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AN UNPUBLISHED REPORT (1858) BY W. E. GLADSTONE ON THE
POLITICAL SITUATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN THE
SEVEN ISLANDS (1815-1858)

INTRODUCTION

This private copy of a confidential report, apparently curtailed, lies in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum¹. It was sent by W. E. Gladstone, High Commissioner Extraordinary to the Seven islands, to Queen Victoria, on December 25th 1858 and it was not printed, as mentioned in the first folio of the manuscript, in a blue book².

This report bears special importance, as it was written, by one of the most prominent British politicians of all times, the renowned "Grand Old Man", and ardent Philhellene, whose impartiality, philanthropism and sense of justice could be matched by his patriotism and deep devotion to duty. Gladstone had also a particularly strong sense of responsibility in politics, and a passion for improvement and liberalism, though deep at heart he was a conservative who admired and respected antiquity and old usages³.

In 1858 the political and social conditions in the Seven islands were characterized by excitement and dissatisfaction on the part of the overwhelming majority of the Ionian population. Greece, the mother country, had been an independent state for thirty years and it was natural for the unredeemed Greeks in and around the Aegean and Ionian seas to long for union with that part of the Greek nation that had but recently obtained its independence. Besides, the revolutions of 1848 in various European countries had given hopes for redemption to those European nations which, oppressed by foreign domination, protection, or by their own reactionary governments, could now perceive the first cracks in the absolutist political institutions and regimes, under which they had to live.

1. British Museum Additional Manuscripts 44588, ff. 99-180.

2. A blue book is a parliamentary publication, so called from its blue paper covers.

3. See: J. L. Hammond and M. R. D. Foot, *Gladstone and Liberalism* (London, 1952). Compare also Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *The Age of Reform* (Oxford, 1962), p. 174. On Gladstone's life and achievements see: J. MacCarthy, *The Story of Mr. Gladstone's Life* (London, 1897). J. Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (vols. I-III, London, 1903). P. M. Magnus, *Gladstone. A Biography* (London, 1963).

The Seven islands of the Ionian sea, the Greek population of which had lived for long centuries under foreign domination, had witnessed the coming and going of various conquerors and protectors: the Venetians, the French, the Russians in alliance with the Turks, the French again, and finally the British⁴.

In the late 1850's, François Lenormant published long articles in French newspapers on the political conditions prevailing in the Seven islands. The renowned French publicist examined the way in which Great Britain had applied the treaty of 1815 concerning the Seven islands, and asserted that this treaty had been repeatedly violated by the British. He pointed out that the idea of nationality, which had been developing in general among the Christian peoples in the East, and in particular among the Ionian Greeks, made the latter demand political union with Greece. This issue was becoming now a subject of European politics and Great Britain had to face a new problem within her empire.

At about the same time a Russian newspaper, *The North*, wrote: "The Ionians are asking for only one concession: that the British protection be abolished", and urged Great Britain to withdraw from the Seven islands and allow them to be united with Greece⁵.

The English newspapers answered in a different spirit pointing out that Great Britain had always treated the Seven islands very favourably, that the press in the Seven islands was free even to publish libels against the Queen of England, the British government and people, and that the Ionians had the right to elect their own Legislative Assembly. Besides, according to certain

4. On the British protection of the Seven islands see: C. Fitzroy, *The Ionian Islands under British Protection* (London, 1851). A. Breulier, "Les Iles Ioniennes sous le protectorat anglais", *Revue Orientale*, 2 (1852), 257-276. Π. Χιώτου, *Ίστορία του Ίονίου Κράτους από συστάσεως αὐτοῦ μέχρι ἐνώσεως, 1815-1864* (τ. Β', ἐν Ζακύνθῳ, 1877) [P. Hiotis, *History of the Ionian State from its Establishment to its Union with Greece, 1815-1864*, (vol. 2, Zante, 1877)]. 'Α. Μ. Ἰδρωμένου, *Πολιτικὴ Ίστορία τῆς Ἑπτανήσου, 1815-1864* (Ἐκδόσεις Β', Κέρκυρα, 1935) ['Α. Μ. Idromenos, *Political History of the Seven Islands, 1815-1864* (Second Edition, Corfu, 1935)]. Ν. Κονόμου, «Ἡ Ἑπτάνησος ἐπὶ ἀγγλοκρατίας: ἐθνικὲς μορφὲς καὶ γεγονότα», *Ἑπτανησιακὰ Φύλλα*, ΣΤ' (1968), σ. 1-143 [N. Konomos, "The Seven Islands under English Domination: National Figures and Events", *Ἑπτανησιακὰ Φύλλα*, VI (1968), pp. 1-143]. 'Η. Ζερβοῦ-Ἰακωβάτου, *Ἡ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀγγλικῆς Προστασίας Ἑπτανήσιος Πολιτεία καὶ τὰ κόμματα* (Πρακτικὰ Τρίτου Πανιονίου Συνεδρίου, 23-29 Σεπτεμβρίου, 1965), ἐν Ἀθήναις 1969 [E. Zervos-Iakovatos, *The Seven Islands State and the Political Parties during the British Protection* (Minutes of the Third Panionian Conference, Sept. 23-29, 1965) Athens, 1969].

5. Hiotis, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

English newspapers, the Ionian Parliament met every year and the Ionian representatives expressed themselves in very strong terms against the British protection⁶.

Thus in 1858, the Colonial Secretary of Great Britain, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, taking into consideration the long-standing grievances of the Ionian population against the alleged British maladministration of the islands as well as the ardent desire of the Ionians for union with Greece, was convinced that an outstanding political personality should be charged with a special mission to the Seven islands in order to investigate the political, social and economic conditions prevailing there, and endeavour to redress the grievances of the Ionians by proposing real reforms to their system of government, in the hope that in this way they would forbear from demanding union with Greece. This personality should be favourably disposed towards the Greek population of the Seven islands; he should also be patient and understanding but also be in a position to make it clear, without going to extremes, that under the circumstances union with Greece was out of the question. The choice fell on William Ewart Gladstone, the renowned Philhellene, undoubtedly the best suited political personality to be charged with such a mission⁷.

In November 1858, Gladstone accepted his assignment as High Commissioner Extraordinary to the Seven islands. It seems that there was a certain measure of political expediency in the proposal made by Lytton to Gladstone, and this is made apparent by the fact that Gladstone's bitterest political opponent, Disraeli, who was then the most outstanding member in Derby's cabinet, raised no objection whatsoever to Gladstone's mission. Most probably, Disraeli thought that if Gladstone was successful in his mission, his success could be a means of attaching him to the Conservative party, but in a role far inferior to that played by himself. On the other hand, if Gladstone's mission proved a failure, then Gladstone would be politically discredited.

At any rate, Gladstone accepted the mission for various reasons. He wanted to offer his good services and at the same time to visit Corfu and

6. Hiotis, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

7. Compare Magnus, *op. cit.*, p. 134. Palmerston, however, had hinted that what Great Britain was particularly interested in was to preserve her dominions in the Mediterranean, as well as her protectorate over the Seven islands. For this reason Great Britain would never stop taking measures to promote the prosperity and welfare of the Seven islands. Thus the object of Gladstone's mission would be to find the proper means to conciliate the protected with their protectors in such a way as the former would be grateful to the British protection (see: Hiotis, *op. cit.*, p. 377).

Ithaca so as to enlarge his knowledge on Homer and ancient Greece. Also Gladstone thought that he could become famous by restoring the constitutional liberties of a Greek community. What is more, Gladstone wanted to consult the Ionian prelates on the possibility of a union with the Church of England. Thus on 8 November 1858, Gladstone sailed for Corfu, accompanied by his wife, the eldest of his daughters, and a secretary⁸. On his way he stopped at Dresden and Vienna, and on 24 November he reached Corfu. His official title was that of High Commissioner Extraordinary, appointed by Queen Victoria herself to investigate and discover all causes of discontent in the Seven islands, to examine the local laws and customs, and everything that would contribute to the prosperity and welfare of their population, and finally to submit a report to the Queen, including all information he could collect as well as suggestions concerning the better organization and administration of the Seven islands⁹.

Gladstone very soon realized that the Seven islands were in a state of commotion due to the way they were governed. He realized, also, that many of the British governmental officials there demonstrated open contempt for institutions greatly respected by the Ionian Greeks, who, having been misgoverned by the British for more than forty years were indignant and exasperated. Especially in the island of Cephalonia, indignation and excitement had reached a climax.

Everywhere in the Seven islands Gladstone was greeted with shouts of "Down with the protection", "Long live the Philhellene Gladstone" and "Long live union with Greece"¹⁰.

Between the date of his arrival in Corfu and 25 December 1858 when Gladstone sent his report to Queen Victoria, he visited all the Ionian islands except Cerigo, came in close contact with governmental officials, senators, representatives of the Legislative Assembly, ecclesiastical dignitaries and with people of all social classes. He delivered a number of speeches, held numerous conferences, listened to advice, and demonstrated great civility and understanding to both civil and ecclesiastical authorities. He was absolutely sincere concerning the purpose of his mission, having declared from the very beginning before the representatives of the Ionian people that he had not come to effect union with Greece, but to try to bring about real reforms to their

8. Magnus, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

9. See: 'Α. Α. Δούσμανη, *Ἡ ἐν ταῖς Ἰονίοις νήσοις ἀποστολή τοῦ Ο. Ε. Γλάδστωνος* (ἑλληνικὴ ἐκδόσις, Κέρκυρα, 1875), σ. 21 [A. L. Dousmanis, *Gladstone's Mission to the Ionian Islands* (Greek Edition, Corfu, 1875), p. 21].

10. See: Morley, *op. cit.*, pp. 602-604.

system of government. Yet, Gladstone did not exclude the possibility of union in the future as, under the circumstances, even if Great Britain wished to satisfy the desire of the Ionian people, the other European powers would not allow her to do so¹¹.

In the meantime certain independent newspapers in England reminded the British people of the missions of Canning and Durham to Portugal and Canada respectively and hinted that they did not expect any positive results from Gladstone's mission either. Besides, the Ionian people could not understand, as the above papers asserted, either the necessity or the purpose of Gladstone's mission¹².

In this atmosphere, and after having examined the whole situation, Gladstone wrote his confidential report to Queen Victoria. He started it by referring to the embarrassments which Great Britain had at times encountered with relation to the working of the Ionian institutions. Special attention, he wrote, should be given to the Charter of 1817 under which, with certain important alterations, the Seven islands were then governed¹³. Then he referred to the publication of a dispatch in the *Daily News* of London (12 November 1858) sent by the Lord High Commissioner, Sir John Young, to the Colonial Secretary. This dispatch, dated 10 June 1857, was stolen from the Colonial Office, and its contents caused much commotion and excitement throughout the Seven islands¹⁴.

11. See: Dousmanis, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-29 and Γ. Σ. Στρέϊτ, *Λόγος ἐπὶ τῇ ἑκατοστῇ ἐπετείῳ τῆς γεννήσεως τοῦ Γουλιέλμου Γλάδστονως* (ἐν Ἀθήναις, 1909), σ. 14 [G. S. Streit, Speech on the Centennial Anniversary of William Gladstone's Birth (Athens, 1909) p. 14].

12. See: Dousmanis, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

13. This Charter was a strange amalgamation of heterogeneous elements, institutions, laws, and regulations, adroitly combined. Its main characteristics were a peculiar obscurity and indefiniteness, while the meaning of its provisions was elastic and ambiguous, giving the Lord High Commissioner almost absolute powers (on the provisions of the above mentioned Charter see: Zervos-Iakovatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-37). See also: Π. Γρατσιατοῦ, *Ἡ Ἐπτάνησος ὑπὸ τὴν ξενικοκρατίαν* (ἐν Κεφαλληνία, 1878), σ. 27-33 [P. Gratsiatos, *The Seven Islands under Foreign Domination* (Cephalonia, 1878), pp. 27-33]. Fitzroy, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-19. Δ. Σ. Μακρῆ, «Ἡ Ἐλευθεροσύνη καὶ ἡ Ἑνωσις τῆς Ἑπτανήσου», *Κερκυραϊκὰ Χρονικά*, Β' Πανιώνιον Συνέδριον, *Πρακτικὰ-Ἀνακοινώσεις*, II' (1967), 41 [D. S. Makris, "The Freedom of the Press and the Union of the Seven Islands with Greece", *Corfu Chronicles*, Second Panionian Conference, Minutes-Announcements, XIII (1967), 41].

14. Sir John Young and his friends, seeing that very few Ionians supported the regime of the British protection, tried to divide the Radical party, which, supported by the masses of the Ionian population, was then very strong, by drawing up a plan according to which Cephalonia, Zante, Santa Maura, and Ithaca would be united with Greece, while Corfu and Paxos would become British colonies. But the results were far different from those

Continuing his report Gladstone informed the Queen that up to that time he had held communications with various officials, members of the Senate and the Assembly and other influential persons, and that he had come to the conclusion that the political situation in the Seven islands presented the symptoms of a chronic disease for which no early remedy could be found.

Then, starting with the Treaty of Paris of November 1815¹⁵, concluded between Great Britain¹⁶, Russia¹⁷, Austria¹⁸ and Prussia, Gladstone gave a

expected by the Lord High Commissioner and his collaborators, as the aforesaid plan, when revealed, strengthened the ties of unity among the Ionians and enhanced their desire for a union with Greece. The man who had conceived this plan was the Attorney-General of the Seven islands and leader of the Anglophil party there.

