

“‘This is a mere spoliation of Turkey,’ I hear some one cry. Well, yes; the Osmanli rose to empire by spoiling others, and it is now his turn to be spoiled. What he won by the sword he must keep by the sword, or the sword will snatch it from him. His presence in Europe is in these days an anachronism; it might be tolerated for good, certainly not for evil. He is fit only for Asia Minor, where, untrammelled by rival Plenipotentiaries and unscrupulous Ambassadors, he can throw off the tights that embarrass his limbs, and become once more the ‘man on horseback.’ There, at least, he can clean abolish his *Irâdes*, his *Tansimât*, and other bastard forms of constitutionalism, which, combined with so-called reforms, have destroyed the old forms without substituting anything new; which have weakened his material powers, spoiled his temper, and debased his character. There he can revert to those mediæval institutions that made the race what it was; to the eternal ‘*non possumus*,’ to the ‘Pacha of many Tales,’ to the slave and the concubine, to the eunuch and the mute, to the bowstring, the bastinado, and the bag for the light o’ love. There *la gent qui porte le turban* may cultivate its mixture of childishness and senile cunning; its levity of mind, cloaked by solemn garb and mien; its mental indolence, with spasmodic efforts by way of change; and its conscious weakness warring with overweening arrogance. But Europe will no longer bear in her bosom this survival of the Unfittest. *Apage Sathanas!* Return, Tartar, to that Tartary whence thou camest. These are the words of St. Louis, and they shall be heard.”

[He also wrote later on—]

“THE PARTITION OF TURKEY.

“The curious are beginning to ask, Do statesmen, politicians, and Foreign Offices really wish to settle the so-called ‘Eastern Question’? Does the trade hesitate to take it in hand from the dread vision of half its occupation gone? And yet what a host of evils such *fainéance* breeds! Take, for instance, the last miserable move, known to politics as the ‘Cession of Dulcigno,’ a paltry village on the wild Albanian shore. It kept the fleets of Europe at bay for a couple of months; it kept the whole of South-eastern Europe in ‘hot water;’ it kept newspapers in news while starving trade; and it supplied history with an episode the most comical, the most absurd. Of the Turk we may say (with Spenser)—

‘That his behaviour altogether was
Alla Turchesca.’

He has adhered to his traditional policy—procrastination, promising, non-performance. ‘The friendly concert of the Great Powers’ has been sorely tried, strained to breaking point. Bulgaria, ‘one and indivisible,’ has been arming and drilling instead of tilling and earing. Greece has made it the business of her national life to raise a loan and an army of 60,000 men. Albania has, perhaps, fared the worst. The Porte encouraged her to resist the so-called ‘will of Europe,’ and to oppose with all her might the transfer of Albanians to Montenegrens. Then the Porte executed the normal manœuvre *volte face*; commanded, or pretended to command, her to give up her property; and made a happy despatch of her recusant

chiefs—by means of the usual cup of coffee. The turbulent mountain region is now between two stools; she is neither Turkish nor Albanian, she is lost to the Porte without having gained her independence; and, like the Libanus in the past, she has become one of the 'tinder-boxes' of the West. Meanwhile the work of the European world has suffered, and still suffers, from an armed peace which has many of the evils and none of the good which war brings.

"When I last wrote (1879) the Turco-Russian campaign of two years, which must have cost the lives of a million human beings, had dragged itself to its weary end. It left the Sick Man weaker and more prostrated than ever—even the political doctors with their patent drugs could do no good to a constitution fast breaking up. The short respite from his sufferings called peace was not a 'peace with honour.' Resolved to maintain the 'integrity of Turkey,' the rough surgeons dismembered, disintegrated her. She was, before that treatment, a 'scattered Empire like England;' after it she became a 'geographical expression,' as was the Italy of the eighteenth century. Virtually she lost all her European provinces, except Roumelia, which took the peculiarly inconsequent title of Eastern Bulgaria. Dynastic demoralization and despotic government; diminished territory and autonomous provinces; national bankruptcy, with confusion of finance, unpaid debts, and a paper money which caused disturbances wherever it circulated, have made the Sick Man a dying man; and, instead of soothing and syruing his last moments, the greedy heirs standing by his bedside are wrangling and recriminating and calling one another names over the approaching distribution of his property.

