

## *Europe and the Ottoman Power before the Nineteenth Century*

THE near Eastern question may be defined as the problem of filling up the vacuum created by the gradual disappearance of the Turkish empire from Europe. Its history, therefore, may be said to begin at the moment when that empire, having attained its zenith, commenced to decline. The European dominions of Turkey reached their greatest extent in the latter half of the seventeenth century, when 'the great Greek island' of Crete, as the modern Hellenes love to call it, at last surrendered to the Turkish forces, and the king of Poland ceded Podolia to the sultan. But the close of that same century witnessed the shrinkage of the Turkish frontiers. The peace of Karlovitz in 1699 has been justly called 'the first dismemberment of the Ottoman empire.'<sup>1</sup> It was the initial step in the historical process which has slowly but surely gone on ever since. The eighteenth century saw the continuation of the work begun at Karlovitz, though now and again the Turkish dominions gained some temporary advantage, and European statesmen anticipated the dismemberment of the sultan's European possessions and formed schemes for the partition of the spoil.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were only four great European powers, instead of six, directly interested in the Eastern question, for Italy was not yet made and Prussia was only of the second rank, while Venice had ceased to exist. Of these four, France, Russia, Austria, and England, the first had been for centuries the traditional ally of the sultans.<sup>2</sup> Francis I, who had begun his reign by proposing, as so many sovereigns have done since, the partition of Turkey, was the founder of this alliance, which, with occasional intervals of anti-Turkish feeling, was the fixed policy of his successors. In spite of the scandal caused to devout catholics by this union of France, 'the eldest daughter of the church,' with the head of the infidel Turks, Francis found it politic to use Suleyman the Magnificent as an ally in his struggle with the house of Austria,

<sup>1</sup> La Jonquière, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> La Jonquière, pp. 222, 235-8, 245, 249, 251, 298, 318-20, 325, 327, 334, 336, 360, 363; Driault, *La Question d'Orient*, pp. 29-30, 41, 48-50.

the historic rival of the French monarchy. The power and geographical position of Turkey at that period, its naval forces and the requirements of French trade in the Levant, were all strong arguments, which outweighed any crusading instincts of the astute French king, just as in our own day we have seen the German emperor champion the Turkish cause in the interests of German commerce. Together the French and Ottoman fleets bombarded Nice, while Toulon served as the Turkish base of operations. By the capitulations of 1535, which were the most practical result of the Franco-Turkish alliance, the French received permission to trade in all the Ottoman ports—a privilege conceded to the vessels of other nations only on condition of flying the French flag. French subjects, residing in Turkey, were permitted the free exercise of their religion, and the custody of the holy places was entrusted to French catholics. Henry II carried on the friendly policy of his father, and concluded a treaty with Suleyman, the object of which was to secure the co-operation of the Turkish fleet against the house of Austria. For a time the alliance ceased to be aggressive, but at the beginning of the seventeenth century French influence was predominant at Constantinople, the capitulations were renewed in 1604, and all nations except the English and the Venetians were compelled to seek the protection, and trade under the flag, of France in the Levant. But the capitulations of 1604 mark in this respect a change from those of 1535. France now had powerful rivals in the East; England, Venice, and Holland exercised a competing influence on the Bosphorus, and in 1634 the Greeks assumed the custody of the holy places, thus foreshadowing the conflict, which two centuries later led to the Crimean war. The French began to turn against the Turks; the plan of a new crusade was drawn up by a French priest; a 'sure means of destroying' the Ottoman empire was published by a French diplomatist. At the battle of St. Gothard in 1664, French troops assisted the Austrians to beat the Turks; during the siege of Candia French men-of-war brought aid to the Venetians, and the monument of the French commander, the duc de Beaufort, may still be seen outside the walls of that town. In fact, Louis XIV, though he tried to prevent Sobieski from saving Vienna, was hostile to the Turkish empire. His fleets entered the Dardanelles, and he obtained in 1678 new capitulations, recognising him as the sole protector of the eastern catholics.

In the eighteenth century, the old friendly relations were resumed, and Turkey, menaced by Austria and Russia and already declining in force, was glad to avail herself of the good offices of France. The French ambassador at the time of the peace of Belgrade, by checkmating Austria, saved Serbia to Turkey for three generations, and his influence was such that he became a sort of 'grand-vizier of the Christians.' The capitulations of 1740, com-

