XI

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The Hatti Sherif of Ghul Khaneh (1839). — Two days after the battle of Nezib, while the victorious Egyptians were marching upon Constantinople, Sultan Mahmoud died. Only the interference of the European powers checked their advance and preserved the throne to his son, Sultan Abd-ul Medjid. Though failing in almost every enterprise he undertook, Mahmoud had made earnest efforts to reform the empire. His successor inherited his ideas. At the summer palace of Ghul Khaneh, in the presence of the foreign diplomatic body, of the heads of the various subject churches, of deputations from all the guilds, and of the great dignitaries, ecclesiastical, military and civil, of the Ottoman state, his Hatti Sherif, or Sacred Proclamation, was read by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Reshid Pasha (November 3, 1839). Everything was done to give solemnity and a binding character to this rescript. It concluded with a prayer and an imprecation, and the vast assembly of Moslems, Christians and Jews responded "Amen."

This was the first formal acknowledgment of abuses and the first official declaration of a purpose to reform that was ever made by an Ottoman sovereign. It guaranteed security of life, property and honor to all subjects of the empire, a uniform and just taxation and uniformity in conscription and military service. It suppressed monopolies, pronounced that all court trials be public, removed restrictions from the sale and purchase of real estate, and ordered that the property of criminals be no longer confiscated but handed over to their natural heirs. These measures were aimed at correcting those violations of justice from which Christians and Mussulmans suffered in common. Its most important provision declared that henceforth Mussulman and Christian subjects should be equal before the law. Hitherto the theory and practice since the foundation of the empire had been flagrant inequality between the adherents of the two religions. For example, the testimony of a Christian was not admissible in court against a Mussulman. A Christian could only hire Mussulman witnesses, who were allowed to testify for him.

The Christians regarded the Hatti Sherif with mixed hope and incredulity. It enraged the Mussulmans, who believed that equality between them and the giaours was a contradiction of the Koran as well as of all their past history. But in Christian Europe, accustomed to see promises followed by deeds, it caused a profound and favorable impression.

Massacres in the Lebanon (1845). — The Sultan, well meaning but feeble, made only desultory efforts to put his proclamation into effect. In most localities it remained a dead letter. In others it stirred up the Moslems to prove that there had been no change in the old order. The region of Lebanon was inhabited by many religious sects. Among the more powerful were the Catholic Maronites, who enjoyed the protection of France, and the Druses, a wild tribe of heretical Mussulmans, followers of the mad Caliph Hakim. Under their leader, the Sheik Abou Naked, the Druses made a sudden attack. His followers had strict orders to harm only the Catholics, for then as always there was method in a Mussulman massacre. Every conceivable horror marked the passage of the bandit chief. He spared neither sex nor age. The government forbade the Maronites to defend themselves, but told them to trust in the padishah. The Turkish soldiers, sent to preserve order, remained inactive or openly sided with the Druses. The French missionary stations were destroyed, their churches and convents sacked and priests murdered. M. Guizot, then prime minister of France, dared not interfere. The French ambassador at Constantinople, M. de Bourqueney, was bolder. He sent a peremptory message to the Porte. The massacres ceased. New measures for the administration of the Lebanon were introduced and a degree of tranquillity was restored.

Question of the Holy Places. The Crimean War (1853–1856). — This subject has been sufficiently discussed in the chapters on the second French empire and Russia. Save at its beginning the Turks played an insignificant and humiliating part in the war. Their assistance seemed as much disdained by the British and French troops as their

resistance had been by the Russians. Before the arrival of their allies the Ottoman commander-in-chief, Omar Pasha, a Christian renegade, had shown ability on the Danube. The successful defence of Silistria, where six assaults of the Russian army were repulsed, was honorable to Turkish arms. In signing the offensive and defensive treaty with Great Britain and France, the Porte promised to accomplish the following reforms: "Equality before the law and eligibility to all offices of all Ottoman subjects without distinction of religion; admission of Christian testimony in court; establishment of mixed tribunals; abolition of the kharadj or exemption tax."

