

ESSAYS, SPEECHES,

AND

MEMOIRS

OF

FIELD-MARSHAL *Helmuth*
von
COUNT HELMUTH VON MOLTKE
111

THE ESSAYS TRANSLATED BY
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MEMOIRS, BY MARY HERMS

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THE EASTERN QUESTION.

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PREFACE.

THE five shorter essays that follow were published between the years 1841 and 1844 in the *Augsburger Allgemeinen Zeitung*. These are : "Germany and Palestine," 1841 ; "The Country and People of the Kurds," 1841 ; "The Military and Political Situation of the Ottoman Empire," 1841 ; "Reshid, Izzet, and the Porte," 1842 ; "The Mouth of the Danube," 1844.

These essays, according to their contents, may be grouped together under the title "Essays upon the Eastern Question," and although the second discusses it from an ethnographical standpoint, and the fifth from a geographical one, yet all five treat primarily of the political and military events in the East, that have often greatly agitated Europe in the past and continue to do so at present.

Late in the autumn of 1839, Moltke returned from Turkey where, during his four years' residence, he had acquired a thorough knowledge of the country and the people, and had collected various and valuable stores of information. He could thus be well regarded as one of the most authoritative, most efficient critics of the East.

After his return from the battlefield of Nisib, there was a momentary pause in the long years of contentions between the Sublime Porte and its rebellious vassal, Mehemed Ali of Egypt, when it seemed as if the decaying power of the Turks would be completely crushed. The Sultan, Mahmoud III., who had begun to reform his empire with an iron hand, but with little success, had died a short time before the terrible news of Nisib had reached Stamboul. His successor was Abdul Mejid, a weak lad of sixteen. He found his empire without army or navy, for the traitorous Kapudan Pascha had taken the latter to Alexandria to Mehemed Ali ; he found all Syria in the hands of the Egyptians, to whom the way to the Bosphorus was open. But Mehemed Ali was not able to reap the benefits of the success he had won, and when Reschid Pasha, who had an European education and favoured progress, entered the ministry at Constantinople, those European powers that were inclined to support the integrity and temporal development of Turkey, began to lay hold upon stronger measures. The Hattischerif of Gulhane, which was executed by Reschid (2nd November,

1839), was most influential in producing a favourable impression on the powers. This decree of the Sultan insured to all his subjects, both the Faithful and the Rajah, security for their lives, honour and property, equal taxation, and a systematic collection of the taxes; he thus meant to take a far more important step on the road of reform. The ministry of Thiers in France alone still continued to support the bold demands of Mehemed Ali, so that the rest of the great European powers formed a quadruple alliance for the protection of the Porte (July 15th, 1840), and made military advancements against the rebellious vice-regent, who had relied upon the aid of France which had not been actually given. An Anglo-Austrian fleet and a Turkish land-force attacked the Egyptians in Syria, and after Beyrout, Akka, and other coast towns had fallen, and the inhabitants of Syria had taken up arms for the Sultan, Ibrahim Pasha, the son and general of Mehemed Ali, vacated the country and led his army back to Egypt in a manner that soon resembled flight. In the meantime an English squadron appeared before Alexandria, and Mehemed Ali was again forced to beg for peace, which was granted him upon acknowledgment of the inheritance of his dynasty (in the beginning of 1841).

But soon after these events Reschid Pasha left the ministry, and a short time after Izzet Mehemed Pasha was appointed his successor. Izzet was one of the most influential leaders of the old Turkish conservative party, and his entrance into office was the signal for a complete rupture in the endeavours for reform. But there were so many influences brought to bear upon the weak young Sultan that Izzet also remained a short time in the ministry, and the government at Constantinople continued to be agitated for a long time by opposing factions, nor was it able to become master of the internal difficulties during the time in which the following articles were written. Rebellions in Crete, complications in the government of the Lebanon, a serious quarrel with Persia, disturbances in the Danube principalities, all combined to make the condition of the Ottoman Empire insecure for years, and a menace to the peace of the world.

It seemed necessary to preface the following essays with this cursory historical review, for the purpose of informing the reader of to-day.

ESSAYS

UPON THE

EASTERN QUESTION.

GERMANY AND PALESTINE.

A LITTLE company of Europeans has brought the Syrian question, which was long unsettled, to a speedy issue by means of a forcible and successful mode of action. Acre fell under the thunders of an Anglo-Austrian fleet, and the phantom of an Egyptian-Arabian power vanished of itself. Lovely Syria was conquered a second time for the padishah, the bold vassal who had so long defied his authority till he was humbled in the dust—but is the Eastern conflict now settled by this means? Hardly anyone will answer this in the affirmative if he has travelled through the Turkish provinces and is able and willing to recognize the truth.

The complete extinction of military spirit among these races that were once so warlike is manifested on every new occasion. If it was in the interest of the English to lay stress upon the strength and boldness of the action of the Turkish army against Ibrahim, the peaceful and impartial witnesses and associates, on the other hand, declare that they saw just as little display of brilliant fighting as a year before at Nisib. The Europeans have done everything. From the moment

that they left the scene, when their fleet sailed away from the Syrian coast, the Turkish army had scarcely taken a step farther, and yet there was required only a last push to effect the complete destruction of the decayed structure of might and barbarism. The Porte was unable to conquer the rich country between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea, and it has as little power to hold these provinces, had they been presented to the Porte. It is not able to keep the Syrians in subjection by a strong form of government, as the military despotism of Ibrahim had been, nor can it gain that country by a just and faithful administration of laws, because the very first element necessary for such an administration, honest officers, was wholly wanting, and the Hattischerif of Gulhane could not produce it by magic. If the Ottoman Government desired to set aside a rich salary for its governors, they will continue to make the usual extortions in addition to the salary. The Turkish pashas will return with their farming of taxes and selling of offices, with their force-sales and bondage, in short, with their old despotism and oppression, and Syria will rise in arms against its new rulers, just as it has always done in times past against former rulers, because it has always been abused. Small revolutions will arise among the mountaineers and in the big cities. Then a war will be waged, just as the Reschid Pashas and Hafis Pashas fought against the unfortunate Kurds, when they slew women and children, and burned down the beautiful villages in order to rule a short time over an exhausted and desolated country which, however, they could not retain for a long time. Certainly, there is no need of foresight to prophesy that, even if there is no attack made from without, the Turks will again be driven out of Syria in one or two years.

But this shock will not fail to come. The fact that one of the strong powers withdrew from the European Areopagus, which had undertaken to solve the

Syrian problem, has, indeed, not been able to set back its measures, though its absence has perceptibly influenced the results of this same. A few *broad-sides* from the line of British ships commanded by the brave Napier would have frightened the Arabian *garde nationale* from their wretched batteries in front of Alexandria, and the flames of a general revolution would have broken out in Egypt which had been fearfully and long oppressed. Instead of this, and out of regard for France, the Grand-Seignior was forced, or what is equivalent to the same, was most politely invited by the quadruple alliance to sanction a part of the usurpation of his vassal. The heir of the caliphs, the multiplier of the inseparable empire, is to bestow a part of this very empire upon a rebel as an inheritance. But what is meant by inheritance in the dynasty of the Arnauts? Whoever is acquainted with the state of affairs in the East knows also how loose the family ties are there. The sons and daughters of Mehemed Ali are the children of his wives, and part of them are so little related that they could intermarry. Ibrahim, for example, is only the stepson of the Governor of Egypt. The Ottoman Empire itself was not held by right of primogeniture but by right of seniority. The right of primogeniture of a minor could not be made good against the might of an uncle, and in doubtful cases secret executions, putting out of eyes, or other acts of violence, were always necessary to help along the uncertain succession. Just so it would be now if the offspring of the reigning house were not raised in the "princes' coop," if they commanded provinces and armies, and if they had the power and of course the disposition also to fight among themselves for the rich inheritance. Finally, the descendants of the Arnautian guncharger are not encircled with that religious nimbus which hallows the descendants of Osman, and even the most distant relatives, the Tartar Khans at Rodosto, in the eyes of the Mussulmans. Foreign rulers also will

stretch out their arms for a part of the great inheritance of the venerable Vice-regent, at the moment when he departs from the scenes of his long and active life.

