

The
"Clean-Fighting" Turk

*YESTERDAY
TO-DAY AND
TO-MORROW*



Foreword by
Sir H. H. JOHNSTON
G.C.M.G., K.C.B., D.Sc.

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FOREWORD



THE TRUE CHARACTER OF TURKISH RULE

I THINK those who are now working with all their vigour to secure for Armenia a distinct nationality in the re-arrangement of Europe and Asia which will follow the conclusion of the War are right in trying to bring home to us the character of the Turk, both in its evil aspects and in what it may have imported into Western Asia that was of any lasting good.

Actual Turkish nationality there is none nowadays; that is to say, any territory of appreciable size in Europe or Asia which is peopled homogeneously by the Mongolian tribes once known as "Turks," and distinguished from other Mongolians by the Turkish speech. In their old East Asiatic homes the Turks were replaced by other variants of the Mongol type and other languages, some quite dissimilar. West of Turkestan (which has at the present day peoples that are not Turks at all in affinity of race and speech) the Turk was never more than a military caste; strong enough however to make his East Asiatic speech the dominant tongue in Asia Minor. The people that our ancestors knew as "Turks" in the middle ages and down to the nineteenth century were, when one diagnosed their ethnology, Kurds, Tatars, Armenoids, Phrygians, Lazis, Greeks, Galatians, Goths, Arabs, Syrians, Slavs, Albanians, Cherkess, Ossetes, Iranians, renegade Italians, and renegade Jews. But the original Turks had brought with them the Turkish spirit, the spirit which had prompted the Hun and the Avar, the Tatar, and the original Bulgar, the Petcheneg, the Seljuk, and the Othmani to ravage and destroy for the mere lust of destruction and of stupid conquest.

All these Turkish-Tatar tribes have deserved a prominent place on the black list of human history. They half destroyed

the old civilisation of China and of India ; they ruined the Aryan culture of Samarkand and Bokhara ; they ruined the Arab Empire of the Caliphs which had played such a notable part in the beneficent renaissance of nearer Asia and North Africa ; they ruined the Byzantine empire of Graeco-Roman origin ; they ruined—in the eighteenth century—the splendid Persia of the Sufi kings. They did their utmost to destroy that Armenia which the Graeco-Romans had respected. The Turkish spirit had but one meritorious feature : physical bravery. Because the original Turkish tribes were bolder riders, more stubborn fighters than the "softer" races to the west and south of them so they prevailed. Much as the Germans by their fighting qualities imposed themselves as rulers in every part of the Roman Empire.

The immigration of the Teutonic tribes between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries gave the necessary new vigour to the rather decadent lands of the Kelts and the Latins ; but the indigenous peoples of Romania were sufficiently numerous, well organised and near of kin with the Goth, the Scandinavian, the Frank, and the Swabian to react against Germania. There was scarcely even a transient check to human progress.

But wherever the Turk imposed his rule the results have been disastrous. They are apparent to the eye in Nearer Asia, in Greece, in Thrace, in Macedonia, and North Africa. There will be no cure for these stricken regions until the Turkish name as that of a ruling caste has been erased from mundane statistics. Then we shall find that be they Christians or be they Muslims there is much abiding virtue in, much happy promise before the diverse peoples of the former Turkish Empire. But we shall need to know them as Kurd and Armenian, Syrians and Arabs, Jews and Greeks, Arabs and Cilicians, Phrygians and Lazis. In my humble opinion the only way that continuity might be secured over Thrace and Asia Minor for the rule of Constantinople is for the Ottoman Empire by a few bold strokes of the pen to announce that it has thrown off its Turkish kaftan and turban, and resumes the name and dress of Byzantium.

But to Armenia within its natural ethnic limits autonomy and independence must be secured. It is not so much a matter of

religious sentiment as of historical gratitude. A bad Armenian Christian is no better than a good Muhammadan Kurd. The modern Armenia is the direct descendant of the Hittite empire which did much to raise the cultural status of the Nearer East. The Armenoid type we now realise was one of the most potent civilisers of Europe in the Neolithic and Bronze ages. From Armenia we have derived many precious things in cultivated plants and domestic animals. The Armenoid or Alpine peoples have enriched the Old World with their cultural ideas.

But there is one unavoidable conclusion to be arrived at when we study the history of the world from 1914 back to pre-historic times. Civilisation must go armed. Armed at first—unhappily—against the powers of rapine, the typical Turks and Teutons; armed in happier days against the ruthless powers of nature. "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow." At some stage in the history of Armenia as of Persia, of Arabia, of Greece and Slavdom the more civilised race failed in courage, in martial vigour. And so the Turk or Tatar got the upper hand and imposed his hideously stupid rule.

Until the theory of the League of Nations has triumphed and is affirmed by indisputable guarantees, each distinct nationality henceforth to be established must learn to defend itself. Switzerland and Holland are tiny countries, but so resolute were they in perfecting their patriotic armies that even Germany at the height of her power hesitated to infract these hornets' nests.

Armenia having regained her national independence must be prepared to defend it, in concert with the complete or incomplete League of Nations that she will be invited to join.

H. W. Johnston.

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THE "CLEAN-FIGHTING" TURK
YESTERDAY, TO-DAY
AND TO-MORROW.

I.

YESTERDAY. *a. 90 Years ago.*

*Reprinted from "The Foreign Quarterly Review,"
London, 1828.*

HISTORY presents to our view no object more imposing than the transient greatness of the Turks; nor does it anywhere furnish a more instructive lesson than that which is inculcated by the rapidity of their decline. A horde of martial devotees, with energetic habits, and peculiar usages, veiling beneath a grave demeanour the fiercest passions and unquenchable enthusiasm, burst upon Europe, when the West was just awakening to a bright career of civilisation, and usurped the place of the greatest empire of antiquity. Their numerous armies, their haughty carriage, their unbounded ambition, and their unsparing mode of warfare, were formidable enough at first to daunt all Christendom; but in the space of four centuries we have seen their empire pass through all the stages of political existence, from the fresh vigour of youth to the weakness and decrepitude of age; and, without any apparent degeneracy of the people, wasting away, as soon as the inactivity of the Sultans, or the strength of the neighbouring nations obliged it to remain in a state of peace.

These remarkable events, occurring at the very time when the art of printing took its rise, are known to us with an authenticity and accuracy proportioned to their interest : that free intercourse of nations, which at present unites all civilized Europe into one great family, was then commencing ; and all the learned, if not all the statesmen of the day, conspired to watch and denounce the movements of the common enemy. Besides, for a long time after the period when Constantinople fell to the Turks, the favourite pursuit of every scholar was the literature of ancient Greece ; and the Levant was constantly filled with accomplished travellers, urged thither by the ardour of classical research. Under such circumstances, a people so peculiar as the Turks, uniting the pomp and splendour of the East with Scythian ferocity, could not fail to be frequently described ; and, in fact, there is no nation in Europe which has from the commencement employed the pens of so many well-informed observers.

The character of the Turks, nevertheless, has never been distinctly drawn ; forbidden by their religion to mix with unbelievers, eminently unsocial among themselves, and dangerous to approach, it is only by the possession of official rank that Europeans can form a slight acquaintance with them. Busbequius, Vignau, Sir Paul Rycout, and Sir James Porter, all possessed this advantage, and turned it to account. Among the authors to whom we are particularly indebted for a knowledge of the Turks, the first place must be assigned to Mouradja D'Ohsson. Born in Constantinople of Armenian parents, and attached in early life to the Swedish embassy, he united the advantages of a European education to the facilities of a native ; and his great work¹ leaves little unexplained relating to the machinery of the Ottoman empire ; but he is partial to the rulers of his native country, and describes them from theory rather than from experience. The Turks whom he portrays bear no more resemblance to real Turks, than the polished cavalier of romance does to the rude baron of the middle ages.

¹ *Tableau Général de l'Empire Ottoman*, 3 tom. folio. Paris, 1787—1820.

The volume whose title stands at the foot of this article,² is also from the pen of a native of Constantinople; written by a Greek, it exhibits the ready pliancy of Grecian genius, and a work more decidedly French in style and sentiment could not have been produced by Jouy himself. It is neat, lively and delicate, free from rancour or exaggeration; and coming, as it does, from one who bears the name of the last and heroic emperor of the Greeks, we could hardly have expected so much moderation. It presents also an animated picture of Turkish manners; but the mode of writing which the author has adopted, that of dramatic scenes and dialogues, is better suited to the vivid display of odd humours and peculiarities, than to the profound analysis of character; and in this case it is peculiarly unfit, as it leaves out of view the very traits by which the Turks are particularly distinguished, we mean their apathy, taciturnity, and unsocial disposition.

When the Ottomans and the nations of the West first came into collision, there was not perhaps much difference between them in the externals of civilisation; but the East and West are cast in different moulds of society, possessing different capabilities; and the disparity between them soon became evident. About one century after the conquest of Constantinople, Busbequius dispelled in a great measure the terror which the Ottomans had inspired by his faithful picture of their empire; Wild and Sandys, a little later, betray some feelings of contempt; but from the close of the seventeenth century, when the character of the Turks had manifestly lost the protection of their illusive greatness, it has been almost uniformly painted in unfavourable colours. Notwithstanding the agreement of the best writers in the general estimate of the Turkish character, their opinions, when considered in detail, are too various and irreconcilable to afford the means of an accurate delineation. We must not, however, believe with Mr. Thornton (a writer who has borrowed every thing, save

² *Esquisses des Mœurs Turques au XIXme Siècle; ou Scènes Populaires, Usages Religieux, Cérémonies Publiques, Vie Intérieure, Habitudes Sociales, Idées Politiques des Mahometans en forme de Dialogues.* Par Grégoire Palaiologue, né à Constantinople. 8vo. Paris. 1827.

his ill-concocted reflections) that the character of the Turks is composed of nothing but contrarities, and that every Turk is both humane and cruel, cowardly and courageous; such incongruities can exist only in the mind of the writer. The character of a man is as single and identical as his person. Although the ways of the individual, as well as of society, may be all chaos and discordance to an unskilful observer, yet order and connection are restored to the picture when the survey is made from the just point of view. A sagacious eye can always command the drift of fluctuating humours, and in the complicated eddies of life detect the central springs of action. The history of a nation is the best portrait of its character; and we learn more of a people from its laws, religion, and domestic usages, than from the conflicting testimony of travellers. From the institutions of the Turks, therefore, we shall endeavour, in the first place, to trace the peculiarities of their manners, and afterwards venture to examine the influence which the character of the nation is likely to exert on its future destiny.

The rites of Mahometanism are so numerous, and its precepts so strictly inculcated, that the true believer is unceasingly exercised in a servile obedience to his faith. The Turks are in fact a nation of puritans; every act of life, from the highest to the lowest, from the murder of a sultan to the purchase of a slipper, is begun and ended in the name of God and the Prophet. The sacred standard leads the Musulman to war; the bayonet is introduced with the benediction of the muphty; and gun-rammers of hogs' bristles, a stumbling block to the faithful, are admitted in defence of the Prophet, amidst pious ejaculations of "Praise be to God!" The great multitude of forms prescribed by the Koran derogates from the importance of its moral precepts; he who observes them carefully has good reason to be satisfied with himself, and every text of the sacred volume promotes the facility of self-justification. The great superiority of the Musulman over unbelievers, and the certainty of his temporal as well as spiritual triumph, are perpetually inculcated; he is forbidden to mingle with, or even to resemble those who reject the Prophet: arrogant unsociability is made the safeguard of the faith, and by

way of compensation an ample latitude for the riot of passion is allowed to those within the pale. Mahometanism in fine does not enlighten or console, it only flatters its followers. It is no wonder that a religion which unites the seductions of the Epicurean and Stoic doctrines, inculcating at the same time self-sufficiency and sensual indulgence, should take a firm hold on an ignorant people, and that no Musulman, as Reland affirms, has ever been converted. The devout exterior of the Turks certainly imposed on the benevolent Dr. Clarke, who, after speaking of their frequent prayers and ablutions, says, we think indiscreetly, "that there is no people without the pale of Christianity who are better disposed towards its most essential precepts;" but surely the Turks do not love mercy better than sacrifice; they are not meek and poor in spirit; they do not commune with their own hearts; pride stands high in their category of virtues, and among the ninety-nine canonical names by which they invoke the Deity, that of *Most Proud* occupies a foremost place. A religious creed cannot be fairly judged from the separate texts of which it is composed; its practical influence is the best criterion of its merit; it may contain many precepts totally at variance with the genius of the whole; nay, a few of its leading principles may suffice to render nugatory all its salutary provisions.