pleting those of 1673, were the reward of French assistance, and remain at the present day a memorial of the Marquis de Ville-neuve's diplomatic success. Numbers of French officers endeavoured, like the Germans to-day, to reform the Turkish army, and Bonneval and Baron de Tott worked hard in the Turkish cause. But the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji ('the little fountain') ruined French influence, and substituted for it that of Russia; and the French revolution prevented France from taking an active part in eastern affairs, though indirectly by means of French *émigrés*, who found their way to the Orient, it spread a knowledge of the French language and French customs.<sup>3</sup> Soon the Ottoman dominions felt the weight of Bonaparte's influence. 'It is no use for us,' he wrote to the Directory, 'to try to maintain the Turkish empire; we shall witness its fall in our time.' The treaty of Campo-Formio in 1797 made France the near neighbour of the sultan by putting her in possession of the Ionian Islands—'more interesting to us than all Italy put together,' as Bonaparte said—and of their dependencies on the mainland, Butrinto, Gomenitza, Parga, Prevesa, and Vonitza. The great French conqueror paid special attention to the Greeks, and two emissaries of the French government in Greece, who were sent on one of those semi-scientific, semi-political missions, dear to modern foreign offices, spread his fame in the Peloponnesos. A legend grew up around the victorious general: Greek philologists discovered that his name was merely an Italian translation of two Greek words (*κάλιο μέρος*) and that he must therefore be descended from the imperial family of the Kalomeri Porphyrogeniti,<sup>4</sup> whose glories he was destined to renew; Greek historians, remembering the emigration of the Mainotes to Corsica more than a century earlier, boldly proclaimed him as the offspring of one of those Spartan families, and the women of Maina kept a lamp lighted before his portrait, 'as before that of the Virgin.' The idea of a restoration of the Byzantine empire with his aid became general among the Greeks, and Bonaparte was regarded as a deliverer of the Hellenic race. Not content with organising the Ionian Islands as 'the departments of Corcyra, Ithaca, and the Ægean Sea,'<sup>5</sup> the French government founded in the two Danubian principalities, where the Greek element was predominant, two consulates, one at Bucharest, the other at Jassy, thus reviving an idea of Catherine de Médicis, who had once meditated colonising the principalities with Huguenots,<sup>6</sup> in order to create French industries and influence in the east. The Egyptian expedition of Bonaparte at last caused the sultan to declare war against France, his traditional ally, and

<sup>3</sup> Eliade, *De l'Influence française sur l'Esprit public en Roumanie*, pp. 261–76.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 200–1, 232.    <sup>5</sup> Rodocanachi, *Bonaparte et les Isles ioniennes*, pp. 63–4.

<sup>6</sup> Eliade, p. 210.

to ally himself with Russia, his traditional enemy. Russia was alarmed at the success of the French propaganda among the Greeks, and desirous that a strong French protectorate over the Christians of Turkey should not rise up as a barrier to her own schemes. England, engaged in a life-and-death struggle with France, joined the Russo-Turkish alliance, and the natural result was the loss of French possessions and the destruction of French trade in the east. The Ionian Islands were occupied by the Russians and Turks; the French commercial houses in the Levant were ruined. France, therefore, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was no longer the upholder of the Ottoman empire. Bonaparte had, by his erratic genius, reversed her secular policy, and forced Russia, in self-defence, to defend the Turk.

But Ottoman statesmen could have no illusions as to the ultimate aims of the northern power. For generations Russia and Turkey had been rivals, and a series of Russo-Turkish wars had been chronicled even before the nineteenth century added four more to their number. By a curious anticipation of modern history, it was in the Crimea that the two nations first came into contact.<sup>7</sup> A quarter of a century after the capture of Constantinople, Mohammed II claimed the suzerainty of the Crim Tartars, whose prince was the ally of the ruler of Moscow. The Russian merchants at Kaffa and Azov were now brought into relations with the Turkish authorities, and their grievances occasioned the despatch of the first Russian embassy to Constantinople in 1495. Other Russian embassies followed, and for a long time pacific relations were maintained between the two governments. But the raids of the Tartars into Russian territory and the vengeance exacted by Russian hordes caused considerable friction, and at last in 1569 the first armed conflict took place between troops of the two states. It is curious to find western powers urging on the Russians at that period to drive the Turks out of Europe, and already recognising Russia as the natural protector of the Eastern Christians, while the fear of Russia's growing strength was felt in Turkey alone. No western statesman seems to have suspected at that moment that Russia on the Bosphorus would be a menace to Europe, but even the sultans, at that time in all their glory, hesitated to retaliate on a power which might, they thought, have proved too strong for them even then. It was not for another century that a formal war broke out between the rivals, in consequence of the Turkish acquisition of Podolia, which seemed to threaten Russian interest. The result was an increase of Russian territory at Kiev and the desire for further gains. Even as early as this, too, the tsar posed as the guardian of religious interests by obtaining a safe-conduct for Russian pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. The

<sup>7</sup> Kállay, *Geschichte der Serben*, ii. 48-80.

political and theological aims of Russia thus became inextricably mixed, just as the missionary has been to other nations the pioneer of the soldier.