If it is possible to regenerate the Turkish Empire as such, it can proceed only from a generation which must be educated to it, and that, too, from Mussulman roots. All proselytism and attempts at Europeanization, all hostile attacks, as well as friendly interpositions, lead only to complete dissolution. The Porte became weaker because of the protection of Russia than it had been after the fall of Varna; it is weaker to-day when England presents it with Syria than when it lost the battle of Nisib. The marasmus of total indifference has seized the mass of the people, and the government, acting only by the impulse that foreigners have given it, has sunk into a state of impotency which offers every lucky adventurer a prospect for the success of his ambitious plans. The complications of the years 1830, 1833, 1839 and 1840, will be renewed and at shorter intervals. Is the peace of Europe to be exposed each time to the serious danger in which it now is?

Till now, European diplomacy has sought only to delay the crises; it has not undertaken to remove the causes which give rise to them. Of course, important and well-established objections can be made against every remedy which has been proposed, but with mere negation nothing is done.

A few voices have dared to declare that there is no real life inherent in the body of the Turkish state; that Islam permits neither progress nor change; that reform has broken Mussulman strength, and it cannot be replaced by foreign institutions; that a great, helpless, and defenceless country having entered into the circle of European powers is a continual source of jealousy, of terror, and of contention; that whatever cannot exist naturally must perish; that Turkey must be divided.

Such a step is contrary to moral right, with which

policy by no means accords, though it strives to do so more and more ; while, on the other hand, it is opposed by the warning example of a former division, the results of which will not be forgotten by Europe for a long time to come. Finally, the division of Turkey will be like the division of a diamond ring ; the question is, Who is to possess the most precious of solitaires, Constantinople ? Who will be satisfied with the worthless remainder, with the extensive stretches of land which are occupied by semi-Arabic races ? Other voices have advised that certain portions of the Turkish territory be surrendered to European civilization, as has been done with Hellas.

An enthusiastic desire for the land where the Redeemer was born, where He lived, taught, and suffered, once caused millions of pious Christians to give up their homes and suffer unspeakable hardships in order to tread the consecrated ground of Palestine. The flower of western knighthood shed its life-blood in order to wrest the holy places from the dominion of the infidels. How greatly this religious feeling had cooled, when, just eight hundred years after the first crusade, the great general of the very nation bearing the title of Protector of the Catholic Faith in the East, could say drily enough, after the conquest of Egypt, "*Jérusalem n'entre pas dans ma ligne d'opération !*" The present feeling lies between these two extremes, and the thought of placing Palestine under Christian protection does not seem to be given up in Europe. However, religious feelings alone dare not decide the point in politics. Palestine as a Christian principality must, in its first step towards fulfilment, contain also the possibility of its continuance. Should it be desired to make Jerusalem with the holy places about it one state by itself, as was done with Cracow, it would be a state in a deserted, barren district, cut off from the sea, far from its protectors, surrounded by Arabian bands of robbers, threatened by Mussulman neighbours, and rent internally by furious

hatred among the sects. Such a state would certainly be a very unfortunate creation. Truly it is a fortunate thing that the tolerant Mussulmans had the power in their hands, and not one of the sects which have so completely forgotten the doctrine of gentle toleration and brotherly love at the grave of the Redeemer, that we blush before the infidels. From the very beginning this much is apparent, that the new creation must have a more extensive territory, a part of the sea-coast, that it must be fortified. Why should the fine harbour and the strong walls of Acre be surrendered into the hands of the weak Turks, which they would lose again the next instant?

It may be further claimed that the control of the new state ought to be handed over to a sovereign prince of the German nation and of genuine tolerance. The exclusive supremacy of any Christian church would disseminate seeds of destruction at the very beginning of the state's existence. We said a German prince, because Germany has the negative advantage of not being a maritime power, while it has the nearest commercial road to the East through the navigation of the Danube and the Austrian ports on the Adriatic. Finally, we said a sovereign prince, because only this form of government is fitted for a semi-barbarous state of affairs, because it is the best of all forms in the hands of a just, wise, and energetic regent, and because only such a ruler can make anything out of the new creation.

The Greeks had fought for and gained their independence, not, indeed, without the help of Europe, but principally through their own exertions. They are a nation of their own, and therefore had a right to demand that their administration, their army, their officials, and their sovereign should be Greek. But here lies a great difficulty in the way of the progress of the Greek state, for the people destined to provide these elements is itself as yet in a state of semi-civilization. The case would be far different with the in-

habitants of Southern Syria. They would be freed from the Turkish yoke, but as they have not yet reached even the Greek stage of civilization, it would be most likely that the Europeans, so superior to them in morality, knowledge, and energy, would supply the nobility, the privileged class and the officials. But, of course, these Europeans ought not to be the deserters from the other nations, as is the case in Turkey. The state which gives Palestine a prince must, beside making him an allowance, provide him out of the number of her military and civil servants with a body of tried men, whose services would be absolutely indispensable. For without prudent, active, and above all, honest officials, no administration, and certainly no colonization, is conceivable. As to the army of a ruler of Palestine, it is easy to see that it would necessarily be very small, in order not to be a useless burden on the country. Its nucleus would be a few battalions, squadrons, and batteries, with European soldiers and officers, in which, however, vacancies might occasionally be filled by natives. By the side of these there should be gradually introduced a kind of general armament, after the pattern of the Sipahi or the Austrian military frontier. This last system is so admirably suited for a rising colony, that it is inconceivable why in Algiers all other means, even the Chinese wall round the Metija, were proposed rather than this. The fleet would consist simply of a few corvettes to protect the commerce against the pirates of the Mediterranean. Provided with such means of defence, the country would be safe from the neighbouring tribes of Arabs, as well as from Turkish and Egyptian encroachments. In case of a more serious danger, the protecting powers would have to intervene.

Internal administration would provide government with the largest field for its activities in a country like this, where everything has still to be created, but where all requisite materials are to be found in such

abundance. There would be no difficulty in attracting settlers and capitalists to this rich soil, to live under this bright sky, as soon as they saw that they would find protection for their property and persons, security for their industrial and commercial enterprises, impartial justice and complete religious toleration. The influence of such model government amongst nations, which have hitherto had only extortioners for their rulers, would be immense. Palestine would be a wall of protection for Syria against Egypt, and if the latter should ever be governed by any other hereditary dynasty than the Ottoman it would afford the best security against Turkish aggression. As Palestine is situated on the direct route of communication between India and Europe, the ports along the coast and the highways through the country would be filled with the treasures of two continents, and, by the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre, Christian Europe would obtain a satisfaction which has been withheld from her for generations.

We candidly confess our belief in the idea, on which so much ridicule has been cast, of a general European peace. Not that long and bloody wars are to cease from henceforth, our armies be disbanded, and our cannon recast into nails; that is too much to expect, but is not the whole course of the world's history an approximation to such a peace? When we look back to the earliest ages, do we not see the hand of everyone raised against his neighbour? And even in the middle ages, did not knights and barons, castles and towns continue to fight with each other till stopped by the princes, who claimed the monopoly of war for themselves? And to-day! Is a Spanish war of succession, or a war "*pour les beaux yeux de Madame*," possible in our times?

