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THE TURKISH EMPIRE, ITS GROWTH AND DECAY

George Eversley

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Содержание

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PREFACE

The favour with which, two years ago, my book on *The Partitions of Poland* was received by the public has induced me to devote the interval to a study of the history of another State which, in modern times, has almost disappeared from the map of Europe – namely Turkey.

The subject is one in which I have for many years past taken great interest. In the course of a long life, I have witnessed the greater part of the events which have resulted in the loss to that State of all its Christian provinces in Europe and all its Moslem provinces in Africa, leaving to it only its capital and a small part of Thrace in Europe, and its still wide possessions in Asia.

So long ago, also, as in 1855 and 1857, I spent some time at Constantinople and travelled in Bulgaria and Greece, and was able to appreciate the effects of Turkish rule. As a result, I gave a full support, in 1876, to Mr. Gladstone in his efforts to secure the independence of Bulgaria, and in 1879 was an active member of a committee, presided over by Lord Rosebery, which had for its

object the extension of the kingdom of Greece so as to include the provinces inhabited by Greeks still suffering under Turkish rule.

In 1887 and 1890 I again visited the East and travelled over the same ground as thirty years earlier, and was able to observe the immense improvements which had been effected in the provinces that had gained independence, and how little change had taken place at Constantinople.

In view of these experiences and of the further great changes portended in Turkey after the conclusion of the present great war, I have thought it may be of use to tell, in a compact and popular form, the story of the growth and decay of the Turkish Empire.

History may well be told at many different lengths and from different points of view. That of the Ottoman Empire, from the accession of Othman in 1288 to the treaty of Kainardji in 1774, which secured to Russia a virtual protectorate in favour of the Christian subjects of Turkey, has been told at its greatest length by the German professor, Von Hammer, in eighteen volumes. He is the only historian who has explored for this long period both Greek and Turkish annals.

The British historian, Knolles, writing in 1610, told the story of the growth of the Turkish Empire in two bulky folio volumes, much admired by two such different authorities as Dr. Johnson and Lord Byron. The work is based on a few only of the Greek annals. It is very discursive and imperfect, but it contains many most terse and striking passages. Gibbon, the historian of the

Roman Empire, and Sir Edwin Pears, in his most interesting book on the Destruction of the Greek Empire, have also relied on Greek authorities up to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, before which date there were no Turkish historians. Very recently, in 1916, Mr. Herbert Gibbons, of the Princeton University, published a very valuable work on the foundations of the Ottoman Empire, dealing with its first four great Sultans. He has again examined with very great care the numerous and conflicting early Greek authorities, and has thrown much new light on the subject.

Other historians of Turkey, writing in English and French, such as Creasy, Lane Poole, La Jonquière, and Halil Ganem (a Young Turk), have drawn their facts mainly from Von Hammer's great work. Their books are all of interest and value. But these writers, and especially Sir Edward Creasy, in his otherwise admirable *History of the Ottoman Empire*, written at the time of the Crimean War, to which I have been much indebted, took what would now be considered too favourable a view of Turkish rule in modern times, and were over sanguine, as events have shown, as to the maintenance and regeneration of the Empire. I have followed their example in basing my narrative mainly on Von Hammer's work, correcting it in some important respects from the other sources I have named, compressing it into much smaller compass than they have done, treating it from a somewhat different point of view, and bringing it down to the commencement of the present great war in 1914.

It would have been easier to tell the story at double the length, so as to include much other important and interesting matter, but, in such a case, the lesson to be drawn from it would have been obscured by the maze of detail. My book does not aim at a full history of the long period dealt with. I have proposed only to explain the process by which the Turkish Empire was aggregated by its first ten great Sultans, and has since been, in great part, dismembered under their twenty-five degenerate successors, and to assign causes for these two great historic movements.

I will only add that I commenced my recent studies under the impressions derived in part from some of the histories to which I have referred and with which I was familiar, and in part from the common tradition in Western Europe – dating probably from the time of the Crusaders – that the Turkish invasions and conquests in Europe were impelled by religious zeal and fervour and by the desire to spread Islam. I have ended them with the conviction that there was no missionary zeal whatever for Islam in the Turkish armies and their leaders who invaded Europe, and that their main incentive was the hope of plunder by the sack of cities, the sale of captives as slaves or for harems, and the confiscation of land and its distribution among soldiers as a reward for bravery. I have also concluded that the decay of the military spirit and the shrinkage of Empire was largely due to the absence of these motives and rewards when the Turks were on the defensive.

If I have expressed my views freely on this subject, and on the misrule of the Turks in modern times, I have endeavoured to

state the facts on which they are based with perfect fairness as between the Crescent and the Cross.

I have purposely refrained from expressing an opinion as to the future of Turkey, after the conclusion of the existing great war. The problems which will then have to be solved are of a different order to those of the past which have been dealt with in this book. The Turkish Empire, in the sense of the rule of an alien race over subject races, has practically ceased to exist in Europe. It survives in Asia and at its capital, Constantinople, under very different conditions.

With respect to the numerous works I have consulted for the latter part of my book, I desire specially to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Lane Poole's admirable *Life of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe*.

I have to thank Lord Bryce, Lord Fitzmaurice, and Sir Edwin Pears for their valuable suggestions, and Lady Byles and Mr. Laurence Chubb for their kind help.

E.
June 1, 1917.

PART I
THE GROWTH OF EMPIRE

I
OTHMAN
1288-1326

Towards the middle of the thirteenth century a small band or tribe of nomad Turks migrated from Khorassan, in Central Asia, into Asia Minor. They were part of a much larger body, variously estimated at from two to four thousand horsemen, who, with their families, had fled from their homes in Khorassan under Solyman Shah. They had been driven thence by an invading horde of Mongols from farther east. They hoped to find asylum in Asia Minor. They crossed into Armenia and spent some years in the neighbourhood of Erzerum, plundering the natives there. When the wave of Mongols had spent its force, they proposed to return to Khorassan. On reaching the Euphrates River Solyman, when trying, on horseback, to find a ford, was carried away by the current and drowned. This was reckoned as a bad omen by many of his followers. Two of his sons, with a majority of them, either returned to Central Asia or dispersed on the way there.

Two other sons, Ertoghrul and Dundar, with four hundred and twenty families, retraced their course, and after spending some time again near Erzerum, wandered westward into Asia Minor. They came into a country inhabited by a kindred race. Successive waves of Turks from the same district in Central Asia, in the course of the three previous centuries, had made their way into Asia Minor, and had taken forcible possession of the greater part of it. They formed there an Empire, known as that of the Seljukian Turks, with Konia, the ancient Iconium, as its capital. But this Empire, by the middle of the thirteenth century, was in a decadent condition. It was eventually broken up, in part, by assaults of a fresh swarm of invaders from Central Asia; and in part by internal civil strife, fomented by family disputes of succession.

When Ertoghrul's band appeared on the scene, Sultan Alaeddin ruled at Konia over what remained to him of the Seljukian State. Other remnants of it survived under independent Emirs at Karamania, Sarukhan, Mentsche, and numerous other smaller States. Between them they possessed nearly the whole of Asia Minor, with the exception of a few cities in its north-west, such as Brusa, Nicæa, and Nicomedia and the districts round them, and a belt of territory along the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, and the Hellespont, to which the Byzantine Emperors, formerly the owners of nearly the whole of Anatolia, were now reduced. Two small Christian States also still existed there – Trebizond, in the north-east, and Little Armenia, in Cilicia, in

the south-east. Though divided among many independent Emirs, the people of Asia Minor, with the exception of the Greeks and Armenians, were fairly welded together. The invading Turks had intermixed with the native population, imposing on them the Turkish language, and had themselves adopted the religion of Islam. Ertoghrul and his nomad tribe, before entering this country, were not Moslems, but they were not strangers in language. Whatever their religion, it was held lightly. They were converted to Islam after a short stay in the country and, as is often the case with neophytes, became ardent professors of their new faith.

The oft-told story of the first exploit of Ertoghrul and his four hundred and twenty horsemen, on coming into the country of the Seljuks, as handed down by tradition, though savouring somewhat of a myth, is as follows: They came unexpectedly upon a battle in which one side was much pressed. They knew nothing of the combatants. Ertoghrul spoke to his followers: "Friends, we come straight on a battle. We carry swords at our side. To flee like women and resume our journey is not manly. We must help one of the two. Shall we aid those who are winning or those who are losing?" Then they said unto him: "It will be difficult to aid the losers. Our people are weak in number and the victors are strong!" Ertoghrul replied: "This is not the speech of bold men. The manly part is to aid the vanquished." Thereupon the whole body of them fell upon the Mongols, who were the winning side, and drove them into flight. The side to which they brought aid

and victory proved to be that of Sultan Alaeddin of Konia. In return for this providential aid, Sultan Alaeddin made a grant of territory to Ertoghrul to be held as a fief under the Seljuks. It consisted of a district at Sugut, about sixty miles south-east of Brusa, and a part of the mountain range to the west of it.

Ertoghrul and his horsemen were a welcome support to Alaeddin's waning fortunes. In a later encounter with a small Byzantine force they came off victorious, and Alaeddin made a further addition to their territory on the borders of his own, over which he had a very nominal sovereignty. Thenceforth Ertoghrul lived an uneventful pastoral life as the head of his clan or tribe of Turks in the ceded territory, till his death in 1288, nearly fifty years from the date of his leaving Khorassan. His son, Othman, who was born at Sugut in 1258, was chosen by the clan to succeed him, and soon commenced a much more ambitious career than that of his father. When of the age of only sixteen he had fallen in love with the beautiful daughter of Sheik Idebali, a holy man of great repute in Karamania. It is evidence of the small account then held of Ertoghrul and his son that the Sheik did not think the marriage good enough for his daughter. It was only after a long and patient wooing by Othman, and as the result of a dream, which foretold a great future of empire for his progeny, that Idebali gave consent to the marriage.

There were no contemporary Turkish histories of the early Ottoman Sultans. It was not till many years after the capture of Constantinople in 1453 that Turkish historians wrote about

the birth of their State. They had to rely upon traditions, which must be accepted with much reserve. This, however, is certain, that Othman, in his thirty-eight years of leadership, increased his dominion from its very narrow limits at Sugut and Eski-Sheir to a territory extending thence northward to the Bosphorus and Black Sea, a distance of about a hundred and twenty miles by an average breadth of sixty miles, an area of about seven thousand square miles. There are no means of estimating its population. It was probably sparse, except on the coast of the Marmora and Black Sea. It included only one important city, Brusa, which was surrendered by its garrison and citizens shortly before the death of Othman in 1326, after being hemmed in and cut off from communication with Constantinople for many years. Considerable as these additions were, the nascent State could not even yet be considered as important in size. It was exceeded by several of the larger Turkish Emirates in Asia Minor, such as Karamania, Sarukhan, and others.

It is notable that Othman, from the outset of his career, devoted his efforts, not against the Turkish Moslem States lying to the south and west of him, but against the territory to the north in possession of the Byzantine Empire, or which had recently been more or less emancipated from it, and inhabited chiefly by Christians. It is to be inferred from this that the motive of Othman was partly a religious one, to extend Islam. This was not effected by any signal victories over the armies of the Greek Empire. There was only one recorded battle against any

army of the Emperor, that at Baphœon, near Nicomedia, where Othman, who by this time reckoned four thousand horsemen among his followers, defeated the inconsiderable body of two thousand Byzantine troops. In the following year, 1302, the Greek Emperor, Michael Palæologus, alarmed at the progress of Othman, crossed in person into Asia Minor at the head of a small army of mercenary Slavs. But he brought no money with him to pay his soldiers. They would not fight without pay. They dispersed, and Michael was obliged to return to his capital. This was his last attempt to defend his remaining territory in that district. He was hard pressed in other directions by other Turkish Emirs in Asia Minor, and in the first decade of the fourteenth century the Greek Empire lost all its possessions in the islands of the Ægean Sea.

The extensions of territory by Othman, during his long reign of thirty-eight years, were effected by a slow process of attrition, by capturing from time to time petty fortresses and castles and annexing the districts round them. He acted in this respect, in the earlier stages, as fief of the Seljuk State; but later, when that Empire came to an end, Othman declared his independence, and thenceforth his accretions of territory were on his own behalf. It would seem that, as these additions were made, their populations, or the greater part of them who were Christians, adopted Islam, not under compulsion – for there is no record of the massacre of captives or of the sale of them as slaves – but because they were abandoned by their natural protectors, the

Greeks of Constantinople. The important fact, clearly shown by Mr. Gibbons in his recent work, is that the new State thus created by Othman did not consist purely of Turks. It had a very large mixture of Greeks and Slavs, who were welded with Turks by the religion of Islam. They were, from an early period, very distinct from the people of other Turkish States. They called themselves Osmanlis. The term 'Turk' was used by them rather as a term of contempt for an inferior people, as compared with themselves. It was only in later years, when the other Turkish States of Asia Minor were incorporated in the Empire, that the term 'Turk' was applied to its people, in the first instance by outsiders, and eventually by themselves.

To Othman, therefore, is due the credit of this inception of a new State and a new and distinct people. He did not, however, assume the title of Sultan. He was simply an Emir, like so many other rulers of petty States in Asia Minor. He was not a great general. He had no opportunity of conducting a great campaign. He was a brave soldier and a sagacious leader, who inspired confidence and trust in his followers and subjects. He pursued with great persistency the policy of enlarging his domain. He was also a wise and capable administrator, and was assisted in this by his father-in-law, Idebali, who acted as his Vizier. He meted out equal justice to all his subjects, irrespective of race and religion. He was simple and unostentatious in his habits. There is no record of his having more than one wife or more than two sons. He did not amass wealth. He divided the loot of war

equally among his soldiers, setting apart a portion for the poor and orphans.

Othman had a vein of cruelty in his character, as had so many of his descendants, the Ottoman Sultans. When, on one occasion, he propounded to his war council a scheme of further aggression on his neighbours, his uncle, Dundar, a nonagenarian, who had been companion in arms to Ertoghrul, ventured to raise objection to the policy of further extension. Othman, instead of arguing the question with him, took up his cross-bow and shot his uncle dead on the spot, and in this way closured the discussion and put down, at the outset, opposition in the council.

Von Hammer, in relating this story, says: —

> This murder of the uncle marks with terror the commencement of the Ottoman dominion, as the brother's murder did that of Rome, only the former rests on better historical evidence. Idris (the Turkish historian), who, at the beginning of his work, declares that, passing over in silence all that is reprehensible, he will only hand down to posterity the glorious deeds of the royal race of Othman, relates, among the latter, the murder of Dundar. If then such a murderous slaughter of a relative be reckoned by the panegyrists of the Osmanlis among their praiseworthy acts, what are we to think of those which cannot be praised and of which their history therefore is silent?[1]

We must judge of Othman, however, not by the standard

[1] Von Hammer, i. p. 28 (French translation).

of the present time, but by that of his contemporaries. By that standard he was reckoned a humane and merciful sovereign. This view is expressed in the prayer which has been used in the religious ceremony, on the accession of every one of his successors to the throne, when he is girt with the double-edged sword of the founder of the Empire, "May he be as good as Othman."

In his old age, when Othman was incapable of taking the field himself, his son, Orchan, took his place as the leader of the army, and just before the death of Othman, Brusa surrendered to him. It was then, as now, one of the most important cities in Asia Minor.

When Othman was on his deathbed, after a reign of thirty-eight years, his son Orchan, in terms of affection and lamentation, addressed him: "Oh, Othman! Thou fountain of Emperors, Lord of the World, Thou conqueror and subduer of Nations." The dying king replied: —

> Lament not, oh my sons: delight! for this my last conflict is the lot of all human kind, common to young and old, who equally breathe the air of this malignant world. Whilst I now pass to immortality, live thou glorious, prosperous, and happy. Since I have thee for successor, I have no cause to grieve at my departure. I will give thee my last instructions, to which be attentive. Bury the cares of life in oblivion. I conjure thee, crowned with felicity, lean not to tyranny, nor so much as look towards cruelty. On the contrary, cultivate justice and thereby embellish the earth. Rejoice my departed soul with a beautiful series of victories, and

> when thou art become conqueror of the world, propagate religion by thy arms. Promote the learned to honour, so the divine law shall be established, and in what place soever thou hearest a learned man, let honour, magnificence, and clemency attend him. Glory not in thy armies, nor pride thyself in thy riches. Keep near thy person the learned in the law, and, as justice is the support of kingdoms, turn from everything repugnant thereto. The Divine law is our sole arm, and our progress is only in the paths of the Lord. Embark not in vain undertakings or fruitless contentions. For it is not our ambition to enjoy the empire of the world, but the propagation of the faith was my peculiar desire, which therefore it becomes thee to accomplish. Study to be impartially gracious to all, and take care to discharge the public duties of thy office, for a king not distinguished by goodness belies the name of a king. Let the protection of thy subjects be thy constant study, so shalt thou find favour and protection from God.[2]

It is probable that much of this was the invention of some historian, writing many years later. It may be taken, however, as a summary, based on tradition, of the principles which had actuated the dying chief during his long reign.

Othman died shortly after receiving the welcome news of the surrender of Brusa, and by his last wish was buried there. He was the progenitor of a royal race who, for nine more generations, continued the career of conquest which he inaugurated, till the

[2] Cantemir, p. 20.

Empire, in the middle of the sixteenth century, two hundred and seventy-eight years from the accession of Othman, under Solyman the Magnificent, the greatest of his race, reached its zenith. It was only after ten generations of great Sultans that the race seemed to be exhausted, and thenceforth, with rare exceptions, produced none but degenerates down to the present time.

II
ORCHAN
1326-59

Othman, on his deathbed, designated as his successor the younger of his two sons, Orchan, aged forty-two, who had been brought up as a soldier under his father's eye, and had shown capacity in many campaigns, and especially in that resulting in the surrender of Brusa. Alaeddin, the elder brother, was not a soldier. He had led a studious life, devoted to religion and law, both founded on the Koran, under the guidance of Idebali.

The Turkish historians agree in stating that Orchan was most unwilling to act on his father's wishes and take precedence over his elder brother, and that he proposed to divide the heritage of state between them, but that Alaeddin declined the offer. Orchan is then reported to have said: "Since, my brother, thou wilt not take the flocks and herds which I offer thee, be the shepherd of my people. Be my Vizier." Alaeddin agreed to this, and devoted himself to the administration of the growing State and to the organization of the army, under the rule of his brother.[3]

[3] Mr. Gibbons refuses credence to this interesting story on the ground mainly of its inherent improbability. His argument does not convince me. The succession of the younger brother to the Emirate without a fight for it, on the part of the elder one, was an event so remarkable, and so contrary to all experience in Ottoman history, as to make the explanation given a reasonable one. The probabilities seem to me to be all

Orchan followed closely the example of his father. He pursued the same method of slow, but sure and persistent, aggrandizement of his State. It will be seen that he succeeded in adding to it a territory nearly three times greater than that which he inherited. Two-thirds of this were in the north-west corner of Asia Minor, along the shore of the Marmora and the Dardanelles, and the remaining third in Europe, where he was the first to make a lodgment for the Ottomans. He made Brusa his capital, and there, after a time, he assumed the title of Sultan. He coined money with the inscription, "May God cause to endure the Empire of Orchan, son of Othman." The phrase must be taken rather as a measure of his ambition than as a description of his existing State, for it was then inferior in size to several of the Turkish Emirates in Asia Minor and to most of the Balkan States. Orchan led a most active and simple life. He was always on the move. When not in the field with his troops, he spent his time in visiting his many petty strongholds, seldom remaining more than a month in any one of them.

