

CHAPTER IV.

OTTOMAN PROMISES AND THEIR FULFILLMENT.

IMPERIAL edicts of toleration, and promises of reform on the part of the Sublime Porte, have been very numerous, and have served Turkey well as political expedients. Their value is that of so much dust thrown in the eyes of Europe when her aid or her mercy was needful. As these reforms have all been promised under pressure, they have likewise been abandoned just so fast and so far as the pressure has been removed. In many cases there has been serious retrogression. The sow that is washed is forever returning to wallow in the mire. It is as true of the "Sick Man" as of him out of whom seven devils were cast, that the last state of that man is worse than the first. This is emphatically so in regard to the freedom of the press, the curtailment of religious and educational privileges, and the safety of the lives and property of Christians.

The following is a partial list of Turkish promises which have been broken in whole or in part, with the circumstances under which they were made.

1. In 1829, by the Treaty of Adrianople at the close of a war with Russia, Turkey promised to re-

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form in her treatment of Orthodox Christians, and acknowledged Russia's right to interfere in their behalf.¹

2. In 1839 Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid, in order to enlist European sympathy and aid—when the victorious Egyptian army under Ibrahim Pasha was threatening Constantinople—issued an Imperial rescript, the Hatti Sherif, in which he promised to protect the life, honor, and property of all his subjects irrespective of race or religion.

3. In 1844 the same Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid gave a solemn pledge that thenceforth no apostate from Mohammedanism *who had formerly been a Christian* should be put to death. This pledge was extorted from the Sultan by the Ambassador of Great Britain, supported by those of other Powers, after the public execution in Constantinople of a young Armenian, Ovagim, who had declared himself a Mohammedan, but who afterwards bravely maintained his Christian profession in the face of torture and death. Since that time many Moslems even have embraced Christianity, and have been put out of the way, quietly in most cases.

4. In 1850 the same Sultan, on the demand of the same Powers, in view of the continued and fierce persecution of the Protestant subjects of the Porte, granted the latter a charter, guaranteeing them liberty of conscience and all the rights as a distinct civil community, which had been enjoyed by the other Christian communities of the empire. But to this day the numerous Protestants of Stamboul have

¹ Morfill's *Russia*, p. 287. Putnam,

never been allowed to erect even *one church*, although they have owned a site and had the necessary funds, and been petitioning for a firman to build for fifteen years.¹ The Greek Protestants of Ordoo, who have a church, are not allowed to worship in it. There are many other flagrant violations of this charter.

5. In 1856, after the Crimean War, Sultan Abd-ul-Medjid, to anticipate demands which he knew would be included in the Treaty of Paris then being drawn up, issued the Imperial edict known as the Hatti Humayoun. This edict not only promised perfect equality of civil rights to all subjects of the Porte, but also added: "As all forms of religion are and shall be freely professed in my dominions, no subject of my empire shall be hindered in the exercise of the religion that he professes, nor shall he in any way be annoyed on this account." But as the interpretation and enforcement of this edict has remained absolutely in the hands of the Turkish Government, it is needless to add that it has been a dead letter.²

6. In 1878 the Anglo-Turkish Convention, entered into just before the Treaty of Berlin, included these

¹ Rev. H. O. Dwight, *The Independent*, New York, January 17, 1895.

² At the time of the Crimean War Lord Aberdeen said:

"Notwithstanding the favorable opinion entertained by many, it is difficult to believe in the improvement of the Turks. It is true that, under the pressure of the moment, benevolent decrees may be issued; but these, except under the eye of some Foreign Minister, are entirely neglected. Their whole system is radically vicious and inhuman. I do not refer to fables which may be invented at St. Petersburg or Vienna, but to numerous despatches of Lord Stratford (de Radcliffe) himself, and of our own consuls, who describe a frightful picture of lawless oppression and cruelty." (Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, vol. ii., p. 528.) Quoted by Canon MacColl, *The Contemporary Review*, January, 1895.

words in its First Article: "His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan, promises to England to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the government and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories [Armenia]; and in order to enable England to make necessary provision for executing her engagement [the keeping of Russia out of Armenia], His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan, further consents to assign the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England." Comment unnecessary.

