

ARTICLE IV.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.¹

No SPECTACLE, perhaps, combines more elements of grandeur and pathos, is more full of lofty and inextinguishable sadness, than the decline of a great nation; when the lights of its better days go out, one after another, the traditions of its glory become forgotten, corruption assumes the place of honor, and its pathway leads downward to humiliation and forgetfulness. The course of one such nation—the mightiest of the ancient, the most domineering and most tenacious of life—has been pourtrayed by the first historical genius of England, in pages which will be read as long as literature endures, or fallen greatness can excite sympathy or teach a lesson. The history of another nation, somewhat similar in its course, and, though of far less grandeur and importance, not to be forgotten in the review of modern achievements of peril, has not, until lately, received its share of attention.

On the 29th of May, 1453, the last of the Constantines fell beneath the ruins of the city which he could not defend, and Mohammed II. entered Constantinople in triumph. “The Conqueror gazed with satisfaction and wonder on the strange, though splendid appearance of the domes and palaces, so dissimilar from the style of Oriental architecture. In the Hippodrome or *Atmeidan*, his eye was attracted by the twisted column of three serpents; and, as a trial of his strength, he shattered, with his iron mace or battle-axe, the

¹ History of the Ottoman Turks: From the beginning of their Empire to the present time. Chiefly founded on Von Hammer. By E. S. Creasy, M. A., Prof. of History in University College, London; Late Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, etc. etc. London: Richard Bentley. Vol. I. 1854. Vol. II. 1856.

The Russo Turkish Campaigns of 1828 and 1829. By Col. Chesney, B. A., D. C. L., F. R. S.

Chapters on Turkish History. Understood to be by Mr. Hulme. Blackwood's Magazine.

under-jaw of one of these monsters, which, in the eyes of the Turks, were the idols or talisman of the city. At the principal door of St. Sophia, he alighted from his horse and entered the dome; and such was his jealous regard for that monument of his glory, that, on observing a zealous Mussulman in the act of breaking the marble pavement, he admonished him with his scimitar, that, if the spoil and captives were granted to the soldiers, the public and private buildings had been reserved for the prince. By his command, the metropolis of the Eastern church was transformed into a mosque; the rich and portable instruments of superstition had been removed; the crosses were thrown down; and the walls, which were covered with images and mosaics, were washed, and purified, and restored to a state of naked simplicity. On the same day, or on the ensuing Friday, the *muezzin*, or crier, ascended the most lofty turret, and proclaimed the *ezan*, or public invitation, in the name of God and his prophet; the imam preached; and Mohammed the Second performed the *namaz* of prayer and thanksgiving at the great altar, where the Christian mysteries had so lately been celebrated before the last of the Cæsars. From St. Sophia, he proceeded to the august but desolate mansion of a hundred successors of the great Constantine; but which, in a few hours, had been stripped of the pomp of royalty. A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness forced itself on his mind; and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian history: 'The spider has wove his web in the imperial palace; and the owl hath sung her watch-song on the towers of Apasiab.'" In these words, the great historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire recounts that conquest whose effects were so vast on the fortunes of Eastern Europe. From this era, modern history is generally dated.¹ The first result, however, of

¹ The Ottoman race, rising, so far as known to history, in the regions east and south of the Euxine and the Caspian, and pursuing their way westward, absorbing city after city, and province after province, had at last that which for two centuries had stimulated the ambition of the Ottomans — the Amuraths and Bajazets. The empire of the East was subverted, and the career of the Ottomans in Europe fairly commenced.

the fall of Constantinople, was not to disarrange the relations of European kingdoms, nor to establish a close alliance between them. Under all the later emperors, the city had been isolated; and its fall, though mortifying to the pride of Christendom, and ominous of the fate of more western nations, stimulated no crusade for its recovery, changed the boundaries of no empires, and awakened but a distant and uncertain apprehension, too weak to excite the zeal of the people, and too doubtful to inspire the energy of the rulers. One incidental effect, however, is too important to be passed over unnoticed. During the progress of the dark centuries (from the fifth to the twelfth), when the old dynasties were crumbling, and the imperial splendors were becoming dim, when art and learning suffered an eclipse, Grecian letters and the knowledge of the Greek language, the old philosophy, poetry, and history, the ample legacy of refinement, taste, and skill, which the ancients had bequeathed to the moderns; all this was buried and forgotten, or cast into secret corners, as the veriest rubbish. In Constantinople, however, a traditional knowledge of this (and somewhat more) was preserved. There were still found scholars, who looked back upon the old glories with reverence, and prided themselves upon their inherited wisdom. With the fall of the Greek Empire, large numbers of this class wandered, as refugees, over the western kingdoms, scattering, as they went, the seeds of that old literature which fell, now into the minds of such as Dante and Petrarch, and again into such as Erasmus and Melancthon, and, springing up, produced fruit—thirty, sixty, an hundred fold—in the revival of learning, the bursting spring of European civilization.

A still more important result of the fall of Constantinople, was seen in its effects upon the fortunes of the conquerors. The Ottomans had, indeed, before this, gained an important foothold in what is now European Turkey; but, while that magnificent city which, for a thousand years, had borne the name of Constantine, remained under the authority of his successors, the Ottoman Empire was imperfect and un-

certain. It still had no centre, no unity. It consisted of an invading and plundering people, but was not consolidated into a nation. By this great victory, Mohammed gained, at once, what he most wanted. The Sultan seated himself upon the throne of the Cæsars, proclaimed himself, in some sense, their successor, and assumed their prescriptive rights.¹ So grand and domineering, we may say, is the power of a great capital, over minds accustomed to associate with it the traditions of government. It gives a local habitation and a name to those who may need them most, and consolidates conquest by gathering about the conqueror all the customs of social life and every institution of the state. It may be asked, then, why should the western nations permit such immense advantages to flow, so easily, to a hostile power? Why allow the Ottomans to cross the Bosphorus, and gain a foothold in Europe, when the Greeks, by their navy, and the western nations, by their united strength, could have so easily prevented it? The answer is found in their lack of energy and foresight, in their underrating, and therefore despising their foe, and still more in their lack of unity of purpose, and a certain weariness and indifference of the public mind. "About six centuries ago," to quote from Prof. Creasy's volume, "a pastoral band of four hundred Turkish families was journeying westward from the upper streams of the river Euphrates. Their armed force consisted of four hundred and forty-four horsemen; and their leader's name was Ertogrul, which means, "The Right-hearted man." As they travelled through Asia Minor, they came in sight of a field of battle, on which two armies, of unequal numbers, were striving for the mastery. Without knowing who the combatants were, the Right-hearted man took, instantly, the resolution to aid the weaker party; and, charging desperately and victoriously, with his warriors, upon the larger host, he decided the fortunes of the day. Such, according to the Ori-

¹ "Whatever belonged to the empire of Rome," Solyman was accustomed to say, "was of right his, forasmuch as he was rightfully possessed of the imperial seat and sceptre of Constantine the Great, commander of the world,— which his grandfather (Mohammed) had, by law of arms, won." (Knolles, p. 615.)

ental historian Neschir, is the first recorded exploit of that branch of the Turkish race which, from Ertoghrol's son, Othman, has been called the nation of the Ottoman Turks." ¹ This vigorous race, giving promise of success in their earliest feat of arms, inspired with something of that Saracenic enthusiasm which led the Arab to boast that, "in the space of eighty years, his conquests embraced a wider extent of territory than Rome had mastered in eight hundred," rapidly established its power in Asia Minor, seized upon Adrianople and the shores of the Black Sea; and, not content with the possession of the great capital (which, as we have seen, after repeated efforts, fell under their attacks), with a gigantic ambition of universal empire, worthy of Alexander or Cæsar, a Charlemagne or Napoleon, prepared immediately to carry their victorious arms into the south and heart of Europe. The first object was to repeople the deserted and half-destroyed city. The fugitives were invited to return; they were assured of protection and the free exercise of their religion; new inhabitants were transplanted to the capital, from various parts of the Empire, and Constantinople became the centre of Mohammedan power. Brousa and Adrianople were both partially abandoned for the city whose fortunate situation has made it coveted by every conqueror from Constantine to Nicholas; and which, under every change of government, will insure it a prominence in the history of the world. But the beauty of that central situation did not enervate the invaders, nor check the progress of victory.

There was no adequate foe between them and the centre of Europe, rent and divided by jealousies and contention. Everywhere was vigor, self-confidence, and success. "Will you secure your life and treasures by resigning your kingdom?" said the conqueror to the so-called emperor of Trebizond, "or would you rather forfeit your kingdom, your treasures, and your life?" "You are too weak," said the Sultan to the ruler of Sparta, to whose assistance he had

¹ Hist. Ott. Turks, Vol. I. pp. 1, 2.

readily gone, "you are too weak to govern this turbulent province: I will take your daughter to my bed, and you shall pass the remainder of your life in security and honor." "Knowest thou not," said the great vizier Ibrahim, "that the ground, wherever the war-steed of the commander of the faithful had set his hoof-print, becomes thenceforward inalienably annexed to his empire?"