The immediate objects of Orchan's ambition, on his accession, were the Greek cities of Nicæa and Nicomedia, with their surrounding districts, the last important possessions of the Byzantine Empire in Asia. Nicæa was then a great city. It had attained greater importance during the sixty years when

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in its favour. Alaeddin died in 1337. It is admitted that for seven years he acted as the first Grand Vizier of the Ottoman State. It may well be, therefore, that he commenced, if he did not complete, the important organization of the army with which he has been credited by Turkish historians.

the Latins were in occupation of Constantinople and the Greek Emperors were relegated to Asia and made it their capital. It was well fortified. It could only be captured, as Brusa had been, by cutting off its communications with Constantinople, and depriving its people of the means of subsistence. The Greek Emperor, Andronicus III, made an effort to relieve it. He hastily raised an army of mercenaries, in 1326, and led them across the Bosphorus. He fought a battle against Orchan at Pelecanon, on the north shore of the Gulf of Nicomedia. According to the Greek historians, the Ottomans had much the worst of it, losing a great number of men, while the losses of the Greeks were trivial. However that may have been, Andronicus decided on a retreat. But a scrimmage occurred in the night between his bodyguard and the enemy, in which the Emperor himself was slightly wounded. He thereupon fled precipitately, and was conveyed in a litter to the Bosphorus and thence to Constantinople. His army, dispirited by this abandonment by their Emperor, was defeated and dispersed. As a result, Nicæa surrendered in the following year, 1327, on favourable terms. The majority of its garrison and citizens followed the example of those of Brusa and adopted Islam. Very few availed themselves of the offer to transfer themselves to Europe. This ill-starred campaign and cowardly flight of Andronicus was the last effort of the Byzantine Emperors to save their possessions in Asia. What remained of them, chiefly the city of Nicomedia, were left to their own resources, without further aid from Europe. Nicomedia was well

fortified and was apparently a tough job for the Ottomans, for it held out till 1337, or possibly 1338, and eventually surrendered in the same way, and on the same terms, as Brusa and Nicæa.

In the interval of ten years between the capture of Nicæa and Nicomedia, Orchan was further engaged in extending his State elsewhere in Asia, not towards Angora, in the south, as stated by some historians, but to the north-west, in the ancient Mysia, by the conquest of the Emirate of Karasi, which lay immediately to the north of Sarukhan and with a frontage to the sea opposite to the island of Mytilene. The Emir of this State died in 1333. His two sons disputed the succession. The younger one was favoured by the Ottomans, and when he was put to death by his brother, Orchan sent an army ostensibly to avenge him. The Emir was driven into exile and his State was promptly annexed by Orchan. The same fate befell some other petty Emirates on the southern borders of the Marmora and the Hellespont, rounding off the boundary of the Ottoman State in the north-west corner of Anatolia. The population of Karasi and the smaller States was mainly Turkish, but there must have been many Greeks on the coast who probably adopted Islam, as had the majority of the Greeks of Brusa and Nicæa. After these acquisitions, and that of Nicomedia in 1338, there were no further additions to the Ottoman State in Asia Minor during Orchan's reign.

There followed, after the capture of Nicomedia, a few years of peace, and it may well be that, during this time, Orchan completed the scheme for the organization of his State and

his army. Hitherto, when Othman and Orchan were involved in disputes with their neighbours, and it was necessary to use armed force in resistance or attack, an appeal was made for the voluntary service of all the male members of their petty State or clan capable of bearing arms; and the appeal was responded to without question. When the occasion for their service was at an end, the warriors returned to their homes and to their usual vocations. With a rapidly expanding territory and with great ambitions for further conquests, it was evidently thought necessary to constitute a permanent and well-disciplined force, and Orchan, whether adopting, or not, the plans of his brother Alaeddin, determined to effect this. On the one hand, he enrolled a considerable body of infantry for continuous service. They were subject to strict discipline and were well paid, and it will be seen that they could be sent beyond the realm to assist the Greek Emperor or otherwise.[4] On the other hand, a large body of horsemen was provided, not under continuous service, but under obligatory service, when occasion arose for calling them out.

For this purpose the country districts were divided into fiefs, the holders of which were bound to serve in the event of war, and to come provided with horses and equipment, or to find substitutes in proportion to the extent of their fiefs. It was, in fact, the adoption of the feudal system, then almost universal in Europe, with this marked difference, that the fiefs were small

[4] This was not the corps of Janissaries, which, as Mr. Gibbons has shown, was created not by Orchan but by his son Murad.

in extent and were not, as a rule, hereditary. They were given for life as rewards for military service, and on the death of their holders were granted to other soldiers, though in some cases hereditary claims were recognized. When new territories were acquired by conquest from non-Moslems, large parts of them were divided into new fiefs, and were granted to the soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the war. Military service, whether in the new infantry or in the feudal cavalry, was strictly confined to Moslems. Christians, who were thus exempted from military duty, were subjected to a heavy capitation tax from which Moslems were free.

This new organization of the army, commenced by Orchan and extended and perfected by his son Murad, who also, it will be seen, created the famous corps of Janissaries, converted the nascent Ottoman State into a most powerful engine for war, and gave an immense impetus to the conquest of non-Moslem countries. Most splendid rewards were held out to the Moslem soldiers for victory and bravery. In the event of victory they benefited not only from the ordinary booty in money and chattels, on the sack of cities and the pillage of country districts. They also received as their share four-fifths of the proceeds of the sale of captives as slaves, the other fifth being reserved as the share of the Sultan. The captives were not only the enemies' soldiers taken in battle, but in many cases the inhabitants of the conquered districts. The strong and the young of both sexes were carried off and were sold, the men as slaves, the fairer women for wives

or concubines, or for harems. The soldiers further received, as has been shown above, a large share of the confiscated lands to be held as military fiefs in reward for bravery in battle. As these fiefs were granted for life only, there was a further distribution among the soldiers of the fiefs held by their comrades who were killed in battle, and often, it is said, the same fiefs changed hands many times in the course of a campaign.

The Moslem inhabitants of a conquered territory were not sold off as slaves, nor were their lands confiscated. These measures were reserved for Christians or non-Moslems. In some cases the Christians were given the option of embracing Islam in order to avoid slavery and the confiscation of their land. But these exceptions were rare in the conquests in Europe, and it is obvious that, to whatever extent they took place, the rewards obtained by the soldiers were reduced.

It has been shown that hitherto in the Ottoman conquests in Asia Minor at the expense of the Byzantine Empire a great proportion of the Christian population embraced Islam; and it may well have been that the spread of Islam and the conversion of infidels to the true faith were in part the incentives for the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. But henceforth, after the organization of the army by Orchan and Murad and the great rewards held out to the soldiers for the conquest of non-Moslem territories, it does not appear that the Ottoman armies were inspired by any missionary zeal for the spread of Islam. The main, if not the sole motives, were loot and plunder, the sale of

captives as slaves, and the confiscation of land and its distribution among the soldiers as fiefs; and these objects were attained to a far greater extent by the invasion of Christian States in Europe than by the extension of the Empire over Moslem countries in Asia.

In the year 1354 Orchan, after completing the organization of his army, turned his attention for the first time to Europe. Thenceforth, till his death in 1359, his restless ambition was directed against the Byzantine Empire. Advancing age prevented his taking the field himself at the head of his army. But his eldest son, Solyman, who had all the great qualities of his race, and who was the idol of the army, took his place in command of the invading forces.

It may be well to point out here that, at this time, the middle of the fourteenth century, the Byzantine Empire was already reduced to very insignificant proportions, compared to its ancient grandeur. The territories subject to it, which for centuries had extended to the Danube in Europe, and in Asia over Anatolia and Syria, had been already greatly diminished when the leaders of the fourth Crusade, in 1204, in one of the most disgraceful episodes in history, turned aside from their avowed object of attacking the Moslems in Palestine and, in lieu thereof, attacked and captured Constantinople, and compelled the Byzantine Emperor to transfer the seat of his government to Nicæa, in Asia Minor. There followed the brief period of the Latin Empire. But in 1261 the Byzantine Greeks reconquered

Constantinople, and the ephemeral Latin Empire disappeared from history. The Byzantines were then able to recover a small part only of their old dominions in Europe and Asia. At the time when Orchan, who had driven them from Asia, decided to attack them in Europe, they held there no more than Thrace with Adrianople, a part of Macedonia with Salonika, and the greater part of the Morea in Greece. To the north of them Serbia, under Stephen Dushan, the most eminent of its rulers, had asserted supremacy over the greater half of the Balkan peninsula, was threatening Salonika, and had ambition to possess himself of Constantinople. Bulgaria, though it had lost territory to Serbia, still possessed the smaller half of the Balkans. The Republics of Venice and Genoa owned many commercial ports and islands in the Ægean Sea and Adriatic, and were madly jealous of one another. The position was such as to afford a favourable opportunity to new invaders like the Ottomans, for there was no probability of a combination among these Christian communities to resist them.

The story of the first entry of the Ottomans into Europe, as told by the early Turkish historians and adopted by Von Hammer and others, is shortly this. In the year 1356 Solyman, the son of Orchan, at the head of a small body of Ottoman troops, variously estimated at from seventy-five to three hundred, under the inspiration of a dream, stealthily crept, it is said, across the Hellespont in boats, and succeeded in surprising and overcoming the Greek garrison of the small fortress of

Tzympe, on the European side of the Straits, and having thus gained possession of it, increased the invading force to three thousand. Mr. Gibbons, on the other hand, has unravelled from the Byzantine historians a much fuller and more reliable story of the successive entries of Ottoman troops into Europe from 1345 downwards. It may be briefly epitomized as follows, in explanation of the great historic event – the first entry of the Ottomans into Europe – a story which is most discreditable to the Byzantine Greeks: —

On the death, in 1338, of the Greek Emperor Andronicus III, the most feeble and incompetent of the long line of Palæologi, his Grand Chancellor, Cantacuzene, was appointed, under his will, guardian of his son, John Palæologus, and as co-regent with his widow, the Empress Anna. Cantacuzene, not satisfied with this arrangement, and ambitious to secure supreme power in the Empire, had himself proclaimed Emperor at Nicotika in 1343. This was bitterly resented and opposed by the Empress Anna. Civil war broke out. Both Anna and Cantacuzene appealed to Orchan, their new and powerful neighbour across the Straits, for aid against the other. Cantacuzene offered his young daughter, Theodora, in marriage to Orchan in return for the aid of six thousand Ottoman troops. Orchan apparently thought this a better offer than that of the Empress Anna, whatever that may have been. He was perhaps flattered by the prospect of a family connection with a Byzantine Emperor. He closed with the offer and sent six thousand soldiers into Europe, in 1345,

in support of Cantacuzene, who made use of them by investing Constantinople, of which the Empress had obtained possession. After a year's siege, Cantacuzene effected an entry into the city by the aid of his partisans there, who treacherously opened its gates to him. The Empress was thereupon compelled to come to terms. She agreed that Cantacuzene and his wife should be crowned as Emperor and Empress, together with herself and her son. This union was further cemented by the marriage of the young Emperor John, at the age of sixteen, with another daughter of Cantacuzene. Orchan, in pursuance of his agreement with the new Emperor, was married in 1346 at the ripe age of sixty-two to the young Theodora, who was to be allowed to remain a Christian.

It may be assumed that the six thousand soldiers lent to Cantacuzene returned to Asia. But the loan of them soon became a precedent for other transactions of the same kind. In 1349 the Serbians, under Stephen Dushan, were seriously threatening Salonika, and had ultimate designs on Constantinople itself. Orchan was again appealed to for aid by the two Emperors, his father-in-law and brother-in-law, and at their instance he sent twenty thousand soldiers into Europe for the relief of Salonika. With their aid Cantacuzene was able to defeat the Serbians, and to extinguish for ever their hope of replacing the Byzantine Empire at Constantinople. On this occasion, again, it appears that the Ottoman troops, having effected their purpose, returned to Asia. But four years later another opportunity befell Orchan

of sending troops across the Straits, and this time of effecting a permanent lodgment in Europe. Cantacuzene, not satisfied with being only a co-Emperor with his son-in-law and the Empress Anna, attempted, in 1353, to usurp the supreme power in the State. His son-in-law, John Palæologus, now of full age, strongly opposed this. Civil war again broke out. For a third time Cantacuzene appealed to his son-in-law Orchan for aid. In return for the loan of twenty thousand soldiers he offered to hand over to the Ottomans a fortress on the European side of the Hellespont. Orchan agreed to this. The Ottoman soldiers were sent into Europe, under Solyman, and were employed by Cantacuzene in fighting against his other son-in-law, the co-Emperor John. They were successful in this, and occupied Demotika. Meanwhile the insignificant fortress of Tzympe was handed over to Orchan and was occupied by Ottoman troops with the full consent of Cantacuzene.

Shortly after this an earthquake occurred in the Thracian Chersonese – not an unfrequent event there. It did great damage to many cities, among others to Gallipoli, the most important fortress on the European side of the Hellespont, and at no great distance from Tzympe. Its walls and ramparts were in great part tumbled down and destroyed, so that entrance to it was made easy. The Ottoman troops at the neighbouring Tzympe, under Solyman, when this opportunity was afforded to them of getting possession of such an important fortress, determined to avail themselves of it. The Greek garrison of Gallipoli, under the

belief that the earthquake and the tumbling down of the walls indicated the Divine will, made no resistance, and the Ottomans established themselves there without opposition. Cantacuzene complained of this to Orchan as a gross breach of their treaty, and demanded that Gallipoli should be restored to him. He offered also to pay a fair price for Tzympe. Orchan, though willing enough to take money for Tzympe, refused point-blank to give up Gallipoli. "God," he said, "having manifested His will in my favour by causing the ramparts to fall, my troops have taken possession of the city, penetrated with thanks to Allah." It will be seen that Greeks and Turks took the same view of the Divine intervention, the one to excuse their failure to defend the fortress, the other to justify their seizure of it.

This action of Orchan roused great indignation at Constantinople. Cantacuzene now began to see how grave an error he had committed when inviting the Turks into Europe. Public opinion compelled him to declare war against Orchan. He appealed to the Czars of Serbia and Bulgaria to assist him in driving the Ottomans back to Asia. They flatly refused to do so. The Czar of Bulgaria replied: "Three years ago I remonstrated with you for your unholy alliance with the Turks. Now that the storm has burst, let the Byzantines weather it. If the Turks come against me we shall know how to defend ourselves" – a very unfortunate prediction as events ultimately proved! The whole course of history might have been altered if these two Balkan States had joined with the Byzantines in preventing this lodgment

of the Turks in Europe. Want of union of the Christian Powers was then, as on many other later occasions, mainly responsible for the extension of the Ottoman Empire in that continent.

Cantacuzene was soon to reap the just reward for his treachery to his country. So far everything had gone well with him. He had ousted the Palæologi from the throne, of which, it must be admitted, they were quite unworthy. He had proclaimed his son Matthew as co-Emperor with himself. But when the full effect of his policy of inviting the Turks into Europe was understood there was a revulsion of feeling against him at Constantinople. The Greek Patriarch refused to crown Matthew. A revolution took place in the city. Cantacuzene found himself without friends. He was everywhere accused of having betrayed the Empire to the Turks. He was compelled to abdicate. He became a monk and retired to a monastery in Greece. He spent the remaining thirty years of his life in seclusion there, and in writing a history of his times, which, though very unreliable, tells enough of his own misdeeds to justify the conclusion that, by inviting the Ottomans into Europe, he proved to be a traitor to his country. The Empress Irene, his wife, became a nun.

John Palæologus was recalled by the people of Constantinople, and, after defeating Matthew, not without difficulty, was established there as sole Emperor. His reign lasted for fifty years, a period full of misfortune for the Empire. He was no more able to compel or induce the Turks to evacuate Europe and return to Asia than his father-in-law.

The twenty thousand soldiers who had been invited to Europe by Cantacuzene remained there as enemies of the State they had come to assist. Under the command of Solyman, they advanced into Thrace and captured Tchorlu, within a few miles of Constantinople. Though the occupation of this city and of Demotika was only temporary, the Ottomans firmly established themselves in the southern part of Thrace. The Emperor John was eventually compelled to sign a treaty with Orchan, which recognized these Ottoman conquests in Thrace. Thenceforth the Byzantine Empire became subservient to, and almost the vassal of, the Ottoman Sultan. Solyman brought over from Asia many colonies of Turks and settled them in the Thracian Chersonese and other parts of Thrace.

In 1358 Solyman, who had shown great capacity when in command of the Ottoman army, met with his death by a fall from his horse when engaged in his favourite sport of falconry. His father, Orchan, died in the following year at the age of seventy-two. He had enormously increased the Ottoman dominions. He had achieved the first great object of his ambition, that of driving the Byzantines from their remaining possessions in Asia. He had rounded off his boundaries in the north-west corner of Anatolia by annexing Mysia. He had invaded Europe and had extended Ottoman rule over a part of Thrace. He had reduced the Byzantine Emperor almost to vassalage. These great results had been achieved not so much by force of arms as a general, for he is not credited with any great victory in the field, or by successful

assaults on any great fortresses, as by crafty diplomacy and intrigue, backed up by superior force, and by taking advantage of the feebleness and treachery of the Byzantines. He also forged the military weapon by which his son, Murad, was able to effect far greater territorial conquests, both in Europe and Asia.

III
MURAD I
1359-89

Murad succeeded his father, Orchan, at the age of forty. He soon proved himself to be eminently qualified to rule by his untiring activity and vigour, his genius for war, and his wise and sane statesmanship. He was illiterate. He could not even sign his name. There is extant in the archives of the city of Ragusa a treaty with its petty republic, which Murad, in 1363, signed by dipping his hand in ink and impressing it with his finger marks. The 'tughra' thus formed became the official signature of subsequent Sultans of Turkey. Osman and Orchan between them created the Ottoman dynasty and State, but Murad must be credited with having founded the Empire in the sense of imposing Ottoman rule on subject races.

On Murad's accession his territory, though greatly increased by Orchan, was less in extent than some other Turkish Emirates in Anatolia. It consisted of an area on both sides of the Sea of Marmora, two hundred miles in length by about one hundred in depth. It included both shores of the Dardanelles, but only one side of the Bosphorus. Constantinople, on the other side, though nearly hemmed in by the Ottomans, was nominally independent, and its communications with the Greek province of Thrace

were still open. Deducting the area of the Sea of Marmora, the territory under Murad's rule was not of greater area than twenty thousand square miles. Its population probably did not amount to a million in number. It is difficult to understand how Murad from this small territory so enormously increased his Empire in Europe. It may be surmised that large numbers of Turks from other parts of Anatolia flocked to his standard in search of adventure and booty in Europe.

The ownership of both sides of the Dardanelles did not, in the days before the invention of gunpowder, give command of the Straits, and as Murad was without a navy, the passage of his armies between Asia and Europe was at the mercy of any naval Power. The Genoese, who had important commercial settlements on the shores of the Black Sea and on the Bosphorus at Galata, and who maintained a large naval force in the Ægean Sea, might easily have barred the way of the Ottomans to Europe, but they hated the Greeks and were greedy of money, and they could be relied on to convey Murad's armies across the Straits for a full consideration. It will be seen that Murad, during his reign of thirty years, increased by more than fivefold the Ottoman possessions, and at one point brought them up to the Danube. He compelled other States also, including the Greek Empire itself, to accept the position of tributaries to his Empire. His fame in Ottoman history must be regarded as on a level with that of Mahomet, the Conqueror of Constantinople, and of Solyman the Magnificent, who raised the Empire to its zenith.

Murad's great extensions of his Empire may more conveniently, than in a chronological order, be treated under three distinct heads: —

1. His conquest of the possessions of the Greek Empire in Thrace and Bulgaria and the reduction of that decadent Empire to the humiliating position of vassalage. 2. His great conquests in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Serbia. 3. His extensions in Anatolia by the absorption of Turkish Emirates or parts of them.

1. The Conquests in Thrace

The Greek Empire, under John Palæologus V, the most unfortunate and incompetent of men, on the accession of Murad, was in a perilous and decadent condition. We have already shown how small were its remaining possessions in Europe. It had no friends on whom it could rely to stem the advance of the Moslems. The old spirit of the early Crusaders in Europe was almost extinct. There was a bitter feud between the Latin and Greek Churches. They hated one another more than they feared the Turks. It was a condition of any assistance of the Latin Christians that the Greeks should come into the fold of the Pope of Rome. The Greeks, on their part, flatly refused this, even for the purpose of saving their Empire from extinction by the Moslem Turks.