7. In July, 1878, by the Treaty of Berlin, religious liberty and the public exercise of all forms of religion were guaranteed in separate articles to the people of Bulgaria, Eastern Roumelia, Montenegro, Servia, Roumania, and finally to all subjects of the Porte in every part of the Ottoman Empire. Cases of glaring violation of the principle of religious liberty may be found in Appendix C. on *The Censorship of the Press*.

The Sixty-first Article of the same treaty reads thus: "The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds. It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application."

What the condition of Turkey was three years later, not simply in Armenia, but throughout Asia Minor, is shown by a report of Mr. Wilson, British Consul-General in Anatolia.

"There has probably never been a time in which

the prestige of the Courts has fallen so low, or in which the administration of justice has been so venal and corrupt. The most open and shameless bribery is practised from highest to lowest; prompt, even-handed justice for rich and poor alike is unknown; sentence is given in favor of the suitor who 'places' his money most judiciously; imprisonment or freedom has in many places become a matter of bribery; robbers, when arrested, are protected by members of the Court, who share their spoil; a simple order may send an innocent man to prison for months; crime goes unpunished, and all manner of oppression and injustice is committed with impunity. The Cadis,¹ especially those in the cazas,² are, as a rule, ignorant men, with no education, knowing little of law, except the Sheri, on which they base their decisions, and sometimes not overmuch of that. As to the members, it is sufficient to say that they are nearly all equally ignorant of law, and that probably not twenty-five per cent. of them can write Turkish, or read the sentences to which they attach their seals. In the Commercial Courts, the Presidents are frequently entirely ignorant of the duties which they have to perform. The low pay of the Cadis, the short term—two years—during which they hold their appointments, and the manner in which they obtain them, render the receipt of bribes almost a necessity. The first thought of a Cadi who buys an appointment in the provinces is to recoup himself for his outlay; the second, to obtain enough money to purchase a new place when his term of office is finished. Even under this system men are to be found who refuse

¹ Judge.² Local districts.

to receive bribes; and there are others who, whilst giving way to temptation, deplore the necessity to do so."¹

The sequel to the Treaty of Berlin is found in the next chapter.

The non-fulfilment of Ottoman promises in regard to Christian subjects, and the frequent massacres of the latter are an exact fulfilment of

THE OFFICIAL PRAYER OF ISLAM

which is used throughout Turkey, and daily repeated in the Cairo "Azhar" University by ten thousand Mohammedan students from all lands. The following translation is from the Arabic:

"I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, [the *rejeem*] the accursed. In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful! O Lord of all Creatures! O Allah! Destroy the infidels and polytheists, thine enemies, the enemies of the religion! O Allah! Make their children orphans, and defile their abodes! Cause their feet to slip; give them and their families, their households and their women, their children and their relations by marriage, their brothers and their friends, their possessions and their race, their wealth and their lands, as booty to the Moslems, O Lord of all Creatures!"²

All who do not accept Mohammed are included among "the infidels" referred to in the prayer.

¹ Report of Mr. Wilson, *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 8 (1881), page 57, No. 48.² *The Mohammedan Missionary Problem*, p. 31. Jessup. Philadelphia, Presb. Pub. Soc.

CHAPTER V.

THE OUTCOME OF THE TREATY OF BERLIN.

IT is quite needless to remark that Turkey, instead of doing anything to improve the condition of the Armenians, has done much to make it worse during the past fifteen years. The question now arises, what have the Powers signatory to the Berlin Treaty done to compel the Sublime Porte "to carry out the improvements and reforms" demanded in the Sixty-first Article? And what steps has Great Britain taken in addition, to discharge the additional obligation for the improvement of Armenia which she assumed by the so-called Cyprus Convention?

We find that in November, 1879, the English Government, seeing that matters throughout Asia Minor were really going from bad to worse, went the length of ordering an English squadron to the Archipelago for the purpose of a naval demonstration. The Turkish Government was greatly excited, and with a view to getting the order countermanded, made the fairest promises.

But England was not the only Power aroused. On June 11, 1880, an Identical Note of the Great Powers demanded the execution of the clauses of

The Outcome of the Treaty of Berlin. 77

the Treaty of Berlin which had remained in suspense. In the conclusion of the Identical Note a clear recognition is made of the fact that *the interest of Europe, as well as that of the Ottoman Empire, requires the execution of the Sixty-first Article of the Treaty of Berlin, and that the joint and incessant action of the Powers can alone bring about this result.*

On July 5th, the Turkish Foreign Minister sent a Note in reply to the representatives of the Powers. "It is of great length and small real value, except as combining in a remarkable degree the distinguishing characteristics of modern Ottoman diplomacy, namely, first, great facility in assimilating the administrative and constitutional jargon of civilized countries; second, consummate cunning in concealing under deceptive appearances the barbarous reality of deeds and intentions; third, cool audacity in making promises which there is neither the power nor desire to make good; and, finally, a paternal and oily tone, intended to create the impression that the Turkish Government is the victim of unjust prejudices and odious calumnies."