Mohammed II. was but twenty-three years of age when he took Constantinople; younger than Napoleon at Lodi, and about the same age with Alexander at the battle of the Granicus. His long reign was marked by the vigor of his efforts and his ample success. Though defeated before Belgrade, by the bravery of John Hunyades and John Capistran, he brought under his sway all the European provinces which, formerly, had constituted the Eastern division of the Roman Empire, and all of Asia this side of Mount Taurus. His grand vizier, Ahmed Kedull, laid siege to Kaffa, then under the power of the Genoese, and one of the richest cities of the East; took it, and, with it, brought the whole Crimea under the vassalage of the Sultan. The principal islands of the Grecian Archipelago fell into his hands. The conquest of Europe had long been the high ambition of the Ottoman. It was the common boast of Bajazet I. that "he would conquer Italy, and that his horse should eat his oats on the high altar of St. Peter's." This arrogant confidence, which gave strength to the Ottoman arms, while it weakened the courage of the west, seemed likely to realize its projects under Mohammed. His victorious armies rounded the northern extremity of the Adriatic; and, in 1477 (twenty-four years after the conquest of Constantinople), passed the Tagliamento, ravaged the country as far as the banks of the Piave, "and the trembling senators of Venice," says the historian, "saw, from their palace-roofs, the northern horizon glow with the light of burning towns and villages."

Stimulated by his intense desire of conquering Italy, in 1480 he successfully assailed Otranto, massacred large numbers of its inhabitants, and secured to himself an ample harbor and a strong city on the shore of the coveted penin-

sula. Nor can we conjecture how far his conquests would have been carried; had not his career been suddenly terminated by death.

Bajazet II., the immediate successor of Mohammed, was unequal to his father. His reign was feeble and inglorious, and he at last was compelled to abdicate the throne in favor of his son, who became Selim the First. Selim (he was called the Ferocious) was remarkable for vigor, activity, perseverance, cruelty, and love of literature. He deposed his father, and murdered his brother and his nephews, and "thus (says the Turkish historian, Solak Zadah, with admirable simplicity) were the fundamental laws of the august Ottoman line (which may God strengthen and preserve!) duly enforced and executed, as is necessary for the maintenance of tranquillity and the security of the established order of succession." (Bl. Jan. '41 p. 42.)

His viziers held their lives by the feeblest tenure, and seldom survived their promotion longer than a few months. "Mayest thou be the vizier of the Sultan Selim," became a common form of Ottoman execration. One vizier once ventured to say: "My Padishah, I know that, sooner or later, thou wilt find some pretext for putting me, thy faithful slave, to death; vouchsafe me, therefore, a short interval, during which I may arrange my affairs in this world, and make ready for being sent, by thee, to the next." Selim laughed loud, in savage glee, at the frank request, and answered: "I have been thinking, for some time, of having thee killed; but I have, at present, no one fit to take thy place: otherwise, I would willingly oblige thee."¹ He possessed great powers of endurance; slept but little, spent much of the night in study of history and Persian poetry, and finally left a collection of odes, written by himself, in Persian.

His reign was comparatively brief, but was marked by intelligence, resoluteness, and nearly uninterrupted victory. He met his enemies, at home and abroad, with a full under-

¹ Hist. Ott. Turks, Vol. I. p. 205.

standing of the means necessary to secure his objects, and with a determination which scrupled at no cruelty or perfidy. The Mohammedan world had early been divided by two sects. The one, taking its name from the *Sunna* (a collection of Mohammedan traditions), called the Sunmites, acknowledged the three caliphs Abubeker, Omar, and Othman; the other, called by their opponents Scheahs, Schiis, or Schiites (i. e. heretics), rejected the *Sunna*, and regarded Ali as Mohammed's successor. Selim was a bigoted devotee of the former sect, and determined to render his empire free from a detested heresy. With secrecy and caution, by means of a wide-spread police, he obtained a complete list of the obnoxious unbelievers, distributed his soldiers according to their numbers in every province, and, on an appointed day, made a universal arrest of the suspected. Forty thousand were put to death, and the rest imprisoned or banished. By this happy expedient (not altogether unimitated in Christian nations), the monarch insured the religious purity of the empire, and obtained for himself, from the Ottoman historians, the title of "The Just!"

The Shah Ismail of Persia¹ was a devoted defender of the tenets of the Schiites, and this massacre of his fellow-believers fanned to a flame the hostility which already existed between the Persians and the Ottomans. Selim prepared for the unavoidable contest with equal readiness and energy, and soon sent to Ismail a declaration of war, remarkable alike for its literary merits, its high religious tone, its dignity, arrogance, and ferocity. Perhaps the spirit of the ruler and of the people cannot be more clearly exhibited than by quoting a portion of this remarkable document:—

"The Supreme Being, who is at the same time the Sovereign of the destiny of man, and the source of all light and all knowledge, announces in his holy Scripture, that the true religion is the religion of the Mussulmans; and that he who professes another religion, far from being heard and saved, will be cast out among the reprobates at the great day of the last judgment.

¹ "A real or pretended descendant from Ali," a gallant adventurer, whose vigor consolidated the Persian monarchy, and established a dynasty which ruled for more than two hundred years.

Again he saith, the God of truth, that His designs and His decrees are immutable; that all the actions of man ought to have regard to Him; and that he who abandons the good path shall be condemned to hellfire and eternal punishment. Place us, Lord, in the number of the true believers, of those who walk in the path of salvation, and take heed to turn away from vice and unbelief. . . . I, chief and sovereign of the Ottomans; I, the master of the heroes of the age; I, who combine the force and power of Feridoon, the majesty of Alexander the Great, the justice and clemency of Kei Khosrem; I, the exterminator of the idolators, the destroyer of the enemies of the true faith, the terror of the tyrants and of the Pharaohs of the age; I, before whom proud and imperious kings are abased, and the strongest sceptres shattered; I, the glorious Sultan Selim Khan, son of the Sultan Bajazet Khan, who was the son of the Sultan Mohammed Khan, who was the son of the Sultan Murad Khan, — I graciously address my words to thee, Emir Ismail, chief of the Persian troops, who art like in tyranny to Tohak and Afrasiab, and art destined to perish like the last Dara [Darius], to make thee know that the words of the Most High are not the frail productions of caprice or foolishness, but that they contain an infinity of mysteries impenetrable by the spirit of man. The Lord himself hath said, in his Holy Book: 'We have not created the heaven and earth, that they should be a sport.' Man, who is the noblest of creatures, and a compendium of the marvels of God, is consequently the living image of the Creator on earth. It is He that hath made ye, oh men! the caliphs of the earth; because man, who unites the faculties of the soul with perfection of body, is the only being that can comprehend the attributes of the Divinity, and adore His sublime beauties. But man does not possess that rare intelligence, nor does he arrive at that divine knowledge, except in our religion, and by keeping the commandments of the prince of prophets, the caliph of caliphs, the right arm of the God of mercy. It is, therefore, only by the practice of the true religion that a man will prosper in this world, and deserve eternal life in the world to come. . . . We differ in our dispositions, one man from another; and the human race is like mines of gold and silver. Among some, vice is deeply rooted; they are incorrigible; and it is as impossible to lead them back to virtue as to make a negro white. With others, vice has not yet become a second nature: they may return from their wanderings of the will by seriously retiring into themselves, mortifying their senses, and repressing their passions. The surest mode to cure evil is for a man to search deeply his conscience, to open his eyes to his own faults, and to ask pardon from the God of mercy with a true repentance and a bitter sorrow. We therefore invite thee to retire into thyself, to renounce thy errors, and walk towards that which is good, with a firm and resolute step. We further require of thee that thou give up the lands wrongfully detached from our dominions, and that thou replace our lieutenants and our officers in possession of them. If thou valuest thy safety and thy repose, thou wilt resolve to do this without delay.

“ But if, for thy misfortune, thou persist in conduct like thy past, — if, drunk with the thoughts of thy power and foolish bravery, thou wilt pursue the course of thy iniquities, — thou shalt, in a few days, see thy plains covered with our tents, and flooded with our battalions. Then shall be performed prodigies of valor, and then shall the world witness the decrees of the Most High, who is the God of battles and the Sovereign Judge of the deeds of men. For the rest, may he fare well who walks well in the true faith.”¹

In the war thus entered upon, Selim was successful, after a very severe battle, and entered Tabreez, the Persian capital, in triumph.² He then turned his arms against the Mamelukes of Syria and Egypt, and against those vigorous lords of the soil displayed the same energy, skill, treachery, and cruelty which marked his course everywhere. Cairo having been occupied by a detachment of his soldiers, the Mamelukes returned in force, and slew them to a man; nor could Selim retake the city until he proclaimed an amnesty to the capital and its defenders. The gates were then opened to the Ottomans, and Selim “the Just,” to show how sacredly he regarded his promise, beheaded eight hundred of the Mamelukes, and massacred fifty thousand of the inhabitants of the city. By the conquest of Egypt, Selim became protector of the holy cities of Arabia, succeeded to the caliphate of Mohammed himself, and took possession of the standard, the mantle, and the sword of the Prophet. His dignity was now complete. In the short space of eight years, he had nearly doubled the extent of the Ottoman empire, had acquired the highest religious as well as political authority, and, dying, left not only the traditions of his greatness, but transferred his plans and schemes of ambition to his successor. Measured by the results of his reign, he was a great prince; by his zeal, he would be pronounced almost a saint; by his love of letters and his productions, a large-minded, tasteful, and discriminating patron of literature; by his cruelty and perfidy, a tiger and a fiend. But his vices,

¹ Hist. Ott. Turks, I. pp. 214—218.