It was under these conditions that Murad, in the first year of his reign, determined to follow up the designs of his father

by conquests in Europe. Leaving Brusa, the then capital of his State, he crossed the Dardanelles, and at the head of a great army marched into Thrace. His generals, Evrenos and Lalashahin, commanded the two wings of it. Evrenos advanced on the left, recaptured the fortress of Tchorlu, five miles from Constantinople, massacred its garrison, and razed its walls. Lalashahin, on the right, captured Kirk Kilisse, and thus protected the army from a possible landing of the enemy from the Black Sea. Murad then advanced with the centre of his army, formed a junction with the two wings, and fought a great battle at Eski Baba, in 1363, in which he completely defeated the Byzantine army opposed to him, with the result that Adrianople surrendered without a struggle and almost the whole of Thrace fell into Murad's hands. Lalashahin then advanced up the Maritza Valley into Bulgaria and captured Philippopolis, a Byzantine possession south of the Balkans.

As a result of this successful invasion the Greek Emperor found himself compelled to enter into a treaty with Murad, by which he bound himself to refrain from any attempt to recover what he had lost in Thrace, to abstain from giving aid to the Serbians and Bulgarians in resisting a further advance of the Ottomans in Europe, and to support Murad against his Anatolian enemies, the Turkish Emirs. Murad thereupon returned to Brusa to cogitate over new enterprises and to organize his forces. He was soon recalled to Europe by most serious events. The Christian Powers had shown no disposition to help the Greeks

against the Ottoman invasion, while their possessions in Asia and Europe were being invaded, but the advance into Bulgaria seems to have caused alarm to them. Pope Urban V stirred up Louis, the King of Hungary, and the Princes of Serbia, Bosnia, and Wallachia to resist. They combined together and sent an army of twenty thousand men into Thrace, with the avowed object of driving the Turks out of Europe. Murad hastened to confront them, but before he could arrive on the scene of action his general, Lalashahin, led an army against the allies. The two armies met on the River Maritza, not far from Adrianople, in 1363. Ilbeki, in command of the Ottomans, made a sudden night attack, when the Christian troops were heavy with sleep after a festive revel. A stampede took place. The Turkish historian says of the allied army: "They were caught even as wild beasts in their lair. They were driven as flames are driven before the wind, till, plunging into the Maritza, they perished in its waters."

The Christian army was practically exterminated. The King of Hungary escaped by a miracle. It was the first conflict of the Ottomans with the Hungarians, who were destined to bar the way into Europe for a hundred and fifty years. As a result of this battle all the country south of the Balkan Mountains was incorporated in the Ottoman Empire. Ilbeki, who devised the night attack, and so successfully carried it out, was made away with by poison, at the instance of Lalashahin, who was madly jealous of his great victory.

The battle of the Maritza was a crushing blow to the

Christians. One result of it was that Murad decided in favour of a scheme of conquest in Europe rather than in Asia. In this view he transferred the seat of his government from Brusa to Thrace, and made Demotika the capital of his Empire. Three years later he transferred it to Adrianople, which for ninety years, till after the capture of Constantinople, held this position, and from thence he organized his great invasion of the Balkan States. Another result was that the Greek Emperor, John Palæologus V, was forced into a further step towards subjection to the Ottomans. He agreed to become a tributary to the Sultan and to send a contingent to the Ottoman army in future wars.

After a time the Emperor fretted under this position of vassalage, and in 1369 he went on a mission to Rome, in the hope of inducing the Pope to stir up the Christian Powers of Europe to another crusade against the Ottomans. He left his eldest son, Andronicus, in charge of the government at Constantinople during his absence. Arriving at Rome, he submitted to the most humiliating conditions with the object of gaining the support of the Pope Urban V. He abjured at St. Peter's, before the High Altar, the principles of the Greek Church, so far as they differed from those of Rome. He admitted the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Pope. He was then permitted to bend his knee, and to kiss the Pope's feet and hands. He was privileged also to lead the Pope's mule by the bridle. He obtained, however, no return for these abject humiliations. The Pope was unable to induce the Christian Powers again to take up arms against the Ottomans.

The Emperor's concessions to the Pope were also disavowed by the Hierarchs of the Greek Church at Constantinople. There never was any prospect of a reunion of the two Churches. The Emperor, John Palæologus, embarked on his homeward journey having nothing to show for his pains. On his way back, when passing through Venice, he was arrested, at the instance of his Venetian creditors, who had lent him money to defray the cost of his mission. Not having the means to pay, he could not discharge the legal process. Andronicus had no wish that his father should ever return to Constantinople. He made no effort to raise money for the release of the Emperor. He pleaded the poverty of the Treasury. A younger son, Manuel, however, with more filial piety, raised the necessary sum, by selling all his property, and obtained the release of his father. Shortly after his return to Constantinople the Emperor, as was to be expected, deprived Andronicus of all his appointments, and replaced him by Manuel, whom he also made co-Emperor with himself.

The son of Andronicus, of the same name, furious at this treatment of his father, entered into a mad conspiracy with Saoudji, the youngest son of Sultan Murad, with the object of dethroning both Emperor and Sultan and reigning in their place. Saoudji, being in command of the Sultan's army in Europe, during the absence of Murad in Asia, was able to tamper with the loyalty of the Ottoman troops. He assembled a considerable force in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, where he was joined by a large number of the sons of Greek nobles and by many soldiers.

Murad, when he heard, at Brusa, of this mad outbreak, returned with all haste to Europe, and organized resistance to it, in concert with the Greek Emperor. They agreed that the two rebels, when captured, should be deprived of their eyesight. Murad thereupon, taking what soldiers he could get together, marched to meet Saoudji's army. When within hearing of it, he called out to the soldiers by night, urging them to return to their duty and promising pardon to them. The soldiers, hearing the voice of the Sultan, who had so often led them to victory, repented of their treachery and deserted the cause which they had so foolishly taken up. Saoudji and Andronicus and the band of Greek nobles, thus deserted by the rank and file of the army, took refuge in the fortress of Demotika. Murad had no difficulty in capturing this place, and with it the two rebel princes and the Greek nobles. In pursuance of his agreement with the Emperor, he then deprived his own son of his eyesight and, going beyond his promise, had the young man executed. He caused the Greek nobles to be bound, two and three together, and thrown into the Maritza, while he stood on the bank and revelled in the sight of their drowning struggles. In some cases he insisted on parents themselves putting their sons to death in his presence. When they refused, the parents were drowned in the river together with their sons. In this instance Murad showed that he had in him the vein of cruelty which was conspicuous, more or less, in all the descendants of Othman. Andronicus was handed over to the Greek Emperor, who partially, but not completely, carried out

his promise of depriving his grandson of eyesight.

As a result of these events, the Emperor John Palæologus found himself compelled to enter into another treaty with Murad, by which, in order "that he might enjoy up to the end of his life in peace his last possession," he recognized himself as vassal of the Sultan, promised to do military service in the Ottoman army, and gave his son Manuel in charge of Murad as a hostage.

2. The Conquests in Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Serbia

The conquest of Thrace by the Ottomans and the defeat of the allied Christians at the Maritza were as great blows to the Bulgarians as to the Greek Empire, though they had given no assistance to the allies. The occupation of Adrianople and Philippopolis opened the way to a further advance into Bulgaria and Macedonia. It was not, however, till 1366 that Murad availed himself of this advantage, and commenced the series of attacks which ultimately made him master of Macedonia and of a great part of Bulgaria and Serbia. The position of affairs in the peninsula at this time was very favourable to him. The Bulgarians, Serbians, Bosnians, and Greeks were madly jealous of one another; each of them preferred the extension of the Ottoman rule to that of their rivals. Bulgaria alone, if united, might have successfully resisted Murad. But in 1365 its Czar, Alexander, died, and his kingdom was divided between his three sons. Sisman, the elder, got the largest share. The other two

gave no assistance to their brother when the Ottomans invaded his country. Between 1366 and 1369, Murad advanced into Bulgaria, and took possession of the Maritza Valley, as far as the Rhodope Mountains. In 1371 Lalashahin encountered an army of Bulgarians and Serbians at Samakof, not far from the city of Sofia, and completely defeated it, with the result that Bulgaria, up to the Balkan range, was annexed to the Ottoman Empire. It remained so for over five hundred years, till its release in our own times.

After this great victory at Samakof, Lalashahin was instructed by Murad not to pursue his conquest of Bulgaria north of the Balkan range, but to proceed westward, and, in concert with Evrenos, to invade Macedonia as far as the River Vardar. This occupied the two generals in the years 1371-2. Kavalla, Druma, and Serres fell into their hands. In 1372 they crossed the Vardar River and penetrated into Old Serbia, Albania, and Bosnia. The main part of Serbia, however, remained in the hands of Lazar, its prince. But he was compelled to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Sultan. As regards the part of Bulgaria not annexed, its prince, Sisman, was allowed to retain his independence. His daughter entered the harem of Murad, with the understanding that she was not to be compelled to adopt the Moslem religion. It was not till 1381 that a further advance was made by Murad. He then sent his armies across the Vardar River and captured Monastir. He also took possession of Sofia, and in 1386 of Nisch, after a fierce struggle with the Serbians.

3. Murad's Acquisitions in Asia Minor

Between the years 1376 and 1380 Murad found himself able to turn his attention in the direction of Asia Minor. In the first of these years he induced the Emir of Kermia, doubtless by threats of war, to give a daughter in marriage to Bayezid, his eldest son. She brought with her as dowry a considerable part of Kermia and the fortress of Kutayia, a position of great strategic importance. In 1377 he followed this up by inducing the Emir of Hamid to sell a great portion of his Emirate lying between Tekke, Kermia, and Karamania, including the district of Ak-Sheir. The effect of this acquisition was to make his frontier conterminous with that of Karamania. Again, in 1378, he declared war against the Emir of Tekke, and annexed a part of his territory, leaving to him Adalia.

Murad made no further effort to extend his dominion in Asia till 1387, when he led a large army against Alaeddin, the Emir of Karamania. For this purpose he called upon the Greek Emperor and the Princes of Serbia and Bulgaria as vassals of the Empire to send their contingents. His two sons, Bayezid and Yacoub, commanded the wings of this army. With a view to conciliate the peasantry of the district he passed through, and to ensure full supplies of food to his army, he gave strict orders that there was to be no pillage, and that the lives and property of the country people were to be respected. Among his troops were two thousand Serbians, whom the Prince of Serbia was bound by

his recent treaty to supply. These men refused to obey Murad's order, and committed atrocious depredations on the route of the army. Murad inflicted severe punishment on them, and directed many of them to be put to death as a warning to the others. The army then marched to meet the Karamanians. A battle again took place on the plain of Angora. Bayezid especially distinguished himself by the fierceness of his cavalry charges and earned for himself the sobriquet of 'the Thunderbolt.'

There are different versions as to the issue of this battle. Some historians describe it as a great victory for Murad, and claim that he treated the vanquished Emir of Karamania with great generosity, insisting only on a token of submission. Murad, however, was not in the habit of neglecting to take full advantage of any successes of his armies. It is very certain that, in this case, he did not succeed in extending his Empire. Karamania retained its independence for many years to come, and did not even submit to a nominal vassalage. It seems more probable, therefore, that this battle was indecisive, and that Murad withdrew, without having effected his purpose.

Murad, who was now near the age of seventy, would have been glad to end his life in repose, but he was recalled to Europe by an outbreak of the Serbians. It appeared that the Serbian soldiers, on their return to their homes, after the campaign against the Karamanians, told the story of the execution of their comrades by order of Murad. It caused universal indignation among the Serbians. They could not understand a war conducted without the

levy of booty from the enemy's country. The whole of Serbia rose in rebellion. An alliance was formed with Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Albania. Assistance was obtained from Hungary and Wallachia. Murad again took the field in command of an Ottoman army, and, crossing the Balkans, captured Schumla and Tirnova, and then marched towards the Danube. Sisman, the King of Bulgaria, shut himself up in Nicopolis, on the Danube, but was soon compelled to come to terms. He agreed to give up Silistria to the Turks, and to pay a tribute in the future.

Lazar, the King of Serbia, in spite of this defection, continued the struggle against the Ottomans, and Sisman himself broke the treaty almost before the ink was dry. He refused to give up Silistria, and sent a contingent in aid of the Serbians. Murad sent part of his army, under Ali Pasha, against Sisman, who was again shut up in Nicopolis. This fortress was captured. Murad was again generous in sparing Sisman's life, but this time he deprived the southern part of Bulgaria of its autonomy, and insisted on its being completely incorporated in the Turkish Empire.

Lazar, the King of Serbia, continued the war. Murad, in spite of his seventy years, led his army, supported, as in Asia Minor, by his two sons. The decisive battle took place on the plain of Kossova, at the point of junction between Serbia and Bulgaria. It was fiercely contested. At a critical point of it a Serbian noble, Milosch Kobilowitch, who on the previous day had been falsely charged in the Serbian camp with disaffection and treason, gave signal proof of his patriotism by riding boldly into the Turkish

lines, as though he was a deserter, and claiming that he had a most important message to deliver to the Sultan. He was allowed to approach Murad, and, while kneeling before him, plunged a dagger into his heart, causing a mortal wound. Milosch then made a desperate rush to escape, but in vain. He was captured and brought to the Sultan's tent. Meanwhile Murad, in spite of his approaching death, was able to give orders for the charge of his reserves, which decided the battle in favour of the Ottomans. The Serbians and their allies were completely defeated and routed. Lazar was taken prisoner and was brought to the Sultan's tent. Murad lived long enough to direct the execution in his presence of Lazar and Milosch. He then expired.

To complete the tragedy of the day, Bayezid, on hearing of the death of his father, and his own consequent accession to the throne, gave immediate orders for the murder of his brother Yacoub, who had been his valiant companion in arms in so many battles. This was effected in the presence of the dead body of the father. The brutal deed was justified by a verse from the Koran, "Rebellion is worse than execution." It was assumed by Bayezid that his brother would claim the throne against him. This was the first recorded case of fratricide in the Othman royal race. Thenceforth it became the settled practice for a Sultan of Turkey, on his accession to the throne, immediately to put to death his brothers and other collaterals, lest they should dispute the succession with him. By the law of succession the eldest living male of the reigning family, and not the eldest son of a defunct

Sultan, was entitled to the throne. This supplied an additional motive for the practice of fratricide, for the new Sultan, by murdering his brothers and uncles, ensured the succession, after his own death, to his eldest son free from competition. In later times, however, when public opinion would no longer justify fratricide, and when the law of succession of the oldest male in the family was more fully recognized, the Sultan, on his accession to the throne, directed the close confinement of his next heir, generally his brother. It followed from this practice that the heir to the throne, instead of being employed on State affairs, or as a general, and gaining experience, was treated as a prisoner, and was forbidden to take any part in public affairs. It will be seen that this practice of forced seclusion of the heir to the throne during the lifetime of the reigning Sultan was one of the main causes of the degeneracy of the Othman dynasty.

Reverting to Murad, it has been shown how important an epoch his reign was in the growth of the Ottoman Empire. During the twenty-four years of war, in which he led his armies in the field, he never met with a reverse. He extended the Empire for the first time into vast territories inhabited not by Turks or by Byzantines, but by sturdy Christian races, such as the Bulgarians, Serbians, and Bosnians. For the first time also the Turks came into conflict with the Hungarians, and defeated them. The influence of the Empire was extended practically to the Danube. Some of the intervening territory was not treated as conquered country and added to the Empire, but was allowed to

retain the position of tributary or vassal States, as in the case of Serbia. Other parts, such as Thrace, Macedonia, and Bulgaria, were fully incorporated in the dominion of the Sultan.

Murad, when not engaged in war, devoted himself to perfecting the organization of his army on the lines laid down by his father, Orchan. He also created a new standing corps of soldiers, recruited from the Christian population of the provinces conquered in Europe. This was the renowned corps of Janissaries – the new army. Von Hammer and other historians following him, and more recently Sir Edwin Pears, give very full details as to the constitution of this corps and the motives of its founder. They state that one thousand lads, between the ages of ten and twelve, were in every year conscripted from amongst the children of Christian parents. The most physically strong and intelligent of them were taken. They were forcibly converted to Islam, and were trained with great care for military careers under the immediate direction of the Sultan. After six years of training they were drafted into a special corps, which reached, after a few years, a maximum of twelve thousand men. The discipline of this corps was very severe. It formed the most efficient and reliable body in the Ottoman army. The men looked on their regiment as their home. Their lives were devoted to it. They were not allowed to own property. What they acquired belonged to the regiment. They were not, till a later period in the history of the Empire, allowed to marry. They formed the backbone of the Ottoman armies in war; and in many a hard-fought battle, when disaster

and defeat were imminent, they saved the army by their intrepid and persistent stand against the enemy. The object which Murad aimed at is said to have been not merely the strengthening of his army by a standing force of this kind, but that it should, by its personal devotion to the Sultan, act as a check on his other turbulent forces.[5]

Sir Edwin Pears says of this force: —

> Take a number of children from the most intelligent portion of the community; choose them for their strength and intelligence; instruct them carefully in the art of fighting; bring them up under strict military discipline; teach them to forget their childhood, their parents, and friends; saturate them with the knowledge that all their hope in life depends upon their position in the regiment; make peace irksome and war a delight, with the hope of promotion and relaxation from the hardship and restraints of the barracks; the result will be a weapon in the hands of a leader such as the world has rarely seen. Such a weapon

[5] Mr. Gibbons in his account of the origin of this corps disputes the figures as reported above from previous writers, and also the alleged motives for its constitution. After careful consideration of the question, I have preferred to adhere to the version given by Sir Edwin Pears, who has investigated the subject with great care in the early Greek and Turkish histories. I have, however, followed Mr. Gibbons in one point, namely, in attributing the constitution of the force to Murad I rather than to Orchan. Mr. Gibbons's account of the corps of Janissaries is to be found on pp. 118-20 of the *Foundation of the Ottoman Empire*, and that of Sir Edwin Pears in his work on the *Destruction of the Greek Empire*, pp. 223-30.

was the army of the Janissaries.[6]

The levy of children was regarded by the Christians as a blood tax of a terrible kind. The corps thus formed was a most valuable instrument in the hands of Sultans who were strong enough to control it. But later, in the times of degenerate Sultans, it became a kind of Prætorian Guard. It dictated the deposition of Sultans and the nomination of their successors. It often insisted on a policy of war. In 1648, under Mahomet IV, the restriction of the force to Christian children was removed, and the sons of Janissaries and other Moslems were admitted. Later the levy of Christian children was abandoned, and none but sons of Moslems were admitted to the corps. After the time of Solyman its numbers were greatly increased. It became a danger to the State. It will be seen that in 1826 Mahmoud II took vengeance on it for the humiliations he and previous Sultans had undergone, and extinguished it in ruthless scenes of blood.

There cannot be a doubt, however, that Murad, by creating this corps of Janissaries and recruiting it from the Christian population in Europe, forged a weapon which for two hundred years to come played a dominant part in the aggrandizement of the Ottoman Empire.

Knolles, in his graphic history of the Turkish Empire, sums up the character of Murad in the following sentences, which could not be improved upon: —

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[6] Pears, p. 228.

Murad was more zealous than any other of the Turkish kings; a man of great courage and in all his attempts fortunate; he made greater slaughter of his enemies than both his father and grandfather; his kingdom in Asia he greatly enlarged by the sword, marriage, and purchase; and using the discord and cowardice of the Grecian princes to his profit, subdued a great part of Thracia, with the territories adjoining thereto, leaving unto the Emperor of Constantinople little or nothing more in Thracia than the imperial city itself, with the bare name of an emperor almost without an empire; he won a great part of Bulgaria and entered into Serbia, Bosnia, and Macedonia; he was liberal and withal severe; of his subjects both beloved and feared; a man of very few words, and one that could dissemble deeply.[7]

[7] Knolles, i. p. 139.