As soon as the reply of the Porte was received, Earl Granville sent copies to the British Consuls in Asia Minor, inviting observations thereon. Eight detailed replies to this request are published in the Blue-Book.¹ They concur in a crushing condemnation of the Ottoman Government.

These conclusions, moderately and very diffusely expressed in diplomatic phraseology, are reflected in

¹ *Blue-Book*, Turkey, No. 6, 1881, reports of Wilson, Bennett, Chermiside, Trotter, Stewart, Clayton, Everett, and Bilotti.

the Collective Note which was sent on Sept. 11, 1880, to the Sublime Porte by the Ambassadors of the Great Powers. On October 3d, without making the slightest references to censures which had been addressed to it, and even appearing completely to ignore the Collective Note, the Porte, assuming a haughty tone, merely notified the Powers of what it intended to do.

In a Circular of the 12th of January, 1881, Earl Granville tried again to induce the other five Powers to join in further representations to the Sublime Porte on the subject. But the other Powers seem to have thought that the diplomatic comedy had gone far enough, and sent evasive answers. Prince Bismarck expressed the opinion that there would be "serious inconvenience" in raising the Armenian question, and France hid behind Germany. Such action by the powers had been anticipated by the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Mr. Goschen, who had already written to Earl Granville: "If they [the Powers] refuse, or give only lukewarm support, the responsibility will not lie with Her Majesty's Government." The whole correspondence was simply a matter of form.¹ I have condensed this outline of events since the Treaty of Berlin from *Armenia, the Armenians, and the Treaties*,² following as far as possible the words of the writer, M. G. Rolin-Jacquemyns, a high authority on International Law.

From 1881 to the present time, almost without exception, England, on her part, has allowed

¹ *Blue-Book*, Turkey, 1881, p. 242.

² Published by John Heywood, London, 1891, pp. 82-89.

no mention in her Blue-Books of the manner in which her *protégés* and those of Europe have been treated. Her energies have seemed to be devoted to stifling the ever-increasing cry of despair from Armenia, instead of attempting her rescue or relief. The other Powers are only less guilty, in proportion as they have done less to perpetuate Ottoman misrule, and have made less pretence of sympathy and help for the oppressed. Freeman says of England,

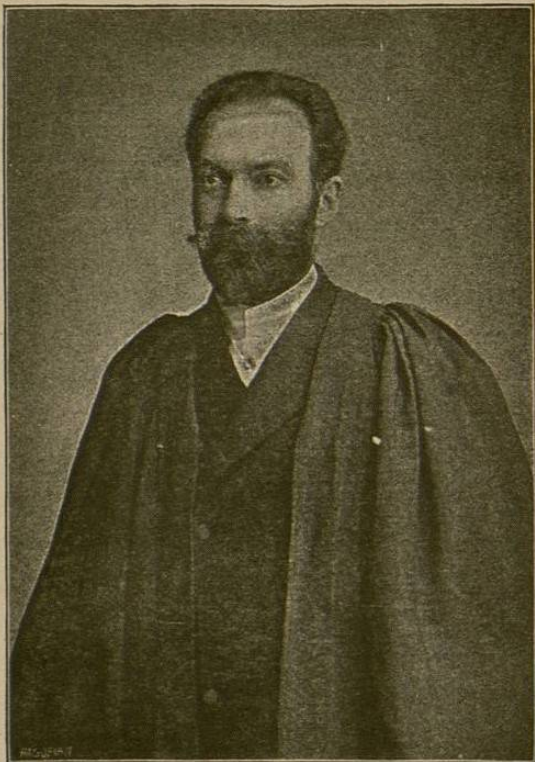
"By waging a war on behalf of the Turk, by signing a treaty which left the nations of South-eastern Europe [and Asia Minor] at the mercy of the Turk, by propping up the wicked power of the Turk in many ways, we have done a great wrong to the nations which are under his yoke; and that wrong which we have ourselves done it is our duty to undo."¹

It is thus clearly seen that both the Sixty-first Article of the Berlin Treaty, and the Cyprus Convention as well, have been of positively no value in securing for the Armenians any of the reforms which were therein recognized as imperatively called for and guaranteed. It is also clear that the condition of Armenia, and of Turkey as a whole, is even vastly worse and more hopeless than it was twenty years ago.

