

tached much more importance—the word of a Sovereign.

“The execution of promises so made and so ratified the Emperor said he must insist upon, but attained by negotiation, the last advices from Constantinople being rather more satisfactory.

“I expressed my belief that negotiation, followed, as I thought it had been, by the threats of military measures, would be found sufficient to secure a compliance with the just demands of Russia. I added that I desired to state to His Majesty what I had previously read from a written paper to his Minister, viz., that what I feared for Turkey were not the intentions of His Majesty but the actual result of the measures which appeared to be in contemplation. That I would repeat, that two consequences might be anticipated from the appearance of an Imperial army on the frontiers of Turkey—the one the counter-demonstration which might be provoked on the part of France; the other, and the more serious the rising, on the part of the Christian population, against the Sultan's authority, already so much weakened by revolts and by a severe financial crisis.

“The Emperor assured me that no movement of his forces had yet taken place, and expressed his hope that no advantage would be required.

“With regard to a French expedition to the Sultan's dominions, His Majesty intimated that such a step would bring affairs to an immediate crisis; that a sense of honor would compel him to send his forces into Turkey without delay or hesitation; that if the result of such an advance should prove to be the overthrow of the Great Turk, he should regret the event, but should feel that he had acted as he was compelled to do.

“With regard to the extremely important overture to which this report relates, I will only observe that, as it is my duty to record impressions, as well as facts and statements, I am bound to say that if words, tone and manner offer any criterion by which the intentions are to be judged, the Emperor is prepared to act with perfect fairness and openness towards Her Majesty's Government. His Majesty has, no doubt, his own objects in view; and he is in my opinion, too strong a believer in the imminence of dangers in Turkey. I am, however, impressed with the belief that, in carrying out these objects, as in guarding against those dangers, His Majesty is sincerely desirous of acting in harmony with her Majesty's Government.

Lord John Russell, in a despatch dated Feb. 9, replies that it is impossible to negotiate respecting the dissolution of a power that may not take place, for 20, 50, or 150 years to come.

“In these circumstances it would hardly be consistent with the friendly feelings towards the Sultan which animate the Emperor of Russia, no less than the Queen of Great Britain, to dispose beforehand of the provinces under his dominions. Besides this consideration, however, it must be observed, that an agreement made in such a case tends very surely to hasten the contingency for which it is intended to provide. Austria and France could not, in fairness, be kept in ignorance of the transaction, nor would such concealment be consistent with the end of preventing an European war. Indeed, such concealment can-

not be intended by His Imperial Majesty. It is to be inferred that, as soon as Great Britain and Russia should have agreed on the course to be pursued, and have determined to enforce it, they should communicate their intentions to the great Powers of Europe; an agreement thus made, and thus communicated, would not be very long a secret; and while it would alarm and alienate the Sultan, the knowledge of its existence would stimulate all his enemies to increased violence and more obstinate conflict. They would fight with the conviction that they must ultimately triumph, while the Sultan's generals and troops would feel that no immediate success could save their cause from final overthrow. Thus would be produced and strengthened that very anarchy which is now feared, and the foresight of the friends of the patient would prove the cause of his death.

“Her Majesty's Government need scarcely enlarge on the dangers attendant on the execution of any similar Convention. The example of the Succession War is enough to show how little such agreements are respected when a pressing temptation urges their violation. The position of the Emperor of Russia as depositary, but not proprietor of Constantinople, would be exposed to numberless hazards, both from the long-cherished ambition of his own nation, and the jealousies of Europe. The ultimate proprietor, whoever he might be, would hardly be satisfied with the inert, supine attitude of the heirs of Mahomet II. A great influence on the affairs of Europe seems naturally to belong to the Sovereign of Constantinople, holding the gates of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

“That influence might be used in favor of Russia; it might be used to control and curb her power.

“His Imperial Majesty has justly and wisely said—‘My country is so vast, so happily circumstanced in every way, that it would be unreasonable in me to desire more territory or more power than I possess. On the contrary,’ he observed, ‘our great, perhaps our only danger, is that which would arise from an extension given to an empire already too large.’ A vigorous and ambitious state, replacing the Sublime Porte, might, however, render war on the part of Russia a necessity for the Emperor or his successors.

“Thus European conflict would arise from the very means taken to prevent it; for neither England nor France, nor probably Austria, would be content to see Constantinople permanently in the hands of Russia.

“On the part of Great Britain, her Majesty's Government at once declare that they renounce all intention or wish to hold Constantinople. His Imperial Majesty may be quite secure upon this head. They are likewise ready to give an assurance that they will enter into no agreement to provide for the contingency of the fall of Turkey without previous communication with the Emperor of Russia.

“Upon the whole, then, Her Majesty's Government are persuaded that no course of policy can be adopted more wise, more disinterested, more beneficial to Europe, than that which His Imperial Majesty has long followed, and which will render his name more illustrious than that of the