² It was this war which laid the foundation of the religious and national hatred between the Turks and the Persians, which has continued to the present time.

springing so naturally from his age and religion, have been often forgotten by Ottoman and by Christian, in admiration of the loftiness of his pride, the skill of his plans, the grandeur of his ambition, and the splendor of his conquests.

The reign of Solyman I., the son of Selim (1520—1566), is regarded as the most brilliant in the Ottoman annals. With less ferocity than his father, he possessed an ambition as commanding, purposes of still wider scope, an energy as untiring, and a wisdom far superior. He came to the throne, at the age of twenty-six, already with ripe experience as a ruler; and his power was, at once, felt in every department of the civil and military administration. He renovated the courts of justice, gave security to property and life, appointed for ministers and governors men of standing and honesty, and repressed disorder, and encouraged fidelity and industry. He divided his empire into districts, and apportioned the number of soldiers which each should furnish; appropriated land for their maintenance, and carefully regulated their arms, their discipline, and the nature of their service. He collected the revenues of the realm by a careful system, and administered the finances with economy and intelligence. He showed that knowledge of the resources and spirit of his people, that capacity for restraining and directing, that ability to concentrate his powers upon the objects of a wise and energetic government, which, in every nation, has characterized the genius of rulers born to eminence, and which does so much to develop and sustain the resources of empire.¹ These causes had their natural results. This power spread in all directions. Belgrade, long considered the bulwark of Christendom, fell before his powerful artillery. The power

¹ Like Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon, he knew how to govern men. Power was open to the most vigorous, of whatever class or rank. His generals, his admirals, his viziers, he chose for their ability; and one had but to distinguish himself to attract the eye of the Sultan. Barbarossa, Dragut and Pialié, were little better than roving buccaneers, but they were put at the head of the Turkish fleets. Ibrahim, his grand vizier, whose influence at one time made him a colleague rather than a minister, was the son of a fisherman, in Parga; yet Solyman was always the ruler. This very Ibrahim, who had married his sister, was one midnight [March 5, 1536] summoned to the Sultan. The next morning, his dead body was exposed at the gate of the palace.

of Hungary was utterly prostrated on the mournful and memorable day of Mohacz, "in which (says a Hungarian historian) the ancient glories of our nation, the flower of our nobility and valiant men, and all the warlike strength wherein we prided ourselves, were stricken down forever by a single deadly blow."—Bl. Sept. '41, p. 323.

His armies swarmed up to the very gates of Vienna. Mosul, Bagdad, and Erivan, then the capital of the Persian monarchy, the territory beyond the Araxes and the Tigris, far towards the rising sun, yielded to his control; and the dominions of Alexander, of Cæsar, and of Charlemagne, in extent, population, and resources, were nearly or quite equalled by those of Solyman the Magnificent. "The arch of Turkish dominion," says the historian, "which still spans the ample regions from Bagdad to Belgrade, rests, at each base, upon a conquest of Sultan Solymans." Venice purchased his favor by ceding the islands of Syra, Patmos, Paros, Egina, and Naxos. Rhodes yielded to his power; and the long line of the African coast, to where it meets the dark Atlantic, owned him as sovereign. Nearly fifty millions of people, of at least twenty different races, obeyed his law. His were most of the great cities famous in Biblical or classical history: Alexandria and Carthage, Athens and Jerusalem. In his dominions flowed the Danube and the Nile, the Jordan and the Euphrates. His soldiers guarded the mountains which fable or miracle has consecrated. The Red sea and the Black, the Propontis and the Mediterranean, were little more than Turkish lakes; for the Ottoman navy swept every sea, and vexed every shore.¹ Such, in brief,

¹ For this vast expansion of naval power Solyman was largely indebted to the enterprise and genius of one who is generally styled a corsair and pirate. On the European shore of the Bosphorus, within sight of the Black Sea, stands an unpretending structure, which the traveller soon perceives to be a tomb. It is the last resting-place of Khair-ed-deen, or Hayraddin, still better known under the sobriquet (derived from the color of his beard) of Barbarossa. Here he had founded a mosque and a college; and here — his eventful life closing at the age of nearly eighty — he was buried. The son of a poor soldier, — "a potter of the isles of Lesbos," Robertson calls him, — he became a mighty potentate. Resisting the temptation to found an independent but precarious dynasty, he wedded himself to the greatest monarchy of the East, bringing as dowry the province of

was the power of Solyman the Great, the "Magnificent," the "Lawgiver," the "Lord of his Age;" a ruler sometimes wrathful, cruel, and bigoted; yet, in the main, just as well as enterprising, combining order and economy with grandeur and magnificence, extorting honor even from his enemies, and distinguishing himself as an encourager of arts and diffuser of learning.

In illustration both of his power and his occasional failures, we may refer to two events near the close of his reign, the siege of Malta, and his last march into Hungary. The Knights Hospitallers of St. John were originally, as their name imports, a religious association for ministering to the sick among the pilgrims to the Holy Land. Subsequently they became a military body, pledged by a vow to defend the Holy Sepulchre, and to maintain perpetual war against the Mohammedans. After the expulsion of the Christians, the Knights took possession first of Cyprus, and subsequently of Rhodes, which they fortified and enriched, and where, for several centuries, they retained their power. Their

Algiers, and spoils from every country on the Mediterranean. With a courage which shrunk from no danger, he planned enterprises the most hazardous, and carried the terror of his name into every harbor of every shore. Of inexhaustible resources, he rose with fresh energy from every disaster. Driven from one position, he appeared, as on the wings of the wind, at another, where none anticipated his attacks. Sanguinary and barbarous, he was not without generosity. Thoroughly loyal to the sovereign whom he acknowledged, he had the rare faculty of making his officers and soldiers equally loyal to himself; and, more than all, finding the Turkish navy of small capacity and limited ideas, creeping along the shores of the Eastern Archipelago, and never venturing beyond the Levant, he boldly carried it to the pillars of Hercules, and left to it, even with Andrew Doria for a rival, the almost undisputed empire of the sea.

Under this great Sultan, also, the Ottoman power began to show its influence in the general politics of Europe. Francis I., in his extreme hostility to his great rival Charles, solicited a naval alliance with Solyman; and Barbarossa, at the head of one hundred and fifty vessels of war, sailed for Marseilles, to join the French fleet in an attack upon Nice. "To the astonishment and scandal of all Christendom," says Robertson, "the lilies of France, and the crescent of Mohammed, appeared in conjunction against a fortress on which the cross of Savoy was displayed." It is worth the while to mention, as indicating the relative efficiency of these two naval powers, that the Turkish admiral is found constantly complaining of the sluggishness, apathy, and imperfect arrangements of his allies, and at last abandoned them in little better than disgust, and sailed homeward, plundering the sea-ports of Italy as he went, in sullen revenge.

galleys were perpetually bringing in prizes from the Turks, their red banner with the white cross was ever seen in the thickest of the fight; their courage, and skill, and ample fortifications resisted every attack. In prosperity they did not yield to luxury, in adversity they did not lose hope; nor did they provoke the jealousy of foreign governments and princes by ambition. "There is no example of a military institution (it is the testimony of Mr. Prescott) having religion for its object, which, under every change of condition, and for so many centuries, maintained so inflexibly the purity of its principles, and so conscientiously devoted itself to the great object for which it was created." Against this little band at Rhodes, Solyman led the whole force of the Ottoman Empire. He was stimulated by a desire of effacing the dishonor of a former repulse, and the necessity of removing so formidable an obstacle to the commerce between Constantinople and the southern shore of the Mediterranean. A fleet of three hundred sail transported ten thousand soldiers to the devoted island, while an army of a hundred thousand men followed along the shore of Asia Minor. For six months the few hundred knights, under the command of Villiers de Lisle Adam, unaided and undaunted, bore the shock of the unequal contest. All the resources of military skill were exhausted in the attack and defence; and the city, hopeless of success, finally surrendered on the most honorable terms. The inscriptions and armorial bearings were suffered to remain, churches were respected, and the island freed from tribute for five years. "Three hundred and fifteen years," to quote the words of Marshal Marmont, "have now elapsed since this illustrious Order was obliged to abandon its conquest, after a possession of two hundred and twelve years. The street of the Knights is uninjured; and the door of each house is still ornamented with the escutcheon of the last inhabitant. The buildings have been spared, but are unoccupied; and we could almost fancy ourselves surrounded by the shades of departed heroes. The arms of France, the noble fleur-de-lis, are seen in all directions. I observed those of the Clermont-Tounerres, and of other

ancient and illustrious families." Driven thus from Rhodes, the Knights took refuge in Malta, then bleak, rocky, and barren, a sad contrast to the garden of roses which they had left. They wasted no time, however, in vain regrets. Terraces were thrown along the sides of the hills; earth brought, at great expense, from Sicily; cisterns and wells excavated; and the island soon began to show the results of their diligent culture. They selected, for the site of their capital, the shores of that remarkable double harbor, which can safely hold the fleets of half the world at once, over which now floats the flag of England, and which the military genius of ages has made equal, in strength, to Gibraltar, Quebec, Ehrenbreitstein, and Sebastopol.

The Knights of Malta, as they were now called, threw up about this harbor such forts as were sufficient for the protection of their fleet and town; and soon their galleys, manned by the most skilful sailors, and mindful of their former spirit, found their way into every harbor of the enemy, and imperilled every venture of their commerce. In this state of things, Solyman, now grown old, yet remembering his conquest of Rhodes, forty years before, determined to exterminate his troublesome and indefatigable enemy. The capture of a huge Turkish galleon, belonging to the chief eunuch of the imperial harem, quickened this resolution.