Both the Ionian Parliament and the people were filled with indignation at hearing that in the countryside around the town of Corfu an effort was made to persuade the villagers to sign this plan. The Ionian Parliament and the people protested strongly against it and declared unanimously for a union with Greece.

It seems that the publication of the aforesaid plan was made in order that the British government could detect the real intentions of the Ionians with regard to the continuation of the British protection over the Seven islands or a union with Greece. It was also believed by certain Ionians that this publication was due to an intrigue by certain ultra-conservative Anglophils, aimed at undermining Gladstone's mission (see: Idromenos, *op. cit.*, p. 108).

At any rate these developments made the British government reconsider the whole issue and by organizing a special mission took special measures in order to appease the indignant Ionians. At the same time the British government declared that Great Britain had no intention whatsoever to colonize any of the Seven islands, and that even if it had wished to do so, the other European powers would not have given their consent. (on these developments see: Δ. Ί. Πατέλλη, "Εγγράφα ἀναφερόμενα εἰς τὴν ἑκτακτον ἀποστολὴν τοῦ κυρίου Γλάδστον-νος εἰς Ἑπτάνησα (ἐν Ζακύνθῳ, 1859, σ. 1-21) [D. I. Patellis, ed., Documents Related to Mr. Gladstone's Special Mission to the Seven Islands (Zante, 1859), pp. 1-21]. Dousmanis, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12. Γ. Βερυκίου, "Εγγράφα ἀναφερόμενα εἰς τὸν ριζοσπαστισμὸν (ἐν Ζακύνθῳ, 1889) [G. Verykios, Documents Related to Radicalism (Zante, 1889)]. Σπ. Μ. Θεοτόκη, "Ἡ ἀποστολὴ στὰ Ἑπτάνησα τοῦ Γ. Ἐδ. Γλάδστον (Κέρκυρα, 1924), σ. 5-11 [S. M. Theotokis, G. E. Gladstone's Mission to the Seven Islands (Corfu, 1924), pp. 5-11].

15. The treaty concluded between the above mentioned powers on 5 November 1815 concerned only the Seven islands. It was aimed at securing independence, freedom and prosperity to the Seven islands under the protection of Great Britain, excluding any right of domination or sovereignty. (see: N. T. Bulgari, *Les Sept-Iles Ioniennes et les traités qui les concernent* (Leipzig, 1859), pp. 51-72, and Fitzroy, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11).

16. The representative of Great Britain, Castlereagh, asked that the Seven islands be placed under absolute British sovereignty (see: Γ. Βερυκίου, "Απομνημονεύματα περὶ τῆς πρώην Ἰονίου Πολιτείας (Κεφαλληνία, 1870), σ. 58 [G. Verykios, Memoirs about the Former Ionian State (Cephalonia, 1870), p. 58].

17. The representative of Russia at the conference, Count Capodistria, an Ionian Greek himself, worried about the fate of the Seven islands, fearing that they would be placed under Austrian sovereignty. So he did everything in his power to avert that possibility, and

full report on the Constitutional Charter of 1817, writing that it placed almost absolute power in the hands of the Lord High Commissioner, and created a privileged class of Ionians with special rights of election and representation, adding, however, that the political, social and economic benefits of the British protection outweighed its evils. He recognized of course that the Charter of 1817 gave neither freedom nor any training to the Ionians in order to receive freedom and he expressed his hope that the Queen would not endeavour to alter the Ionian Charter or any law of the Ionian state without the assent of the Legislative Assembly, the Senate and the Lord High Commissioner, as the Treaty of Paris did not confer on the Queen of Great Britain the sovereignty of the Seven islands, but gave her the power to call a Constituent Assembly which could decide upon a Constitution.

Thus it was evident that only a Constituent Assembly could alter the Constitution. Accordingly Gladstone pointed out that the changes already brought about to the Ionian Constitution were effected in the legal form of a regular assent by the Legislative Assembly, the Senate and the Lord High Commissioner. Therefore there should be no doubt that the above mentioned authorities would not accept any laws narrowing the liberties of the Seven islands¹⁹.

Gladstone also believed that since Great Britain had been entrusted with the protection of the Ionian islands, she should not spare any effort in order to mitigate the evils existing in their political and administrative system. He recognized, certainly, that these evils were deep-rooted in the Ionian Constitution and that neither the Lord High Commissioner nor any other individual was fully responsible for them. Besides the Executive in the Seven

finally asked that the Seven islands be placed under the joint protection of all the great powers and in particular under the protection of the "Mistress of the Seas", Great Britain (see: Κ. Λομβάρδου, *Ἀπομνημονεύματα πρὸς καταρτισμὸν τῆς περὶ ἀπελευθερώσεως τῆς Ἑπτανήσου ἱστορίας* (ἐν Ζακύνθῳ, 1871), σ. 196 [K. Lombardos, *Memoirs for the Composition of the History of the Liberation of the Seven islands* (Zante, 1871), p. 196].

18. Austria wanted to become the protecting power in order to secure her domination over her new Balkan subjects against any revolutionary movement that might start in the Seven islands. She was also afraid that Turkish Albania would not be safe if any other power took the Seven islands under her protection (see: Verykios, *Memoirs, op. cit.*, p. 57).

19. Gladstone's point of view was based on sound legal arguments and precedent, but the situation that Great Britain had created in the Seven islands was deep-rooted and the British government, acting through the Lord High Commissioner, would accept only such changes to the Constitution of the Seven islands that would not hurt in the least the British interests there, as they were understood by the conservative government of Great Britain headed by Derby and Disraeli.

islands was not responsible to the electoral body, a problem that further aggravated the whole situation. What is more the Lord High Commissioner was invested with the power of a veto, which meant that he could interfere constantly with the course of public affairs.

The function, therefore, exercised by the Lord High Commissioner was negative, since he was not entitled to give the Seven islands the benefits of good government. As a result the Ionian state enjoyed no independence due to the fact that Great Britain exercised rights of sovereignty over the Seven islands²⁰.

Having reported on the Constitutional Charter, Gladstone continued from the years 1848-49, when important reforms were introduced to the Constitution of the Seven islands. It was then that the freedom of the press was established, though publishers and journalists still had to face arbitrary powers of punishment²¹, while the Ionian Assembly, the electoral system, and the public finances were reorganized on a more liberal basis.

The above mentioned reforms were introduced because of the evident discontent prevailing in the Seven islands and the serious disturbances that broke out in Cephalonia, which Gladstone characterized as "properly agrarian", recognizing, however, that social and political elements were infused

20. The proposals made by Gladstone concerning the correction of the evils existing in the political and administrative system of the Ionian state as well as the mitigation of the arbitrary powers of the Lord High Commissioner could be characterized as extremely liberal both by the Queen of England and the British Government, taking into consideration that England itself was governed at the time by an aristocratic conservative oligarchy and that there existed neither a written constitution nor really popular institutions in England, not to say anything about the absolutist regimes prevalent in Europe.

21. The freedom of the press conceded by the Protecting power to the Seven islands, in October 1848, marked the beginning of the open struggle of the Ionians against the British protection. The press turned against the British Administration of the Seven islands, and inspired the masses of the Ionian people with a militant spirit. Among the newspapers then circulating, the most militant one was *The Fatherland* (*Ἡ Πατρίς*) written in Greek and French. In general, the freedom of the press proved one of the most effective means of the Ionians in their struggle for union with Greece (on the freedom of the press conceded to the Seven islands see: Π. Πανῶ, *Ριζοσπάσται καὶ βελτιώσεις ἐν Ἑπτανήσῳ* (ἐν Κεφαλληνίᾳ, 1880), σ. 20 [P. Panas, *Radicals and Betterments in the Seven Islands* (Cephalonia, 1880), p. 20]. B. Δούσμανη, *Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς ἐνώσεως τῆς Ἑπτανήσου* (δημοσιευθεῖσα εἰς τρία τεύχη τῆς *Νέας Ἐποχῆς*) Ἀθήναι, 1924, σ. 3 [B. Dousmanis, *A Contribution to the History of the Union of the Seven Islands with Greece* (published in three issues of the journal *New Epoch*, Athens, 1924), p. 3]. Makris, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48. Zervos-Iakovatos, *op. cit.*, p. 58. Ἡ. Ζερβοῦ - Ἰακωβάτου, *Ἡ ἐπὶ τῶν Ἀντικυθήρων αἰχμαλωσία μου καὶ ἡ τῶν συναιχμαλώτων μου* (Ἀθήναι, 1972) [E. Zervos-Iakovatos, *My Captivity and that of my Fellow-captives in Antikythera* (Athens, 1972)].

into them. Order was restored after harsh punishment had been inflicted on a large number of the inhabitants of Cephalonia, that left bitter recollections²².

Gladstone went on analyzing at some length the existing since 1817, and after the reforms of 1848-49 political, economic and administrative system which he found too complicated and corrupted. Referring to the electoral system he reported that candidates were politically immature, with no political creed, they ignored the public opinion and felt no joint responsibility with the whole Executive body. They desired to be elected only to fulfil their ambitions and take advantage of a public office in order to promote private ends. Besides, not many Ionians were enfranchised, since the electoral qualification was a University degree, a liberal profession and mainly the possession of a certain amount of property.

In order to be enfranchised an Ionian had to apply to a commission, appointed by each senator for his own island, which would carry out a search into the private affairs of each applicant and find out, after a humiliating scrutiny, if the applicant could be enfranchised. Therefore it was evident that injustice prevailed throughout the process of deciding on claims to the suffrage. This evil, however, was slightly mitigated after the passing of a law which allowed claimants to appeal to Tribunals including the Supreme Court. Generalising on this matter Gladstone said that the whole electoral system ran counter to the public opinion in the Seven islands. What is more, the freedom of election was at times violated through the presence of military forces that made secret suffrage impossible²³.

Gladstone did not hold the British authority directly responsible for all the above mentioned evils but he pointed out that the whole system prevalent in the Seven islands discredited the British Protection which did almost nothing to abolish such proceedings.

Under these circumstances even the reformed electoral system which enfranchised a number of Ionians did not produce the desired effects since

22. Compare Lévy, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92, Gratsiatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34. See also: Καταθέσεις και διαδικασίαι ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν Κεφαλληνίᾳ κατὰ τὸ ἔτος 1849 συμβάντων, Κέρκυρα, ἐν τῇ τυπογραφίᾳ τῆς Κυβερνήσεως [Depositions and Proceedings on what happened in Cephalonia in the Year 1849, Corfu, in the Government Printing Office].

23. Exposing the evils of the electoral system in the Seven islands and asking for their abolition, Gladstone proved to be in advance of his time, considering that only a small part of the British male population had been enfranchised by the First Reform Bill of 1832, that is, only those householders who paid a ten pound rent per year, while a further yet incomplete extension of the franchise in England was made possible in 1867 under Disraeli. Besides, it was only during Gladstone's first administration (1868-1874) that secret suffrage was established in England through the passing of the Ballot Act.

the representatives of the Ionian people were not in a position to give the Seven islands the benefits of a sound administration, being unable to determine the public expenditure and to conduct the Executive power. As a result corruption and the pursuance of personal interests prevailed, since the Ionian representatives had no sense of public duty or responsibility. Thus dissatisfaction and discontent were deep-rooted, and England was held responsible for this system under which she could prohibit and prevent²⁴.

These political conditions, Gladstone continued, were the outcome of the merging of two systems: the political system emanating from the Charter of 1817 and the one based on the reforms of 1848-49. These two systems proved to be in hopeless contradiction between themselves²⁵.

Gladstone also reminded the Queen of the fact that according to the Treaty of Paris (1815) Great Britain had not been given the sovereignty of the Seven islands, but only the right to protect them. So, according to European law, these islands were independent in every point in which their independence had not been expressly limited. The main problem in the Seven islands, as he wrote, was that the existing evils were rooted in their Constitution, and that popular election was absolutely incompatible with the existence of an irresponsible Executive²⁶. Besides, the Lord High Commissioner had no power to give the Ionian people the benefits of a good government, involved as he was in the vicious circle of their political system, and despite the recent reforms, free institutions, properly so called, were not introduced into the Seven islands. Therefore, popular liberties should be extended by the concession of really free institutions, and a responsible government should be set up here too as it had been set up in Canada, Australia and the Cape of Good Hope²⁷ within the last fifteen years.

There was no doubt, Gladstone pointed out, that free institutions in

24. The British authorities might not be held responsible for all these evils; yet the British administration could be charged with indifference towards the rotten political and administrative system of the Seven islands. This attitude maintained by the British was undoubtedly due to the fact that protection over the Seven islands for Great Britain meant the possession of a strong naval base in the Mediterranean.

25. The political, administrative, and economic system prevailing in the Seven islands from 1817 to the time of Gladstone's mission is treated, discussed and analyzed in detail by Zervos-Iakovatos, *The Seven Islands State and the Political Parties during the British Protection*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-90.