The law of the Turks is but an extension of their religion; their whole code is founded on the Koran, and the edifice is completed by dialectic subtilty. Where sacred texts are wanting, traditionary tales, or constructions put upon the silence of the Prophet, supply their place, and the involuntary fraudulence of ingenious reasoning pervades the whole. In the imperfect state of sublunary dispensations, this identity of law and religion is the greatest calamity that can befall a people. A few simple enactments will suffice for society in a primitive condition; but as it becomes developed new interests and new sentiments arise, which require new regulations: institutions, however, which pretend to a divine origin, are not sufficiently accommodating to the wants and weakness of human nature, which can never become perfect but by a slow progression.

Where a theocratic system, or religious jurisprudence exists, as among the Turks, every innovation is an act of impiety; and if the body of men who feel an interest in its maintenance possess influence with the people, all chance of social improvement is at an end. When we come to consider the character of that body which unites the sacred and judicial functions in Turkey, it will be seen how it has promoted the sinister tendencies of a perverse system, with a view to the promotion of its own interests.

The vices of the Ottoman code are not corrected by the manner of its administration. The law being composed in a great measure of fine-drawn deductions from inadequate texts, is often a mere tissue of subtilty and equivocation. The Cadi is infected with the general avarice; he pays for his office, which he holds for a very limited time; the plaintiff may choose his court, and of course make sure of the judge beforehand, and no appeal lies from his decision; he who gains the cause pays all the expenses, consequently *avaries* or vexatious suits are not discouraged, and the attendance of witnesses is not compelled, so that few give their testimony who are not paid by the party whom they assist. These facts will be sufficient to refute the praise which has been bestowed on the administration of justice in Turkey, and will explain why in the dramatic exhibitions occasionally seen in Constantinople, the plots of the pieces usually turn on the injustice of a cadi. But there is one circumstance which strongly marks the barbarism of the Turks, which is, that they have no police; if one Turk threatens to kill another, no one cares to prevent him; and the murderer who eludes immediate detection may afterwards boast of his crime with impunity, and will be admired for his hardihood. The laws of the Prophet were designed for the rovers of the desert, and the Turks, though so long the inhabitants of populous cities, still cling pertinaciously to the manners of the wilderness.

In Turkey every man is by turns a despot and a slave; each within his own little sphere indulges in all the paraphernalia of greatness, and, as ignorance is easily imposed on by appearances, pomp and ostentation distinguish the

Ottoman. Hence the *ataghan* and pipe set round with jewels; hence the *tespih* or rosary, composed of ninety-nine precious stones, which sometimes costs a fortune. When a man would be thought great, it is very natural for him to have recourse to what Lord Shaftesbury calls the essence of imposture, gravity; and the religion, over which the Turk is continually brooding, tends to produce the same effect. This sense of his dignity, conspiring with the torpor which seizes all things beneath the gloom of despotism, renders him indolent and inactive. Pride however is a lonely and melancholy affection, and the haughty Musulman is often obliged to fly to wine to recruit his flagging spirits; for, although the use of that beverage is forbidden by the Koran, yet it has been for a long time connived at, and taverns are now as common in Constantinople as in any town in Europe. The Turk is not, however, a social votary of Bacchus, he is a solitary toper, whose only object is to get intoxicated. This is the most ominous feature in the character of the Turk; he feels no pleasure but in excessive and unnatural excitement. The same languor explains why he so often appears to be a coward; he is a lion if roused, but his spirits are often sunk, and he feels like a despot who has got no slaves to fear him.

In a country where the relative value of money is enhanced by the contempt in which human life is held,—where there is no safety without power, nor power without wealth, avarice is a natural vice. Every one who has ambition unites to it the passion of accumulation; and it is quite incredible what immense sums have been heaped together in a short time by public officers and the slaves of the seraglio. The treasures of Bechir, the Kislak Aga, who was put to death by Mustapha III. to appease the popular clamours, amounted to nearly four millions sterling, and similar instances occur every day; but, under a rapacious despotism it is not sufficient to possess treasures, they must also be concealed; hence the frequent mention of hidden treasures in Turkish history. It was a hidden treasure which made the fortune of Ali Pasha of Janina; defeated in one of his early engagements, and to all appearances totally ruined, he sought shelter in some dilapidated build-

ing, and, tossing his sword in a fit of reckless despair, struck it against something which gave a tinkling sound; this proved to be a casket of money, with which he raised new forces and commenced a more successful career. A hidden treasure occasioned the death of Czerni George; after having obtained high rank in the Russian service, he imprudently entered the Turkish territory, for the purpose of recovering a treasure which he had buried near Semandria; he was recognised and decapitated at Belgrade.

Another vice, engendered by ambition and continual fear, is dissimulation; the necessity of this is inculcated by a terrific Turkish proverb, which says that a man, in order to be safe, must be deaf, dumb and blind. Raghib Pasha, the Vizir of Mustapha III., and one of the chief ornaments of Turkish literature, was esteemed the model of an accomplished Turk; yet, according to Sir James Porter, who knew him well, he was a second Tiberius. His favourite maxim was to hunt the hare in a waggon, that is, to proceed in every affair by covert means, and without precipitation. The description which Dr. Holland gives us of the Pasha of Janina presents a lively idea of the Turkish physiognomy; the calm countenance of Ali, he says, always reminded him of the intense glow of a heated stove. All the mental discipline of a Turk consists in the repression of his furious passions. From habitual pomp, formality, and dissimulation, some forms of politeness will necessarily arise, and these, in fact, constitute a principal branch of Ottoman education; but we must not suppose that Turkish politeness has anything to do with refined feelings of delicacy of sentiment; the abominations of the puppet shows and *ombres chinoises*, which amuse the grandees, are a sufficient proof of the contrary.

A proud barbarian delights in the display of his superiority, and inflicts the greatest tortures in order to show his power; the Turks, indeed, appear to be naturally cruel, and seldom throw off their listless melancholy unless when they have an opportunity of shedding blood. We need not say anything of the pyramids of skulls constructed Gazi Hassan in the Morea, nor of the fillets of ears and noses which have lately decorated the walls of the Seraglio,

The language of the nation itself bears testimony against them; as there is no nobility among the Turks, all who rise to eminence are distinguished by epithets derived from some personal qualification, and these are almost always of a ferocious character. The mother calls her son my lion and my tiger; the Sultan is called the Manslayer and the Master of Blood; the Pasha of Acre rejoiced in the title of The Butcher; Abdil Pasha, an Aga of the Janizaries, renowned during the late Russian wars for the number of his executions, was styled the Gravedigger; and another officer, whose duty it was to decapitate the pashas, earned the sounding name of the Aga of the Dark Doings.

The Turks, nevertheless, have been extolled for their charity, and especially for their kindness towards the brute creation. Their forbearance towards the lower animals seems to be the effect of superstition, or perhaps a mode of compounding for their harshness towards the human species. In reality, despotism always chooses its associates among the weak, and ignorance can only converse with brutes. The Turk, besides, has no enjoyment but in his reveries, and there is something unreal and fantastic in the companionship of dumb creatures. Birds are the amusement of hypochondriacs and of opium-eaters. Magni, an acute observer, notes this circumstance, "Molti fra essi, come serii e malinconici, s'affezionano a certe sodisfazioni che bene spesso passano all' eccesso, e ne hò osservato ne' giorni addietro varii che vivono curiosi e dilettranti di uccelli." When De Tott waited on Ismael Bey to concert with him the fortifications of the Bosphorus, he found that minister intent on procuring two canary-birds which sang the same song; and Ismael Bey, according to Peyssonel, was an inveterate opium-eater.

Of the inmates of the harem we know but little from observation. The debasing tendency of polygamy no one can deny; nor is it much redeemed because the Turks, as their apologists will tell us, rarely avail themselves of the permission to marry four wives. The obligations of matrimony are incommodious to the Turk, and a harem filled with slaves is more congenial to his feelings; but society in the meantime is in a savage state so far as moral

sentiments are unsupported by laws. Marriages by *Kapin*, or contracts of cohabitation for a specified time, are also permitted; so that those who can only maintain a single wife may change her often. Thus tyranny, sensuality, and mistrust poison in their fountains the streams of domestic felicity. The Turkish women cannot be called happy; ignorance and confinement must impair the sense of being; quarrels and toys divide their time; they dote on trifles, and all the copiousness of female feeling is wasted on personified objects.

The language of flowers, which is peculiar to the Turkish harems, owes its celebrity wholly to Lady Wortley Montague; it was she who introduced it into Europe, together with the practice of inoculation, in the same manner as Busbequius, two centuries before, had introduced the Persian lilac and the writings of Dioscorides. The Persian personifies the rose, and makes it the mistress of the nightingale, to whom, on the return of spring, he tells his amorous pains. The Hindoo dedicates flowers to his divinity, whose various attributes they represent to his imagination; but it is in Turkey alone, and in the harems, that we find this mysterious language, to which there exists nothing similar among other Oriental nations. Our fair countrywoman, however, who has thrown a brilliant, and rather a voluptuous colouring over the manners of the harem, has also much exaggerated the merit of these hieroglyphics of love; and the "millions of verses," of which she speaks, dwindle down to about two hundred before the researches of the learned. This language of flowers is merely the amusement of the secluded fair ones, and a knowledge of it can only be acquired from the slaves of the harem. A learned Turk, to whom J. von Hammer applied for information on the subject, was highly offended at the freedom, and replied, indignantly, that he was not a woman's slave.

There is no art more adapted to soothe uneasy passions, or to recreate the weariness of confinement, than that of music, and we might, therefore, naturally expect to find it the amusement of the Turkish women. But it has never been cultivated in Turkey, and, since its first introduction

from Persia by Amurath IV., it does not appear to have undergone any change or improvement. Prince Cantemir wrote a treatise in Turkish on the theory of music, and set to notes the most agreeable Persian airs, but so incapable of improvement are these indocile barbarians, that at the present day they hardly ever practise the musical notation.

As every Turk who receives an education has some acquaintance with the Arabic and Persian languages, he has a ready access and introduction to all the learning of the East. The number of those who possess these elementary acquirements is very great, owing to the multitude of offices connected with the law and religion, which can be filled by those alone who have been qualified by a regular course of study. From these circumstances, and from the great literary ardour of the Arabians, who now serve as models to the Turks, we might expect to find among the latter a great display of intellectual activity. But the fact is quite the reverse; Turkey is the desert of literature; some scattered antiquities, and a few stunted stems, detach themselves from the dreary waste, but there is little life, and no variety.