Fortunately, the knights were commanded by a grand-master, La Valette, whose determination and genius were equal to the emergency. By means of his spies, he found out the objects of the Sultan, and, through his ambassadors, applied for aid from the different states of the West. He recalled all the members of the Order who had been distributed throughout Europe. "It was the great battle of the Cross and the Koran," he said, "that was to be fought. They were the chosen soldiers of the cross; and, if Heaven required the sacrifice of their lives, there could be no better time than this glorious occasion." The whole force which could be mustered for the defence of the island amounted to about nine thousand; against whom were brought thirty thousand picked troops, besides the mariners of more than

two hundred galleys and transports. Everything depended on the rare insight, the judgment, the courage, the indomitable constancy, of the grand-master, and these great qualities never for one moment failed. His name has well been affixed to the almost impregnable city which crowns the point, and commands the waters, he so bravely defended. The overwhelming fire of the Turkish artillery, directed at first against the detached castle of St. Elmo, soon rendered that post, in the judgment of most military men, untenable. Not so with the grand-master. He knew the value of time, and that if it fell, and fell early, the whole island would fall with it. He offered to take the command of it himself, and hold it, or die in the breach. Some of the younger Knights expressed a determination, if not relieved, to sally out, and die honorably in the camp of the enemy. He told them, in reply, that it was not enough to die honorably; their vow of obedience required that they should endure every trial which he should order, and not die even but in the manner he should prescribe. His self-devotion inspired theirs. The word *surrender* was never heard but from the lips of a single soldier, and he was immediately put to death. For a whole month,—a precious month of time,—the doomed fort resisted assault by day and by night, directed by all the skill of the Turkish engineers, and all the ferocity of a long baffled foe, and was not taken till fifteen hundred Christians had fallen in its defence, and more than eight thousand Turks in the attack. "What will not the parent cost," exclaimed the Turkish general, alluding to the town itself, "when the child has cost us so dear!"

A short breathing space was allowed before the whole force of the Ottoman army was hurled upon the town; and here, on both sides, were exhausted all the military and engineering knowledge of the age. The town was bombarded; mines were sprung; assaults repulsed, only to be repeated by fresh bodies of assailants, who swarmed into the ditches, and up the shattered slopes of the ramparts. The besieged were not idle. Messengers were sent to urge reinforcements from Sicily; new means of defence were in-

vented; hand-grenades, heaps of combustibles, showers of bullets, were sent among the assailants; iron hoops, wound with tow and rags, were set on fire, and sent sailing over their heads, so as to fall and scorch their victims in a ring of flame. With every attack, with every failure of foreign succor, the spirit of La Valette rose higher and firmer. Their only reliance, he said, was Heaven and themselves. He was urged to withdraw within the castle, and give up the town. So far from it, he would not even suffer the papers and archives of the Order to be carried into the castle, lest it might indicate to his soldiers distrust of his power of defence. "No, my brethren," he said, with heroic fervor, "*here* we must make our stand; and here we must die, if we cannot maintain ourselves against the infidels."

So much nobleness at last had its reward. The besiegers themselves became weary and wasted; their army had suffered fearfully. Succor was at last sent to the Knights, when it was hardly needed; and, after two months of incessant fighting, the siege was raised, and the discomfited and chagrined Ottomans slunk back to Constantinople. It was the beginning of the end. Never again did their arms, in anything like such force, sweep so far westward, or menace the northern shores of the Mediterranean.

The career of Solyman terminated under circumstances of strangely mingled sorrow and glory. On the first of May, 1566, too feeble to sit on horseback, he was borne on a litter at the head of his army, which began its march towards Austria. Again was presented for solution the great problem, then not certain to the eye of history, and filling the hearts of monarchs and people with ill-concealed anxiety, whether Europe should be Mohammedan or Christian. The first great trial was by the Saracens, whose power was finally shattered on the plains of Tours by the battle-axe of Charles Martel. The second most important effort was the life-long labors of Solyman. He had just finished the walls of Constantinople, which secured the defence of the city, and the great aqueducts which supplied it with water, when he left it for the last time, and moved slowly but victoriously towards his expected prey.

Far up the Danube, above Belgrade, and on a little tributary stream north of the Drave, on the high road to Vienna, stands the little town of Szigeth. It was the first strong fortress in the way of the victorious Ottomans, and specially obnoxious to them, because it had formerly repulsed their assaults. It was now defended by a hero, Count Zriny, whose name was destined to be famous in the annals of his country. Having burnt the lower town, he shut himself up in the citadel with thirty-two hundred determined men, hoisted the black flag, and took an oath never to surrender. The Sultan sought to win him by promises of wealth and power, but in vain. The Leonidas of Hungary, as his countrymen loved to call him, was incorruptible. The assaults of the besiegers were repelled with great loss; but their overwhelming numbers enabled them to renew the attack continually with fresh troops, until, at last, the exterior defences were shattered, and within the citadel there remained standing but a single tower. Into this Count Zriny retreated with the remains of the garrison, now reduced to six hundred men. "On the 8th of September, the Janizaries advanced in a dense column along a narrow bridge that led to this last shelter of the defenders; and Zriny, feeling that his hour was come, resolved to anticipate the charge. The gallant Magyar prepared himself for death as for a marriage feast. He wore his most splendid apparel, and a diamond of high price glittered in the clasp of his crest of the heron's plumes. He fastened to his girdle a purse containing the keys of the tower, and a hundred ducats, carefully chosen, of Hungarian coinage. 'The man that lays me out,' he said, 'shall not complain that he found nothing on me for his trouble. These keys I keep, while this arm can move. When it is stiff, let him who pleases take both keys and ducats; but I have sworn never to be the living finger-post of Turkish scorn.' Then, from among four richly ornamented sabres, which had been presented to him at some of the most brilliant epochs of his military career, he chose the oldest one. 'With this good sword,' he exclaimed, 'gained I my first honors; and with this will

I pass forth to hear my doom before the judgment-seat of God.' He then, with the banner of the empire borne before him by his standard-bearer, went down into the court of the tower, where his six hundred were drawn up in readiness to die with him. He addressed them in a few words of encouragement, which he ended by thrice invoking the name of Jesus. The Turks were now close to the tower gate. Zriny had caused a large mortar to be brought down, and placed in the door-way, and trained point blank against the entrance. He had loaded this with broken iron and musket balls. At the instant when the foremost Janizary raised his axe to break in the door, it was thrown open. Zriny fired the mortar: the deadly shower poured through the mass of the assailants, destroying hundreds of them in an instant; and, amid the smoke, the din, and the terror of this unexpected carnage, Zriny sprang forth, sword in hand, against the Turks, followed by his devoted troop. There was not one of those six hundred Magyar sabres but drank its fill on that day of self-immolation, before the gallant men who wielded them were overpowered. Zriny met the death he sought, from two musket balls through the body, and an arrow wound in the head. The Ottomans thrice raised the shout of 'Allah,' when they saw him fall, and they then poured into the citadel, which they fired, and began to plunder; but Zriny, even after death, smote his foes. He had caused all his remaining stores of powder to be placed beneath the tower; and, according to some accounts, a slow match was applied to it by his orders, immediately before the Magyars made their sally. Either from this, or from the flames which the Turks had themselves kindled, the magazine exploded while the tower was filled with Ottoman soldiery, and, together with the last battlements of Szigeth, three thousand of its destroyers were destroyed." ¹ But where, all this time, was Solyman the Magnificent? Cold, stark dead, in his tent. His strength had yielded, and life passed away, before the victorious shout of his army was heard. A countermarch was ordered; while the great

¹ Hist. Ottoman Turks, Vol. I., pp. 312—314.

secret was faithfully kept by the sagacious vizier (Sokolli), and the faithful physician, till the tidings were transmitted to Constantinople. For nearly two months, the body, embalmed and placed in the covered litter of the Sultan, was borne along by the troops, who knew not that the signature which they obeyed was a counterfeit. All the common external marks of respect were paid as to the living monarch, at whose order battles were still fought, to the fear and renown of whose name cities and towns still capitulated. "At last Sokolli received intelligence that Prince Selim had been enthroned at Constantinople, and he then took measures for revealing to the soldiery the death of the great Padishah. The army was now (24th October, 1566) four marches distant from Belgrade, and had halted for the night in the outskirts of a forest. Sokolli sent for the readers of the Koran, who accompanied the troops, and ordered them to assemble round the Sultan's litter in the night, and, at the fourth hour before daybreak (the hour at which Solyman had expired, forty-eight days before), to read the appointed service for the dead from the Koran, and call upon the name of God. At the chosen time, amid the stillness of the night, the army was roused from sleep by the loud, clear voices of the Muezzins, that rose in solemn chant from around the royal tent, and were echoed back from the sepulchral gloom of the forest. Those who stood on the right of the corpse called aloud: 'All dominion perishes, and the last hour awaits all mankind.' Those on the left answered: 'The ever-living God alone is untouched by time or death.'"¹

Thus the army received the first tidings of their monarch's decease; thus sounded the twelfth hour, the noon, the *past-meridian* of the Ottoman power in Europe. The body of Solyman was finally entombed in the great mosque bearing his own name, and his dominion was handed over to his son, Selim the Second, who, for his low vices, has been called by historians, *Selim the Sot*.

