

MR. GLADSTONE ON TURKEY

HIS STRONG SPEECH DELIVERED IN LIVERPOOL THURSDAY.

The Sultan Is Responsible for the Atrocities Which Have Been Com- mitted, Despite His Denials—Eng- land Has the Right to Act Alone in Putting an End to Them—No Danger of a European War if She Acted at Once.

The forcible speech on Armenian atrocities and the necessity of English intervention, made by Mr. Gladstone at Liverpool Sept. 24, has been cabled to The Independent, and will be published in full in the issue of Oct. 1.

Mr. Gladstone began his remarks by explaining that the cause was not one against Mohammedans, but was one of humanity. He claimed that Continental powers were not upheld by their own people. Then he referred to the bold denials of the Sultan, and the claim that the massacres were the work of revolutionists and agitators.

"This is not the first time that we have been discussing horrible outrages perpetrated in Turkey," he continued, "and perpetrated not by Mohammedan fanaticism, but by the deliberate policy of a Government. The very same thing happened in 1876. The first intelligence came from sources not altogether official. By degrees the cloud of testimony swelled, and at length it became such as to carry the most conclusive evidence of fact. But at that very time, in the Summer of 1876, I well recollect receiving, through the courtesy of the Turkish Ambassador of that day, a lengthy printed statement on the authority of the Sultan Government declaring, as absolutely as it is now declared, that there were no atrocities, no crimes committed by Turks or by the agents of the Government of the Sultan, but that it was to Bulgarian rebels and Bulgarian agitators that the whole of the calamities were due. I apprehend that that question, at any rate, has passed beyond the region of dispute, that the Bulgarian outrages rank among the facts of history.

"The very same course of proceeding is now being repeated, and the guilt of massacre, and not of massacre only, but of every other horror that has been transacted, such as we have heard in the statements read to-day, rests upon that Government. And to the guilt of massacre is added the impudence of denial, and this process will continue—how long? Just as long as you, as Europe, are contented to hear it."

The Sultan Responsible.

He charged that the Sultan was responsible for the massacres. He asked his audience to recollect that eighteen months had passed since the first massacre, and that this event itself had shocked the civilized world. "For Bulgaria becomes pale by the side of Armenia," he said. "But, alas! that massacre, gigantic as it was, has been followed up so that one has grown into a series. When the Sultan, conscious of his triumph over the diplomacy of united Europe, carried the work of massacre into his capital, under his own eyes and under the eyes of our Ambassador, then it was that he appeared to have gained for a time the very acme of what it was possible for him to do.

"Translate the acts of the Sultan into words," he said later, "and they become these: I have tried your patience in distant places; I will try it under your own eyes. I have desolated my provinces, I will now desolate my capital. I have found that your sensitiveness has not been effectually provoked by all that I have heretofore done, and I will come nearer to you and see whether, by the vicinity, I shall or shall not wake the wrath which has slept so long.

"Some feeling has been awakened. To an extent, the weakness of diplomacy I trust is now about to be strengthened by the echoes of the nation's voice; but it is right, though it is painful, that we should estimate that weakness, and it stands before us in naked fact, and what do we know? We know that after sufficient deliberation, embassies of six powers, having screwed their courage to the sticking point, presented to the Sultan a truly formidable document in which they announced that such proceedings as these at Constantinople must really cease; and why must they cease? because if they continued they would create a prejudice against Turkish Government and against the Sultan. A prejudice was that result to which they were to lead!

"I ask you to put yourselves in the position of the guilty author of these massacres, be he who he may. Don't you think such a remonstrance of itself would cause him to proceed? What more does he want than that you should confine yourselves to a paper war? A paper is that which is alone necessary for the execution of his purpose, and that paper war conveys to him all he wants, namely, an assurance of impunity."

The Concert of Europe.

He spoke of the concert of Europe, and said that the great reforms out of which grew Greece and the Balkan States had been effected without the concert. In the present case he believed the presence of the six Ambassadors in Constantinople had not deterred the Sultan, but had been "a distinct countenance and support of the Sultan." Then he referred to the possibility of England acting alone.

"The rules of prudence must be observed," he said, "and the rules of prudence, I take it, neither require nor permit, nor does duty, in my opinion, either require or permit, that we, for the sake even of the great object we have in view, should place ourselves in the condition of war with united Europe or should take measures which should plunge Europe generally into a state of war.

"With that proposition I cordially agree; but when I speak of a state of war in that sense, I mean a real state of war, and I do not mean those phantasms of European war which every one, not so much in this country as in other countries, who wishes to stop beneficial measures on behalf of Armenia, conjures up before our eyes in saying that any country that takes into its own hands, exercises its own judgment, and makes itself in the last resort, judge of its own duty, that every such country must reckon upon plunging Europe into war. I need not say that I mean everything that is reasonable, everything that is possible.