Would Holland be allowed to disturb the peace of Europe for the sake of a province, Naples for the monopoly of sulphur, Portugal for the navigation of

the Douro? It is for a very small number of powers that the possibility of setting the world ablaze is reserved. Wars will become rarer and rarer because they are growing expensive beyond measure; positively because of the actual cost, negatively because of the necessary neglect of work. Has not the population of Prussia, under a good and wise administration, increased by a fourth in twenty-five years of peace? and are not her fifteen millions of inhabitants better fed, clothed, and instructed to-day than her eleven millions used to be? Are not such results equal to a victorious campaign or to the conquest of a province, with this great difference, that they were not gained at the expense of other nations, nor with the sacrifice of the enormous number of victims that a war demands? and is there any European country that has not made similar conquests, though in most cases they have been on a smaller scale? When we consider the milliards which Europe has to spend every year on her military budget, the millions of men in the prime of life who are called away from their business in order to be trained for a possible war, it is not hard to see how these immense powers might be utilized and made more and more productive. May we not hope that Europe will, in the course perhaps of decades, perhaps of centuries, agree upon a mutual disarmament, and show us the reverse of the picture presented to us to-day by France, who wishes to sell her coat for a suit of armour?

It has been said that with the cessation of war, men would lose their moral energy and unlearn the virtue of sacrificing their lives for an idea, whether honour, loyalty, glory, patriotism, or religion. This fear may not be altogether without foundation, and the rarer war becomes in Europe, the more necessary will it be to find a field of activity for the surplus energy of the rising generation. England has found in every continent and on every ocean scenes of action, where the

younger sons of her nobility are provided for, where the martial courage of her youths is tried, where new channels are opened to her commerce and new markets for her industry. France has sought an outlet for the often morbid excess of her energy in Algiers, and if her attempts at colonization have so far met with little success, we wish her endeavours the best results in the interest of civilization. But should not Germany gladly seize the opportunity of extending German civilization and energy, industry and honesty beyond the German frontier; when such an opportunity presents itself?

THE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE OF THE KURDS.

THOSE who are interested in the *dénouement* of the tragedy in the East will be surprised to hear a report of new risings in Kurdistan, at the moment when everybody believed the affairs of the Turkish Empire settled by the interference of the four great European powers. And yet the insurrection is only a consequence of this interference. With the battle of Nisib the sovereignty of the Padishah over the newly defeated Kurds, who, however, were never completely subdued, had ceased. We felt that we had no power over the mountain tribes, and so they were left alone. But now that English and Austrian cannon have left the Porte free to act, she demands as before taxes and the *corvée*, money and recruits, and thus causes the insurrection which must come before long even if it has not broken out already. The phenomenon reminds us of a mighty stream which flows onwards with unruffled surface, until it is opposed by rocks, when it reveals for the first time, by the surging and roaring of its waters,

the force with which it moves. The province had already renounced its allegiance, and the first attempt to recover it called forth open insurrection. In giving a short sketch of the people and the country which at the present moment may well attract the eyes of all Europe, we will not begin with Xenophon, but simply mention that the "Karduches" are to this day the terror of all intruders, and that they still construct those houses with little towers of which the Greek general tells us; we will not vainly attempt to clear up the long and dark history of this people, nor stay to inquire whether they are a tribe of Tartar immigrants, or the descendants of the old Medes and Chaldæans whose language is preserved in the Bibles of those villages on the Persian frontier which have remained Christian. We wish rather to describe the Kurds and their home, as they appear to-day to observers, who had an opportunity of spending some time amongst them, travellers who, ignorant of the language, and surrounded by a thousand dangers, real and imaginary, hurried over these mountains by the perilous passes of Bitlis and Djinlamerik.

If any nation is bound to the soil, it is the Kurds. Heirs of an ancient agriculture, they live in the valleys of the Armenian table-land, shunning the plains where the brooks of their native mountains are dried up, and though the winters are severe, they enjoy long and beautiful summers. Among them are a few wandering shepherds, but for the most part they are an essentially agricultural people, to this extent nomadic that when the heat in the valleys becomes oppressive and the rays of the sun free the mountain pastures from the snow, they drive their herds a step higher, for a time exchanging their houses for tents of black goat-hair.

Quite in accordance with this manner of life is the fact that in the district inhabited by them we find nothing but villages, detached farms are nowhere to be

seen, nor yet towns of any size. The latter are not in Kurdistan but round it. If a line be drawn from Diarbekir, cutting through Mardin, Nisibin, Djesereh-Ibn-Omer, Van, Mush, Paluh, Derindeh, Maresh and Andiaman, it will encircle Kurdistan proper, in the interior of which only very small towns such as Tacho, Bitlis, Soort, Hassu-Keffa, Thiro, Portek, Troglu, etc., are to be found. The population of these is principally Kurdish, and it is only in the plains of Karput and Malatia that we find the two towns with these names, places of importance, it is true, but decidedly not Kurdish. In all these towns there is a wonderful mixture of nations, languages and religions. The Christians, the older part of the population, are the descendants of the ancient Assyrians and Chaldæans, mixed with Armenians who immigrated at a later period. The former are for the greater part Jacobites and Nestorians, who are sharply divided by the difference of their opinions; the latter, with the exception of some proselytes gained by the Propaganda at Rome and St. Lazaro of Venice, belong to the Greek Church. These Christians intermarried with the neighbouring Kurds, and over the population thus formed passed the wave of Saracens which the Crusaders were here compelled to resist, leaving a sediment everywhere behind it of greater or less amount. Finally the Turks obtained the supremacy, and the Jews, who are distributed over the world as universally as iron, are not wanting.

In the south the home of the Kurds is sharply bounded by the mountains. Beyond their range the Arab villages cease; agriculture is unknown, and it is only in a few walled towns that the inhabitants are safe from Arab raids. The Kurds who inhabit the Sindshar mountains form an isolated outpost, this mountain chain rises steep and wall-like from the immense steppe of Mesopotamia. In the north and east, however, the Kurds are mixed with the Armenians, and it is only in

the wooded mountains north of Palu, which attain a great height and are almost inaccessible, that they possess an exclusive domain, into which neither the Turkish army nor the inquisitive traveller has ever penetrated. The subjugation of this last refuge of Kurdish independence had been planned by Hafiz Pasha,¹ when the Egyptian war broke out. This district, therefore, remained closed to European exploration, and will very likely remain so for a long time to come.

Within the limits we have indicated, the Kurds inhabit the zone which extends from the region of the fir-tree and the Palamut oak down to that of the olive and pomegranate, from the steep rocks and snow-covered peaks whence the streams gush noisily forth, down to the valleys and rice-fields, through which the same streams flow with gentle windings. Agriculture is limited to this zone, for the peaks above are covered with snow and masses of ice, even when the sun has scorched up all the vegetation in the treeless steppes below.

The Kurdish villages afford a pleasant prospect. As the traveller approaches them, he beholds, while still far off, groups of walnut-trees, under whose shade the houses lie hidden. Near the spring or brook, which is never absent, there stands, as a rule, a plantation of poplars, which are indispensable for the building of the cottages. As they are well watered, and exposed to the life-giving heat of the sun, these trees reach an extraordinary height in an incredibly short time; they grow as thickly as the blades in a corn-field, and the trunks are slim and straight like reeds. The villages are surrounded by vineyards, olive plantations, gardens, or cornfields, according to the altitude, but only very few of them can boast of a minaret, which the

¹ Hafiz Pasha was Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish Army in Syria in 1838 and 1839; he lost the battle of Nisib.

smallest Turkish villages possess. The outer walls of their dwelling-houses are built of a kind of air-dried brick, which is made of clay and crushed straw without any wood; instead of windows, there are only a few narrow openings, which are placed rather high, and are not closed, as neither glass nor paper is known in these districts. The entrance is guarded by a strong oaken door. The ceiling is made of a layer of poplars placed at intervals of nine inches; over these branches are laid, and the whole is covered with clay and gravel to a thickness of about one or one and a half feet. This platform is used by the family as a sleeping-place during the summer, and is often surrounded by a parapet about four feet high. The houses of the wealthier people have two storeys, and are sometimes built of stone; they are generally provided on one side with a square tower. Everything is arranged with a view to defence in their intestine feuds.