IV
BAYEZID I
1389-1403

Bayezid succeeded his father, Murad, at the age of thirty-four. He reigned as Sultan for only fourteen years, the last of which was spent in captivity. No one of the Othman race passed through such vicissitudes, with such a brilliant career of victory during nearly the whole of his reign, but ending with overwhelming and crushing defeat. He had all the courage and military capacity of his three predecessors. He excelled them greatly in cruelty and brutality. In his private life he descended to depths of sensuality and unmentionable and degrading vice which were unknown to them.

Early in his reign he adopted a much bolder attitude toward the Christian Powers of Europe than Murad had thought prudent. To a deputation from Italy asking for a renewal of commercial privileges, he replied that when he had conquered Hungary he intended to ride to Rome, and there give feed to his horse with oats on the altar of St. Peter's. His treatment of his Christian subjects was much harsher than that of his predecessors.

Bayezid followed up his father's great victory at Kossova over the Serbians, and compelled Stephen, the successor of Lazar, to sue for peace. The terms of the treaty then agreed to were very

moderate. Instead of being incorporated in the Ottoman Empire as Bulgaria had been, Serbia was to be an autonomous State, under vassalage to the Ottoman Empire, paying tribute in money, and bound to provide and maintain a contingent of five thousand soldiers at the disposal of the Sultan. Stephen, its prince, also gave his sister, Despina, to the Sultan as an additional wife. He most loyally carried out his promises to Bayezid. In the great battles of Nicopolis against the Hungarians and the crusaders from Western Europe, and of Angora against Timur, the Serbian contingent fought with the utmost bravery, and there were no more loyal soldiers in the Ottoman ranks.

Having come to terms with Serbia, Bayezid marched southwards with his army, and took up a menacing position near to Constantinople, where the aged and feeble John Palæologus still reigned, supported by his son Manuel as co-Emperor. By threatening to promote the cause of Andronicus, whose eyesight had not been quite extinguished, after his mad rebellion against the Emperor, the Sultan compelled the two Emperors to sign a treaty, under which the remnant of the Greek Empire became an abject vassal State to that of the Ottomans. The Emperors promised to pay an annual tribute of thirty thousand pieces of gold and to supply a contingent of twelve thousand men to the Ottoman army to be at the disposal of the Sultan for any purpose he might design. They also undertook to surrender to the Ottomans the stronghold of Philadelphia, the only remaining possession of the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor. When the

officer in command of that city refused to surrender it, Bayezid insisted on the Greek Emperor employing his contingent in capturing his own city, and on his leading the assault on it, with the aid of his son Manuel, for the purpose of handing it over to himself, their nominal ally, but crafty and designing foe. It would be difficult to imagine a lower depth of humiliation and cowardice than that to which the Emperor and his son thus descended. These public humiliations were aggravated by a domestic one. Bayezid, having captured at sea a vessel bringing a foreign princess as a bride for Manuel, took a great fancy for the lady, and insisted on her entering his own harem.

Bayezid next turned his attention to Asia Minor, where he was mainly ambitious to add to his Empire. His first effort there was directed against Aidin. After defeating its Emir and annexing the State, he dealt in the same way with the Emirs of Sarukhan and Mentsche. He then made an attack on the city of Smyrna, at that time in possession of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The Knights made a vigorous resistance, and Bayezid, not having command of the sea, was compelled, after six weeks, to withdraw from the siege. He next, in 1391, attacked the Emir of Tekke, and took from him what had been left under his rule by Murad, including the important city of Adalia. The Ottoman frontier was now conterminous with that of Karamania, whose Emir, Alaeddin, was brother-in-law to the Sultan. This family connection was no protection to him. Bayezid invaded and laid siege to Konia. He withdrew on Alaeddin agreeing to give up a

slice of his Emirate, including the city of Ak-Sheir.

Having achieved these annexations, for which there was no justification other than mere greed for the extension of his Empire, Bayezid returned to Adrianople, leaving his general, Timurtash, in command of the conquered provinces. The Greek Emperor John, meanwhile, had been engaged in putting his capital into a state of defence, and for this purpose had demolished three of the most beautiful churches of Constantinople, intending to use their masonry for the erection of new forts. The Sultan, when he heard of this, sent word to the Emperors ordering them to desist from any such work, and threatening to deprive Manuel of his eyesight. The Emperor had no alternative but to obey. But this humiliation was the last he had to endure. He died very shortly afterwards, under the weight of his cares and anxieties, as some historians say, but according to others of gout and debauchery. His son, Manuel, who was detained at the Court of the Sultan, acting as a kind of Groom of the Chamber, on hearing of his father's death, secretly fled and reached Constantinople, where he was installed as the successor to his father. Bayezid by way of reprisal for this directed a blockade by land of Constantinople. There commenced what was virtually a siege by land of the city, which lasted for seven years, till the invasion of Asia Minor by Timur caused a diversion and brought it to an end.

Leaving a part of his forces to conduct this blockade, and with instructions to harass the Greek garrison by day and night,

Bayezid, with the larger part of his army, marched through Bulgaria, and compelled the Prince of Wallachia to submit as a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. A part of his army then penetrated into Syrmia and engaged in war with the Hungarians. It was defeated and driven back, and Sigismund, the Hungarian King, was able to make a counter-attack, and to capture the important stronghold of Nicopolis. He, in turn, was forced to abandon the city, mainly by the assistance given to Bayezid by the Wallachians. It was during his retreat through the Duchy of Hunyadi that Sigismund met and became enamoured with Elizabeth Moronay. The offspring of this liaison was the celebrated Hungarian hero Hunyadi the Great, who later took such an active part against the Turks.

In 1393, Bayezid sent an army, under command of his eldest son, Solyman, to invade the northern part of Bulgaria, which still enjoyed an autonomous existence. Tirnova, its capital, was taken by storm after a siege of three weeks. Its inhabitants were sent into Asia Minor as slaves. He then decided to incorporate the northern part of Bulgaria in the Ottoman Empire in the same manner as the southern part had already been treated. This completed the servitude of the Bulgarian people. Sisman, their prince, disappeared from the scene, and the ruling family became extinct. The land was confiscated, except in a few cases where the owners were allowed to become Moslems. It was parcelled out to Turks under a feudal system involving military service, while the cultivators of the soil were reduced to serfdom.

About this time the fortresses of Nicopolis, Widdin, and Silistria fell into the hands of the Ottomans and opened the way into Hungary. Bayezid commenced a system of raids into that country, not for the purpose, at that time, of acquiring its territory, but for plunder. His Turkish 'akinjis,' or irregulars, spread terror over wide districts, burning and destroying villages and carrying off their inhabitants for sale as slaves. He fitted out ships also with the same object in the newly acquired ports in Asia Minor, and ravaged the islands of Chios and Negropont and districts on the coast of Greece.

Bayezid was now compelled by an outbreak in his recent acquisitions in Asia Minor, fomented by the Emir of Karamania, to suspend operations on his northern frontier in Europe and to transfer his army to Asia. He received at Brusa an envoy from his brother-in-law, Alaeddin of Karamania, suing for peace. Bayezid replied that the sword alone could determine the issue between them. He sent an army at once, under Timurtash, against the Karamanians. It encountered Alaeddin on the plain of Ak-Tchai. The Turkish army was completely successful. Alaeddin and his two sons were captured, and without waiting for authority from Bayezid, Timurtash had them hanged. When Bayezid heard of this treatment of his brother-in-law, he affected to be greatly distressed and incensed, but he soon consoled himself by a text from the Koran, "The death of a prince is less regrettable than the loss of a province," and he gave practical application of the verse by orders to his army to occupy and annex the whole

of Karamania. There was no resistance. Konia and other cities in the eastern part of the State were taken. In spite of this, however, Karamania was not at this time finally incorporated in the Ottoman Empire. After the invasion of Asia Minor by Timur it recovered its independence, and it was not till seventy years later that it was finally subjected and incorporated.

About the same time, 1393-4, Bayezid made further important conquests in Asia Minor – namely, Samsun, Cæsarea, and Sivas, the last of the most important fortresses on the frontier of Armenia. These great successes both in Europe and Asia were followed by a period of repose, during which Bayezid gave himself up to a life of gross debauchery. He was recalled from this by threats of war on the part of Sigismund, King of Hungary, and he soon showed that he had lost none of his vigour and dash.

Sigismund had fretted under the constant raids on his kingdom, above referred to, and had for some time past been contemplating war against the Ottomans for the recovery of the fortresses on the Danube, which were so great a menace to him. For this purpose he appealed, in 1395, to the Christian Powers of Europe for assistance. He was backed up by Pope Boniface IX, who preached another crusade against the infidels. Through the efforts of the King of France, Charles VI, a large number of leading nobles of France were induced to band together, under the Comte de Nevers, son of the Duke of Burgundy, a young man of twenty-two years, without any military experience. A thousand horsemen, chevaliers of good birth and position, and

six thousand attendants and mercenaries were enrolled in France for this adventure. Others came from England and Scotland, and from Flanders, Lombardy, and Savoy. On their march through Germany to Hungary they were joined by great numbers of German knights, under Count Frederick of Hohenzollern, the Grand Prior of the Teutonic Order, and by a large force of Bavarians, under the Elector Palatine. Later they were reinforced by a number of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, under the command of de Naillac, their Grand Master. When joined by the Hungarian army, under Sigismund, and by the contingents from Wallachia and Bosnia, they made up a total force of about sixty thousand men. The expedition was in the nature of a crusade, but was more secular than religious in its aims and methods, and was regarded, it seems, by most of those engaged in it rather as a kind of picnic than as a serious campaign. The composite force collected together at Buda, in Hungary, in the summer of 1396, and thence marched down the Danube to Nicopolis, capturing Widdin and Sistova on the way. When passing through Serbia they ravaged wide districts inhabited by innocent Christians, and emulated, if they did not exceed, the Ottomans in cruel devastation, as though they were in an enemy's country. They established their camp before Nicopolis in September, but for sixteen days they refrained from assaulting the fortress, which was bravely defended by an Ottoman garrison, thus giving time to Bayezid to collect his army and to advance against the allied forces.

The Christian camp was the scene of riotous living and gambling. Large numbers of courtesans had accompanied the crusaders. The whole army was in a state of indiscipline and disorder. The French knights were boastful. They spoke with contempt of the Turkish troops, and could not believe that there was any danger from them. Bayezid, whose army was full of confidence in its superiority, was allowed to approach within striking distance, without any attempt to harass his advance. Even then the Christians did not believe there was danger. The Turks suddenly came into contact with them. The knights were compelled to abandon their gaming tables and their women, and to face the enemy whom they had so much despised.

The Ottoman army was preceded by large numbers of scouts and irregulars. The leaders of the chevaliers, knowing nothing of the numbers of the Ottomans or of their methods in war, and utterly despising them, most rashly proposed an immediate attack by the whole force of their splendid cavalry. The King of Hungary, who had had experience of the Ottomans and who knew their method of masking the main body of their army by irregulars, was more cautious, and advised that the foot soldiers of Hungary and Wallachia should be first employed to meet the attack of the Turkish irregulars, and that the cavalry should be reserved to meet the main body of the Ottomans. The chevaliers were furious at this suggestion. They suspected Sigismund of playing for his own hand, and of wishing to rob them of the glory of a great victory. They insisted on an immediate attack.

Sigismund, on hearing of this decision, said, “We shall lose the day through the great pride and folly of these French.” And so it turned out.

The chevaliers advanced in splendid array and had no difficulty in dispersing and slaughtering the mob of Turkish irregulars. But this impetuous charge spent their energy and tired their horses. When they were confronted by the main body of the Ottomans, sixty thousand in number, they were powerless to resist. They were surrounded and were compelled to surrender. The main body of Hungarian foot soldiers, when they came in contact with the Ottomans, were not more fortunate. The Wallachians, who formed one of the wings of the army, when they saw how the battle was going, retired from the field without a fight. The centre of the Hungarian army, under Sigismund, supported by the Bavarians, made a most gallant fight, and might have been successful if it had not been that the Serbian army, under Prince Stephen, came at a critical time, in support of the Ottomans, and turned the scale in their favour. After a battle of only three hours the Christian allies were completely defeated with great slaughter on both sides. Ten thousand of the Christians, including most of the surviving chevaliers, were taken prisoners. Those who escaped across the Danube suffered terribly in their retreat through Wallachia. They were beaten and maltreated by the peasantry, for whom they had shown no consideration in their advance.

Sigismund and the Grand Prior of Rhodes, at a late stage

of the battle, abandoned the army to its fate. They escaped in a small boat down the Danube, and were taken on board by a Venetian vessel, which conveyed them to Germany through the Black Sea, the Dardanelles, and the Adriatic. On passing the Straits the Turks paraded before their eyes the knights made captives at Nicopolis. One of these prisoners thus described what took place: —

> The Osmanlis took us out of the towers of Gallipoli and led us to the sea, and one after the other they abused the King of Hungary as he passed, and mocked him and called to him to come out of the boat and deliver his people; and this they did to make fun of him, and skirmished a long time with each other on the sea. But they did not do him any harm, and so he went away.[8]

On the morning of the battle of Nicopolis, Bayezid, when told of the heavy losses of his own army, and that in the early part of the battle the chevaliers had massacred a number of Turks who had surrendered on promise of life, was greatly incensed. He gave orders that all the Christian prisoners to the number of ten thousand were to be put to death in his presence. He made an exception only in favour of twenty-four of the knights, including de Nevers, their leader, for whose release a heavy ransom might be expected. But they were compelled to witness the execution of their comrades in arms.

On taking leave of them a year later at Brusa, Bayezid

[8] Gibbons, p. 221.

addressed de Nevers in these proud and insolent terms: —

> John, I know thee well, and am informed that you are in your own country a great lord. You are young, and in the future I hope you will be able to recover with your courage from the shame of the misfortune which has come to you in your foul knightly enterprise, and that in the desire of getting rid of the reproach and recovering your honour you will assemble your power to come against me and give me battle. If I were afraid of that and wanted to, before your release, I would make you swear upon your oath and religion that you would never bear arms against me, nor those who are in your company here. But no; neither upon you nor any other of those here will I impose this oath, because I desire, when you have returned to your home, and will have leisure, that you assemble your power and come against me. You will find me always ready to meet you and your people on the field of battle. And what I say to you, you can say in like manner to those to whom you will have the pleasure of speaking about it, because for this purpose was I born, to carry arms and always to conquer what is ahead of me.[9]

Before their final departure, Bayezid treated these knights to a day's sport on a regal scale; seven thousand falconers were employed on the occasion, and five thousand men led dogs to pick up the game. The historian does not state what was the bag resulting from this great battle.

Of the twenty-four knights only one, Marshal Boucicaut, took

[9] Froissart, xvi. 47.

up the parting challenge of Bayezid and returned to the East to make war against him. The others showed no desire to wipe out the disgrace of their defeat.[10]

After this great battle at Nicopolis the Ottoman army made irruptions into Wallachia, Styria, and Hungary. The city of Peterwardein was captured and eighteen thousand of its inhabitants were sold into slavery. Another division invaded Syrmia, and devastated the country between the Drave and the Danube. The fortresses on the river taken by the crusaders were recaptured. The raid into Wallachia was a failure. The Turks engaged in it were defeated and driven back. Bayezid himself threatened Buda, in Hungary, but his progress was checked by a long and painful fit of gout. Gibbon moralizes on this in the following sentence: "The disorders of the moral are sometimes corrected by those of the physical world; and an acrimonious humour falling on a single fibre of one man may prevent or suspend the misery of nations."[11] The invasion of Hungary on this occasion was a failure.

After this campaign Bayezid returned to Adrianople, and there occupied himself by inflicting further humiliations on the Greek Empire. He forced Manuel to resign and imposed John, the son of Andronicus, as its Emperor. He then issued forth again

[10] Boucicaut in 1399, with four ships and two armed galleys and twelve hundred knights and foot soldiers, after defeating an Ottoman fleet in the Dardanelles, arrived at Constantinople and gave assistance to the Emperor in defence of the city.

[11] Gibbon, viii. p. 114.

with his army, in 1397, and fell like a thunderbolt on Greece, without any warning or cause of complaint. He marched with his army through Thessaly, capturing on the way Larissa and Pharsalia. He passed through Thermopylæ. The mere passage of his army sufficed to subdue Doris and Locris. His two generals, Yacoub and Evrenos, then invaded the Peloponnesus. The latter captured and pillaged Argos. Its inhabitants, to the number of thirty thousand, were sold as slaves and deported to Asia. Colonies of Turks were planted in the Morea. Theodore Palæologus, who acted as despot there on behalf of the Greek Empire, agreed to become tributary of the Sultan.

Returning to Adrianople, Bayezid determined to obtain immediate possession of Constantinople. The Greek Empire had been already deprived of nearly all territory outside the walls of its capital. The Sultan opened proceedings against it by sending an envoy to the Emperor with this insulting message: —

> When I dethroned your predecessor, Manuel, it was not in your interest but in mine. If, then, you want to remain my friend, you must surrender your crown. I will give you any other government you may wish for. If you do not consent, I swear by God and the Prophet I will not spare a soul in your city; I will exterminate all of them.

The citizens of Constantinople, rather than experience the terrible fate which they knew would befall them in the event of a successful assault by the Ottoman army, were willing to come to terms. But the Emperor, who was buoyed up by hope

of assistance from the Christian Powers, refused to acquiesce in a pusillanimous surrender. He replied to the ambassador in dignified terms: "Tell your master that, feeble as we are, we know no other power to whom to address ourselves if it be not God, Who protects the feeble and humbles the powerful. Let the Sultan do what he pleases."

At this stage, and before he could give effect to his threats, Bayezid was compelled by great events in Asia to raise the siege of Constantinople. Hitherto, in twelve years of incessant war, Bayezid had been uniformly successful. He had annexed the greater part of Asia Minor, Macedonia, Northern Bulgaria, and Thessaly. He had reduced to vassalage the Greek Empire itself and Serbia, Wallachia, Bosnia, and a great part of Greece. He had defeated the feudal chivalry of Europe in the great battle of Nicopolis. He had not met with a single reverse. The next two years, the last of his reign, were to result in disastrous and overwhelming defeat to him, in his capture and death, and in the temporary crumpling up of the Turkish Empire. He came into conflict for the first time with Timur, a general and a conqueror more resolute, crafty, able, and cruel than himself.

Timur the Tartar, better known to us as Timurlane – Timur the lame, for he had met in early life with an accident which lamed him – was the greatest, the most ruthless, and the most devastating of warriors recorded in all history. Born in 1333, a descendant through his mother of the great Gengis Khan, he began life as a petty chief of a Tartar tribe in the neighbourhood

of Samarkand. It was not till he had reached the age of thirty-five that he achieved eminence over other neighbouring Tartar States. He then conceived the ambition of universal conquest. "As there was only one God in heaven," he said, "so there should be only one ruler on earth" – that one was to be himself. He went a long way towards gaining this object of his ambition, for he embarked on a career which, in rather less than thirty-five years, resulted in an empire extending from the Great Wall of China to the frontier of Asia Minor, and from the Sea of Aral to the River Ganges and the Persian Gulf. He had, by this time, conquered twenty-seven separate States and extinguished nine dynasties. He effected his purpose, not only by force of arms, but by a deliberate policy of terrorism. After victory he was of settled purpose ruthless in cruelties on the greatest scale.

It was obvious that, sooner or later, he would come into conflict with what was, at that time, the only other growing military Power in the world – the Ottoman Empire. The two potentates had already become neighbours, and causes of dispute and antagonism were often arising between them. Each had sheltered refugee princes, whose territories had been absorbed by the other, and who were engaged in intrigues to stir up war between the two rivals, in the hope of regaining their possessions. Insolent messages passed between the two potentates.

> What is the foundation of thy insolence and folly? [wrote Timur to Bayezid]. Thou hast fought some battles in the woods of Anatolia; contemptible trophies! Thou

hast obtained some victories over the Christians of Europe; thy sword was blessed by the Apostle of God; and thy obedience to the precepts of the Koran in waging war against the infidel is the sole consideration that prevents us from destroying thy country, the frontier and bulwark of the Moslem world. Be wise in time; reflect; repent; and avert the thunder of our vengeance which is yet suspended over thy head. Thou art no more than an ant; why wilt thou seek to provoke the elephants? Alas, they will trample thee under their feet.