26. Concerning the powers of the Executive see: Zervos-Iakovatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-28.

27. On these developments see: Woodward, *op. cit.*, pp. 379-389 and 400-402. Bibliography concerning the colonies of Canada, Australia and the Cape of Good Hope is included in pages 648-649 of the same book.

development in the newly established Greek state had influenced the general attitude of the Ionian people in their pursuit of political freedom. On the other hand, the Ionian people were not so politically immature as not to be qualified for discharging, even imperfectly at the beginning, their duties in a system of free political institutions. Besides, these people, as Gladstone assured the Queen, were characterized by certain virtues like gratitude to those who had treated them kindly, and trust to those who had proved honest to them and had respected their feelings. The concession of political freedom, however, must not under any circumstances deprive Great Britain of her rights to be responsible for the order and security of the Seven islands²⁸.

Gladstone also pointed out that under the system of government in the islands, democratic sentiment was not widespread, but social injustice was, and might constitute a very serious danger in years to come, as the proprietors and creditors oppressed the peasants and other classes of people²⁹.

Then he proceeded to suggest substantial constitutional, administrative and economic reforms in detail³⁰. Thus the Senate should retain its legislative function only, while its executive powers should be transferred to a Ministry, whose members, along with the other public functionaries should be legally responsible for their actions according to the provisions of a law to be enacted. The Ionian Assembly should take full control of the taxation and expenditure of the islands but it would not be entitled to pass any measure without the consent of the other branches of the Legislative body, which would have the

28. Most probably Gladstone had realized that the only solution to the problem would be union with Greece. Still, he refrained from expressing his opinion openly in his report either because of the explicit instructions he had received or because he thought that under the circumstances union had to be postponed. We have come to the above mentioned conclusion having in mind that on 18 March 1864, when a debate was conducted in the English Parliament on the union of the Seven islands with Greece, Gladstone praised the Ionians for their many virtues and especially for their patriotism and stated that they had sacrificed the benefits they were enjoying under the British protection for the sake of the union with Greece (see: Δ. Σομερίτις, *Τίνες οι ἔθνικοι καὶ διεθνεῖς παράγοντες τῆς ἐνώσεως* (Πρακτικὰ τοῦ ἐν Κερκύρᾳ Πρώτου Πανιονίου Συνεδρίου, 20-22 Μαΐου 1914 καὶ αἱ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀνακοινώσεις, ἐν Ἀθήναις 1915), σ. 54 [D. Someritis, *The National and International Factors that led to the Union* (Minutes of the First Panionian Conference in Corfu, May 20-22, 1914, and Announcements, Athens, 1915), p. 54].

29. See: Whittingham, *op. cit.*

30. The reforms suggested by Gladstone reflected the liberalism and enlightened spirit of a wise and benevolent politician and, had they been suggested to a colony of people of English descent and traditions, they could have been readily accepted (summaries of the reforms suggested by Gladstone, and included in this document in detail, see in Lévy, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-105 and Theotokis, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15).

right to veto. The Legislative, thus invested with an effective control over the public finance would be empowered to exercise, if necessary, an influence on the composition of the Ministry, in order to prevent the Executive from violating popular institutions. The exclusive powers of the Lord High Commissioner should be limited to matters relating to the protection of the Seven islands, whereas all the acts of Government should have the explicit approval of the Executive acting through its proper officers. Also he suggested that the arbitrary and extralegal powers of the High Police should be abolished³¹.

Of course, Gladstone admitted that the existing Constitution contained provisions concerning the responsibility and legal punishment of the members of the Ministry and other public functionaries; but these provisions were absolutely ineffective, depending for their enforcement upon the will of the Lord High Commissioner. Besides, Gladstone was against any reduction in the Lord High Commissioner's Civil List, as it was necessary to secure the command to the Protecting power.

With regard to the powers of the High Police he reminded the Queen of the fact that in 1852 the Lord High Commissioner was ready, with the approval of the British Government to abolish the powers of the High Police, demanding, however, that censorship should be imposed on the press. Under the present circumstances, Gladstone pointed out, the powers of the High Police must be abolished without any restriction on the press, as censorship would run counter to British institutions and would outrage the Ionian people³².

Having completed his proposals concerning popular rights and privileges in the Seven islands, Gladstone went on to recommend certain essential changes to the Ionian Constitution, stressing at the same time the vital importance of all of them. Thus he proposed that a second Legislative Chamber should be set up to exercise the legislative functions of the Senate without taking any privileged initiative; that the Executive body should be invested

31. Through these modifications Gladstone aimed at the separation of the Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial powers up to that time gathered in the hands of the members of the Senate. He also aimed at limiting the powers of the Lord High Commissioner to such an extent that he would no longer be the real governor of the Ionian state but the representative of the Protecting power responsible for the defence of the Seven islands. It went, of course, without saying that in a self-governing state, as Gladstone conceived of the Seven islands, the powers of its police must not exceed the limits of the law.

32. Gladstone aimed at effecting a compromise according to which liberal institutions and a sound administrative system providing democratically against fraud and corruption should be combined with a discreet yet firm control of Great Britain over the Seven islands. Gladstone was also interested in abolishing flagrant acts of oppression like the censorship of the press which not only outraged the Ionians but also discredited Great Britain.

with the power of initiating money votes, which, up to that time, was the exclusive privilege of the Assembly; that the members of the Legislative Chambers should be paid by a generally estimated daily allowance, as long as they stayed in Corfu, and only during the time that a session lasted, and that Municipal Councillors should not be paid for their services.

Justifying his proposals he stated that the formation of a Legislative Chamber was necessary, though in reality it existed "under the anomalous form of the Senate". This Chamber would function as a Tribunal to try cases of civil servants accused of delinquency, since in this respect the Constitutional Chart was defective. Moreover the creation of this Chamber would act as a connecting bridge between the aristocracy of birth and property and the other social classes, and would bring the aristocracy in fuller touch with public affairs. Besides, through this Chamber each island would be represented as a separate unit³³.

As to the number and the appointment of the members of this Chamber Gladstone proposed that twelve should be the right number, each island electing one representative for a period of two Parliaments, while the remaining five members should be nominated by the Head of the Executive either for a period of two Parliaments or for life. Candidates for election or nomination should be qualified by property and education in the first case and by public service or in the best manner possible in the second. By combining election and nomination Gladstone wanted to form a Chamber which would not be either too strong or too weak in influencing the action of the Legislature and obtaining a share of power in forming the laws. Each Chamber might elect its own President, subject to the consent of the Government of Great Britain³⁴.

33. In this way a balance would be created between the two Chambers and as a result the Senate's absolute power would be reduced. What is more, by the creation of a second Legislative Chamber, justice would be delivered more effectively in cases of various offences committed by civil servants. Besides, it was simply right and practical that public expenditure should be reduced by paying the members of the Legislative Chambers only as long as they offered their services, participating in the sessions of their Chambers in Corfu, and by abolishing the payment of Municipal Councillors which was a serious source of corruption.

Gladstone's idea that the creation of a second Chamber would serve as a connecting bridge between the aristocracy and the common people could be characterized as unrealistic, as the gap separating the upper class from the people was still too wide.

34. In this Chamber one could detect the prevalence of the aristocracy since out of its twelve members, seven would be elected among the landed gentry and the educated, who also belonged to the upper class. Besides, the manner in which the remaining five members would be elected was vague and elusive, while the Protecting power would have the right

Concerning the allowances of money made to the members of the Legislative Chambers, Gladstone pointed out that they were exorbitant in relation to the time of the members' attendance as well as in comparison to what the members of the Chamber of Deputies in Greece received. Besides, Ionian candidates for the Legislative Chambers would use all means in order to be elected or reelected with the sole purpose of enjoying the high allowances made to them.

Gladstone admitted that it would be difficult to eradicate the above mentioned evil and he proposed that the Lord High Commissioner should use his power to apply the law against it. But if the exorbitant allowances to the members of the Legislative Chambers should be reduced, those made to Municipal Councillors should be abolished as completely unwarranted. As a matter of fact they were a source of corruption as the salaries paid to Municipal Councillors seemed to be the premium on their abuses both in trying to be elected and in endeavouring to please and reward those who had helped them be elected. If, on the other hand, allowances to Municipal Councillors were abolished, corrupt or money motivated candidates would lose interest in obtaining Municipal councillorships. Thus Ionians of better character and high qualifications could be elected to exercise the functions of Municipal Councillors, especially interested in conducting local affairs in the best possible way so as to maintain decentralization of power.

The above mentioned reforms would, undoubtedly, extend popular liberties in the Seven islands although Gladstone accepted that the main difficulty in effecting any reform or constitutional amendment was the ardent desire of the overwhelming majority of the Ionians for union with Greece. For this reason, on many occasions the Ionian Assembly had been prorogated or dissolved in order to be prevented from voting for union with Greece. Matters had become worse because of a dispatch sent, as already mentioned, by the Lord High Commissioner, Sir John Young, to the Colonial Secretary. This dispatch was stolen and published in the *Daily News* of London. In this dispatch it was recommended that five of the Seven islands should be ceded to Greece and that Corfu and Paxo should be colonized by the British³⁵.

This plan in combination with the unexpected mission of a High Commissioner Extraordinary made the Ionians believe that Great Britain was thinking seriously of the possibility of ceding the Seven islands to Greece,

to exercise a discreet yet steady control over both Chambers by ratifying or rejecting the election of a president for each Chamber.

35. Concerning this plan and its consequences see footnote n° 14.

though it became soon known that the above mentioned plan had greatly displeased the British government which rejected it as wholly unacceptable.

But the desire of the Ionians, Gladstone continued, for union with Greece must not be considered a crime, as long as it was expressed legally, respectfully, and without disturbances. Besides, the Constitution of the Seven islands accorded to the Ionians freedom of expression through petitions addressed to the Queen of Great Britain. If it were argued that a petition for the removal of the British protection was not in accordance with European law, then it could also be said that the Ionians had not been consulted when their fate was decided by the great European powers under anomalous circumstances. Thus the Ionians were fully entitled to declare their desire for union, since they had never given their consent to the Charter of 1815 and the British protection³⁶. Besides, it would be absurd to assert that there was public danger in this desire, expressed peacefully by the Ionians³⁷. But even if there was danger, it could be very easily repressed by the British forces.

What is more, since, according to the Constitution of the Seven islands, individuals and newspapers were free to express their opinions and desires, the Protecting power was not entitled to deprive the Ionian Assembly of its right to express a desire for union with Greece. Any attempt by Great Britain at enforcing silence on the Assembly, which had never demanded the intervention of the European powers or endeavoured to effect union with Greece arbitrarily, might produce greater dissatisfaction and lead to more complicated inconveniences.

It would also be a serious mistake to believe, that the Ionians' desire for union with Greece involved any kind of crime or aversion towards the Queen of Great Britain and the English nation, or that it could be ascribed to secret foreign intervention. Immediate union with Greece, however, would not be to the interest of the Seven islands and when the Ionian representatives insisted that this was the ardent desire of their compatriots they were exaggerating³⁸.

36. Count John Capodistria, an Ionian Greek, as known, was in the service of the Tsar of Russia when he agreed to the British protection on the Seven islands; so his consent could not be binding upon the people of the Seven islands whom he did not represent.

37. The "agrarian revolt" of 1848-49 in Cephalonia broke out mainly because of social and to a certain extent political reasons and had very little or nothing to do with the burning question of union with Greece which became very important in the late 1850's.

38. Later, in 1864, Gladstone stated that everybody in the Seven islands considered union with Greece as a dream and a chimera (see: Someritis, *op. cit.*, p. 53). Yet it seems that Gladstone, as stated above, had realized that this "dream" of the Ionians was deep-rooted and that time was in favour of its realization. So we may conclude that he was convinced that the question of union with Greece was a matter of time as well as of more propi-

This desire for union with Greece, Gladstone continued, was made up of various elements, foremost among which was the fact that almost all Ionians of education and a certain social status regarded themselves Greeks and looked forward to a political union with Greece. Still there were many Ionians who realized that, under the circumstances, immediate union with Greece would be premature due to the political conditions prevailing in eastern Europe. There were others, however, who were carried away by their enthusiasm and did not judge the situation coolly and prudently, and lastly there were those who, in order to promote their own interests and fulfil their personal ambitions, were trying shamelessly to exploit the general sentiment of the Ionian people³⁹. These exploiters of the public sentiment were greatly helped by the policy of Great Britain to adjourn or dissolve the Ionian Assembly every time it declared its desire for union.

Besides, the desire for union with Greece had another meaning. It expressed the discontent of the Ionian population with the existing government in the Seven islands. So reforms in the system of government would undoubtedly divert their thoughts from the question of union⁴⁰.

Gladstone continued stressing the fact that there were very strong ties of blood, religion, language, and intercourse binding the Ionian Greeks to the Greek nation in general, and partly to the newly established Greek state. What is more, the Ionian islands themselves were closely bound together by this very strong feeling of Greek nationality, entertained by their inhabitants. Thus respect for their nationality, customs and feelings would be very instrumental in governing the Ionian Greeks.

tious circumstances, and that only political expediency did not allow him to express himself differently, when he was writing this report to Queen Victoria (concerning the pro-union convictions of the overwhelming majority of the Ionian people see: A. L. Dousmanis, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-31 and 100-150. Patellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-21).

39. Concerning the different attitudes towards union, maintained by various parties in the Seven islands known as Reformers (Μεταρρυθμιστές), Radicals (Ριζοσπάστες), and Infernals (Καταχθόνιοι), the last ones being exploiters of the public sentiment, see: Zervos-Iakovatos, *The Seven Islands State and the Political Parties during the British Protection*, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-53. Verykios, *Documents related to Radicalism*, *op. cit.* Panas, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-34. Gratsiatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37.