"The 'future of Turkey' was virtually settled in 1816, when 'Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington' proposed to the great Muscovite Empire the mediatization of Constantinople. Russia saw how great a boon this step would be to her. She may look forward to absorbing the Queen of the Bosphorus after half a century; in the present state of things she knows that the superb possession would be a well-nigh unmitigated evil. It would cut her Empire in two: and the southern would only injure the sounder and sturdier northern half. The *status quo* she knew to be equally detrimental; autocratic governments must obey popular will; and an ebullition of national rage may at any moment force on a campaign like that of 1877-78. She wants rest; and she wishes to recruit her finances, to reorganize her armies, and to settle conclusions with the Tartars and the Chinese. In fact, peace in Europe, but not an armed peace, is a desideratum to her, and she can obtain it only when Constantinople becomes a free town. She knew this half a century ago, and she knows it still.

"Meanwhile, the partition of Turkey has been going on merrily. In the war brought on mainly by our old enemy Rashîd Pasha, the 'rebellious Principalities,' Montenegro and Servia, have enlarged their boundaries; but both want more, and both will have more. For the characteristic of the actual 'situation' is its purely provisional nature. No one is satisfied as matters now stand; all are without exception claimants, and urgent claimants, for something more than 'administrative autonomy,' either

municipal or provincial. The new 'tributary principality' of Bulgaria Proper, as I suppose we must call her, will not be satisfied with *quasi* independence. She has spent the last two years in preparations for a campaign; in buying arms and in drilling under Russian officers. She waits only for Greece to begin the game; whilst Greece says, 'Gentlemen of Bulgaria, fire first.' It is the old story of the Earl of Chatham and Sir Richard Strachan. Eastern Roumelia, which is Southern Bulgaria, cannot be satisfied with her rank as a mere province, even under a nominal Christian Governor whose ministry rules. She must conquer her freedom; and she will conquer it by uniting with Bulgaria Proper, and by throwing herself into the arms of Russia, if we compel her to commit this act of political suicide.

"Greece, that progressive little kingdom, which has been so much and so unjustly abused by the sentimentalists of England, behaved with exemplary patience during the Russo-Turkish War. She allowed herself to be cajoled by promise after promise, and now she finds that—

' In native swords and native ranks,
The only hope of freedom dwells.'

Action, in fact, is thrust upon her. The two Conferences of Berlin promised her a thin slice of enslaved Greece, which she thankfully accepted as an earnest of more. It would weary the reader to recount the miserable subterfuges and tergiversation of Turkey, who alternately presents the bittock to her lips and withdraws it, proposing impossible conditions. In this mean matter politics are complicated by something like personal spite and racial hatred. The Turk makes it a *pundonor* not to yield to the Greek; he would keep for his own use the right of robbery and rape, kidnapping and murdering. The Greek will bear no more the hateful yoke.

"The former declares with perfect untruth that the transfer of Janina, Larissa, and other places would be the loss of a commanding strategic line. The Greek asserts that he must also have Epirus, Thessaly, and even Thrace, because the whole country is Greek in language, manners, and religion. And a fresh complication has sprung up. Greece has been making, for her, immense sacrifices, and an army of 30,000 to 40,000 men will soon eat up a State whose population is 1,500,000, and whose revenue of £3,600,000, with a deficit of half a million and a debt of eighteen millions; it would hardly keep her in bread and cheese. Every day costs her more money than she can afford; the business of everyday life is at a standstill.