This condition, I further maintain, is in large measure directly attributable to those treaties themselves and to the attitude subsequently assumed by the Powers which signed them. It is said that the Armenians have brought trouble on themselves, by stirring up the Turks. I ask what stirred the Armenians up? It was primarily the Sixty-first Article

¹ Freeman, *The Turks in Europe*.

of the Treaty of Berlin. Many a time has that precious paragraph been quoted to me in the wilds of Kurdistan by common Armenian artisans and



PROFESSOR MINAS TCHÉRAZ.
Present at the Berlin Congress.

ignorant villagers. They had welcomed it as a second evangel, and believed the word of England as they did the gospels. *It was that Article which*

roused them from the torpor of centuries. They saw Bulgaria rise from her blood and shame and enter on a career of honor and prosperity under the ægis of European protection. Is it surprising that hopes and aspirations have been born anew in the heart of the Armenian race—a people not inferior to the Bulgarians and in many respects more talented?

I have rarely found it difficult to persuade intelligent Armenians that an autonomous Armenia is impracticable. But I have never been able to convince one of them that the course of England and the other powers has been anything but one of selfishness, jealousy, and dishonor as far as fulfilment of their treaty obligations is concerned.

During a residence of four years in Eastern Turkey I noticed a marked and rapid alienation of Armenian sentiment from England in favor of Russia, who now seems to them the only source of succor. *They see in England only a dog in the manger.*

There is another sequel to the Berlin Treaty and to the attitude of the powers, namely, its effect on the Turks themselves. The natural enmity and contempt of the Moslem rulers and population generally for the Christian subjects has been greatly increased by reason of the pressure which foreign Powers have occasionally brought to bear on the Turks in order to procure relief for the Christian. To be sure the only hope of such relief is from without. But the pressure should not be of a petty, nagging and galling nature. This is worse than nothing. *What is needed is prompt, decisive, and final action.*

And things have now arrived at such a pass that in such action lies the only hope of preventing a terrible catastrophe, which will eclipse even the massacres of Sassoun. The wheels of progress will not go backward except as they are broken. The Christians of Armenia can be exterminated, but it is too late for them to accept slavery or Islam. They may be slaughtered like sheep, but they will not all die like dogs. The revolutionary movement, as it is called, is thus far nothing but a blind turning of the worm. It is ill considered, without resources, reckless, and foreign to the real spirit, objects, and methods of the Armenians on Turkish soil. It is not denied that there are a few Armenians in Europe who, in despair and for lack of better teaching, have imbibed Nihilistic views and are trying, in a very bungling way, to apply them. They are hated by the vast majority of Armenians in Turkey. They are related to the question at issue in the same way and degree as train wreckers and box-car burners were to the industrial problem during the riots of Chicago in July last, and deserve the same treatment. The Turks take great pains to thrust them into public notice, as a cloak for themselves, and with good success. The Turkish Government and its partisans, in order to conceal the real character of the massacre in Sassoun, have made persistent, extensive, and dishonorable use of a letter by the first President of Robert College, Constantinople, Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, written December 23, 1894. Dr. Hamlin's vigorous and indignant protest may be found in Appendix C.

The idea of Armenian revolution is a new thing

in the history of that peaceable race, which has quietly submitted for centuries to the yoke of the Turk. But it is the natural outcome of the horrible situation in Armenia since the Treaty of Berlin, and the disease is bound to grow more virulent and contagious until the European doctors apply vigorous and radical treatment to the "Sick Man." It is difficult to see how anything but a surgical operation can be helpful. The knife has frequently been used in the case of this incurable patient during the present century, and always with excellent results, as for instance in the case of Greece, Lebanon, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Egypt.



ZEIBEK, TURKISH SOLDIER,
"IRREGULAR."

A situation in many respects parallel to that in Armenia existed until lately in Bosnia and Herzegovina. How quickly and completely that difficult problem has been solved, is narrated by M. de Blowitz in the October,

1894, issue of *The Nineteenth Century*, from which I condense in his own words.