The great number of the public libraries in Constantinople, however, has been adduced as a proof of the national learning, and we feel required on that account to bestow on them a short consideration. These libraries, according to D'Ohsson, are thirty-five in number, but he gives no particulars. Toderini enumerates thirteen; Sekeria Efendi fourteen; and a writer in Eichhorn's *Geschichte der Literatur*, whose authority we shall follow, makes them amount to eighteen.³ No works are arranged on the shelves or included in the catalogues of these libraries except such as are written in the languages of Islamism, Turkish, Arabic and Persian; if any others exist, they are thrown into lumber chests and left to moulder in neglect. Of the seven principal establishments, including that of the Seraglio, we have exact details, and their united collections

³ Some recent information, however, respecting these libraries (leading to the belief that D'Ohsson's enumeration is not exaggerated) will be found in the statements of Mr. Schultz, an eminent German orientalist now travelling in the East, published in No. 1 (January, 1828,) of the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*.

amount precisely to 10,000 volumes. Hence, we may safely conclude that the literary treasures, contained in all the libraries of Constantinople, do not exceed 25,000 volumes, or, as the various catalogues have much in common, perhaps 5,000 works. The single library that was consumed by fire in the Basilica, just ten centuries before the Turks obtained possession of the city, contained 120,000 manuscripts! We will not say anything respecting the character of this triple literature, except, that if we are to estimate the value of genius from the influence it is likely to exercise on the happiness of mankind, it is probable that the works of Plutarch and Cicero are worth all the learning of the East. Here we cannot omit the opportunity of expressing our opinion, that, with due diligence, much classic treasure might still be rescued from the dusty chests of the Seraglio. There is no good reason for believing that the library of the Palæologi was destroyed by the Ottoman conquerors. Mahomet II. was an accomplished prince, the patron of letters, and versed, it is said, in the Greek language; on the conquest of Constantinople he immediately took possession of the imperial palace; why, then, should he destroy the library? Besides, no mention is made by the Turkish historians of the destruction of Greek manuscripts, at that, or any future period; on the contrary, we have positive and we think unquestionable evidence, in proof of their existence. Ismael Bey, a learned Turk, who had lived nine years in the Seraglio, assured Toderini that there existed an immense quantity of manuscripts in the Greek, Latin, and other languages; not in the library, indeed, but in the store-rooms of the Seraglio; this testimony was confirmed by Francesco Franchini, the Venetian Dragoman, who turned Musulman, and was appointed Keeper of the Imperial Library; he stated that many books, in the Greek, Latin, and Syriac languages, remained shut up in chests, and that a collection of manuscripts, brought from Jerusalem, was said to be among them. The indefatigable Toderini published in 1788 the Catalogue of the Imperial Library of the Seraglio, of which he had surreptitiously procured a copy. If General Sebastiani had not been ignorant of this circumstance, as well as of the jealous care

taken by the Turks to keep their collections undefiled by the languages of unbelievers, he might have searched the lumber-rooms instead of the library of the Seraglio, and turned to better account the permission he obtained to penetrate so far within the interior.

There is but one mode of rescuing from destruction those literary treasures of antiquity, and that is, by money; a Turk will do anything for money, and the Grand Signior is the most needy of the Turks. It was generally thought that no Frank could view the interior of Saint Sophia without a firmân, until Dr. Clarke discovered that it might be seen at any time for six piastres; and Grelot (thanks to his liberal bribes) was allowed to measure the sacred edifice, and to finish accurate drawings of its internal decorations. There is an additional circumstance respecting the libraries of Constantinople, to which we would call the attention of our readers; only three of all those collections existed prior to the last century, the rest having been formed within that period by the Sultans or grandees who imitated their zeal; the literature and language of the Turks, nevertheless, seem to have derived no benefit from those aids, but to have gone on gradually declining. The importance of this observation will be manifest, when we come to consider the various attempts which have been made to reanimate the nation, and the uniform failure of them.

The Turks are a people extremely peculiar in all their usages; what may be considered their ancestral customs bear, as the Abbate Häger has fully shown, a close resemblance to those of the Chinese. In sentiments and deportment they differ widely from all surrounding nations, Persian as well as European, and these original dissimilarities have been turned by superstition into principles of repulsion. Education being wholly in the hands of the Ulemas, is doled out in a manner conformable to the interests of that crafty body, and does not produce the same humanizing effects which usually accompany the free diffusion of knowledge. Thus ignorance and pride, a bigoted adherence to established usages, and hatred of strangers, stop up the ordinary channels of improvement,

and prevent the application of remedies from without to correct the virulence of internal disease. The rapid and palpable decline of the empire during the last century and a half, has convinced the Ottoman princes of the necessity of change; but as the efforts of the despot have hitherto been uniformly defeated by the bigotry of the people, and as the present sultan persists in the attempt which has proved fatal to so many of his predecessors, we will try to investigate, in the construction of the empire itself, the chance of its ultimate reformation.

The emperor of the Turks unites in himself the power of the *kitab* and the *kilitch*, the book and the sword, and consequently claims the exercise of an absolute authority, both spiritual and temporal. Though not of the family of Coureisch, to which the office of Chief Imam is limited by the Koran, yet conquest has supplied to him every defect of title, and he is considered by all true believers as the legitimate successor of the Prophet. The warlike princes, however, who led the Ottomans into Europe, had neither leisure nor inclination to discharge the united offices of judge and priest; they entrusted, therefore, to the mollahs and cadis the administration of justice, to the sheiks and imams the ceremonies of religion, and on the muphty they conferred the general prerogatives of the theocratic character. This was a fatal error in policy. Under a despotic government everything depends upon the monarch; when he is strong, the nation also will be strong, while the division of his power does not necessarily accrue to the advantage of the people. The priests and lawyers, united into one body under the muphty, soon profited of the religious bias of the nation, to intercept a large portion of the popular reverence, and to constitute themselves the guardians of right, leaving to the sultan the more questionable exercise of power. But, however the Ottoman princes may be thwarted in practice by the stubborn nature of a theocracy, they hold in theory a despotic sway, and the only limits to their authority are those of a usurped or accidental nature. There are some, indeed, who have thought fit to controvert this point; Peyssonel in particular and Sir James Porter both insist, that the

Grand Signior is so much checked by the soldiers and the Ulemas, that he really enjoys but a very limited authority. "When," says the latter author, "the people are notoriously aggrieved, when their property and that of the church is repeatedly violated, when the prince will riot in blood, or carry on an unsuccessful war, they pronounce him acting contrary to law, and destroy him." But is it possible to imagine a more barbarous government than that in which the excesses of the prince can be checked by nothing but his destruction? or can we conceive a despotism so complete as to take away even the right of vengeance from the people? The sultan is not more controlled by law than the savage is by a natural sense of justice; the only restraint on both is the dread of retaliation, and the savage, in general, has more to fear. The Grand Signior cannot infringe the right of property, nor inflict punishment in general without a formal condemnation; such is the theory of Turkish law: but, on the other hand, the *Orlouf*, or royal prerogative, allows him to put to death fourteen persons per day as the effect of immediate inspiration, and in these cases confiscation is sure to follow. The most characteristic trait, however, of Turkish despotism, is exhibited in the relation that subsists between the prince and his officers. All who accept any post or government from the sultan (and what he offers none dare refuse) place their lives and properties thereby at his disposal; he is the heir to all their effects, and can, at any time, demand their heads as a matter of right. In such a state of things it is natural that the powers of government should either be in the hands of desperados, or of men who hope to escape notice by a servile adherence to established routine, and who sacrifice every consideration to that of personal safety. The Ulemas alone are placed beyond the reach of these odious prerogatives; they may be exiled, but cannot be put to death, and to the inviolability of their persons they add the security of their property. As the body thus designated appears to us to have exerted a powerful influence on the character of the Ottoman empire, we shall endeavour, as fully as our limits will permit, to expose its temper and constitution.

As the law and religion of Turkey are founded on a

common basis, so the Ulemas, or body of priests and lawyers, form but a single order in the State: but the prayers and ablutions prescribed by the Koran are so numerous and frequent, that the minister of religion could never find leisure to execute the office of a judge; the imams or priests, therefore, constitute a separate class of the Ulemas, and leave to the cadis the administration of justice. Every Osmanli is entitled to become a member of this body, but he must first receive a suitable education: after a few years' study, and an examination in the Arabic language, the Koran and the Psalmody, the candidate may be admitted to the service of a mosque; but, having once entered upon the sacerdotal office, his career is closed, and no further promotion awaits him in the body of the Ulemas. Those who aspire to the honours of the judicature continue their studies for a longer time, and after several examinations obtain the rank of *Mulazim*, which entitles them to hold the office of *cadi*, or judge: if their ambition urges them still further, and they wish to obtain the degree of *Muderis*, or Doctor, their noviciate must be continued seven years longer, when they undergo a final examination in presence of the *muphty*; and the title of *Muderis* being once conferred, the first dignities of the magistracy lie open to their hopes. The classification, however, does not end here; the *Muderis* of Constantinople are divided into ten classes or degrees, from the first of which alone are chosen the supreme magistrates of the State. The routine of advancement which is here pointed out is rigorously adhered to with respect to the great body of the profession, although frequently violated in favour of the principal Ulemas, whose children often obtain at a very early age the degree of *Muderis*, in order that they may reach the principal honours while still in the vigour of life. This exact and judicious organization gives to the body of the Ulemas a firm coherence, which makes it the most solid part of the Ottoman constitution. Long probations, and a multitude of successive gradations are well calculated to insure safe and uniform counsels to a body engaged in the pursuit of objects which they dare not avow. The heads of the order cannot fail to be devoted to its interests, and its

unity is secured by the controlling authority of the muphty, from whom depend all the appointments of the priesthood. Of all the offices in the State his alone is held for life; he is the oracle of the law, and the representative of the sultan in the exercise of his spiritual authority: and, as all new laws, and even the question of peace or war must await his sanction, he participates in the legislative power of the prince, and interferes with all the movements of government. The privileges common to all the Ulemas are exemptions from taxes and arbitrary impositions; from the punishment of death, and from arbitrary confiscations;—precious prerogatives in a country where death and confiscation are the usual methods which the monarch pursues to fill his treasuries and enjoy his power! It appears from the Turkish historians, that it is only within the last two centuries that the Ulemas have had the uncontested enjoyment of these rights; but the most singular advantage gained by the steady encroachments of this juridical priesthood, is the establishment of an aristocracy, which assures to a few families the hereditary and almost exclusive enjoyment of the principal offices of the magistracy, and obliges the sultan to conform to the routine of the profession. He could formerly select the muphty from among all the members of the order indiscriminately, but his choice is now confined to the first class of the Muderis of Constantinople.

In a country where every transaction is coloured with a show of justice and religion, such a body as the Ulemas must necessarily enjoy a high degree of consideration; and the superiority of their education confirms to them that ascendancy which the people are willing to concede to the interpreters of the Koran. They are sufficiently enlightened to understand their interests; the prerogatives which they defend are of the most solid and important nature; their chiefs are bound to them by the strongest ties, or are proved by a long noviciate and repeated trials; they unite the firmness of an aristocracy to the spirit of a profession; in fine, their influence has such a naturally good foundation, and is so artfully fortified, that it would be hardly possible to overturn it. But all the advantages which

result from the strong and closely jointed combination of the Ulemas are exclusively their own; they cannot resist the arbitrary violence of the Sultan, but they can impede the alterations of the law; their power is founded on the false principles which arrest the progress of civilization, and they are the natural supporters of the present state of things. There is nothing in the Ottoman empire which has a solid construction except this bulwark against innovation. Law and religion are hard to be reformed even when taken separately, but when united they offer an inert, or even an active resistance, sufficient to baffle the strongest efforts of the best-intentioned despot.

To this separation of the spiritual from the temporal authority of the sultans, in the early periods of the Ottoman history, must be ascribed the increased bigotry and present barbarism of the Turks. The Koran, indeed, breathes a fanatic and unsocial spirit, averse from all progress in civilization and the arts, yet so constant is the action of our social tendencies, that the clearest precepts of the Prophet, if not re-enforced by the spiritual power, must at length give way to them, and fall into neglect. The Caliphs, who always retained this power, were enabled to dispense with those dogmas which seemed averse to the interests of society; and the Arabians under them attained to a high degree of literary eminence, and even to principles of religious toleration. A prince invested with the spiritual authority is checked in his innovations by nothing but his own scruples; and if he possess enlarged views, if he be animated with a love of learning, or a sincere desire to promote the welfare of his people, he is sure to find in his favour the current of popular sentiment. Among the Turks this power has devolved upon a body of men who have made it available for the protection of their lives and properties, and who are naturally disposed to maintain in its integrity the system to which they owe their safety. Education also is in their hands, and they exert a more immediate influence on the people by the sheiks or preachers, who sometimes venture to inveigh very boldly against the measures of the government.