40. It was very probable indeed, that reforms would divert, but only divert, the Ionians' thoughts from the question of union for a while, as their ties with Greece were very strong to be broken by the concession of reforms, however radical and real they might be. Thus the British government should have realized that nationality, blood and vicinity were factors too powerful to be ignored and that remedies aiming at ameliorating political, social and economic conditions in the Seven islands could have temporary effects only.

The proper mode for the Ionian Assembly to act, as Gladstone suggested, would be to send a petition to the Queen of Great Britain, requesting union with Greece⁴¹. But even if the Assembly acted otherwise, declaring union with Greece without first asking for the consent of the Protecting power, the British government should not take summary measures to suspend free government in the Seven islands. Nevertheless, should the Assembly endeavour to implement such a declaration, Great Britain could easily deal with the situation. A direct, tactful and explicit answer from the Queen to the Assembly would put an end to all wishful thinking and probably to the serious disturbances in the Islands, as many of the Ionians, being intelligent people, realized that under the circumstances union could not be effected⁴².

Besides, it was doubtful whether Greece, poor, weak and with no considerable naval power, would wish to annex the Seven islands, while political, social and economic reasons would make it almost impossible for Greece to bear the responsibility of governing the islands. Differences in law, finance and social structure between Greece and the Seven islands were too great to be settled, and even if the Protecting power as well as the other great powers gave their consent to the union, it could not possibly be effected⁴³.

Moreover, under the political circumstances prevailing in eastern Europe, it would be absurd to encourage the Ionians to effect union with Greece, because in such a case Corfu, with its great strategical importance would become a constant threat to the Turkish dominion of Albania, while at the same time the unredeemed Greeks of Crete, Thessaly, Macedonia and the Aegean islands would also start agitating against Turkish sovereignty. Thus the union of the Seven islands with Greece would mark the beginning of the "reconstruction of all political society in southwestern Europe". Neverthe-

41. The Ionian Assembly sent a petition to Queen Victoria on 29 January 1859, requesting union with Greece (see: British Museum Additional Manuscripts 44748, ff. 28-31).

42. Obviously Gladstone was referring to those of the Ionians who belonged to the party of the Reformers and did not, certainly, represent the majority of the Ionian population (on the policy of this party in general and of its most influential members in particular see: Gratsiatos, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-66).

43. Gladstone had not taken into consideration that since the newly established Greek state was under the joint protection of the Great powers, the Seven islands would also be placed under their protection automatically, as soon as their union with Greece was effected (compare Lévy, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110). Besides, nobody would expect that the existing differences in law as well as in social and economic structure between Greece and the Seven islands could be settled as soon as the union was effected. But as it was proved, not much later, mutual good will, understanding and patriotism contributed to the gradual settlement of the above mentioned differences,

less, Gladstone, looking into the future, did not exclude the unification of all the unredeemed Greeks in one Greek state⁴⁴, but in order that such a development could be effected, he suggested that several portions of the Greek race should first obtain local liberty.

Thus Gladstone concluded his confidential report by suggesting constitutional reforms and recommending that a negative answer be dispatched to the Ionian Assembly on the issue of its petition respecting union with Greece. And if the Assembly refused to accept the proposed reforms and insisted on union, then it should be dissolved, in order that the Ionian people could reconsider the whole situation, and repair the error made by their temporary representatives⁴⁵.

Finally Gladstone pointed out that the suggested solution to the issue in question was not the most favourable one concerning the relations between Great Britain and the Seven islands, but he asserted that it could be considered the only feasible one under the circumstances.

44. Gladstone's prophetic words did not reveal only his philhellenism but also his political insight and sense of international justice.

45. The representatives of the Ionian people were, of course, as Gladstone pointed out, temporary, but the desire of the Ionians for union with Greece, as Gladstone knew, was strong and deep-rooted. Thus his suggestions in favour of reforms were meant to be the first in a series of stages leading to union in the future. At least this is what Gladstone's words "repairing the error of its temporary representatives" could imply.

*THE UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENT**

Dec. 25th 1858

Private Copy

(Not printed in blue book) but
in this confidential report
(apparently curtailed)

May it please
Your Majesty

The terms of the Commission under which I have been commanded to act, include a particular reference to the embarrassments which have been encountered from time to time in the working of the present Ionian Institutions. This reference, pointed as it is, would of itself have led one to give special and early attention to the subject of the Charter of 1817 under which, with certain important, but partial alterations, the Islands are at present governed. I learned, however, after quitting England, and before reaching Corfu, that a despatch of the Lord High Commissioner, dated June 10th 1857, had been stolen, and had subsequently been published in London. It speedily appeared that this occurrence had given occasion to a state of high political excitement in the Seven Islands, though happily without the smallest danger to the public tranquillity. The existence of such a state of things appeared to me to render it expedient that I should in the first instance apply myself exclusively to the consideration of the political question thus unfavourably raised, or to such matters as are immediately connected with it, and that I should proceed at the earliest possible moment to report to your Majesty the conclusions which my inquiries might suggest.

I have accordingly been occupied near-by up to the present date in holding full communications with the leading official persons of the Islands, with the Members of the Senate and Assembly and with a considerable number of the principal proprietors and persons of influence, character and ability. The question is beset with many difficulties; it presents at once the symptoms of a chronic disease and of a sudden access of fever: and no mode of treatment that can be adopted would appear to offer certain or early prospect of success. Still, perceiving little room for doubt as to the main principles which should, as I humbly submit, be the guides of British Policy in the Islands, and, on the other hand, not anticipating that the subject is likely to be further elucidated by delay, I dutifully report to Your Majesty as follows:

It was declared by the Treaty of Paris in November 1815 that the Seven Ionian Islands should constitute a single, free, and independent state, under the exclusive protection of Great Britain: and it was engaged on the part of the British Crown that it should give a

* No changes have been made to the spelling and punctuation of the manuscript.

particular solicitude to their affairs. This Treaty was concluded between the Sovereigns of the United Kingdom, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and it was provided in the instrument that the other powers, parties to the Treaty of Vienna, should likewise be invited to become parties to the arrangements, which thus assumed a very definite and solemn character. In pursuance of its provisions, a Legislative Assembly was convoked, of which the composition was regulated by the Representative of the Protecting Power, and this Legislative Assembly accepted rather than prepared the Charter of 1817.

This Charter was so devised as to present to view an array of Ionian officers and authorities with certain forms of election and representation but to reserve in reality power nearly absolute, and to place it in the hands of the Lord High Commissioner. It had, however, the merit of being coherent, and it is to be remembered that, at the period when it was applied to the Ionian Islands restrictive modes of Government for Your Majesty's own Colonies were in vogue. Again the object of its framers and administrators, though it did not embrace either political or municipal freedom, doubtless was to introduce into the Islands the essential and all important principles of equality before the law, strict administration of justice between man and man, an effective security of life and property: and it appears to me to be generally, for the most part, very gratefully admitted that these ends have been attained in a degree unknown to the prior history of the Islands. I cannot, therefore, doubt that the benefits of the Protection have greatly outweighed any foils arising either from the anomalous nature of the relation itself or from errors in British policy.

On the other hand it must be avowed that this Constitution with its complex arrangements neither gave freedom, nor, by any virtue of its own, trained the people to an aptitude for receiving it; that its exterior semblance did not correspond with its substance or its intention; and that, while it wholly passed by the mass of the Community, it secured the partial assent of the class which was to supply its necessary instruments through the medium of a number, amount and arrangement of salaries which have ultimately come to be very burthensome to the finances, and which could not be without a demoralizing influence.

In the years 1848 and 1849 important changes were made in the Charter. Up to that period there had been no power of printing in the Islands except with the permission and at the Office of the Government. But a great transition was somewhat suddenly made; and all previous restraint upon printing was removed, though stringent and very arbitrary powers of punishment were still kept alive. At about the same period important changes were made with respect to the Assembly. In lieu of the old system of selection out of Lists prepared under the influence of the Government, a free choice of Candidates was conceded; a new and enlarged qualification for electors was adopted; the system of secret voting was established, and the control of the Legislative Assembly over the public expenditure, previously partial, was extended, or meant and supposed to be extended to the whole of it, except only the portions fixed under convention with the Crown of England, namely the Military contribution of twenty five thousand pounds sterling per annum, and the Lord High Commissioner's Civil List of thirteen thousand pounds.

During the years 1848 and 1849 these changes were in course of adoption: and the same years were marked by two popular outbreaks in the Island of Cefalonia. The later and more serious of these was in its character properly agrarian, but the contest of class and class offered an opportunity to designing persons and a political element was partially infused into it. The local range of the disturbance and the destruction of life were small, although in the latter was included a murder of peculiar horror.

Order was immediately and completely re-established, but the persons implicated were notwithstanding arraigned before Courts Martial instead of the ordinary Tribunals. Twenty one persons suffered Capital punishment, and a much larger number were subjected to flogging, an infliction which is unknown to Ionian Law and is regarded by the people with the strongest sentiments of revulsion.

It is my duty to report to Your Majesty that these punishments have left behind them painful and bitter though I am persuaded not ineffaceable recollections.

Attempts were made in the course of 1852 at further legislation in the matter of Reform. It was proposed by the Lord High Commissioner, with the assent of a considerable portion of the Party there termed Reformers; 1st that the Session of Parliament should be annual instead of bi-ennial;—2d that the Senate should frame a Bill for the better distribution of its duties and its increased moral responsibility;—3rd that a fifth Judge, an Ionian Subject, should be added to the Supreme Council;—4th Permission was promised to the Assembly to introduce a Bill to amend the Municipal Institutions of the Islands;—5th It was conceded that the High Police Power should be limited to the repression of actual revolt, if the Assembly would consent to pass a law which should withdraw Political offences of the Press from the cognizance of a Jury. The proposals were rejected by a majority of one in the Assembly. For some they were too little, and for others they were perhaps too much. This would of itself seem to speak in their favour. I must however make two observations with respect to them. The proposal to abandon the arbitrary powers of the High Police was coupled with a condition of a peculiar nature, and all recognition of political responsibility on the part of the Agents of the Executive Power to the Legislative Assembly was refused. Under such circumstances while we may admire the moderation of those who were inclined to accept such concessions I submit to Your Majesty that no blame is due to those Ionians (and they included many sensible and able men) who shared in or approved their rejection. The effect of this defeat however was not only to distract but to shatter this reforming party which has never since been reconstructed.

Another element of difficulty, the desire or cry for an union with Greece had shortly before entered into the political combinations of the Islands. At first the idea of Reform seemed to make sufficient head against that of union: but since 1852 the whole popular influences and tendencies of the Island so far as they have met the Public eye, have been absorbed in the prosecution of the latter scheme by various kinds of demonstration.

Passing onwards from this cursory sketch of the course of events by which we have arrived at the present political temper and condition of the Islands, I have now to report to Your Majesty that the actual system both political and administrative appears to me to be radically unsatisfactory with reference alike to the interests of the Ionian people and to the honor of the Protecting Power.

It is I think a prevailing opinion among the most trustworthy, dispassionate and enlightened men that the subsisting state of things is practically worse than that which prevailed before the Reforms. Nor is it difficult to perceive the grounds upon which an opinion of this kind may be based.

Before the reforms, responsibility though feeble and inadequate was at least undivided: it rested and was known to rest upon the Lord High Commissioner. It was a state of things which enabled the holder of that office, if intelligent, firm and well disposed toward the Ionian people, to repress the abusive practices of inferior authorities and thereby to impart in a considerable degree content and satisfaction to the people. More recently, and in order

to meet as far as present institutions will permit the spirit of those reforms by an enlarged recognition of Ionian influences, a large share has been allowed to the Senate in the disposal of the public patronage. The intention of this policy cannot be too much commended but I fear that its effect is questionable. The Organ of patronage was formerly single, conspicuous, directly interested in the maintenance of English honor, and free from local or personal interests. But power delegated to the Senate is delegated to an Organ of which without any personal disparagement to its members, it must be avowed that it possessed no one of these recommendations.

It would perhaps be difficult to find in any country so incongruous an assemblage of functions all vested in one and the same Organ, as that which is presented by the Senate of the Ionian Islands.

Under the Constitutional Charter of 1817 the Senate forms the Executive of the Ionian State. It likewise discharges the functions of a Second Legislative Chamber. In certain cases, those namely in which the Supreme Council or Court of Appeal is equally divided the Senate exercises in the decision of the cause an Office strictly judicial. It is also invested with a free initiative power in the Legislative Assembly, while that conceded to the Members of the popular chamber is fettered by various restrictions. During the recess of the Assembly that is to say during about nine tenths of their time on an average it has the power of making laws termed *Atti di Governo* subject only to the approval of the Lord High Commissioner which are in force until the next meeting of the Assembly. It is true that this power is limited by law to cases of absolute necessity but it has in practice been found at times equivalent to a substantial supersession of the Legislative Assembly. Lastly, it is the vote of the Senate and not of the Assembly which determines under the actual prevailing system the Annual Budget or extraordinary expenditure of the State.

