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TURKEY

The decline of the Turkish Empire has furnished an eloquent theme for historians, who have ever made it the 'point and commendation of their tale.' Judging from its decline, they have predicted its fall. Half a century ago, the historian of the middle ages expected with an assurance that 'none can deem extravagant,' the approaching subversion of the Ottoman power. Although deprived of some of its richest possessions and defeated in many a well-fought field, the house of Othman still stands—amid crumbling monarchies and subjugated countries; the crescent still glitters on the Bosphorus, and still the 'tottering arch of conquest spans the ample region from Bagdad to Belgrade.'

Yet, how sadly changed is Turkey from her former self—how varied the fortunes of her classic fields! The physical features of the country are the same as in the days of Solyman the Magnificent; the same noble rivers water the fertile valleys, and the same torrents sweep down the mountain sides; the waves of the Ægean and Mediterranean wash the same shores, fertile in vines and olive trees; the same heaven smiles over the tombs of the storied brave—but here no longer is the abode of the rulers and lawgivers of one half the world.

It has been said, and with some degree of truth, that the Turks are encamped, not settled in Europe. In their political and social institutions they have never comported themselves as if they anticipated to make it their continuing home. Their oriental legends relate how the belief arose in the very hour of conquest that the standard of the Cross should at some future day be carried to the Bosphorus, and that the European portion of the empire would be regained by Christians. From this superstitious belief they selected the Asiatic shore for the burial of true Mussulmans; nor was it altogether a fanciful belief, for in the sudden rise of Russia, Turkey foresaw the harbinger of her fall, and recognized in Muscovite warriors the antagonists of fate.

A nation to be long-lived must rise higher and higher in the scale of civilization; must approach nearer and nearer its meridian, but never culminate. The Athenians reached the zenith of their glory in the age of Pericles, and lost in fifty years what they had acquired in centuries. The Turks attained their meridian greatness in the reign of Solyman the Magnificent—from which time dates their decline.

If we make a comparison between Turkey and her formidable neighbor, Russia, we shall find that the latter adopted, while the former resisted reforms. Turkey was in the fulness of her power when Russia had not yet a name. The spirit of the Ottomans was remarkably exclusive. They regarded themselves as a separate and distinct people; they were conquerors, and as such thought themselves a superior race—men who were to teach and not to learn. In their intercourse with other nations, they borrowed nothing, and out of themselves looked for nothing. Their feeling of national glory was not extinguished by national degradation, but cherished through ages of slavery and shame. But the world is a world of progress. A nation cannot remain stationary; she must advance or retrograde. Turkey is not what she was, while Russia, with the rest of Christendom, has advanced; her faults grew with her strength, but did not die with her decay. It will not be sufficient for her merely to regain her former power; she must overtake Christendom in the progress made during her decadence. Her spirit of vitality is not yet extinct; it wants guidance and development to strengthen and elevate it. There is still hope of reforming the Turkish empire without that baptism of blood which many have urged

and are still urging. Indeed, Lord Palmerston declared in Parliament that Turkey has made a more rapid advance and been improved more during the last ten years (he made this statement in 1854, and Turkey has been rapidly progressing since) than any other country in Europe.

Before considering the question of reform, it will be necessary to take a cursory view of Turkish history and character.

While the monarchs of Constantinople were waging war with Persia, and both empires were tottering; while the Christian religion gave rise to different sects, hating each other with intense and fanatical hatred, a silent power was rising among the Turks, which was destined to subvert empires and found a new religion. Their original seat was among the Altai mountains, where they were employed by their masters in working iron mines. They rose in rebellion, threw off their allegiance, and made incursions into Persia and China, proving themselves formidable enemies. From being a weak and enslaved people they became the allies and conquerors of the Byzantine emperors. 'With the Koran in one hand,' says Macaulay, 'and the sword in the other, they went forth conquering and converting eastward to the Bay of Bengal, and westward to the Pillars of Hercules.' They became a terror to the nations that had beheld with contempt their rising greatness. Amid the expiring glories of the Roman world they made Constantinople the capital of their empire. It was all that the oriental imagination could desire. Rendered by its fortifications impregnable, and situated on the Bosphorus, whose dark blue waters flow between shores of unrivalled beauty, where nature and art had reared their grandest monuments, it surpassed in wealth and grandeur Nineveh and Babylon.

From this stronghold, which had been the cradle of Christianity, and which had witnessed the dying struggle of the Roman empire, the conquerors, maddened with the victories and crowned with the wealth which years of perpetual war had heaped upon them, mustered their armies and sallied forth. They subjugated many countries, but copied none of their virtues; and to-day their degenerate descendants still retain most of their original traits of character. Their religious sense is deep, but theirs is a religion which blunts and stupefies the intellectual faculties, and makes man fit only to perform a score of prostrations each day. It inspires courage in war, but it also teaches blind resignation to defeat and disgrace: it teaches morality, but sensuality and ferocity are not inconsistent with its doctrines. Eat, drink, smoke—indulge all the passions to-day, for immortality begins to-morrow! No Turk is so high that he has not a master, none so low that he has not a slave; the grand vizier kisses the sultan's foot, the pasha kisses the vizier's, the bey the pasha's, and so on. Yet their many virtues half redeem their faults. They are proverbial for their hospitality, and charity, which 'covereth a multitude of sins,' is an oriental virtue. They have, too, great love of nationality. The beggar who seeks alms of the Turk with cries and entreaties, will not ask a single para of the Frank (a name applied to all foreigners).

Turkey in Europe, though smaller in extent than the Asiatic division of the empire, is by far the wealthier and more important. It extends from Russia to the Adriatic, and from Hungary to the Euxine sea, the command of which it shares jointly with Russia. The Straits of Constantinople, the Dardanelles, and the Sea of Marmora are free to all friendly nations. The situation of the country, its numerous and safe harbors, are all favorable to commerce. There is every variety of climate, and the soil in every part of the empire is fertile, and, when cultivated, yields productions in the greatest abundance. The agricultural, like the manufacturing industry, owing to the indolence of the people, is much neglected. This indolence is, in a great measure, the result of oppression. Before Russia extended her protection over the provinces, the Turks left agriculture to their tributaries, whom, when wealthy and prosperous, they plundered.

Let us now consider the causes which led to the decline of the empire. In the reign of Solyman, poetry, science, and art flourished. New privileges were conferred upon the ministers of religion; the Janissaries received increased pay; the coffers of the empire were filled to overflowing; the condition of the rayas was ameliorated; security to life, honor, and property was given to all, without distinction of creed or race. But even then there were causes at work destined to effect a decline. The sultan

in person was ever at the head of his troops. Thus the vizier, or prime minister, who remained in the capital, became, by degrees, a more influential personage than 'the grand seignior' himself. The intrigues of the eunuchs in the imperial harem began to exert their baneful influences on the administration. The seraglio—in which many hundred females are immured, the most beautiful that can be found in the contiguous realms of Europe and Asia, wherever the Turk bears sway—from being the most beautiful appendage, became the moving spring of the Ottoman Porte. The inmates formed a faction hostile to the ministers of religion. The administration was transferred to Greeks, Jews, and Armenians, who filled the treasury of the sultan and enriched themselves by impoverishing the people, who, since they could no longer enjoy the fruits of their labor, became indolent. The army was more eager for booty and captives than for glory; slaves were multiplied; the higher classes revelled in wealth and luxury, while the poorer classes with difficulty obtained a livelihood.

It would be strange, indeed, if in an empire so extensive and with an immense and motley population, we did not find it difficult to introduce reforms, and instruct the people in the arts of more civilized nations, and remove old abuses, guarded by the fanaticism of the clergy. Political reforms can be made only by those in high places of authority; and to be sanctioned by the prejudiced and infatuated Ottoman they must assume the garb of religion. The sultan himself, wielding the sceptre over millions of subjects, uniting in his own person all the powers of the state, claiming to reign by divine commission, and profanely styling himself the shadow of God—even he dares not venture to vary one iota from the teachings of the Koran and the Sunnah.

Selim III was the first royal reformer. While Europe was shaken to its very centre, and the continental monarchs trembled on their thrones, he applied himself assiduously to those civil and military reforms, which his successors promoted, and without which Turkey could not have maintained her position as a European power. Selim made a new organization of the army, made innovations in the judicial and administrative branches of the government, changed the system of taxation, and gave a decidedly new organization to the divan, where reform was most needed. He also attempted to make innovations in the financial department, but by depreciating the coin, in order to fill an exhausted treasury, signally failed. He deposed the then reigning hospodars of the Moldo-Wallachian provinces, and established others more favorable to his work of reform. Russia and England remonstrated at this measure, and war was declared. The Turkish army was defeated and driven across the Danube. The Janissaries, ignorantly attributing their defeat to Selim's reforms in military discipline, rose in rebellion. The well-meant but too mild sultan fell a victim to their violence, and was succeeded by Mustapha, who had instigated the insurgents to revolt. His short reign is signalized by the vigorous measures he took to destroy Selim's reforms. Shortly after his accession to the throne, the defeat of the Turkish fleet by the Russians spread consternation and terror through the capital. It was at this critical juncture that an Asiatic pasha, a friend of the deposed sultan, advanced with a powerful army, and laid siege to Constantinople, which yielded to him after a vigorous resistance of one year. Mahmoud ascended the throne. From Selim, his cousin, he had learned the lamentable condition of the empire and the necessity of reform. He had no sooner ascended the throne, than the Janissaries began to manifest a feverish anxiety for revolt. No time was to be lost; and Mahmoud acted with that energy which was one of the few redeeming traits of his character. Mustapha, the murderer of Selim and the destroyer of the work of a lifetime, was put to death; his son and wives shared his fate. Mahmoud was now firmly established. He was the last scion of the Othman race, and as such was vested with *sacrosancta potestas*. He resolved to annihilate the unruly corps and anathematize their name. He engaged the services of their aga, or commander-in-chief, to whom he made known his plans. His next step was to issue an order commanding each regiment to furnish one hundred and fifty men to be drilled after the manner of European soldiers. The friends of Mahmoud asked: 'Is he mad?' The soldiers exclaimed: 'Bismillah! he wants to make infidels of us. Does he think we are no better than infidel dogs?' The Janissaries reversed their kettles (the signal of revolt) in the Byzantine hippodrome, and calling upon their patron saint, proceeded to

attack the royal palace. But Mahmoud was prepared to receive them. All his other troops, artillery, marines, and infantry, were under arms and at his command. The ulemas pronounced a curse of eternal dissolution upon the insurgents. Mahmoud unfurled the sacred standard of the prophet, and called on his people for assistance. A hundred cannon opened fire upon their barracks, and in an hour twenty-five thousand Janissaries were mowed down by grapeshot and scimitars. Their bodies broke the lingering fast of the hungry dogs, or were cast into the Bosphorus, and hurried by its rapid currents into the Sea of Marmora. The annihilation of the Janissaries took place in 1826.