The Janizaries, like the Ulemas, possessed valuable

immunities, which united them in the sense of a common interest, and nourished among them a spirit of mutual support, even after they had ceased to assemble in the field. Machiavel, in his "Prince," (a work, by the way, which was translated into Turkish by the desire of Mustapha III.) ascribes the solidity of the sultan's power to his reliance on a fierce soldiery, who, he says, are more easy to be pleased than the people, and to please whom all the cares of government may be confined. He did not perceive that the Janizaries, from their numbers and immunities, united the interests of citizens to the power of arms; and the necessity of their suppression proceeded, in fact, from those very honours and rewards to which our early writers ascribe their superiority. Their odas, or regiments, at first formed of slaves and captives, were soon filled by the bravest of the Osmanlis; and as a military brotherhood affords some chance of protection from arbitrary power, all crowded to the muster-roll of the Janizaries. This immense multitude, however, was not subjected to military discipline, and only served to fill the empire with turbulence and confusion, without increasing its strength. The number of Janizaries enrolled at the close of the last century was 400,000; pay was issued for 60,000, but not more than 25,000 men could at any time be mustered during the Russian wars. The danger to which the sovereign was exposed from a pampered and licentious soldiery was very soon felt, and Bajazet II., within less than a century and a half after the creation of the Janizaries, formed a plan for their destruction: the idea was often revived by his successors, and Amûrath IV. murdered a great number of them. Selim III. was satisfied with forbidding the recruiting the corps, and his moderation cost him his life. The suppression of the Janizaries, however, had become obviously necessary to the security of the prince and of the State. Mahmoud, the present Sultan, when he ascended the throne, had been careful to preserve the arms and accoutrements of the Nizam Gedid, or new troops, who were at that time disbanded; and while maturing his designs he had imported 50,000 stand of arms from Liège, and secretly stored them in the Seraglio. At length the time

came, and by one deadly and well-dissembled blow of Turkish policy, that haughty soldiery, to which the Ottoman empire owed the largest share of its glory and its conquests, was totally extinguished.

Despotic power has no faithful allies; the priesthood purloin the authority they are designed to assist, and an angry army capriciously usurps it. The strength of the Ottoman government has been long since wasting away from both these defections; but another cause, more characteristic of the nation, a law of the Seraglio itself, has powerfully co-operated to obscure the splendour of the House of Osman. In the early periods of the Turkish history, all the male relations of the emperor shared with him the glories and dangers of the field; but among a people prone to admire bold crimes, who had no fixed law of succession to the throne, and whose domestic manners were calculated to weaken the ties of kindred, the prince often found dangerous competitors in his sons and brothers. Selim I. deposed and murdered his father Bajazet II.; his successor, Soliman the Great, was obliged to strangle his eldest son, who had conspired against his life. These circumstances induced the last-named sultan to ordain that all the princes allied to the throne should be kept in close confinement in the Seraglio, secluded from the public eye and from state concerns; nor could they leave their prisons, unless in the presence of the emperor, till called to ascend the throne. This fatal law, dictated in the gloomy spirit of eastern jealousy, soon marred the grandeur of the Ottoman race. The succeeding sultans, reared in captivity, amidst women and eunuchs, were unfit to be the heads of a warlike nation, and relinquished in almost every case the command of the army, to riot in cruelty and sensuality. From Osman, the founder of the dynasty, to Soliman the Great, the emperors of the Turks were all men of surprising vigour and abilities; but from that period their history exhibits little but disgrace. The turbulence of the Janizaries met with little restraint, and the muphty and the grand vizir divided between them the sovereign authority; the latter officer, to whom is delegated all the temporal power of the sovereign, easily became formidable to his

weak and suspicious master. After the Revolution in 1730, by which Ahmed III. was deposed, Mahomet V., his successor, was persuaded that the power of the grand vizir had grown dangerous, and that a frequent change of the minister was the only way to frustrate the schemes of his ambition. This maxim was adopted in the succeeding reigns. Osman III. in the space of two years and a half, beheaded or deposed five grand vizirs, and six caimacans, or deputies. But the palliatives of a weak policy are not equivalent to the adoption of sound measures; and the frequent change of ministers, though it spared the emperors some alarms, diminished the vigour of the government, quickened the intrigues of the Seraglio, paralysed the operations of the army, and exposed the faltering measures of the divan to general contempt.

As the power of an imbecile despot consists in his treasures, the whole system of internal administration in Turkey is directed to the accumulation of money; and as, according to the Turkish proverb, "the fish stinks first at the head," the avarice which actuates the sovereign is soon diffused through every branch of the administration. The three maxims of government bequeathed by the great vizir Kiuperly, to Mahomet IV. were—"never to listen to the suggestions of women—to fill his treasury by any means—and to be always on horseback among his troops." Of these the second alone has been observed by the degenerate sultans; every office is sold, with an understanding that the purchaser may use any means to reimburse himself; and as confiscations, or presents to secure impunity, are fertile sources of revenue, the rapacity of governors is secretly encouraged. The sale of pashalics is sometimes so flagrant that the commissions are disposed of, sealed, to bankers, who having found purchasers, at a profit if possible, have the names inserted: thus the right of ruling over millions is the traffick of brokers, who discount, as it were, the vizir's drafts on extortion. What is in Turkey called energy, and with us unmitigated cruelty, is thought to be the greatest merit of a pasha, who, if he did not resort to violence and rapacity, could rarely fulfil his engage-

ments; and the most revolting atrocities, if they only serve to circulate the gold of the provinces into the imperial treasury, are not thought averse from the ends of a barbarous despotism.

The same system is followed by the muphty in filling the offices within his jurisdiction. As these are in general held for only eighteen months, and as the number of cadis in the empire is very great, the revenue arising from these frequent changes must be enormous. But the intervention of bankers is here more frequent than in the former instance, and the offices which regard the administration of justice are tossed about with stock-jobbing dexterity by Jews, Greeks and Armenians, till some Turk is found who is willing to pay all the profits, and who gives those slaves of Mammon a price which the equitable discharge of his office can never reimburse. These statements depict the cupidity of the government, and a cupidity so blind must necessarily terminate in brutal oppression; they also show how systematically this destructive system is pursued. The provinces in the meantime are made deserts, and malversation is introduced into every branch of the government.

The first of these effects we will explain in the words of Beaujour (author of the *Tableau du Commerce de la Grèce*) a candid and well-informed writer; speaking of Salonica, he says,

“Le Pacha a la dîme d'une vingtaine de villages qui relèvent immédiatement de lui il n'afferme cette dîme que soixante à soixante dix mille piastres; mais il perçoit une pareille somme en droits casuels. Il fait ensuite au moins cent mille piastres d'*avanies*; et quand il n'est pas humain, il en fait deux cent mille; s'il est avide et rapace, *dans six mois il a dévoré le pays*. Moustaphe Pacha tirait de son pachalik trois cent soixante mille piastres, et ce pacha passait pour un homme désintéressé; *il l'était en effet pour un Turk.*”

Here we see a pasha extorting from his province six times the amount of the tithe which was due, and yet passing for a disinterested Turk. As the *karatch*, or poll-tax,

paid by tributary subjects, is assessed on the provinces without any attention to the changes of wealth or population, when these happen to be diminished by any public calamities, the levying of the impost becomes a work of extermination, and this barbarous government, which expects to effect everything by brute force, desolates the country to punish the poverty of the inhabitants. This wasting of the source of revenue has gone on with increased rapidity of late years, while at the same time speculation frustrates all the intentions of public expenditure. Mustapha III. a well-intentioned prince, was blamed by his ministers for his parsimony; but he excused himself to De Tott by expressing his conviction, that, if he were to make liberal disbursements for the public service, they would only go to feed the avarice of his servants: funds appropriated to public institutions were often diverted into channels of private interest. The attempts of the emperors to maintain schools for military instruction, and to promote by liberal rewards the science of gunnery, appear to have been baffled in a similar manner: even the pay of the Janizaries was not allowed to reach undiminished its proper destination; one third of it at least went to support the pomp of the chief ministers, and the pensions of half a dozen veterans were often accumulated on the head of a single slave. This corrupt system is not an accidental evil, but a vice inherent in the nature of the government, and all the details of office are arranged in accordance with it. The desire of extending a lucrative patronage has increased to a prodigious multitude the inferior offices of the Porte; and as these offices are the only school of politics with which the Turkish statesmen are acquainted, it is no wonder that so few objects enter into their field of view, or that while the diplomatic corps of Pera plot the partition of the empire, the divan are wholly intent on pecuniary gains, or the intrigues of the Seraglio. A despot reared in captivity, sensuality and ignorance,—ministers raised from the dregs of the people, and still further disabled by the instability of office,—religion and law wedded to ignorance and abuses, and deeply engaged to resist innovation,—such are the props that support the tottering fabric of the

Ottoman empire, which, though once the terror of the world, is now (to borrow the words of Knolles) "labouring with nothing more than with the weight of itself."

"But, to the amazement of all," (says Dr. Clarke) "who were well acquainted with the internal state of the Turkish empire, it has still survived; and the most impotent of human beings, cooped up with his eunuchs and his concubines in a crazy old hut, at the mouth of the Thracian Bosphorus, still exercises a nominal jurisdiction over many millions of human beings, inhabiting the fairest and most fertile portion of the earth." The cause of this permanency is easily explained:—Osman I. gave his name to his people; he not merely founded the dynasty—he created the nation. The word Turk among the Ottomans is a term of contempt, synonymous with barbarian; while they glory in the name of Osmanli, as expressive of valour and politeness. In Turkey there is no hereditary nobility; all the great officers and ministers of state are considered in law as the slaves of the sultan; thus all the prejudices of an ignorant people in favour of antiquity, nobility, and power, are concentrated in favour of the race of Osman. A few families indeed have attained to hereditary rank; three of these who belong to the Ulemas, have also succeeded in confining to themselves the office of muphty; but this is in a great measure the work of management and usurpation. The family of Ibrahim Khan, vizir of Mahomet II., enjoys, it is said, like the Grand Signior, an exemption from the bonds of marriage, and also the valuable privilege of refusing to accept office: but still the splendour of the family of Osman stands single in the eyes of the nation, and the care to preserve that illustrious line has never been more conspicuous than in the midst of revolutions. The dynasty had nearly been extinguished however in 1808; at the time when Mustapha was put to death, executioners despatched by him were in search of Mahmoud, the present emperor, who was discovered by his deliverers lying concealed under some old tapestry. The preservation of his life was a great triumph to the nation, as he was the only surviving male of the family; and this circumstance, in all probability, has saved his life in the recent troubles, and

more recent national disgraces. His eldest son, Abdul-Hamid, perished by a fire which consumed a great portion of the harem in 1817, and the Sultan Achmet, the heir to the throne, is still in his minority : thus the life of Mahmoud is still of great value to a nation unacquainted with regencies, and whose chief link of union is the attachment to the race of Osman.