The Hatti Humayoun (1856). — The Hatti Sherif of Ghul Khaneh had proved abortive. The abyss still yawned unbridged between the Mussulmans and the Christians. Language can hardly set forth the sense of superiority among the former. The cadi of Mardin in 1855 gave a permit for the interment of a Christian in the following words: "Permission to the priest of Mary to bury the impure and offensive carcass of Saidah, who went to hell this very day. Signed, Saïd Mehemed Faize." In its language and its sentiment toward their subjects, this paper was typical of the ruling race. A Hatti Humayoun, or Imperial Proclamation, was issued on February 18, 1856. It reaffirmed and extended all the glittering generalities of the Hatti Sherif. It forbade all distinction between the followers of the two religions. All Christian subjects had hitherto been excluded from the ranks. It now opened to them not only military service, but attainment of the highest grades. To this provision Mussulmans and Christians united in opposition. The former were unwilling to obey officers of the subject Christian nationalities or to serve with them in the troops. The latter preferred still to pay the exemption tax and had no wish to fight for a government they abhorred.

Massacres at Djeddah (1858) **and in Syria** (1860). **European Intervention**. — It is a peculiar fact that the Crimean War stimulated the hatred of the Turks for all foreign Christians, for the British and French even more than for the Russians. Their pride was stung on seeing the crushing superiority in the civilization and power of the Western nations. This sullen hatred was diffused throughout the empire and grew all the more intense, because they realized

that those detested foreign Christians looked on them with contempt.

At Djeddah, in Arabia (July 15, 1858), the wild exhortations of some dervishes excited a crowd of pilgrims to attack the foreigners. The consul of France and vice-consul of Great Britain were massacred while trying to protect their countrymen. The bombardment of the city by an Anglo-French squadron (July 25) and the hanging of ten of the murderers made only a slight impression.

An explosion followed on a larger scale in Syria. The Druses, though comparatively quiet since 1845, were no less envenomed against the Christians. Khourshid Pasha, governor-general of Beïrout, and Achmet Pasha, commander of the army of Arabistan, encouraged them to action. Speedily (May, 1860) the Lebanon and the neighboring country were drenched with blood. Greed and lust multiplied the bands of the fanatics. With every attendant horror entire villages were blotted out. The Bedouins of the desert joined hands with the Druses of the mountain. Damascus was as sanguinary as the Lebanon. Only the British and Prussian consulates were respected. The Ottoman troops were not behind in murder and pillage. It is impossible to tell how many thousands were slain or died of exposure. The Emir Abd-el-Kader, who for sixteen years had defended his country of Algeria against the French, was then living in Damascus. At peril of his life, with a band of followers, he protected as many Christian fugitives as he could and lavished his resources in their support.

Europe shuddered at these atrocities. Lord Palmerston denounced them in Parliament. By a convention between Great Britain and France, which the Porte was obliged to approve, 6000 French troops were sent to Syria. They were potent arguments in favor of justice and order. Fuad Pasha, Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs, was given full authority to punish the criminals. Marshal Achmet Pasha was tried and shot. Khourshid Pasha was condemned to prison. Eighty-five Mussulmans on conviction were put to death. Such interference was effectual. The Lebanon became, and has continued to be, one of the most orderly and peaceful provinces of the empire. By decision of the great Powers it has since been ruled by a Christian governor. The French corps of occupation returned home in 1861.

Sultan Abd-ul Aziz (1861–1876). — Sultan Abd-ul Medjid died in June, 1861. His reign of twenty-two years was filled with good intentions without accomplishment. His brother, Sultan Abd-ul Aziz, who succeeded, was of stronger fibre. But kept in extreme seclusion, constantly under watch, he was as ignorant as a child of what went on in the Ottoman Empire or the outer world. On his accession he repeated all the customary glowing promises of reform. More extravagant even than his brother, his prodigality bordered on madness. Enormous sums were squandered in erecting palaces, of which he often tired before they were complete. His harem of 900 women was served by 3000 attendants. Moustapha Fazyl Pasha, accountant general, in an interview with the Sultan hinted at the danger of national bankruptcy. He was exiled for his rashness. The machinery of government was kept in motion by two capable men, Fuad Pasha and Ali Pasha. The latter was one of the ablest statesmen Turkey ever produced. Strictly honest, inaccessible to a bribe, he was moreover a tireless worker. Provincial rebellions and petty wars kept him constantly busy.