Peter the Great gave a great impetus to the anti-Turkish policy of Russia. His capture of Azov was not permanent any more than the free use of the Black Sea for his new navy; but it was he who sent the first Russian man-of-war to the Bosphorus: though its mission was pacific, it was a sign of the future. Equally significant were the beginnings of Russian intrigues in the two Danubian principalities, whose princes corresponded with the tsar, and his proclamation to the Greeks,<sup>8</sup> to whom he foretold the approaching restoration of the Byzantine empire. The holy war, which broke out between Russia and Turkey and was concluded by the treaty of the Pruth in 1711, was a proof, like so many of its successors, of the military strength of even a politically feeble empire. The humiliating terms of that treaty, which imposed the retrocession of Azov to Turkey and the suppression of the Russian embassy at Constantinople, were, however, modified a few years later, and a permanent embassy was re-established in the Turkish capital. It is worth noticing that on this occasion the influence of England was, for the first time, used against Russia. Since the formation of the Russian navy, the English Levant Company, which, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, had all the trade of the near east in its hands, had become alarmed at the rivalry of Russian merchants, and the English ambassador at Constantinople, in opposing for this reason the return of his Russian colleague, drew the attention of the Porte to the dangers of a political and religious propaganda by Russian agents among the sultan's Christian subjects. Having gained her point in regard to her embassy, Russia went on with characteristic tenacity of purpose to recover her lost foothold at Azov; and despite the efforts of England and Holland,<sup>9</sup> united in their opposition to further development of Russian trade in the east, again declared war against the sultan in 1736, and again occupied Moldavia. By the peace of Belgrade she regained Azov, but only on condition that its fortifications were destroyed, that no Russian man-of-war should enter the sea of that name or the Euxine, and that all the Russian Black Sea trade should be carried in Turkish bottoms. A lull in the eastern question followed, for the great powers were busy elsewhere.

The accession of Catherine II revived the plans of Peter the Great. Russian agents were sent to stir up the Greeks and Montenegrins, war broke out in 1768, and a Russian fleet, largely officered by Englishmen, was despatched to the Peloponnesos, and at one

<sup>8</sup> Xénopol, *Histoire des Roumains*, ii. 124 et seq.; Finlay, *History of Greece*, v. 246.

<sup>9</sup> Xénopol, ii. 200.

moment threatened Constantinople itself. But the greatest triumph of this war was the memorable treaty which concluded it. The obscure Bulgarian village of Kutchuk-Kainardji, where this instrument was signed, has given its name to one of the most stupendous acts of Turkish folly. It was not so much the territorial losses of Turkey that mattered, though Russia's retention of Azov, Kinburn, Kertch, and Yeni-Kalé gave her the means of dominating the Black Sea, which her ships were now allowed to navigate, while her guardianship of the Crimean Mussulmans<sup>10</sup> naturally foreshadowed their absorption in her empire nine years later. The really fatal clauses of the treaty were those which gave her the right of making representations on behalf of the Greek church in Turkey and of 'speaking in favour of the Rumanian principalities,' which furnished pretexts for constant interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman dominions. The convention of Ainali-Kavak in 1779 confirmed the provisions of that treaty, and stipulated that the tribute which the two Danubian principalities had to pay to the Porte 'should be imposed with moderation and humanity,'<sup>11</sup> an arrangement which did not prevent the Russian ambassador at Constantinople from demanding, no less than the Turkish government, ample pecuniary proof of the fitness for office of the candidates for the two Danubian thrones. Against the wishes of the Turks, a Russian consulate was now established at Bucharest, as a centre of intrigue, and we find the Prussian consul at Jassy soon complaining<sup>12</sup> that these agents were 'put everywhere, without any necessity, perhaps to win over the inhabitants.' Russia had, indeed, supplanted France as the oracle of the Porte, and had taught the Eastern Christians to look to her for protection against their sovereign. The grand-duke Constantine was educated to be the emperor of a new Greek empire; and Catherine II received a memorial from a Greek deputation. By the peace of Jassy in 1792, which closed the next war between the Russians and the Turks, the former, in spite of the threatened opposition of England and Prussia, moved their frontier up to the Dniester. This was the last dispute between the two rivals in the eighteenth century, and, as we have seen, the close of that period witnessed their temporary alliance in order to defeat the ambitious schemes of Bonaparte in the east.

Austria, now the chief competitor of Russia in the Balkan peninsula, was early brought into hostile contact with the advancing Turkish armies. In the fifteenth century the Turks began their attacks on the Hungarians, who were at that period the

<sup>10</sup> Sorel, *La Question d'Orient au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 262.

<sup>11</sup> Xénopol, ii. 249.

<sup>12</sup> See my review of the Rumanian *Documente*, x., *ante*, vol. xiv. 376.

