

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

would still feel compelled to adopt the same course, as a matter of internal political necessity. The Moslem population look to him as the Defender of the Faith, girded with the sword of the Prophet. He feels it imperative at all hazards to regain lost prestige over his fanatical subjects, especially in the south, where rumblings of discontent and disloyalty are ominous.¹

Let us be reasonable and practical. Why longer exact or accept from the Sultan promises which he cannot make without doing violence to his own conscience and to his office, and which he cannot execute without imperilling his throne? You might as well ask the Pope to abandon the doctrines of temporal sovereignty and of infallibility, which to him are fundamental. If the situation in Turkey demands that anything be done, and if the rest of humanity and civilization have any responsibility in the matter, let practical statesmen proceed to business. All hope of reform from within depends on

¹ From a descendant of Dahir Billah, the thirty-fifth caliph of Bagdad, Sultan Selim I. "procured the cession of his claims, and obtained the right to deem himself the shadow of God upon earth. Since then the Ottoman padishah has been held to inherit the rights of Omar and Haroun, and to be the legitimate commander of the faithful, and, as such, possessed of plenary temporal and spiritual authority over the followers of Mohammed."² The Persians and Moors, however, reject this claim, and at the close of the Russian War not a few of the Arab muftis declared that the caliphate had been forfeited by the inglorious defeat of the Turks, and should now return to the Arab family of Koreish.

² Freeman, *The Saracens*, p. 158. Quoted by Jessup, *The Mohammedan Missionary Problem*, p. 21. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1879.

the distrustful, distracted, hoodwinked Sultan, who is clearly, in the circumstances, a helpless and pitiable object. But he should no more be allowed to stand in the way of the emancipation of Turkey, than the Pope was allowed to impede the making of Italy. "The Prisoner of the Vatican" has still abundant scope for his great and beneficent spiritual projects; and the Captive at Yildiz Palace—for such he has for years constituted himself—may also be allowed a sphere in which his personal virtues and ability shall shine forth, unobscured by the clouds and darkness that surround him now. He certainly would be better off, and his subjects also—Moslem no less than Christian.

The shrieks of ten thousand slaughtered Armenians pierce for the moment above the groans of others. But it should not be forgotten that all the races in Turkey are under the same curse, and that the present is a chance to help them as well as the Armenians.

According to the Koran, which is the basis and ultimate authority of Mohammedan law—Code Napoleon, treaty stipulations, and Imperial *Irads* notwithstanding,—the whole non-Moslem population of Turkey are outlaws. The millions of ancient, hereditary inhabitants, whether Greek, Armenian, Nestorian, Jacobite, Jew, or Syrian, are considered aliens. Their legal status is that of prisoners of war, with corresponding rights and responsibilities.¹ Not one of them is expected or even allowed to serve in the army. Non-Moslems, whose services are indis-

¹ Hughes, *Notes on Muhammadanism*, pp. 209, 210.

pensable to the government, are, in rare cases, put in civil offices, especially financial, for which no Mohammedan of sufficient integrity or ability can be found.

It cannot be denied that the above is true in theory, and it is equally true that the theory is carried out so far as fear of intervention by Christian nations permits.

But in this hour, when our hearts are stirred by the lot of our co-religionists under the Crescent, let us not forget that the Moslem population almost equally is cursed and impoverished by Turkish misrule, venality, and taxation. They drink the cup of woe, all but the more bitter dregs of religious persecution, which is reserved for Christian lips. Their benumbed condition, natural stolidity, and unquestioning obedience to Islam, a creed whose cardinal principle is submission,¹ accounts for the fact that they do not appear as a factor of the problem. Yet even Mohammedans often secretly come pleading that Europe take some interest in their case too. In the name of humanity, yes, of Christianity, let them not be forgotten.

"An Eastern Resident," writing from Constantinople, in an article entitled "Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid," in *The Contemporary Review*, January, 1895, gives an able analysis of the Sultan's position and policy, showing at the same time great appreciation of His Majesty as a man. His position and relations to the Sublime Porte are not well understood by the public, and could hardly be better stated than in these extracts:

¹ Hughes, *Notes on Muhammadanism*, p. 10.

