

Mr. Gladstone called a farce, for Austria and Germany made known that under no circumstances would they fire a shot. France rather less prominently took the same course. This defection, which was almost boastful on the part of Austria and Germany, convinced the British cabinet that Turkish obduracy would only be overcome by force, and the question was how to apply force effectually with the least risk to peace. As it happened, the port of Smyrna received an amount of customs' duties too considerable for the Porte to spare it. The idea was that the united fleet at Cattaro should straightway sail to Smyrna and lay hold upon it. The cabinet, with experts from the two fighting departments, weighed carefully all the military responsibilities, and considered the sequestration of the customs' dues at Smyrna to be practicable. Russia and Italy were friendly. France had in a certain way assumed special cognisance of the Greek case, but did nothing particular. From Austria and Germany nothing was to be hoped. On October 4, the Sultan refused the joint European request for the fulfilment of the engagements entered into at Berlin. This refusal was despatched in ignorance of the intention to coerce. The British government had only resolved upon coercion in concert with Europe. Full concert was now out of the question. But on the morning of Sunday, the 10th, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville learned with as much surprise as delight from Mr. Goschen, then ambassador extraordinary at Constantinople, that the Sultan had heard of the British proposal of force, and apparently had not heard of the two refusals. On learning how far England had gone, he determined to give way on both the territorial questions. As Mr. Gladstone enters in his diary, 'a faint tinge of doubt remained.' That is to say, the Sultan might find out the rift in the concert and retract. Russia, however, had actually agreed to force. On Tuesday, the 12th, Mr. Gladstone, meeting Lord Granville and another colleague, was 'under the circumstances prepared to proceed *en trois*.' The other two 'rather differed.' Of course it would have been for the whole cabinet to decide. But between eleven and twelve Lord Granville came in with the news that the note had arrived and all was well. 'The whole of this extraordinary