The body which is to discharge this extended and ill assorted diversity of functions is composed of a President and five members. They are all appointed by the Lord High Commissioner, the President without any other legal or imperative limit than that he be a noble Ionian subject; the Senators subject to a double condition; first that either all the five or at least three of them be members of the Legislative Assembly and secondly that they be chosen one from each of the four larger Islands, and the remaining one from among the three smaller in rotation. The Senate is Constituted at the beginning of each Parliament, and last for five years, or until a Dissolution. The President remains in Office only for two years and a half, but is capable of reappointment. The other Senators remain during the whole term of Parliament. This complex machinery almost defies analysis.

It is in the first place to be borne in mind that the mode of establishing just relations between the Legislative and the Executive power has ever been the cardinal and decisive point in the formation of a Constitution. In the instance before us the Senate once chosen is entirely and absolutely independent of the Legislative Assembly which has no really available power of calling that body or its members to account or of affecting their tenure of office. But neither is it effectively dependent on the Lord High Commissioner for when it has been chosen, its members cannot be displaced, except by the formidable operation of a Dissolution of Parliament, which only takes effect under an Order of Your Majesty in Council. It might be supposed that if the Senate were thus to be placed beyond all easy and direct controul from any other quarter, at least care would be taken that there should be a power in the person who appoints it to choose the best men and that these men when so chosen should have every facility given them for rendering effective service. But such is not the tendency of the provi-

sions of the Charter: the Lord High Commissioner is not permitted to choose the best men of the State to hold this vast proportion of its political powers, but he must choose them from the Islands severally in a certain order and proportion with respect to their origin and not to their capacity. The Senators therefore are not and cannot be charged individually according to personal fitness with the several Chief Offices of State, and responsible for them though it were but to the body of the Senate, but the Senate is divided into three Departments of two chambers each, and the line between the powers of the whole and of each part appears to be feebly and obscurely drawn. Upon a dissolution they all disappear from Office, and it seems to be the practice not to reappoint them, a practice for which it appears difficult to assign any better reason than the maxim apparently embodied in the Constitution of 1817, namely that public Office is a valuable property which ought to be shared in turn among those to whom it may be convenient to enjoy it.

It may at first sight appear that though the Senate is independent of the Assembly yet a security is taken for harmony between them by the provision that either all the five Senators or at least three of them shall be chosen from the Assembly. It may however, readily be shown that such an idea is without foundation.

In the first place as the Senate consists of six persons, the voting power of the President is precisely double that of the Senators. Two members of the Senate can do with the President everything that four can do without him. Thus the number of votes being seven, two are in no way subject to the condition of being taken from the Assembly. Two more need not be taken from it if the Lord High Commissioner thinks fit. Thus only three, or a minority of the whole number, are required to be chosen from it. Even as to these three it is not required that they be taken from among those who represent the prevailing sentiment of the Assembly. More indeed than being not required, it is not permitted, for the Lord High Commissioner is obliged to choose them locally from particular islands, and the man who is in the highest favour with Zante or Corfu may be the very opposite to the most popular member for Cefalonia or Santa Maura. If the Lord High Commissioner desires to give real effect to the principles of free Government he must choose the Senators with relation to the general sentiment of the Islands collectively: but the Constitution requiring him to choose from each island, appears to point out that the title to his favour is to be found not in the general judgement of all the Islands, but in the separate and perhaps conflicting judgement of each. Accordingly he must either abandon all hope of forming an harmonious and efficient executive or he must excite local discontents, which would find their warrant in the evident meaning of the Constitution.

Even however if all these difficulties could be surmounted the choice of the members of the Senate from the body of the Assembly would still be utterly null as a means of preserving harmony between them. The accord between a Ministry and a Legislative Chamber is not to be maintained by the historical fact that they have been chosen from the list of its members, but by the daily contact of the two bodies, and their reciprocal sympathy and pressure in the conduct of affairs.

A body of Ministers who have belonged to a Legislative Chamber and who are then removed from this contact are not so much chosen out of it as severed from it: and the case is not so much one in which harmony is doubtful as one in which discord is certain. That discord, besides being certain, becomes extreme in a case where the knot of individuals thus gathered together is invested not only with executive functions but with a group of further attributes trenching at every point on the province of the Assembly, and reducing it in every particular of its power to a state of inferiority if not of degradation.

That the members of a Legislature should be chosen in certain quotas from the several divisions of a country is no less just than it is usual; for it is the Office of such a body to collect and to represent in a single focus the influences and powers which are distributed throughout a community, and it in some degree resembles a miniature which should retain the proportions though not the dimensions of its original. But the executive is to bring each of them for the most part within the action of individual influence. To have been elected to the Assembly or to have influenced the Elections has been considered under the present Constitution the best qualification for a Senator. The use of strictly electioneering influence thus becomes the direct road to the highest Executive Offices. There is ample space for its exercise in the Islands.

Under the original Constitution salaries were attached to the Offices of Legislator and Municipal Councillor as means of political influence on behalf of the Protecting Power. They were then but nominally and not really elective. When however a real constituency was created then these Offices amounting I believe to no less than seventy two and leading onwards more or less directly to the Offices of Senator, President and Regent, were set up as so many several premiums on the use of Electioneering influence. It may easily be conceived to what arts both of demagoguism and corruption the disposal of so many paid Offices by popular election formed for action is not to represent a Legislative Assembly as a Legislative Assembly represents the people; it should only be the expression of the prevailing element reduced to that unity which is essential to its force. The Executive of the Islands composed on the opposite basis of local representation is essentially wanting in this principle of unity, and it is not the fault of its individual members or of its head, the President, if we find it deficient in cohesion and in purpose, and incapable of attaining its proper ends.

By this principle of insular division in the Senate, the ground which ought to be held in common by the united body for the general purposes of the State is parcelled out anew into so many separate appropriations for the separate Islands. The position of a Senator with all its attributes is attained according to the Ionian Constitution, not by character and influence in the Septinsular State, nor by services rendered to it at large, but by an activity limited to one of its subdivisions. These subdivisions are of a size such must especially in these small and isolated Societies have given rise. It has followed also that favours received in these Elections were nowhere certain of requital except in cases where influence had been used with such energy and success as to reach not only the benches of the Assembly, but the table of the Senate, from which table, under a Lord High Commissioner liberally disposed, all the general public patronage is dispensed, and all the Municipal patronage is effectually controuled.

It is true that countries enjoying Constitutional Government are not wholly free from the taint of this impurity. But in the Ionian Islands the checks which limit it elsewhere are generally inoperative and as if for the purpose of raising the evil to its maximum, it is subject to incentives which elsewhere are unknown. The number of offices rendered desirable by salary and open to direct election in proportion to the population, I suppose to be without a parallel. The smallness of the Septinsular State of itself reduces the energy of public opinion but the existing arrangements are further calculated to keep the jobs and abuses of each Island wholly exempt from criticism by the public opinion of the others. I must add to that, in part from causes creditable to the people, the Ionian press, so far as I have observed or learned, commonly shows a singular reluctance to expose in individual instances the undue predominance of personal feelings over public interests. Elsewhere the candidate for power

seeks to enter into an honourable partnership bound more or less to a political creed, subject to the action of Public opinion, open in some form to impeachment and having in view a common course of action to be pursued by the whole Executive body with a joint responsibility. Under the constitution of the Islands the object presented to his desires is an office to be held in severalty, apart from all political creed and all common ties without responsibility in any defined or intelligible sense and likely therefore to have for its first, and in some cases perhaps its sole object, the use of public patronage for private ends.

By an arrangement alike strange and unfortunate the manifold temptations thus offered to the use of electioneering arts, whether vulgar or corrupt receive a yet further enhancement.

The electoral qualification is either a University degree the exercise of a liberal profession or the possession of a certain amount of property. It is the last named qualification however on which the franchise is principally based.

Thus the formation of the list or register becomes a matter of the utmost delicacy not only involving in any case more or less of inquisitorial scrutiny into private affairs which is less dreaded in these Islands than in England but likewise affording unbounding scope for injustice through the medium of weakness, prejudice or wilful perversion in the judges who are to decide on claims to the suffrage. These claims are decided by a Commission and the Commission is appointed by the Senate that is in the main by each Senator for his own Island. He is thus enabled to react directly in a vicious circle upon the composition of the electoral body to which in substance he owes his seat. At a recent period (in 1852) a wise law was passed which permitted an appeal to the Tribunals, including the Supreme Court. This law has mitigated the evil but it cannot be said to have been removed while an elector can only rely with confidence on fair dealing in regard to the suffrage by carrying his case in the form of a legal proceeding before a Court of Justice.

In the case of the Island of Cephalonia some years ago the electoral list was reduced by a Commission as I understand from 2563 to 1521 or by about two fifths of its number. The Commission was composed of five unofficial and three official members: one of the latter had a double vote. Four of the five independent members unable to concur in the proceedings of their four Colleagues, and overborne by the double vote, resigned. Four more were appointed and all these protested against the Report which was carried by the casting vote of the Regent now a member of the Senate. Since the law of appeal to the Tribunals has been in existence numerous appeals have been made and I understand that in every case the decisions of the Commission have been reversed. Confining myself to facts and avoiding all praise or blame, I am bound to add that the series of transactions in the matter of these Lists has had the most unhappy effects upon the feeling of the Islands.

There have also been complaints at various times and places of unconstitutional interferences with freedom of election. It is stated and I believe with truth, that in one instance where there was no reasonable fear of disturbance the attendance of the military in great force was required and that the law of a secret suffrage was practically violated by arrangements which made it plain in what way each elector voted. I do not find a disposition to charge these abuses directly on British authority; but they illustrate the kind of influence which it is the tendency of the present system to set in motion, and as the Protecting Power is entitled by law to prevent any such proceedings, it cannot but suffer in credit from their having taken place.

The extension of the elective franchise and the free choice of Candidates have not under circumstances like these produced the benefit which might otherwise have been expected

from them. The Electors have not had the power of choosing representatives who could determine the public expenditure or exercise an united influence on the composition and conduct of the Executive power: they have not therefore been taught by experience to connect their own general as well as particular welfare with the honest and discreet exercise of the trust committed to them. This power when thus detached from a sense of duty is apt to become little more than an engine of corruption and as certainly, whenever it is thus used to multiply is only to multiply the corrupt and personal claims which in a thousand forms are to be set up and to prevail against the public interests. There is indeed a difference of opinion in the Islands upon the question whether the reforms of 1848 and 1849 ought to have been begun, but the conviction is universal that they are in hopeless contradiction with other parts still unaltered of the old system of 1817 if those parts of the public law of the Islands of the Reforms were right and if they are not to be repealed it is impossible in my judgement to recommend or justify the maintenance.

In the actual condition of Affairs in the Islands the following questions may I presume be asked.

1. Can that state of affairs consistently with the honor of the protecting power and the welfare of the protected people be permitted to continue without an effort to amend it.

2. Can it be altered in the sense of withdrawing the liberties conceded in 1848 and 1849 and returning to the prior system or some modification of it.

3. Will it be enough to aim by peculiar care in appointments at correcting or modifying the mischiefs of the present constitution by administrative ability without what is termed organic change.

4. Or should the endeavour be made to regulate the Government of the Islands by means of a popular but balanced Constitution.

In answer to the first of these enquiries I refer to the explanations which have been already given and I humbly submit to Your Majesty that the existing system is so highly objectionable in principle and practice as to be a source of discredit no less than uneasiness to the protecting power and of mischief no less than discontent to the Ionian people. Though the elementary aims of government are in a great degree attained yet those extended benefits of the Civilized state, which may fairly be expected from a system where England is the ruling Agent have not been realized.

The work of legislative improvement is very feebly carried on. The expences of civil government are in relation to the extent of the Country, enormous, and out of the last ten years no less than seven it appears in succession have presented as many successive deficits. The present system of taxation calls loudly for reform. Corruption is very widely spread in the administrative system and as I understand in the practice of elections. While on the one hand it is observed that the present system gives ample scope to the mischievous profession of the demagogue it is complained on the other hand and with equal truth, that the Islands labour under many of the evils of absolute Government. Discontent and dissatisfaction with the existing system of Government are deep rooted and well nigh universal. In many cases these feelings are only hid from view by a prevailing mistrust and dispondency the fruits of former disappointment. And I must add that I have found them entertained the most strongly by the most able and enlightened men of the Ionian State. Together with all this I would humbly urge that we cannot wonder at finding England held responsible for a system of which she has been the principal framer and under which her unlimited title to prohibit and prevent appears in the public eye to associate her with all that is prohibited and prevented.