Judged by the standard which measures princes, Solyman

¹ Hist. Ottoman Turks, Vol. I, pp. 315, 316.

stands among the highest. Compared with the most eminent in his own age, — an age remarkable for the energy of rulers, — with Charles V., or Francis I., or Henry, or Elizabeth, he will not be found unworthy of the august companionship, nor the least able of the sovereigns. The three great objects of his later life were the completion of his code of laws, the finishing of the mosque which bears his name, and the undying, the hereditary desire of the Ottomans — the conquest of Vienna. In the first two, he was successful; in the last, he failed. “Since the horoscope of no man,” quotes Mr. Hulme (*Bl. Nov.* '41, p. 608), “is altogether unclouded by adverse influences, it was never the fortune of Sultan Solymán Kanooni to become lord of the *Kizie Alma*,” i. e. the red-apple, a name given to the metropolis of Germany.

Such being the power of the Ottomans, so persistent, so nearly irresistible, it is not surprising that literature, which reflects the thoughts of men, should have been so full of hostility to the “grim Soldan;” nor that religion, — a record of men’s faith and affections, — not always quite sure that the cross might not, for a time, yield to the crescent, should have made deliverance from the Turk foremost in her prayers.

It has been said that, in the history of a kingdom, next in importance to the reign of the monarch who does the most for its advancement, is that of him under whom it begins to decline. If this be true, we may well pause for a few moments at the name of Selim II., before proceeding to what demands a larger attention, namely, a notice of some of the causes of the rise and decay of this remarkable power. It is the glory of free and constitutional governments, that they command not only the talents of the ruler, but of his ministers. This is also, sometimes, true of despotic governments, and the prosperity of the administration is due to a power behind the throne. The true, beneficent ruler, is unseen. So was it with Selim. The glories of his reign are, in large part, due to his grand vizier; its misfortunes, to himself.

The Turks had been entirely regardless of commerce, al-

though the commercial classes, there as elsewhere, were looked upon with half contempt, and trade as something akin to dishonor. Yet its influence, though not dominant as now, was early felt in bringing together the East and the West, in modifying prejudices, and in enlarging the boundaries of knowledge. As early as 1530, France had formed a commercial treaty with that power which Christian nations had thought it a scandal to regard otherwise than as an abhorred public enemy. The Venetians, with a quick eye to the opulence which had built up their fairy city, soon followed; and England promptly sent an ambassador. In these compacts, however, the Ottoman Porte abated none of its haughty pretensions. The western nations had sought *her* alliance, not *she* theirs. She walked, in grandeur and triumph, along her way, and boasted, with barbaric pride, that France and England, Venice and Transylvania, flocked to her for wealth and refuge. The ambassadors sent to her were not always sure of courteous treatment, or even of safety. Taking advantage of the dissensions of Christian nations, she paid little regard to their usages, and treated their agents sometimes with cruelty, and nearly always with arrogance; yet also often with a "magnanimous disdain of opportunities," with a noble sympathy for fallen greatness, and with a regard for treaty engagements, which might shame the frequent diplomacy of Christendom.

Stimulated by a desire of easy military and commercial intercourse with the East, Selim, under the advice of his far-sighted viziers, formed two plans, the execution of either of which would have conferred lasting renown upon his reign; plans which, in spirit, seem more like the enterprise of our own day, than that of the sixteenth century. The two great rivers, which flow along the confines of Europe and Asia, the Don and Volga, approach, in one point, to within thirty miles of each other. To join these two navigable streams, would give the Ottomans the command of the Caspian as well as of the Black Sea, would afford an easy and safe transit for Turkish armies towards Persia, and for the rich merchandise of India towards Constantinople. This

was seen by the ministers of the Sultan, and Turkish soldiers were sent to occupy Astrachan, while, at the same time, five thousand Janizaries and three thousand laborers commenced the work at Azoph. But at each extremity they were met by a fierce and uncouth race, of strange aspect and unknown tongue, and forced, after repeated defeats, to give over their attempts. This deserves to be chronicled, as the first successful encounter of the Russians with their Southern neighbors. The defeat would only have stimulated the older sultans to more vigorous efforts; but Selim inherited their empire, not their spirit. Another grand project of Sokolli was one revived in our own day, the union of the Mediterranean and Red seas, so that the Ottoman fleets could sail from one to the other. This too, so near being undertaken at last, failed, partly from a revolt in Arabia, and, in part from the self-will and cupidity of Selim; which, against the remonstrances of Sokolli, led him to break the treaties of peace with the western nations, for the sake of re-acquiring the dominion over Cyprus. The coveted acquisition was made, but at the cost of fifty thousand Turkish soldiers, who perished in the effort, and the still greater cost of the aroused jealousy and fear of all Christian Europe. A league was formed between the principal western nations; fleets were equipped; and both parties prepared themselves for a fierce and decisive contest.

The heights of Lepanto never looked down on an armament like that which troubled its peaceful gulf on the 7th of October, 1571. The opposing fleets were not very unequal; and, together, numbered not far from six hundred vessels of war. Light piratical craft, from the shores of Greece, Asia Minor, and Africa; Turkish galleys, which had swept victorious over every sea, which had destroyed Rhodes and Cyprus, and blockaded Malta, and defiantly flaunted the crescent within the gulf of Genoa and the lagoons of Venice, moving heavily now under the unwilling oar-strokes of ten thousand Christian slaves chained to the benches; all these, confident and ferocious, obeyed the Turkish commander. On the other side, were the banners

of Spain and Savoy, of Rome, and Malta, and Venice, fewer in number than their enemies and less confident of victory, but equally resolute to win it. The admiral of the combined Christian forces was Don John of Austria, a natural son of Charles V., and brother of Philip II. of Spain, a warrior from his youth, of ancient military skill, whose zeal and ambition had been inflamed by the dangers of conflict, the peculiar confidence reposed in him, and the special exhortation of the pope. Many famous captains had flocked to his standard, proud to serve under so eminent a chief, in "such an honorable enterprise." But among them all, the scholar and lover of letters will be apt to remember first, one who fought, that day, as a common soldier; "that day," as he says, "so fortunate for Christendom; when all nations were undeceived of their error in believing that the Turks were invincible at sea;" one who then, literally, gave an arm to his country, and went through life, after, a maimed man; one who became "the glory and reproach of Spain," whose Don Quixote, has embalmed his name in the memory of thousands to whom Philip, and John, and Selim, are utter strangers. The sun of that terribly-contested day went down on the Turkish forces utterly discomfited, the head of the Turkish admiral at the top-mast of the Spanish flag-ship, two hundred and twenty-four Turkish galleys destroyed, thirty thousand Turks slain, and fifteen thousand Christians liberated from slavery. But for dissensions among the allies, the success would have been even greater. All Christendom had watched the fight; all Christendom joined in the rejoicing. When the pope heard of it, he exclaimed: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." Rewards were showered upon the victors, and churches everywhere built in honor of the victory. The naval prestige of the Ottoman was broken, and in this, rather than in any material success, lay the significance of the battle. The Turks still remained supreme on land, rapidly recovered their numerical superiority by sea, and in nothing lowered the haughtiness of their tone. "You have shaved our chin," said the Turkish vizier to the Venetian ambassador, "but

our beard is growing again. We have lopped off your arm, and you can never replace it." But this was the boast of audacity, rather than the assurance of strength. The reputation for invincibility, so rudely shaken, was never re-established. The Ottoman power was already on its retreat.

We may pause here (having no space to speak of the Amuraths, Achmets, and Mustaphas, under whom the decline was constant), to notice some of the causes of the early triumphant progress of the Turkish dominion. In reality (speaking only of physical causes), there is nothing mysterious or anomalous in the history of the Turks. That which makes any people great, made them so: union, obedience, justice, intelligence, enterprise. Not to speak of personal ambition, of a thirst for dominion, of a desire for a more fertile territory, or a more favorable climate, which have excited so many migrations, we may notice in the Early Ottoman, the vigor of a new and enterprising race matched against the effeminacy of a race effete and worn out; bravery opposed to intrigue, action to sophistry. The Ottomans, inspired with the fresh life of the Eastern and Northern tribes, nursed in hardships, of sinewy frame, of daring courage, precipitated themselves upon a people enervated with luxury, without self-reliance, and without ambition. Any people who will tamely relinquish their homes, who are so unmindful of their ancestors, of their common fame, and of a national position the fairest which the earth offers; so unmindful as to suffer these to be, one by one, sullied or snatched away,—and still show no signs of discontent,—themselves give the signal that their hour is come. Personal bravery there may be, rare and beautiful instances of self-devotion, eloquence the most passionate, sorrowful, and fierce. But they will avail no more than the philippics of Demosthenes or the patriotism of Kosciuszko. The course of a demoralized nation is always to the grave; the music of its step, a funeral march. The "*mene, tekel, upharsin,*" is written, in letters of fire, on every palace, on every tower; and the terrible besom which Providence shall appoint, will soon enough sweep them to destruction.

Another cause of the continued conquests of the Ottomans may be found in their skill and discipline in war. However deficient their training compared with the methods of the present day, in the height of their organization, no European army was their equal. They did not, like the Tartars, owe their success to the dead weight of numbers, nor to fierce predatory excursions; but to more complete equipments, more scientific tactics, and thorough discipline. The Turkish officer was educated for his place; and the soldier was strong, docile, sober, intelligent, satisfied with small pay and meagre fare, possessing the thorough contempt of death which belongs to a fatalist and a fanatic.