Besides the small apartments where the women are kept in the strictest seclusion, there is, in the interior, a larger room, which is the same as the *selamlık* of the Turks. At the upper end is the fire-place or hearth, on a level with the floor; on both sides is a low divan with cushions, and the wealthier people have a carpet on the floor. This is all the furniture that the room contains.

The paths which connect the different villages are most precipitous, and cannot be passed even on mules without risk; to the unaccustomed rider the effect is appalling. Each community keeps to itself, and neither needs nor desires intercourse with the others. The principal occupation of the women is weaving the cotton and mixed silks, the red and black striped materials for the wide trowsers, the black mantles of goat-hair, which, together with sandals and white felt caps, compose the dress of the men. With the aid of a few sticks set upright in the ground, they weave the beautiful and durable carpets which are the

chief luxury of their homes. The men till the fields, tend their flocks, and smoke, or go out to fight.

It would be very difficult to give even an approximate idea of the number of the Kurds; in any case it exceeds half a million. The greater number are Moslems; on the Persian frontier there are Christian Kurds, and on the Sindshar and the Southern boundary live the Yezids, whom the Turks believe to be devil-worshippers, and who are, therefore, allowed to be sold as slaves. The Armenians, who live amongst them in considerable numbers, are all Christians of the Greek Church. All Kurds have a certain national likeness. Their skin is not any darker than that of their neighbours the Turkomans and Armenians; they are generally tall and stalwart, their noses are aquiline, but their eyes are set very close together, which sometimes gives them the appearance of squinting.

They show great dexterity and practical knowledge in the works they construct for purposes of irrigation. Without the use of any levelling instruments they conduct the water from the springs and streams for leagues along the mountain sides to the point where they are in need of the element which is here indispensable for all vegetation. The mountain slopes are often cut into terraces up to an astonishing height, just as in our best cultivated vine districts, in order to gain a few feet of productive soil. Plantations, fields, and aqueducts are the principal features of Kurdish agriculture.

Such is the home and the climate to which this race is so deeply attached. When, in the year 1838, Hafiz Pasha had driven the inhabitants of Karsann-Dagh with fire and sword into their highest and most inaccessible hiding-places, and when, now that they were surrounded on all sides, food began to be scarce, a deputation of their elders appeared before the tent of the conqueror to implore his pity. The Pasha knew of no better means of transforming these people into faithful subjects of the Porte than that of transplanting

them from their inaccessible mountains into the plain. There he promised them ten times the property they possessed at their homes (on such occasions his generosity knew no bounds), freedom from all taxes and military service for three years, and pointed out to them in bright colours the riches which they would be able to gain by the cultivation of the silkworm and by horse-breeding, instead of mulberry-picking and sheep-rearing. But one might as well offer to build a nest for a fish. Mournfully the old men looked up to heaven, promising everything they were asked; they then returned to their families, loaded with presents, and reported how they had been received. Thereupon women and children took up arms, the skirmishes were renewed, and did not end till the insurgents were entirely defeated; but the project of a colonization in the plain had to be abandoned.

Kurdistan is an aggregate of single communities without any bond of union. Sometimes, but very rarely, an old castle may be seen, perched on a lofty and inaccessible mountain-top, or hedged in between perpendicular walls of rock. These castles are used by some of the Beys, not as residences, but as places of refuge in times of danger. None of these small princes exercise permanent authority over any great part of the country, and it is only in times of danger and distress that men like Revandus Bey, Vedehan Bey, and Sayd Bey have been able to gather any considerable body of their countrymen round their standards. But, even then, these armies melted away in a very short time, and each soldier refused to defend more than his own hearth. This is where the weakness of the people lies. They would be unconquerable if they were united, but none of them have ever attempted to lend a helping hand to their neighbours, and while Reshid and Hafiz Pasha were invading one district, the others rejoiced in their temporary safety till it was their turn.

From the Arabs, who present a complete contrast to this people, the Kurds have been protected by a natural frontier since their last settlements in the plain were destroyed by troops of horsemen from the desert. The Arabian lion cannot harm the Kurdish falcon in these mountain clefts, and on the other hand, the latter is powerless against the former, so long as he remains in his own element.

Persia would be the most dangerous enemy of the Kurds on account of her nearness, if she had not sunk into total impotence. They did succumb to the Pashas of Bagdad and Diarbekir, but principally because at that time a large army of 50,000 men could be employed against them, which the Padishah was obliged to maintain in that remote region for quite a different purpose, that is, to keep a watch on Ibrahim. The Porte herself knows best what sacrifices of men, money, and material are required in order to occupy Kurdistan for the space of a few years. She was, however, compelled to make these sacrifices, as without the help of Kurdistan it would have been impossible for her to bear the burden of the "status quo" for seven years. Her artillery, which was conveyed into these mountain valleys with immense exertion by camels or by human labour, provided her with a weapon far superior to anything which the Kurds could bring against it, and yet castles with garrisons of from forty to eighty men resisted all their attempts for thirty-two and even forty days.

Meanwhile famine and disease made dreadful havoc among the besiegers, and if Hafiz Pasha's last expedition came speedily to an end, it was principally owing to the fact that Kurds were fighting against Kurds. The same men who had fought so badly in the plain, under the Turkish flag, were now seen storming intrenched caverns, villages, and strongholds, or defending them with the utmost daring. The love of plunder and the love of home were powerful motives on one

of these occasions, but on the other they were absent.

The nature of the soil seldom permits the Kurds to fight on horseback. Their cavalry, who ride excellent horses, are generally armed with bows and arrows, or with long lances of bamboo, the upper ends of which are ornamented with thick pads of ostrich feathers; for defence they still carry their little round shells of wicker-work covered with skins. But the long gun which the foot soldiers carry, with its Persian barrels of damaskeened iron, still often provided with a matchlock, is a terrible weapon in so perilous and difficult a country. All this shows that there is a strong defensive element in the Kurdish nation, and one must not imagine for a moment that the Russians would not meet with an extremely obstinate resistance, if they ever attempted the conquest of this country. Here they would find the same fanaticism and the same difficult mountain warfare, so uncongenial to the Russian soldier, that they have been compelled to face in the Caucasus, where, spite of the sea and the nearness of the country to their own, their efforts have hitherto been in vain.

But the same considerations show that the Kurds are not much to be feared when they assume the offensive. The large towns outside their territory are perhaps a temptation to them, but though they may plunder them now and then, they do not care to possess them or shut themselves up within those walls, which glow with the heat of the sun. In particular Mossul and Bagdad lie quite out of the sphere of their operations. Nor are we inclined to regard their latest insurrection as a matter vitally affecting the continuance of the Turkish Empire. Kurdistan has never been assimilated into it, but has only been for a time mechanically mixed with the other provinces. In its present condition it is not to be regarded as a corroding cancer, but as a dissevered member of that great political body of which so many limbs have already perished. It is also

quite possible that the Turkish army now available for use in Asia may, by once more marching through these lovely valleys, burning the villages and trampling down the crops, force a few Kurdish districts into renewed obedience to the Padishah. But the fact, that it would be necessary to repeat the same bloody work again and again, and that every levy of recruits or collection of taxes would demand a similar display of power, suggests serious considerations as to the state of the Empire, which Europe is at present so interested in preserving by her fleets and her armies.

THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL SITUATION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

THOSE who follow the development of events in the East with any attention, cannot fail to see that the Turkish Empire is rushing more and more rapidly down the steep road to ruin. Since Navarino and Adrianople the Padishah has fought no battles against other than his own subjects. The nations who had been hostile to him for hundreds of years, suddenly became as many friends and, before long, protectors. Help and advice were pressed on him from all quarters, more liberally as it seemed to him, than his case required, and each interposition in his favour left him weaker than he had been when confronted by the danger from which such interposition had been intended to deliver him. And now that the English and Austrian cannon have helped him to regain the long coveted prize of Syria, the vast stage of the Ottoman Empire presents us once more with the spectacle of discontent and mutiny on the one side, of confusion and weakness on the other.

