

by the Plenipotentiaries to the Porte at the close of the Constantinople Conference of the 15th January, 1877, recommended a rectification of the frontiers of Montenegro, including the Kuci Kraina and other mountain districts east of Lake Scutari.

During the war the Montenegrins captured Dulcigno on the 18th January, 1878, and occupied the country up to the Boyana, advancing nearly to Scutari.

By the Treaty of San Stefano a very large addition was made to Montenegro: The frontier was traced a long way to the north in Herzegovina; to the east it was made nearly contiguous to Servia; to the south it comprised Dulcigno and the Boyana; and nearly all Lake Scutari, leaving only the town to Turkey; and to the south-east it included the Hotti district, Tusi, and the whole of Gusinjé and Plava.

By the Treaty of Berlin this was materially reduced, especially in the north and east, while to the south Dulcigno was restored to Turkey, the Clementi, Grudi, and Hotti tribes left to Albania, and the most material extension to the south-east was the district of Gusinjé and Plava.

The Montenegrin troops, in fulfilment of the XXXIInd Article of the Treaty of Berlin, had been withdrawn from the district of Dulcigno, but the Porte had failed to comply with the Treaty by the transfer of Gusinjé and Plava. On the urgent representations of the Porte of the difficulty of placing the district in the possession of Montenegro the Powers agreed to an arrangement, to which the Prince of Montenegro had previously signified his assent, by which the Porte undertook to surrender instead a strip of territory inhabited by the Hotti, Grudi, and Clementi tribes, together with the district of Kuci Kraina.

An agreement to this effect, to be executed within ten days, was signed in the first instance between the Porte and the Montenegrin Chargé d'Affaires on the 12th April, and a Protocol recording that the new line of frontier therein described was accepted in substitution for the frontier specified in the Treaty of Berlin was signed by the Representatives of the Treaty Powers and the Porte on the 18th April.

When the time came for the surrender of this territory the Turkish Commander failed to give twenty-four hours' notice, as had been agreed upon, to the Montenegrin authorities, and the result was that when the Turkish troops evacuated the fortified positions on the Podgoritza plain, which command the road between Podgoritza and Scutari, the Albanians took possession of them, and the Montenegrins, finding that they would be resisted, did not attempt to advance. The Albanians continued to hold the country, and the Porte did not attempt to dislodge them.

This was the situation when your Excellency arrived at Constantinople. The Montenegrins and Albanians were face to face; skirmishes were occurring between the outposts, and it was evident that unless steps were taken without delay for the settlement of the frontier, active hostilities might at any time ensue.

In the identic note addressed to the Porte on the 11th June the Powers accordingly represented that the state of things created by the question of the Montenegrin frontier required pressing attention and immediate solution.

The note added:—

"The Turkish authorities have failed to carry out the engagement entered into between the Porte and Montenegro, and adhered to by the Representatives of the Powers in the Protocol of the 18th April, 1880. They have compromised

the agreement accepted by His Imperial Majesty the Sultan by allowing the Albanians to occupy certain frontier positions assigned to the Montenegrins, and a collision may at any time occur between the Montenegrins and the Albanian forces opposed to them.

"The Powers, therefore, consider themselves absolutely bound to request the Government of His Imperial Majesty to state in the most explicit terms what their intentions are as regards the Montenegrin frontier, and to put into immediate execution the arrangement come to between the Sublime Porte and Montenegro. The Powers hold the Sublime Porte responsible in advance for the grave consequences that might be produced by a further delay in giving satisfaction to the rights acquired by the Principality."

On the 24th June the Porte replied to this part of the identic note by offering, if the necessary time were allowed, to again undertake the execution of the Protocol of the 18th April, and to pay to the Montenegrin Government the taxes levied by the Turkish authorities upon the territory which the Montenegrins had been provisionally unable to occupy.

Abédine Pasha added that the Porte was at the same time ready to take into consideration any other mode of settlement which might be suggested by the Powers, and which would attain the desired result without bloodshed or the disorders which would follow on a violent resistance.

Her Majesty's Consul-General at Scutari, together with the Austrian Consul-General, had suggested some time previously that an alternative plan might be proposed with greater prospects of success for bringing about a peaceful solution of the difficulty if the Porte would consent to the surrender of the district of Dulcigno, together with a small strip of territory between the Lake of Scutari and Podgoritza, and the Kuci Kraina, but excluding the Hotti district and the Grudi and Clementi Mountains, which had been comprised in the Agreement of the 18th April.

Her Majesty's Government were informed that this scheme had been mentioned to some of the leaders of the North Albanians, who intimated that they would not be unwilling to agree to it if the Powers would guarantee to them some form of local self-government.

Her Majesty's Government have always had in view the importance of establishing a better system of administration for the various clans which occupy the highlands of Albania, and this proposal presented the advantage that in relieving the Porte from the difficulty of carrying out the April Agreement, it afforded an opportunity to the Powers of urging the necessity of restoring order in this part of European Turkey. Your Excellency is aware from the reports which have been received that the state of the country in North-east Albania is little short of anarchy. The Turkish officials are powerless to execute justice; murder, violence, and forced exactions are prevalent, and the peaceable population is at the mercy of the armed committees who, under the name of the Albanian League, have been allowed to assume absolute authority:

Communications passed between the Powers which resulted in a general assent to the scheme, and Mr. Green and M. Lippich, the Austrian Consul-General, laid the new proposal before the Prince of Montenegro, who, after some demur, accepted it.

The result of these communications between the Powers and the Prince of Montenegro and the Albanians was that the following joint pro-