The affection of the Ottomans for the family of their founder is not however sufficient to save the empire from decline. A government which does not acknowledge the good of society for its object, has no *vis medicatrix* to withstand the violence of casual shocks. The towering pride of despotism has a wide shadow, but a narrow basis; all that supports it is oppressed, all beneath it is in gloom, and, if once it swerves from the perpendicular, ruin and dilapidation speedily ensue. Towards the close of the last century, the period of the dissolution of the Ottoman empire seemed fully arrived. We do not refer to the plans for its partition by the two imperial courts; those plans, we are convinced, could never have succeeded; but the rebellious dismemberments were of the most formidable nature. Egypt was divided among rebellious beys; almost all the pashas from Bagdad to Aleppo refused obedience; Central Greece was in the power of the formidable Ali of Tepeleni: Servia was in arms, and successfully withstood the whole force of the empire: while Paswan Oglou, Pasha of Widdin, routed an army of 100,000 men, and carried his arms to the gates of Constantinople. The circumstances of these two last-named rebellions exhibit more clearly the weakness of the state: in both cases the leaders were obscure adventurers, who at first had not perhaps any definite object, but who knew the advantage of European tactics; and in both cases the rebels were completely successful. The effect of such shocks cannot be soon recovered: the Porte endeavours to preserve the calm by accepting a nominal submission, but the Grand Signior is probably not obeyed in more than a fourth of his dominions. Happily for mankind, experience has again confuted the authority of Machiavel, who asserts, "a chi assalta il Turco è necessario pensare di averlo a trovare unito." The possibility of disunion and

successful rebellion in the empire of the Grand Turk is now no longer doubtful.

A sense of their declining strength has induced the Ottoman princes, since the beginning of the last century, to aim at introducing some military reforms, and to endeavour, by the adoption of European tactics, to retrieve the tarnished glory of their arms. A brief detail of these attempts, all of which failed from the stubborn prejudices of the people and their want of active spirit, cannot fail to prove instructive, and to guide us in our conjectures respecting the future destiny of the Ottoman empire.

Bonneval, an officer of prince Eugene's army, of a petulant and restless disposition, fled into Turkey from the consequences of his misconduct, and taking the turban in 1720, engaged in the service of the Porte. The Turks had been instructed in the casting of cannon about fifty years before, by an Italian renegade of the name of Sardi; but they were unskilful in the management of artillery, and totally unacquainted with the use of bombs. These defects Bonneval undertook to supply; a regiment of Combaradgis, or bombardiers, was formed on the European model, and Bonneval (or Achmet Pasha, as he was named), was placed at the head of it: he retained the command till his death in 1747, when he was succeeded by his son Soliman Aga. In twenty years, nevertheless, after the death of Bonneval, the art of pointing, or even of firing a mortar, appears to have been totally forgotten by the Turks. The vizir, Morovandgi Pasha, who commanded the troops at Choczim, in the Russian war, begged of De Tott to show him a mode of firing mortars without a fuse, merely because a muezzin, who appeared to him to have great talents as an engineer, was a stranger to the use of fuses; so little benefit had been derived from Bonneval's instructions. De Tott also assisted in establishing a school of engineers; and afterwards the science of fortification was for some time diligently studied under General Lafitte, who resided fourteen years in Turkey, and was intrusted with some operations in the war of 1787. In 1793, Aubert de Bayet, the ambassador of the French Republic, brought with him to Constantinople a squadron of horse artillery, the rapidity and

precision of whose movements were calculated to convince the Turks of their inferiority. At the same time an English renegade, named Campbell, who had held a high rank in the British service, received the command of Bonneval's corps of Combaradgis, another English renegade directed the cannon foundries, and a Prussian had the control of the engineer. It is needless to name the crowd of European officers who have been subsequently engaged in the service of the Porte; but what availed all this bustle of seeming reformation? The activity of a Mustapha, and the enlightened views of a Selim, could not change the passive character of a people sunk in ignorance and stupid arrogance, and who have no spirit but in the paroxysms of excitement. The Turks are considered as the inventors of trenches and parallels in the attack of places; but their defeat before Widdin, and the lingering blockades to which they have been obliged to have recourse in their late contests with the Greeks, show how completely they have lost their former skill, and how little they have profited from the lessons of their European instructors. When the English fleet passed the Dardanelles in 1807, the Turks who were stationed in the batteries and castles fled from their guns (as we are informed by M. Juchereau de St. Denys,⁴ a distinguished French officer, who was present on the occasion,) and threatened to kill all who offered to prevent their flight.

The reforms in the marine, during the same period, appeared to proceed under better auspices from the vigorous character of those engaged in their promotion. The Capitan Pasha, Gazi Hassan, was a man of extraordinary boldness: he applied himself with unremitting zeal to the formation of an effective navy: and under his protection, a nautical academy was opened in 1773, in which instructions were given by an Algerine, not deficient in practical abilities. Before this time the Turks knew nothing of navigation, and were almost ignorant of the use of the compass, as was remarked by Boscovitch. The best models of naval architecture were procured from Deptford and Toulon. European artists were engaged: docks were constructed by

⁴ Révolutions de Constantinople en 1807 et 1808; précédées d'Observations générales sur l'état actuel de l'Empire Ottoman. 2 vols. 8vo. Paris. 1819.

a Swede, named Rodé: the great natural resources of the empire—the forests of Taurus, and the mines of Trebizond,—were put in requisition, and Brun, Benoit, and Spurring launched in the port of Constantinople some of the finest vessels of which any nation could boast. This ardour of the Porte to increase the naval strength of the empire did not abate on the death of Hassan. His successor, Kutchuk Hussein, was equally severe, active, and indefatigable; but both these men were ignorant barbarians, destitute of even the first elements of science; their improvements extended no further than the skill of the intelligent agents they employed: they created a fleet externally imposing; but what was its real strength?—We refer to Navarino for an answer. Cool intrepidity, strict discipline and science, are the ingredients of naval superiority; but the battles of Lepanto, of Chesmé, and finally of Navarino, are memorable proofs how incompatible these qualifications are with the Turkish character.

It deserves to be remarked, as a proof of the repulsive bigotry that exists under the Ottoman government, that almost all the European Christians who engage in its service retire from it in disgust; while the renegades, from whose intelligence a more permanent benefit might be derived, are generally put to death for slight offences: such was the fate of Soliman, the Prussian engineer, and of the Russian who instructed the army of Bairactar in European manœuvres. Ingliz Mustapha (so Campbell was called) died not long ago in misery and want; and the end of Selim, a man of wit and accomplishments, who had been, we suspect, a distinguished member of the Irish bar, was still more wretched.

Coeval with these attempts to improve the Ottoman army and marine, an innovation of a more important but less ostentatious nature was made by the introduction into Turkey of the art of printing. A Turkish printing press was, for the first time, established in Constantinople, in the year 1726, under the protection of the Sultan Ahmed III., by Ibrahim Motaferrika, a Hungarian renegade. Toderini insists that the types were cast in Constantinople; but of this there is no direct proof, and we prefer the authority of

Jänisch, in his preface to Meninski, who says that they were brought from Paris. This institution was liberally supported by the Sultan Ahmed, but languished under his successor, and on the death of Ibrahim totally ceased. The whole fruit of its labours, during the fourteen years of its existence, was three-and-twenty volumes. This great instrument of public instruction could not be introduced without the permission of the Ulemas; and they, of course yielding to the wishes of the prince, sanctioned the printing of all works in the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian languages, except the Koran, and those of a religious nature. This inhibitory clause, which comprehends three-fourths of oriental learning, and nearly all that the Turks care to read, was necessary, Mr. Thornton says, to preserve religion in its purity; but we are unable to perceive that there is anything unholy or unclean in the nature of letter-press; or that religion is kept more pure by bearing a high price. The same writer adds, "that he wants no other evidence of the liberal encouragement given to learning by the Turks than their own unassisted efforts to introduce the art of printing." To this we will reply, that we want no stronger proof of their apathy and hopeless barbarism than the fact, that their rich and populous capital was not able to support the *single* press, the short-lived existence of which was wholly due to the liberality of the prince, and the talents of a renegade. After an oblivion, however, of more than forty years, the experiment was repeated, and in the year 1783 the press was re-established by Abdul Hamid; and shortly after, the accession of the liberal Selim to the throne gave it ampler funds and fresh activity. The French, who at this time were making great efforts to civilise the Turks, co-operated with the Sultan, and a press was also established in the palace of the French ambassador. Several treatises on the art of war, translated from the French, were printed in the Turkish language; and two little volumes were printed in French, which, from particular circumstances, deserve to be mentioned. The one is entitled "*Tableau des Nouveaux Réglemens de l'Empire Ottoman*," and appeared in 1798: it was the work of Mahmud Efendi, who had resided some time in England, and cost the author his life in the

revolution which deposed Sultan Selim. The other is a pseudonymous pamphlet on the Turkish army and the state of military science at Constantinople. It bears the name of Mustapha, and the date of 1803; but it was in fact written by the Greek brothers, Argyropoulo, and after the accession of Mahmoud, with the intention of deceiving the courts of Europe with respect to the strength of the Ottoman empire. This palpable forgery, nevertheless, duped the learned M. Langlés, who republished it in 1810, with numerous notes. Few elementary works proceeded from the press of Constantinople; and, if we except the complete History of the empire from native authorities, nothing calculated to engage the favour of the people. The art of printing became, under Selim, part of the new order of things, and the establishment was fixed in the barracks of the new troops at Scutari; in consequence, when the revolution of 1807 broke out, the whole was reduced to ashes, and few of those connected with it escaped the fury of the Janizaries. Not more than forty volumes issued from the Turkish press during this second period of its existence. Thus ignorance obtained a second and complete victory; for although the press has been since re-established by Mahmoud, yet the general bigotry of the nation allows it only an inactive and stealthy existence. As the Turks are generally versed in Arabic and Persian, their literature of course is proportionally extensive; nevertheless, although they have known the art of printing one hundred years, they have not as yet printed as many volumes: this fact alone, this slowness to feel the merits of an art which ministers so largely to intellectual enjoyment, sufficiently shows how insusceptible they are of social improvement. It deserves, also, to be remarked, that the art of printing has been practised by the Jews of Constantinople from the earliest period of its discovery. A Septuagint was printed by them, we think, in 1486. This circumstance might have facilitated the adoption of that art by the Turks, if their apathy and bigotry offered less powerful resistance to their progressive civilization.

Reasoning from all those facts, we cannot agree with Mouradjha D'Ohsson, that the civilization of the Turks is

not impeded by any insurmountable obstacles, or that the vices which waste away the Ottoman empire are not derived from its institutions, but are merely accidental.

“Pour reformer les Ottomans,” says that author, “il ne faudroit donc qu’un esprit supérieur, qu’un-sultan sage, éclairé, entreprenant; qu’il soit secondé par le génie puissant d’un Sinan Pacha, d’un Kupruli; qu’un mouphty animé du même zèle et du même esprit entre dans leur vues.”

Certainly, with such *points d'appui*, the world itself might be moved; but where such a paradoxical combination of great qualities must take place, in order to effect improvements towards which every free community naturally tends, it is evident that the old fabric must be totally razed and a new one constructed on a different model. If gravitation does not support the globe, we must have recourse to the elephant and the tortoise; and when individual interests and the welfare of the community are not allowed fair play, prejudices alone can hold together the frame of society. The power of the despot stands on a slender foundation: if he quarrels with ignorance, he loses his only friend, as is clearly evinced in the recent history of the Turks. Selim III. was a wise, enlightened, enterprising prince; his servants had zeal and abilities, and the muphty was devoted to his will; yet he could neither correct abuses, nor restore the empire to its pristine vigour. The reformations which he urged were not precipitately introduced by him; many of his ancestors had failed in similar attempts. Ahmed III. nearly a century before, resembled Selim in fortune as well as in character; both these princes were distinguished by their poetical talent and literary accomplishments; both knew how to appreciate the superior enlightenment of Europe; the former introduced into Turkey, and the latter revived and encouraged the art of printing; Ahmed sent the first Turkish ambassadors to the courts of Europe, Selim made them permanent; both were innovators with the best intentions, and—here is the point of resemblance most worthy of attention,—both lost their thrones by their zeal for improvement, and in each case the nation relapsed to its torpor, its ignorance and corruption.