The second question appears to admit of a yet more easy and equally decisive answer. I assume without a moment's question that the strictest legality is to be observed in all the dealings of England with the Septinsular State. That principle so essential to the well being of Society is too highly valued by Your Majesty and by your subjects to permit the supposition that on account of some shortsighted view of political convenience it could be put aside. At the present time which appears to have entailed upon England the privilege and duty of bearing especial witness to such a principle, her traditional reverence for it is confirmed by fresh evidence of the mischiefs which the breach of it entails. There is no power so far as I am aware, vested in Your Majesty, which would authorise the alteration of the Ionian Charter or of any law of the Ionian State otherwise than in the legally established form of a regular assent by the Legislative Assembly, the Senate and the Lord High Commissioner as Your Majesty's representative to a new law for the purpose. The Treaty of Paris conferred on Your Majesty not the Sovereignty of the Islands but the right together with the charge of protecting them and of exercising the functions which in pursuance of the provisions of the Treaty have been acquired. That instrument empowered Your Majesty through Your Lord High Commissioner to call a Constituent Assembly which should decide upon a Constitution but did not receive any further power of calling a new Assembly of the same Class to alter that Constitution. I apprehend it to be indubitable that by the Treaty as a part of the law of Europe the Islands are independent in every point in which their independence has not been expressly limited. It seems then juridically clear that the Constitution cannot be altered without the assent of the Assembly. Accordingly in the alterations which it has already undergone that assent was sought and had in the usual forms. If then further changes are to be made it will doubtless again be invited: and it is so entirely certain that the Assembly would refuse its assent to any laws which should aim at narrowing the liberties of the Islands, that I should abuse the trust which Your Majesty has committed to me by discussing the question whether it would on the other hand be most expedient, that those liberties should be narrowed.

The third question which has been put may, I submit, be in the main sufficiently answered by reference to what has gone before. I am indeed of opinion that too much care, too much of energy and of patience cannot be exercised in the administration of the difficult and delicate trust which the Crown has undertaken in the Ionian Islands.—I do not doubt that something may be done in this manner for the mitigation of existing evils.—But they have their root in the constitution itself and not ascribable to any fault on the part of any individual far less of the Lord High Commissioner who at this moment represents Your Majesty's Crown and dignity in the Islands. It was found impossible in your Majesty's North American and South Australian Colonies to reconcile popular election with the existence of an irresponsible Executive. This however is the problem presented to Your Majesty in the Ionian Islands with a thousand aggravations, and with no countervailing mitigations of its form.—

It is true that the Lord High Commissioner has power to prevent malversation by a continual exercise of his *veto*, but a state of things which requires from such a personage constant interference with the course of public affairs by way of prohibition is shewn by that very fact to require other and more effectual change.

Again the power of the Lord High Commissioner in this respect is purely negative. He is invested with no prerogatives which will enable him to give the Ionian people the benefits of good government and the investing him with such attributes and I apprehend, by virtually

extinguishing the independent rights of the Ionian State, exceed the powers vested in Your Majesty as the Protecting Sovereign.

When on the one side the Lord High Commissioner is armed with the power of appointment and of a general veto, and on the other hand the Senate has at its command the passive forces of a five years tenure, and of inert resistance, besides being sheltered as to its action by the obscurity of minute details the result cannot be doubtful. In the midst of general dissatisfaction the Lord High Commissioner will not readily quarrel with the body which he cannot except by a rare and disproportionate effort dismiss; which if he dismisses it he knows that he cannot satisfactorily replace, on which he relies for the ordinary transaction of business with which he is in daily contact, and which almost alone does not join in swelling the prevailing sentiment and cry of dissatisfaction.

But it seems inevitably to follow that his resistance to maladministration in detail can only be effected under circumstances so fortunate that they can seldom arise and never become permanent. The serious manifestation of Your Majesty's displeasure on the detection of abuse when it should fortunately be discovered might indeed partially soothe and allay discontent but would hardly appear to amount to a full discharge of the duties of the protection unless in a case when every other more effective remedy had already been offered and refused.

I proceed then to the remaining inquiry whether under the actual circumstances of the time it would be well to extend instead of limiting the sphere of popular liberties so that they shall be complete and self-adjusting instead of being partial fragmentary and unbalanced.

Much misapprehension appears to prevail in England respecting the free institutions which are supposed to have been accorded to the Ionian Islands. The account I have already given of the constitution of the Senate may suffice to dispel this misapprehension but it may not be amiss to throw more additional light on the question by collecting a few of the facts. Since the epoch of the reforms of Lord Seaton the press has been free from all restraints operating previous to publication but the Editors of Newspapers which had given offence by the violence of their language have in various, though happily not recent instances, without any legal process and by the simple will of the Lord High Commissioner, been banished to and detained in lonely and almost desolate islands. The Legislative Assembly not only has, as we have seen, no power to act on the composition of the Executive or to put an end to its tenure of Office but it has no effectual means of calling its members to account for political delinquency. During the greater (which was also earlier) part of the period that has elapsed since the reforms, the government has been carried on not by the usual machinery but by those *Atti di Governo*, which were evidently intended only to be employed as rare and extraordinary expedients in circumstances of emergency and not as means of superseding the established functions of the House of Assembly.—Lastly in each successive occasion the whole of that portion of the public expenditure which is annually reconsidered has been fixed by the votes not of the Assembly but of the Senate. The recital of these few particulars may serve to show that notwithstanding the free press, the electoral franchise and the secret suffrage, free institutions properly so called do not at this moment exist in the Ionian Islands.

I proceed to consider briefly two objections which may probably suggest themselves against the concession of institutions really free to the Ionian Islands: and then to explain in what form the essential conditions of those institutions might, as it would appear, with least hazard be conceded.—

The objections are First—That the Ionian people are not fit for free institutions, and Secondly that if offered they would not be accepted.

As respects the first it is obvious to observe that fitness is no where to be found perfect, but exists only amidst various grades of imperfection and that there are special reasons why the Ionians should not be judged in this respect by a standard to which even the most apt and experienced people can scarcely reach. Again that aptitude can never be found in a high degree without the aid of habit, the experience by which habit is formed can only be had by paying for it, and thus in the constitutional life of a people the errors of to day are the safeguards of tomorrow.

The treaty of Paris declares the Seven Islands to be a free as well as an Independent state subject only to the restraint of British Protection which included a particular solicitude on the part of the protecting power for their internal affairs. It is difficult to assign to this language any one signification so clear and indubitable as to preclude all others, but it would perhaps be the judgement of an impartial observer that at any rate among the various admissible constructions the Constitution of 1817 adopted that which was the least favourable to liberty and the least in harmony with the political traditions of England, or with her well earned Character for directness and fair dealing. And the reforms of 1849 if they broke up the self consistency of the old construction yet did not effect a transition to a new one.

While the inferences to be drawn from the Treaty of Paris are favourable rather than otherwise to free institutions the changes which have taken place since its date in the views and policy of England with regard to transmarine dependencies tend powerfully in the same direction. In no one of Your Majesty's Colonies did there exist previously to the last twelve or fifteen years any form of what is termed Responsible Government. But within that period it has been extended generally to the North American and Australian Colonies as well as to the Cape of Good Hope with great advantage and satisfaction on all sides and it may now be said to form the fixed rule of the policy of the British Empire in all those of Your Majesty's possessions which are not stamped with an exceptional character either as purely military possessions, or as being too critically divided between dominant and subject races. In the absence of evidence to the contrary presumptions of no inconsiderable weight arise out of the general tenour of British policy, in favour of the extension of similar advantages to the Ionian Islands.

Nor does any such counter evidence exist. It cannot be said with truth that free institutions have failed in the Septinsular State any more than, or indeed nearly so much as, it could have been said thirty years ago that they had failed in Canada. In neither case had they been in operation under the only conditions which in the present age could afford a hope of their success. But Canada at that period was much nearer to political freedom than the Ionian Islands now are and if the concessions previously made to her were then only found available to inflame discontent and to stimulate further demands, we cannot wonder that in the Islands political arrangements themselves rife with contradiction and disorder should have failed to result in the establishment of harmony.

It has indeed now become a common idea in England that the care of her inhabitants has peculiar or even exclusive aptitude for popular institutions. Various nations of Europe, however, not of that race, have shown themselves to be ready and effective pupils in the school of freedom and no one instance can probably be quoted where an European Country endowed with Representative Institutions derives more evil than good from their operation. Among the Countries so endowed it is important to bear in mind that one is the Kingdom of Greece, where the principles and habits of freedom are not yet fully developed but where its machinery is in use. The proximity of this Kingdom to the Ionian Isles, with its many other points of resemblance, invests the example with considerable weight. And though

encouraged by Colonial experience, public opinion in England is now thus liberal to the British race, it must be remembered that before the change of policy was adopted under circumstances of urgency rather than unbiassed choice, there were very many unfavourable auguries as to the result.

It is difficult in the case of the Ionian people to distinguish between the defects which may be due to adventitious circumstances and those which have their roots in the groundwork of character. To be vain to be mutable in purpose to be liable to excitement to want the firm tone of truthfulness and directness which only the vigour and health of freedom can confer to substitute private for public interests as the object of pursuit these are defects some of which may be more prominent among the Ionian people than in the United Kingdom, and some of which I must add the constitution of 1817 has contributed to extend and confirm. But I am not able to perceive that the Ionians have any such share of the infirmities of our common nature as to amount to an absolute disqualification for the discharge of the duties of which political freedom must entail. On the other hand, when their character is examined from other points of view, it may in no small degree supply just grounds of hope. I do not rely simply or mainly on their remarkable powers of thought and expression: because I am aware that without the balance weight of sober judgment and the support of vigorous and resolute will, these qualities do not much avail towards the happiness of a community. But Your Majesty may safely rest assured that the Ionians if they have their defects have also their virtues. There are a people gifted with great delicacy of feeling, eminently alive to kindly treatment, and well disposed to trust until they have been deceived. Under favourable circumstances the influence of England working through the medium of their free will might be almost unbounded. Even amidst the present complications I believe that it would be found very great, when exercised in a spirit kindly and unselfish with the just respect to their feelings which would soothe irritation and with a consistency which would render it intelligible. From whatever cause this consistency, so essential to the discharge of the duties of the Protection, has not been characteristic of the British Policy in the Islands as a whole.

I do not venture to predict with confidence, especially at a time when the case has been so greatly prejudiced by antecedent events that the working of free institutions would in its earlier stages be smooth and satisfactory. Rare indeed are the instances where this can be broadly affirmed. But I see no reason to despair first of a balance of advantage over evil and secondly of a gradual growth and progress towards decidedly stability and efficiency. And it is material to observe that if under circumstances such as I have described the opening prospects can not be the brightest, on the other hand the sphere within which incidental mischiefs could operate is strictly circumscribed by the rights and duties of the protecting power, so that any risks attending the trial are limited to a more than ordinarily narrow range.

Under any construction, however favourable to popular rights, that can be given to the Treaty of Paris, England must remain responsible in the eyes of Europe for the order and security of the Islands. In addition therefore to the burden of military protection and to the conduct of all foreign relations on behalf of the Ionian state, she can never consent to any laws which would compromise the maintenance of order, or the security of individual lives and properties even supposing which I see no reason to apprehend, that the representatives of the Ionian people would be likely to pass Bills of a nature to place them in jeopardy. From past experience it seems reasonable to hope that their general spirit in matters of administrative arrangement would in the whole be liberal and forbearing. There is a further limitation which, so long as England retains a veto upon the passing of all laws in the Ionian State, will, I take it for granted, be rigorously maintained. Your Majesty's assent will without

question always be withheld from any measure which may impair the sanctity of contracts or may be in any manner inconsistent with good faith. Presuming then that a discretion to such an extent as I have described is to remain with the Protecting Power, I submit to Your Majesty that no fatal or serious danger can arise to the interests of the Ionian people from the exercise of popular rights in constitutional forms within the limits thus traced and from the partial and casual errors by which, especially in its first stages, the exercise of such rights may possibly be marred.

The three heads under which a dangerous abuse of power might possibly be apprehended are those of democratic sentiment, of class interests, and of the spirit of Hellenic nationality. As respects the first I may observe that it does not appear to me that any violent democratic tendencies at present prevail in the islands, although I do not venture to predict what form the popular dissatisfaction may take in future years, should the present system of Government be continued. As regards the second, it is probably true that the relations of proprietor and peasant, as well as those of creditor and debtor, are not in a satisfactory condition. But if it be the tendency of the present constitution to thrust aside the more healthful class of social influences in favour of demagoguism and corruption, it is plain that any dangers arising from this source are likely to be aggravated rather than avoided by the postponement of change. But I may add generally that I see no tendency in the mass of the people or in their leaders to the practical adoption of really dangerous extremes. Even were they more inclined than I suppose to push their opinions to such a point, I believe that their consciousness of weakness would still prove an amply sufficient curb. To the third subject, that of the Hellenizing spirit, I shall presently refer.

The main propositions which appear to me to bear conclusively on this part of the case may be summed up as follows:

The present state of Ionian Institutions and administration, considered as to principle, if it is to be justified by the Treaty of Paris, must rest upon a construction of that Treaty which some might represent as stinted and illiberal, and which is certainly not conformable to the spirit in which the British Nation commonly views questions of popular right, and often recommends or expects that others should also view them.

The same matter, considered as to practice is to be weighed in connection with the acknowledged predominance of British influence and authority for so many years in the Islands. When thus viewed the picture is unfavourable to the character and reputation of England. She has now practically lost much of the power which she formerly possessed to prevent malversation; but until she has allowed some other power to be organized and put in use for the purpose, she is naturally held responsible for the prevailing corruption and paralysis.

By the reforms of Lord Seaton, certain first steps were effected in a process which, if undertaken at all, should have been complete. All the experience of the Colonial system appeared to teach us that when representation essentially popular has been conceded the representative body ought to exercise a strong and ultimately even a dominant influence over the composition of the Executive. This principle would seem at first sight applicable to the Ionian State, with these important but limited reservations which the nature of the Protection requires. But instead of this, after the reforms of Lord Seaton, it was made an object of desire to draw the Senate closer to the Lord High Commissioner by way of counterpoise to the Assembly. The result has been as was to be expected discord between the several powers of government, paralysis in its general action and a series of penal prorogations or dissol-

utions for the greater part of the time since 1849 which could only be justifiable or wise under the pressure of an absolute necessity.

