The very suddenness of these disasters contributed ulti­mately to the preservation of the Ottoman empire, inas­much as it compelled the powers of Europe to take action. The French and English fleets appeared in the Dardan­elles. The czar saw that it was impossible to maintain the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, and this treaty was tacitly abandoned. Russia now addressed itself to the task of widening the existing differences between France and England. France insisted on far more favourable condi­tions for Mehemet Ali than England would allow, demand­ing that Egypt and all Syria should be given to him in hereditary dominion, with no further obligation towards the sultan than the payment of an annual tribute. Russia and the other powers took part with England, and ulti­mately, without asking the sanction of France, the four powers signed a treaty pledging themselves to enforce upon Mehemet the terms proposed by England, which practically reduced him to the position of an ordinary pasha in Palestine, while leaving him the hereditary govern­ment of Egypt. On the publication of this treaty Thiers, the French minister, prepared for war. He was, however, dismissed by Louis Philippe, and his successor, Guizot, accepted the situation. As Mehemet Ali refused to give up his conquests, an Anglo-Austrian naval squadron was sent to co-operate with a Turkish force in attacking the coast-towns of Syria. Acre was captured, and Ibráhím, assailed by the mountain tribes of the interior, was forced to retire to Egypt. A convention made between Mehemet and Sir Charles Napier, who had appeared at Alexandria with part of the fleet, formed the basis of the ultimate settlement, by which Mehemet, after formal submission to the sultan, was recognized as hereditary governor of Egypt. Russia now united with the other powers in a declaration that the ancient rule of the Ottoman empire, forbidding the passage of the Dardanelles to the war-ships of all nations, except when the Porte should itself be at war, was accepted by Europe at large.

The young sultan entered on his reign nominally as an independent sovereign, but really under the protection of the European powers. His minister, Reshid Pasha, who had gained in an unusual degree the confidence of Western statesmen, understood the necessity of bringing the Turkish system of government more into harmony with the ideas of the civilized world. An edict, known as the *Hatti- sherif of Gulhane,* announced the speedy establishment of institutions “which should insure to all subjects of the sultan perfect security for their lives, their honour, and their property, a regular method of collecting the taxes, and an equally regular method of recruiting the army and fixing duration of service.” Scarcely had this edict been published when Reshid was driven from power by a palace intrigue. His reforming efforts, like those of Mahmúd, were not wholly ineffective ; yet little was realized in com­parison with what was promised and what was needed. The Turkish Government was soon discredited, and the intervention of Europe required, by conflicts between the Christian and Mohammedan tribes in the Lebanon, result­ing in massacres of the former. After the convulsions of 1848 the sultan incurred the enmity of the autocratic courts by refusing to give up Kossuth and other exiles who had taken refuge within his dominions. The suppression of the national Hungarian Government by Russia in 1849 had heightened in the emperor Nicholas the sense of his own power. He now looked forward to the speedy extinction of Turkey, and in 1853 proposed to the British ambassador, Sir H. Seymour, a plan for the division of “ the sick man’s” inheritance as soon as he should expire. Disputes between France and Russia relating to the rights of the Latin and Greek Churches in certain sacred places were made the occasion for the assertion of a formal claim on the part of the czar to a protectorate over all Christians in Turkey belonging to the Greek Church. This claim not being acknowledged by the Porte, a Russian army entered the Danubian principalities. After ineffective negotiations war was declared by the sultan on 4th October 1853. Hostilities commenced in Walachia, and the Turkish fleet was attacked and destroyed at Sinope. England and France allied themselves with the Porte, and landed an army at Varna in the spring of the following year. Silistria was successfully defended by the Turks; and, on the occupation of the Danubian principalities by Austria, the allies took up the offensive and transferred their forces to the Crimea. The siege of Sebastopol followed, ending in its capture in September 1855. Meanwhile Russian and Turkish forces were opposed in Asia. Kars maintained a gallant defence, but succumbed to famine two months after the fall of Sebastopol. The peace of Paris followed, in which Russia ceded to Turkey the portion of Bessarabia adjacent to the mouth of the Danube. The Black Sea was neutralized, Russia and the Porte alike engaging to keep no war-ships and to maintain no arsenals there. The exclusive pro­tectorate of Russia over the Danubian principalities was abolished, and the autonomy of these provinces, as well as of Servia, placed under the guarantee of all the powers. The Porte published a firman, the *Hatti-Humaiun,* profess­ing to abolish “ every distinction making any class of the subjects of the empire inferior to any other class on account of their religion, language, and race,” and establishing complete equality between Christians and Mahommedans; the powers in return declared the Porte admitted to the advantages of the public law and concert of Europe. The absurd stipulation was added that no right should thereby accrue to the powers to interfere either collectively or separately in the relations of the sultan with his subjects.

The Crimean War gave to part of the Balkan population twenty years more of national development under the slackened grasp of the Porte ; and by extinguishing the friendship of Austria and Russia it rendered the liberation of Italy possible. But each direct proviso of the treaty of Paris seemed made only to be mocked by events. Scarcely a year passed without some disturbance among the Christian subjects of the sultan, in which the interfer­ence of the powers invariably followed in one form or another. A new series of massacres in the Lebanon in 1860 caused France to land a force in Syria. Walachia and Moldavia formed themselves into a single state under the name of Roumania, to which the house of Hohenzollern soon afterwards gave a sovereign. Bosnia and Montenegro took up arms. Servia got rid of its Turkish garrisons. Crete fought long for its independence, and seemed for a moment likely to be united to Greece under the auspices of the powers; but it was ultimately abandoned to its Turkish masters. The overthrow of France in the war of 1870 and the consequent isolation of England led Russia to declare the provision of the treaty of Paris which excluded its ships of war and its arsenals from the Black Sea to be no longer in force. To save appearances, the British Government demanded that the matter should be referred to a European conference, where Russia’s will was duly ratified.

A few- years later the horizon of eastern Europe visibly darkened with the coming storm. Russian influences were no doubt at work ; but the development of national feeling which had so powerfully affected every other part of Europe during the 19th century could not remain without effect among the Christian races of the Balkan peninsula. In 1875 Bosnia and Herzegovina revolted. In the meantime the government of ‘Abd-ul-'Azíz (1861- 1876) had become worse and worse. The state was bank­rupt. Ignatieff, the Russian ambassador, gained complete ascendency in the palace, and frustrated every attempt on