We read in the newspapers that the insurrection in Bulgaria is put down. Hussein, the Pasha of Widdin, the destroyer of the Janissaries, a gouty old man, almost ninety years old, has succeeded in pacifying the country. The old cut-throat has let loose his Arnauts against the discontented Rajahs. His greedy hirelings swoop down upon the ill-armed hosts of Bulgarian Christians, burn their villages and crops, drag women and children into captivity, and drive the remnant which escapes slaughter into the mountains, where the men who have been thus abandoned to hunger and misery, form themselves in their turn into bands of robbers. By this means the difficulty is postponed, the only method, it would appear, by which questions affecting Turkey can at present be solved.

It is doubtful whether in our survey of the Turkish Empire we ought to include those principalities in which no Turk is any longer allowed to live, and where the Turkish Government cannot convey its orders without sending its Tartars on board Austrian vessels, and allowing them to be put up in quarantine for a fortnight. Meanwhile we see one royal chamberlain after another arrive in Servia, and none of them is able to put an end to the confusion there. Old Milosh Obrenovitch watches events from across the Danube, as if thinking that a time will come when he will be able to rejoin his old companions in arms, remind them of the glorious fight of their younger days, and free his country for ever from the Moslems.

The provinces of Albania and Bosnia from which the Porte drew, or rather bought by the offer of high pay the means of pacifying Bulgaria, are in a state which is far from satisfactory. Yet it is thought at Stamboul that fortune has been specially propitious whenever the Divan succeeds temporarily in making its power felt among these mountains. Ali Pasha of Zanina is no more, and if things came to the worst, the Austrian frontier soldiers would restore order, however

much they might dislike meddling with the affairs of a foreign country.

Graver faces will be seen at Pasha Kapussi when the determined attitude of the "Romans" in Thessaly is discussed. The formation of an independent kingdom out of a territory of the Ottoman Empire inhabited by Greek Rajahs, was a greater grievance to the Porte and a more bitter personal affront to Sultan Mahmoud than all the other losses. This fact, and the obvious example of a state whose progress in spite of all difficulties is undeniable, while under the administration of the Pashas everything retrogrades, can hardly be lost upon the neighbouring Greek Christian population of Thessaly. There is no need to stimulate the fermentation from outside; the principal seat of the intrigues is to be looked for on Mount Athos, which is almost exclusively inhabited by monks, and the whole question becomes all the more critical, the more it assumes a religious complexion.

Discontent has asserted itself much more openly in Crete, which is ablaze with the lurid flames of insurrection. Among her highest officials, the Porte possesses but a very small number of men of proved efficiency, for those nonentities who continually succeed each other in the Seraskeriat, and who are in turns Ministers of Marine, are entirely out of the question when important commissions are to be assigned. One of these few is Tahir Pasha, an orthodox Turk, with an iron will endowed with many-sided knowledge, and practical utility, but hard, cruel, and full of hatred against the Christians and the European Cabinets, whom he has never forgiven the day of Navarino. This man is charged with the pacification of the island. Though the result of his enterprise can by no means be foreseen with any certainty, it is probable that he will drive the rebels from the field with his artillery, against which they have nothing to oppose, and that he will restore Turkish rule in the towns. But that he will

penetrate into the mountains and repeat the scenes of Karsann-Dagh,¹ we may be permitted to doubt. Here again we see an indefinite adjournment of the situation.

Nothing has been heard lately of the disturbances in Kurdistan, but without doubt only because the Porte allows matters to take their own course. But as soon as Turkey finds herself compelled, in her hour of need, to enforce her claim to draw upon the resources of this province, a reaction will certainly set in, and the newspapers will once more report disturbances in the Taurus and in Mesopotamia.

Whereas in a former article the opinion was expressed that the Turks would hardly be able to retain the recovered province of Syria longer than a year, this prediction seems likely to be fulfilled in a still shorter period. In Syria there is only one real and permanent power, that of the Emir Beshir, who has shown his rare sagacity by allying himself with the Egyptians against the Turks, and with the Turks against the Egyptians, and it is very possible that this Emir, or the heir of his policy, may look down from his mountains upon more than one change in the plain. But it is very problematical what increase of power the Porte would gain from the renewed possession of the rich coast where the greater part of her available forces would be as entirely absorbed after as before the conquest. The memory of so many thousands of the noblest men of Germany, France and Italy, of so many millions of devout Christians, who willingly sacrificed their property and their lives in order that they might set foot on the consecrated soil of Palestine, drink from the waters of Jordan and behold the holy city—all this has hitherto counted in the calculations of the European Cabinets as so much empty moonshine. Jerusalem and the grave of the Redeemer, Syria and the fate of the Christian population have been once more abandoned

¹ Compare p. 283.

to the Infidels, and the reins of government placed in trembling hands, from which they threaten to fall again every moment. Meanwhile there is time to reconsider the matter, for we may depend upon it, that before long Syria will be for the second time as much at our disposal as it was after the victory of Acre.

While the Anglo-Austrian victories have been far from giving back to Christianity her holy places, the heir of the Califs is just as far from regaining his by them. At present Arabia obeys neither the Pasha nor the Padishah; new prophets arise there and, according as they belong to the fanatical or to the Puritanical sect, prophesy the fall or the purification of Islam, but all equally reject the authority of the Sultan.

Egypt is more independent after her defeats, than she ever was before. Though deprived of one part of his possessions, Mehmed Ali has obtained in respect of his diminished territory the recognition and, to a certain extent, the guarantee of the European powers. One claim of the usurper, to which Sultan Mahmoud would never have dreamt of assenting, that his authority should be hereditary in his family, has been allowed by Mahmoud's son. The tribute has been lightened, and to the order for the reduction of his army, the old Pasha has replied with all humility and submission by new levies of troops. Though far from believing in the hundreds of thousands of regular troops and national guards, or in the possibility of reconquering Syria with this rabble, we yet cannot help thinking that Mehmed Ali will in future be able to choose at his pleasure between the friendship and protection of France, England, and Russia.

To whatever direction the young Sultan may look from his palace on the Bosphorus, he sees himself surrounded by dissatisfaction, insubordination and revolt. Let us now examine the means which are at his disposal for the maintenance of his authority and rights.

Reschid Pasha, without doubt the most eminent man in Turkey, has been obliged to relinquish his office as prime minister. This incident however will trouble him little, for he will probably be soon recalled to his old post, because he is in fact indispensable. But this man, who is sincerely anxious to benefit his country, cannot but be pained to see the most important reforms which he has introduced in the administration, rejected as impracticable. One of these is the attempted separation of the military executive power from the administrative power, and the direct collection of taxes for the exchequer. This scheme, which would be as advantageous to the tax payers as to the Government, fails partly on account of the distracted condition of the provinces, in which it is impossible to raise taxes without a display of power or the intervention of the military governors, and partly for want of honest officials, an evil which has been in operation for hundreds of years. Throughout the empire therefore, a return has been made to the old system, by which the Government received the amount of the taxes from the Pashas in advance, and they for their part borrowed it from Armenian bankers at enormous rates of interest, and afterwards recouped themselves by the aid of the military power placed at their disposal. The Turkish translation of a French *Charte Gulhane* has evidently not increased the moral power of the Sultan and has happily remained without any consequences. From a philanthropic point of view it is all very well for the descendant of Osman, Bajazid, and Suleiman to proclaim the equality of the Rajahs and the Moslems, but it is absolutely fatal to Turkish rule, which is principally based upon the sovereignty of the Faithful over the Infidels. The celebrated *Hattischerif* has drawn the attention of one part of the subjects of the empire to the rights of humanity they are entitled to claim, and of another to the privileges of ascendancy they are on the point of losing. This latter warning refers principally to the

Ulemas, the most powerful, the best educated and the most influential class, and its effect is to loosen the only tie which unites the Padishah with the different nations of his vast empire which are only held together by community of faith. When that is gone nothing remains but physical force, the power of the army.