"So far as we can judge, the Sultan is a sincere and honest Mohammedan, and regards himself as a



H. I. M. ABD-UL-HAMID KHAN, THE SULTAN OF TURKEY.

true Caliph—a successor of the Prophet—the chief defender of the faith, under God the absolute arbiter of its destinies. He has undoubtedly done his

best to reconcile the interests of the Caliphate with those of the Empire. . . .

“In one particular it [the policy of the Sultan] is condemned by most enlightened Mohammedans as strongly as by Christians. His attempt to concentrate the whole administration of the Empire in his own hands has led to the establishment of a dual government—that of the Palace and the Porte. The whole machinery of a government exists at the Porte. There are Ministers and fully organized departments. There is a Council of Ministers and a Council of State. All business is supposed to pass through their hands, and the whole administration is supposed to be subordinate to them. All is, of course, subject to the supreme will of the Sultan, but his official advisers and his official agents are at the Porte.

“In fact, however, there is another government at the Palace of Yildiz, more powerful than the official government, made up of chamberlains, mollahs, eunuchs, astrologers, and nondescripts, and supported by the secret police, which spares no one from the Grand Vizier down. The general policy of the Empire is determined by this government, and the most important questions of state are often treated and decided, while the highest officials of the Porte are left in absolute ignorance of what is going on. It is needless to add that the Porte and the Palace are at sword's-point, and block each other's movements as far as they can. . . .

“The Sultan evidently believes that he is equally independent of both these governments, and decides

all questions, great and small, for himself. In form he does so, but no man can act independently of all his sources of information, and of the personal influence of his *entourage*. Under the present system he makes himself responsible for every blunder and every iniquity committed in the Empire, but he has disgraced three distinguished Grand Viziers for telling him so, and seems to have no idea of the causes of the intense dissatisfaction with his government which prevails among his Mohammedan subjects. The Turks, as well as the Christians, also condemn the laws restricting personal freedom, which have increased in severity every year. In many ways these laws are more galling to the Turks than the Christians. . . .

“There is another evil connected with this system which may lead to serious difficulties with foreign Powers. All foreign relations are supposed to be managed through the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Grand Vizier, but these officials have no power and but little influence. They can promise nothing and do nothing. But in all delicate diplomatic questions it is essential to treat with responsible agents, and to discuss them with such agents in a way in which it is impossible to treat with the Sovereign himself. The present system has been a serious injury to Turkey. It has roused the hostility of all the Embassies and led them to feel and report to their governments, that there is no use in trying to do anything to save this Empire; that it is hopelessly corrupt, and the sooner it comes to an end the better for the world. There is no longer any concerted

action of Europe at Constantinople for the improvement of the condition of the people. . . .

"If Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid would come out of his palace, restore to the Porte its full responsibility, disband its secret police, trust his Mohammedan subjects, and do simple justice to the Christians, his life would be far more secure than it is to-day, with all precautions; his people and all the world would recognize the great and noble qualities which they now ignore, and welcome him as the wisest and best of all the Sultans. . . .

"The sad pity of it is that he will never do it. It is too late. The influence of the Palace favorites is too strong. He will appear in history not as the Sultan who saved the Empire, but as the one who might have saved it and did not."

CHAPTER VII.

PREVIOUS ACTS OF THE TURKISH TRAGEDY.

IN this chapter¹ I shall take no account of events that have taken place in legitimate warfare, where the slain were foreign enemies or rebellious subjects of the Sultan, resisting with arms in their hands after being ordered to submit. The "insurgents"—as the Porte has called them—in all these cases have consisted of men, women, children, and infants, and in each case, by a curious coincidence, have been non-Mohammedan.

In all of these massacres, Turkish military or civil officers presided and directed the bloody work, as will be seen by reference to the authorities mentioned. There have been many other massacres of less than ten thousand during the intervals, which, to use the language of Beder Khan in Mosul (see Layard's *Nineveh*), have confirmed the whole Turkish principle, that "the Armenians were becoming too numerous, and needed diminishing."

¹ Parts of this chapter are taken from an article, "Notes on the Armenian Massacre," in *The Independent*, New York, January 31, 1895, by a high authority, who is compelled to sign himself "A Student of Modern History."