The Insurrection of Crete (1866–1868). — During the last sixty years insurrection was the chronic condition of Crete. In 1866, as before in 1821, in 1841 and 1858, it assumed a more general and threatening form. Never were the 200,000 Christians, who formed two-thirds of the population, more cruelly and more unjustly governed. Their complaints to Constantinople against their inhuman governor, Ismaïl Pasha, had only called out vague promises of improvement and a stern menace that they must submit to the officers of the Sultan. The Cretans got together a general assembly which declared them independent and pronounced for union with Greece. In the mountains of Sphakia, the western part of the island which never had been thoroughly subdued, they carried on a guerilla war. They routed detachment after detachment sent against them, forced the capitulation of Ismaïl Pasha and destroyed another Turkish division at Selino. Kiritli Pasha was sent as a dictator with 40,000 men. He fared no better, nor did Omar Pasha, the Turkish generalissimo, who replaced him. France, Italy, Prussia and Russia proposed the appointment of an international commission to administer the island. Great Britain and Austria opposed the proposition, and it was

rejected by the Sultan. War seemed imminent between Turkey and Greece, but the latter power was kept from action by France and Great Britain. From America generous sums were sent to relieve the distress among the Cretan refugees, but Europe looked on in general apathy. By the employment of all its resources the Ottoman Empire at last quieted the insurrection for a time. At the convent of Arcadion the Cretans made their final stand. As the Turks crossed the last trench over the bodies of its last defenders, the Cretan women set fire to the powder in the vaults and blew up themselves and their conquerors.

Opening of the Suez Canal (November 17, 1869). — This year the great enterprise of M. de Lesseps, though still incomplete, was so far advanced as to be passable by ships. Its various stages of construction had already occupied twenty years. By connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, it converted Africa into the vastest of the island continents. In prolonging its entire length 100 miles, over 80,000,000 cubic yards of earth and rock had been removed. On it had been expended about $95,000,000. The only share of Turkey in the achievement was found in the fact that Ismaïl Pasha, viceroy of Egypt and the earnest promoter of the enterprise, was a vassal of the Sultan. At the formal opening almost all the maritime nations were represented by warships, which passed through the canal in an imposing and memorable procession. The occasion was honored by the presence of European sovereigns, among them Empress Eugénie and the emperor of Austria-Hungary.

Foreign Loans and Bankruptcy. — In 1854, during the exigencies of the Crimean War, the government obtained a foreign loan of £5,000,000. The next year it borrowed a like amount. Almost to its surprise it found foreign capitalists not only willing but desirous to advance their money in return for its promise to pay. With that thoughtlessness of the morrow which characterizes the Ottoman, it was of all others the easiest and most agreeable way to obtain a revenue. By March, 1865, the entire public debt amounted to about £36,700,000.

Within the next ten years the total of foreign indebtedness had grown to nearly if not quite £230,000,000. That is, it had increased in the proportion of about £20,000,000 a year! To show for it there were only a few elegant but

useless edifices here and there and a fleet of equally useless ironclads, always anchored in a majestic semi-circle along the Bosphorus in front of the palace of the Sultan, not for his protection but for his amusement. It is impossible to describe the levity with which those enormous sums had been squandered. When the daughter of Sultan Abd-ul Medjid was married to Ali Galib Pasha, over $7,000,000 were expended on the trousseau of the bride.

The day of reckoning came in less than a quarter of a century after that first loan of 1854. Up to 1875 the interest had always been promptly paid, even if a new loan was necessary to obtain the funds. At last even the interest could no longer be provided for. On October 6, 1875, the grand vizir, Mahmoud Nedim Pasha, announced that the state was bankrupt. He considered himself in no small degree justified for partial repudiation by the fact that the nominal sums had by no means been received, the later loans especially being effected at ruinous rates, and that the interest already paid on certain loans was larger than the original amount.

Death of Sultan Abd-ul Aziz. — The troubles in Herzegovina (1875), the massacres in Bulgaria (1875), and the war with Montenegro and Servia (1876–1877) make the last years in the reign of Sultan Abd-ul Aziz to be long remembered. Ali Pasha, Fuad Pasha, General Omar Pasha, all his tried statesmen and supporters, were dead. The grand vizir, Mahmoud Nedim Pasha, was the creature of General Ignatieff, the Russian ambassador. The empire was in a condition hardly better than anarchy from one end to the other. The long patience, even of the Mussulmans, was exhausted. The softas or theological students terrified the Sultan into the appointment of ministers of their choice. A few days later the Sheik-ul-Islam gave a fetva approving his deposition. Midhat Pasha, an energetic man whose government of several provinces had been signalized by violent reforms, headed a conspiracy. The Sultan was quietly dethroned (May 24, 1876). A few days later he was found dead. The court physicians declared he had committed suicide.

