

BOOK
VIII.

1880.

volte-face,' as Mr. Gladstone said with some complacency, 'had been effected within six days; and it was entirely due not to a threat of coercion from Europe, but to the knowledge that Great Britain had asked Europe to coerce.' Dulcigno was ceded by the Porte to Montenegro. On the Greek side of the case, the minister for once was less ardent than for the complete triumph of his heroic Montenegrins, but after tedious negotiations Mr. Gladstone had the satisfaction of seeing an important rectification of the Greek frontier, almost restoring his Homeric Greece. The eastern question looked as if it might fall into one of its fitful slumbers once more, but we shall soon see that this was illusory. Mr. Goschen left Constantinople in May, and the prime minister said to him (June 3, 1881):—

I write principally for the purpose of offering you my hearty congratulations on the place you have taken in diplomacy by force of mind and character, and on the services which, in thus far serving the most honourable aims a man can have, you have rendered to liberty and humanity.

Only in Afghanistan was there a direct reversal of the policy of the fallen government. The new cabinet were not long in deciding on a return to the older policy in respect of the north-west frontier of India. All that had happened since it had been abandoned, strengthened the case against the new departure. The policy that had been pursued amid so many lamentable and untoward circumstances, including the destruction of a very gallant agent of England at Cabul, had involved the incorporation of Candahar within the sphere of the Indian system. Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet determined on the evacuation of Candahar. The decision was made public in the royal speech of the following January (1881). Lord Hartington stated the case of the government with masterly and crushing force, in a speech,¹ which is no less than a strong text-book of the whole argument, if any reader should now desire to comprehend it. The evacuation was censured in the Lords by 165 against 79; in the Commons ministers carried the day by a majority of 120.

¹ March 25-6, 1881.