

# THE OTTOMAN PORTE.

## Its Past History and Present Condition.

GIBSON says the Turks are only encamped in Europe; and a prophecy long current—for over a century the weird and watchword of the House of ROMANOFF-HOLSTEIN—speaks of a time when that encampment shall be broken up. The Turks, themselves, have heard it floating over the Bosphorus; and a great many of those who can choose their graves, desire to be buried at Scutari, on the Asiatic side of that strait, and thus assured of "snug lying" in case of the worst. But there may be no necessity for this; the frocked and un-turbaned Padishah may still make good his rest upon that conquered ground of Thrace. To argue that the Turks are behind the civilization of the age, and unfit to stay in Europe, is a gross fallacy, in face of those civilized and Christian Governments that may be found between the Neva and Tiber; to suppose the Turks are too weak to hold their own on the Bosphorus, may be only a mistake, which the history of Europe has a certain tendency to rectify. Looking at matters closely, we do not find that the European despots are so very omnipotent as to have Turkey at their mercy. Indeed, if the Turks were wise, there need be no talk at all of that striking of the Oriental tents.

The Turks have sat in Constantinople for four hundred years. In the middle of the Fifteenth Century, MOHAMMED II., who took it from PALÆOLOGUS, began a career of conquest which, towards the close of the Sixteenth, had led the Sultans to a dominion only inferior to that of Rome, when her eagles had two eyries. SOLYMAN the Magnificent raised the Empire to its most formidable pitch, from 1520 to 1566; but AMURATH III., from 1575 to 1593, saw it at its grandest extent, in Europe, Asia, and Africa. From the beginning of the Seventeenth Century the Ottoman dominion began to contract; first, on the Danube, where the Poles and Magyars stood up so bravely on behalf of Europe, only to be trampled on so basely at last, in requital of their steady championship. For another hundred years, the Turks held their conquests pretty well—though they suffered defeats from the Hungarians, Poles, Austrians, and Venetians, who were generally leagued with one another against those dreaded Orientals. SOBERSKI sent the green banner of the Kaliph flying down the Danube, and MOROSINI took the Morea for Venice.

In the commencement of the Eighteenth Century, came forward, still increasing to the view of the world, the most formidable of those powers with which Turkey was destined to cope—the empire of the Czar. PETER THE GREAT, shipwright, having made ships, desired an Eastern sea to float them in, and so took Asoph; and thus began the flow of that tide, whose icy current and compulsive course has known no retiring ebb, but kept right on, to the Propontis and the Hellespont. While the neighboring nations had increased in population, and grown by degrees more expert in the arts of fighting—proving the truth of the saying, that knowledge is power—the haughty Turks, refusing to fall in with the ways or learn the science of the *glaivours*, had remained pretty much *in statu quo*—smoking their pipes, cross-legged, and reposing their ideas on the *Zismet*—the course of destiny. One-half of their old conquering charter had been abrogated; they did not carry the Koran in one hand to sharpen the sword upon. They tolerated the Christianity of Catholicity and the Greek Church, in Europe and Asia. The ancient virtue of the sword also seemed to have passed out of it. The wealth and the enjoyments of Empire had done their work upon the Padishah and his chiefs, who lost their old energies of the *couraltai* and the camp in the shade of their luxurious harems. Their armies, too, became insolent, insubordinate, and relaxed in the discipline which alone could have enabled them to cope with the well-drilled troops of Austria and Russia. Austria recovered all Hungary, except Temesvar, and Transylvania ceased to be a vassal State of the Porte. In 1718, after the battle of Peterwardein, Temesvar also passed into Austrian possession, along with parts of Wallachia and Servia. On the accession of АСМЯТ IV., in 1773, the Turks began to feel the fiercer pressure of the Russians. By the treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarje, the Porte surrendered to the Czar Great and Little Kabarda, and the region from the Bog to the Dneiper. Russia also received the free navigation of the Black Sea, a free passage through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and, thus early, something like a joint protectorship over the Greek Churches in the Ottoman Empire. After a little time, Crimea became Russian, and Bukowina was ceded to Austria. АСМЯТ, seeing his territory slipping from his grasp, made a desperate effort; called out the *arriere-ban* of the Empire, and hoisted the sacred standard of the Prophet, preserved by the *imams* for critical occasions. But his campaigns were unlucky. The Russian Generalissimo, РОТЪМКИН, took Осазаов and other places, and АСМЯТ died under the impression that the tents of Islam were about to be struck, in good earnest.