"Austria has at length adopted the course prescribed to her in the last century by the soldier and statesman, Prince Eugène of Savoy, who advised her to abandon her worse than useless Italian conquests, and to bring her weight to bear upon the Turk. After an 'occupation,' which was a campaign costing some 4000 lives, she has established herself in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, which are geographical necessities to the 'Kingdom of Dalmatia,' the old 'Mother of Emperors.' Here she has done, despite her enemies, excellent work. A traveller writes to me, 'The improvements effected in the new protectorate during the last two

years must be seen to be believed. The military roads extending from Brood on the Sava to Serajevo, and from Serajevo through Herzegovina, by Mostar, to the mouth of the Narenta, do infinite honour to the Engineer Department, and, considering the immense outlay of the Imperial Treasury, to the forethought and generosity of the Government. A capable police has been organized, and district courts and schools have been established throughout the length and breadth of the land. I found perfect order and tranquillity prevailing everywhere, and well will it be for the best interests, social and political, of the people, the farther Austrian rule is extended and the longer it is perpetuated.'

"Austria took formal charge of the Ottoman in South-Eastern Europe at the Congress of Berlin—a step enthusiastically hailed by a statesman as 'glad tidings of great joy.' The Emperor's journey to Dalmatia (1876) was the beginning of that policy, and we have still to see the results of the Imperial round of visits in the summer of 1880. It is understood that the attitude of England has revived the league known as the Dreikaiserbund, and that Germany and Austria are united in the determination that the other third should not profit exclusively by annexing Turkish territory. When the war breaks out, and it may break out at any moment, Austria cannot remain passive. Under pain of retrograding she must advance. Adrianople will become necessary to the Dual Empire when Greece enlarges herself; when Bulgaria shall conquer her independence, the course of events must carry Austria forward to Salonica. There is nothing to prevent her becoming a great Jugo-Slav (South Slavonic) power, the mainstay of the Catholic Slavs, as Russia is of the Northern or orthodox. By cultivating the Christian populations on the Lower Danube, and by a league with 'Old Bulgaria' (Servia, Roumania, Roumelia, etc.), she would invest the Muscovite rival to the south and the south-west, while Germany hems him in to the west and the north-west. Russia declares that such a union, forming a state of siege impossible to endure, would be a calamity second only to the restoration of the kingdom of Poland.

"Austria has two opponents who will serve only to force her forwards. The Land of the Magyar has become a country of 'white Turks,' of 'ogres,' as Mr. Freeman calls them, more Ottoman than the Ottomans. Kossuth's lately published volumes explain the reason why; but the ambitions and the passions of 1848, which brought about the unnatural and abominable union, cannot outlast a second generation. The other rival is Italy, whose statesmen view, with a curious mixture of rage and spite, the aggrandizement of a quondam master. Since Italia became *una*, her politicians have shown a turbulent spirit which menaces the peace of Europe. *Italia Irredenta*, an old idea, but an expression apparently coined in 1878, means much. The *Redenta* represents an 'Italy free from Etna to Trieste.' The Moderates would be satisfied with annexing the Trentino, the duchy of Gorizia, and the peninsula of Istria. The 'Immoderates' add all Dalmatia and part of Albania; in fact, wherever the Roman *regiones* extended. But Trieste will not be Italian. Mr. Disraeli said, 'The port of Trieste is not a mere Austrian port; it belongs to the German Confederation; and an attack on Trieste is not an attack on Austria

alone, but also on Germany.' The managing man, *par excellence*, of Europe has as openly declared that if the Italians attempt to march upon the Vice-Queen of the Adriatic, they will meet a sword-point which is not Austrian. Italy might do better than to lay out her income upon 'bloated armaments,' a disproportionate army which she is still increasing, and colossal ironclads, which any torpedo-cockboat may blow up. She is one of the poorest of nations, in the very richest of soils; her agriculture has progressed little beyond that of the 'Georgics'; her railroads are a disgrace; so is her post-office; her finances suffer from the good old practice of converting a stocking into a bank; and her business is injured by her over-'cuteness' and greed of gain. She is no longer the charming country of the early nineteenth century. Freedom has taught her all the roughness, but little of the virtue of the Northerner. Honesty seems to be at its lowest ebb. The knife is king. Whatever Italy has of genius, energy, and 'go-ahead' is now devoted to warlike preparations, and to dreams of conquest. The awaking will be bitter.