vanguard of Christendom against the Moslem. A century later Budapest was captured and remained, together with the greater part of Hungary, under Turkish rule for about 150 years. But the close of the seventeenth century marked the retreat of the Ottoman armies from Hungarian soil. After the defeat of the Turks before Vienna and the emancipation of Budapest frequent Austrian expeditions invaded Bosnia, over which the Hungarian crown possessed old historic rights, while an Austrian force captured Vidin in Bulgaria and Nish in Servia, and penetrated into Macedonia as far as Uskub, where Stephen Dushan had fixed the capital of the medieval Servian empire. Prince Eugene made in 1697 his memorable march to Sarajevo along the same route that was afterwards followed by the army of occupation in 1878. 'Yet another campaign,' said a Turkish statesman, on hearing that Macedonia was invaded, 'and the Austrians will be under the walls of Stambûl.' But these feats of arms were without permanent results, and Uskub is the furthest point on the road to Salonica that an Austrian army has ever reached. The peace of Karlovitz, however, finally excluded the Turks from Hungary (except the *Banat* of Temesvár, which they abandoned nineteen years later), gave Transylvania to Austria, and effected a complete change in the relations between that power and the Turks. Austria had hitherto regarded the Turk as an aggressive enemy to be repulsed; she henceforth looked upon him either as a weak foe to be attacked or as a bulwark, to be strengthened at need, against the advance of Russia, in whom she saw a rival in the east all the more dangerous because there were many Slav subjects of Austria, who might be attracted by the Russian national and religious propaganda.<sup>13</sup>

The eighteenth century furnishes examples of all these three points of view. Sometimes, Austria was mainly actuated by the desire for Turkish territory, and then she was willing to avail herself of Russian aid, even at the risk of Russian aggrandisement. This was the case in the war of 1736-39, when the Austrian and Russian armies were united against the Turks; in the projected partition of Turkey between Catherine II and Joseph II, which awarded the Crimea to the former and Bosnia and the Herzegovina to the latter; and in the war of 1787-91, when once again the two states were allies, and the Turks their common foes. But it is a curious fact that, whenever this policy has been pursued by Austria, her successes have been much less than when she attacked Turkey single-handed. Whereas the result of the Austro-Turkish war, which was ended by the peace of Passarovitz, was to give part of Servia, North Bosnia, and Little Wallachia, as well as the *Banat*, to Austria, her co-operation with Russia in 1736 cost her all her

<sup>13</sup> Sorel, pp. 36-7.

gains south of the Danube and Little Wallachia, while the alliance of 1787 brought her nothing more than the town of Orsova and two small places on the Croatian frontier. On the other hand, during the Russo-Turkish war which was ended by the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji, Austria proposed a secret treaty with Turkey, as soon as she saw that the Russians were becoming too successful. As the reward of her services, she was to receive once more Little Wallachia, and when Russia, in alarm, concluded peace, another Rumanian province, the Bukovina, became, and has ever since remained, Austrian. At this period the Austrian diplomatist, Thugut, believed the fall of Turkey to be at hand, and designated the two Danubian principalities as his country's share of the spoil. An Austrian consul was accordingly placed there to counteract the schemes of his Russian colleague. But the French revolution and the death of Joseph II saved by an accident, as has so often been the case since, the life of the 'sick man,' and diverted the attention of Austrian statesmen from the east to the west.

But the eighteenth century had done much to shape the course of Austrian policy in the regions of the Balkans. The twenty-one years' Austrian occupation of Little Wallachia, a large portion of what is now Serbia, and a slice of North Bosnia, between 1718 and 1739, was the beginning of that movement which has been resumed in so striking a manner in our own time. Austria then became an important factor in the Eastern question, and undertook, though only temporarily, that duty for which destiny seems to have marked her out. The effects of those twenty-one years of European civilisation were not wholly lost on the peoples who were put back under Turkish sway by the treaty of Belgrade. While the Austrian rule was unpopular among the Rumanians of Little Wallachia owing to its insistence upon the regular payment of taxes,<sup>14</sup> the Serbs of Turkey henceforth regarded Austria as the only power which, under existing conditions, could set them free. Numbers of their ancestors had settled in Hungary after the downfall of Servian independence in the fifteenth century,<sup>15</sup> and two Serb patriarchs of Ipek, accompanied by thousands of their flock, had more recently followed that example by migrating thither. The Hungarian Serbs were among the most brilliant soldiers of Prince Eugene, and at the outbreak of every fresh Austro-Turkish war their brethren in Serbia took up arms on the Austrian side.<sup>16</sup> A Serb poet hailed Joseph II as 'the protector of the Serb race,' and the Serb leaders bitterly reproached his successor for making peace with Turkey in 1791. Nor can we be surprised at their regrets.

<sup>14</sup> Xénopol, ii. 202-7.

<sup>15</sup> For their history see Coquelle, *Le Royaume de Serbie*, pp. 137-85.

<sup>16</sup> Kállay, i. 173-4, 226-7.



For the first time since the Turkish conquest, Servia had shown signs of material progress during the two brief decades of the previous Austrian occupation, and they naturally hoped that this time Austria would not retire beyond the Danube and the Save. Knowing little of Western politics, they could not understand why the power which had taken Belgrade and entered Bosnia should make peace on the most modest terms.<sup>17</sup> But the last decade of the century gave Austria a further foothold in the near east. Just as the same year that had witnessed the disappearance of Venice from the Peloponnesos witnessed also the first appearance of Austria as a Balkan state, so the same year that saw the death of the republic of St. Mark saw too the assumption of her heritage on the Adriatic by the Habsburgs. The treaty of Campo-Formio in 1797, which handed over the Dalmatian possessions of Venice to Austria, substituted a strong power for a declining one as the neighbour of Turkey and Montenegro, and indicated to the anxious sultan that the state which had thus annexed the Illyrian coastline would probably one day occupy the Bosnian territory behind it.