The commissariat was carefully attended to. It is said that, at the first siege of Vienna, though as many as 250,000 were assembled in the besieging army, and though the country about had been widely devastated, there was no want of forage or provision, until quite at the close of the siege. Their army was the best, especially in those departments which require the highest military knowledge. No European nation could boast of artillery like theirs, or a corps of engineers equal in genius and skill. To them is ascribed the first regular approaches to fortified places, the first use of red-hot shot (at the siege of Vienna, in 1683), and the invention of a kind of Paixhan or howitzer cannon.¹ They attracted adventurers to their standard by high pay and liberal rewards. The cannon with which the walls of Constantinople were battered down, were cast by a Hungarian (or Wallachian) engineer, tempted from the service of the Greeks when he was half-starved, by the ample recompense of the Ottoman monarch. Some of these rude cannon were of immense size; and, according to Gibbon, threw a stone ball of six hundred pounds.

But the most peculiar institution of the Ottoman was the growth among them of a body of soldiers by profession and descent, a military caste, distinct in habits and interest from the body of the nation, constituting a band, under the control of the Sultan, formidable by their skill and *'esprit du*

¹ Col. Chesney, pp. 282, 283.

corps,' and ready to be used, sometimes, as instruments of vengeance against a refractory populace ; but oftener as a terrible and irresistible force against every foreign foe. The Janizaries, destined to play so important a part in the history of Turkey, were originally the children of Christian captives ; one fifth of the whole, it is said, being set apart and educated for the purpose. Afterwards, this body was recruited from all the Christian subjects of the Porte, and from the sons of soldiers themselves, till they were numbered by tens of thousands, a standing army, free from popular sympathy and prejudices, bound to the nation at large neither by descent nor character, and ready at all times to contribute their aid in concentrating and sustaining the power of the reigning dynasty. It is a singular fact that a body so constituted should have grown up in the heart of an oriental despotism, forming the centre and ground of its permanence, and thereby distinguishing it from the usual fickle and transitory character of Eastern governments, "identifying itself with all the Ottoman traditions," successfully opposing every social change, and finally overawing and controlling the throne itself, till the haughty independence of its members rendered them more an object of fear than of trust ; and at last, within our own memory, precipitated them into destruction. But, for a century after their formation, they constituted the nucleus about which armies could be easily gathered ; they opposed their discipline to the tumultuous levies of foreign soldiery ; their spirit and audacity to the timidity and distrust of their foes ; their stability to the fluctuating elements of their own government.

A third, though less prominent and effective, cause of the rapid progress of the Ottoman arms, may be found in their religious enthusiasm ; less prominent, we say, because the old Saracenic fanaticism, which had swept the fiery masses of Arabia along the northern shores of Africa, and established a kingdom in Spain, and well nigh overrun the whole of that peninsula and the west of Europe ; this fiery zeal had, in a measure, spent itself. The cry was no longer : "You infidel dog—The crescent or the scimeter ;" for,

the Christians crouched securely beneath their Moslem rulers, and pursued their ignoble occupations without molestation. The spectacle was early exhibited of Christian subjects, in many places, outnumbering their Mohammedan masters by three or four to one. The traditional hostility still, however, continued; and the Turk was impelled, by every promise of the Koran, by the zeal of Muftis and Imams, and by unrelenting religious hatred, to subdue to his sceptre the kingdoms of Christendom.

There was yet another cause which contributed to the stability and permanence of the Empire. Nations cannot always subsist upon war. War is a means, not an end. The arts and virtues of peace — agriculture, commerce, justice, morality; these form the real basis of the prosperity of a State. It is professedly to gain these, all or some of them, that a civilized and prudent nation submits to the terrible and hazardous trial of arms. In the earlier ages, though the arts of peace were less honorable, though war was less rare and entered upon more carelessly and with less regard to right, it still remained true that the strength of the Empire lay in its internal prosperity. Of this, the Turks were not unmindful. Down to the time of Solyman the Magnificent, whose reign nearly synchronizes with that of Charles V., the Sultans of the Ottomans were, for the most part, sagacious, wise, prudent, and illustrious. As sovereigns, they were enlightened, accomplished, and tolerant. As Europe then was, disturbed by wars, and almost every kingdom rent with factions, the dominions of the Sultan offered the safest asylum for the persecuted, and the strongest assurance of personal freedom, safety, and happiness. "Except in a single instance," says Gibbon, "a period of nine reigns and two hundred and sixty-five years, is occupied, from the elevation of Othman to the death of Solyman, by a rare series of warlike and active princes, who impressed their subjects with obedience, and their enemies with terror." Selim I. was as remarkable for literary attainments and the vigor of his domestic administration, as for ferocity and success in war. Solyman was celebrated as a lawgiver, no less than as a

warrior. He established order by an efficient police; divided his empire into districts, and appointed the number of soldiers which each should furnish; appropriated land for their maintenance, and carefully regulated their arms, their discipline, and the nature of their service. The early sultans were lovers and patrons of learning. A college and a library were attached to the most important mosques, and Aristotle and Plato were translated into Turkish. "It is a saying," says one writer, "attributed to Mohammed, that "the will of the learned, and the blood of the martyr, is of great value in heaven."

Let us now pass on a little more than two centuries from the time of Solyman, centuries of almost constant warfare; the Turk, without intermission, flinging his armed bands against the proud ramparts of Europe, as if it were his sacred mission to overwhelm and destroy; and assailed, in turn, with a hostility quite as intense and unintermitted. The fortunes of wars so multitudinous, so protracted, were various. Success was not always on one side, not always on what might seem to be the right side. Countries were still desolated; foreign vessels ventured into the Levant only on payment of tribute; Christian captives were carried into slavery; Vienna was again besieged; the Turk was the great foe of Europe. But what does history chronicle as the result? How stand the great parties towards the end of the eighteenth century? We see new nations in the field; we see a struggle of a diminished and vacillating fanaticism against calm, persistent, self-comprehending power; a struggle of desperation against strength; of fatalism against free will; of a nation whose conquests and glories are in the past, against nations whose dominion is in the present, whose hopes are in the future; and especially against a nation whose civilization, long held back, is now painfully but effectively unfolding itself; a nation well nigh invulnerable in its northern intrenchments of barren plains and frozen seas; whose aggressiveness is perpetual, and assumes almost the dignity of a principle; and whose ambition for dominion is untiring, unscrupulous, and vaster even than its power. We see Turkey no longer the terror, but almost the

pity of Christendom. She retains her traditional position in the cabinet, but has lost her supremacy in the field. She no longer affects the language of unapproachable majesty ; but receives, with readiness and submission, the advice (another word, sometimes, for demands) of foreigners. She expostulates, but yields, and takes off the edge of the humiliation only by a dignity of bearing which adversity has tempered, but cannot destroy. She is no longer a power fierce, rampant, victorious, terrible ; but a power sustained, protected, tolerated ; no longer "an absolute government tempered by regicide," as Chateaubriand calls it ; but compelled to respect the temper and faith of its subjects. No Barbarossa or Dragut sweeps the seas ; no Mohammeds or Solymans domineer over the land.

We can hardly allude even to the historical facts which mark the progress of this great change. In 1481, thirty years after the taking of Constantinople by Mohammed II., Ivan the Great succeeded, after a fierce struggle, in establishing himself as an independent sovereign. But Russia does not appear as a hostile power, exciting the fear of Turkey and the jealousy of Europe, until the 18th century ; since which time, Mr. Alison has said, that "war is the natural state between the Muscovites and the Turks ; the intervals of peace are only truces." The progress of Russia for the last hundred years has been steadily southward. A brief inspection of the map of Europe will afford the best illustration of this. South of the Dnieper are three smaller rivers, flowing nearly parallel,—the Bog, the Dniester, and the Pruth, the latter entering into the Danube some sixty or seventy miles above its mouth. In 1774, the southern boundary of Russia, which for many years had been formed by the Dnieper, was advanced to the Bog ; in eighteen years more, it had reached the Dniester. In 1812, the frontier had crept down to the Pruth, and, in 1829, was made to include the mouth of the Danube. Already, as early as 1774, Russia had acquired the protectorate of the Crimea ; and, in 1792, in spite of Turkish resistance, incorporated that important peninsula with her own territory.