"So much for Turkey in Europe, where, despite Mr. Redhouse, she can hardly be said to exist. In Asia, or rather Asia Minor, her future home, she has lost her most valuable possessions—Kars, the great base of military operations, and Batoum, the rival of Trebizonde, and the port that commands the Bosphorus. The Muscovite really requires nothing more in Western Asia; and it was a masterly stroke of policy our pledging ourselves to protect what wants no protection. It is again the Dean's—

'When nothing's left to need defence
They build a magazine.'

But here again Russia is being forced forward. She has nothing to do with the bleak and barren mountains of Armenia, an Asiatic Scotland; but the cries of the unfortunate Christians, though preemtorily suppressed in the Turkish papers, are exciting legitimate Muscovite sympathies. It is the old story of the 'Bulgarian atrocities.' Armenia, when I last wrote, was a 'rebellious province,' and she was to be put down by slipping at her the Kurd bloodhound. This race of bandits, fanatical as it is ferocious, has perpetrated every horror under the sun; and the complication of a hunger-year has made the desolate Christians ready to accept any rule. And now they are attacking in force Persia, the neighbour and ally of Russia, so as to compel the latter to remove.

"The 'reform by moral force,' the honest gendarmie, the just tribunals, and the tax-gathering publicans turned to saints, all these choice projects of a future for Asia Minor have turned out, as might have been expected, the merest visions, baseless as a mirage. If England were *doctrinaire*, she would either let the task severely alone or she would appoint to every government (*vilayet*) of Turkey a British 'Resident,' after the fashion of Anglo-India. But compromise is her specific; it is a panacea for home use, and, *ergo*, it is a panacea everywhere. She has done neither this nor that; she has adopted *mezzi termini* (half-measures); she has again applied the rule of thumb; she has 'meddled and muddled' once more. How perfectly she has failed is known to every newspaper reader.

"A number of English officers, mostly ignorant of the languages and customs of the East, have been made Consuls and Vice-Consuls in Asia Minor. Turkey, on her side, has sent Englishmen, with high official rank in her armies, to inspect provinces, to inquire into abuses, and to send in long reports for instant pigeon-holing. This is again mere dust thrown in the general eyes. As Sultan of Turkey, the old Bāsh-Buzzuk of Cavala would have given new life to the battered and broken empire of the 'unspeakable;' and, naturally enough, his ambition was dreaded by the northern pretenders to Constantinople. Let one sentence suffice to show the difference of development between the two. Syria has not one made harbour; Egypt has three. Egypt has a dozen railroads; Syria boasts only of one carriageable highway, and that is French property. But Palestine grows in importance every year. Mr. Laurence Oliphant has surveyed the land of Gilead, the eastern frontier; and, supported by the Israelitish capitalists of Europe, he proposes to restore that part of Judæa to her old owners. Captain Cameron, equally well backed, has virtually begun the Euphrates Valley line, despite the adverse forecasts of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt. Jerusalem, it is true, cannot, in the present state of Europe, become the exclusive possession of any European Power. But already almost all the land around has been bought up by the Jews, and the Sacred City, like her holy sisters, Hebron, Tiberias, and Safet, may be said to belong to them. The sooner Syria is made over to Egypt the better.

"Then we shall recognize the full value of Cyprus. The marvellous excitement, caused at home and abroad, by this latest scrap of annexation shows the way the popular wind blows—the reaction of the melancholy policy which restored and ruined Corfu. We do not wish to make the Mediterranean an 'English lake;' but it is, and ever will be, our highway to India and to Indo-China; and we reasonably object to its becoming a French lake or a Russian lake. And England wants secure ports and stations for her guardhouses, the ironclads. Candia and Mitylene would not oppose the hoisting of the Union Jack. These acquisitions must be unpopular at first—they will cost money, and men will die of fever. The Turks, who occupied three centuries of misrule in making the noble islands howling wildernesses, will clamour as they now do for the 'surplus revenues' produced by British blood and gold. Rome was not built in a day, nor will Cyprus be restored in a week. But our energy and industry must at last prevail. We will clean out harbours, raise cities, and drain away malaria. We are not justified in failing where our crusading ancestors succeeded so grandly.