While the accomplishment of the work now but half achieved is recommended by these positive considerations, I have ventured to observe on the other hand that the possible inconveniences and dangers of the case would from its very nature be limited within certain and narrow bounds.

It is certainly true that political party when well defined is in many ways a powerful auxiliary to constitutional government and that it is not well defined in the Ionian Islands. But the countries are few in which political parties are clear and pronounced: and it seems possible that the defects of the Ionian Islands in this respect are such as might either be removed by the course of events, or might, if not removed be borne, and need cause no total or general loss of the benefits of freedom.

I now proceed to explain in what form it appears to me desirable to attempt the extension of popular liberties in the Islands.

The original scheme of the Treaty of Paris points to the formation of an Ionian Constitution by a sort of Constituent Assembly for the Ionian States and to ratification as the part falling to the share of the Protecting Power.

The reforms of 1848-9 were proposed to the ordinary Legislative bodies and carried by their assent in the ordinary form.

A short time ago it might have appeared unreasonable to expect that dissatisfaction with the existing institutions would produce a general readiness to concur with the protecting Power in a zealous endeavour for constitutional amendments but the encouragement, alike unexpected and excessive, which has since been afforded by special circumstances to what may be called the rival specific or union with Greece, has much altered the state of affairs, and has so far warped the popular mind as to render it clear that such amendments if accepted at all, will at best be accepted passively that it will be left to England to propose them on her own responsibility and that the development of local freedom, upon proof that the Union cannot be had, will be met with no more than acquiescence.

In the former of the two cases, the arrangement to be made might have assumed the form of a new contract to replace that of 1817. It might then have been desirable to enter upon a complete review of the Charter and of all laws bearing upon the subject of it, and at once to limit the agency of England to matters connected with the protection, and to the reservation of her supremacy in the last resort, but to leave to the Ionian people free from the decisive intervention of the Protecting Power, the management of their own properly internal affairs.

But even if the frank cooperation of the two powers from the first would have warranted such extensive proposals, I cannot recommend that the same method of proceeding should be so much as entertained, when the Protecting Power has to act on her own responsibility alone. As she must act unaided from her own position, so she will I apprehend do wisely in making the most of the means which it affords her for modifying and improving it, and in eschewing any admissions which might, in the event of the present or permanent failure of her plans, weaken her title, founded on usage and possession, to keep in her own hands the actual powers of Government.

The following is an outline of the Constitutional changes which I recommend to be proposed by Your Majesty through the Lord High Commissioner to the Senate and Assembly.

1. To sever the legislative from the executive functions of the Senate assigning the latter to a Ministry.

2. To provide by law for the legal or penal responsibility of the Members of the Ministry and of Public functionaries.

3. Subject to a permanent provision such as is now made for the Military contribution and for the Lord High Commissioner's Civil List to assign to the Assembly a full control over the taxation and expenditure of the Country reserving only to the other branches of the Legislative body their right to veto.

4. By means of this control over the finance and other-wise if possible and requisite to provide for the due influence of the Legislature over the composition of the Executive body according to the spirit of popular institutions.

5. That any acts of Government done by the Lord High Commissioner except in matters relating to the purposes of the Protection be countersigned by the proper Executive officer.

6. To abolish the arbitrary and extralegal powers of the High Police.

These may be regarded as the main concessions to be made to the popular principles of Government. Of the first I have already treated. With regard to the second, it is true that the Constitution already contains provisions of this kind; but although they are real as regards the power of the Lord High Commissioner, yet as apart from his will, and as guarantees on the part of the people, they are so clogged with conditions as to be ineffective and in some cases even ludicrous. With respect to the third of these heads I may observe that it wont perhaps be found practicable to reduce the second of the two charges on the Ionian Revenues of which it is necessary to secure the command to the Protecting power.

With respect to the fifth I beg to refer to the correspondence and proposals of 1852 when the Lord High Commissioner of that day announced, with the approval of Your Majesty's Government, his readiness to abandon the powers of High Police in consideration of restrictive changes in the Laws of the Press, which he at the same time demanded. Without at present entering on the subject of those laws, I am convinced that no such equivalent ought to be asked for the surrender of a power wholly alien to the genius of British institutions and in no degree rendered necessary by the manners and dispositions of the Ionian people.

Such being the enlargements of popular rights and privileges that I have humbly to recommend I now proceed to those other provisions which seem essential to the due balance and well working of the Ionian Constitution, I have to submit to Your Majesty that they should be presented as vital portions of the plan, upon the rejection of which, or if any among them the entire proposal might fall to the ground.

These provisions are as follows.

1. That a second Legislative Chamber shall be constituted, to exercise the legislative functions of the Senate, but without any privileged initiative.

2. That the initiation of money votes, which can take place only in the Assembly, be reserved to the Executive body.

3. That the allowances of money made to the members of the Legislative Chambers be calculated upon the principle of simply reimbursing, by a daily allowance founded upon a general estimate, the addition to individual expenditure required by residence in Corfu and that the daily allowance be limited to a moderate maximum duration of the Session.

4. That the Municipal Councillorships of the Islands be from henceforward unpaid Offices,

Upon these proposals I have to subjoin a few remarks.

A Second Legislative Chamber is recommended for the Ionian Islands upon peculiar as well as upon general grounds. It exists already under the anomalous form of the Senate. It might possibly afford suitable and convenient means for the trial of public officers accused of delinquency, a subject in regard to which the present provisions of the Constitutional Chart appear to me to be most delusive. In Islands which have still an Aristocracy of birth and property, a second chamber might tend to bring that Aristocracy again into more healthy relations with other classes, as well as into fuller contact with public affairs. It would also afford an unexceptionable means of maintaining the representation of the Islands as *integers* which it would not be desirable wholly to dispense with.

As to the mode of appointment for this chamber I humbly submit that a discretion might wisely be left to the Lord High Commissioner to be used as he might find it suitable in the general prosecution of the subject. A chamber wholly elected might be so strong as to stop entirely the action of the Legislature. A chamber wholly nominated might be too weak to obtain a fair share of power in the formation of the laws. I am also of opinion that the present mistrustful state of the public feeling a proposal of this kind, having for its direct effect an increase of those executive powers which the people have never yet been accustomed to see exercised under popular influence or control, would be received with extreme jealousy and might mar the prospects of the whole plan of improvement. Upon the whole it might be best to combine the two elements of Election and nomination, but at the same time to give some numerical preponderance to the former principle. The number, twelve, would probably be sufficient for the whole Chamber. Seven of these might be elected one from each Island for a period not less than two Parliaments, and either form a different and more limited constituency or else under a high qualification of property or education for the candidates themselves. Five might be nominated by the Head of the Executive for a like period or for life, from among persons qualified by public service or otherwise in such manner as might be thought best. This chamber, and likewise the other, might elect its own President, subject if it be thought necessary to the consent of the protecting power.

On the second head I make no comment except that it is proposed on grounds of general prudence and expediency and not because there is especial reason to expect abuse of this kind from an Ionian rather than from any other assembly.

As to the third, just objection may certainly be taken to the present allowances to Legislators moderate as in our eyes they may appear. I believe that a member of the Chamber of Deputies in Greece receives in consideration of attendance for six months out of each twelve at Athens the sum of about seventy pounds a year or for two years requiring a residence of twelve months one hundred and forty pounds whereas for an attendance of only three months at Corfu, once in two years a member of the Assembly repairing thither receives two hundred and seventy pounds. In short the present arrangements make the seats in the Assembly that which they ought not to be, objects of desire on pecuniary grounds and thereby encourage the prosecution of vulgar acts in order to obtain them. It is possible that difficulty might be experienced in obtaining this salutary alternation of the law and that the Lord High Commissioner might be empowered in case of need to relax the demand although he should if possible enforce it.

In the case of the Municipal Councillors such allowances are altogether without warrant, and the existence of these thirty paid offices, conferred by popular election is a great and glaring public evil. They entail no expense and convey no title to salary. It is in connection with this class of elections that the greatest amount of corruption appears to prevail. The

salary is a direct premium upon abuses committed to obtain the seat or to reward those by whose aid it has been required: extreme scandal in many cases attends the proceedings of Municipal Councils as they are now constituted; but if the corrupt inducement were removed it is probable that the Offices would lose all favour in the eyes of the more objectionable class of Candidates, and that when their functions came to be exercised by Citizens of greater weight and character than is now frequently the case, the instrument of Municipal Government would be found far more efficient in the transaction of local affairs and in checking any undue tendency to the centralization of power.

There are other political provisions of which it might be well to recommend the consideration. Such for instance would be the diminution of the number of subdivisions in the State by attaching for executive and judicial purposes Paxo to Corfu and Ithaca to Cefalonia, a measure from which a material economy in the public expenditure would result. Such, again would be the sub-division of the Islands into Districts for the election of representatives in the Assembly with a view to give the means of separate expression to the feelings and interests of the Classes belonging to Town and Country respectively. But I forbear from the discussion of these topics, and I also postpone for the present the recommendations which it will be my duty to submit to Your Majesty upon many subjects of public interest less directly connected with the political constitution of the Islands. Without them indeed any views even of that central question must remain somewhat incomplete: but I am induced to submit this Report to Your Majesty and to reserve various important particulars for a subsequent occasion, on account of the conviction I entertain that delay in the attempt to effect a satisfactory change in the Constitution would go far to destroy the yet remaining chance of success.

It has thus far appeared that an improvement of the actual constitution, and an extension of popular liberties are advisable. It has appeared also evident that these changes, if they are to be effected at all should be effected by means of the organs which the constitution provides and with the strictest adherence both to the letter and the spirit of legality. In other words they should be proposed to the Legislative Assembly of the Seven Islands. But the question will naturally suggest itself whether that Assembly so far as its probable temper can be made a matter of previous estimate is likely to address itself to the task of reforming the errors and supplying the defects of the Constitution or whether it will not rather enter upon the more popular and inflaming topic of an Union between the Seven islands and the Kingdom of Greece.

It is within the Knowledge of Your Majesty that on many previous occasions the Assembly has manifested a paramount desire of this description: that its deliberations have been repeatedly cut short by prorogation or by dissolution to prevent the accomplishment of its end: that in the month of June 1857, without any regular vote its members gave an eager assent by acclamation to the sentiments of one among them, who in the strongest terms proclaimed the principle of this union: and that the tendency to such proceedings has been provoked by a variety of causes at different periods. On the last named occasion they were powerfully stimulated by the circulation of a report that a petition was in course of signature for the conversion of Corfu into a British Colony. It is likewise within Your Majesty's Knowledge that in consequence of a general expectation of similar manifestations at the next meeting of the Assembly the Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands did within the present year make such recommendations as appeared to him suitable to the anticipated case. Finally it is my duty to report to Your Majesty that within the last few weeks an unusually powerful stimulus has been applied to the desire for Union with Greece in those who really

feel it and to the disposition to profess such a desire in those who may profess it chiefly with a view to collateral or ulterior purposes. This unfortunate incentive appears to have been furnished by the guilty publication in England of a despatch of the Lord High Commissioner in which was recommended the cession of five of the Islands to the Kingdom of Greece. Important in itself the matter of this despatch derived an enhanced importance from the fact that it appeared just after Your Majesty had been graciously pleased to appoint a Commissioner Extraordinary to examine into the state of the Ionian Islands. When two such events were thus connected in time, a people even of half the quickness of the Ionians, and with ten times their political experience could hardly do otherwise than read in the purport of the Despatch the object of the Mission.

When the Known and usual Organ of the British Government has at length been found to have recommended for adoption great part of the plan, the very mention of which had previously been always visited with severe displeasure it would be too much to expect anything less than that the Assembly when it meets should resume the attempt to recall a declaration whether in the form of petition to the Crown or in some other form less regular and legal in favour of the Union of the Islands with Greece.

Some weeks ago the case was different whatever the evils of the system of administration, a tone of mildness had recently been felt, und recognized by the Ionian public in so much of it at least as they were disposed to associate particularly with the British Crown, and I am led to believe it likely that in the absence of any peculiar cause for excitement on the subject of Union with Greece an immediate and thankful attention would have been accorded by the Assembly to proposals conceived in the spirit of constitutional freedom and offered in the name of Your Majesty. But at present the case is widely different: and it would not be prudent to do otherwise than assume that the Assembly will choose the Union for its first topic of discussion.

The question then arises in what way the indications of such a disposition should be dealt with. And here I would submit to Your Majesty that there has already been an important deviation under the present Lord High Commissioner from the line marked out by previous proceedings, in the omission to notice by prorogation or otherwise the demonstration of the 20th of June eighteen hundred and fifty seven.

I must not withhold from Your Majesty the expression of my humble conviction that it is an error in policy to treat as if it were a crime the expression of a desire for union with Greece whether by individuals or by bodies in authority provided it be legal in form, respectful in terms, and in no way associated with a tendency to public disorder.

The Constitutional Charter accords to the subjects of the Ionian State the right to express their desires by humble petition to Your Majesty; and even if it were otherwise any general discountenance to the exercise of a right found so precious in England would be little accordant with Your Majesty's method of Government.