Bayezid replied in terms of the greatest indignation. He protested that Timur had never triumphed unless by his own perfidy and the vices of his foes.

> Thy armies are innumerable: be they so; but what are the arrows of the flying Tartars against the scimitars and battle-axes of my firm and invincible Janissaries? I will guard the princes who have implored my protection; seek them in my tents. The cities of Arzingan and Erzerum are mine; and unless the tribute be paid I will demand the arrears under the walls of Tauris and Sultania.

And he added an insult of a yet grosser kind which, by its allusion to the harem, was the worst that could be devised by a Moslem: —

> If I fly from thy arms may my wives be thrice divorced from my bed; but if thou hast not courage to meet me in the field, mayest thou again receive thy wives after they have thrice endured the embrace of a stranger.

After this interchange of abuse Timur determined, in 1400, to attack and invade Asia Minor from Armenia, at the head of a horde of armed men, estimated by historians at not less than eight hundred thousand. He laid siege to Sivas, in Cappadocia, on the Armenian frontier, which had only been captured by Bayezid about three years previously. It was now defended by a garrison of Turks, under command of Ertoghrul, the eldest son of Bayezid. The fortifications were immensely strong, but Timur was ready to sacrifice any number of men in assaulting and capturing the city. He employed six thousand miners in undermining its defences with galleries and propping up the walls temporarily with timber smeared with pitch. When the mines were completed, fire was applied to the timber, and the walls gradually sank into the cavities laid open to them, and afforded entrance to the assaulting columns. The city was captured. Four thousand of its defenders were buried alive by order of Timur, and Ertoghrul was executed.

Bayezid, thus challenged, advanced, in 1401, with an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men to avenge the disaster at Sivas. Timur, however, after the capture of that city, refrained from advancing farther into Asia Minor. He passed into Syria and captured Damascus, and thence into Mesopotamia for the capture of Bagdad. It was not till the next year, 1402, that he determined to return to Asia Minor and to humble Bayezid. He retraced his steps to Sivas, and thence, after a further exchange of insolent messages with the Ottoman Sultan, he went in search of

him towards Angora, taking the route of Cæsarea and Kir Sheir.

Bayezid had also collected a great army in the east of Asia Minor, and had finally concentrated it in the neighbourhood of Angora. He showed none of his previous skill as a general, though all of his insolence and bravado. His army was discontented by his avarice, and by his neglect to pay them out of the well-filled treasury. He refused to follow the advice of his best generals, who warned him against meeting Timur's vast hosts on a field where they could deploy their whole strength. The two armies met at last on the plain of Angora, the site of many previous famous battles. It is almost inconceivable that Bayezid, in arrogant contempt of his foe, employed his army, in the face of the enemy, in a great hunt for game, which led them into a district devoid of water, where his soldiers suffered terribly, and five thousand are said to have died of thirst.

On return to their camp they found that Timur had diverted the stream which supplied it with water. Bayezid was forced to fight at a disadvantage. The Tartars, who formed a fourth part of the Ottoman army, were not to be relied on in this battle. Their sympathies were with their fellow-Tartars under Timur. Bayezid had committed the fatal error of placing them in the front line, after his usual tactics of meeting the first encounter of the enemy with inferior troops. But in this case the Tartars deserted on the field of battle. The Serbian contingent, under Prince Stephen, and other Christian vassal troops fought with the utmost gallantry and loyalty. But it was in vain. The whole

Ottoman army was outnumbered, overwhelmed, and routed with great slaughter. Bayezid with his bodyguard made a last stand. "The Thunderbolt," says the Turkish historian, "continued to wield a heavy battle-axe. As a starving wolf scattering a flock of sheep he scattered the enemy. Each blow of his redoubtable axe struck in such a way that there was no need of a second blow." But in the end he was overpowered and taken prisoner.

Bayezid for some time after his capture was treated with unwonted generosity by Timur, who was impressed by his dignified bearing, in spite of his overwhelming defeat and humiliation. But after an attempt to escape he was more rigidly guarded, and was put into fetters at night. The treatment of him became more cruel and contemptuous. He was carried by day in the train of Timur, when on the march, in a litter, which was in effect a cage[12] with open bars, exposed to the derision and contempt of the Tartars. His wife, Despina, the Serbian princess, was compelled to serve Timur with drink at his meals in a state of nudity, and with other women of Bayezid's harem was taken into that of the conqueror. Timur is also said to have made a footstool of his conquered foe.

Bayezid died of a broken heart after eight months of humiliation, at the age of forty-eight. During that time Timur overran the greater part of Asia Minor, capturing Nicæa and

[12] This story of the cage, which forms the subject of a scene in Marlowe's play of *Tamerlane*, has been discredited by some historians of late years. But Mr. Gibbons, after a full and careful examination of all the records of the time, has re-established its veracity.

Brusa and many other strongholds from the Ottomans, and Smyrna from the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The walls of Smyrna were undermined in the same way as those of Sivas. In two weeks Timur effected a capture which Bayezid had failed to do in three times that length of time. The Knights, when they found that the city was no longer tenable, fought their way down to their galleys against the crowd of despairing inhabitants. Most of them escaped to Rhodes and effected there another settlement. Those who failed to escape were put to death by Timur, who built a pyramid of their heads. Everywhere there was ruthless cruelty. When approaching the city of Ephesus, children came out to meet him singing songs to appease his wrath. "What is this noise?" he asked. When told, he ordered his horsemen to ride over the children. They were trampled to death.

Timur reinstated in their former territories, as tributaries to his own Empire, most of the petty princes who had been dispossessed by the Turks, including the Emir of Karamania. He eventually returned to Samarkand, where he made preparations for the invasion of China, but before this could be realized he died, at the age of seventy-one, two years after the death of Bayezid. As a result of his raid into Asia Minor the Ottoman Empire there, for the time being, completely collapsed. But the Tartars disappeared without leaving any trace behind them.

If Bayezid's physical downfall was overwhelming and humiliating, his moral decadence was even worse, and, as it turned out, was more permanently injurious to the people of his

Empire by the evil example it set. In the brief periods of peace, spent at Brusa and Adrianople, he gave way to self-indulgence and vice of a deplorable kind. He was the first of his race to break the laws of the Prophet and to drink too freely of wine. In company with his Grand Vizier, Ali, he was addicted to drunken orgies. Still worse, he was tempted by that boon companion to give way to vice of unmentionable depravity, condemned by all the world. The Empire was ransacked for good-looking boys, the sons of Christian parents, who were compelled to embrace Islamism and to enter the service of the Court, nominally as pages, but really to pander to the degrading desire of the Sultan. In adopting such practices, Bayezid set the fashion to others of his entourage. The moral infection then spread widely among the upper classes of society, especially among the judges and ulemas. There can be little doubt that immorality infected the upper society of the Empire and was one of the causes which ultimately led to decadence and ruin.

It is to be noted of Bayezid that in his short but strenuous career of conquest he did not show any falling off of vigour and courage as a result of his excesses. But in his final campaign against Timur his conduct was so fatuous as to give rise to the belief that his gross debauchery had resulted in softening of the brain. However that may have been, he met in Timur a greater man than himself who, even at the age of seventy, had lost none of his vigour of mind and body, and who, as master also of bigger battalions, was practically invincible.

V
MAHOMET I
1413-21

On the death of Sultan Bayezid, in captivity, it seemed as though the Ottoman Empire was doomed to extinction. Asia Minor had already passed out of its hands, and was either in possession of the Emirs who had been reinstated in their territories by Timur, and who had sworn allegiance to him, or was still in the occupation of the invading Tartars. It was not to be expected that the Empire in Europe would survive when it could no longer draw support from Asia. The Christian populations of Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Wallachia would soon reassert their independence, and the Greek Empire might be expected to recover some of its lost provinces. The Turkish Empire, however, showed a most unexpected vitality. It survived not only the invasion of Timur, but civil war, which after the death of Bayezid broke out between four of his sons. An interregnum of ten years occurred, during which there was internecine war between these claimants to his throne. The Empire emerged from these stupendous difficulties, under the able rule of the youngest of them, Mahomet I, as strong as ever, and without the loss of a single province.

Timur's hosts, after ravaging the whole of Asia Minor,

departed like a swarm of locusts which has denuded a district of its produce and then seeks fresh ground. They returned to Central Asia. They left nothing behind in Asia Minor of Tartar rule, either of an army or of an administration. The field was left open to the Ottomans to fight among themselves and their former vassals and neighbours for such a settlement as could be achieved by the strongest of them.

Of the six sons of Bayezid, five fought with him at Angora in command of divisions of his army. One of them, Mustapha, was supposed to be among the slain; another, Musa, was taken prisoner and shared the captivity of his father. The other three escaped. The eldest of them, Solyman, accompanied by the Grand Vizier, Ali, and Hassan, the Agha of the Janissaries, made his way to Adrianople, where, on the death of Bayezid, he had himself proclaimed Sultan, and exercised power as such over the European provinces of the Empire. Issa, a younger son, fled to Brusa, where he also claimed to be successor to his father, and Mahomet, the youngest son, but by far the ablest, retired to Amasia, a small principality in the north-east of Asia Minor. He there assumed authority over the district. After the death of their father these three claimants for succession to his Empire fought it out between themselves, and, later on, a fourth claimant was added to the list in Musa, who had been set free by Timur, in order that he might convey the dead body of his father for interment at Brusa.

The earliest conflict was between Mahomet and Issa.

Mahomet offered to divide between them the Ottoman possessions in Asia. Issa refused and claimed the whole of them. He was defeated and fled to Europe, where he sought the assistance of Solyman, who had firmly established himself in the Ottoman dominions there, and who was now able to lead an army into Asia Minor in support of Issa. Mahomet was hard pressed by Solyman. He sent Musa across the Straits to effect a diversion by raising revolt against Solyman in Europe. This had the desired effect, and Solyman was compelled to return to Adrianople. After his departure Mahomet succeeded in defeating Issa again, and the latter disappeared and was heard of no more.

In Europe, Solyman and Musa were now in deadly conflict. Solyman was much the same type of man as his father – of great vigour and courage in action, but given to orgies of drink and debauchery. The Agha of the Janissaries in vain tried to rouse him from the apathy to which he was often reduced after these bouts. He threatened to shave the Agha's beard with his sword. He was often severe and even cruel to his soldiers, and finally the Janissaries, incensed by his brutal treatment, his dissolute habits, and his inability to rouse himself to action, rebelled against him, at the instance of Hassan, and put him to death. They then took service under Musa, who became master of the position in Europe and assumed the title of Sultan.

After an expedition to Serbia for the purpose of avenging what he considered their treachery to him in supporting Mahomet, and where he committed the most revolting cruelties, Musa returned

to Adrianople, and opened a campaign against the Emperor Manuel, who, after the death of Bayezid, had superseded Andronicus on the Greek throne and who supported Mahomet.

The Emperor appealed to Mahomet for assistance. Mahomet, with a Turkish army, supported by the Serbian contingent, crossed the Bosphorus in answer to this appeal, and the strange sight was witnessed of a Turkish army, under command of one of the Othman race, defending Constantinople against another Turkish army.

Musa eventually retreated from his lines in front of Constantinople, and was pursued by Mahomet. When, later, the two armies came into close touch on the borders of Serbia, a conflict was avoided by a revolt of Musa's troops. The Agha, Hassan, addressed the Janissaries in the very presence of Musa. "Why," he said to them, "do you hesitate to go over to the ranks of the most just and virtuous of the Othman princes? Why subject yourselves to be outraged by a man who can take care neither of himself nor of others?"

Musa, on hearing this harangue to his troops, rushed at Hassan and slew him. The companion of Hassan struck at Musa with his sword and wounded him in the hand. The troops, when they saw that their general was seriously wounded, were seized with panic. They deserted and went over to Mahomet. Musa fled with three attendants, and, later, his dead body was found in a marsh.

Mahomet was now in undisputed command of the Empire as Sultan. He reigned as such for only eight years. He

showed, during that time, infinite skill and patience, as a statesman equally as a general, in restoring, consolidating, and maintaining his Empire. He was ardently desirous of peace. To the representatives of Serbia, Wallachia, and Albania he said: "Forget not to tell your masters that I grant peace to all, and that peace I will accept from all. May God be against the breakers of peace."

He kept on the best of terms with the Greek Emperor, with whom he had made a defensive alliance, and restored to him certain cities on the coast of the Black Sea and in Thessaly. He had frequent causes, however, for the use of his army, and for showing his skill as a general. He compelled the Emirs of Karamania, Kermia, and other principalities in Asia Minor, who had promised allegiance to Timur, to renew their vassalage to the Ottoman Empire. Two or three times the Karamanian prince revolted and endeavoured to assert complete independence. As often Mahomet defeated him, but contented himself with asserting supremacy, and did not insist upon the incorporation of his territory with the Empire. He also defeated an attempt of a Turkish upstart to create an independent State at Smyrna and Aidin. He put down a dangerous revolt of Dervishes and extinguished the sect. He came into conflict at sea with the Republic of Venice, and though he was worsted, and his fleet of galleys was destroyed, he succeeded in making an honourable peace.

As a ruler of his Empire he showed many great qualities. He

gained the appellation which is best translated into English as the "Great Gentleman" – and right well he deserved it. He was magnanimous and just. He strictly observed his promises. He knew that his Empire could not be maintained by force alone, but that justice and clemency were necessary. His Christian subjects were everywhere treated with consideration. He would not tolerate cruelty to them. He was a liberal patron of literature, and in his short reign the Ottomans first showed a bent for poetry. It was a blot on his fame that he caused his youngest brother to be deprived of his sight, and that he put to death his nephew, the son of Solyman, lest either of them should dispute the throne with himself or his son after him. His experience of his brothers and the history of his family doubtless convinced him that no member of the Othman race would be content with any position short of the Sultanate. This may not be a moral justification, but it is an explanation which, in view of the ethics of the times, must prevent too severe a judgment. Though Mahomet in his short reign, after attaining full command of the Empire, made no extension of it, he must be regarded practically as one of its founders and as among its most eminent and successful rulers. He owed his success over his brothers to his moral ascendancy and to the great reputation which he achieved with his troops for his high qualities as a ruler even more than to his prowess as a general. The emergence of the Empire from the extreme difficulties into which it fell from the Mongolian invasion must have been due to the fact that the Ottomans at that

time were much superior to the Greeks and the other Christian communities in all the qualities which tend to make a stable government.

Mahomet died of apoplexy in 1421 at the early age of forty-seven. He was buried at Brusa in a mausoleum near to the splendid building known as the Green Mosque, which he had himself erected.

VI
MURAD II
1421-51

Murad succeeded his father in the Sultanate as second of the name. He reigned for thirty years, including two short periods when he abdicated and retired into private life. But on each occasion he was compelled by the exigencies of the State, and the youth and inexperience of his son and successor, to resume the throne. He much resembled his father in vigour and capacity as a general and in his desire to act justly.

At the very commencement of Murad's reign the Greek Emperor Manuel, by an almost incredible act of folly, hoping to take advantage of Murad's youth and inexperience, let loose from confinement a man who claimed, whether rightly or not was never clearly established, to be Mustapha, the son of Sultan Bayezid, who had disappeared after the battle of Angora. Manuel entered into a treaty with this claimant to the Ottoman throne, by which, in the event of his succeeding in establishing his succession, the city of Gallipoli and all the cities on the shores of the Black Sea, taken from the Greek Empire by the Turks, were to be restored to it.

In spite of this scandalous treachery to Islam, the so-called Mustapha succeeded in raising a large army in Europe, with

which he defeated the troops who adhered to Murad. He then crossed the Dardanelles into Asia with his army in vessels supplied by the Emperor Manuel. Murad showed all the vigour and capacity of his race in dealing with this emergency. He won over the greater part of Mustapha's army, who were disaffected. He defeated what remained. Mustapha was driven across the Straits again to Gallipoli, where he was besieged, captured, and hanged, as the best proof, it was said, that he was an impostor.

Murad, having defeated this claimant to his throne, determined to avenge the perfidy of the Emperor Manuel and to put an end to the Greek Empire by the capture of Constantinople. For this purpose he collected an army of veterans. He invested the city, making a long line of great earthworks from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmora. From this he bombarded the city walls by cannon, then for the first time used by the Ottoman army, but which were not as yet very effective. He also used movable towers, from which assaults could be made on the walls of the city. He proclaimed that the great wealth of the capital would be the prize of the soldiers if the assault on it were successful. He made a special promise to a band of five hundred Dervishes, who were to lead the assault, that all the nuns in the city would be given to them as concubines. In spite of these great inducements to victory, the assault was unsuccessful. The Greeks defended the walls of the city with the utmost heroism, assisted, it was said, by a timely apparition of the Holy Virgin, which stimulated their efforts and depressed the

assailants. Murad would probably have been successful with the overwhelming forces at his disposal if he had persisted in the siege, but he was compelled to raise it by a diversion cleverly contrived by the Greek Emperor.

A rival to the Sultan was set up in Asia in another Mustapha, a younger brother of Murad, who had not been put to death in pursuance of the fratricidal policy of his family. This new claimant was supported by the Karamanians and Kermians, and with their aid he defeated an Ottoman army in Asia Minor. Murad found it necessary to abandon the siege of Constantinople, and to transfer his main army to Asia Minor for the purpose of dealing with this danger to his throne. He came to close quarters as quickly as possible with Mustapha's army, and defeated it. Mustapha was taken prisoner and was hanged at once by his captors, without giving an opportunity to Murad to exercise his clemency in favour of his brother, had he so willed it. Murad then occupied himself by reducing the Karamanian and other Emirs to complete subjection to his Empire.

Meanwhile the Emperor Manuel died, and was succeeded by John Palæologus. Murad, in lieu of renewing the siege of Constantinople, was content to make another treaty with the new Emperor, imposing on him a heavy tribute and stripping him of almost every possession beyond the walls of his capital. The Empire thus obtained a reprieve for a few brief years.

In the case of Salonika, which had been recently sold by the Greek Emperor to the Republic of Venice, now desirous of

effecting a lodgment in Macedonia, Murad refused to recognize the right of the Emperor to transfer to a foreign Power a city which at one time had been under Ottoman rule. It had three times in the last hundred years been captured by the Ottomans, and had as often been recaptured by the Greeks. Murad led an army, in 1430, to attack it, and, after a vigorous resistance by the Venetians, captured it by assault, and finally annexed the city and its district to the Turkish Empire. It was thought that Murad showed great clemency in not allowing his soldiers to indulge in a wholesale massacre. The Greek inhabitants, however, were sold into slavery, and their numbers were so great that a good-looking girl was sold for the price of a pair of boots.

The suppression of rebellion in Asia Minor, the subjection of the Greek Emperor to the position of a humble vassal, and the capture of Salonika had occupied Murad for some years. Later he was involved in long struggles with his neighbours, the Hungarians, on the northern boundaries of his Empire. The Ottomans were engaged in constant raids across the Danube, where vast districts were devastated, and thousands of their population were carried off as captives for sale as slaves. There arose about this time in Hungary a national hero, the celebrated Hunyadi, a natural son of the late King Sigismund. He was a born leader of men, not a great general, but a most valiant fighter. He had gained great distinction in war in other directions. He now became the soul of hostility against the Ottomans. He was known as the White Knight, on account of his silver armour, which

always shone in the van of the impetuous charges of his cavalry. He was rightly regarded by his countrymen as a patriot and a national hero. None the less, he was a bloodthirsty ruffian. He made a practice of massacring all the prisoners taken in battle. He found pleasure in having this effected, in his presence, at banquets, where the guests were entertained by the shrieks of the dying men.