Then came SELIM III., in 1789, who saw the weak and rotten parts of the Ottoman system—saw that the Turks were falling behind the march of progress, and strove to regenerate them. His armies continued to be beaten by the Austrians and Russians, SUWARROW commanding the latter at Ismail and elsewhere. It now became generally apparent that Turkey could no longer stand *viribus suis*—of its own strength. England, Prussia and Sweden interfered to keep Eastern Europe from falling under the power of Russia. The peace of Jassy followed, for which SELIM paid dearly with a farther cession of Turkish territory, and the flag of the Czar, who, about the same time, (the beginning of this century,) acquired Georgia, was advanced to the Dneister. In this debility of the empire, several of its pashas rebelled, encouraged by the signs of the times, and, very probably, by the secret aid of Russia. KASBAN OLOV, Pasha of Widdin and ALI, Pasha of Albania, were chief of these. The career of the latter makes a stirring episode in Turkish history, second in interest only to that of MEHMET ALI, Pasha of Egypt. ALI waved his tails over Epirus and Albania, and, at last, held his pashalic as the military fief of his family, not as an office. In 1821, the blood-thirsty old man perished fighting against his brother pashas, sent against him by the Sultan, and his fief ended with him. The Emperor NAPOLKON, feeling the hostility of Russia, became, naturally, the ally of the Porte; and in 1807, Russia and England were united in war against the Turks and the French. Sir THOMAS DUCKWORTH's squadron threatened Constantinople, but was obliged to retreat through the Dardanelles, and the Russians defeated the Ottoman fleet, off Lemnos. During this year the Turkish capital was kept in a dreadful ferment; by its civil dissensions, SELIM, the reformer, and his successor, MU-

TAPPA, were both put to death within the space of a few months, and MAHMOUD succeeded, in 1808, to a very distracted inheritance—the great Eastern pashas being in rebellion, and those of Epirus and Egypt nearly independent. In 1812, the war was concluded by the peace of Bucharest, which secured to Russia the country east of the Pruth, Bessarabia and the mouths of the Danube. In 1821 broke out the insurrection of Greece, destined in the end to rend away the fairest European conquest of the Ottoman arms. In 1828, Russia was again at war with the Porte—in consequence of troubles following the taxing of Moldavia and Wallachia by the Sultan. In this war, Turkey suffered a number of reverses; and, by the treaty of Adrianople, made in 1829, while that great city was in the hands of the Russian commander DEMITRI, the Sultan ceded to the Czar parts of the eyalets of Kars and Childir, near the Caucasus, and Anapa, near the mouth of the Kuban. At the same time Greece became independent; the isles still remaining in possession of the Turks. It was then also agreed that Moldavia and Wallachia should be governed by independent Hospodars, under the joint protection of Russia and the Porte—though nominally belonging to the latter. Servia was also recognized as a self-governing State, acknowledging the sovereignty of the Sultan.

Meantime, MEHMET ALI, of Egypt, tried to make himself independent, after having destroyed (in 1811) the power of the twenty-four Mameluke Beys, whose dynasty had ruled Egypt for four hundred years. In 1831, this Pasha—who, at the command of the Porte, had put down the government of the heretic Wahabees of Arabia, and constituted himself Protector of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina—seized Syria, as a sort of piecing-out of his own pashalik. A war between the Sultan and the Pasha followed, in which IBRAHIM, son of MEHMET, and conquerer of the Wahabees, beat the commanders of the Padishah and advanced towards Constantinople. But for the interference of Russia—who did not care to see her contemplated spoil meddled with by another—and of England, IBRAHIM would, very probably, have taken the capital and dethroned MAHMOUD. They stopped him; and, after a fitting amount of protocolling and management, made a peace, by which MEHMET was allowed to keep Syria. This, however, was only for a time. IBRAHIM contemplated an Empire of Arabia—something like a restoration of the old Kaliphate of the Abassids, which would have made him chief of the Mahomedan world. War with the Sultan broke out again; and again the great powers interfered. In 1842, Sir CHARLES NAHIER battered down the defences along the sea-coast of Syria, and IBRAHIM was forced to surrender that country to the Porte. In the treaty which concluded this military hubbub, it was stipulated that the Sultan should never open the Dardanelles to any enemy of the Russian Czar. Egypt is now a hereditary pashalik or fief in MEHMET's family, and governed by his grandson, АББАС PASHA.