He visited the International Exposition at Paris in 1867, being the only Ottoman sovereign who in peaceful fashion had set foot in a foreign country. But he learned nothing in his travels and brought back only added aversion

to Western ways. His one success was in humbling the viceroy of Egypt, his vassal, on whom he had previously bestowed the almost regal title of khedive. He compelled him to reduce his army, surrender his ironclads and abstain from exercising the attributes of sovereignty. It had been his lifelong ambition to assure the succession to his son, Yusuf Izeddin, thus setting aside the Ottoman custom, which vests the inheritance in the oldest member of a dynasty and not in direct descent. By his deposition all his careful plans were brought to naught. His nephew, Sultan Mourad V, was at once proclaimed. The excitement caused by the tragic death of his uncle and by the assassination of some of his ministers at a cabinet meeting unsettled his reason. He was removed by the sultan-maker, Midhat Pasha, and his brother, Sultan Abd-ul Hamid II, reigned in his stead.

The Reign of Sultan Abd-ul Hamid II (1876–1898). — No other Sultan in the Mosque of Eyoub ever girded on the sword of Osman — the Turkish equivalent of coronation — in national conditions so appalling.

Rebellion was rampant in Bosnia and Herzegovina and imminent in Arabia. Montenegro and Servia had declared war and the Turks believed that Europe, and certainly Russia, were about to do the same. The horrors of Bulgarian massacres had shocked and for a time alienated the empire's most persistent friends. The civil and military service was everywhere in utter confusion. The prodigality of preceding reigns had impoverished the people and brought on bankruptcy, which made further foreign loans impossible. There was no money to pay the troops. The ironclads could not move for lack of coal. The young Turkey party, composed largely of Moslems who had lived abroad, not numerous but noisy, demanded thorough renovation of the empire. The vast majority of the Mussulmans, as bigoted as they were ignorant, denounced even the pretence of reform. To them Sultan Mahmoud and Sultan Abd-ul Medjid were little better than giaours. In their judgment the abandonment by recent Sultans of the principles and practice of early days was wholly responsible for national decline. Their fierce fanaticism was as dangerous as foreign attack. Partisans of the dead Abd-ul Aziz were plotting to enthrone his son, Yusuf Izeddin. Partisans of the crazy Mourad were plotting his restoration. Midhat had deposed two sultans. Two dethronements in four months had made the idea of

revolution grimly familiar. What Midhat Pasha had done twice he was capable of doing again. When Abd-ul Hamid ascended the throne in 1876 it was a common belief that he would not occupy it a year.

In December the formal conference of ambassadors opened at Constantinople. The Ottomans were not allowed representation at the sessions. The very day the delegates assembled salvos of artillery hailed the proclamation of a Constitution by the Sultan. This Constitution was most comprehensive and liberal. It was based upon the equality of all men and the sanctity of individual rights. It introduced the representative system. There was to be a senate, named for life by the Sultan, and a chamber of deputies, holding office for four years. The system of election was by universal suffrage and ballot. There was to be one deputy for every 50,000 Ottoman "citizens."

The Turks met the memorandum containing the definite propositions of the conference by counter propositions and pointed as a guarantee to their newly granted Constitution. "Few countries enjoy such a constitution as ours," said Midhat Pasha gravely to the ambassadors. The success of Turkish diplomacy during this century has been due to a simple and invariable policy. In any emergency by specious promises it has sought to gain time, and the time thus gained it has utilized in playing off the Powers against one another. The conference formulated an ultimatum. Midhat Pasha submitted this ultimatum to a national assembly of 180 Mussulman and sixty Christian notables. Only the one delegate, the head of the native Protestant community, dared vote for its acceptance. The other notables declared that it was contrary to the Ottoman Constitution and must hence be refused. Then the ambassadors quitted Constantinople, but dissensions had arisen among them and they were not in harmony as to the ultimatum they had proposed. The Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878 and its consequences are described in the chapter on Russia.