"I say that it would not be reasonable to do that which would imply war with Europe or plunge Europe into war; but I completely deny that it means that England is under all circumstances to abandon and forego her own right of ultimate judgment upon her duties and her powers, and to be dragged at the chariot wheels of the other powers of Europe, or some other powers of view and who may not take at present entirely the same view with ourselves as to this idea of war.

"That the threat of war in insignificant newspapers and by random gossiping going about from one place to another, even if among the places be included doorways of some public departments—to suppose that that implies that all independent action on the part of this great country is to be made chargeable for producing war in Europe is, in my opinion, a mistake more deplorable, perhaps, even than any of those mistakes that have ever before been committed in the history of diplomacy.

"Therefore, while I fully admit and recognize that possible measures, all measures that are possible, do not include a policy which gives just cause of complaint to the powers of Europe—because I admit that if they had just cause of complaint, of course, they would have a title to object to our action and to enforce their action by the use of all their military means—I will not admit that we are on that account to forego our own convictions and our own

duties, or to take our own measure of those duties from that which may be said and felt abroad."

A Violation of a Treaty.

He showed that the massacres had been a violation of the treaty into which England had entered with the other powers, and said this gave England the right to act. Then he spoke of procedure, saying:

"I will first of all suppose, then, that every effort to obtain direct and active co-operation from any power of Europe has failed. Well, of course the first thing would be to require Turkey to fulfill her obligations, and to require that by what may be called a peremptory demand.

"Upon failure to comply with that demand, I apprehend the first step to be taken must be the recall of our Ambassador from Constantinople and the corresponding dismissal of the Turkish Ambassador from London. I apprehend that that is not creating a European war.

"Now, I am going a little further. I am going to suppose that upon this suspension of diplomatic relations England informs the Sultan that she shall take into consideration means of enforcing, if force alone is available, compliance with her just, legal, and human demand. Now, I am here going to impose a condition on my own authority. I am strongly of the opinion that if, unhappily, we come to that point of sole action and of continuing obstinacy on the part of Turkey, neither of which do I conceive to be very probable, if we come to that point and if it became our duty to intimate to the Sultan that we should consider the proper means of enforcing our just demands, there is, in my opinion, one condition on our part which ought on no account to be overlooked, and that is the passing of what has been called a self-denying ordinance.

"Such a declaration was made at the beginning of the Crimean war on the part of England and France. It was a declaration that on no account would they turn that war to their own private and particular advantage. That declaration was publicly made, and it was honorably kept.

"In my opinion it would be the manifest duty of England to make such a declaration, and to make it in such terms that the powers of Europe, aye, or any of them, might, if they thought fit, resent the breach of it as being not only a violation of good faith in itself, but a violation of our engagement to them, and therefore placing us entirely at their mercy.

"Inerefore, if this country be the selfish and grasping country that she is sometimes represented to be, and perhaps on certain occasions she has been I can only say I can hold out no inducements in the direction I have indicated. We ought, in my opinion, solemnly and effectively to disclaim and renounce every prospect of the kind, to limit ourselves absolutely to those duties which lie in our path and which we, under the obligations of treaty, ought to insist upon.

Europe Will Not Make War.

"I do not believe that Europe, or any part of Europe," he continued, "will make war to insure the continuance of these massacres; but if they are not to continue, and if security is given against them, that is all we want. But that security must be effective; it must be real; it must not be visionary; it must not be limited to the exactions of promises upon paper, with which we have too often and too long been contented.

"Now, supposing, however, that this monstrous supposition were to come about, and that when we had in a binding form limited our own proceedings to the suppression of mischief in its aggravated form, on the account that we have used the word 'coercion' in our communications with Turkey, then the supposition is that a threat of war by the European powers is to be at once thrown in our face.

"This is the supposition I am considering. Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to make a frank confession. If the people of England find themselves confronted by a distinct announcement of such a war, in order to secure maintenance of the present state of things in Turkey, they would have to consider their position. Supposing they came to the conclusion, because this is the most unfavorable supposition, that it was their duty to desist from all effort of procuring effectual change in Turkey; suppose they frankly owned that they were not prepared to incur the responsibility of plunging Europe into war; suppose they said: We cast upon you who are willing to undertake it the responsibility of giving countenance to those detestable and horrible proceedings, we wash our hands of them, we will have nothing more to do with them, we will never give countenance, we will never give neutrality, we will not acknowledge as a nation within the family of nations a ruler who is himself the responsible agent of these monstrous acts; but we are not prepared to urge Europe on to war, and we will do what was done by France in 1840, without loss of honor, retaining our own judgment and retaining our own right of enforcing that judgment when we see our way to do it; but we will not plunge Europe into war, and we will leave to those who bring about this state of things the responsibility which belongs to them."