It is more than probable that Mahmoud could have effected a salutary reform in the military system without resorting to extreme violence. He was naturally of a cruel disposition, and was also deficient in prudence and moderation. He gave the Janissaries cause to revolt; he made frivolous innovations in their long-cherished customs, by commanding them to shave their beards and forbidding them to wear the turban, a beautiful headdress, an ornament at once national and religious. These measures excited the disgust of all 'true believers,' while his enemies called him an infidel, and his warmest supporters and the strongest advocates of reform despaired of success. Innovations are expedient only when they remove evil, and when men are prepared to receive them. Command a Turk to shave his beard—by which he swears—the idol of his life. As well bid him cut off his right arm or pluck out an eye—he would obey one as soon as the other. The impolicy of changing the customs and dress of a half-civilized, warlike nation, has been made obvious in many instances—none more impressive than the mutiny of the Anglo-Indian army at Velore in 1806.

Mahmoud in destroying the Janissaries took for his model Peter the Great. Never were two sovereigns more unlike each other. Peter, generous and humane, leaving his throne and travelling in disguise to educate himself, stands in bold contrast with the parsimonious and cruel sultan. Moreover, Mahmoud's was a more difficult undertaking. The Strelitzes whom the czar annihilated were unsupported, were famous by no illustrious victory, and had not an enthusiastic religious feeling. The Janissaries, on the other hand, had strong family interests; they, too, had decided the fate of the empire at the battle of Varna, where their bravery established the Ottoman power, whose brightest triumphs were clustered around their names; they had fought many a bloody battle, and had never turned their backs to the foe; their leader was chosen from their own ranks, and no nobility controlled their ambition or prevented them from receiving the honor due to enterprise and valor; they held the sultan in check; the ulemas gave sanction to their laws, and they in turn sustained the authority of the ulemas with their swords. As long as they experienced no change in their discipline and customs they were invincible. But they too had participated in the universal degeneracy. Like the Prætorian bands of Rome, they had become the absolute masters of the empire. They pulled down and set up sultans at their will; their valor had departed, but their unconquerable pride remained as part of their heritage. Their ranks were filled with crowds of Greeks, Jews, and Moslems, without discipline and without order. Many who had purchased the privilege of being numbered in this formidable body, lived outside of the barracks, and assembled only on pay day or in times of tumult and rebellion. They despised all laws, civil and religious, and were a constant source of annoyance to the people, whose lives and property were at their mercy. Such were the subjects upon whom Mahmoud was to operate. In the destruction of the Strelitzes and the Janissaries, Peter and Mahmoud may be compared to two physicians: one practises on a healthy savage, while the other attempts to cut out a malignant cancer reaching the vitals, from the pampered sensualist. In annihilating these troops, as in his other reforms, Mahmoud began where he should have ended his labors; he mistook the end for the means.

Had he stopped with this act of violence, his supporters might defend him on the doubtful ground of expediency; but he did not stop here. For centuries the tyranny of the sultans had been restrained by the derebeys, or lords of the valleys. They had been confirmed in the possession of their lands by Mohammed II, from which time they had continued to pay tribute to the sultan, and furnished him with quotas of troops. The sultan had no control over their lives or property. The subjects who tilled the productive lands of the valleys were suitably rewarded for their labor. The happiest and

wealthiest peasants of the empire were found among the vassals of the beys, to whom they showed great devotion. These feudal lords, at a moment's warning, could summon twenty thousand men before their palace gates. They furnished the greater part of the sultan's cavalry force in war; and, unlike the pashas, had never raised the standard of rebellion; they had never wished for revolutions, and had never sanctioned insurrections. The possession of their property was guaranteed to them by inheritance, and they had no need of money with which to bribe the Sublime Porte.

Mahmoud was bent on depriving them of their wealth and curtailing their privileges. They were rich, did not bribe him, and held hereditary possessions. These were unpardonable crimes in the sight of this exemplary reformer. The beys, who never dealt in treachery, were unsuspecting of others, and fell an easy prey. The peasants ceased to cultivate the lands from which they could no longer profit; and many of the wealthiest possessions became desolate. We must not think it strange, therefore, that the military power was prostrated, when, after having annihilated the Janissaries, Mahmoud deprived the derebeys of their ancient authority; for the military power of the empire rested chiefly in these two bodies. These innovations were made in the midst of a destructive Greek war, and at a time when the Danube and the Balkan were no longer formidable barriers to the Muscovite descendants of Ivan the Terrible, who brought back memories of the past, and threatened to avenge deeply treasured wrongs. Even at this critical period, when his army was annihilated, his fleet defeated, and the legions of Russia within a few days' march of Constantinople, Mahmoud threatened to feed his horses at the high altar of St. Peter's, and proclaim the religion of the prophet in the Muscovite capital. A threat that savored more of the seraglio than of the throne!

His next step was to assail the privileges of the great provincial cities, the inhabitants of which elected from their own number ayans, or magistrates, distinguished for their wisdom and virtue. These magistrates had much influence among the people; they had always resisted exorbitant taxes and unjust decrees; their protection was extended to Mussulmans and Christians without distinction. Their power of veto was almost as effective as that of the *tribuni plebis* of Rome; they could point back to Solyman, the Solon of his time, as the author of their protective system. But their power originated with the people. To this Mahmoud would not submit. All power must emanate from him, the all-wise and innovating sultan, who raised the low and humbled the great, not as they were honest or corrupt, but as they fawned upon him, or refused to yield implicit obedience to his nod.

In their endeavors to institute a new financial system, the predecessors of Mahmoud reduced the standard of money gradually, in order not to produce a panic. But he wished to accomplish in one day the work of years. He issued a decree commanding the people to bring all their coin, gold and silver, to their respective governors—where they would receive less than half its value! He threatened the refractory with death. The capital resounded with the dreaded cry of rebellion; and the exasperated multitude that had surrounded the royal palace was not appeased until it witnessed the public execution of the mint officers, whose only crime was obedience to their master. This impolitic measure in the financial department impoverished the people, and left the treasury still empty. Foreign speculators bought the money—the circulation of which had become illegal—and resold it to the sultan for sterling value!

Shortly after this he expelled about thirty thousand Christians from the capital, which they had embellished and enriched by their labor. Their fidelity had never been doubted. For this despicable act—their expulsion—Mahmoud could adduce no better reason than that 'it was solely on political grounds.' Strange politics this, for a sovereign, who professed to have the magnanimity of Christian rulers! On the expulsion of the Christians, Russia commenced hostilities, and a war followed, in which the sultan paid dearly for his rashness.

In short, Mahmoud could not have given a better lesson to his subjects than by reforming himself. He was cruel beyond measure—if the grand seignior can ever be so called, who is taught that he may lop off a score of heads each day 'for divine inspiration.' Still if he had been as thoroughly skilled as he professed to have been, he should have shown himself a humane as well as an innovating

sovereign. Those who assisted him in his reforms, he rewarded with the bowstring. His character was blackened by ingratitude, an instinctive vice in oriental rulers. Obstinate as he was suspicious, deceitful as he was cunning, he could not rule his own passions, much less could he control the corrupt morals of his people. He was to an extraordinary degree avaricious, a quality everywhere odious, but especially in a land where generosity measures love—where in the highest and in the lowest stations liberality is the moving spring. While he mistook parsimony for economy, he did not scruple to make war on trifling pretexts and waste his amassed treasures in a hopeless cause.

In every attempted reform he wounded Ottoman pride and prejudice. Unlike his cousin, he did not humor the faults of the people while making innovations; he neither amused them with imposing shows, nor flattered them by the pompous spectacle of his appearance in public—in one word, he wanted the tact of a reformer. Selim, while he increased the navy and established manufactories, built gorgeous palaces, and by his magnificence dazzled the people, who were blind to his real designs; they even permitted him to set up printing presses in the large cities, on receiving assurance that the Koran would not be submitted to the unholy process of squeezing!

Mahmoud thought, or pretended to think, that he could reform the empire by imitating only the vices of Christianity, and manifesting a contempt for Moslem virtues. While he drank wine—and in many other breaches of the teachings of the sacred book provoked the faithful—his proclamations breathed a most orthodox and fanatical spirit. He was a sceptic; neither Mussulman nor Christian, but surprisingly inconsistent and capricious. His, we fear, were 'hangman's hands,' and 'not ordained to build a temple unto peace.'

Under Solyman the Magnificent, at once the most warlike monarch and munificent patron of literature and art, the constitution of the Janissaries was wise and effective. The children of Christians, taken by the Turks in war or in their predatory incursions, were exposed in the public markets of Constantinople, whence any person was at liberty to take them into his service, on making a contract with the government to return them at the demand of the sultan. These children were instructed in Islamism, and were trained by manly exercise and labor, calculated to strengthen the body and give elasticity to the spirits. From these hardy orphans the ranks of the Janissaries were recruited. They came eagerly to the camp; for they had been taught to regard it as the theatre of their future glory. From earliest infancy they looked forward with joy to the time when they should be numbered among those brave soldiers, whose arms had maintained for a long series of years the supremacy of the crescent. There was no rank, no dignity in the Turkish army to which a Janissary could not aspire—a strong incentive to the display of bravery. Such was the constitution of the army when it was the most powerful in Europe: then it gained its victories, not by force of numbers, but by superior military discipline and valor. In the middle of the nineteenth century the capture of Christian children was abandoned. The land forces degenerated into a wretchedly organized army of less than three hundred thousand men, drafted from the lowest classes. Mothers put their children to death that they might be spared the pangs of seeing them torn away to pass their days in scenes of shame and dissipation.

Not till the army had become a laughing stock to the weakest European power did the sultans perceive the necessity of military reform. Selim III established a school for artillery and naval officers, and engaged Europeans, especially Frenchmen, as instructors in military science. We can readily comprehend the degeneracy of the Turkish army, when we remember that since the establishment of the school at Sulitzi for engineers, the Turks have learned from foreign teachers military tactics of which their own ancestors were the inventors, and which had been forgotten, although full accounts of them lay hidden in musty volumes in their military archives.

Foreign officers were at first regarded with contempt by Turkish soldiers, whose unconquerable pride has ever proved a great impediment to the regeneration of the empire. Moslem talent was not equal to the exigencies that arose from the impolitic measures of Mahmoud. We find a parallel case in Russia. Had Peter trusted to Muscovite genius to form and command the troops which superseded the Strelitzes, Charles XII would have quartered in the Kremlin.

Kutchuk Husseyin, the relative and favorite of Selim, made valuable additions to the navy in which his master took such pride. Husseyin, who had the welfare of his country at heart, was liberal and disinterested. Vested with the office of captain pasha, he sent to Greece for architects and engineers, with whose assistance he fortified Stamboul, Sinope, and Rhodes; he built arsenals and extensive docks, which he supplied with the necessary equipments of a powerful fleet. In a short time, twenty sail of the line, constructed on the newest European models, rode at anchor within sight of his palace. He also erected barracks for the troops, and greatly improved the naval school. The sudden death of Selim paralyzed the navy, which soon resumed its accustomed languor.

The events of 1821, in which the Turkish fleet was defeated by armed merchant vessels of Greece, gave a fresh impulse to the navy. Experienced officers were placed in command, who, as they grew in strength, grew in confidence, and trusted more to their own resources than to the protection of Allah. Six years after the defeat, the navy was in a state of greater practical efficiency than at any other time. After a protracted struggle of five years it had gained the undisputed supremacy of the Archipelago; and had it not been for the disastrous defeat at Navarino, it would have proved equal, if not superior, to the Russian fleet in the Black sea. The Turkish navy, to-day, numbers about sixty war vessels, six of which are ships of the line, and six steam frigates, built partly at London and Toulon.