England was not, like Russia and Austria, the territorial neighbour of Turkey; but, even before the foundation of her Indian empire, she had interests in the east, owing to her large Levant trade. As early as the beginning of the sixteenth century a Levantine was named English consul at Chios; in 1520 the first English consul was appointed to Crete.<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth gained free trading facilities for her subjects in the Turkish dominions, who had previously carried on their commerce with the near east in the 'argosies' of the Ragusan republic, then the greatest mercantile community of the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>19</sup> It is said that the origin of our trade in the Levant in ships of our own was a petty quarrel concerning the duty on currants; but, whatever the cause, the interest of England in the affairs of Turkey was primarily commercial, and down to the beginning of the nineteenth century English influence in that part of the world was almost entirely due to 'the Company of Merchants of the Levant,' who received letters patent from Elizabeth in 1581. It was in the following year, on the first of the company's ships that sailed to Constantinople, that William Harebone went out as the first English ambassador to the sultan. Like all his successors in that post down to 1803, he was appointed and paid, not by the English government, but by the company,<sup>20</sup> and his chief duty was to develop English trade. At the same time, he was instructed to obtain the sultan's support against the 'idolatrous' Spaniards, for the Spanish Armada was soon to

<sup>17</sup> Ranke, *Serbien und die Türkei im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> Mr. E. Pears in this Review, vol. viii. 440.

<sup>19</sup> Jackson, *Dalmatia, the Quarnero, and Istria*, ii. 302; Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren*, p. 460.

<sup>20</sup> J. T. Bent in this Review, vol. v. 654-64.

descend upon our shores. This admixture of commerce, politics, and religion was eminently characteristic of English statecraft, and the ambassador did not neglect any part of his instructions. He began at once to appoint more consuls, and both he and his successor, Sir Edward Barton, used ingenious theological arguments to prejudice the sultan's advisers against Spain. The Turks admitted that there could not be much difference between their own religious views and those of Giaours who excluded images and pictures from their churches.<sup>21</sup> But Spain had the riches of the New World at her back, and no help was sent by the Turks, though Barton was so popular with the sultan that he accompanied him to the war in Hungary.<sup>22</sup>

James I confirmed the company in its monopoly, and in spite of the insolence with which Christians were treated by the Turks in the middle of the seventeenth century, English ships visited Greece; and a Mussulman once observed that Englishmen 'always persisted in what they said, even at the peril of their lives.'<sup>23</sup> The English ambassador was entrusted by the Austrians with the money to bribe the chief Ottoman representative at the peace of Karlovitz,<sup>24</sup> and it was our representative who, at the peace of Passarowitz, obtained for the Turkish province of the Herzegovina the two small outlets on the sea, which were so important during the insurrection of 1875-6, and are still among the curiosities of political geography.<sup>25</sup> During the eighteenth century, when Russia had come to the front as the possible successor of the Turk in Europe, English statesmen were, as a rule, without fear of Muscovite aggrandisement. At one moment, as we have seen, England tried to make peace between Russia and Turkey in the interests of her own trade, and in 1719 Stanhope had desired 'to drive the Muscovite as far as possible;' but in the middle of the century France was our great commercial rival in the Levant, where the English company had lost much ground in consequence of Villeneuve's vigorous support of Turkey.<sup>26</sup> It was France, too, and not Russia, which then threatened India, and the opening of the Black Sea to Russian ships was even regarded as an advantage for English merchants, who would thus find a new market. We saw that the Russian fleet, which nearly took Constantinople and destroyed the Turkish navy at Chesmeh in 1770, was largely under the direction of English officers, and Turkish officials asked England to explain what her policy really was. On the eve of the fatal treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji we find Lord Chatham writing that he is 'quite a Russ,' but our ambassador at Constantinople was not of that opinion.<sup>27</sup> As early

<sup>21</sup> Mr. Pears, *ibid.* viii. 449.

<sup>22</sup> See the inscription on his tomb at Halki; *ibid.* vii. 116.

<sup>23</sup> Finlay, v. 127, 157, 281.

<sup>24</sup> Xénopol, ii. 118.

<sup>25</sup> Jackson, ii. 307.

<sup>26</sup> Xénopol, ii. 224.

<sup>27</sup> Sorel, pp. 81-9, 99.

as 1786 Mirabeau contemplated a Russian advance on India, and in 1791 it was the intention of Pitt, had he had the support of the country, to have declared war on Russia, in order to maintain the balance of power ;<sup>28</sup> while Fox was enthusiastically on the side of Russia, he pointed out the uses of Turkey as our ally, but by a combination of the two policies, the century closed with a triple alliance of England, Russia, and Turkey against the French invaders of Egypt.