We must not, however, impute to the people alone the continued degradation of the Ottoman empire; there is something in the character of Turkish genius which unfits it for the task of reformation; and under the Turkish government there is so frequent a delegation of absolute power that the enlightenment of the prince can only operate within a very narrow sphere. In Turkey all may rise to power who manifest abilities; that is to say, who are at once wily and audacious. There is no country so fertile in genius of this kind, or which produces so many Napoleons on a small scale; but the natural energies of barbarians, bred in a school of corruption, are not of a humanising kind. Bairactar Vizir, who effected the revolution of 1808, was originally a labourer, and fell the victim of his own arrogance; Gazi Hassan and Kutchuk Hussein, the chief supporters of the declining empire, had both been slaves, were both quite ignorant, cruel, and avaricious. Little need be said of Achmet, Pasha of Acre, originally a Bosnian slave, who gloried in the appellation of Djezzar, or the Butcher, or of Ali, of Janina, who, with a little mercy towards his subjects, might have fixed his independence on a solid basis; their atrocities are too well known. Czerni George, the Servian rebel, was a Turk in habits, and so ignorant that he could not even read. He shot his father, hanged his brother for a supposed affront, and had recourse to every means to increase his wealth; he resolved to rule as a despot, and, refusing to listen to the Servian chiefs, who spontaneously met in council, he sacrificed the opportunity of firmly establishing his country's freedom. Mehemet Ali, the Viceroy of Egypt, has stained his history by the massacre of the Mamelukes; he, also, is ignorant and of humble origin; and his system of ruling Egypt by troops of negroes and Albanians, together with his monopoly of the commerce, raise such a wall between himself and his subjects, that his power deserves at least to perish. But the Pasha of Widdin, Paswan Oglou, was one of the most extraordinary men the world ever saw: his name signifies the son of the sweep, but though of low origin he was not without some education: struggling from an obscure beginning and through numerous vicissitudes, he at length

defeated the whole force of the empire, and imposed his terms on the humiliated Porte; yet even his course was marked with the Turkish vices of cruelty and avarice, and his want of moderation alone prevented the early consolidation of his power. These are the most distinguished men in the recent history of Turkey, and from these examples it is evident that the genius of the Turks is better fitted to overthrow an empire than to establish one on principles of permanence and stability.

Few of the Ottoman emperors have been free from the prevailing vices of their nation; and the present sultan is no less distinguished for his unbounded rapacity than for his disregard of human life. He is the terror of the wealthy bankers, who are seldom fortunate enough to save their lives by the surrender of their properties. He appears, however, to have imbibed some of the leading opinions of his cousin Selim, to whose assiduous care he owes all his instruction; that unfortunate prince was far from being what the bigoted Toderini styles him, "*uno feroce anticristiano*;" he knew the superiority of European manners, and was well aware that the imputation of barbarism was cast upon his empire. This was his tender point, and it was by insisting on this that Mr. Arbuthnot obtained in 1807, in the case of the Russian minister, Italinsky, a departure from the practice of confining in the Seven Towers the ambassadors of states which declared war against the Porte. Mahmoud appears to be actuated by similar views but different dispositions, and his conduct at the present moment implies a sulky adoption of the principles of international law. But though willing to treat the Europeans with respect, he is at the same time a rude barbarian; and his internal administration is energetic without being wise. His avarice has led him to debase the coin to such a degree that the piastre, which at the commencement of the last century was worth nearly four shillings, and which when he ascended the throne was reduced to a third of that value, is not at present worth more than four pence; the same motive has led him to offend the prejudices of his nation in the tenderest points. After the massacre of the Janizaries in 1826, he sold by public auction the wives of his

two predecessors, who were confined, according to usage, in the *Eski-Serai*; this is a deed unparalleled in the Ottoman history. But he went still farther; he demanded of the Ulemas whether circumcision and abstinence from wine were strictly enjoined or only recommended by the Koran; and they, being called upon to answer, while the sword, bathed in the blood of their old comrades in rebellion, was yet unsheathed, replied, by the muphty, that the observance of these precepts is an act of virtue, but not essential to salvation. Thus two of the great pillars of Islamism have been cast down to open a wider channel for the revenue, but who can doubt that the flames of bigotry are still smouldering beneath their ruins? or who can fail to learn from these facts the indissoluble connection between the military and the social reformation of the Ottomans? We are not to suppose, however, that Mahmoud is not a staunch Musulman; his scruples give way to avarice but not to the calls of humanity. When the chief of the Wechabites, or Arabian reformers, who was taken prisoner by the Egyptian army, was sent to Constantinople in 1817, the unhappy heretic was cruelly tortured and put to death before the eyes of the sultan.

The question then presents itself,—Can Mahmoud reform his country? We think not; the task exceeds his talents,—it exceeds his means,—and could not be accomplished within the life of a single man. The Ottoman empire must first sink in the political balance to dimensions more suited to its inveterate barbarism. But it may be said that he has succeeded in suppressing the Janizaries, an indispensable preliminary, and, in forming in their stead, an organised army; and that he is seconded in all his reformations by the voice of the Ulemas. If anything, however, within the Ottoman empire be solidly and systematically combined, it is the interests and principles of the Ulemas; and these are directly opposed to innovations. If they now assist Mahmoud, it is because they must yield to force, as they have always done. The apparent advantages gained over them by the sultan are only the broken waves of a steady current; but their sentiments and their influence will outlast the strength of any single despot. If a season of

national calamity should arrive, they will call the same Mahmoud an infidel, and the word will depose him; while their history will supply them with a recent precedent. Selim never meddled with religious rites or religious abstinence; his innovations extended no farther than military improvement, and all he did received the muphty's benediction; but when the rebels who sought to depose that prince asked the same authority "*Whether the emperor deserved to be left upon the throne, who by his conduct and his laws subverted the religious principles of the Koran,*" the chief of the Ulemas formally pronounced "*No: God knoweth best.*"

The military reforms of Mahmoud are as insecure as his disregard of military scruples is impolitic: the Janizaries, with all their faults, contributed to preserve the integrity of the empire; they were not able to defend it from without, but they often saved it from internal dissolution; they were dangerous to the sovereign, but still more dangerous to the beys and pashas; they never forgot that they were *imperial* troops, and never arrayed themselves against their prince, unless in defence of their corporate interests. An organised army, on the other hand, is easily swayed by its leader, and, if regularly paid, may be always controlled by a conspiracy of officers. The sultan cannot lead against European armies the riotous levies of the beys and pashas, nor the raw conscriptions of Egypt and Nubia. The language of exhortation with which Busbequius sought to animate the European states in their early contests with the Ottomans, may now be addressed to the latter: "*Arma vero! arma, non fortuita neque tumultuaria, nec procul quæsitâ, sed vostra, sed expedita, sed magno judicio, magnâque ratione delecta, instructa, et exulta.*" An organised army only can supply the place of the Janizaries; but can the sultan create an organised army? can he adopt the tactics of Europe? an organised army can only exist in an organised state; where this is all anarchy and corruption, can the other be all discipline and good order? The tactics of modern Europe require much knowledge, both theoretical and practical; they require much arrangement, steady foresight and regular resources; but where will Mahmoud find

all these? he has no science, no habit of extensive combinations, and a regular army cannot be maintained by rapine and confiscation. It is only on parade, we are convinced, that an army of Turks can be made to resemble the army of a civilized nation; in the field it will have no commissariat, no supplies, no succours for the wounded, nor concerted means of retreat; every repulse will be a rout, and every defeat dispersion. The illustration of this may be found in the fortune of the Egyptian army; the massacre of the Mamelukes, and the organisation of a new military force by the Viceroy of Egypt, excited the emulation of the Turk; but Mehemet Ali had more ample funds as well as more plastic materials for the work than the Grand Signior; and the organization of his army would, nevertheless, disgrace a civilized nation. The camp of Ibrahim Pasha, without hospitals or provisions, is wasted by famine and disease, and the wretched soldiers, left to shift for themselves, suffer more from military execution than from the sword of the enemy.

We are, therefore, justified in concluding that it is morally impossible to reform the Turks; the sultan cannot create an effective army on European principles, without altering the whole system of society and the practice of his government; he cannot meddle with existing institutions without trenching on the sanctity of a religious legislation; and if he give offence to the prejudices of a bigoted people, how can he think of summoning the faithful to the standard of the Prophet? or how will he be able to affirm, in the language of the imperial mandate, "that the Sublime Porte being the court of Mahomet, must, of necessity, endure till the day of judgment?" Two-thirds of his subjects feel no interest in the integrity of his empire; the spirited and docile Greek has felt the contact of civilization, and the principle of alienation is actively at work.

Thus the fierce and haughty empire of the Ottomans, which once daunted all Europe with its fame, is now fast approaching to its end; and the chief impulse is given to its downfall by a people whose very language inspires the hatred of barbarians; who rise from obscurity, degradation, and servitude, to revenge the affront so long offered to that

civilization which they nurtured and sent forth; and who, though long deprived of their heritage, are indisputably lineal heirs to the fairest prerogatives of humanity. The empire of the Turks, who, as Knolles energetically expresses it, "stuck not in their devilish policy to break and infringe the laws of nature and of nations," has been gradually wasted by its inherent vices, and its fall will illustrate to future politicians the instability of ill and the weak vitality of despotic power. Havoc and devastation always attended the march of the Turks; and as they never acquired industrious habits, and dissipated quickly what they obtained by force, the wealth of their tributary subjects soon began to decline. Two centuries ago the condition of the Ottoman empire is eloquently described by old Sandys:

"Those rich lands, at this present, remain waste and overgrown with bushes, receptacles of wild beasts, of thieves and murderers; large territories dispeopled or thinly inhabited; goodly cities made desolate; sumptuous buildings become ruins; glorious temples either subverted or prostituted to impiety; true religion discountenanced or oppressed; all nobility extinguished; no light of learning permitted nor virtue cherished; violence and rapine insulting over all, and leaving no security save to an abject mind and unlookt-on poverty."

Such was the state of Turkey in its most fortunate period; and since that was written ruin and depopulation have made a rapid progress; licentiousness and cruelty have increased with the misery of the people; the disgraces of the empire have soured the national temper of the Turks; their predicted expulsion from Europe has rendered them more gloomy; the revolt of the Greeks has awakened their bigotry; robbers lay waste the provinces and incendiaries the towns; nothing is to be seen in their expiring empire but anarchy and riot, massacre and spoliation, smoking ruins and human torture:

"*crudelis ubique*

Luctus; ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago."

"Un pareil Etat," says Montesquieu, "sera dans la meilleure situation lorsqu'il pourra se regarder comme

seul dans le monde." The empire of the Turks, without finances or established military force, cannot oppose itself to the dictates of the European powers. The Ottomans must give way in the field; they have in truth but one chance of victory left, and that is in the temerity of enemies who would drive them to despair. Though the strength of their proud empire is broken, their spirits are not degenerate, nor have they lost their fiery courage and contempt of death. Mahmoud is one who will hold with a firm grasp the last fragment of his shattered dominion, and, if pressed to extremities, he will animate his nation by the example of energy well applied.

Since Turkey, under its present system, cannot be restored from its political debility, we are glad that a decisive, though somewhat tardy interference has stopped the further progress of carnage and desolation; and that a new power is to be erected in the east of Europe. When we consider, too, the strong party which the Russian government has fostered in Greece for more than thirty years, we cannot but admire the dexterity which has restored that country to political independence, and dissociated it from the Imperial courts by conferring on it a constitutional form of government.

When the Emperor Joseph proposed a partition of Turkey to Catherine of Russia, that princess met all his plans with the question, "What shall we do with Constantinople?" This difficulty still remains, and so long as the two imperial courts view each other with jealousy and mistrust, they will each feel averse from a project which involves the possibility of placing that great city in the hands of its rival. If the partition of Turkey by the two imperial courts be attended by such difficulties, the sacrifice of that country to the ambitious views of one of them is still less likely; nor could Austria and Prussia continue any longer neutral if Russia ventured to overstep the stipulations of the treaty of London. We are not therefore alarmed at the apparently dangerous confidence reposed in Russia, since we feel convinced that the interests of the co-limetary powers and the general principles of European policy form a stronger security against the violations of

the treaty than any which the guarantees of the contracting parties could afford.