Within the present century, the three great struggles which have both demonstrated the condition of Turkey, and unmasked the designs of Russia, have been, the war terminated in 1812 by the treaty of Bucharest, by which, although Russia lost Moldavia and Wallachia, once declared to be a part of the empire, it gained Bessarabia, the important province just north of the mouth of the Danube; the war of 1828-29, ended by the treaty of Adrianople; and the contest which has just been brought to a close. We may have space to refer briefly to the second of these. The year 1827 found the Turkish empire somewhat exhausted by the Greek revolution; her fleet annihilated by the battle of Navarino; and the great powers of Europe pressing her, through their ambassadors, to acknowledge the independence of Greece. England and France were impelled to this by sympathy with a struggling people, whose ancient history was that of freedom, and whose literature was so largely the informing element of modern education and discipline, as well as by the general barbarity with which the war was carried on, and an apparent necessity of stopping a useless effusion of blood. Russia, which by her emissaries had kindled the fire of revolution, and fanned its flame, looked to more distant results. Every diminution of the Turkish power was an increase of her own. She had pushed her outposts around the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea, and already had her grasp nearly upon the mouths of the Danube. To the application of the foreign powers the Reis Effendi replied, that at least it was remarkable,—“that history presented no example of conduct so opposed to the reciprocal duties of governments as that of interference in the internal concerns of another state, followed by success given almost openly, as a means of prolonging the rebellion, and this, too, by powers professing to be friendly.” At this answer, the ambassadors of France and England withdrew from the Porte; but Russia went further, and made the refusal an occasion of war, for which she had long been preparing. A note was addressed to Count Nesselrode (dated December 27, 1827), complaining

of the haste with which friendly relations were broken off, and inviting negotiation. No answer was returned for nearly four months, nor, indeed, until orders had already been given to prepare to invade Asia Minor. In the meantime, charges against Turkey were easily found. "The trade of the Black Sea," it was said, "had been impeded by searching the vessels so employed; Russian subjects had been attacked; and Turkey had even announced her determination to return evil for good, and war for peace." To this last charge there was at least a shadow of truth, in the incautious wording of a Hatti Scheriff which was issued, appealing to Moslem religious prejudices, and urging the provinces to be prepared for the coming danger. "According to the Turkish minister, the grievances were quite on the other side. It was the old story of the wolf complaining of the lamb. Turkish ports had been blockaded, and supplies cut off from Turkish armies; the Sultan's subjects were not allowed to pass from one part of Russia to another; the Turkish fleet had been destroyed by Russian cannon; an army was assembled on the frontiers of Bessarabia, ready to cross into the Turkish territory; and fortresses in Asia, which by treaty were to be surrendered, were not only retained, but to an application for them the answer of Russia was, that as she had held them so long, she might as well keep them altogether."¹

Whatever may be thought of the pretexts upon which war was declared, the time was well chosen by the powerful and unscrupulous northern antagonist. A large part of the army of Turkey was inefficient, and without experience. Its officers were, for the most part, mere lads, selected at this early age that they might more easily become familiar with the new tactics recently introduced. The European system had been adopted, with which the soldiers were not yet familiar. Many pachas were jealous of reforms, and actually withheld their assistance, in order to compel the Sultan to retract. The Janizaries had been destroyed, and, with them, something of the Moslem pride and self-reliance;

¹ Chesney, pp. 37—39.

and, besides all, the Russian fleet had the entire command of the Black Sea, and could therefore transport armies and munitions to any point of attack.

Nevertheless, Mahmoud, with a vigor which reminds one of the early sultans, with an enlargement and liberality of mind to which few of them could lay claim, determined to resist the adverse pressure at home and abroad; to continue his reforms, though unpopular, and to save, if possible, his ancient territories from successful invasion. The great battle-field of Turkey, the extended valley of the Danube; its strong fortifications, Shumla, Varna, Rustchuk, and Silistria; its great mountain range, the Balkan, running like a rampart from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, — are now all familiar to every reader of the newspapers. Relying upon these natural defences, and on the inherent bravery of his soldiers, the Sultan hoped to make a successful defence. In part, his expectations were realized. The annals of no war offer examples of more protracted and obstinate resistance than that made by Shumla, Varna, and Silistria. The most remarkable sieges of the Peninsular war, of St. Sebastian, of Badajoz, of Ciudad Rodrigo, were equalled in examples of daring and self-devotion. The emperor Nicholas inspired the army by his presence; yet every inch of ground was disputed; the most vehement fighting took place in the ditches, and on the ramparts of the besieged places, and the defence often seemed to begin in earnest just where, in ordinary sieges, it would be thought nearly to end. Varna surrendered, after a vigorous defence of three months, and then only in consequence of the defection of Yussuf Pacha, the second in command, — a result, probably, of Russian gold. Silistria — it seems to have a habit of obstinacy — held out three months, in 1828, against an army of thirty thousand, and finally compelled the Russians to raise the siege. The next year, it was obliged to yield before an overwhelming force. Shumla, on the northern declivity of the Balkan, important as a military position, commanding one of the great roads across the mountains, was not taken at all.

Through means, however, of the Russian fleet, the Balkan range was turned; the army advanced towards Adrianople; a communication was opened with Russian forces in the Mediterranean; and a disadvantageous and even humiliating peace was concluded, at a moment when the enemy might have been most successfully resisted, had his weakness been known. The policy of the invader was, to compel a peace before his own condition was discovered, and before foreign nations could interfere. "It is in the midst of our camp," wrote the Russian ambassador, in London, to Count Nesselrode, "that peace must be signed. Europe must learn its conditions only when it is concluded. Remonstrances will then be too late, and it will patiently suffer what it can no longer prevent."¹ During the campaign, the Russian army lost, by sickness and the sword, more than fifty thousand men; and, at the moment when the bold-faced audacity of Marshal Diebitsch wrung the treaty from the Sultan, he had not probably more than fifteen or seventeen thousand effective soldiers in his army.

In comparing the rise of the Ottoman power, its conquests, its haughty independence, its hostility to Western Europe, with its present position of partial dependence, when conquest is never thought of, and the maintenance of its territory is all at which it aims, two questions naturally occur: First, What are the causes of its decline? and, secondly, Is the empire destined soon to become extinct, or is there a future for it still? The causes of the nation's decline may be found to contrast with those of her brilliant early progress. As we found some of the causes of her eminence to lie in the vigor of her race, the energy and intelligence of her monarchs, her superior military skill, and her practical enthusiasm, so may we notice her decline as connected with the absolute or relative decay of these elements of her life.

We may notice that, in the course of ages, she came to contend with races of different mould from those whom she early displaced; no longer the effeminate Greek, but the

¹ Chesney, p. 226.

patient, progressive German, the obedient, persevering, ambitious Russian, the ardent French, the indomitable English. We may observe, again, that the Turks have long since lost their ancient superiority in military affairs. Other nations have passed far beyond, and left them to use the old methods, the clumsy weapons, the imperfect equipments, and the unscientific tactics, which modern skill and genius have entirely superseded.

Still another and stronger reason may be found in the faulty internal administration of the kingdom. The great and sagacious early sultans, the Mohammeds and Solymans, had few successors. Born and educated in the seclusion of the seraglio, with little learning, no experience in affairs, and no familiarity with the wants or resources of the country, with few gratifications besides those of a sensual and effeminate nature, and an ambition circumscribed by the narrow limits of prejudice or ignorance, what could be expected but bigotry and incapacity on the throne? And must it not be held the mark of a superior mind, when these limits have been passed? Instead, therefore, of a careful cherishing of the sources of revenue, a fostering of arts, a stimulus to the national enthusiasm, and a wise direction of the national energies, there has oftener been found, for the last century or two, a neglect of all these; opposition and oppression; revenues farmed out to the highest bidder, or bestowed upon favorites; the lower officers sent as sponges to drink up the life-blood of a country (its total wealth), and then squeezed into the treasury of the master; the poor becoming poorer, and the rich not much richer; old prejudices growing inveterate, and love for a government, no longer helping and protecting, growing less; with fraud, corruption, and imbecility, in every branch of the administration, as the rule, and honesty and vigor the exception.

Travellers have recorded the result in the vast and productive plains of Syria and Asia Minor lying uncultivated and desolate as an untouched prairie, and the reservoirs and canals, which once treasured and bore to them the elements

of fertility, broken down and neglected; villages deserted and in ruins; terraces washed away and unrepaired; extensive cemeteries, populous with the relics of former generations, but with no town near to replenish them now; roads insecure, means of transportation imperfect, and a general falling away of enterprise.

The ground of all this, if we should refer it to any one central cause, is undoubtedly to be found in their religious creed. The old faith, at least in its intensity, has been shaken in the mind of the European Turk, and can never be firmly established again. While it had free sway with all its bitterness and intolerance, it effected much; but it has spent itself, and fails utterly before the deeper, wider, nobler power of Christianity. And this, perhaps, is pre-eminently the lesson which this history teaches. In the moral hostility of Turkey to the faith of Christendom do we find the essential, if not the formal, cause of the earlier centuries of wars. In no other way can we account for their continuance and ferocity. No influence in a nation is so profound, so subtle, so pervading, so constant, so resistless, as its religion. This it is which excites, modifies, and controls its various activities. It shows itself not merely, nor perhaps most powerfully, in the dogmas of its creed, considered as mere articles of faith; but in every action which it prompts, in every law whose spirit it controls, in every tradition which it originates or shapes, in every road, every school, every hospital, every scientific institution built or founded by its beneficence and wisdom; in the self-denial, the purity, the courage, the aspirations which it authorizes and inspires. In proportion, then, as a national religion is true or false, universally or partially believed, respected or despised, will, sooner or later, be found to be the strenuous vigor and permanence of the nation, or its decline and ultimate extinction. The battle between Christianity and Mohammedanism has been already fought, and the victory declared and registered. The latter, with its partial truth intensely believed, carried its followers to a high position; but left them with no power to advance; while

the victorious Christian nations have swept on to heights far more commanding, and are still pushing forward with eye unblanched and nerve unrelaxed. From the very nature of Mohammedanism, the Turk has long remained nearly stationary. His fatalism has prevented effort; his fixed and barren creed has checked improvement. Turkey has been like a proud ship anchored fast in the stream, while rival vessels, unimpeded, have floated triumphantly past, to prosperity and fame.