In view of the great influence of Germany in Turkish affairs at the end of the nineteenth century, a few words may be said about the eastern policy of Prussia during the period of which we have just given a sketch. The Great Elector sought to use the Danubian principalities in his schemes against Poland, and one of their princes, after his deposition by the Turks, endeavoured to obtain aid in Brandenburg.<sup>29</sup> Frederick the Great saw that the expansion of Russia in the East could not injure him, for he had few interests there, but would neutralise the rival power of Austria.<sup>30</sup> His representative at Constantinople occasionally interceded on behalf of a Moldavian ruler, and a Prussian consul was appointed in that country, partly on the characteristic ground that he asked no salary. Frederick regarded Turkey as a useful means of keeping Austria busy, and so of assisting his own plans of conquest. Frederick William II formed a triple alliance with England and Holland, to check the Austro-Russian combination against Turkey between 1787-91. But in their time the German trade in the East was in Austrian, rather than Prussian, hands, and Prussia's territorial aspirations were not in the direction of the Ottoman empire: at most she demanded compensation elsewhere for the gains of other nations in the east.

We thus find four great powers at the beginning of the nineteenth century all directly or indirectly affected by the Eastern question: France, in the main the protector of the sultan, and also the protector of the catholics of the Levant; Russia, with her grand scheme of a new Byzantine empire already formulated, and her efforts to attract her orthodox co-religionists in the Turkish dominions already begun; Austria, oscillating between the fear of Russia and the desire of Turkish territory; and England, commonly favouring a policy of friendship with Russia. Above all, we have seen that there was a general conviction that sooner or later the rest of the Turkish empire in Europe would go.

Still the opening of the nineteenth century found the sultan the possessor of a vast European domain. He held the whole island of Crete, for even the warlike Sphakiots, long independent, had been forced to pay the *haratsh*, or capitation-tax, in 1770. The

<sup>28</sup> Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, v. 278-84; Eton, *Survey of the Turkish Empire*, pp. 484-5.

<sup>29</sup> *Documente*, vol. x.

<sup>30</sup> Sorel, p. 14.

modern kingdom of Greece was his, except the Ionian Islands, and even they for the moment constituted a republic under the joint protection of the tsar and himself. All the former dependencies of the islands on the mainland, except Parga, were Turkish, having been captured by Ali Pasha of Joanina and then formally handed over to Turkey by the convention with Russia in 1800.<sup>31</sup> All that is now known as European Turkey was then part of the Ottoman empire, and modern Bulgaria, including in that term Eastern Rumelia, modern Servia, Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and more than half of the present principality of Montenegro were direct possessions of the sultan. Beyond the Danube, the two principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, including at that time Bessarabia and stretching as far as the Dniester, formed tributary states, governed by Greek princes, selected by the Porte from the wealthy families of the Phanar at Constantinople. It may be estimated that the Turkish dominions in Europe in 1801 measured 298,000 square miles, and contained 8,000,000 inhabitants.<sup>32</sup> Their present area, excluding such practically lost provinces as Bosnia and the Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Crete, is calculated at 62,744 square miles, with a population of 5,711,000 souls. Such is the result in figures of a century's 'consolidation,' as Lord Beaconsfield called it.

The European empire of Turkey was at that period divided into five governorships, which were subdivided into provinces and again into districts. In addition to these governorships there were the two Danubian principalities, which had the misfortune to enjoy a quasi-independence, worse even than the lot of the sultan's direct possessions. The five European governments were known as Rumelia, Bosnia (including Vidin in Bulgaria), Silistria (including Belgrade), Djezair (including the Peloponnesos and many of the Greek islands), and Crete; and the governor of Rumelia, who was styled in Turkish *beylerbey*, or 'prince of princes,' was the commander-in-chief of all the European contingents in time of war. These five European governments comprised nine pashaliks: Rumelia, Belgrade, Bosnia, Scutari, Joanina, Negropont, the Morea, Candia, and the Archipelago.<sup>33</sup> The sultan's subjects in our continent were of various races—Turks, Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians, and Rumanians; but there were some common misfortunes, which they all had to bear, though these were much lighter in the case of the Mussulmans than in that of the Christians. The former found it easier to bring their complaints to the ear of the sultan, while their interests were protected in the provinces by

<sup>31</sup> Finlay, v. 275.

<sup>32</sup> This is the, admittedly rough, estimate of the Ottoman government: Juchereau de Saint-Denys, *Révolutions de Constantinople*, ii. 293.