That great capital, which to Catherine seemed worth all the provinces of Turkey, has had a singular fortune; it has hardly ever been at the head of a prosperous empire, and even its oldest monuments exhibit proofs of declining taste. The short-lived splendour of the Ottoman empire cannot be called prosperity; it consisted wholly of success in arms unadorned and unsupported by commerce or the arts of peace. Constantinople, nevertheless, has always continued populous, owing not more to the care taken by the Emperors and Sultans to supply it abundantly with corn, than to the natural advantages of its situation. The spot on which this city stands appears to have been marked out by nature for the capital of the old world. Placed on the canal which connects the north of Europe with the shores of Africa, and where the caravans from the borders of China meet the cargoes of the West, it possesses every advantage of situation and climate which can stimulate industry, or quicken commercial intercourse.

YESTERDAY. *b. The Crimean War*

The Duke of Cambridge to Queen Victoria.

Constantinople, 13th May, 1854.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I have not as yet announced to you my safe arrival here, as I was anxious first to see the Sultan and the general state of things before giving you a report of what was really going on. . . .

I found a great proportion of the Infantry arrived, a portion of the Artillery, but as yet no Cavalry. Lord Raglan is well and in good spirits, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe ill in bed with a bad fit of the gout—most miserable to see in every respect. The Sultan¹ received me at once on the day of arrival, and made his return visit to me yesterday. I confess I was not much impressed with either his appearance or general ability. He is, to say the truth, a wretched creature, prematurely aged, and having nothing whatever to say for himself. A few commonplace civilities was all the conversation which passed between us. I said everything I could think of to make a conversation, among other things messages of civility from yourself; but though he appeared pleased and expressed his satisfaction at our being here, I could not get him to enter into anything, and I was not sorry on both occasions when our interview was at an end. As to his Ministers, and in fact the whole population and country, with the exception of Redschid Pasha,² they are all a most wretched and miserable set of people, and far, far worse than anything I could possibly have imagined or supposed. In fact, the "sick man" is *excessively sick indeed*, dying as fast as possible; and the sooner

¹Abdul Medjid, born 1823, who had succeeded to the throne at the time of the Syrian War.

²Minister of Foreign Affairs, born 1802, died 1858.

diplomacy disposes of him the better, for no earthly power can save him, that is very evident. This is the opinion of every person out here of both armies, French and English, and you may rest assured it is the truth. The great thing is that we are here and no other Power can now step in, but diplomacy must settle what is to happen, for as to the Turks remaining in Europe that is out of the question, and the very fact of our being here now has given them their death-blow. I hope, my dear cousin, you will forgive me for being very candid on this point, but I really do not think that anybody in England had any idea of the real state of affairs here. The sooner therefore that they are put in possession of the truth unvarnished the better. The great and imperative necessity is that the four Powers of Europe should strike together, otherwise things will become much worse than they are even at present. Everybody is very civil and obliging to me, the Sultan has put me into one of his best Palaces, very nicely fitted up, and is anxious to do everything I wish. I find it inconvenient, as the troops are on the other side of the Bosphorus, and I therefore intend going over there to reside if possible. Marshal St. Arnaud is here and Prince Napoleon, but no French troops. I have seen the latter once; he was very civil indeed to me, but I do not think he has made at all a good impression here, his manner being offensive and harsh. I do not think the Army like him at all. I am afraid the French Ambassador is giving much trouble. Neither St. Arnaud nor the Prince like him at all, and I believe they have written to demand his recall, which would be a very good thing, as he cannot hit it off with anybody. As to our movements, I know nothing of them as yet, nor do I think that much has as yet been settled, but I fear we shall not be fit to move for some time; the difficulty of transport is very great, our Artillery only partly arrived, and no Cavalry. We require more troops, more particularly of the latter arm, in which the Russians are very strong. We ought to have at least 10,000 men more, and the sooner they are sent out the better. Even that number is not enough, for the French talk of 100,000 men, and we should be in a most dreadful minority unless we had 40,000 to 50,000. I am afraid all

this will alarm people in England, but it is the truth. . . .
I remain, my dear Cousin, your most dutiful Cousin,

GEORGE.

We never hear any news here. All that does come to us generally comes by way of Europe; another proof of what a miserable country this is.

II. TO-DAY.

Reprinted from "THE TIMES," Tuesday, February 20, 1917.

a. THE "CLEAN-FIGHTING" TURK. A SPURIOUS CLAIM.

The writer of this article, who is a distinguished authority on Oriental affairs, has had exceptional experience of the ways of the Turk.

DURING the present war we have heard a good deal of the good nature of the Turks, yet they have pursued the most devilish policy that even this war has seen. The Armenians have been massacred, assassinated, marched to death, starved, and exposed to ravages of disease, until perhaps 700,000 men, women, and children have met with untimely ends. In the Lebanon an artificial famine has swept away more than half the population, who died within sight of plenty; the Moslem Arabs of Syria have been robbed of their noblest families, bullied, crimped, and taxed to the last penny; the Jewish colonists have been impoverished, conscripted, and subjected to vile indignities. The British prisoners of war have perished by the roadside, of hunger and thirst. Some of those who survived are known to have been left to die of cold in unhealthy prisons, where they are denied garments, medicine, and the ordinary necessities of life.

Nevertheless the sportsmanship and chivalry of the Turks is a favourite theme of some writers. How is the paradox to be explained?

The plain fact is, that the Turk as a ruler is a merciless oppressor; as a negotiator a cunning Byzantine; as a soldier a tough fighter; as a victor a remorseless bully—

but when he feels he has met his match he is chivalrous, when he is defeated he is a pathetic and distressed gentleman. And so he contrives that the Turk has never been in the wrong, no one has ever convicted a Turk of a mean or cruel act.

When he is beaten, or near beaten, he would have us believe that the Armenians were killed by wicked Kurds, that the Lebanon famine was a disaster which was beyond the power of man to avert, that the British prisoners died because they were delicate, that the war itself was the work of the Germans (curses on them!), and so on. When his star is in the ascendant the tale is pitched in a different key. "The Armenians shall not talk of independence for fifty years," said Talaat; "The English civilians shall be exposed to English shells," said Enver; "I will teach the Arabs who is master," said Djemal; "One sound Turk for every sick or wounded Englishman or Indian," said the victors of Kut, knowing that every sick Englishman and Indian must die if he were unexchanged. Thus we get a glimpse of the seamy side of Turkish mentality, which is made up of the craft of Byzantium, the ruthlessness of the nomad of Steppe, the cold cruelty of the fanatic.

THE YOUNG TURK AND THE OLD.

The Turk has strewn the earth with ruins and has made the prettiest nursery rhymes; he has shattered civilizations both Moslem and Christian; he has coined the most witty and delightful proverbs. He is a thoughtful and solicitous host, an easy-going master, and a mild landlord, but he is a merciless mis-governor, a feckless squanderer, and as revengeful as a camel.

Hulagu devastated Irak and Syria and laid Baghdad in ruins; he destroyed some eight millions of peaceful people, but he wept when he heard of his brother Mangu's death. Hulagu was a very typical Turk with a warm heart and great feeling.

Timur raged over Asia Minor and put civilization back three centuries, but he was exceedingly kind to the people who survived the passage of his armies. Timur was a true Turkish gentleman, and it is an historical libel to say that

he imprisoned Bayezid in a cage; he treated Bayezid as well as Enver has treated General Townshend, and he exterminated the population of Asia Minor almost as thoroughly as the Turks have exterminated the Armenians.

The good old Turk with a rosary, a melting eye, a long white beard, a compliment on his lips, a large turban on his reverend head, a small child nestling in the folds of his ample gown, is a picture which has bewitched many a heart. A philanthropic and gentle philosopher, you will find him contemplating vacuum in many a mosque and shrine in Asia Minor, and no one can deny that he is a good old Turk, charitable, benevolent, and kind; I have no doubt he would save Armenians from pursuit if they came his way, though he would not go a yard to find them; he would surreptitiously convey food to English prisoners just as he would share his last crust with a mangy street dog, for the pious must be kind even to unclean things; but his benevolence is individual and isolated; he is a sort of hermit-crab dwelling in a rosy shell of personal philanthropy, he counts for nothing, nor would five million of him count for anything.

Take again the Young Turk with a German uniform, a German parade voice, and German technical education. He has been reared in a Stambul harem; when he was four years old his mama helped him first at table, and taught his elder sister to kiss his hand; his papa taught him that by blood alone could Christian subjects be governed, and that by diplomacy alone could the Christian powers be set by the ears; his German professors taught him all there was to be known about mass-suggestion, *Weltpolitik*, and high explosives.

Breeding, environment, and education combine to produce a very complete foil to the passive philanthropist of the shrine. This young man is the embodiment of ruthless action and inflexible tyranny. His mother taught him that whatever he wanted was his; his father taught him to hold whatever he got; and his German schoolmaster taught him what he believes to be the universal method of getting what he wants. Moreover, the German professor reinoculated him with some of the destructive virus of his plundering Turanian ancestors. *Yeni-Turan* is the latest creed.

THE CREED OF YOUNG TURKEY.

Its doctrine is simple. The Turks in ancient times devastated and conquered with complete success, Attila, Ghengiz, Hulagu, Mangu, and Timur were never beaten; but for the last 200 years the Turks have constantly been beaten. Why is this? The primitive Turks were pure barbarians, but unfortunately the Turks of to-day have imbibed some of the vices of the people they have conquered—philosophy from Persia; poetry, literature, and religion from the Arabs; some tincture of the arts from the Greeks. These are blots and blemishes on the rude purity and simplicity of the Turanian race, who only knew destruction as their motto. True, the degenerate Turks of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries did not produce much, but at least, in moments of forgetfulness, they allowed others to produce; Christians built their mosques and palaces, Persians made it possible for Turks to express, if not understand, abstract ideas, Arabs influenced Turks with the thought of a Creator who was something more than a tribal Mumbo-Jumbo.

The German professor has taught our Young Turk to purge this perilous stuff from his heart and brain and tongue. The creed of Yeni-Turan is back to the forest, back to the tent, back to the palæolithic state of mind; it is the grand reaction, and so strong is the taint of the Turanian stock which runs through that maze of cross-bred Celts, Sumerians, Hellenes, Iranians, Semites, and Caucasians which we call the Turkish people, that Yeni-Turan is a living thing which finds a responsive echo in the Turkey of to-day.

The old Turk with a turban is the negative, the young Turk with a Mauser pistol is the positive; and, contrary to all rules of philosophy, it is the evil principle which is positive, and the good, for what it is worth, which is negative.

The violent Young Turk reactionary is the controlling power, the old Turk quietist has about as much influence on actual events as a decaying monument of a forgotten age. The young Turk who snubbed his mother, pulled his sister's hair, kicked the Armenian porter, cringed before his father, gobbled up the dogmas of the German professor, mastered the formulæ of the Prussian military instructor, and resuscitated the dormant lusts of his savage ancestors

in his heart, is the man who counts. The lumpish peasant conscripts of Anatolia are his tools. His dream is to reassert once more the pristine authority of the Turanian races, and to exterminate or Turanize everything within reach.

The Arabs are to be robbed of tongue and leading; the Armenians are to be exterminated; Christianity is to be abolished in Turkey; Islam is to be overthrown and Shamanism and Fetishism revived; the British are to be kicked out of India and Egypt; and Russia is to be paralysed by a Turanian revival in Central Asia. Between the dream and its realization nothing is to stand.