"As regards Egypt we are beginning only now to appreciate the grand results brought about by the great high-minded Ali Pasha and his successors. We want from her nothing but the free right of transit and transport; but we are resolved that the great highway of nations shall not be barricaded by her or by others. Meanwhile, the absolute independence of Egypt has become a necessity. Her connection with Turkey is an unmixed and unmitigated evil. She wants all her hands; and yet she was compelled to send a large contingent to the last Russo-Turkish campaign. When the Turks are freely allowed wholesale 'repudiation,' the Nile

Valley must pay her usurious creditors the uttermost farthing of a public debt individually contracted. She wants all her money, and she should, in common justice, be freed from her heavy tribute, and from the heavier benevolences and *douceurs* which perpetually find their way to the Seraglio, or rather into ministerial pockets. And Egypt is at present, despite the rose-water reports of officials, who take a personal pride in writing, not the truth but what is wished to be the truth, far from comfortable. Abyssinia has placed her between the horns of a dilemma. She must either grant or not grant a port to the barbarous and bloodthirsty Nestorians called Christians. In the former case, the only imports will be arms and ammunition, especially the latter, for Johannes, the Emperor, has thousands of breech-loaders, but no cartridges. In the latter case she will be in a state of chronic war with her turbulent neighbour, who is ever threatening her inland frontier.

“And Egypt has lately offended the moral sense of Europe by a peculiarly retrograde Mohammedan measure—the systematic revival of the import slave-trade. England has a manner of convention with her for suppressing it; but the provisions of 1877 should be made more stringent. She has now reached that point of civilization when she can afford to proclaim a total abolition of compulsory labour, the full and immediate emancipation of the ‘chattel.’ Slaves and eunuchs, the latter denounced by Islamism, are mere articles of luxury for pashas and beys. I will not deny that when the infamous revival of trade in human beings was brought to their notice, her Ministry addressed a circular letter to the *Mudirs* or provincial Governors, and appointed a director for its suppression. But this, again, was the Eastern trick of *poudre aux yeux*. The director went up the Nile, and the slaves came down the Red Sea. Then the director, having apparently done enough for a rose-water report, retired to his winter quarters at Cairo, and the slaves returned to the Nile. Meanwhile the Ministry, whilst permitting this shameful traffic, has systematically neglected the gold and silver placers discovered on the Midian coast, and evidently extending far southwards; in fact, the old Ophir and Havilah. In Turkish Arabia (the *vilayet* province of Yemen, near Sana’a), a new digging has been discovered, and, with true Oriental exaggeration, has been proclaimed ‘one of the richest in the world.’ But in the hands of the Turkish Government even a diamond-mine, a Golconda, would be a losing affair; it can be worked with profit only by European heads and hands. Meanwhile Egypt must recover her prestige by abolishing slavery and by exploiting her mineral wealth.

“To conclude. Poets are sometimes prophets; and we have a specimen in the forecast of Camoens, which dates from the year of grace 1572—

‘Those fierce projectiles, of our days the work,
Murderous engines, dire artifices,
Against Byzantine walls, where dwells the Turk,
Should long ago have belcht their batteries.
Oh, hurl it back, in forest caves to lurk,
Where Caspian crests and steppes of Scythia freeze,
That Turkish ogre-progeny multiplied
By potent Europe’s policy and pride.’

“What also wrote Torquato Tasso, only a few years after Camoens?

‘For if the Christian Princes ever strive
To win fair Greece out of the tyrant’s hands,
And those usurping Ismaelites deprive
Of woeful Thrace, which now captived stands ;
You must from realms and sea the Turks forth drive,
As Godfrey chased them from Judah’s lands,’ etc.

Amen, and so be it !

“ R. F. B.

“ Trieste.”