Since the defeat at Nisib the Porte has been able to do little for the development of her army. It is only in the department of the artillery, no doubt the most effective portion of a modern Oriental Army, that the employment of Prussian officers and sergeants has led to the attainment of a perfection far in excess of anything which at Constantinople had ever been thought possible. The employment of Turkish soldiers against foreign enemies has long been out of the question; this possibility is so far from entering into the calculations of the divan, that even the strongholds on the frontier, Rustchuk and Silistria, Shumla and Varna, are without any garrison of regular troops, and consequently the country from the banks of the Danube to the walls of the capital is unprotected. The Turkish Nizam would be quite equal to putting down insurrections at home wherever their numbers were sufficient, and wherever the nature of the ground did not give their opponents too great an advantage.

Yet the Government has never, since the peace of Adrianople, been able to raise a standing army of more than 75,000 men, without calling out the Redifs or militia, who, however, can only be kept together for a few weeks or months if this measure is not to lead to catastrophes like the desertion of the corps of Izzet Pasha and Osman Pasha in the year 1839. At the present moment the Porte has at its command hardly more than 50,000, or at the most 60,000, regulars, and even this comparatively small number is a great drain upon the country. As everything necessary for the equipment of the troops must be supplied from Belgium, Austria, and England, this equipment, bad as it is, costs

more than double as much as that of any other European army; but the greatest difficulty is the recruiting. Abundance of food, together with deficient physical exercise, the crowding in the vast barracks (some of which contain quarters for 8000 men), the total want of physicians and medicines, and, in addition, the repugnance of the people to compulsory life-long service, produce a mortality amongst the soldiers, of which we can form no idea. Plague, typhus, dysentery, and desertion are continually thinning the Turkish lines, and we may assume without exaggeration, that apart from skirmishes and battles, the number of recruits annually amounts to about a fourth or a third of the total forces. It is a well-known fact that polygamy causes decrease of population; if in addition youths who have barely reached the age of manhood are dragged into the celibacy of military service, it is easy to understand what disproportion there must be between the Mohammedans and the steadily-increasing Rajahs, especially the vigorous Armenians. But how can 50,000 men suffice to repress the universal disorder in an empire which reaches from Bagdad to Belgrade, from Ararat to Lebanon; and that, too, in a country where communication is so difficult, that for every movement of troops, a special road must be constructed? How can they possibly perform their allotted task of presenting a firm front to Egypt at the very time that they are expected to restrain the turbulent population of Syria in their rear, scale the mountain hiding-places of the Kurds, pursue the flying Arab through the desert, re-conquer Crete, curb the seditious spirit rampant in Thessaly, Albania, Servia, and Roumelia, and, simultaneously with all this, guard a capital of half a million inhabitants, upon whose tranquillity and order the existence of the whole Empire depends? There is one remedy which might help to treble the Ottoman forces, that is the arming of the Rajahs. If the Porte had united the

interest of her Christian subjects with her own by a good administration, or, to be just, if she had been able to do so, this expedient would have saved her. Before Nisib this measure was proposed, and might, with precaution, perhaps have been partially executed. As things are to-day, it must be owned that the remedy would be worse than the evil.

The reports concerning the young Sultan's health are far from satisfactory. None of Abdul Mejid's numerous marriages has as yet provided him with a male heir, and should he die without one, the sole remaining representative of the ancient house of Osman would be a boy fourteen years of age; who, to judge from his appearance, is no stronger than his elder brother. If anything were wanted to make the dreadful confusion complete, it would be the extinction of the dynasty, so sacred in the eyes of the Moslems, of the founder of their Empire.

But even apart from the possibility of such an event, the continuance of the Ottoman Empire is only conceivable on the condition of its being contracted within its natural boundaries. In Europe these would only include Constantinople and the Thracian Isthmus with Adrianople; but in Asia the large and rich district, which is washed by two seas, and which is bounded on the south by a line which would retain Erzerum, Mush, Malatia, Kaisariah, and Konieh for the Turkish Empire. All the rest, however legitimate may be the Padishah's claims for it, is no longer to be held, and even Bagdad, Diarbekir, and Orfa are mere islands in a strange Arabic-Kurdish sea.

If we consider the incalculable consequences which would flow from the sudden disappearance of the Ottoman Empire, from the universal concert of nations, it is not to be wondered at that European statesmanship tries to postpone such a catastrophe to a distant future. But has not the dismemberment of the Empire already begun? Does not the tricolor wave in Algiers

and the palm branch on the Nile? Has not Russia's frontier advanced from the Don to the Pruth, from the Pruth to the Danube, and beyond the Caucasus? Is not Morea free? and do the principalities obey the firmans of the Padishah? Did not all this happen through the action of those very powers who proclaim the integrity of the Empire and the legitimacy of her ruler? And would it not be advisable to prop up other separate portions of the old rotten building, in order that when the threatened collapse occurs they may remain standing, and not cover Europe with their ruins?

But, unfortunately, we see the dissevered provinces and countries under the influence of Russia, France, and England, but not under that of Germany. It is a striking fact that in Turkey we always hear of these three powers, but never of Austria, and yet the latter should be held in greater regard there, for it is Austria's sword which will some day be thrown into the scale to decide the fate of this Empire. All the fleets in the world can neither execute nor prevent the division of Turkey; Austria's armies may do the one, and can certainly do the other. How much of the noblest German blood has been shed in fruitless expeditions to Rome? How often has the glorious double Eagle been carried over the Alps only to be repulsed on the Italian soil, which it was so difficult to reach? Austria has always directed her attacks against the West, whilst in the East she only defended herself. She turned her sword to the West, her shield towards the East. This policy seemed to be justified, as on the one side there were all the treasures of civilization heaped together, while on the other there was nothing but desolate regions with barbarous inhabitants. But to-day Austria has her share in the Hesperian gardens; the principalities which are struggling for emancipation, especially Servia, throw themselves upon her protection only to be repulsed. Is Russia to find there an open field for the still further extension of her influence?

What German heart is not filled with sorrow at the sight of the long processions of our countrymen, who, with their wives and children, their goods and chattels, go to seek a new home on the other side of the ocean? Wallachia is a country wide enough to receive them all, and even by the poorest can now be easily reached in a few days at small expense by the new road along the Danube. There they would find a rich soil, nor would they miss the forests, the murmuring streams, and the mountains or plains of their homes. They would find a Christian Government and the beginnings of order, which indeed would be greatly promoted if the privilege of hereditary authority were conferred on the Hospodars, a privilege which the cut-throat on the Nile has extorted for his own family in the midst of his defeats. By concluding treaties with the philanthropic Prince Ghika, by abolishing the present consular system which makes all immigration a burden on the Government, by appointing an embassy armed with the powers of the higher law-courts and charged to uphold the interests of the colonists with the government of the country, industry and diligence would be ensured that safety which is requisite for prosperity under the most favourable conditions. Then German industry need no longer flee to the noxious swamps and the glowing sun of other continents, and while the German language would be heard on the banks of the proud Danube, German civilization would stretch from the Swabian Mountains to the mouth of the Sulina.

RESCHID, IZZET, AND THE PORTE.