In spite of all these subtractions, the Turkish Empire is still extensive. One end of it touches the Tigris, and the other is washed by the Danube and the Nile. Its European dominions lie between the Adriatic and the Euxine, and may be divided into Roumelia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thessaly, Albania, the Islands, Bosnia, and the tributary Provinces—Moldavia, Wallachia, Servia. In Asia, the Turkish Government covers Asia Minor, Syria, Erzeroum, parts of Arabia, Persia, and Chaldea—from the grass-covered mounds of Irak, (that grave-yard of buried old cities, which BOTTA and LAVARD, the famous resurrectionists, have been lately digging into and discussing with such general applause,) to the site of the wind-swept Ilium, and the mosque of St. Omar, on Mount Zion. The geography of the Bible is almost covered by the Crescent. In Africa, along with Egypt, the Turks hold Tripoli and Tunis. In the East, the Empire of the Porte is not continuous; it is full of *lacunes*. Large tracts of country, within its extreme bounds, in Arabia, Persia, Chaldea, are in possession of independent native chiefs and imams, and wandering tribes. The population of this Empire, according to the census or estimate of 1844, is stated as 35,350,000. Of these, the Osmanlee Turks, the dominant races, are reckoned at 11,800,000; the Slavonian races—the most numerous in European Turkey, as the Czar is well aware—number 7,200,000. The Turks on the soil of Europe amount to about a million only. The Arabs, Armenians, Arnauts, Hellenes, Kurds, Tartars, Jews, Turkomans, Maronites, Druses, Jacobites, Chaldeans, complete the motley population. The Osmanlis or Osmanlee Turks are not one-third of it. But the Empire contains 20,550,000 Mussulmans and 14,630,000 Christians, of whom over 13,000,000 are of the Greek Church, and the rest Catholics.

Turkey is divided into 28 eyalets or provinces, of which four are in Europe and the rest in Asia. Of the component parts of the Empire, all have not the same modes of government. Moldavia, Wallachia, Servia, Montenegro, Egypt, Tunis, and Tripoli, are vassal states or fiefs, as it were, of the Monarchy. The Beys of Tunis and Tripoli manage their own sun-burnt seaboard, and pay tribute. Egypt, as we have said, is held almost independently by АББАС PASHA. But he pays yearly tribute, and is bound to put his army and navy at the service of his suzerain whenever the Porte shall stand in need of such assistance. The Sultan considers Algiers as part of his Monarchy; at least it forms part of his style, as "King of France" was that of GEORGE III.—the Ottoman Porte never having recognized the French conquest on ground over which the Crescent was assumed to gleam in right of the old Fatimite Kaliphs.

Servia, Moldavia, Wallachia, Montenegro, are, with very few exceptions, of Slavonian origin and the Greek Church—the race and religion of the Czar's people. Indeed, it has been stipulated that no Turk shall reside in Wallachia. Servia, with a million of inhabitants, lying between Bulgaria and Bosnia, on the right bank of the Danube, is governed by a prince named for life—ALEXANDER GEORGEWITCH, son of Czerny GEORGE, that gave MAHMOUD such a world of trouble. These FRITZ-GEORGES were substituted, after much confused fighting and management, for the preceding princes, MILOSC—of the race of that brave homicide who killed AMURATH in 1389. GEORGEWITCH has not yet been made hereditary ruler; and this question may make future confusion. Servia was always a nation of high-spirited people. The Prince is assisted by a Senate named for life; and a General Assembly elected by the people controls the other two powers of Government. Quite an Anglo-Saxon affair—breathing the difficult air of those neighboring despotisms! Moldavia, with 1,500,000 inhabitants, and Wallachia, with 2,188,000, are governed by their Hospodars. These provinces call themselves

Roman; and the language of the people in a great measure, a corrupt Italian. They are doubtless descendants of the old Dacia whose sites they occupy; the very costume they wear has its counterparts on the figure of the captive Dacians represented on the Column of Trajan. In 1849, by the treaty of Balta-Liman, GREGORY GHKA was named Hospodar of Moldavia, and W. STIRLEY Hospodar of Wallachia. These rulers, whose office were guaranteed for seven years—that is, about 1856—govern by a ministry and a national militia. The laws of these unhappy principalities—occupying a middle state; dreary political purgatory—have been improvised and modified a good deal of late years chiefly under the influence of Russia, the object of which is to make the Government Slavonian as possible.

Montenegro, about which the interest powers had such a keen discussion, a few months ago, is a sort of priestly Democracy or was,—the head of which was a prince-bishop—resembling old Belgian Liege and modern Muscat, in Arabia, with its Imaum. In February last, the Austrians, in close understanding with Russia, demanded of Turkey the independence of the Montenegrins, then in rebellion, and doubtless encouraged by the Northern powers; they also demanded the protectorship of the Catholic Christians in Turkey, and, along with that, the seaports, Kleck and Sutturina, situated on the Adriatic, and belonging to the Sultan. The tone of LEININGEN, the Austrian ambassador, was wonderfully imperious and insolent, and people said the Padishah would soon be quelled. But that was a mistake. АБДЪЛ МЕДЖИД, who seemed to see his way, met the demands very resolutely. All at once, an insurrection rose in Milan,—a cry ran that MAZZINI was in Italy, Kossuth's emissaries were arrested, here and there, and the Emperor FRANCIS JOSEPH was nearly murdered on his military parade, in the noonday! No more insolent demands! Austria—that Government without a nation—a head without a body—a thing of shreds and patches—dropped Montenegro, as if it were hot iron; and the question slipped out of the newspapers, while we were listening for the first cannon. We heard no more of the Protectorship; OMAR PASHA settled the Montenegrins, and Austria rested within the lines of the *status quo*.