The standing army in times of peace consists of 150,000 regulars; 60,000 auxiliaries (such as the Egyptian forces); and those of the northern provinces, 110,000; with a corps de reserve of 150,000—an aggregate of 470,000 men. The army is recruited by lot and conscription (as in France), and not as formerly, by arbitrary compulsion. Christians are excluded from service in the infidel ranks, but pay a military tax. Partial infringements, however, have been made in this exclusion, by employing Armenians in the marine service and at the arsenals. Active service in the army continues for a period of seven years; and the discharged soldiers belong to the reserved force for five years more. The organization of the corps de reserve is the same as that of the regular army. Their arms and equipments are kept in the state arsenals, and are produced only when the soldiers are called out, which takes place once a year, after the harvest season. During one month, the members of this corps de reserve lead a military life, and receive regular pay.

The army is divided into six divisions of 25,000 each. The artillery is modelled after the most approved Prussian system, while the infantry and cavalry drill according to French tactics, and use French accoutrements and arms. Thus, Turkey, with a standing army of 150,000 men, can muster a force of nearly 500,000 at a few hours' notice; provided, however, she has money to pay the troops, for the religious prejudices of the Osmanlee do not tolerate the system of loans. So that Turkey, though she has neither the formidable land force of France nor the navy of England, is not crushed by the weight of a public debt, the principal of which can never be paid. This military system is the result of the labors of Rija Pasha and Redschild Pasha, by turn rivals and colleagues, disputing on matters of secondary importance, but ever cordially cooperating in the regeneration of the empire.

More attention has been given to military than to political reforms. The intolerant Moslem spirit manifests direct opposition to all innovation in the administration. As their fathers were, so they wish to be. Before the time of Selim no reform movements of importance had been made in the administrative branches. For five centuries the sultans had received, as an aphorism in their political education, that the subjects existed for the good of the sultan, and not the sultan for the welfare of the people. Selim proclaimed the rights of his subjects and their supremacy; and his words were confirmed by his deeds.

The administrative system was purely oriental, and bore scarcely any analogy to that of any other country. From the reign of Solyman to that of Selim—the protector (from whom there is no appeal) was kept closely confined in the seraglio walls; indeed, he was a state prisoner from his cradle to the day when he girt around him the imperial sabre. As the sultan reigned by divine commission, no education was considered good enough for him. Moreover, since his power was absolute, it had been received as a recognized principle of state policy that he should be as ignorant as possible, in order

that he might prove more faithful to the will of Allah. Selim banished these antiquated notions, and instituted a new system—not that he lessened his own power, but established representative bodies to assist him in making laws, and tribunals to pass judgment upon and execute them.

The sultan is assisted by a divan; or council of ministers, and others, who are nominated to that dignity by himself. The grand vizier presides over this body, and is responsible for all measures adopted by it.

The legislative as well as the military system is borrowed from the French; but the sultan is the source of all law, civil and military; he is the summit, while the municipal institutions are the base, of the political fabric. In theory at least, these institutions are established on the broadest principles of freedom. Each community, like the communes of France, sends an aga, or representative, to the supreme council. By the famous ordinance of Gulhana, Mussulmans, Jews, and Christians are represented, without distinction, in proportion to their number.

The administration of the interior belongs to the prime minister, who appoints civil governors to take charge of the general administration. The pashas had hitherto been both civil and military officers; purchased their appointments at extravagant prices, and repaid themselves by extortions practised upon the unfortunate subjects over whom they ruled. The appointment of civil governors removed this old abuse, and left the pashas vested only with military power. Each of the military chiefs has command of one of the six divisions of which the army is composed. All these officers receive a fixed salary; and the people, no longer subject to their avarice and tyranny, pay regular rates of taxation.

The reforms I have mentioned, great as they were, were only preliminary to the publishing of the *hatti-scheriff* of Gulhana, the magna charta and bill of rights of Turkey. The son of Mahmoud, Abdul Medjid, on ascending the throne, published this ordinance, which was to effect a reform in the internal administration more beneficial than any other, either before or after the destruction of the Janissaries. The ulemas, state officers, foreign ambassadors, and a vast multitude of subjects had assembled on the plains of Gulhana. The illustrious writings (as the name signifies) were read aloud in the presence of this solemn assembly by Redschid Pasha. The sultan, 'under the direct inspiration of the Most High and of his prophet,' desired to look for the prosperity of the empire in a good administration. The ulemas addressed a thanksgiving to heaven amid the acclamations of the assembled thousands. These reforms were threefold: The first guaranteed security to life, honor, and property; the second is a new system of taxation; the third, a remodelled plan for levying soldiers, and defining their time of service. The subject can best be illustrated by quoting a few extracts from the *hatti-scheriff* itself:

'The cause of every accused person shall be adjudged publicly, in conformity to our divine law, after due inquiry and investigation; and as long as sentence shall not have been regularly pronounced, no one shall, either publicly or privately, cause another to perish by prison or any other deadly means.'

'It shall not be permitted to any one to injure another, *whosoever* he may be.'

'Every man shall possess his own property, and shall dispose of it with the most entire liberty. Thus, for example, the innocent heirs of a criminal shall not be deprived of their legal rights, and the goods of the criminal shall not be confiscated.'

'The imperial concessions extend to *all* subjects, whatever may be their religion or sect; they shall reap the benefit of them without exception.'

'As to the other points, since they must be regulated by the concurrence of enlightened opinion, our council of justice, with whom shall assemble, on certain days to be fixed by us, the notables of the land, shall meet together to lay down guiding laws on the points that affect the security of life, honor, and fortune, and the assessment of imposts.'

'As soon as a law shall be defined, in order to render it valid and binding, it shall be laid before us to receive our sanction, which we Will write with our imperial hand.'

'As these present institutions have no other object than to give fresh life and vigor to religion, the government, the nation, and the empire, we pledge ourselves to do nothing to counteract them. Whoever of the ulemas or chief men of the empire, or any other sort of person, shall violate these institutions, shall undergo the punishment awarded to his offence, without respect to his rank, or personal consideration and credit.'

'As all the functionaries of the government receive at the present day suitable salaries, and as those that are not sufficient shall be increased, a vigorous law shall be enacted against traffic in posts and favors, which the divine law reprobates, and which is one of the principal causes of the decline of the empire.'

As a pledge of his promise, the sultan, after having deposited the documents in the hall that contains the 'glorious mantle' of the prophet, in the presence of the ulemas and chief men, swore to them in the name of God, and administered the same oath to the priests and officers. The hattis-scheriff was published in every part of the empire, and was well received, except by a few of the retrograde party, who lived by the old abuses, and vigorously resisted all attempts at reformation.

By this ordinance, the sources of the revenue consist of the frontier customs, the tithes, and a property tax. In two of these three sources of revenue there are great abuses. In collecting the taxes, the tax gatherers make exorbitant demands, for which (owing to the partiality of justice) there is no redress. The salguin, or land tax, is also the cause of constant complaint. It presses equally upon the richest and the poorest provinces; in consequence of which many of the most fertile districts have been deserted. The government is not ignorant of these facts. Abdul Medjid, a short time previous to his death, ordered a new registration of property to be made, which will, in a great measure, remedy this evil. This new registration caused not a little astonishment and fear among the peasants, who could not approve of persons taking an inventory of their property and their flocks. We must not be surprised at this, for a parallel case is close at hand. When the Emperor Joseph endeavored to introduce the mode of distinguishing houses in the principal streets of *Vienna*, by numbers instead of the antiquated mode by printed signs, the people were impressed with the idea that the numbers were affixed for the purpose of more conveniently collecting a new house tax!

The new system of farming the revenue proved especially beneficial to the Christians. Under the old regime the Turks had been greatly favored. The poll tax formerly levied on all who were not professed followers of the prophet, has been abolished.

The empire is wealthy—immensely wealthy; but the money is in the hands of the few. If we except the province of Servia, feudal lords, and tax collectors, the whole Turkish population consists of peasants, who till the soil on an equality of wretchedness. Yet it is to these same suffering peasants, the bone and sinew of the land, that reformers must look for support. It was the peasantry of Servia, headed by George the Black, that in 1800-1812, rose in rebellion, and whose success infused life and vigor into the more passive provinces. They, too, were peasants—those brave and resolute men who expelled from the provinces the robber princes, and almost gained a national existence. Many of these same peasants, men in whose breasts still lingered the valor that made their ancestors famous, joined the Grecian army in the successful struggle for independence; even Moslem peasants left their ploughs in the furrow and their herds unattended, to join the insurgents, to whose success they greatly contributed. The heroes of all Turkish rebellions have been peasants—the men of strong arms and unswerving energy. They are naturally of a passive disposition, but when once roused to action by religion or patriotism, they are as firm and unyielding in their purpose as their own

'Pontic sea,

Whose icy currents and compulsive course
Ne'er feels returning ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont.'

In the hands of the peasantry lies the destiny of the empire, its regeneration or its fall. By ameliorating their condition and gaining their good will, the sultans cannot fail to succeed in their reforms. By working in opposition to them and exciting their enmity, success is impossible.

The social system introduced by the victorious Othmans among the conquered nations was not as oppressive as is generally believed. The Turks, unlike the Germanic nations, the Huns and Normans, did not take forcible possession of private property and divide it among their conquering hordes. From those who acknowledged themselves subject to their rule, the Turks exacted tribute, but protected their liberties and political institutions. The conquerors introduced their laws into the country, but not forcibly. To those who still adhered to the Christian religion, they extended the rights of self-government, subject, however, to a military tax. This was very far from degrading the cultivators of the soil to servitude; this did not deprive them of their possessions, inherited or purchased. But by a gradual change in the government this civil equality and liberty in the possession of property was superseded by an aristocratic and almost absolute despotism. The Ottomans came in contact with a people ruling under Byzantine law, of which (as of the feudal system) they had but a confused knowledge. The feudal system having taken root in Greece, and having been already introduced into Albania, had necessarily much influence on the contiguous provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, Servia and Bulgaria. Here the Greek emperors, with correct notions of right and wrong, had governed wisely and justly in a simple administration, which gave place to a complicated system of laws and refinements, as unintelligible as they were useless and ineffective. In the double heritage of Greece and Rome, the conquerors imitated only their faults, moral and intellectual, and thus made more prominent the fall of the two countries. The Turks were not sufficiently enlightened to understand the laws and customs of the Greeks and Romans, and profit thereby; nor could they resist the charm thrown around aristocracy and venality, but succumbed to their baneful influences. The degeneracy of the laws caused the misery of the peasantry, and paralyzed the energies of the empire. The pashas gained almost unlimited power, founded on the ruins of civil liberty. They did not scruple to persecute the suffering peasant, even in the sanctuary of his family—held in the highest veneration by the Turk. The peasants in many instances had no other alternative than to fly to the mountains for safety, and lead a wretched existence by rapine and murder. Some left Turkey to settle in Russia and Austria, in search of that liberty and protection which was denied them at home.