THE fall of Izzet Mehmet Pasha, the embittered opponent of the Christians, has excited a hope in many quarters that the Porte will now introduce a new

system of Government, which may end the precarious state of things in the East. But for Turkey there are really only two systems, and Reschid and Izzet are their representatives. As the present state of affairs did not seem to contain in itself any guarantee of its continuance, those two men, though working by opposite methods, were both attempting to make it more durable. The one strove to advance towards the institutions under the influence of which he had seen the Christian nations in the West become great, powerful, rich, and far superior to his own. The other wished to return to the principles on which a succession of powerful monarchs, from Sultan Orchan to Suliman the law-giver, had governed the East victoriously and happily. Reschid is, without doubt, the best educated statesman, in the European sense of the word, that Turkey has possessed up to the present time, and it is to be lamented that this honest, zealous architect did not work along with the strong but ill-advised destroyer Mahmoud. No government which was not strong at home could undertake to declare the gradual emancipation of its Christian subjects, but at the moment of greatest weakness the hattischerif of Gulhane could not pass beyond the walls of the palace without awakening the discontent of those to whom the rule of the believers over the Rajahs was both a precept of religion and a maxim of government, without calling forth defiance, opposition, and mutiny among the Christians who for three hundred years had been sorely oppressed and maltreated. But these plans were never executed; the most important act of Reschid was indisputably his attempt to raise the state revenues directly, which would not only have doubled the revenue of the Government, but would have been an enormous relief to the taxed. If this enterprise had succeeded, it would have been possible to win all classes of subjects so completely that the step might have been ventured upon of inviting the Christians to share the

heaviest of state burdens, military service. By this means the military position of the Empire would have assumed an entirely different aspect, and the emancipation of the Rajahs would have followed as a matter of course. But this noble intention was not realised. The Government was dismayed by the financial losses which evidently would have been incurred by the transition from the old system of anticipating the revenues to the new one; the governors of the provinces and their satellites had a common interest against this arrangement, and while they accepted the higher pay, they allowed the old extortions to be continued; in short, the project was found impracticable even during the ministry of Reschid himself, principally because there was a lack of honest officials, who cannot be created by any governmental decree, but can only be trained with a new generation.

The views of Reschid would never have been listened to at the *Divan* if Turkey had not been in such a weak condition after the defeat at Nisib, the falling away of the fleet, and the death of Mahmoud. As soon as Syria had been conquered by the Christians and given to the Turks, the Egyptians humiliated, and in consequence Europe herself threatened with a quarrel amongst her great powers, the Porte quickly passed over to a new system.

It cannot be disputed that with Izzet and Tahir Pasha, two of the ablest and most powerful men of the old school, came into office, but it is just such men as these that the Porte does not require in that place, because they entangle her in quarrels with her own and foreign countries, to which this weak government is not equal; and that was what happened when the hopes which Reschid had fostered in the Rajahs were disappointed by his successors. Mildness encouraged opposition, severity led to the revolt which blazed out in Candia, in Lebanon, and in the Balkans. To this was added the difference with the Greek Government,

this thorn in the side of all Mohammedans, this dangerous example of a successful insurrection of Christian subjects, where not even outward appearance was kept up as with the bastard states on the Danube. It is true that Izzet tried to reform the finances by curtailing the salaries, which in Turkey are very high, but very few officials receive salaries at all; those who can, pay themselves at the expense of the subjects. No other result, therefore, was to be expected from this measure beyond the discontent of a few magnates at Constantinople. But the fall of Izzet was principally due to his misunderstandings with the high diplomacy at Pera, which troubled the Porte much more than the revolt of a few provinces, a chronic malady to which the Empire has long been accustomed.

The attempts which Reschid and Izzet made on opposite principles have effected no improvements in the internal condition of the country, but, on the contrary, the impotence of the Government has become more evident, the complaints of the Osmanli louder, and the defiance of the Rajahs bolder. It would be quite in accordance with the character of the *Divan* to abandon such attempts for the present, let matters go on as they are, and trust Allah for the rest. Without doubt, we shall shortly see such combinations as Halil and Sayd Pashas, Rauf and Akif Pashas—and whatever may be the names of other nonentities—succeed each other in office according as favour and intrigue may decide. As for old Chosrev, we have racked our brains to know whether he was for reform or for reaction, for Russia or for France. The truth is that he has no opinions at all on these subjects, except that he himself must gain power and keep it. His extensive connections in all parts of the Empire make him fitter than anyone else to maintain the internal tranquility which the Porte so much needs, nor does this old man of eighty lack either the energy of character or the ruthless severity which this task requires. In short, Mehmet Chosrev is the

very man for the circumstances, and we should not be at all surprised to see him again in the *seraskeriat* before long.

But what a state of things! The existence of the Porte depends upon the conservative principles of Europe, and, yet, she herself tramples upon these principles in Servia without understanding that she is undermining her own ultimate foundations. The Empire will fall to pieces as soon as the European powers cease to agree concerning its continuance or come to an agreement concerning its end. The first contingency might arise suddenly and unexpectedly, a complication, like that in Servia, might be the cause, but the consequence would, in such a case, be beyond all calculations. The second contingency would depend on the voluntary action of the European cabinets, and the consequences could in their main outlines be foreseen, weighed, and regulated. At all events this is a catastrophe which, we may assume, must come. The only question is whether to put it off indefinitely and allow ourselves to be taken by surprise, or to look the danger in the face and hasten on the crisis in order to remain master of the situation.

We have already drawn attention to the fact that on Asiatic soil there are still to be found many germs of life favourable to the continuance of Ottoman supremacy. Though the Turkish population is here, too, continually decreasing owing to well known causes, yet it is still numerous. The extensive Armenian population is faithfully devoted to the Porte, averse to all revolt, and patient in suffering and labour. Except for their religion, these Armenians are, in manner, custom, habit, inclination and views, real Turks, so much so, that they speak Turkish more than their own language. At Brussa or Koniah the Padishah may be able to reign for another century by his pashas and mutselims, by farming out the taxes, raising forced loans or firmans, and by relying upon the Ulemas and

the Rediffs. But Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Adana, Arabia and Kurdistan, Roumelia, Bosnia, and the Danubian principalities are already slipping from his grasp. All these countries will, without fail, pass into strange hands, or become independent under foreign protection.

It may be said that we are shaking the bearskin before killing the bear; but we are convinced that the Porte will have few objections to urge against a migration to its native soil of Asia as soon as an Austro-Russian army appears in Bulgaria, or an Anglo-French fleet in the Sea of Marmora. The difficulty does not lie in the conquest of Turkey, but in the division of the conquered territory, especially as Constantinople is the jewel of this rich crown, which, itself indivisible, is of greater value than all the rest. In our opinion the only natural and possible solution of this problem is the formation of a Christian Byzantine Empire at Constantinople, the re-establishment of which has been already begun in Hellas by the will of Europe. Whatever the view we take of the new Greek State, no one will deny its growth and progress, while Turkey is decaying and almost dead. The eyes of the Greeks in Thessaly, Macedonia, and the islands of the Archipelago are turned towards Hellas, and there is no reason why the Slavonic population of Bulgaria itself should not prefer to join a Russo-Greek rather than a Byzantine-Greek church, should not rather obey the Czar than the Sultan. As we have already seen, whenever the reconstruction of Eastern Europe takes place the ruins of the old edifice will suffice to compensate both those who have armed for the fight, and those who have taken no share in it, "*Il y en a pour tous,*" but to make the partition is not part of our present purpose. Thus much, however, we think we are entitled to assert, that when the sword of Eyyoub has been carried over the Hellespont back to the land whence it came; when the dome of St. Sophia is once more surmounted by that cross for

which it was built; when the shores of the two Straits are no longer obedient to one will, and that a weak one; and when the two inland seas are opened to the flags of all nations: then, and not till then, will the peace of the East be assured for a long series of years.

THE MOUTH OF THE DANUBE.