There is something grand, and solemn, and prophetic of empire, in the epitaph, prepared by his own hand, of Mohammed II., the conqueror of Constantinople, the "conqueror of three hundred cities and twelve kingdoms." "I designed," he says, "to conquer Rhodes, and subdue proud Italy." There is here no repose on the past, but an eager, ambitious hope of the future; a recollection of what he had done, only to stimulate the expression of what he meant to do. This spirit of a conqueror, he bequeathed to his successors. Is there the faintest shadow of it now? And is it not true that a nation can never long remain stationary; that if it does not advance, it must recede? The revival of letters, the invention of printing, the enlargement of commerce, the encouragements and better methods of agriculture, skill in manufactures, the advancement of sciences and arts, the extension of civil and religious liberty, had their effect everywhere but in Turkey; or were tenfold more effective in all other countries than in that. Even the Muscovite, the newest comer upon the European stage, so long regarded as barbarous, and claiming but a slight general culture, even he can point to his poets and historians, to his printing-presses and universities, to his observatories and railroads, to a thousand appliances and means of civilization, of which his southern neighbor is nearly destitute.

We may return then, with some solicitude, to the second question: Is there a future for the Ottoman; or has he run his race, and accomplished his destiny? Is the "encampment" breaking up? Are there gathering, slowly but surely, about the nation, the damp and mould of a permanent de-

cay—the shadows of the night that shall know no morning? He would not be very wise who should pronounce an absolute prophecy; yet we may venture to say that a distinct and independent *Moslem* power, actuated by the spirit of the Koran, withdrawing into the old policy of arrogance and exclusiveness,—as such a government, the Ottoman power can never again exist. As such, it does not exist. That ground has already been abandoned. Mohammedanism no longer contends for supremacy. It is gradually retreating to that rear door, by which it will pass out from among the nations. But whether changes have not already been inaugurated, whose results shall be most beneficent; changes which, though working roughly and harshly at first, shall lead on to stability and prosperity at last, is a fair and interesting inquiry.

It is so much the fashion to condemn, that a word in favor may certainly be tolerated, though we are far enough from intending to enter upon the full discussion of the question. Omitting a consideration of the fact that the extinction of a great nation is neither easy nor rapid; omitting, too, that other fact of prime importance, that no *partition* of Turkey is possible, the jealousy of the western nations absolutely preventing it, nor could anything short of a universal revolution solve the problem as to what should take its place if it should pass away; omitting, too, the important fact of the gradual change of race, the old Ottoman blood hardly existing, anywhere, unmodified; we may notice that, on general grounds, there have been many periods in Turkish history more discouraging than the present. The East and the West have not, for centuries, been brought into so close contact as now. Turkey was never so closely linked into the European system. The ideas and maxims of Christian civilization have, indirectly, entered largely into the recent policy of the government. The present Sultan and the last, with what we cannot hesitate to call a remarkable liberality, in face of the prejudices and unyielding hostility of the muftis and imams (the doctors of the law and the ministers of religion), in face of ignorant and often ungenerous for-

eign criticism, initiated and are carrying out reforms which more than justify the remark in the British parliament, that "no nation, for the last twenty-five years, has made greater improvements, or more deserves encouragement." A very late arrival (March, '57) gives us the intelligence that Reschid Pacha, the grand vizier, is about to enter on the gigantic task of remodelling the Empire according to the principles laid down in the Hatti Humayon. A commission is appointed to study the existing state of things, and propose a plan by which abuses can be corrected; a commission controlled only by the celebrated ordinance to which we have referred. History will hardly afford an example of greater forbearance and consideration than in the treatment of the Sultan by the Christian foreigners in his dominions, after the terrible provocation of the battle of Navarino; or of anything more high-minded, moderate, and humane, than his decision respecting Russian vessels in Turkish ports, after the late declaration of war. In both cases, the persons and property of foreign merchants and residents were protected, and every facility afforded them of making such disposition of themselves and their effects as should be thought most advantageous. If we compare with this the decree of Napoleon, on the sudden rupture of the peace of Amiens, by which more than ten thousand Englishmen, travelling in France for business or pleasure, were suddenly and simultaneously arrested and doomed to a detention of twelve years, we cannot hesitate to declare which has the advantage on the score of magnanimity, and indeed of wisdom.

If, now, we recall to mind the extent and riches of the territory over which the Sultan presides; with a population still of twenty-five or thirty millions, which prosperity would largely increase; with a varied and delightful climate, and a soil whose resources have as yet been hardly tried, whose mineral wealth lies as yet almost entirely unknown; with a central position on the border of two continents, holding the finest ports on the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and controlling the great highway of commerce from India to Europe, a commerce which steamships and railroads have

partially restored, and will yet further restore, to the old thoroughfare, a commerce which once built up, to their towering grandeur, the wealth and pride of Alexandria and Palmyra, and Tyre and Venice; if we recall the unexpected vigor and vitality displayed in the recent wars, notwithstanding the systematic and persistent efforts to spread among the people the elements of discord and weakness; if we remember the character of the Osmanlee of the present day, changed somewhat with the lapse of years, a character compounded of many virtues, if of some vices; if indolent and apathetic, yet capable of great exertion, and possessing great administrative ability; if proud and overbearing, yet dignified, self-respecting, just in his engagements, and true to his word, — if we recall these things, we may conclude that, if Turkey is treated with justice and sympathy, not as the “sick man,” whom an efficient dose may put out of existence and of misery at the same time; but as a convalescent, to be encouraged and assisted, by honorable and protecting alliances, its reforms may gradually work into the heart of the nation, its defences may be secure, and its prosperity rise to a level with its increasing virtues. All this, to be sure, is doubtful, for it is future; but the national disorganization and decay are less marked than formerly; and its recuperative energies have surprised both friends and foes. It is doubtful, too, because it requires patience, skill, and energy, a wisdom, virtue, and force, beyond what we have been accustomed to ascribe to Turkish rulers; and because the various accidents of governments, of wars, or the indolence of the people, may postpone or prevent the result. It is doubtful besides, because the world has so seldom seen a nation regenerated, a nation changing its habits and fundamental ideas; for, at the bottom, all must depend on the question whether the ideas of Christian civilization came to form the controlling spirit of the government. Yet things have happened quite as incredible as that predicated by an old Turk, spoken of in Lord Carlisle’s beautiful diary: “It is becoming inevitable,” said he, “that, gradually, all the chief employments, and the army itself, must be recruited from the

Christian population ; and then, some day the minister will tell the Sultan that he must become a Christian ; and he will do so." This, indeed, may not happen ; and yet religious liberty may be thoroughly established ; and if so, the greatest obstacle will be removed from the complete civilization of the Empire, and its indefinite advancement in all that constitutes true greatness and prosperity. Of the results of the recent war and the treaty of Paris, we have no room to speak ; nor, of course, have they as yet developed themselves. The brave resistance at Kalafat, Silistria, and Kars ; the battles of Alma, Balaclava, Inkerman, and Traktic bridge ; episodes in the tremendous siege of Sebastopol, will enliven the brilliant pages of emulous historians, or perhaps form the theme of an epic whose pictures shall surpass, in wonder and fear, those of the " tale of Troy divine ;" but the permanent and substantial influence on the prosperity of the people whose future we have briefly sketched, is yet enfolded in the dark drapery of the future. Some things, however, unless all accounts deceive us, seem to be assured: First, a greater freedom from unfavorable foreign interference. The intrigues of Russia and Austria have offered, heretofore, some of the greatest obstacles to the Ottoman reforms. The prestige of Russia is broken, and all excuse for her interposition with the Christian population of Turkey taken away. Secondly, an increased domestic stability from the union of various races under the protection of the same law, with the same commercial and civil privileges, and an equal law of the same country. And thirdly, religious toleration, which if heartily guaranteed, must not only give social elevation and importance to large bodies in the Empire, but attach them more strongly to the government, in whose support they have an increased interest, and tend to the wide and unobstructed diffusion of Christian principles and habits.

We cannot suppose that the bigotry of an ignorant race will yield at once, or that substantial changes can be carried out without opposition and disappointment. But let us hope that, with better guarantees of peace and independ-

ence assured to Turkey, her reforms may be encouraged, and her experiments fairly tried ; so that, if she must be blotted out from the catalogue of nations, her children can reproach none but themselves.

ARTICLE V.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JEAN RACINE.¹

By Professor James B. Angell, Brown University.

ON the banks of the Ourcq, about fifty miles from Paris stands a town of two thousand inhabitants, called La Ferté-Milon. It is pleasantly situated on an amphitheatre of hills, which rise gently from the river-side. The stream winds far away through the rich meadows, and disappears between the distant wood-crowned summits. The whole valley presents one of those quiet pictures of rural happiness and peace, which the imagination so naturally paints to itself as the birth-place and home of a poet. There is little in the general appearance of the town to distinguish it from other old French towns, except an ancient castle of the twelfth century, the scene of many a wondrous tale, which the gossiping market-women hand down from generation to generation. But on the chief square stands a marble statue of Jean Racine, with whose lasting fame the name of La Ferté-Milon is indissolubly connected ; for that humble town was his native place.

He was born on the twenty-first of December, 1639. As his mother died when he was three years of age, and his father only two years later, he was left to the care of his

¹ Oeuvres Complètes de J. Racine, avec les Notes de tous les Commentateurs. Quatrième édition publiée par L. Aimé-Martin. 7 Tomes. A Paris, chez Lefavre, Libraire. 1895.