<sup>33</sup> D'Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman*, iii. 331-90; Juchereau de Saint-Denys, i. 179.

the little bodies of local worthies, who assisted the governor in the discharge of his duties.<sup>34</sup> But, even a century ago, the fate of the provincials was so hard as to attract the sympathy of even avowed partisans of the Turks. In reading of their sufferings, one is reminded of the grim descriptions which the Roman satirists give of the exactions of their own provincial authorities. It was not that the fixed and recognised taxation of the empire was heavy, but that the whole administrative system, excellent though it might be in theory, was utterly rotten in practice. Corruption had entered into the Sublime Porte, and everything was to be bought. A pasha, appointed to a provincial governorship for a year, had to pay a heavy price for his appointment, and recouped himself at the cost of his province. As the end of his year approached, he found it necessary to renew his bribes at Constantinople, if he wished to remain at his post, and for that too the unhappy province had to pay. Bad as this system was, if the pasha were a rich man and had capital at his disposal to invest in a governorship, it was much worse when, as usually happened, he was poor, and therefore compelled to borrow at heavy interest from some Greek or Armenian banker, who thus had a sort of lien on the revenues of the province. The judges, appointed in Constantinople in the same way as the governors, sold justice without scruple, and the officers who executed their sentences were even more odious to the people.<sup>35</sup> The authorities were also fond of imposing taxes, merely as temporary expedients, which tended to become permanent institutions. It was calculated at this time that about one half of the product of each man's industry was paid to the government in one way or another throughout the provinces, and when we consider the need which the governors had of money, we cannot wonder at this high proportion of taxation to income. The frequent journeys of the pashas, the presents inseparable from Oriental administration, the necessity of sending a messenger on the smallest business, as there was no postal service, and the luxury and vast establishments kept up by the great officials all involved a heavy expenditure. The general insecurity of the country, owing to bands of brigands, repressed all industry; there were few means of investing money safely, and the deterioration of the roads, which had once struck English travellers as superior to those of their own country, increased the difficulties of commercial intercourse.

Selim III, who at this time sat on the throne, was, it is true, a reforming sultan, anxious to raise his empire from its declining state, and willing to take western nations as his model. He made, for the moment, a clean sweep of the Bulgarian and Macedonian brigands and the Aegean pirates, repaired the ruinous

<sup>34</sup> Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey*, i. 159.

<sup>35</sup> Kállay, i. 187-8.

fortresses on his frontiers, and employed French shipbuilders to construct men-of-war. But, like most autocrats, he was powerless to change a whole system of misgovernment with a stroke of his pen. Albania and Epiros, always the most dangerous part of European Turkey, were in such a state that a Turk could not venture to show his face there, while all travellers were liable to be murdered with impunity by the natives of that mountainous region.<sup>36</sup> In many parts of the empire hereditary tyrants, known as *dereh beys*, or 'lords of the valleys,' terrorised their humble neighbours. Here and there great pashas, like Ali of Joanina and Pasvanoglu of Vidin, fought for their own hands and acted like semi-independent sovereigns. The 'lion of Joanina' has been made familiar to the reader by the poetry of Lord Byron and the prose of Jókai, while, as a forerunner of the Greek revolution, he has gained a place in the best-known chapter of modern Oriental history. Osman Pasvanoglu, though almost forgotten now, was in his day scarcely inferior to him in influence. With the true fanaticism of a Bosnian Mussulman he declared against the reforms of his sovereign, whose real and only friend he pretended to be. Master of the 'virgin-fortress' of Vidin, he showed his loyalty by defeating the sultan's armies and despoiling his fellow-subjects. He raised a private force of his own, levied his own taxes, coined his own money, and sent his representative to Paris to negotiate on his own account with the French government.<sup>37</sup> A British consul visited his court, and such was the terror of his name that there was a general stampede from Bucharest on the approach of his men. Severe as were the sufferings of the Rumanians and Bulgarians from his depredations, the cost of maintaining an army to oppose him was an even greater burden to the Wallachian peasants. It was on this occasion that Hangerli, their prince, confiscated practically all the cattle of his people, and thus left them without sustenance in a winter which has become proverbial as one of the four plagues of that sorely oppressed principality.<sup>38</sup> The Bulgarians experienced in their turn the usual fate which at that time befell a country through which a Turkish army marched. Southern Bulgaria was reported to be almost destitute of inhabitants, and its now flourishing capital was left a heap of corpses and charred timber. The fearful ravages of the plague in most Turkish cities completed the devastation of the empire, though in this respect the European provinces suffered less than the Asiatic.<sup>39</sup>

The division of the sultan's subjects into two sharply defined classes, those who were Mohammedans and those who were not, was the cause of much evil. It has been justly said that the Turkish government has shown itself far more tolerant of religious

<sup>36</sup> Eton, p. 334.<sup>37</sup> Jireček, pp. 486-503; *Documente, Sup. I.* ii. 217.<sup>38</sup> Eliade, p. 114; Xénopol, ii. 254-5, 258-9, 263-4.<sup>39</sup> Eton, 262.