Hunyadi for twenty years was a terror to the Ottoman armies. His first encounter with them was at Hermannstadt, north of the Danube, which was invested by an army of eighty thousand Ottomans. He led an army of twenty thousand Hungarians against them, in relief of the fortress, and inflicted a severe defeat on them, in despite of great disparity of numbers. Twenty thousand of the Ottomans were killed, including the general. The others were dispersed. Murad sent another army of eighty thousand men against him, under another Pasha. Hunyadi again defeated it with great slaughter at Varsag.

These notable victories roused great enthusiasm in Europe. It was determined to take the offensive against the Ottomans, and to make another effort to drive them out of Europe. A coalition was formed for the purpose between Hungary and Poland, then united under King Ladislaus, and Wallachia and Bosnia. Serbia, which under its king, Stephen Lazariwitch, had been the firm ally of the Ottomans, and had supported them in many campaigns in Asia and Europe, was now induced to abandon this alliance and, under Stephen's successor, George Brancowitch, to join

the confederacy against the Ottomans. The Pope, Eugenius, was most active in support of this combination. His legate, Cardinal Julian Cesarini, led an armed force in support of it. Money was raised for the purpose of the war by a great sale of indulgences to the faithful in every part of Europe. A large contingent of French and German knights joined the allied army. It was, in fact, another crusade, prompted by religious zeal on behalf of Christianity against Islam. The allied army was under the nominal command of Ladislaus, but Hunyadi was its real leader.

The Republics of Venice and Genoa gave their support, and as, at this time, the Ottomans had no naval force, it was hoped that these Powers, by means of their numerous and powerful galleys, would prevent the transfer to Europe of Murad's main army, which was again engaged in conflict with the Karamanians in Asia Minor.

The allied army, under these favourable circumstances, crossed the Danube in 1443. It defeated an Ottoman army on the banks of the Masova and again at Nisch. It then crossed the Balkan range in winter – an operation of extreme difficulty, which has since only twice been effected, by General Diebitsch and General Gourko – and again defeated the Turks in a battle at the foot of these mountains. Strange to say, instead of marching onwards to Adrianople, as Diebitsch did in 1829, Hunyadi was content with the laurels already achieved, and returned with his army to Buda, where he displayed his trophies and received a triumph.

Murad, on hearing of the retreat of the Hungarians across the Balkans, determined to come to terms with them, and not to pursue them again across the Danube. With some difficulty, and in spite of the sullen opposition of Cardinal Julian and the French contingent, a treaty was agreed to, at Szegeddin, with Ladislaus, by which Serbia was to be freed from dependence on the Ottoman Empire and Wallachia was to be ceded to Hungary. The treaty was to be in force for ten years. It was solemnly sworn to on the Gospel and the Koran by Ladislaus and Murad.

While this treaty was being negotiated Murad, weary of war, and desirous of spending the remainder of his life in sensual enjoyments which had so long been denied to him, decided to abdicate his throne. He was still in the full vigour of life at the age of forty-one, though he was said to be growing rather fat. He did not propose, like the Emperor Charles V, to retire to a monastery, but rather, like Diocletian the Roman Emperor, to a luxurious palace, surrounded by beautiful gardens, which he had prepared for his retreat at Magnesia. On the ratification of the treaty of Szegeddin, in 1444, he carried out this purpose, and his son Mahomet, at the age of fourteen, was proclaimed Sultan in his place.

When this became known to the Hungarians a revulsion of opinion took place against the recent treaty with the Turks. The Hungarian Diet determined, at the instance of Cardinal Julian, backed up by the Pope, to break the treaty. News had arrived of a fresh outbreak of the Karamanians. The fleets of Genoa, Venice,

and Burgundy were masters of the Hellespont and would, it was believed, prevent the Ottoman army in Asia Minor from crossing into Europe. The opportunity for crushing the Turks and driving them out of Europe seemed to be most favourable.

> Is it now [said Cardinal Julian to the Hungarian Diet] that you will desert expectations and your own fortunes? Is it to your God and your fellow-Christians that you have pledged your faith? That prior obligation annihilates a rash and sacrilegious oath to the enemies of Christ. His vicar on earth is the Roman Pontiff, without whose sanction you can neither promise nor perform. In his name I absolve your perjury and sanctify your arms. Follow my footsteps in the path of glory and salvation; and, if you still have scruples, devolve on my head the punishment and the sin.

"This mischievous casuistry," says the historian Gibbon, "was seconded by his respectable character and the levity of popular assemblies." The Hungarian Diet resolved on war, and King Ladislaus, in spite of his recent oath, determined to break the treaty. Hunyadi was, in the first instance, strongly opposed to this, but his assent was obtained by the promise of the throne of Bulgaria, in the event of the defeat of the Ottomans and the conquest of that province. The Prince of Serbia, who had regained his independence by the treaty, was persuaded to join with the allies by the promise of an addition to his kingdom.

It was decided to send an army at once against the Ottomans. But it was a much reduced one in comparison with that which had

so recently crossed the Balkans. Most of the French and German knights and their attendants had already gone home. Not more than ten thousand remained under Hunyadi. They were joined by five thousand Wallachians. They invaded Bulgaria, and then, instead of crossing the Balkans, descended the Danube to the coast and thence marched to Varna. Meanwhile the Ottomans, in great alarm and fearing the incompetence of the young Mahomet to conduct a great war, induced Murad to emerge again from his retreat. He hastily gathered together an army in Asia Minor. He bribed the Genoese, at the rate of a ducat for each man, to convey it across the Hellespont. He arrived in front of Varna unexpectedly, before the Christian army knew of his intentions. His army greatly outnumbered that of King Ladislaus. In spite of this, the two wings of it were driven back with great slaughter. Murad, in command of the centre of his army, for the moment and for the only time in his life, lost his presence of mind and was disposed to fly. But the Beglerbey of Anatolia laid hold of the bridle of his horse and urged him to fight it out. The battle was renewed. The Janissaries stood firm and successfully repulsed the main body of the Christians. Ladislaus was unhorsed and asked for quarter. But he was put to death on the field. His head was stuck upon a lance and was held up by the side of another lance which bore on high a copy of the violated treaty. The Christians, when they saw the head of their dead king in its soldier's helmet thus held aloft, were struck with panic and fled precipitately. Hunyadi escaped with difficulty. Cardinal Julian

expiated by death on the field his sin in advising the breach of the treaty. Two other bishops shared his fate. Never was defeat and disaster more richly deserved. Two-thirds of the Christian army were slain in the battle, and even greater numbers, though a less proportion, of the Ottomans shared their fate.

Murad, having won this great victory, again, a second time, abdicated his throne and returned to his retreat at Magnesia, and again the young Mahomet was invested as Sultan. Though history supplies cases of great kings seeking retirement from the cares of office, and of some of them being induced to resume their thrones, it records no other case of a second abdication and a second resumption. Murad was very soon recalled from his abode of pleasure. A serious outbreak of the Janissaries occurred at Adrianople. They ravaged the city and committed great atrocities. The ministers of the young Sultan were greatly alarmed. They felt that only a strong hand could keep a check on the unruly Janissaries. Murad was again summoned from his retreat. The young Mahomet was induced to go on a hunting expedition. In his absence Murad again made his appearance at Adrianople and resumed power. Mahomet, on his return from hunting, found that his father was again in the saddle. Murad was received by his troops with a great ovation, and even the unruly Janissaries gave in their submission to him. He did not again seek retirement at Magnesia. He reigned for seven more years – another period of almost incessant war. He first made an invasion of the Morea, which the Greek Emperor's brothers had divided

between them and governed as petty princes, or despots, as they were called. Murad had no difficulty in storming and capturing the fortification by which the isthmus of Corinth was defended. He compelled the two despots to accept the position of vassals under the Empire.

Murad then again turned his attention to Serbia and Hungary. He defeated the combined forces of Hungary, Serbia, and Bosnia, under Hunyadi, on the field of Kossova, where in 1389 Murad I had first subdued the Serbians. As a result of this great battle Serbia lost its independence and was finally incorporated as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. Bosnia became a tributary State.

Murad was less fortunate in his efforts to subdue the Albanians. These people were under the leadership of George Castriota – commonly called Scanderbeg – who had been brought up at Murad's Court as a Mussulman, and had learned the art of war from him, but who had abjured Islam, with a view to leadership of the Albanians. He carried on a guerrilla war against the Ottoman invaders with great success, and Murad was unable to complete the conquest of the State. This was practically the only failure of Murad's adventurous life. His generals met with many defeats at the hand of Hunyadi, but Murad retrieved them in the two battles in which he came in conflict with the great Hungarian hero. He died of apoplexy in 1451.

Looking back at his career, it does not appear that he made war with ambitious objects to aggrandize his Empire. War was,

in almost every case, forced upon him. Three times the Prince of Karamania declared war against him, and three times Murad defeated him, and was content with insisting on the vassalage of the province and not on its extinction and incorporation with the Empire. It has been shown how perfidious was the conduct of the Greek Emperor, and how fully justified Murad was in reducing his territory to the narrowest limits. Murad's attack on Salonika when in the hands of the Venetian Republic was equally justified, for the Greek Emperor had no right to sell it, and thus invite a foreign Power to make a lodgment there. The wars on the northern frontier were forced upon him by the Hungarians and the Christian Powers in alliance with them. They appealed to arms, and victory decided against them. It will be seen that as a net result of Murad's reign the Ottoman Empire was extended during these thirty years by the acquisition of many petty principalities in Asia Minor, by the complete subjection of Serbia and Bosnia, the conquest of Salonika and its district, and by the conversion of the Morea into a tributary State. It was, however, reduced by the loss of Wallachia as a vassal State.

Gibbon, quoting from a Turkish historian, says: —

> Murad was a just and valiant prince, of a great soul; patient of labour, learned, merciful, religious, charitable; a lover and encourager of the studious and of all who excelled in any art or science. No man obtained more or greater victories. Belgrade alone withstood his attacks. Under his reign the soldier was ever victorious, the citizen rich and

> secure. If he subdued any country, his first care was to build mosques and caravansaries, hospitals, and colleges.

Though, *more suo*, Gibbon suggests doubts whether such praise could be justified in the case of a Sultan "whose virtues are often the vices most useful to himself or most agreeable to his subjects," he admits that

> the justice and moderation of Murad are attested by his conduct and acknowledged by Christians themselves, who consider a prosperous reign and a peaceful death as the reward of his singular merits. In the vigour of his age and military power he seldom engaged in war till he was justified by a previous and adequate provocation. In the observance of treaties his word was inviolate and sacred.[13]

[13] Gibbon, viii. p. 242.

VII
MAHOMET II, 'THE CONQUEROR'
1451-81

If Mahomet, the eldest son of Murad, at the age of fourteen, had been reckoned too feeble to cope with the emergencies of the State, it is very certain that he soon made wonderfully rapid progress. At the age of twenty-one, when he again mounted the throne on the death of his father, he was amply, and almost precociously, endowed with many of the best, and many also of the worst, qualities of an autocrat, and was quite able alone to take command of the State. He was undoubtedly the ablest man that the house of Othman had as yet produced, not only as a general, but as a statesman. He had also great intellectual capacity and literary attainments. He spoke five languages fluently. He was the most proud and ambitious of his race and the most persistent in pursuing his aims. He combined with these high qualities, however, extreme cruelty and perfidy and sensuality of the grossest and vilest kind. He differed from his predecessors in his craving for absolute power, free from control by his ministers, and in his reckless disregard of human life. Hitherto, from Othman to Murad II, the Sultans had been in intimate association with their viziers and generals, and had shared their meals with them. They were accessible to their subjects, high

and low. Mahomet was very different. He was the true despot after the Oriental fashion. He held himself aloof. He took his meals alone. He made no confidants. He treated his viziers and pashas as though they were his slaves. He had no regard for their lives. There were men in his personal service who were adepts at striking off heads by single blows of their scimitars. Two at least of Mahomet's Grand Viziers were put to death in this way in his presence without warning or compunction. This levelling process was not apparently objected to by his subjects.

On hearing at Magnesia of the death of his father, Mahomet, who was eager to resume power, mounted at once an Arab horse, and exclaiming, "Let all who love me follow!" he rode to the Hellespont, and thence crossed to Gallipoli and made his way to Adrianople. He was there again acclaimed as Sultan, not, however, without having to submit to onerous presents to the Janissaries, a bad precedent which was later always followed on the accession of a Sultan. The first act of his reign was to direct that his brother, an infant son of Murad, by his latest wife, a Serbian princess, should be put to death. He feared that the child, when grown up, might dispute the throne with him, on the ground that its mother was a legitimate wife of royal descent, while he himself (Mahomet) was only the son of a slave. A high officer of the Court was directed to drown the child in a bath. This was effected at the very moment when the mother was engaged in offering her congratulations to the new Sultan on his accession. The foul deed created a very bad impression,

and Mahomet found it expedient to disown the act. He did so by directing the execution of the officer who had carried out his order. He compelled the mother, in spite of her royal rank, to marry a slave, an outrageous insult to the Serbian prince and to the memory of his father.

From the earliest moment of his accession it became clear that Mahomet intended to signalize his reign by the capture of Constantinople. With this view, he came to terms for a three years' truce with Hunyadi and the Hungarians. He chastised and then gave easy terms to the Karamanians, and accepted as a wife the daughter of their prince. He sent an army to the Peloponnesus to prevent the two brothers of the Greek Emperor, who were ruling there, from lending their aid to the Greeks of Constantinople. He directed the erection of a great fortress on the European side of the Bosphorus, at its narrowest point opposite to another, which had been erected by Bayezid, very near to the capital, so as to command the Straits. When the Greek Emperor sent an envoy to protest against this, Mahomet replied: —

> I make no threats against your city. By assuring the safety of my country I am not infringing any treaty. Have you forgotten the extremity to which my father was reduced when your Emperor, in league with the Hungarians, endeavoured to prevent his crossing to Europe by closing the Straits against him? Murad was compelled to ask for the assistance of the Genoese. I was at Adrianople at the time and was very young. The Mussulmans were in great alarm and you Greeks insulted them. My father took an oath at

the battle of Varna to erect a fort on the European side. This oath I will fulfil. Have you the right or the power to prevent my doing what I wish on my own territory? The two sides of the Straits are mine – that of Asia Minor because it is peopled by Ottomans, that of Europe because you are unable to defend it. Tell your master that the Sultan who now reigns in no way resembles his predecessors. My power goes beyond their vows. I permit you now to withdraw, but in the future I will have flayed alive those who bring me such messages.[14]

No more envoys were sent to him after this by the Greeks. Their Emperor, Constantine – the last of his line – had succeeded his brother three years before the accession of Mahomet. He was a brave and conscientious prince, who gave lustre to the last days of the Empire. But he was most unwise and provocative in his conduct to the new Sultan, evidently under the belief that he had to deal with the inexperienced youth who had been displaced by Murad six years previously. He threatened to let loose, as a rival claimant to the Ottoman throne, Orkhan, a grandson of Bayezid, who was under his charge, if a larger allowance was not given for his maintenance. Mahomet contemptuously rejected the claim. The Grand Vizier, Khalil, who was suspected of being in the pay of the Greeks, warned the Emperor of his extreme folly. "Your madness," he said to the Greek ambassador, "will put Constantinople in the hands of the Sultan. Proclaim Orkhan

[14] Von Hammer, ii. p. 379.

Sultan in Europe, call in the Hungarians to your aid, retake what provinces you can, and you will speedily see the end of the Greek Empire."

The new fortress was completed in the autumn of 1452. It was then seen that, in combination with the fortress on the opposite shore, it gave complete command of the Straits to the Ottomans. Venetian vessels which attempted to pass were captured and their crews were sawn in halves. Mahomet then declared his intention to attack Constantinople. In an address to his principal pashas, after describing the conquests made by his predecessors in Europe and Asia, he pointed out that the great barrier to further progress was this city and the army of the Emperor.

> The opposition [he said] must be ended; these barriers must be removed. It was for them to complete the work of their fathers. They had now against them a single city, one which could not resist their attacks; a city whose population was greatly reduced and whose former wealth had been diminished by Turkish sieges, and by the continued incursions made by his ancestors upon its territories; a city which was now only one in name, for in reality its buildings were useless and its walls abandoned and for the great part in ruins. Even from its weakness, however, they knew that from its favourable position, commanding both land and sea, it had greatly hindered their progress and could still hinder it, opposing their plans and being always ready to attack them. Openly or secretly it had done all it could against them. It was the city which had brought

about the attack by Timerlane and the suffering which followed. It had instigated Hunyadi to cross the Danube, and on every occasion and in every possible manner had been their great enemy. The time had now come when, in his opinion, it should be captured or wiped off the face of the earth. One of two things: he would either have it within his Empire or he would lose both. With Constantinople in his possession, the territories already gained could be safely held and more would be obtained; without it, no territory that they possessed was safe.[15]

In the ensuing winter (1452) Mahomet made every preparation at Adrianople for a campaign in the next year. Having no means of casting cannons, which at that time were coming into use in European armies, he tempted a Wallachian, who was experienced in such work, and who was in the service of the Greeks, to come over to his side for higher pay, and devised with him a cannon of enormous size, firing stone balls of 2-1/2 feet in diameter, and many other smaller, but still large, guns throwing balls of 150 lb. weight, for use against the walls of Constantinople. He also constructed a large fleet of war vessels propelled by oars, biremes and triremes, to be used in the siege of the city. He was most active and eager, working day and night in concerting plans with his generals for his great purpose. Early in the following year (1453) he collected in front of the walls of Constantinople an army, estimated at a hundred and fifty

[15] Sir Edwin Pears, *Destruction of the Greek Empire*, p. 217.

thousand men, including twelve thousand Janissaries, and a vast number of irregulars and camp followers eager for the sack of the great city.

Constantine, on his part, was equally engaged in making preparations for the defence of his capital. He collected supplies of every kind. He did his best to repair and strengthen the walls of the city, which had been neglected and badly repaired by fraudulent Greek contractors. He invited the aid of the Christian princes of Western Europe for the coming struggle. In this view, and in the hope of getting full support from the Pope, he agreed to a scheme of union between the Greek and Latin Churches, in which everything was conceded to the latter. A great service was held at St. Sophia to ratify this union. Cardinal Isidore, the legate of the Pope, a Greek by birth, presided. It was attended by the Emperor and all his Court, clergy, and the officers of State. This gave great offence to the main body of the Greek clergy, and to the great majority of the people of Constantinople. There was implacable hatred between the members of the two Churches, and not even the grave peril of the State could induce them to compose their differences. St. Sophia was deserted by its congregation. It was thought to be polluted by the service.[16] The Grand Duke Notaras, the second person in the State after the Emperor, in command of all the forces, was specially offended. He even went the length of saying in public that he would rather

[16] The four pages which Gibbon devotes to a description of this attempted union of the two Churches are masterpieces of irony and scorn (Gibbon, viii. pp. 287-91).

see the turban of the Turks at Constantinople than the hat of a cardinal. It resulted that the Greeks were divided into two parties. Priests refused to give the sacrament to dying men not of their party. The Churches refused to contribute out of their vast wealth to necessities of the State. Constantine was seriously embarrassed and weakened by the division among his people. Of a total population of the city, reduced as it was, as compared with the past, and estimated at a hundred thousand, not more than six thousand took up arms in support of Constantine against the Turks.

The appeals to the Western Powers resulted in a certain, but very insufficient, number of volunteers from Southern Europe giving their services to support the Greek cause in its final struggle with the Moslems. Seven hundred Genoese came under the command of Giustiniani, an able soldier of fortune, who proved to be the main support of Constantine. Others had come with Cardinal Isidore, at the instance of the Pope, and with some small amount of money from the same quarter. There were Catalans and Aragonese from Spain, but the number of these recruits from Western Europe did not exceed three thousand. The total force under the command of Constantine for the defence of the city amounted to no more than eight thousand. It is strange that there were no volunteers from France and Germany, or from Hungary and Poland, from whence so many crusaders had volunteered in previous years to drive the Turks out of Europe. Nor was there any valid assistance in men and

money from the numerous Greeks in the Levant. The unfortunate Constantine was not only very deficient in men, but his resources in money were very low. He had, however, in his service twenty powerful galleys well manned, and three galleys had come from Venice.