The Turkish peasants are not insensible to the degradation in which they are languishing. But accustomed, in suffering and privation, to find consolation in fatalism—which teaches implicit acquiescence in and obedience to the will of Allah—they drag out their days in passive submission. Seditions are almost always excited by unbelievers, who feel their wrongs more deeply. The devout Turkish peasant seeks no better fortune than the means wherewith to build a little cabin, with windows and doors religiously closed to vulgar eyes. He finds comfort in the words of his holy book: 'He is the happiest of mortals to whom God has given contentment.' He performs his daily labor, makes his prostrations, smokes his chibouk, and lives oblivious of care. He is far from being indifferent to reforms, but is loth to take the initiative in political innovations and social wars. His heart is with the cause, but here also he is resigned: 'God is great—His will be done.' This same spirit of resignation and submission to the divine will, from being a virtue becomes his greatest curse.

The Servians, a hardy and vigorous race, who pride themselves on their victories over the Moslems, stand in the van of the reform movement. By the new constitution given to Servia in 1838, there exists no longer any distinction of classes. All pay taxes, in proportion to the value of their property, to the municipal and general government. All the peasants are proprietors, and all the proprietors are peasants. The Servians and Albanians have never refused foreign aid. They gave a

kind welcome to the legions that Nicholas sent across the Pruth, and worked in concert with the brave warriors of the north, in the hope of gaining a nationality and a recognized name.

The moral condition of the Bulgarians does not differ essentially from that of the Servians; but there is a wide difference in their political organization. The Bulgarians are yet only peasants, unprotected against the violence and exactions of the sultan. They are more enterprising than the Servians, and, could they enjoy an equitable legislation, would soon vie with them in wealth and prosperity. They envy the national and democratic institutions of the Servians, who are related to them by blood, by religion, and a common tongue. They are eager for reforms, both social and political, which shall give them a constitution similar to that of Servia. In this they must ultimately succeed. The two people are one in their sympathies: one cannot enjoy privileges without exciting the jealousy of the other. Unless concessions are made, the day is not far distant when the Bulgarians will revolt, as the Servians did under Tzerny George, and gain the right of self-government.

The Illyrian peasants have not as promising a future. They are divided among themselves, both in politics and religion; the several clans and parties are engaged in ceaseless strife and bickering. On the most trivial pretence a community will rise in arms and carry ruin and desolation to its neighbor. The face of the country everywhere shows signs of the terror under which it groans. In many districts the humblest dwellings are fortified citadels, gloomy and threatening; observatories are stationed in trees and on high cliffs, to guard against surprisals; the streets of the towns and villages are traversed by gloomy figures of athletic savage warriors, with fierce and sinister expression of countenance, and their right hand resting on a belt garnished with its brace of pistols. They are in such a deplorable state of ignorance, and so blinded by mutual hatred, that they are incapable of perceiving their wants and obtaining their rights by concerted action.

The Servians and Bulgarians, although by nature not less warlike than the Illyrians, are more pacific. This quality is, to a certain degree, attributable to a better government; but their great advantage consists in their being friends of labor. They are not divided by internal factions; their pistols serve for ornaments, not offensive weapons; their rude exterior hides within a gentle, childlike nature. Though laborious, they seek not to amass wealth; kind to each other, to strangers they are hospitable and generous. They are extremely courteous and polite, and theirs is not the humility of the Austrian peasant, who kisses the scornful hand of his superior; it is the deference and respect that youth bears to age, or the attention which the host gives to a welcome guest.

In Servia and Bulgaria, Christianity has gained the ascendancy; the light of the gospel imparts comfort and happiness to all; but the Illyrians, through a blind zeal in their social dissensions, have debarred themselves from its vivifying and soothing influence.

During the early part of the last century, the peasants of the Moldo-Wallachian provinces were enfranchised, but have not yet obtained the right of property legislation. Being contiguous to Poland and Hungary, their attention is naturally called to all the noise of reform and to all the social questions that agitate the two countries. Unless concessions are made, unless the peasant is recognized as proprietor of the soil of which to-day he is but the farmer, a revolution will take place, in which the Sublime Porte will lose these provinces as effectually as it did the pashalies. It is not absolutely necessary, though it would be judicious, to give Moldavia and Wallachia the same political organization as Servia enjoys. The question now, is not of rulers, whether they shall be sent from the divan or chosen from the people; but is of property legislation and municipal institutions.

In all his reforms, the sultan should remember that the material upon which he is to operate lies in the peasantry.

The empire, however, cannot be thoroughly reformed merely by enfranchising the peasants, by introducing European customs, by organizing new armies, building barracks, and establishing custom houses. These improvements are the sign of a vigorous national impulse and prosperity; they are the result, not the rudiments of civilization. The fact that the sultan wears French boots and supplies his seraglio with the latest Parisian modes signifies nothing.

In its palmy days, Turkey relied for success on its courage and love of military glory; now its welfare and very existence depend upon the peaceful arts of civilized life. The prosperity of the people measures the condition of the empire. But how can an ignorant people prosper? The time has come when a reform in the educational system of Turkey is emphatically demanded. There must be intelligence among the people, and educated men in the cabinet as well as brave men in the field. The innovating sultans of the last century have done much for the reconstruction of the broken political fabric of the empire; they have organized a new and powerful army and navy; they have facilitated commercial intercourse, but have done scarcely anything for the diffusion of knowledge among their subjects.

All the knowledge in the empire is concentrated in the ulemas and lawyers. The members of the Sublime Porte and other state officers, with but few exceptions, are unlettered men, who owe their elevation, to partiality or bribery. Under Mahmoud, beauty of person was the best recommendation to favor and promotion!

But Turkey has had her golden age of letters as well as her age of military glory. Her libraries and archives are filled with unread, musty manuscripts, comprising treatises on philosophy and metaphysics, histories, biographies, and poems, rich in the classic erudition of the Orient. In 1336, Sultan Orkan found leisure from war and conquest to establish, at Brusa, a literary institution, which became so famous for its learning, that Persians and Arabians did not disdain to avail themselves of its instruction. But with the death of its founder its glory passed away. It was no longer the fountain head of learning in the East.

The Turks, forgetful of the fact that antiquity is the youth of the world, still follow Aristotle as their guide in philosophy and metaphysics, and Ptolemy in geography! Missionaries have succeeded in introducing modern text books into some of the schools, but owing to the peculiar system of Turkish education, the result has not been so favorable as was anticipated.

To each mosque is attached a school, where the pupils devote several years in acquiring the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic; which completes their education. But few foreign instructors are employed to teach in the schools, because the government is unwilling to pay a suitable salary. While on state officers wealth is lavished with the prodigality of oriental munificence, instructors receive only a nominal recompense, often not exceeding six cents a day!

A few favored youths receive a European education, especially in French and Austrian colleges. The oriental academy, established at Vienna by Maria Theresa for the education of diplomatists to conduct intercourse with the Porte, has formed many illustrious Turkish scholars. It is a singular but not unpleasant commentary on the vicissitudes of fortune, that Turkey should send her sons to be educated at Vienna, which only two centuries ago a sultan besieged at the head of an army of two hundred thousand men, and before whose gates he was defeated by the combined Christian forces, who recovered eighty thousand Christian captives, among whom were fourteen thousand maidens, and fifty thousand children of both sexes!

The Christian subjects of the empire have made visible progress in their educational system, although it is yet in a very imperfect state. In the middle of the last century a body of Armenian monks formed a society for promoting the educational interests of their countrymen. These pious and benevolent men dwell alone on the little island of San Lazzaro, and publish works on literature, science, and religion, which are distributed among the Turkish Armenians.

Printing presses have lately been set up in the large cities, and books are rapidly multiplying. In Constantinople several newspapers are printed in French, Turkish, and Arabic; they are read in every coffee house and barber shop, the common lounging places of the Ottoman, where he smokes his pipe and discusses politics. Their columns are chiefly devoted to the discussion of state affairs, and notices of public functionaries. The sultan is the virtual editor, and consequently the papers are popular, as containing opinions on state policy *ex cathedra*. These presses were established with the reluctant

sanction of the ulemas, and the vigorous opposition of the scribes, an influential body, protesting against the introduction of machinery, which was to supersede the use of their fingers.

The council of public instruction at Constantinople has established a medical and polytechnic school; in both, French, English, and German teachers are employed. To the medical college is attached a botanical garden and a natural history museum. The medical library consists chiefly of French works. The implements used to experiment in the physical sciences were made at Paris, London, and Vienna, and are of the most approved kind. The number of students in attendance, on an average, is seven hundred, comprising Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, all of whom not only pay no tuition, but receive pecuniary assistance from the government. As science cannot well be taught in Turkish, French is the language of the school.

It should be borne in mind that Turkey, in her reform movement, commenced this century, four hundred years behind Europe. When we consider this, her advance in educational reformation appears in a better light. The present law makes it a penal offence in a Turkish parent not to send his children to school.

The universities, as well as the mosques and hospitals, are under the control of the ulemas, who have always been a privileged and a sanctioned order, and by their sanctity and great wealth are rendered the most formidable body in the empire. Selim and his successors somewhat lessened their power. By the innovations of 1854 an important change was effected in the vacoof, or church property. The church had hitherto held enormous possessions; and had not a check been placed on the system, in the course of a few centuries all the lands would have belonged to the priests. The property annexed to the mosques is held sacred by all, both high and low. True believers, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, alike, by a reversion of their property on failure of male issue, transferred it to the ulemas. The decree above mentioned restricted this privilege of the priests. The entire system will soon be abolished.

As before stated, the ulemas have charge of the schools connected with the principal mosques. The average number of scholars in each school, in the reign of Mahmoud, was four hundred. They were, for the most part, worthless, indolent fellows, and entirely under the control of the ulemas, who used them as tools, and made them figure conspicuously in all tumults and revolts. Their attempted assassination of Abdul Medjid was their death warrant. Each ulema was restricted to four, in place of four hundred scholars. This measure caused not a little ill feeling among those opposed to reform; but as the most successful attempt at restricting the despotic power of the religious order, the decree was of vital importance, and gave the ulemas to understand that the power on the throne was paramount to theirs.

The ulemas—whose functions do not differ materially from those of the old doctors of the law among the Hebrews—have always claimed and enjoyed both magisterial and ecclesiastical authority; and, indeed, since the Mussulman's law and religion are convertible terms, we would expect priests to be vested with the same powers, and performing the same duties. Mohammed designed it should be so, and as long as war was waged in the name of religion, as long as the Koran and the sword went hand in hand together, the two professions were not incompatible; but when Islamism had gained undisputed ascendancy, there arose an obvious discrepancy between the peaceful adoration of Allah and the settlements of disputes between man and man. Priest and jurist, each had distinct and qualified duties to perform. Before justice can be administered properly the religious and legal professions must be separated; the statutes must be distinct from the Koran and Sunnah, in the obscurities of which they are at present involved. The sheik-ul-Islam (pontifex maximus) is the head of the church and the bar; he appoints the bishops and the judges; and in his twofold character of minister and lawyer, he is the expounder of the Koran, the source of all laws, civil and religious; his decisions serve as precedents, and are as incontrovertible as the Koran itself.

