

AS shown by the papers laid before the British Parliament on Jan. 21, Lord Salisbury has induced the concert of Europe to agree, if the sultan does not accept the proposed reforms, to consider whether coercion might not be applied. Austria and Italy support England in insisting upon coercion if necessary, and Count Goluchowski, on his recent visit to Berlin, is said to have succeeded in bringing the German emperor into agreement with the Austrian view of conditions at Constantinople. That view is that there must be a sultan there if European peace is to be preserved, that there cannot long be a sultan without reforms, and that therefore if the sultan will not enforce reforms, Europe must do so. Russia, whose scheme of reforms had not included coercion, consented, to quote the words of the despatch, "not to object to advise as to coercive measures if the sultan should refuse to accept the reforms," and the consent of France followed as a matter of course. Since then, it appears, the six ambassadors at Constantinople have finished the draft of the proposed reforms, and submitted it to their respective governments for approval, the draft, it is stated, being drawn upon the assumption that the sultan will accept the reforms, and without reference of any kind to coercion. As the agreement of the powers secured by Lord Salisbury is only to consider coercion should the sultan refuse to accept the reforms, the omission does not indicate the abandonment of coercion, though unless the draft is presented to the sultan with that as an alternative, it does pave the way for dangerous delays, if not defeat. For the sultan is sure to regard the powers as insincere, without real intention to resort to force, and will be supported in that belief by the patent indisposition of the monarchs of Europe to coerce an independent sovereign, or to hold him personally responsible for his acts. More disappointing still, however, are the reports of the nature of the reform protocol, which seems to be limited to financial reforms in the interest of the foreign holders of Turkish bonds—including a small loan nominally to meet the expense entailed by the reforms, but really to avert bankruptcy—and to securing equal justice for all classes of the sultan's subjects, that is, to reform the courts. Accepting the reports as true, the scheme amounts to this—the Turkish bondholders are to be made a little more secure, the sultan is to be propped up by a new European loan, is not to be punished for his unquestionable complicity in the Armenian massacres, and is only to pledge himself on paper to do justice to all men under his rule. As he has always been bound by his own decrees and his religious creed to do justice, his pledge will amount to nothing unless enforced by a strong vizier whose tenure is guaranteed by Europe, or by a European commission, neither of which now seems possible. In fact, the so-called concert of Europe is, from present indications, to end in a selfish scheme to avert a financial crash on the Paris bourse, the suspicions and jealousies of the powers preventing any united action for the reform of Turkish abuses. It makes one's blood boil to think of it, and renders talk about the government of Europe by men of sense and philanthropy not a little absurd.