It would seem that the cause of Constantine did not much interest Europe, and did not even meet with an effective support among the Greeks themselves.

The city of Constantinople, as it then existed, was situate between the Golden Horn, its great harbour, and the sea of Marmora. Its land frontage, distant about nine miles from the entrance to the harbour, was four miles in length. It was protected by a triple line of walls, the two inner of which were very massive, flanked by towers at distances of 170 feet. There was a space of 60 feet between these walls. The third and outer wall was a crenelated breastwork on the other side of a fosse, of a width of 60 feet. This powerful line of defence had been devised by the Emperor Theodosius II about a thousand years ago and had protected the city in twenty sieges. Before the invention of cannon it was practically impregnable.[17] There were also fortifications extending for about nine miles on the side of the Golden Horn. The eight thousand men were too few even for effective defence of the four miles of walls, which were to

[17] The writer, in 1890, had the advantage of viewing what remained of these walls in the company of Sir Edwin Pears, who has fully described them in his admirable account of the great siege.

be attacked directly by the Ottoman army, to say nothing of the fortifications along the side of the Golden Horn. The defence, however, with these limited means, was a spirited one. It showed that if the Greek Emperor had been adequately supported by the Western Powers Mahomet might not have been able to capture the city.

The siege was commenced by Mahomet on April 6, 1453. Much time had been occupied in conveying the cannon from Adrianople. There were two very interesting incidents in the siege which are worth recording. The one was the breaking of the close blockade of the port by four powerful and well-manned Genoese galleys, bringing provisions and stores to the beleaguered city from Chios. They sailed across the Marmora and up the Bosphorus with a strong breeze in their favour. The Sultan sent against them a hundred and forty of his fleet of smaller vessels propelled by oars. They found great difficulty in stemming the heavy sea. The four larger Genoese vessels came down on the smaller craft, crashing against them and shivering their oars. Their crews hurled big stones on the Turkish galleys and emitted against others the inextinguishable fire of which the Greeks had the secret. The Turkish boats could make no headway against the superior weight of the bigger vessels. A large number of them were sunk with serious loss of life. When near to the entrance of the harbour the wind died off and the Genoese vessels were in imminent peril, surrounded as they were by the numerous Turkish craft. But at the last moment an evening

breeze sprang up. The Genoese vessels were able to force their way through. The chain which prevented ingress to the harbour was lowered, and the relieving vessels were admitted.

The Sultan had watched the naval battle from the shore. He spurred his horse some distance into the shallow sea in the hope of animating his sailors to greater efforts. He was bitterly disappointed at this first engagement of his new fleet. The next morning he sent for the admiral, Balta Oghlou, a sturdy Bulgarian by birth, and bitterly reproached him for his failure. He directed the admiral to be laid on the ground and held there by four strong men, while he was bastinadoed. Some historians state that the Sultan himself belaboured the unfortunate admiral with his mace.

The other incident, growing out of the naval defeat, was that Mahomet, on finding that his small craft, propelled only by oars, were of little effect against the powerful vessels at the disposal of the Greeks, determined to transfer a large number of them from the Bosphorus to the upper part of the harbour, where the bigger vessels could not engage them, owing to the shallow depth of water, and where they would be of use against the inner defence of the city. For this purpose Mahomet directed the construction of a broad plank road from Tophane, on the Bosphorus, across the hill intervening between it and the head of the Golden Horn. This road was well greased with tallow, and the vessels were dragged up it with windlasses and oxen. The descent on the other side of the hill was easy enough. The scheme was not quite a

novelty, as an operation of the same kind, though on a smaller scale, had been attempted elsewhere. It was carried out with striking success; and in one night eighty of the Turkish galleys were transferred in this way to the upper harbour. Mahomet also constructed a pontoon bridge across the harbour, on which batteries were erected. The two schemes together enabled him to attack the Greek defences along the line of the harbour, and compelled Constantine to withdraw many men from the defence of the landward walls, where the main attack was made.

The young Sultan took a most active part in the siege work. He traced the lines of fourteen batteries from which the walls were bombarded. The first great cannon was a failure. It burst at the first shot and blew to pieces the Wallachian who had cast it. It was recast, however, and two others of the same size were also cast. About two hundred smaller guns were used. They threw stone balls[18] against the walls and towers of the city, and ultimately succeeded in effecting a breach. There can be no doubt that the capture of the city was mainly due to the provision of these great guns, which were far above anything previously used against fortresses. The Greeks also used cannons in defence, but the parapets of the walls were not wide enough to allow of the recoil of the guns, and where it was possible to use them the walls suffered from the concussion. Gunpowder was also deficient.

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[18] Stone balls of considerable size were used by the Turks to defend the Dardanelles up to a late date. When in 1855 the writer visited the forts there, he observed that they were still provided for some of the guns.

After seven weeks of siege the bombardment effected breaches in the walls at three points such as to give Mahomet every hope of success in a final assault. The principal breach was at St. Romanus, where the outer of the two main walls was practically levelled for a length of four hundred yards, and four of the flanking towers were destroyed. The broad ditch was filled in part by the débris of the wall and in part by fascines. The Sultan decided that the assault should take place on May 29th. This became known to the Greeks in the city, and both sides made every preparation for a supreme effort.

On the 28th, Mahomet ordered a proclamation to be made to his troops, to the effect that when the city was captured it would be given up to them to sack at their will for three days. The Sultan, it said, had sworn by the everlasting God, by the four thousand prophets, by Mahomet, and by his own soul that the whole population of the city, men, women, and children, should be given over to them. This was received by the troops with tumultuous expressions of delight.

On the same day the Sultan reviewed his army in three divisions, each of fifty thousand men, and afterwards received in his tent all the leaders, military and naval. He made a speech to them in which he announced his intention to make a final assault on the city on the next day, explained to them the method of attack, and gave his final orders. He enlarged on his promise to give to the troops the plunder of the city.

> In the city [he said] there was an infinite amount and

variety of wealth of all kinds – treasure in the palaces and private houses, churches abounding in furniture of silver, gold, and precious stones. All were to be theirs. There were men of high rank and in great numbers who could be captured and sold as slaves; there were great numbers of ladies of noble families, young and beautiful, and a host of other women who could either be sold or taken into their harems. There were boys of good family. There were houses and beautiful gardens. "I give you to-day a grand and populous city, the capital of the ancient Romans, the very summit of splendour and of glory, which has become, so to say, the centre of the world. I give it over to you to pillage, to seize its incalculable treasure of men, women, and boys, and everything that adorns it. You will henceforward live in great happiness and leave great wealth to your children. The great gain to all the sons of Othman would be the conquest of a city whose fame was great throughout the world. The greater its renown, the greater would be the glory of taking it by assault. A great city which had always been their enemy, which had always looked upon them with a hostile eye, which in every way had sought to destroy the Turkish power, would come into their possession. The door would be open to them by its capture to conquer the whole of the Greek Empire."[19]

We have quoted this speech of Mahomet as further proof that plunder and the capture of men, women, and boys for sale or for

[19] Speech of Mahomet recorded by the historian Christobulus, quoted by Sir Edwin Pears, pp. 323-4.

their harems, and not religious fanaticism, was the main incentive to Moslem conquest.

The night before the assault was spent by the Turks in rejoicing. Their camp was illuminated. Very different was the action of the Greeks on this last day of their Empire. There was a religious procession through the city, in which every one whose presence was not required in defence of the walls took part and joined in prayer, imploring God not to allow them to fall into the hands of the enemy. Eikons and relics were paraded. At the close of the procession the Emperor Constantine addressed a gathering of nobles and military leaders. He called attention to the impending assault. He said: —

> It had always been held the duty of a citizen to be ready to die either for his faith, his country, his sovereign, or his wife and children. All these incentives to heroic sacrifice were now combined. The city was the refuge for all Christians, the pride and joy of every Greek, and of all who lived in Eastern lands. It was the Queen of Cities, the city which, in happy times, had subdued nearly all the lands under the sun. The enemy coveted it as his chief prize. He had provoked the war. He had violated all his engagements in order to obtain it. He wished to put the citizens under his yoke, to take them as slaves, to convert the holy churches, where the divine Trinity was adored and the most holy Godhead worshipped, into shrines for his blasphemy, and to put the false prophet in the place of Christ. As brothers and fellow-soldiers it was their duty to fight bravely in the defence of

> all that was dear to them, to remember that they were the descendants of the heroes of ancient Greece and Rome, and so conduct themselves that their memory should be as fragrant in the future as that of their ancestors… For himself, he was determined to die in its defence… He and they should put their trust in God, and not, as did their enemy, in the multitude of his hordes.

In the evening a solemn service was held at St. Sophia, memorable as the last Christian service before its conversion into a Turkish mosque. The Emperor and his followers partook of the Sacrament and bade farewell to the Greek Patriarch. It was a memorable scene – a requiem service for the Empire which was about to expire. Later the Emperor paid a last visit to his palace and bade farewell there to its staff. It was a most touching occasion. One who was present there wrote of it: "If a man had been made of wood or stone, he must have wept at the scene." It is very certain that the Emperor had no hope of saving the city from capture by its mortal foes.

Very early in the morning of the next fateful day, the 29th May, 1453, the final assault was delivered by the Turkish army. The scheme of the Sultan was to attack the walls of the city at many points, from both land and sea, but to make the main assault on the part of the wall which had been so much injured by the cannon in the Lycus Valley, near the gate of St. Romanus, and then, by successive waves of his vastly greater army, to overwhelm the defenders, using first his inferior troops, and

reserving his best for the last attack, when the enemy would be wearied by long fighting. The first assault was made by an immense horde of irregulars, armed with bows and arrows, and with slings throwing stones and iron balls. Gunpowder, though already used for cannon, was not yet applied to muskets. The men advanced with scaling-ladders for the assault, and a cloud of arrows darkened the sky. No more than two thousand Greeks could be spared to defend this part of the long line of fortifications. They were collected in the *peribolus* between the two walls. The gates in the inner wall were closed, so that these men had no opportunity of shirking the defence and retreating into the city. They had to fight for their very lives between the two walls.

The Sultan directed the great cannon to be brought to the edge of the fosse, and a shot from it broke down the stockade which had been erected in place of the outer wall. Under cover of the dust the Turks made the assault. They were bravely met by the defenders, and were driven back with heavy loss. A second assault was then made by the Anatolian infantry, a very superior force to the irregulars. But they were no more successful. The Sultan, thinking that the Greeks must be exhausted by these two assaults, then personally led a third great body of men to a third assault. It consisted of his Janissaries. He led them to the edge of the fosse, and thence directed their attack. The cannon was used again against the stockade, and again under cover of the dust caused by it the Janissaries made their assault. Some of them

succeeded in getting over the stockade, and a hand-to-hand fight occurred between them and the Greeks. The defenders seemed to have the best of it. But at this crisis a grave misfortune occurred to the Greeks. Giustiniani, who commanded them, was severely wounded. Blood flowed freely from his wounds. He decided to leave the field of battle and return to his ship in the harbour, for medical relief. The Emperor Constantine, who was near by, in vain implored him to remain, pointing out to him the damaging effect his departure would have on the soldiers who remained. Others thought that the wounds were not very serious and that the general was not justified in leaving the field. But he insisted on doing so, and demanded the key of the gate in the inner wall. With him departed some of his Genoese soldiers. This defection caused dismay and depression among the troops. Their resistance to the Turks slackened.

Some Greek historians accuse Giustiniani of cowardice in deserting the battle at so critical a moment, and Gibbon lends the weight of his great authority to this. The reputation, however, of the famous Italian soldier has been vindicated by later historians, such as Mr. Finlay and Sir Edwin Pears. They have shown that Giustiniani died of his wounds within a few days of the capture of Constantinople, the best proof of their serious and fatal character. All the same, he may not have sufficiently appreciated the effect of his withdrawal on the soldiers. It might have been better to have died there rather than on board his ship. However that might have been, all are agreed that the departure of the

general was the turning-point of the day, and that it had the worst effect on the soldiers engaged in the defence.

The Emperor did his utmost to retrieve the position. He took upon himself the charge vacated by Giustiniani, and led the defence. Mahomet, on his part, had observed from the other side of the fosse the slackening of the defence. He called out to the Janissaries: "We have the city! It is ours! The wall is undefended!" He urged them to a final effort. They rushed the stockade and effected an entry into the *peribolus*. Soon great swarms of others followed, and overwhelmed the defenders with their vast numbers. The Emperor, despairing of success, threw aside his imperial mantle. He called out, "The city is taken and I am still alive!" Drawing his sword, he threw himself into the mêlée. He died fighting gloriously for his city and his Empire. His body was never found, though search was made for it by order of the Sultan. The Greek and Italian soldiers in the *peribolus* were now completely outnumbered. There was no exit through the inner wall by which they could escape. They were in a trap between the two walls. They were massacred to a man. The Janissaries, having effected this, found no difficulty in making their way through the inner wall, which, as we have explained, was not defended owing to the want of men.

All attacks on other parts of the city were failures. This one alone succeeded. Victory here was due in part to the good generalship of Mahomet and to his indomitable persistency, and in part to the ill-fortune of the Greeks in the withdrawal of

Giustiniani at the critical moment of the defence. The defenders of the city had nobly performed their duty. Their numbers were quite insufficient. They had received no adequate support from Western Europe, or even from the neighbouring Christian States. It is quite certain that a few thousand more soldiers would have saved the city. Thirty galleys sent by the Pope with reinforcements were on their way when the city fell. They had been detained at Scio by adverse wind. "Auxilium deus ipse negavit," says the Greek historian.

When the Turks entered the city they began to massacre all the persons they met in the streets, without distinction of age or sex. But there was practically no resistance. There were no armed men left in the city. The population was cowed and panic-stricken, as well they might be in face of the overwhelming misfortune which now came upon them. After a short period of massacre the Turks turned their attention to the more practical business of looting and taking captives for sale. They effected this in a deliberate and systematic way. One great band of soldiers devoted themselves to plundering the palaces of the wealthy, another to the churches, and a third to the shops and smaller houses. Everything of value was gathered together for subsequent division among the soldiers. Of the inmates of the palaces and houses the older people were put to death; the stronger and younger of both sexes were carried off in bands as prisoners, bound together with ropes, with a view to ultimate sale as slaves.

The Turkish historian, Seadeddin, in words which seem to smack of pleasure at the scene, says: —

> Having received permission to loot, the soldiers thronged into the city with joyous hearts, and there, seizing the possessors and their families, they made the wretched unbelievers weep. They acted in accordance with the precept, "Slaughter their aged and capture their youth."[20]

The gravest misfortunes fell upon the wealthier and more cultured classes in the city. Their daughters and sons were torn from them to be sold to harems in Asia Minor, or for other vile purposes. The parents, if still strong, were sold as slaves. Numbers of them fled from their houses and crowded into St. Sophia and other churches, hoping that their foes would respect places of worship, or expecting that a miracle of some kind would save them. But it was in vain. St. Sophia acted as a kind of drag-net in which all the best in the city were collected, and were carried off thence in gangs. Virgins consecrated to God were dragged from this and other churches by their hair and were ruthlessly stripped of every ornament they possessed. A horde of savage brutes committed unnameable barbarities.

The city was cleared of everything of value and was all but denuded of its population. By the lowest estimate, fifty thousand persons, mostly the strong and the young of both sexes, were made captives, and later were sold as slaves and deported to Asia Minor. Some few escaped from the city into the country districts.

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[20] Quoted by Pears, p. 303.

Others found refuge in the Greek and Genoese galleys in the harbour, which were able to get away and escape because the crews of the Turkish vessels blockading the port had deserted in order to take part in the sack. Some were able to hide themselves in the city, and emerged later when the scene of horrors was at an end. Others, we know not how many, were ruthlessly massacred because they were of no value for sale. The proceeds of the sack and of the sale of captives brought wealth to every soldier in the Turkish army. No such dire misfortune to a city had occurred since the destruction of Carthage.

After three days and nights of these orgies the Sultan intervened and proclaimed an end of them. Meanwhile, on the day of the last assault, when his troops were in possession of the city, the Sultan rode into it. He went direct to St. Sophia, and, dismounting, entered the great church. He took pains at once to prevent any destruction of its contents, and himself struck down a soldier engaged in this work, telling him that buildings were reserved for himself. He instructed a mollah to call people to prayer from the pulpit. He thus inaugurated the conversion of the splendid Christian church into a mosque.

After this he sent for Notaras, who had been in command of the Greek forces under the Emperor, and affected to treat him with generosity. He obtained a list of all the leading men in the city and offered a large reward for their heads.

On the next day the Sultan made an inspection of the city and paid a visit to the Imperial Palace. On entering it he quoted the

lines from a Persian poet: —

> The spider's web hangs before the portal of Cæsar's palace,
> The owl is the sentinel on the watch-tower.

Later he presided at a great banquet, where he appears to have imbibed too freely of wine. When half-drunk he directed the chief eunuch to go to Notaras and demand of him his youngest son, a handsome lad of fourteen. Notaras refused, preferring death to dishonour for his son. The Sultan thereupon ordered Notaras and all his family to be put to death at once. Their heads were struck off and brought to the banquet and placed before the Sultan as a decoration of his table.

It was said that the Sultan's ferocity was stimulated by the last favourite of his harem, with whom he was much enamoured, and that she, on her part, was instigated by her father, a Greek renegade. Under this influence the Sultan ordered the execution of all the persons to whom on the previous day he had promised liberty. The Papal legate, Cardinal Isidore, escaped recognition and was sold as a slave by a soldier for a mean price. He was later ransomed. Orkhan, the grandson of Bayezid, who had been brought up as a Christian at the Imperial Court, committed suicide rather than be sold as a slave.

Although many cruel deeds were committed by the Sultan and his soldiers, and a terrible calamity fell upon the whole community of Greeks, it cannot be said that the capture of

Constantinople was the scene of such infamous orgies as took place in 1204, when it was captured by the Crusaders. After the first few hours of entry there was on this occasion no general massacre. There was not much incendiarism. The Sultan did his best, successfully, to save the churches and other buildings.

Although the young Sultan was most brutal in some of his actions, he showed in others remarkable foresight and statesmanship. One of his earliest acts, after putting an end to the sack of the city, was to proclaim himself as protector of the Greek Church. A charter was granted to the Orthodox members of that Church securing to the use of it some of the churches in the capital, and authority to celebrate in them religious rites according to their ancient usage. It also gave to them a certain amount of autonomy in civil matters. It recognized their laws of marriage and of succession to property and gave jurisdiction to the Patriarch and to Ecclesiastical Courts to enforce them.

The most eminent survivor of the Greek clergy, Gennadius, was sought for. He had been sold as a slave after the sack of the city to a pasha at Adrianople. He was brought back to Constantinople and was invested by the Sultan with the office of Patriarch of the Greek Church. Mahomet, in doing so, said: "I appoint you Patriarch. May Heaven protect you. In all cases and all occasions count on my friendship and enjoy in peace all the privileges of your predecessors." This was a most wise and opportune act of policy. The Sultan had been advised by fanatics among the Turks to order a general massacre of Greeks and

others who would not embrace Islam. Mahomet's record shows that he would have sanctioned this if he had thought it for the interest of the State, and he would probably have revelled in it. In pursuance of a deliberate policy of enlightened statecraft he rejected this advice. It was necessary to repeople his capital and to attract others than Turks to it. Mahomet was also ambitious of further conquests in Europe. He recognized that the attempt to force a wholesale change of religion on the vanquished would stimulate their resistance, while a wise tolerance might weaken it. When the Prince of Serbia asked Hunyadi, the Hungarian patriot, what he would do with the Orthodox Greek Church if he made himself master of that province, the reply was, "I will establish everywhere Catholic churches." The reply of Mahomet to a similar question was, "By the side of every mosque a church shall be erected in which your people will be able to pray."