By the late reforms, Christian testimony is admitted in courts of justice. But this is merely a nominal privilege; for what avails it that Christian evidence is received, if the Koran and Sunnah are

to constitute the law, and a Mussulman judge is to be the expounder? Is it not evident that the 'true believer,' whether right or wrong, will be shielded by the strong arm of prejudice at the expense of the Christian? The purity of Turkish justice may be understood from the following humorous account given by Dr. Hamlin:

'I once had a case of law with a Turkish judge. It was tried nine times, and each time decided against me. After the ninth trial, the judge sent me word that if I gave him 9,000 piastres (about \$800), he would decide the case in my favor, for all the world knew that justice was on my side!'

I look, however, upon the religious toleration extended to Christians in 1854 as the most important of all reforms; it is the keystone of the arch. Christianity has been on a gradual increase in Turkey; and it may not be deemed extravagant to hope that when a few generations shall have passed away, its supremacy will be acknowledged. As Constantine, finding the Christian element predominant in the Roman empire, made the religion of Christ that of his people, so some Selim or Abdul Medjid, urged by a power behind the throne, and more potent than the throne itself, will substitute the Bible for the Koran!

The fall of Islamism does not imply the downfall of Turkish rule. The one is religious, the other a civil power; the one may wane, the other rise.

The wars which brought the European powers in Turkish waters made a deep impression upon the Turks, and convinced them that they had been rescued from annihilation by foreign arms. This led to an important measure, viz.: the promulgation of the imperial edict of 1850, which was translated into all the languages of the empire, and read in all the mosques and churches. Besides securing the freedom of conscience and the equality of rights, it grants the right of apostasy, which had hitherto been a capital offence: 'As all forms of religious worship are and shall be freely professed in the empire, no person shall be hindered in the practice of the religion which he professes; nor shall he in any way be annoyed in this kind: in the matter of a man *changing* his religion, and *joining* another, no force shall be applied to him.' The decree bore directly upon Islamism. Turks, both private and official, now discuss freely the doctrines of the New Testament. The Bible, to-day, is widely circulated among the Turks. About seven thousand copies are sold annually to Mohammedans, while ten years ago they would not have been accepted as gifts. By all classes of people the Bible is purchased, read, and made the subject of discussion. The sultan himself reads it. Discussion leads to investigation, and investigation to the establishment of truth. This is one of the causes that have been silently at work, destined to effect the fall of Islamism.

In all parts of the empire, the Christian element is growing stronger and stronger; the Mohammedan weaker. Even in Asia, the chosen abode of the faithful, we find Christian cities and villages prosperous, and Mohammedan cities falling to decay. In another century the Sublime Porte will depend chiefly on the Christian element for its influence. To-day, the Mussulman mosque, the pagoda of the Hindoo, the fire temple of the Parsee, the Roman and Greek churches, meet together.

The adoration and prostrations of the Turk afford an imposing sight even to the Christian. 'Praises be to God, for He is great,' resounds at sunrise and at sunset, from ship to ship at sea, from kiosk to minaret on land.

According to the Koran, there is a paradise for all true believers. This paradise, Al Janat, signifies a pleasure garden, from which flows a river, the river of life, whose water is clear as crystal, cold as snow, and sweet as nectar. The believer who takes a draught shall thirst no more. Even the oriental imagination fails to describe the glories of this paradise—its fountains and flowers, pearls and gems, nectar and ambrosia, all in unmeasured profusion. To crown the enchantment of the place, to each faithful Moslem is allotted seventy-two houris, resplendent beings, free from every human defect, perpetually renewing their youth and beauty. Such is the Mohammedan conception of the future world.

The Turks, in common with other Mohammedans, believe in angels, and in the prophets Adam, Noah, Moses, and *Jesus*. One might suppose that such a belief would assist missionaries in converting the infidel; but far from assisting, its tendency is to make more difficult the inculcation of Christian doctrines. When asked to accept the religion of Christ, the Turk's ready answer is: 'We believe in Jesus! we believe in him already; you know only a part of the true faith; Mohammed has superseded Jesus.' Notwithstanding this, many Turks in Europe and Asia believe that in a long series of years, Jesus will return to earth, reanimate their faith and ancient valor, and with one unbroken religion, give them dominion to the end of the world. They, in short, expect Jesus—the same Jesus whom Christians worship—in the fullness of time to accomplish the work which their prophet only began. Christian missionaries should avail themselves of this remarkable belief, and turn it to the spiritual advantage of those who entertain it.

'Let the Turkish Government remain, if by her standing Islamism may fall!
that we may carry back a purer literature to the land of Homer, a purer law to the
land of Moses, and the Gospel of Christ to the land of the apostles.'

It only remains for me to say one word in regard to the now reigning sovereign. The ulemas—who have become what the Janissaries were, the hotbed of fanaticism—in their endeavors to overthrow the late sultan, Abdul Medjid, looked upon the present sultan as their champion. If he permits himself to become a tool in their hands, Turkey will lose during his reign what she gained in a century. If, on the other hand, he has the energy of Mahmoud, the humanity of Selim, and practises the conciliatory policy of his brother, a glorious future awaits the empire.

FALSE ESTIMATIONS

As one, who under pay of priest or pope,
Painteth an altar picture boldly bad,
Yet winning worship from the common eye,
Is less than one, who faltering day by day
Before the untouched canvas, dreams, and feels
An unaccomplished greatness: so is he
Who scrapes the skies and cleaves the patient air
For rhyming ecstasies to cheat the crowd,
That sees not in the stiller worshipper
The truer genius, who, in heights lone lost,
Forgets to interpret to a lesser sense.

O there do dwell among us minds divine,
In which th' etherial is so subtly mixed,
That only matter in its outward mien
To the observer shows. Such ever live
Unto themselves alone, in sweet still lives,
And die by all men misinterpreted.

Within a churchyard rise two honored urns
O'er graves not far removed. The one records
The 'genius of a Poet,' whose fitter fame
Lies in the volumes which his facile pen
Filled with the measure of redundant verse:
Before this urn the oft frequented sod
Is flattened with the tread of pensive feet.
The other simply bears the name and age
Of one who was 'a Merchant,' and bequeathed
A fair estate with numerous charities:
Before this urn the grass grows rank and green.

I knew them both in life, and thus to me
They measured in their lives their effigies:
He who the pen did wield with facile power,
Created what he wrote, and to the ear
With tact, not inspiration, wrought the sounds
To careful cadence; but the heart was cold
As the chill marble where the sculptor traced
Curious conceits of fancy. Let him pass,
His name not undervalued, for his fame
Shall in maturer ages lie as still
As doth his neighbor's now.

Turn we to him.
He was a man to whom the general eye

Bent with the confidence of daily trust
In things of daily use: a man 'of means,
—Sagacious, honest, plodding, punctual,—
Revolving in the rank of those whose shields
Bear bags of argent on a field of gold,
His life, to most men, was what most men's are,—
Unceasing calculation and keen thrift;
Unvarying as the ever-plying loom,
Which, moving in same limits day by day,
Weaves mesh on mesh, in tireless gain of goods.
But I, that knew him better than the herd,
Yet saw him less, knew that in him which lives
Still gracious and still plentiful to me
Now he hath passed away from me and them.
This man, whose talk on busy marts to men
Teemed with the current coin of thrifty trade,
—Exchanges, credits, money rates, and all,—
Hath stood with me upon a silent hill,
When the last flush of the dissolving day
Fainted before the moonlight, and, as 'twere
Unconscious of my listening, uttered there
The comprehensions of a soul true poised
With elemental beauty, giving tongue
Unto the dumbness of the blissful air.
So have I seen him, too, within his home,
When, newspaper on knee, his earnest gaze
Seemed scanning issues from the money list;
But comments came not, till my curious eye
Led out his meditation into words,
Thought-winding upward into sphery light,
So utterly unearthly and sublime,
That all the man of fact fled out of sense,
And visual refinement filled the space.
Oft hath he told me, nothing was so blind
As the far-seeing wisdom of the world,
And none within it knew him, save himself,
And that so scantily, that but for faith
In a redeeming knowledge yet to come,
He would lie down and let his weakness die
In self-reclaiming dust.

After his death,
I searched his papers, vainly, for a scrap
Whereon some dropped memento might record
His inner nature; but he nothing left—
Nothing of that deep life whose wondrous light
Guided him onward through the realms of sense,
And in a world of practical self-need
Sustained him with a glory unexpressed.

And thus it is that round the Poet's urn,
The sod is beaten down with pensive feet:
And thus it is that where the Merchant lies,
The grass, untrodden, groweth rank and green.

THE BLUE HANDKERCHIEF

I had passed my last examinations, and had received my diploma authorizing me to practise medicine, and I still lingered in the vicinity of Edinburgh, partly because my money was nearly exhausted, and partly from the very natural aversion I felt from quitting a place where three very happy and useful years had been spent. After waiting many weeks—for the communication between the opposite shores of the Atlantic were not then so rapid as now—I received a large packet of letters from 'home,' all of them filled with congratulations on my success, and among them were letters from my dear father and a beloved uncle, at whose instance (he was himself a physician) my father had sent me abroad to complete my medical education. My father's letter was even more affectionate than usual, for he was highly gratified with my success, and he counselled me to take advantage of the peace secured by the battle of Waterloo to visit the continent, which for many years (with the exception of a brief period) had been closed to all persons from Great Britain; he enclosed me a draft on a London banker for a thousand pounds. My uncle's letter was scarcely less affectionate; my Latin thesis (I had sent my father and him a copy) had especially pleased him; and after urging me to take advantage of my father's kindness, he added that he had placed a thousand pounds at my disposition, with the same London banker on whom my draft was drawn. A letter of introduction to a French family was enclosed in the letter, and he engaged me to visit them, for they had been his guests for a long time when the first Revolution caused them to fly France, and they were under other obligations to him; which I afterward learned from themselves was a pecuniary favor more than once renewed during their residence with him. Ten thousand dollars was a good deal of money to be placed at the disposition of a young man as his pocket money for eighteen months, even after a large deduction had been made from it for a library and professional instruments.

Before I quitted Edinburgh, I received a letter from the gentleman to whom my uncle had given me an introduction; he acquainted me that my uncle had informed him that I was about visiting France, and that he had taken the liberty of introducing me to him. The Marquis de – (such was his title—his name I omit for obvious reasons) expressed with great warmth his delight at having it in his power to exhibit the gratitude he felt to my uncle, and urged me with the most pressing terms to come at once to his home, and pass away there at least so much time as might accustom me to the *spoken* French language (I could easily read it), that my visit to Paris might be more profitable and agreeable—and it should be both, he was so good as to say, at least as far as it depended on himself and his friends. I wrote him by the return mail to thank him for his kindness, and to inform him that I should at once set out for his hospitable home. I shall never forget the six months I passed away in the Chateau de Bardy: the happiness of those days was checkered only by my departure and by the incident I shall presently relate. And even after I quitted that noble mansion, the kindness of its inmates still watched over me, and opened homes to me even in that great Maelstrom of life—Paris.