"The orders, given after the taking over of the country, to surrender all arms or to destroy them, was given a sweeping application. Yet, before the victorious entry of the Austro-Hungarians, each Bosnian each Herzegovinian, was a walking arsenal.

"To-day weapons and ambushes are things of the romantic past. Twelve years have sufficed, under M. de Kallay's administration, not only to remove all traces of the wild, inhospitable, inaccessible Bosnia of which I have been speaking, but indeed and especially to banish even the memory of those dark days of strenuous battle, and to wipe away from the hearts of both invader and invaded all traces of the hate which then animated them. In the year 1882, the superior administration of the two provinces (Bosnia and Herzegovina) passed into the hands of the Minister of Finance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who was then, and who is still, M. de Kallay. From this moment all is changed. The powers given to the new administration are almost unlimited. The civil element has been substituted for the military element, and pacification has succeeded conquest. The greatest effort is made to reassure all minds. Not a single minaret has disappeared, not a *muezzin* is deprived of his resources."

A recent writer wisely says that "the Armenian question, if it ever be settled at all, must be taken out of the Turk's hands, whether he like it or not. . . . And we have an opportunity now, which may never come our way again, of settling a diffi-

culty which, if allowed to develop much longer, will prove more fruitful of mischief than any with which we have been confronted for a generation or more."¹

C. B. Norman, special correspondent of *The London Times*, in his *Armenia and the Campaign of 1877*² wrote words which are even truer to-day. I condense:

"Naturally, since I have been here I have had many, very many, opportunities of conversing with Turkish officers and men on the so-called Eastern Question; and the consequence is that, arriving in the country a strong philo-Turk, deeply impressed with the necessity of preserving the 'integrity of the Empire' in order to uphold 'British interests,' I now fain would cry with Mr. Freeman: 'Perish, British interests, perish our dominion in India, rather than that we should strike a blow on behalf of the wrong against the right!'"

"There is no finer race in the world than the Turk



TURKISH SOLDIER,
"REGULAR."

¹ "Diplomatist," "The Armenian Question" in *The New Review*, January, 1895.

² Pp. 158-9. London: Cassell, Petter, & Galpin.

³ Speech in St. James's Hall, December, 1876.

proper. Brave, honest, industrious, truthful, frugal, kind-hearted, and hospitable, all who *know* the Osmanli speak well of him. He is as much oppressed by the curse of misgovernment as his Christian fellow-subject; and had the members of the Eastern Question Association as keen a sense of justice as they have love of writing, they would long ago have obliterated the word 'Christian' from their lengthy documents, and striven to ameliorate the condition of the lower orders of the subjects of the Porte, down-trodden as they are by an effete section of the Mohammedan race, who have degenerated in mind, body, and estate, since coming in contact with Western civilization.

"I do not for one moment mean to deny that there are honest, energetic Turks, capable of exercising their talents for their country's good; but these men are powerless. The vital powers of the nation are so sapped by centuries of misrule, the minds of the majority are so imbued with the belief that all ideas not born of Moslem brains and sanctified by Moslem usage are false, and to be scorned, that were any honest-minded gentleman to rise to power, and endeavor to check the present system of misgovernment, he would not remain in office one week. Captain Gambier's able article on the 'Life of Midhat Pasha'¹ bears me out in this idea."

¹ *The Nineteenth Century*, January, 1878.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SULTAN AND THE SUBLIME PORTE.

CHURCH and State are one and inseparable in Turkey. The Sultan of the empire is also Calif of the Mohammedan religious world. He cannot abdicate either office, if he would, without vacating the other by the same act. In fact, herein lies the secret of the present Sultan's policy, which seems suicidal on general principles of government. He has, on the one hand, been lavish in the building and repairing of mosques, and in establishing Moslem schools throughout his dominions. On the other hand, he has infringed and ignored the ancient rights and privileges of the Christian Patriarchates which were guaranteed by Mohammed II., and have hitherto been regarded as sacred. He has blocked the erection of new Christian schools and churches, and even the repairing of such as are falling into decay. There were formerly thousands of non-Moslems in civil positions, faithfully serving the government; under the new régime, however, they have been systematically removed and excluded. And why has all this been done? Because the Sultan is a good conscientious Mohammedan, it is only fair to believe. Even if he were not a sincere believer, he