

soil, in concert with the other Powers, for the defence of innocent lives, and to prevent the repetition of those recent scenes, at which hell itself might almost blush.

For it must not be forgotten that the last utterance on this subject was from the Prime Minister, and was to the effect that our fleet was in the East for the support of British interests. I object to this constant system of appeal to our selfish leanings. It sets up false lights ; it hides the true ; it disturbs the world. Who has lifted a finger against British interests ? Who has spoken a word ? If the declaration be anything beyond mere idle brag, it means that our fleet is waiting for the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, to have the first and the strongest hand in the seizure of the spoils. If this be the meaning, it is pure mischief ; and if we want to form a just judgment upon it, we have only to put a parallel case. What should we say, if Russia had assembled an army on the Pruth, or Austria on the Danube, and Prince Gortschakoff or Count Andrassy were to announce that it was so gathered, and so posted, for the defence of Russian, or of Austrian interests respectively ?

Perhaps, in these unusual circumstances, before describing what it is that we should seek and should desire, it may be well to consider what we should carefully eschew. In the channel, which we have to navigate with or without our Government, there are plenty of false lights set up for us, which lead to certain shipwreck. The matter has become too painfully real for us to be scared at present by the standing hobgoblin of Russia.* Many a time has it done good service on the stage : it is at present out of repair, and unavailable. It is now too late to argue, as was argued sometime back by a very clever and highly enlightened evening Journal, that it might be quite proper that twelve or thirteen millions of Christians in Turkey should remain unhappy, rather than that (such was the alternative hardily presented) two hundred millions of men in India should be deprived of the benefits of British rule, and thirty millions more in the United Kingdom made uncomfortable by the apprehension of such a catastrophe. But more plausible delusions are about. What we have to guard against is imposture ; that Proteus with a thousand forms. A few months ago, the new Sultan served the term, and very well. Men affirmed that he must have

* Yet it appears to be considered good enough for the electors of Bucks (I judge from a reported speech of Mr. Fremantle.) They seem to be treated, as Railway Companies are sometimes said to treat obscure branch lines, with their worn-out rolling-stock, not presentable in more fashionable districts.