It was toward the end of the month of October—the most delightful month of the seasons in France—as I was returning on foot from Orleans to the Chateau de Bardy, from a rather prolonged pedestrian exploration in that interesting neighborhood, where I had accurately examined all of the curiosities, thanks to an ample memoir of my noble host (in those days 'Handbooks' were unknown, and Murray was busy publishing Byron and Moore), when I thought I caught a glimpse of some soldiers. I was not mistaken: on the road before me a Prussian regiment was marching. I quickened my pace to hear the military music, for I was extremely partial to it; but the band ceased playing, and no sound was heard except an occasional roll of the kettle-drum at long intervals to mark the uniform step of the soldiers. After following them for a half hour, I saw the regiment enter a small plain, surrounded by a fir grove. I asked a captain, whose acquaintance I had made, if his men were about to be drilled.

'No,' said he, 'they are about to try, and perhaps to shoot, a soldier of my company for having stolen something from the house where he was billeted.'

'What,' said I, 'are they going to try, condemn, and execute him, all in the same moment?'

'Yes,' said he, 'those are the provisions of the capitulation.'

This word 'capitulation' was to him an unanswerable argument, as if everything had been provided for in the capitulation, the crime and the punishment, justice and humanity.

'And if you have any curiosity to see it,' added the captain, 'I will place you where you may see everything. It won't be long.'

It may be from my professional education, but the truth is, I have always been fond of witnessing these melancholy spectacles; I persuade myself that I shall discover the solution of the enigma—death—on the face of a man in full health, whose life is suddenly severed. I followed the captain. The regiment was formed in a hollow square; in the rear of the second rank and near the edge of the grove, some soldiers were digging a grave. They were commanded by the third lieutenant, for in the regiment everything was done with order, and there is a certain form observed even in the digging of a man's grave. In the centre of the hollow square eight officers were seated on drums; a ninth officer was on their right, and some distance before them, negligently writing something, and using his knees as his desk; he was evidently filling up the forms simply because it was against the 'regulations' that a man should be killed without the usual forms. The accused was called up. He was a tall, fine-looking young man, with a noble and gentle face. A woman (the only witness in the cause) came up with him. But when the colonel began the examination of the woman, the soldier stopped him, saying:

'It is useless asking her any questions. I am going to confess everything: I stole a handkerchief in that lady's house.'

The Colonel. What! Piter! You have been stealing! We all thought *you* incapable of such a thing!

Piter. It is true, Colonel, I have always tried to pass as an honest man, and a good fellow. Oh! I tell you, it wan't for me I stole the handkerchief. 'Twas for Mary.

The Colonel. Who is Mary?

Piter. Mary? Oh! she lives yonder.... at home.... just outside of Areneberg.... don't you remember the big apple-tree?.... Oh! I shall never see her again....

The Colonel. I don't understand you, Piter; explain yourself.

Piter. Why, Colonel.... but read this letter.

He gave the colonel a letter, which the latter read aloud, and every word of which was engraved on my mind, and still is as present to my memory as though I heard them an hour ago. It was as follows:

My dear, dear Piter:—I take advantage of recruit Arnold's leaving, for he has enlisted in your regiment, to send you this letter, and a silk purse I have made for you. Oh! I have hidden from father to work it, for he is always scolding me for loving you so much, and is always telling me that you will never come back. But you will come back, won't you! Even if you never come back, I will always love you just the same. I promised myself to you the day you picked up my blue handkerchief at the Areneberg dance, and brought it to me. Oh! when shall I see you again? The only pleasure I have is to hear that your officers esteem you, and your comrades love you. Everybody says you are an honest man and a good fellow. But you have still two years to serve. Serve them quickly, because then we shall be married. Good-by, dear, dear Piter, and believe me, your own dear
Mary.

P.S. Try to send me, too, something from France, not because I'm afraid I shall forget you, but I want something from you to carry always about me. Kiss what you send me. I know I shall find at once where you kissed it.

When the colonel finished reading the letter, Piter said:

'Arnold gave me this letter last night when I received my billet paper. For my life's sake I could not sleep; I lay awake all night long, thinking of home and of Mary. She asked for something from France. I had no money. I drew three months' advance last week to send home to my brother and my cousin. This morning, when I got up to go, I opened my window. A blue handkerchief was hanging on a clothes line; it looked like Mary's; it was the same color, the same white lines; I was so weak as to take it, and put it in my knapsack. I went out into the street; I was sorry for what I had done; I was going back to the house with it just when this lady ran after me. The handkerchief was found in my knapsack. This is all the truth. The capitulation orders me to be shot. Shoot me, but don't despise me.'

The judges could not conceal their emotion; but when the balloting took place, he was unanimously condemned to death. He heard his sentence with sang-froid; after it was passed on him, he went up to his captain and asked him to lend him four francs. The captain gave them to him. I then saw Piter go to the woman to whom the blue handkerchief had been restored, and I heard him say:

'Madame, here are four francs; I don't know whether your handkerchief is worth more, but even if it is, I pay dear enough for it to engage you to knock off the rest.'

Taking the handkerchief from her, he kissed it, and gave it to the captain.

'Captain,' said he, 'in two years you'll be returning home; when you go toward Areneberg, ask for Mary; give her this blue handkerchief, but don't tell her how dearly I purchased it.'

Piter then kneeled and prayed fervently; when his prayers were ended, he arose and walked with a firm step to the place of execution. I forgot that I was a scientific man, and I walked down into the woods to avoid seeing the end of this cruel tragedy. A volley of musketry soon told me that all was over.

I returned to the fatal spot an hour afterward; the regiment had marched away; all was calm and silent. While following the edge of the grove, going to the highway, I perceived at a short distance before me traces of blood, and a mound of freshly heaped earth. I took a branch from one of the fir trees, and made a rude cross.

I placed it at the head of poor Piter's grave, now forgotten by every body except by me, and perhaps by Mary.

GOLD

Gold, next to iron, is the most widely diffused metal upon the surface of our globe. It occurs in granite, the oldest rock known to us, and in all the rocks derived from it; it is also found in the veinstones which traverse other geological formations, but has never been found in any secondary formation. It is, however, much more common in alluvial grounds than among primitive and pyrogenous rocks. It is found disseminated, under the form of spangles, in the silicious, argillaceous, and ferruginous sands of certain plains and rivers, especially in their junction, at the season of low water, and after storms and temporary floods. It is the only metal of a yellow color; it is readily crystallizable, and always assumes one or more of the symmetrical shapes, such as the cube or regular octahedron. It affords a resplendent polish, and may be exposed to the atmosphere for any length of time, without suffering any change; it is remarkable for its beauty; is nineteen times heavier than water, and, next to platinum, the heaviest known substance; its malleability is such, that a cubic inch will cover thirty-five hundred square feet; its ductility is such, that a lump of the value of four hundred dollars could be drawn into a wire which would extend around the globe. It is first mentioned in Genesis ii, 11. It was found in the country of Havilah, where the rivers Euphrates and Tigris unite and discharge their waters into the Persian gulf.

The relative value of gold to silver in the days of the patriarch Abraham was one to eight; at the period of B.C. 1000, it was one to twelve; B.C. 500, it was one to thirteen; at the commencement of the Christian era, it was one to nine; A.D. 500, it was one to eighteen; A.D. 1100, it was one to eight; A.D. 1400, it was one to eleven; A.D. 1613, it was one to thirteen; A.D. 1700, it was one to fifteen and a half; which latter ratio, with but slight variation, it has maintained to the present day. Gold was considered bullion in Palestine for a long period after silver had been current as money. The first mention of gold money in the Bible is in David's reign (B.C. 1056), when that king purchased the threshing floor of Oman for six hundred shekels of gold by weight. In the early period of Grecian history the quantity of the precious metals increased but slowly; the circulating medium did not increase in proportion with the quantity of bullion. In the earliest days of Greece, the precious metals existed in great abundance in the Levant. Cabul and Little Thibet (B.C. 500) were abundant in gold. It seems to be a well ascertained fact, that it was obtained near the surface; so that countries, which formerly yielded the metal in great abundance, are now entirely destitute of it. Cræsus (B.C. 560) coined the golden *stater*, which contained one hundred and thirty-three grains of pure metal. Darius, son of Hystaspes (B.C. 538), coined *darics*, containing one hundred and twenty-one grains of pure metal, which were preferred, for several ages throughout the East, for their fineness. Next to the *darics* were some coins of the reigns of the tyrants of Sicily: of Gelo (B.C. 491); of Hiero (B.C. 478); and of Dionysius (B.C. 404). Specimens of the two former are still preserved in modern cabinets. *Darics* are supposed to be mentioned in the latter books of the Old Testament, under the name of *drams*. Very few specimens of the *daric* have come down to us; their scarcity may be accounted for by the fact that they were melted down under the type of Alexander. Gold coin was by no means plenty in Greece until Philip of Macedon had put the mines of Thrace into full operation, about B.C. 360. Gold was also obtained by the Greeks from Asia Minor, the adjacent islands, which possessed it in abundance, and from India, Arabia, Armenia, Colchis, and Troas. It was found mixed with the sands of the Pactolus and other rivers. There are only about a dozen Greek coins in existence, three of which are in the British Museum; and of the latter, two are *staters*, of the weight of one hundred and twenty-nine grains each. About B.C. 207, gold coins were first struck off at Rome, and were denominated *aurei*, four specimens of which are in the institution before alluded to. Their weight was one hundred and twenty-one grains. Gold coins were first issued in France by Clovis, A.D. 489; about the same time they were issued in Spain by Amalric, the Gothic king; in both kingdoms they were called *trientes*. They were first issued in England A.D. 1257, in the shape of a penny. Florins

were next issued, in 1344, of the value of six shillings. The guinea was first issued in 1663, of Guinea gold. In 1733 all the gold coins—nobles, angels, rials, crowns, units, lions, exurgats, etc., etc., were called in and forbidden to circulate. The present sovereign was first issued in 1817.

From the commencement of the Christian era to the discovery of America, the amount of gold obtained from the surface and bowels of the earth is estimated to be thirty-eight hundred millions of dollars; from the date of the latter event to the close of 1842, an addition of twenty-eight hundred millions was obtained. The discovery and extensive working of the Russian mines added, to the close of 1852, six hundred millions more. The double discovery of the California mines in 1848, and of the Australia mines in 1851 has added, to the present time, twenty-one hundred millions; making a grand total of ninety-three hundred millions of dollars. The average loss by wear and tear of coin is estimated to be one-tenth of one per cent, per annum; and the loss by consumption in the arts, by fire and shipwreck, at from one to three millions per annum.

A cubic inch of gold is worth (at £3 17s. 10½d., or \$18.69 per ounce) two hundred and ten dollars; a cubic foot, three hundred and sixty-two thousand eight hundred and eighty dollars; a cubic yard, nine millions nine hundred and seventeen thousand seven hundred and sixty dollars. The amount of gold in existence, at the commencement of the Christian era, is estimated to be four hundred and twenty-seven millions of dollars; at the period of the discovery of America, it had diminished to fifty-seven millions; after the occurrence of that event, it gradually increased, and in 1600, it attained to one hundred and five millions; in 1700, to three hundred and fifty-one millions; in 1800, to eleven hundred and twenty-five millions; in 1843, to two thousand millions; in 1853 to three thousand millions; and at the present time, the amount of gold in existence is estimated to be forty-eight hundred millions of dollars; which, welded into one mass, could be contained in a cube of twenty-four feet. Of the amount now in existence, three thousand millions is estimated to be in coin and bullion, and the remainder in watches, jewelry, plate, etc., etc.