The conclusion of the war did not bring internal peace to the broken empire. Soon the Albanians rebelled and murdered Mehemet Ali Pasha, who had been sent to make amicable arrangements with them (1881). The Arabs, who had always looked down on their Turkish masters and lost no opportunity to weaken their authority, gave constant trouble and were subdued at great cost. For a moment, on

the occupation of Egypt by the British (1882), the Sultan was on the point of declaring war against Great Britain, but more prudent counsels prevailed. The Armenian massacres of 1894–1896, rivalling the atrocities of the time of the Greek revolution and exceeding in horror the massacres in Syria and Bulgaria, roused the indignation of the civilized world. But this time no foreign nation was ready to do more than exchange diplomatic notes and employ diplomatic pressure. The promises of 1868 to Crete were habitually ignored. The Cretan insurrections of 1877, 1885, 1887 and 1889 were succeeded by what seemed a life-and-death struggle in 1895 and 1896. Again the government promised reforms, forwarded a specious programme and appointed a Christian governor. The Cretans despised pledges which had been violated so often and demanded annexation to Greece. The Greek government sent Prince George with a torpedo flotilla and Colonel Vassos with 1500 troops to the assistance of their brethren (February, 1897). Now a real concert of Europe was brought about, not to restrain despotism, but to crush men fighting for liberty. The ironclads of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Russia blockaded Crete, landed a force of 3600 men and bombarded the insurgents who had gained control of almost the whole island. The war of 1897 between Greece and Turkey was the result.

At first Sultan Abd-ul Hamid II was only a phantom upon the throne. Were he really to reign, it was necessary to break the virtual dictatorship of Midhat Pasha, who was a tool of Great Britain as Mahmoud Nedim Pasha had been of Russia. Reports, skilfully put in circulation, and the arrogant bearing of the Pasha, sapped his popularity. Suddenly arrested at midnight (February, 1877) he was obliged to give up the seals of office and go at once into exile. Later on he was recalled and made governor of Smyrna. Accused of the murder of Sultan Abd-ul Aziz, he was tried and convicted. The sentence of death was remitted and he was banished to Arabia, where he died. All the men who had conspired against Sultan Abd-ul Aziz and Sultan Mourad V and all the prominent partisans of those sovereigns were gradually stripped of power. The Sultan took the entire administration upon himself. By a revolution, as silent as it was slow and effectual, all real authority was removed from the grand vizier and centred in

his own hands. The palace superseded the Porte. The cabinet officers became hardly more than the Sultan's secretaries, the two essentials for their continuance in office being ability and subservience. Professing no admiration for European institutions, he emphasized his headship of the Moslems as their caliph. The most personal of personal governments ruled and still rules at Yildiz Kiosk. But inherent in it are all the radical and fatal evils of absolutism.

"Laborious but ill-informed," the Sultan, though shutting himself in Oriental seclusion, has been successful in controlling or outwitting the foreign ambassadors who were in the habit of domineering over his predecessors. For a few years he seemed to incline to France; then to Great Britain during the days when Lord Dufferin and Sir William White were British ambassadors; since 1891 to Russia. The example of frugality and economy, set by the Sultan, is in marked contrast to all past Ottoman history. Reorganized by German officers, the efficiency of the army has been greatly increased. The Ottoman Empire is to-day stronger and more formidable, despite its loss of territory, than it has been at any time since the battle of Navarino, seventy-one years ago. But the Ottoman parliament ended its brief existence with its second session (1880) and there is little discussion of "reforms."

XII

THE BALKAN STATES

(1848–1898)

The Five States, Roumania, Montenegro, Servia, Bulgaria, Greece. — These have all been carved during the present century out of the Ottoman Empire. Montenegro indeed always asserted her independence, but was none the less reckoned a subject territory by the Sultan. Greece achieved national existence by the revolution which began in 1821 and lasted seven years. In 1848 the three other states were in different stages of subjection. Bulgaria was hardly more than a tradition. Her boundaries had been blotted out and her people utterly reduced when she was added to other Ottoman conquests in the fourteenth century. Servia was an autonomous province, with a native prince, but paying tribute and kept in check by Turkish garrisons. Roumania is the present name of what was then the two provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, including all the Turkish possessions north of the Danube. All five were adherents of the Eastern Orthodox, or Greek Church, but were of different races. The Roumanians were the mixed descendants of Dacians and Romans, the Greeks were Hellenic, and the Montenegrins, Servians and Bulgarians were Slavs. Thus there were three ethnic layers, the northern or Latin, the central or Slavic, and the southern or Greek. Though partakers in the common distress, brought on by the civil and religious despotism under which they lived, they looked on one another with jealousy and aversion rather than sympathy and kindly feeling.

Roumania. — Moldavia and Wallachia, in 1848, were both under the tyrannical rule of hospodars, appointed by the Sultan. The shock of the French Revolution reached even the Black Sea. Both the provinces rose and drove out their governors. The Turks marched in from the south to put down the rebellion, whereupon the Russians entered from