

most famous Sovereigns who have sought immortality by unprovoked conquest and ephemeral glory.

"With a view to the success of this policy, it is desirable that the utmost forbearance should be manifested towards Turkey; that any demands which the great Powers of Europe may have to make, should be made matter of friendly negotiation rather than of peremptory demand; that military and naval demonstrations to coerce the Sultan should, as much as possible, be avoided; that differences with respect to matters affecting Turkey, within the competence of the Sublime Porte, should be decided after mutual concert between the great Powers, and not be forced upon the weakness of the Turkish Government.

"To these cautions her Majesty's Government wish to add, that in their view it is essential that the Sultan should be advised to treat his Christian subjects in conformity with the principles of equity and religious freedom which prevail generally among the enlightened nations of Europe. The more the Turkish Government adopts the rules of impartial law and equal administration, the less will the Emperor of Russia find it necessary to apply that exceptional protection which his Imperial Majesty has found so burdensome and inconvenient, though no doubt prescribed by duty and sanctioned by treaty.

In a conversation at a party previous to the formal presentation of the note, the Emperor told Sir H. Seymour that the English Government did not understand him. All he wanted was an understanding as to what should *not* be done when the sick man dies. The ambassador replied that countries do not die in such a hurry.

"Then," rejoined the Emperor, "I will tell you that, if your Government has been led to believe that Turkey retains any elements of existence, your Government must have received incorrect information. I repeat to you that the sick man is dying; and we can never allow such an event to take us by surprise. We must come to some understanding; and this we would do, I am convinced, if I could hold but ten minutes conversation with your ministers—with Lord Aberdeen, for instance, who knows me so well, who has full confidence in me, as I have in him. And, remember, I do not ask for a treaty or a protocol; a general understanding is all I require—that between gentlemen is sufficient; and in this case I am certain that the confidence would be as great on the side of the Queen's Ministers as on mine. So no more for the present; you will come to me to-morrow, and you may remember that as often as you think your conversing with me will promote a good understanding upon any point, you will send word that you want to see me."

Sir H. Seymour adds his suspicion "the Emperor's object is to engage her Majesty's Government, in conjunction with his own Cabinet and that of Vienna, in some scheme for the ultimate partition of Turkey, and for the exclusion of France from the arrangement."

Upon the formal reading of Lord John Russell's despatch, the ambassador asked the Emperor to explain his negative policy.

This his Majesty for some time declined doing; he ended, however, by saying, "Well, there are several things which I will not tolerate; I will

begin by ourselves. I will not tolerate the permanent occupation of Constantinople by the Russians: having said this, I will say that it never shall be held by the English, or French, or any other great nation. Again, I never will permit an attempt at the reconstruction of a Byzantine empire, or such an extension of Greece as would render her a powerful State; still less will I permit the breaking-up of Turkey into little republics, asylums for the Kossuths and Mazzinis, and other revolutionists of Europe; rather than submit to any of these arrangements I would go to war, and as long as I had a man or a musket left would carry it on."

The Emperor argued at some length that the dissolution of Turkey was at hand, and would some day take them unawares.

"His Imperial Majesty spoke of France. 'God forbid,' he said, 'that I should accuse any one wrongfully, but there are circumstances both at Constantinople and Montenegro which are extremely suspicious; but it looks very much as if the French Government were endeavoring to embroil us all in the East, hoping in this way the better to arrive at their own objects, one of which, no doubt, is the possession of Tunis.'

Sir H. Seymour suggested that Austria would desire to be consulted.

"Oh!" replied the Emperor, greatly to my surprise, 'but you must understand that when I speak of Russia I speak of Austria as well; what suits the one suits the other; our interests as regards Turkey are perfectly identical.'

Referring to the rising in Montenegro His Majesty said—

"It is impossible not to feel great interest in a population warmly attached to their religion, who have so long kept their ground against the Turks; and the Emperor continued—'It may be fair to tell you that if any attempts at exterminating those people shall be made by Omer Pacha, and should a general rising of the Christians take place in consequence, the Sultan will, in all probability, lose his throne; but in this case he falls to rise no more. I wish to support his authority, but, if he loses it, it is gone for ever. The Turkish empire is a thing to be tolerated not to be reconstructed. In such a case, I protest to you I will not allow a pistol to be fired.'

"The Emperor went on to say that, in the event of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, he thought it might be less difficult to arrive at a satisfactory territorial arrangement than was commonly believed. 'The Principalities are,' he said, 'in fact, an independent State under my protection; this might so continue. Servia might receive the same form of government. So again with Bulgaria. There seems to be no reason why this province should not form an independent state. As to Egypt, I quite understand the importance to England of that territory. I can then only say, that if, in the event of a distribution of the Ottoman succession upon the fall of the empire, you should take possession of Egypt, I shall have no objections to offer. I would say the same thing of Candia: that island might suit you, and I do not know why it should not become an English possession.'

"As I did not wish that the Emperor should imagine than an English public servant was