The Russian gold mines were discovered in 1819, and extend over one third of the circumference of the globe, upon the parallel of 55° of north latitude. Their product, since their discovery to the present time, has amounted to eight hundred millions of dollars. The California gold mines were discovered by William Marshall, on the ninth day of February, 1848, at Sutter's Mill, upon the American Fork, a tributary of the Sacramento, and extend from 34° to 49° of north latitude. Their product, since their discovery to the present time, has amounted to one thousand and forty-seven millions of dollars. The Australia gold mines were discovered by Edward Hammond Hargraves, on the twelfth day of February, 1851, in the Bathurst and Wellington districts, and extend from 30° to 38° of south latitude. Their product, since their discovery to the present time, has amounted to nine hundred and eleven millions of dollars. The finest gold is obtained at Ballurat, and the largest nugget yet obtained weighed twenty-two hundred and seventeen ounces, valued at forty-one thousand dollars. In shape it resembled a continent with a peninsula attached by a narrow isthmus. The annual product of gold at the commencement of the Christian era is estimated at eight hundred thousand dollars; at the period of the discovery of America it had diminished to one hundred thousand dollars; after the occurrence of that event it gradually increased, and in 1600 it attained to two millions; and in 1700, to five millions; in 1800, to fifteen millions; in 1843, to thirty-four millions; in 1850, to eighty-eight millions; in 1852, to two hundred and thirty-six millions; but owing to the falling off of the California as well as the Australia mines, the product of the present year will not probably exceed one hundred and ninety millions.

Since 1792 to the present time, the gold coinage of the United States mint has amounted to seven hundred and forty millions of dollars, of which six hundred and fifty-five millions have been issued since 1850. The gold coinage of the French mint, since 1726, has amounted to eighty-seven hundred millions of francs, of which fifty-two hundred and fifty millions have been issued since 1850. The gold coinage of the British mint, since 1603, has amounted to two hundred and eighty millions of pounds sterling; of which seventy-five millions have been issued since 1850. The gold coinage of the

Russian mint, since 1664, has amounted to five hundred and twenty-six millions of roubles, of which two hundred and sixty millions have been issued since 1850. The sovereign of England contains one hundred and twelve grains of pure metal; the new doubloon of Spain, one hundred and fifteen; the half eagle of the United States, one hundred and sixteen; the gold lion of the Netherlands, and the double ounce of Sicily, one hundred and seventeen grains each; the ducat of Austria, one hundred and six; the twenty-franc piece of France, ninety; and the half imperial of Russia, ninety-one grains. A commissioner has been despatched by the United States Government to England, France, and other countries of Europe, to confer with their respective governments upon the expediency of adopting a uniform system of coinage throughout the world, so that the coins of one country may circulate in any other, without the expense of recoinage—a consummation most devoutly to be wished.

The fact that the large amount of gold which has been thrown into the monetary circulation of the world within the last fourteen years, has exercised so little influence upon the money market or prices generally, is at variance with the predictions of financial writers upon both sides of the Atlantic. The increase in the present production of gold, compared with former periods, is enormous; and it would not be surprising if, in view of the explorations which are going on in Africa, Japan, Borneo, and other countries bordering upon the equator, the product of the precious metals within the next decade should be a million of dollars *daily*. The price of gold has not diminished, although the annual product has increased fivefold within twenty years.

LAST WORDS

I am at last resolved. This taunting devil shall possess me no longer. At least I will meet him face to face. I have read that the face of a dead man is as though he understood the cause of all things, and was therefore profoundly at rest, *I* will know the cause of my wretched fate, and will be at rest. My pistols lie loaded by my side—I shall die to-night. To-morrow, twelve awestruck and trembling men will come and look at me. They will ask each other: 'What could have been his motive for the rash act.' Rash! my face will be calmer than theirs, for my struggles in this life will be over; and I shall have gained—perhaps knowledge, perhaps oblivion, but certainly victory. And to-night, as the clock strikes twelve, there will be shrieks and horror in this room. No matter: I shall have been more kind to those who utter them than they know of, for they will not have known the cause until they have read these lines.

And yet most people would esteem me a happy man. I am rich in all that the world calls riches. I sit in a room filled with luxuries; a few steps would bring me into the midst of guests, among whom are noble men and women, sweet music, rare perfumes, glitter and costly show. My life has been spent amid the influences of kind friends, good parents, and culture in all that is highest and worthiest in literature and art; and I can recall scenes as I write, of days that would have been most happy but for the blight that has been upon me always. I think I see now the pleasant parlor in the old house at home. Here sits our mother, a little gray, but brisk and merry as a cricket; there our father, a well-preserved gentleman of fifty, rather gratified at feeling the first aristocratic twinges of gout, and whose double eyeglass is a chief feature in all he says; there is Bill, poring over Sir William Napier's 'Peninsular War'; there is Charles, just rushing in, with a face the principal features in which are redness and hair, to tell us that there is another otter in the mill stream in the meadow; there is my little sister, holding grave talk with dear Dollie, and best (or worst) of all, there is cousin Lucy—cousin Lucy, with her brown hair, and soft, loving eyes and quiet ways. Where are they all now? Charley went to London, was first the favorite of the clubs, next a heartless rake, and finally, being worn out, and, like Solomon, convinced that all was vanity, went into the Church to become that most contemptible of all creatures, a fashionable preacher; my father and mother are laid side by side in the aisle of the old church on the hill, where their virtues are sculptured in marble, for the information of anxiously curious mankind; sister Mary no longer talks to dolls, though a flock of little girls, who call her mother, do. Bill, poor Bill, lies far away in the Crimea, with the bullet of a gray-coated Russian in his heart. And Lucy—but it is to her I owe what I am, and what I am about to do.

I loved her—love her still. Will she *know* what these words mean, when she finds them here? I cannot tell. They are enough for me. Not for you are they written, ball-room lounge, whispering of endless devotion between every quadrille; not for you, proud beauty, taking and absorbing declarations as you would an ice; not for you, chattering monkey of the Champs Elysées, raving of your *grande passion* for Eloise, so *charmante*, so *spirituelle*; nor for you, Eloise aforesaid, with your devilish devices, stringing hearts in your girdle as Indians do scalps; not for you, dancing Spaniard, with your eternal castagnets, whispering just one word to your dark-eyed señorita, as you hand her another perfumed cigarette; not for you, lounging Italian, hissing intrigues under the shadow of an Athenian portico, or stealing after your veiled incognita, as her shadow flits over the place where the blood of Cæsar dyed the floor of the Capitol, or where the knife of Virginius flashed in the summer sun—not for one of you, for I have seen and despise you all. To you all love is a sealed book, which you shall never open—a tree of knowledge that will never turn into a curse for you—a beautiful serpent that, as you gaze upon its changing hues, will never sting you to the death.

I never told her. I would wait for hours to see her pass, if she went out alone—but I never told her. I would trace her footsteps where she had taken her daily walk; I would wait beneath her window at night, to see but her shadow upon the blind, until she put out her lamp, and left the stars and myself

the only watchers there—but I never told her. I would lay flowers in her way, happy if she wore them on her bosom, or wreathed them in her hair, as she sometimes would—but she never knew from whom they came. I sickened at my heart for her; I pined, oh! how I pined for her, and worshipped her as a saint, the hope, the glory, the heaven of my life—but I never told her.

Did she love me? No. And, while I loved, I feared her. She never made me her companion, never took my arm; would always sit opposite me in the carriage instead of by my side; if in a game of forfeits, I forced the embrace I had won, she would struggle with tears of anger, though she had given her cheek to William with a blush but a few minutes before. If I had not been her abject slave, I could have torn her in pieces. Alas! alas! we were but boys, and she a girl still. How many, long years I have suffered since then!

One night I could not sleep, but sat up in my room thinking. Why should she not love me? I am esteemed well-looking and intelligent, thought I, looking into the glass, as if to confirm my satisfactory judgment of myself. I gazed long and earnestly. Yes, certainly handsome, said I with my lips, but—fool! fool! said my mocking eyes; for at that moment there came out of their depths—there came a devil! Yes, a devil that glared at me from the glass! a devil that was, and yet was not, myself! a devil that had my form, and looked out of my face, but with its own cruel, mocking eyes! And he and I confronted each other in that horrible glass. I know not how long, but they told me afterward that I was found next morning making ghastly faces at myself.

And then I was carried by spirits into a land of visions, where for a hundred years, or for a moment of time, I was flying through space, and clouds, and fire!—groping through dark caverns, millions of miles long, crying wildly for light and air; now a giant, entangled in myriads of chains that I could not break; now a reptile, writhing away from footsteps that made the earth reel and tremble beneath their tread; and at last waking, as if out of sleep, a poor, puny thing, with limbs like shadows, laughing or crying by turns for very feebleness.

As I arose from that bed I knew that I was changed. It was a secret thought, a secret that I have kept till now. I was not quite sure at first, but it thus fell out that I knew it well:

One day William and I had been sitting for some time in the library, he reading and I looking at the faces that glowed in the red-hot coal, and thinking of Lucy and him.

'Where is Lucy?' said I, at length,

'Gone out into the village,' he answered, without looking from the book; 'first to buy gloves, then to see Miss Trip, the dancing mistress, who is ill, then to Hurst Park to tea, whence I am to fetch her at nine o'clock.'

'You seem to know all her movements,' I said, with a sneer.

'Certainly, he rejoined, 'she told me all that I have told you.'

'You always *are* in her confidence,' said I, very angrily, as my blood rose.

'I believe so,' said he, calmly; though he looked at me with some surprise.

'And I never,' said I, between my teeth.

'That,' he said, 'is a matter with which I have no concern.'

I ground my teeth, but I kept quiet. I kept quiet, though every nerve in my body tingled with rage, and my boiling blood rushed into my eyes till I could hardly see. 'Do you know,' I shouted, 'do you know that I love her—would die a thousand deaths for her?'

He clasped his hands with a quick motion, as he said in a low voice, 'And so do I; and so would I.'

'Beast, fiend!' I screamed, 'does she—does she—' I could not get out the accursed words.

'We have been engaged,' he answered, divining what I would have asked, 'we have been engaged for some time, and—'

He did not finish the sentence, for I sprang at him, crushed him to the floor, squeezed his throat till his face grew black and the froth oozed out from his lips, beat his head upon the hearthstones till he lay still and bleeding, and then sought my knife. It was up stairs. I flew to get it. It lay upon my dressing table before the glass, and I snatched at it. Great God! as I did so, another arm was thrust

forth—not mine, I swear, if I live a thousand years; and as I recoiled, I saw in that glass a fiend step back. Not me, not me!—but a fiend with bloody hands, and a foul leer upon its face, and a fierce, cruel laugh in its glittering eyes. It was he, it was he! It was the devil that had possessed me before, come back again. And as I shuddered and gasped, and turned away, and then looked again into those eyes that pierced *me* through, and saw the cold, bitter smile that was on the face before me, I knew that the fiend would leave me never more, and that I was mad!