But the quarrel was still to be fastened on Turkey. The Northern conspiracy was not to be baffled. The Knot now demanded the intervention of the Scavonian Deus, and the dissonant consonant MANSCHIKOFF came, hot-foot, to Constantinople, with the demands of the Czar. And the end of this movement is not yet. As for Montenegro, there was a late report that DANIEL, the prince-priest, went to Petersburg and showed his desire to put aside the Crozier, and manage his craggy little principality after some secular fashion.

The army of the Sublime Porte is organized on the European system. The flowing Oriental dresses of the soldiers have been retrenched. Turbans and excessively wide trowsers have been replaced by the red *fec*, the round cap and tassel, the European coat, and so forth. Ease and picturesque effect have been sacrificed to discipline; and in the imperfect conditions of the reform, especially at an early stage, many were found to lament that the Turkish soldiers had a less imposing military bearing than formerly. It was only in 1843 that the European organization was completely adopted. Twenty-five thousand men are raised annually—the recruits being taken from the Districts, by the drawing of lots—a principle, one would think, more suitable to a sense of justice than the efficiency of a regiment of soldiers. The army is distinguished into the active and reserved force—each amounting, according to the latest authorities, to 138,500 men—in all, 277,000. The fiefs of the Empire are bound to furnish war-contingents; and, in the event of a national crisis, and a holy war—a war which would arouse the old military fanaticism of the Mussulman faith, from the Euphrates to the sea-shores of Tunis, (the Pasha of which last place has, we perceive, just sent in his fighting adhesion to his suzerain,) the levy would, of course, be much larger, and make a very formidable show round the old green banner of the Prophet.

The Turkish navy has been estimated at 74 vessels, of various sizes; among which are three three-deckers, thirteen two-deckers, fourteen frigates, twelve corvettes, four brigs, fourteen cutters, six steam-frigates, and eight corvettes; the whole manned by about 15,000 seamen. In the creation and management of the navy, the Sultan has always been anxious to avail himself of European improvements, and a crowd of foreign officers has contributed to the present effective condition of the Turkish marine.

The provinces of Turkey are generally governed by pashas, who form the revenues, paying the Porte a fixed yearly sum. The custom has been that the pashas are appointed in a great degree (though not always) according to the certainty they may furnish of the regular returns of revenue. Thence it has followed in Turkey, that the Armenian bankers of the Capital have become a great power in the internal government of the country. There are ROTHSCHILDS among them. The Sultan must have security that the pasha, going to his distant place, will be punctual in paying his rent. That officer, being perhaps raised from the lowest ranks of the Turks, has no security of his own to give; so he goes to an Armenian banker, or Seraf, of Constantinople, who not only gives the Padishah the best security, but fits out the pasha for his office. The dues of the pashalik are to be paid by installments; but he gives the Seraf a note of hand for the whole sum, which then begins to bear interest at 20 or 25 per cent. per annum. He also allows the banker *douceurs* of office. He must have shawls, swords, horses, and so forth, and the accommodating Seraf furnishes them, charging ten per cent. commission, and also interest. When the pasha arrives at his province, he must send presents—first fruits—to the banker—and the banker's clerk. If he pays his debt in kind, the Seraf then becomes a merchant—trades on produce which he gets at a very low figure, and sells at a high one. Then perhaps he will write to the pasha to say that, hearing there was a very serious plot to injure him, at the Seraf, he has paid away a great sum—so and so—to hush matters up—sum charged to his account, with interest, as before. After all, the Seraf's charges are fair enough, seeing the risks he runs, for his unreasonable pasha may run his head into a bow-string, totally reckless of his debt. From all this we could understand how the pashas would be mere factors of the crabbed Armenians of Constantinople, and how the poor people of the pashalik would have their noses kept to the grindstone to pay for all. A good deal of injustice, and many abuses have resulted, as we may gather from MACFARLANE's entertaining, but horribly splenetic, and not entirely trustworthy, book on (or rather *against*) Tur-

key, published three or four years ago. No doubt, the progress of reform in that country is diminishing those evils. Of late the pashas are only parts of the provincial governments—civil governors and their officers accompanying them, to see that justice is properly administered, and everything kept in proper order.

The diplomacy of Turkey is indicative of the progress of those reforms which, for half a century, have occupied the cares of the Ottoman rulers. Since 1834, the Porte has had its Ministers Plenipotentiaries and Ambassadors at the courts of the great European powers—*except Russia*. Besides these regular and permanent embassies, temporary missions have been sent to Madrid, Rome, the Hague, the United States, &c. Curiously enough, Prince CALLIMAKI, Minister of the Porte at Paris, and M. MESSURUS, Minister at London in 1850, are both Christians. The Consul General at Paris is a Jew.