THE attention of the reader of this newspaper¹ has, several times lately, been drawn to the importance of the Danube, as the principal means of communication between the heart of Germany and the East, as well as to the obstacles which impede free navigation at the mouths of our greatest stream, and the hope has been raised that the latter might be avoided by the construction of a canal in the neighbourhood of Trajan's wall. We cannot share this hope, as personal observation has confirmed our conviction of the total impracticability of the enterprise. From Widin the Danube flows for almost thirty miles in an easterly direction through the wide valley and plain between the Carpathian mountains and the Balkans. At Rassova, at a distance of only seven miles from the Black Sea, the stream suddenly changes its normal course, though opposed by nothing more than a gently rising tract of land with an even and sandy surface. But more than this, a number of shallow lakes and a stream with a very slight fall seem to continue the immense Danube valley to the east as far as the Euxine. Even where this valley ends, at a distance of not more than 3000 paces from the sea, and half a mile from Port Kustendje, there rise no mountain cones or rocky walls, but the valley and banks become flatter and flatter till they end in a

¹ Compare Preface.

gently undulating plain. It is undeniable that on the map this district presents the exact appearance of a branch of the Danube which has been choked up by sand, where the lakes are due to the remnant of the chalk formation, and the marshy depressions mark out the old river-bed.

From Rassoava the Danube flows due north and almost parallel to the coast of the Black Sea for twenty German miles, as far as Galatz; thence it flows for about the same distance through the reed-covered delta, through which it sends three arms. As, for the present at any rate, the steamers of the Danube Navigation, that splendid achievement of private enterprise, proceed in the first place to Constantinople, they are compelled after leaving Rassoava, to perform a journey of seventy miles through the Sulineh mouth before passing Kustendje, which is separated from Rassoava, or, more accurately, from Boghas-Kjöi, the Tchernavoda of the maps, by a distance of no more than seven miles. No wonder then, that there is a wish for a canal here and would be even if there were no other difficulties than those presented by the Sulineh mouth.

In constructing a canal, the first difficulty to be considered is, whence to draw the water to feed it. Now the Danube, even as far down as Isaktchi, has a considerably rapid fall, and a very natural suggestion is to provide the new channel with the necessary water from the rich store of the main river. In this case locks would be needed in order to prevent the water rushing too powerfully into the sea; for though the Danube near Isaktchi has but one, and thence to the mouth but two feet of fall per German mile, yet thirty-five feet of total fall distributed over seven German miles, would still produce a considerable current. But in order to feed the canal with the waters of the Danube, a necessary condition would be that its bed should run without any rise, but rather with the necessary fall, from the level

of the Danube near Boghas-Kjöi to the level of the Black Sea, at a depth sufficient for navigation. This would necessitate cutting through all the intervening heights down to the level of the canal-bed. These heights rise gently, but without interruption for almost seven German miles, for their culminating point lies near the sea, not more than a quarter of a German mile distant from it. The ground slopes towards the sea for a short distance, and then suddenly ends in perpendicular cliffs, sixty to eighty feet in height, whose bases are washed by the Euxine. The texture of this mass of chalk-mountains, and its continuity which is nowhere broken through its whole thickness, and which forms the foundation of the whole of Dobrudsha and Bulgaria, shows distinctly that there can never have been a mouth of the Danube in the neighbourhood of Kustendje, but that the stream has been diverted along the glaxis-like western slope of a low range of hills, the eastern inclination of which has in the course of centuries been for the greater part submerged by the sea.

The height of the culminating point has been carefully measured from the shore.¹ The lowest part of the ridge, about half a German mile west of Kustendje is $166\frac{3}{10}$ Prussian duodecimal feet above the level of the sea. From that point the valley of Karasu descends to the west, first like a shallow ditch, then between rocks which become steeper and steeper, but without water for three and a-half German miles to Allakapu. Below this point the marshy surface of the valley does not slope perceptibly towards the Danube, and at high water it is flooded by the stream. On the east the descent towards the sea is much more rapid. The only place within a short distance of Kustendje, where the sea is not bounded by an uninterrupted wall of chalk, lies

¹ This interesting work was executed by Major Baron Von Vincke in the year 1838.

three-quarters of a German mile south of this little town. The ground is there hollowed into a shallow cavity, and the precipice, still fifty feet high, is formed of layers of loam and clay. No continuous indentation in the mountain ridge or interruption in the foundation of the chalk rocks is to be perceived even here.

It is clear, from what has been said, that this ridge 161 feet high, would have to be excavated to a depth of ten feet below the lowest water-mark of the Danube. But now imagine a cutting, whose length from Allakapu to the sea would be three and a-half German miles, whose greatest depth would be 171 feet deep, and whose upper width at this deepest part would need to be at least 600 feet, excavated too, at least for the greater part, out of the solid rock!

For these reasons no objection on the part of the Russians to the draining off of the waters of the Danube from Rassoava need trouble us much.

There are canals as, for example, the Trollhätta in Sweden, which surmount higher hills than those which are the cause of the circuitous course of the Danube. But in those cases there must be on the heights themselves large reservoirs or considerable supplies of water sufficient to fill the canal and to make good the loss which is incurred by evaporation and the use of the locks through which in this case the vessels ascend or descend step by step. But the lakes of Tchernavoda and Karasu lie almost at the same level as the surface of the Danube near Boghas-Kjöi, the tributary stream, which is quite insignificant, and on the heights themselves there are for miles and miles neither brooks nor ponds nor lakes. The Dobrudsha, though surrounded by water on all sides, is a district most scantily supplied with water. During the summer there is not a drop of it in the valleys, every trace of watercourse disappears, and in the villages which lie at great distances from one another, the drinking water is drawn up from the wells by ropes of from sixty to eighty feet in length.

It is not impossible that there may be a point on the ridge lower than the one measured, somewhere to the south of it, and forming the head of a valley, deviating from the Karasu Valley near Umurdsha Şaya, in the direction of Lascale and the Tekirajol, and it would be interesting if this region too could be carefully levelled. So much is certain, there is no real gap in the mountain ridge there, and very probably, what was saved in the depth of the excavations would be lost again owing to the considerable increase in length.

But next to the construction of a canal, hopes have been raised by the project of a railway in the direction of Trajan's wall. Travellers can be taken on an improved road from Rassoava to Kustendje in four hours. By rail it would be done in an hour and a-half less. But in a journey from Vienna or Pesth to Constantinople a saving of two hours and a-half is of no great importance, and it would require a much greater increase in the goods traffic than there is at present any reason to expect, to stand the expense of a double trans-shipment. The construction, maintenance and working of a railway in this out-of-the-way and desolate district would be very expensive. Add to this the bad condition of the harbour of Kustendje, which is shallow, narrow and quite unprotected from the eastern and southern gales. The little town has lain in ruins since 1829, and was in 1838 only inhabited by forty families. Everything there would need to be created from the beginning. Therefore it would be better not to harbour delusions and unfounded expectations, but to look for the real difficulties where they are to be found, that is, in the nature of the navigation through the Sulineh mouth. The local obstacles there are much smaller than is generally supposed¹ and far less important than those encountered in the middle course of

¹ Compare "Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei ans den Jahren 1835 bis 1839."

that stream, which are described in an interesting article published in this paper not long ago. They could be overcome with the tenth part of the expenditure that a railway or a canal from Boghas-Kjõi to Kustendje would entail. But to tell the truth it is not these difficulties of which people are afraid but the real or imaginary encroachments of Russia, the quarantine-stations on both sides of the Sulineh, provided with cannon and situated in a boggy lowland of ten miles, which, according to the treaty of Adrianople, is to be left uninhabited, the attempts to subject Austrian steamers to a visitation, and similar drawbacks.

In case of a war Trajan's wall will not be sufficient to stop the Russian armies or to cover the much discussed new commercial road. The Dobrudsha is a deserted district with an absurdly thin population. It is flanked on one side by Wallachia and on the other by the sea, both of which are dominated by Russia. Hirsova, Isaktchi, Matchin and Tuldsha have been razed. Before Kustendje are the opening Russian mines, looking as if they had been blasted but yesterday. It seems as if the Porte meant to rely for her defence on the Balkans, on Varna and Shumla. She will occupy the places on the middle course of the Danube as advanced posts, but certainly will not keep an army to hold the Dobrudsha. However, in time of peace we must and may hope that Austria will protect the rights and future of the Danubian countries, and that Germany in the end will succeed in liberating the mouths of her great rivers.

THE END.