Turkish national solidarity is maintained within by a terrorist secret society, the knife, the bullet, the bribe, and the massacre; on the battle front the Turkish peasantry is sacrificed without stint or hesitation; in Afghanistan, Persia, India, and Egypt the Young Turk has endeavoured to cast his spells by fomenting sedition, espionage, assassination, and fanaticism; in Europe, where he has survived by intrigue and corruption through two long centuries, he does not yet despair of the efficacy of these weapons. In England the Young Turk still hopes to maintain a certain sentimental hold on public opinion, which interested politicians and romantic travellers have secured for him in the past. His spurious reputation as a clean fighter he is glad enough to keep as a war asset. In defeat he knows the noble pose, just as in massacre he knows how to shuffle responsibility; when it is worth while he can assume the airs of a good fellow. He will give a truce to bury the dead just as readily as he will set fire to an Armenian prison, and spare a bandage for a wounded English prisoner left behind in a retreat just as deliberately as he will stick a knife into a pregnant Christian woman. Any little act of kindness which costs nothing, will mitigate his difficulties, and further his war aims, he will perform with the same subconscious purpose as he will commit the vilest atrocities.

His success we must acknowledge; he has massacred, pillaged, outraged; for two years and a half he has broken every convention, maltreated our prisoners, killed our wounded, held our women hostages, but he remains the "clean fighting Turk."

A Report on the Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Turkey was issued on Nov. 20, 1918, as a White Paper (Cd. 9208.).

b. TURKISH TREATMENT OF BRITISH PRISONERS

(from the "Morning Post," Nov. 21, 1918.)

FROM first to last the tale told is one which induces almost physical nausea. It is a story of a national crime more appalling than that of the Black Hole of Calcutta, for there the captives were killed relatively quickly; the Turks killed our men slowly, deliberately, and with a luxury of torture.

When the 6th Division surrendered at Kut their belongings were looted and they had to spend a week on the bare ground quite unsheltered in sun and rain. For two days no rations were issued by the Turks. There was nothing to eat but dates and black bread which the Arab soldiers peddled among the men in exchange for boots and clothing, thus bringing their destitution a stage further. The Turks also plied a traffic in their dry and stony ration biscuits, quite indigestible fare for semi-starved men and probably one of the main causes of the large number of deaths from gastro-enteritis and dysentery which occurred at Shamran. Nearly 300 men were dead within a week of the surrender. "It was, in short, very soon clear—and at the time this came as a surprise—that the Turks had neither the power nor the will to protect the lives of the prisoners they had taken."

OUR MEN FLOGGED.

On May 6, when the column of prisoners was to set out on the 100 mile march to Bagdad, the officers learned to their consternation that they were to be separated from their men. By this time they well understood what the consequences would be. The officers and the absolutely

unfit embarked in two heavily-loaded boats for Bagdad. They had evidence at intervals how the men were faring on their march.

The men had on the second day to march not eight, as promised by the Turks to the officers, but eighteen miles, and afterwards twelve to fifteen miles per day. They were herded like sheep by mounted Arab troopers, who freely used sticks and whips to flog forward the stragglers.

"Food was very short," proceeds the official report, the heat was intense, the clouds of dust perpetual, and a great number of the men had now neither boots nor water-bottles. Their escort stripped them still further; by the time of their arrival at Bagdad most of the Arab guard were dressed in odds and ends of British uniforms, stolen during the march. There was little or no control by the Turkish officers, who usually rode at the head of the column. The only mitigating influence was that of the Turkish doctor who accompanied the march; his name—which was Ilia¹—deserves to be recorded, for he was untiring in his ministrations to the men; but he could, of course, do little among the thousands who needed him. One day—the fourth of the march—had absolutely to be given over to rest. This was at Azizie, where some 350 sick, British and Indian, were left behind in a sort of cowshed, densely crowded and filthily verminous, to follow later by river. The rest struggled on, many of them now half naked, all so near the limit of exhaustion that there were daily deaths by the roadside. So, after nine days' march, the column arrived at Bagdad on the 15th May, and were marched for three or four hours through crowded streets before being taken to the place where they were to encamp."

AN HISTORIC CRIME.

The report goes on: "There remains to be told what had happened to the main mass of the prisoners, those who had been judged capable of the journey up country and across the Syrian desert to Asia Minor. Week after

¹ Dr. Ilia is not a Turk, but a Syrian Christian.—*Ed.*

week, through June and July, parties of them had left Bagdad, following the route already taken by their officers. They had been seen leaving the city camp and crowded into the railway trucks which were to take them as far as Samarra, the railhead (as it then was) some seventy miles up the river. From there they would go afoot. Their state of preparation for a march of 500 miles, the health and strength and equipment which they possessed for withstanding one of the fiercest summers of the globe, can be pictured, and the efficiency of the Oriental care to which they were entrusted is as easily imagined. The officers who were left in Bagdad, and who watched them depart, could only feel the deepest anxiety and dread.

“The truth of what happened has only very gradually become known, and in all its details it will never be known, it is certain that this desert journey rests upon those responsible for it as a crime of the kind which we call historic, so long and terrible was the torture it meant for thousands of helpless men. If it is urged that Turkish powers of organisation and forethought were utterly incapable of handling such a problem as the transport of these prisoners, the plea is sound enough as an explanation; as an excuse it is nothing. There was no one in the higher Turkish command who could be ignorant of the fact that to send the men out on such a journey and in such conditions was to condemn half of them to certain death, unless every proper precaution were taken. And there were precautions which were easy and obvious, the chief one being that the prisoners should not be deprived of the care for their health which their own officers could give them. Yet even this plain opportunity was sacrificed, as we have seen, with perfect indifference to the fate of the mere rank and file. Here, as always, we find that Turkish apathy is not as simple as it seems; it betrays considerable respect of persons, and it contrives to evade the most dangerous witnesses of its guilt.

DEAD BY THE ROADSIDE.

“It was indeed by the purest accident that the British doctors in Bagdad received the first confirmation of their

fears. It so happened that a small party of officers, delayed by illness, were sent north *after* the first batches of men had departed. These officers followed the same track, and presently an urgent message from one of them reached Bagdad, addressed to the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, pressing for a hospital establishment and one of the British staff to be sent at once to Samarra. Hospital and staff were immediately ready, though it took the Turkish authorities five days to provide the necessary pass for leaving the city. At Samarra were then collected the hundreds of sick who had fallen out of the march during its first stages. They were picked up from the roadside where they lay in the miseries of dysentery, just as they chanced to drop, disregarded and deserted. All possible care was given them at Samarra, but many were beyond help. It was clear enough what would have happened to them all but for the chance of the state of things being discovered in time. It was a chance that was not allowed to recur; a subsequent party of officers were carefully sent from Bagdad by another route.

“But it was only those who failed on the first part of the march who could be brought to Samarra; the main body passed on and out of reach. The track was still followed by the same group of officers, and the sights they saw, at villages and halting places all along the road, hardly bear telling. There were parties of men lying exhausted under any shelter they could find, in all stages of dysentery and starvation; some dying, some dead; half clothed, without boots, having sold everything they could to buy a little milk.

MYSTERY OF KUT SOLVED.

“Only here and there had an attendant of some kind been left to look after them; generally there was no one but the Arab villagers, who mercilessly robbed them, or the under-officer of the local police-post, who stared indifferently and protested that he had no authority to give help. The dead lay unburied, plundered and stripped of their last clothing. All across the desert, at one place after another, these sights were repeated; starving and

dying men in tens and twenties, lay in any scrap of shade or mud-hovel that might be allowed them and waited their end. Some had to wait long. Many weeks later, at a desert village about three days' journey from Aleppo, there was found a group of six British soldiers and about a dozen Indians, who for three months had lain on the bare ground of a mud-walled enclosure, subsisting solely on a few scraps thrown to them by Arabs or passing caravans. The Englishmen had been fourteen; eight had died; and of the survivors only one was still able to crawl two or three hundred yards to a place where there was water. It begins to be evident how it came about that of the men who surrendered at Kut more than three thousand, British and Indian, have never been heard of at all.

"The last part of the march over the mountain ranges of the Amanus had been the worst of all, and here, too, the same terrible vestiges had been left in many places. In the future it will be possible to throw further light on the whole of this crime of two years ago, even though much of it will remain beyond the reach of any investigation. For the present a brief and imperfect summary has to suffice. It is at least enough to ensure that the march of the Kut prisoners will never be forgotten in this country. Their own silent and stoical endurance of the worst made a deep impression, we are told, on those who saw them emerge from this experience."

A SCENE FROM THE INFERNO.

When the thinned ranks of these prisoners arrived on July 16 within sight of the Mediterranean on the western side of the Amanus mountains their journey was over for the time, but it was only a new stage of suffering that began for them. The Bagdad railway, which was to lead to the final destruction of the English in Mesopotamia, only wanted the piercing of a few tunnels to be complete from Constantinople to the Syrian desert, and the prisoners were to be employed in finishing the work. They were handed over to the German company engaged in the construction, and were in effect slaves. They were incapable of work at all, but it was not till September that the Ger-

mans handed them back to the Turks as useless. They were next sent over the Taurus mountains, no provision for food being made, and prodded forward by gendarmes with the butts of rifles till of sheer inanition many dropped and died.

"A few managed to take refuge in certain German and Austrian military camps in the Taurus," adds the report, "but the main body was somehow beaten and driven across the mountain range. It was like one thing only—a scene from Dante's *Inferno*; the word was that of an Austrian officer who witnessed it."

From "The Times," Nov. 22, 1918.

A despatch from Constantinople from Mr. G. Ward Price, dated the 11th November and received the 21st November.

I have spent the morning among our British prisoners of war being collected here from different parts of Asia Minor. There are men taken at Gallipoli, men from Kut, and men from Palestine. One's first impression is that they look better than one had hoped. But there is a grim reason for that. All but the most stalwart and sound died under their privations and ill-treatment, and this remnant has been better fed and less harshly used during the last six months by the Turks, because they foresaw the day of reckoning. No suffering has been spared these men, and it is fine to see how unbroken is their spirit still. Though they have endured and seen cruelties that might have reduced them to half-imbecile creatures, they remain in look, bearing, and words soldiers and men.

There are men here who worked in slave-gangs on the Taurus railway, and were driven with sticks for 16 to 18 hours a day. This is the only place where I have heard British soldiers speak of merciful treatment received from

Germans. Many men told of German officers and soldiers who intervened to save them from Turkish brutality, and even found them clothing and food. In the worst Turkish camps British prisoners were bastinadoed on their bare soles, and the only limit set to their slave-master's brutality was that he got profit from hiring them out as labourers.

The men are now dressed in civilian clothes provided by the British Government through the Dutch Legation, and lately have been receiving £10 a month each to eke out their rations—a sum none too large, seeing that a loaf of bread lately cost eight shillings and still costs four.

We English have been inclined to consider the Turk as a clean fighter and not a bad fellow at heart. It is an opinion that must be altered.

Give a Turk the least authority (said a major captured at Kut) and he uses it like a brute. The Turkish officers, who are so polite and charming now, bullied and ill-treated the British prisoners abominably. I bear no grudge for the blows with riflebutts I received. I am ready to forget incidents such as when a party of British officers I was with was driven into sheep pens, the floor of which was 6 in. deep in dung and the sheep, just taken out, had been suffering from foot-and-mouth disease. But I can never forget, or forgive, the ghastly way our men were herded, worked, and brutalised all these years.

From the Daily News. Nov. 22, 1918.

BRITISH PRISONERS BASTINADOED AND FORCED TO EAT
VERMIN.

In a despatch from Constantinople (dated the 12th inst. and received yesterday), Mr. G. Ward Price describes the condition of British prisoners who are being collected there. He has spoken with men from Kut, from Gallipoli, and from Palestine. Their evidence fully bears out the stories told in yesterday's "Daily News."

"In the worst Turkish camps British prisoners were bastinadoed on the bare soles of their feet. One Turkish officer, to punish a man for having lice on him—which was unavoidable under the conditions in which the prisoners were living—made him eat the vermin found in his shirt."

III.
TO-MORROW.

NO CHANGE

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