It may be said that to petition for the removal of the Protection is a blow at a fundamental principle placed beyond all controversy and question by European Law.

We may assume in the case of countries which are both *de jure* and *de facto* absolutely independent, that there are certain laws fundamental at least in such a sense that it would be unwise to permit them to be brought into question by petition at the will of individuals or bodies. To these laws the subject may be held in a certain sense to have yielded his assent.

But the case of the Ionian Islands is different. Their lot has been decided for them by the powers of Europe in a manner independent of their will and by an arrangement anomalous and exceptional in its form. The obedience of the Ionians to law so laid down may

justly be claimed and if necessary enforced upon grounds of a broad and general character, but here their duty appears to find its limit.

They are certainly bound by no consent direct or tacit to the treaty of 1815 and the plan of British Protection, however it may have been wise and beneficial under the very peculiar circumstances of the Islands, yet from the very fact of its singular and exceptional nature cannot be assumed to be in such sense final as to warrant the peremptory shutting out of a contrary opinion on the part of those who are free in honour to give that opinion and who have nothing else that they can contribute towards the conduct of their country's destinies in what they may consider as the most vital point.

If indeed it could be said with truth that there was public danger in the expression of such a sentiment as the desire for union with Greece, the existence of that danger would be a good reason for enforcing silence. But to assert its existence would, as it appears to me, be extravagant. It is needless that I should speak of the case with which the forces of Your Majesty would at once repress any proceedings connected with the question of union which would encourage the machinations of an enemy or compromise the peace of the Islands; for I am convinced that the people even assuming the sentiment to be strong and universal in favor of the Union, have at this critical time no thought and no desire of using force or of disturbing tranquillity in order to obtain their end.

Again it is difficult to see on what grounds when individuals and the press are permitted to express the desire for union with Greece, the Assembly can be prevented from doing so and that too by a measure so severe as prorogation or dissolution. It may indeed be stated that constant expressions of this kind by the assembly would be indecorous and inconvenient. The answer appears to be that the attempt to repress by strong measures everything that is inconvenient is often found productive of inconveniences greater than those which it aims at curing. But further we do not know that the Assembly would trespass on the limits of propriety and respect. I am bound to state to Your Majesty that the Ionian People of all classes without distinction unless under very high excitement, appear to me to have an unusually sensitive regard for considerations of this class. I may add that the prohibition to utter their wish especially when conveyed in a form that may seem summary and even harsh is to them as unintelligible as it is painful. The members of the Assembly have in my hearing done more than claim it as their right and duty not to effect the union with Greece, not to demand an European Congress on the subject not to influence authoritatively Your Majesty's judgement and policy, but simply to make known that desire of the people which they think to be an element in the case and of which accordingly they are solicitous that Your Majesty should be in possession. I submit this statement to Your Majesty as the result of pretty full communications with nearly all the members of the Assembly as well as with other individuals of weight in considerable numbers. These members have indeed as I believe fallen into a double error. I believe that they overstate the sentiment of their countrymen when they proclaim this eager desire for immediate union. I believe they misjudge Ionian interests in the opinion that they would be promoted by the adoption of the measure. But neither of these errors involves a crime. I must humbly add that in construing these errors we may ourselves fall into other errors not less grave. And it is a grave error, so far as my knowledge goes, to ascribe this desire for union with Greece either to any aversion towards Your Majesty and towards England, or to foreign intrigue. In no portion of the Islands that I have visited, in no class or body whatever of their inhabitants have I perceived any sign that would authorise me to assert the existence of the one or the other. But I have found everywhere signs in abundance that Your Majesty is cordially venerated, and that the British

Nation is still viewed with admiration and regard, notwithstanding a prevailing sentiment that it has not on the whole been favourably represented by its protection of the Ionian Islands.

With regard to the desire in the Islands for union with Greece it appears to be made up of the following elements. There is first the abstract sentiment of nationality.

This is general nay it is universal. There is I believe hardly anyone in the Islands, especially it would be difficult to find anyone of character, education and station, who does not say that he feels himself a Greek, and that he longs for the day when he may be united in one political Society with the members of his race. But then many, tempering their sentiment with good sense, are aware not only that this consummation is rendered impossible by the opposing authority of England, but likewise that Eastern Europe has not yet reached the state, in which alone such a reunion ought to be an object of an immediate and practical desire. There are doubtless also persons of enthusiastic temper, who overleap these bounds of prudence and give the reins to their sympathies without duly calling in aid their powers of observation and judgement. And lastly there are here as elsewhere the traders upon popular emotion, of whom some perhaps desire the union, and some desire it not, but all use it, with the facilities afforded by the present system, as a means of advancement through popular fame to salary, patronage or both. I have to add that nothing can better serve the objects of these men than the policy which has repeatedly punished the Assembly for indicating a desire to entertain the question. For by this course not only is the national grievance raised to the highest point but the people are permitted and encouraged to believe that there would be some great efficacy for the attainment of its end in that declaration or petition of the Assembly which England shews herself so solicitous to prevent.

It would however be an error to suppose that the cry for union with Greece means only what it seems to mean. As the demand most in favour with the people, this cry naturally becomes the form in which all dissatisfaction with the Government finds vent. Men are apt to express their grievances not in the form which most accurately and logically describes them but in that form which best satisfies the feeling they have engendered, and it is not to be doubted that decided improvements in the Government would of themselves greatly diminish the available forces and enthusiasm of the Unionists. But to return from this digression. Erroneous political opinions are often entitled to respect and it does not appear to me that the error of which I now treat is one which should be wholly excluded from the benefit of that indulgent view. Here are five strong ties which are at once observable as binding the Islands in feeling partly to the Kingdom of Greece, but for the most part yet more conspicuously to the Greek race at large; they are blood, religion, language, vicinity and predominating intercourse. Indeed the case is even stronger than this. When it is asked what tie binds together such islands as Paxo and Zante or as Cerigo and Corfu, what unites these seven small spots, severed by distance so wide in proportion to their size into a single state and gives them a common name, and a sentiment of unity? The answer can be but one, it is this very Hellenic feeling. They are only Ionians because they are Greeks: the tie of the state subsists only in virtue of those other ties, which some would so severely proscribe. Thus reasonable, under an impartial view is the abstract sentiment which I have described as entertained by the most moderate, judicious and intelligent Ionians. And the exaggeration of such a sentiment which carries it beyond the bounds of prudence, and takes no account of practicability is not with justice to be treated as a guilty error until it indicates a tendency towards illegality, but in the absence of any such tendency may be opposed by reason rather than by reproach and by the firm maintenance of the law rather than by violence done

to the freedom of opinion. I am also persuaded that a tolerant feeling towards their customs, a regard for their susceptibilities and an indication of desire to touch their affections will be found instruments of no mean power in the government of this people.

The case I have supposed throughout is that of a petition from the Assembly declaring in terms of due respect that the Ionian people desire a union with the Kingdom of Greece. Should that body attempt any resolution or mode declaratory of rights to that effect without reference to the will of superior authority it would I apprehend more of less abuse its powers and it would be a matter for consideration in the event of its persistence in such a course how it should be met. Even here however I should hesitate to recommend the virtual suspension of free Government at once by penal prorogation as a remedy much worse than the disease. Even where the gross error of an unseemly declaration once committed it does not follow that it would occur a second time, and the case would not of necessity be so urgent as to require the adoption of summary or predetermined measures. But should the Assembly proceed further still which I do not apprehend, an attempt to bring about what is illegal, the mode of dealing with it would not be a matter of much difficulty. If however it confines itself to a proper Petition, and should Your Majesty direct that Petition to be promptly answered in terms which without rebuking the Assembly should undeceive the Country by an explicit declaration coming direct from the highest Authority to the regularly elected Organ of the Ionian People, I do not despair of seeing a practical stop put to the serious mischiefs of the present agitation, and the Assembly after the delivery of its prayer disposed to set about the business of the Country, perhaps without any trace of factions or obtrusive temper or extravagant opinions.

Authority would be in the main the basis of such a reply. But the Ionians are acute and observant, and many of them know that there are the strongest reasons against the accomplishment of their wish at the present epoch. The question of this Union is indeed viewed with very mixed feelings, even in Greece itself where the desire of territory and power is chequered with doubts as to the political temper of the Ionians and as to the degree in which with the independence of their insular position they would prove tractable subjects to so small and poor a Kingdom destitute of an effective Navy and ill able to bear the expense of such an establishment. On the other hand, many whose minds play with the question of Union while it is remote have it is evident, never considered closely the changes both of general law and finance to which the measure would at once render them liable. To touch only for a moment on the latter subject in Greece direct taxes prevail, while in the Islands they are absolutely unknown: and the attempt to equalize the two systems between the infant Kingdom and the small and disjointed Island State would require efforts to which probably neither are adequate. The experience of the United Kingdom has shown that unions of this Kind between countries where differences of law and different relations of class have prevailed are achievements which it requires the greatest effort of powerful and highly organized societies to effect. In short it is far from improbable that if Europe and England gave permission for the union with Greece today, tomorrow the parties themselves would find good reasons even in their own internal condition respectively why it should not take effect.

But the considerations connected with that internal condition must of necessity be subordinate to the dictates of other and larger interests. And I am persuaded that the Ionians of station and intelligence though they may not be strong enough to resist the general warmth, especially when it has an ally in their own hearts, yet well know that there many and conclusive reasons connected with the present state of Eastern Europe, which would render it an act of criminal folly on the part of England were she to give the slightest encouragement to

so crude a project. What would be the position of Corfu with its great strategical importance in the hands of a power so unable as Greece must be to defend it, what would be the condition of the Ottoman dominion in Albania with Corfu an appendage to Greece; what obedience the inhabitants of Candia, Thessaly, Macedonia, the Islands, could as Greeks be expected to pay to Turkish Sovereignty after the Ionians of the Seven Islands had as Greeks been relieved of British Protection, all these questions and others when even so slightly touched are, I believe, felt and appreciated in the Islands and serve to show the most intelligent of their inhabitants that the union of the Seven Islands with the Kingdom of Greece is in truth and fact a conventional form of words under which is hidden a far larger meaning: that this small question is the marrow corner of a very great question, one no less in all likelihood than the reconstruction of all political Society in South Western Europe. And if it be allowable to look so far into the future as to suppose possible the arrival of a day when the union of the scattered members of the Greek family may be accomplished with benefit to themselves and to Europe, it seems obvious that the best and safest means both of meeting that day when it comes and accelerating its tranquil arrival will be to have trained some at least of the several portions of that race in the peaceable and steady exercise of local liberty and in the enjoyment of the happiness for which we may hope as its result.

Such liberty on a basis that would render it the ally of order would alike prepare for the future and turn the present to account.

Even at this very late period and when the whole case has been so seriously compromised I believe that the force of these and other considerations would come powerfully in aid of a succinct and solemn declaration to the Assembly proceeding directly from Your Majesty on the project of an union of the Seven Islands to Greece.

Upon these grounds I humbly and dutifully submit to Your Majesty that constitutional changes shall be proposed to the Ionian State of the nature which has been above described, that authority be given to the Lord High Commissioner to summon the Assembly expressly if he shall think fit for that purpose.

That Your Majesty's gracious recommendations be made known to them by message

That if a petition dutifully expressed respecting union be interposed a prompt answer in the negative be dispatched.

And that opportunity be given to the Assembly to address itself thereafter if it shall so think fit to the consideration of the said recommendations.

But if the Assembly shall unhappily be seduced into a temper of political fanaticism and shall under the plea of desiring Union with Greece, refuse to entertain propositions which aim at affecting great and necessary improvements in the condition of the Islands, it may then, I submit, be for Your Majesty to consider whether the Ionian people shall have an opportunity given them by a Dissolution of repairing the error of its temporary representatives.

In any case they will then better learn that England is not the friend of abuses, not the enemy of freedom, and Your Majesty's Government will cease to be responsible in the eyes of Europe for the political and administrative evils the prevalence whereof in the Seven Islands is so much lamented.

I tender these recommendations to Your Majesty as the best means at my command of dealing with the most important and critical part of the serious duty which Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to place in my hands. I do not presume to offer them as being certain of a favorable, still less of an immediately favorable issue, or as containing in themselves, even if they attain the utmost success, a complete solution of the difficulties which beset

the relation between England and the Islands as long as that relation shall subsist its difficulties must subsist also. They lie in the heart of the arrangement devised by the Powers of Europe, and accepted by England under the Treaty of 1815. But the provisions now proposed seem to me to be such as the reason of the case suggests as the honor of England requires and as are most likely to reduce to their minimum the embarrassments which are inherent in a scheme where without incorporation the Crown of Great Britain has to exercise a dominion essentially foreign and limited by very peculiar terms, over a people standing in such near and manifold affinity to the populations of other and neighbouring countries. I dare not in any case expect that full identification of interest and feeling, which is in every political relation so much to be desired: but I see no reason to despair of our attaining to a condition in which the Ionian People will be thankful for their actual lot, even if they continue to desire the exchange of it for one they think more enviable; and in which their sympathies with the residue of their race will in no way check the sentiment of grateful affection and regard towards Your Majesty's Crown and People.

All which is humbly submitted to Your Majesty.

/signed/ W. E. Gladstone

Corfu

December 25th, 1858

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