This great act of tolerance of Mahomet was far ahead of the political ethics of the Christian Powers of Europe at that time. His example was not followed by the Spaniards, when they drove from their country the Moslem Moors, who had refused to adopt the religion of their victors. The action of Mahomet is another proof that the Turkish invasion of Europe was not actuated by religious fanaticism or the desire to spread Islam. There seems to have been no attempt to induce or compel the Greeks and others of the conquered city to embrace Islam.

Mahomet also set to work, at an early date, to repeople Constantinople. For a long time previous to the conquest its

population had been dwindling. In proportion as the Greek Empire was reduced by the loss of its territories, so the importance of the capital was diminished. Mahomet invited all who had fled after the capture to return, promising protection to their property and religion. He directed the transfer of families of Greeks, Jews, and Turks from many parts of his Empire. When he took possession of Trebizond and the Morea, many thousands of Greeks were forcibly removed to Constantinople. The same was the case with many islands in the Ægean Sea. At the end of his reign Constantinople was far more populous and flourishing than it had been under the last Greek Emperor.

Although the capture of Constantinople was the principal feat in Mahomet's long reign, and that on which his fame in history chiefly rests, it was, in fact, only the first of a long list of conquests which earned for him from his countrymen the title *par éminence* of 'the Conqueror.' During the thirty years of his reign he was almost always at war in personal command of his armies, and there were very few in which he did not add fresh territory to his Empire, either in Europe or Asia.

Bosnia and the Morea, which had become tributary States under previous Sultans, were now again invaded and were compelled to become integral parts of the Empire. Their princes were dethroned and put to death. Wallachia and the Crimea were forced to become vassal States. In Asia, Karamania, so long the rival and foe of the Ottomans, and which, after many wars, had agreed to pay tribute, was now forcibly annexed, and its

Seljukian line of kings was put an end to by death. The great city of Trebizond and its adjoining province of Cappadocia, which had been cut off from the parent Empire, after the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders, and formed into a miniature Empire, under the Comneni dynasty, was invaded and annexed by Mahomet, and at his instance its reigning family was put to death. The possessions of the Genoese on the coasts of the Black Sea were seized and appropriated.

Many islands in the Greek Archipelago, including Lesbos, Lemnos, and Cephalonia, were also attacked and annexed. The same fate befell Eubœa. It belonged to the Republic of Venice, which was also deprived of others of its possessions on the coast of the Morea. Besides all these enterprises, Mahomet in several successive years sent armies to ravage parts of Styria and Transylvania. He even sent an army across the frontier of Italy to ravage the region of Friuli, and other districts almost within sight of Venice, whose Republic was compelled to enter into an ignominious treaty, binding it to assist the Ottomans in other wars with a naval force. The last achievement of the ambitious Sultan was to send a force to the South of Italy, where it captured Otranto. The only captures which Mahomet attempted without success were those of Belgrade, in 1456, and the island of Rhodes in 1480. The case of Belgrade was of the greatest importance, for it long barred the way to the invasion of Hungary and Germany. The Sultan himself took command of the army of attack with a hundred and fifty thousand men

and three hundred guns. He thought the capture of it would be an easy task after that of Constantinople. But Western Europe, which had rendered so little assistance to the Greek Empire in its extremities, was alarmed at the prospect of the invasion of Germany through the loss of Belgrade. The Pope preached another crusade, and a large body of knights volunteered for the defence of this frontier city.

Hunyadi led the Hungarians in this his last campaign. The lower town was taken by the Turks after great loss of life; but the upper town made a protracted resistance. The Christian knights in a notable sortie attacked the batteries of the enemy, captured all the guns, and wounded the Sultan himself. Mahomet was compelled to raise the siege after losing fifty thousand men. It was the last feat of the Hungarian patriot. He died twenty days after this signal success. It was fifty years before Belgrade was again attacked and captured and the road was opened for the invasion of Hungary and Vienna.

In all these campaigns Mahomet personally led his armies in the field, with the exception of those for the invasion of the Crimea, the attack on Rhodes, and the capture of Otranto, where he delegated the task to able generals, of whom he appears to have had an abundant supply. But there never was a great commander who more completely dominated the generals under him and maintained his supremacy in the State. He made no confidences as to his intended military operations, or what were his immediate objects of attack. There were no councils of war.

His armies were collected, year after year, on one side or other of the Bosphorus, without any one knowing their destination. When, on one occasion, one of his generals asked him what was his next object, he replied that if a single hair of his beard knew what his intentions were he would pluck it out and cast it into the fire. He held secrecy and rapidity to be the first elements of success in war, and he acted on this principle. With the exception of the single case of the invasion of Wallachia, the provocation for war was in every case on the part of the Sultan. Invasion and attack were preceded by laconic messages calling upon the State or city aimed at to surrender, and the actual attack was made with the shortest possible delay.

Having determined on war and invasion, his object was pursued with the utmost vigour, and wholly regardless of the loss of life. As a rule, his campaigns were short; but the war with Venice was an exception. It lasted for many years. It consisted mainly of attacks on strongholds of the Republic in the islands of the Archipelago and the coasts of Greece and Albania, where the fleets of the two Powers played a large part. The conquest of Albania also was only effected after a struggle spread over many years, in which the patriot hero, Scanderbeg, defeated successive attacks by Ottoman armies enormously exceeding his native levies. It was not till after the death of this great chief, in 1467, that Mahomet was able to wear down opposition in Albania by sheer force of numbers.

Early in his reign Mahomet recognized the strategic value

of Constantinople. It became the keystone of his Empire. He transferred the seat of his government to it from Adrianople. He fortified the Dardanelles by the erection of two castles on either side of it near to Sestos and Abydos, each with thirty guns, which commanded the Straits. This secured his capital from attack. It prevented the entrance of a hostile fleet into the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea. He added greatly to his navy, and made it superior to that of any other single Power in the Mediterranean. It gave him absolute supremacy in the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora. The possessions of the Genoese in the Black Sea were at his mercy. He sent a flotilla of small vessels up the Danube to assist in the siege of Belgrade.

Throughout all his campaigns Mahomet exhibited perfidy and cruelty on a scale almost without precedent. Princes, generals, and armies, who capitulated on the promises of safety of life and respect of property, were put to death without compunction, in gross breach of faith. The inhabitants of cities were sold into slavery or transferred forcibly to Turkish dominions, in total disregard of solemn pledges.

A notable case of this kind was that of Bosnia, where the final victory was achieved by the Ottoman Grand Vizier, in command of one of the armies engaged, under the supreme command of the Sultan. The Prince of Bosnia and his army capitulated on the distinct engagement in writing that their lives would be spared. Mahomet was full of wrath at this concession. It was his deliberate policy to extinguish by death the family of any reigning

prince whom he vanquished in war. He consulted on the point the Mufti, with doubtless a strong hint as to what the answer should be. The Mufti issued a *fetva* which declared that no treaty of this kind with an infidel was binding on the Sultan. The holy man went so far as to offer himself to act as executioner. When the Bosnian king was summoned to the presence of the Sultan, and came before him trembling, with the treaty of capitulation in his hand, the Mufti himself struck off his head in the presence of the Sultan, exclaiming that it was a good deed to put an end to an infidel. The *fetva* in this case formed a precedent for numerous similar cases. The whole of the royal family of Comnenus, the Emperor of Trebizond, who, without a fight, surrendered his kingdom to Mahomet, upon the promise of life and private property to himself and his family, were put to death a few weeks later in Constantinople on the most flimsy pretence.

In a similar way, when the island of Eubœa was captured from the Venetians in 1470 by the Sultan, the Venetian garrison, supported by the Greek population, made a most gallant defence and inflicted enormous losses on the Turks. Paul Evizzo, the Venetian general in command of the island, eventually surrendered on the promise of safety of life to himself and his army. Mahomet broke his word. He put to death the whole of the Venetian garrison by the cruel method of impaling. The gallant Evizzo was, by the Sultan's order, sawn in two. His daughter was summoned to Mahomet's tent, and when she refused to submit to his lust, was put to death by his order. The island was added

to the Ottoman Empire in 1471.

It must be admitted that in all these conquests the Ottoman armies were very greatly superior in number and in armaments. In many cases they were also assisted by the disunion of their opponents. The subjection of Karamania was due to the death of its last king, Ibrahim, who left seven sons behind him. Six of them were sons of a wife of royal descent, the seventh the son of a slave. The father favoured the youngest, whom he declared his heir. The other six fought for their patrimony against the youngest and besieged him in Konia, the capital. Mahomet thought that this was a good opportunity to intervene and to annex the whole country. Without any cause of quarrel he marched an army of a hundred thousand men into the country and waged war against all the sons. The Grand Vizier, Mahmoud Pasha, was sent on in advance, and defeated Ishak, the youngest son of Ibrahim, in front of Konia. The terms of capitulation were thought by Mahomet to be too humane. He determined to punish Mahmoud for his leniency. The cords of his tent were cut while the Vizier was asleep. The tent fell on the luckless sleeper. This was a sign of disgrace. Mahmoud, who was a most able and successful general and statesman, was removed from his post and was put to death. The Karamanian dynasty, which for so long had been the rival of that of Othman, was now completely subdued. The country became a province of the Turkish Empire. Its two principal cities were depopulated and lost their splendour. It never again gave trouble to the Ottoman government.

The country which suffered most from the cruelties of Mahomet was Greece. Here, again, disunion was the main cause of its ruin. Two brothers of Constantine, the last Greek Emperor at Constantinople, Demetrius and Thomas, held sway as tributaries of the Sultan, the one at Argos, the other at Patras. Unmindful of the danger which threatened them, they fought one another for supremacy, after the death of Constantine, and were assisted in their internecine war by large numbers of turbulent Albanians, who transferred their services, now to one and now to another of these petty despots, and are said to have changed sides three times in the course of a single Sunday. Mahomet, in 1458, thinking that the disputes between the two brothers afforded a good occasion for getting full possession of the Morea, invaded it with a large force. The two brothers, instead of uniting to defend the country, continued to fight against one another, and attempted, at the same time, singly to fight against the Turks. There followed scenes of massacre and rapine as Mahomet's army passed through the country, besieging and capturing successively its many petty strongholds. In nearly every case, after vigorous resistance, capitulation was offered and agreed to on promise of life to the garrisons. In no case was the promise kept. As a rule, the fighting-men were massacred after surrender, their leaders were sawn in two, and the other inhabitants were sold into slavery, or were in some cases transferred *en masse* to Constantinople as colonists to fill the empty city. The two brothers were driven from the

country. Demetrius appears to have made some kind of terms with the Sultan, one of which was that his daughter should enter Mahomet's harem. This promise was not kept; she was not thought worthy of it, and she was insulted by being deprived of the only eunuch who attended her. It is not stated what became of her. Thomas fled from the country, carrying with him, instead of treasure, a valuable relic, the head of St. Andrew, with which he disappeared from history. The Sultan possessed himself of the whole country, with the exception of two or three seaports in the hands of the Venetians. The memory of this cruel invasion of the Turks was deeply impressed on the minds of the people of Greece. But for 471 years, with a short interlude when it was held by the Venetians, it remained a Turkish province.

On his way back to Constantinople the Sultan passed by Athens, where one Franco reigned as Duke, but tributary to the Turks. He gave orders that Franco was to be strangled. As a special favour this operation was effected, not in the tent of the Turkish general, but in his own domicile, and thus the last spark of Greek independence passed away.

It is not perhaps fair to judge of Mahomet as regards his cruelties and perfidies by a high standard. His opponents, the chiefs of the countries he invaded and conquered, were, in many cases, not inferior to him in these respects. Scanderbeg, whose patriotic defence of Albania won for him the reputation of a saint in his own country, and a high place in history, was most cruel and vindictive whenever he had the opportunity. He habitually

massacred the prisoners taken in his battles. The two despots of the Morea were not behindhand in this respect. The Prince, or Voivode as he was called, of Wallachia, Wlad by name, was one of the most cruel and bloodthirsty ruffians recorded in history. He was known by the name of "the Impaler." He revelled in the dying agonies of the prisoners and other victims whom he subjected to this cruel death. They were reserved for this purpose to enliven his banquets. When some guest expressed surprise that he could bear the odour emanating from the victims of this death, the prince directed the immediate execution of his guest, on a higher pale than the others, so that he might not be incommoded by the odour he complained of.

Mahomet invaded Wallachia, in 1462, with an army of two hundred thousand. In his pursuit of Wlad he came across a field where twenty thousand Turks and Bulgarians had been put to death, one-half of them by impalement and the other half by crucifixion. Mahomet defeated and drove into exile this ruffian, and installed in his place a favourite named Radul, who had been brought up at his Court as a page. On the death of this man Wlad turned up again, but was killed by a slave. Wallachia, which previously had been compelled to pay tribute by Mahomet, was now made a vassal State. The Sultan appointed its prince. It was not otherwise treated as a Turkish province.

The failure of the Turkish general to capture the island of Rhodes was said to be due to the fact that, just before the final assault, after long resistance by the Knights who held this island,

the Turkish general issued an order to the army that there was to be no pillage of the city, wishing to reserve for the Sultan and himself the wealth which might be captured. This dispirited the Turkish soldiers, and they made no effort for success in the assault. The Knights again repulsed the attack and the siege was raised. It was not till 1520 that Rhodes was finally captured.

Great as Mahomet was as a warrior and general, he was not less conspicuous as an administrator and statesman. The organization and provisioning of his armies in his numerous campaigns were specially worthy of notice. His soldiers were always well fed and were amply equipped with guns and armaments. He was also the sole source of legislation for his Empire. He had supreme power over life and property of all his subjects. More than any of his predecessors and successors, he founded mosques, hospitals, colleges, and schools in Constantinople and other cities of his Empire. He fully recognized the importance of science in education. He cultivated the society of learned men and loved to converse with them. He had some reputation as a poet. With all this, he was notorious for evil and sensual life in a direction which is held to be infamous and degrading by all peoples. He was not only himself guilty of fratricide, but he prescribed it as a family law for his successors. He died at the age of fifty-one, after thirty years of reign. He had collected a great army for another campaign, but no one knew what his aims and intentions were, whether for another attack on Rhodes, or for the invasion of Candia, or to follow up his success

in Calabria. His secret died with him. He was the first Sultan to be buried at Constantinople, in the famous mosque which he built there. In spite of his cruelties and perfidies and of his evil life, he has been held in honour by successive generations of his countrymen, and has been rightly designated as 'the Conqueror.'

VIII
BAYEZID II
1481-1512

Mahomet left two sons, of whom the eldest, Bayezid, succeeded him as Sultan at the age of thirty-five. Von Hammer and other historians, who have founded their narratives on his great work, write of Bayezid in terms of disparagement because, unlike other early Sultans of the Othman race, he did not signalize his reign by any great additions to his Empire. If success as a ruler is only to be measured by territorial expansion, Bayezid must take rank in history below the other nine Sultans who created the Ottoman Empire and raised it to its zenith. A great Empire, however, such as that which the Ottomans had already achieved, may be better served by peace than by war for further conquests. It would certainly have been well for the Ottomans if no attempt had ever been made to extend their Empire northwards beyond the Danube. Bayezid, so far as we can gather his policy from his actual deeds, was not favourable to expansion of his Empire. If he was engaged for some years in war with Hungary, Venice, and Egypt, he was not the aggressor. He came to terms of peace with these Powers when it was possible to do so. He did not support the army which, under his predecessor, had invaded Italy and captured Otranto. He recalled the very able

general, Ahmed Keduk, who commanded it. Khaireddin Pasha, who succeeded in command, after a most gallant defence, was compelled to capitulate; and never again was Italy invaded by a Turkish army. It would seem to have been a wise decision on the part of Bayezid not to pursue further the Italian adventure.

As it is not our intention to write a complete history of the Ottoman Sultans, but rather to describe the early expansion of their Empire and its later dismemberment, it will not be necessary to devote more than a very few pages to the comparatively uneventful reign of Bayezid. It may be well, however, briefly to note that he was of philosophic temperament, very austere in religion, and without his father's vices. Like many of his race he was devoted to literary studies, and he had a reputation as a poet. He was not wanting in energy and valour when occasion required. He was, however, the first of his race who did not habitually lead his armies into the field.

His younger brother Djem, who at the death of Mahomet was only twenty-two years of age, was a much more fiery, valorous, and ambitious soldier, and of more attractive personality. He was of a romantic disposition, and had a much greater reputation than Bayezid as a poet. His poems rank high in Turkish literature. His strange adventures and sad fate form one of the romances of Turkish history, which might well fill many chapters. It must suffice to record of him that, like other brothers of Sultans who were not at once put to death at the commencement of a new reign, he took up arms and claimed the throne against Bayezid.

The latter fortunately was the first to arrive at Constantinople after the death of Mahomet. He there obtained the support of the Janissaries, not without large presents to them. With the aid of Ahmed Keduk, Bayezid, after vain efforts to come to terms with his brother, was successful in putting down two rebellions of a formidable character on behalf of Djem. After the second defeat Djem fled to Egypt, and thence, after many adventures, found his way to the island of Rhodes, where he claimed the hospitality of the Knights of Jerusalem. Their Grand Master, D'Aubusson, who had made such a gallant defence of the island against Mahomet, and who was a most brave warrior, was also a crafty and perfidious intriguer. On the one hand, he induced Prince Djem to enter into a treaty, by which very important concessions were promised to the knights in the event of Djem being able to gain the Ottoman throne. On the other hand, D'Aubusson negotiated a treaty with Bayezid under which he was to receive an allowance of 45,000 ducats a year, nominally for the maintenance of Djem, but really as an inducement to prevent the escape of that prince from Rhodes. On the strength of this, the unfortunate prince was detained as a virtual prisoner in Rhodes, and later in a castle at Sasesnage, in France, belonging to the order of the Knights, for not less than seven years. At the end of this time the King of France, Charles VIII, intervened in favour of the prince, and got him transferred into the keeping of the Pope at Rome. The Pope Callixtus was also not above making a good profit out of Djem. He came to terms with Sultan

Bayezid under which he was to pocket the 45,000 ducats a year so long as Djem was kept out of mischief. On the death, some years later, of this Pope, his successor, Pope Alexander Borgia, of infamous memory, renewed the treaty with Sultan Bayezid, with the addition of a clause that he was to receive a lump sum of 300,000 ducats if Prince Djem, instead of being detained as prisoner, was put to death. After a short interval the Pope, fearing the intervention of the King of France, on behalf of Djem, and wishing to pocket the lump sum, contrived the death by poison of the prince. The menace to the Sultan was thus at last removed, and his Empire was spared another civil war, at a cost which by the ethics of the day was no doubt fully justified.

Of other incidents in Bayezid's reign it is only necessary to state that the most important of his achievements was the complete subjection, in the second year of his reign, of Herzegovina, which had been a tributary State under his predecessors, but was now again invaded. It was finally incorporated as a province of the Empire. There were also many years of desultory war with Hungary, in which frequent raids were made by the two Powers upon one another's territories, and where each vied with the other in atrocious cruelties. Everywhere children were impaled, young women were violated in presence of their parents, wives in presence of their husbands, and thousands of captives were carried off and sold into slavery. But there were no other results, and peace was eventually established between the two Powers.

In Asia there was war for five years with the Mameluke government of Egypt and Syria. The Mamelukes had sent an army in support of an insurrection in Karamania. The outbreak was put down, and the Karamanians were finally subjected, but the Mamelukes defeated the Turkish armies in three great battles. Peace was eventually made, but only on concession by the Turks of three important fortresses in Asia Minor.

There was also war with the Republic of Venice, in the course of which the Turks succeeded in capturing the three remaining Venetian fortresses in the Morea – Navarino, Modon, and Coron – an important success which extinguished the influence of Venice on the coasts of Greece. The success was largely due to a great increase of the Turkish navy, which in Mahomet's reign had achieved a supremacy in the Mediterranean over any other single naval Power. It now defeated the Venetian fleet in a desperate battle off Lepanto in 1499, and met on equal terms the combined fleets of Venice, Austria, and the Pope in 1500. It also went farther afield, and at the entreaty of the Moors of Grenada, who were severely pressed by the Christian army in Spain, ravaged the coasts of that country.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.