What was a quarrel with my brother now? I stole back, and, lifting him up, carried him to his room, where I washed the blood from his face. When he came to himself I fell at his feet and besought his pardon, and that he would keep what had happened a secret. He forgave me. And I believe the only lie he ever told in all his life was when he told Lucy that he had cut his head by falling on a jagged stone.

Oh, how often after that my fingers itched to be at his throat again; but I always quailed before his steady eye.

I pass over the next few years, except to say that I went to college, where I was shunned by all, though never alone: was a dunce, and plucked twice. Perhaps it was I who shunned others, for had I not society in the constant presence of my Familiar? I was of course a dunce, for my brain was never steady enough to carry me over the *Pons Asinorum*, or to make a Latin verse with even decent correctness. I went away in disgust. I think if I had stayed longer I should have torn somebody, or else myself.

I went next into the army. It was a new era in my life, and, strange to say, my devil left me for a while, so that I was able to master the details of my profession, and to be esteemed a good and careful officer. There was hope, too, of active service; for the Russian Eagle was slowly unfolding his vast wings for a new descent into the plains of Europe. William, married to Her now, who was a lieutenant in the Foot Guards, wrote to me to say that he hoped we should be really brothers, now that we were to meet before an enemy; and the next day out came the declaration of war. When I had read it, I drew my sword, and, as I ran my eye along its cold, sharp blade from hilt to point, I thought how strange was its power to let out a man's life, and turn him, in a moment, into a heap of inanimate carrion.

Of course I am not going to tell the history of the great siege in the Crimea, for every child knows by heart the tale of the clambering fight up the Alma's steeps, of the withering volley that suddenly crashed out of the gray twilight on the hill of Inkerman, of the long months of starvation, of the final *feu d'enfer*, beneath which the Russian host crowded over the narrow bridge that saved them from their foe. But of the fatal charge of the Six Hundred I must speak, for I was one of them, and I have cursed its memory a thousand times.

I well remember that day—how restless I was the night before, and how I listened to the dropping shots on either side, hoping almost that one would find its way to my heart.

We were brigaded by daylight. Some manœuvres on an extensive scale were to be attempted, I believe, one of which was to outflank some batteries of field artillery by which we had suffered much loss. They were drawn up at the side and end of the valley of Balaklava, and we were at the other end, and were ordered, it has since been said in error, to charge down the valley upon them.

How beautiful the sun rose that day! The dewy odors from a thousand flowers came floating up from that green valley as he rolled away the mists from the mountain tops, and showed us the dusky masses far below, from which the shot came whizzing every now and then. Gods! how we exulted at the sight. Along our line rose a wild cheer, as our horses tugged and strained at their bits, and every man's bridle was drawn tight. Soon a puff of smoke came from a hillock near, and the stern command 'draw swords' ran along from troop to troop, as the bright steel flashed in the sunshine like a river of light. Then out pealed the trumpets, and away we went, amidst a storm of ringing harness, and clashing scabbards, and flying banners, and thundering hoofs that made the ground shake. On we dashed, straight across the valley, in front of a point-blank fire, that emptied many a saddle as we flew along, straight upon the mass of smoke and flame which hid those fatal batteries—straight at

the gunners, dealing out wild blows upon them, while they fought with swords, or axes, or clubbed muskets, or gun spongers, or anything that could cut or strike a blow.

As for me, I only know that I was in the first line, and among the first in the *mêlée*; where my first blow lighted upon the bare head of a Russian, whose blood spouted high as I cut at him with all my force; for after that a mist came over my eyes, and I fought in the dark, and then came oblivion.

When I awoke to consciousness, which I did not for several days, I found that I was wounded, and had been in danger of my life, though I should most probably recover. As soon as I was strong enough to talk much, I was told that my bravery had been very conspicuous, and that I had been honorably mentioned in the order of the day. Four Russians, it seemed, had died by my hand, and being at last cut on the head by a sabre, I was with difficulty held on my horse when the retreat was sounded. I had raved, it also appeared, incessantly; but now the fever had left me. Good. It was fever, they thought, which had held possession of me. But those who said so did not know what power it was that nerved my arm, and then, having worked his devilish wile, flung me away like a broken toy. Fever! They did not know that it was a 'fever' that had cursed me for twelve long years.

But I got well, as those who were about me said, and, having been reported fit for duty, made my appearance at parade, and afterward, the same day, at mess.

My brother was dead. One day, while I lay ill, he and a party of his brother officers were idly chatting in one of the more advanced trenches, when a minié ball struck him, and he died without a word or groan. They carried him out, and he lies at the little graveyard at Scutari, with thousands of others who fell in the Great Siege. His sword and other relics had been kept for me, and among them was a portrait of Cousin Lucy, which he had worn next his heart. I should have to take it to her. The general in command had already written to her, with the news of her bereavement.

I was saying that I rejoined the mess. All my comrades congratulated me but one. He was a young fellow, recently exchanged from another regiment, who would one day wear the strawberry leaf upon his coronet—a cold, supercilious, prying puppy, whom I hated at once. When we were introduced, our mutual bow was studied in its cold formality—on his side so much so as to be almost insulting, considering the place and circumstances. To this day I believe that he, the only one of all there, had suspected me, and I felt that I must be perpetually on my guard against his curious glances. I was sure that one day we should have to strive for the mastery. And we did—sooner than I expected; for, as the colonel filled his glass, and, calling upon the rest to follow his example, drank a welcome to me back among them, this knave, sitting opposite at the time, fixed his eyes upon me as he lifted his glass to his lips, and did not drink. As our looks met, I knew that he mocked me, and I flung my wine in his face, and raved.

Those present forced me away, and took me to my tent, where they made me lie down. I was supposed to be delirious from weakness and the effects of my wound, and I heard them say, 'He has come out too soon; that wine he drank at dinner was too much for him.' Good again! It was the wine! 'But,' thought I, 'as soon as this arm shall be able to strike or thrust, I will have the life of that sneering devil, or he mine.' And I kept my word. I met him within ten days afterward, walking at some distance from the camp, quite alone, as I was myself.

'Good morning,' said he; 'you are about again, as I am glad to see.'

I said to him, 'Do you forget the time when I was out before?'

'Surely not,' said he; 'but I knew that you had been ill, and was not master of yourself.'

'And so forgave me?' I rejoined, in a passion.

'And so forgave,' said he; 'why not?'

'Then learn,' said I, 'that I *was* master of myself; that I am now; that you insulted me grossly; that the only words I have for you are—draw, sir, draw!'

'Stop!' he cried, as I drew my sword; 'pray come back with me to the camp. You are ill; pray, come back; I have no quarrel with you, believe me.'

But I struck him on the breast with my swordhilt, so that he nearly fell. Then he recovered himself, and, still crying out that he had no quarrel with me, drew and stood upon his guard, while I rushed upon him.

He was cool, and I furious. I believe he could have killed me easily if he had wished, but he only parried my rapid blows. At last, however, as I pressed him more closely, he grew paler, and began to fight in earnest. What *then* could he do against a madman? I bore him back, step by step, till a mass of rock stopped him; and there I kept him, with the hissing steel playing about his head, until he dropped upon one knee and his sword fell from his hand. Then I paused, waiting to see him die as I would a wounded hare, as die I knew he must, for I had pierced him with twenty wounds. He knelt thus, and looked, not at me, but at the setting sun; and then his head drooped and he rolled over, and was dead.

And as I wiped my sword on the grass, I shouted with glee.

Of course, I told no one. It was but another secret added to the many that had torn my heart and brain. Nor, when the body was found, stripped by camp followers, and supposed to be killed by a reconnoitring party of the enemy, did I betray myself by word or look.

At last the war was over, and we were ordered home. I bade farewell to the blue hills of the Crimea with secret joy, and as the shore faded from my sight, the memory of all that had happened to me during the Great Siege faded from my memory like a dream.

Upon our landing, I went as soon as possible home. How green the hedges were, how sweet the scent of the violets, how soft the grass, how grand the arching oaks and giant elms, as I journeyed along on foot. Surely I have suffered enough, I said to myself, as I passed through meadow, and copse, and lane, and over stiles, and to the old park at last. Surely I have suffered enough, I said, as I came to the lodge gate, where the keeper's wife looked curiously at my uniform and bronzed face, and the crape on my arm, and then ran into the lodge to tell her husband that here was Master Horace come back. Surely there was peace in that old house, with its pointed gables, and moss-clad turrets, and ivied walls, and little gothic windows—where the old butler grasped my hand; and the maids came peeping out; and the old dog licked my face; where poor Lucy wept upon my breast—wept for that I had come back alone; and then put her little girl into my arms, to kiss dear Uncle Horace, come home once more.

But, when I went to bed that night, in the same glass that showed me my Enemy years before, I saw him looking at me, with his cruel smile, shining out of my own eyes.

What more remains to be told? But little; for it was but the old story. It is enough to say that I struggled on, hoping against hope; that I cheated myself with the maddest hope of all—that she might be brought to love me; that I one day prayed her to become my wife, and that she broke from me with terror and loathing; that I fled her presence, and was once more a wanderer over the earth; that my weary feet dragged me over the snows of Siberia, where the furred noble and the chained serf worked side by side; over the burning sands, where the brown Arab careers along upon his steed, his white burnous fluttering in the hot wind; over the broad prairies of America, where the Indian prowls with his trusty rifle, waiting for the wild beast; over the paths of the trackless deep; over the still wilder deserts and still more lonely deeps of revelry and vice;—what more than that I have come back again; that many guests are here to do honor to my return; that these are the last words which I shall ever write!

PARTING

When 'mid the loud notes of the drum
And fife tones shrilling on the ear,
The music of our nation's hymns
Rose 'neath the elm trees loud and clear;
When on the Common's grassy plain
The city poured her countless throng,
And blessings fell like April rain
On each one as he marched along;

We parted,—hand close clasped in hand,
Telling the thoughts tongue could not speak;
Was it unmanly that our eyes
O'erflowed with love upon the cheek?
I hear thy cheery voice outspoke,
'Courage, the months will quickly fly,
And ere November chill and bleak
We meet at home, Ned, you and I.'

A livelier strain came from the band,
'God bless you' went from each to each;
A gazing eye, a waving hand,
Where hearts were all too full for speech.
He marched, obeying duty's call,
Of noblest nature, first to hear;
I, bound by fond domestic thrall,
In path of duty lingered here.

Slowly the summer months rolled on,
October harvested the corn,
November came with shortening days,
Passed by in mist and rain,—was gone,—
Yet still he came not; winter's snow
In feathery vesture clothed the trees,
Or, iceclad in a jewelled glow,
They sparkled in the chilly breeze.

Spring glowed along Potomac vales,
While north her footsteps tardier came,
For him the golden jasmine trails
O'er bright azaleas all aflame;
Still upon Yorktown's trampled fields,
O'er grassy plain and wooded swell,
Her sunny wealth the summer yields,
And still the word comes, 'All is well.'

A MERCHANT'S STORY

'All of which I saw, and part of which I was.'

CHAPTER XII

In the afternoon the exercises at the meeting house were conducted by Preston, who publicly catechized the negroes very much in the manner that is practised in Northern Sunday schools. When the services were over, and the family had gathered around the supper table, I said to him:

'I've an idea of passing the evening with Joe; he has invited me. Would it be proper for you and Mrs. Preston to go?'

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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