opinions than many so-called Christian nations. The welcome extended by Turkey in the fifteenth century to the Spanish, and in the nineteenth to the Russian, Jews contrasts most favourably with the Jewish persecutions in catholic Spain and orthodox Russia and with the recent anti-Semitic agitation in Rumania and at Corfu. Such was the hatred which one sect of Christians felt for another, that the Bogomiles of Bosnia preferred to be conquered by the sultan rather than converted by the pope, and the orthodox Greeks chose to be the subjects of infidel Turks rather than of catholic Venetians.<sup>40</sup> Mohammed II, like the great statesman that he was, saw at once that the Greek church might become in his hands a powerful support of the Ottoman rule. He accordingly restored the œcumenical patriarchate of Constantinople and made the patriarch his tool. But, with all this tolerance for freedom of thought, the Mussulmans regarded the Christians as an inferior caste. The *rayah* had to put up with a hundred slights, and were made to feel that they were outside the pale of the dominant religion. They were liable to all sorts of aggravating rules, which regulated the colour of their clothes, the style of their houses, and the professions which they might enter. Their women were exposed to the *droit de seigneur* at the pleasure of the young bloods of Islâm; if their children were no longer taken as a tribute for the sultan's armies, and they were exempt from compulsory military service, they had to victual and do all the dirty work of the Ottoman forces, build military roads and fortresses, transport artillery, and carry munitions of war.<sup>41</sup> It was no wonder, then, that those of little faith abandoned Christianity for a religion which would assure them the respect of the Turks, and the right, equally dear to them as perverts, of despising and maltreating their former co-religionists. Numbers of Serbs in Bosnia, numbers of Greeks in Crete, many Bogomiles in Bulgaria, embraced Islâm after the Turkish conquest, and the Bosnian, Cretan, Bulgarian, and Albanian Mussulmans became the most conservative of all the sultan's subjects in their opposition to reforms, the most fanatical of all Mohammedans in their devotion to the law of the prophet. Popular phraseology, which calls these people 'Turks,' obscures the fact that some of the worst oppressors of the Christians in Turkey were not Turks at all, but perverts from Christianity, of the same race as the persecuted. The high road to honours was to profess Islâm, and it became proverbial that 'one must be the son of a Christian renegade to attain to the highest dignities of the Turkish empire.'<sup>42</sup> Thus, in Bosnia, although a Turkish governor was sent from Constantinople, he was a mere figure-head, and all real power was centred in the great Bosnian

<sup>40</sup> Klaich, *Geschichte Bosniens*, pp. 380, 425, and an article of mine in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for Dec. 1897; Finlay, v. 6.

<sup>41</sup> Kállay, i. 209, 218-20.

<sup>42</sup> Finlay, v. 119-20; Kállay, i. 177-8.

nobles, who gradually became hereditary headmen of the divisions of that country. So strong was the influence of these Mussulman Serbs that they permitted the pasha to remain at Sarajevo for no more than forty-eight hours, and resisted all attempts to move the official capital from Travnik thither. So the Bosnian *begs* administered that province on feudal lines, and were quite content with a system which allowed them to do as they pleased at home and provided them with the occasional luxury of a foray abroad. It was only when the Turkish military power began to decline and Bosnia was invaded by Austrian armies, that the Bosnian Mussulmans began to doubt the wisdom of the sultan's government.

In Servia, where there was no native aristocracy as in Bosnia, a number of these Bosnian *begs* were settled as landowners, forming the majority of the *spahi*, or cavalry, who were the sole possessors of the soil, to the complete exclusion of the *rayah* from all rights of ownership. There were at this period some 132,000 of these military landowners in all Turkey, some 900 in the Pashalik of Belgrade.<sup>43</sup> In return for their lands they owed military service to the sultan; but even in time of peace they were mostly absentees, idling away their days in the towns and letting the despised Christians manage their farms. In addition to these *spahi*, another military force, the Janissaries, were to be found in detachments through the provinces. Their leaders, or *dahi*, were often more powerful than the sultan's representative, and not only maltreated the Christian peasants, but even seized the lands of the Mohammedan *spahi* with impunity. The natives had, indeed, some small share in the administration, and when, as was the case in Servia at this period, the pasha was a just man, their chosen representatives could temper the wind to their shorn flock. The head-man of the village, the village magistrate, and, in many cases, the district official, or, in Serb, *oborknes*, who was responsible for the collection of the Turkish taxes, and acted as a medium between the pasha and the taxpayers, were elected by the people. The *oborknes*, whether so elected or nominated by the pasha, usually held office for life—it had formerly been an hereditary post—and acquired considerable influence both with the Turkish officials and the Serb peasants. Not a few of these local worthies became leaders of the Servian revolution.<sup>44</sup>

The Albanians had offered, under their hero Scanderbeg, the most determined resistance to the Turkish conquest, and even at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as indeed to-day, their land was hardly under the control of its nominal sovereign. Divided by three religions—the Catholic, the Orthodox, and the Mohammedan—and split up into two main branches—the Gueghs and the Tosks—and into numerous tribes, the Albanians were alike

<sup>43</sup> Eton, p. 61; Kállay, i. 192.

<sup>44</sup> Kállay, i. 190-2.



in their love of fighting. The best regiments in the Turkish army, the crack regiment in the kingdom of Naples, were composed of these warriors, who to-day form the bodyguard of the timorous sultan. Even before the Turks had conquered Greece, Albanian colonies had settled there, and the islands of Hydra and Spetzas, in particular, which played such a conspicuous part in the Greek war of independence, were wholly inhabited by Albanians. The celebrated Suliots of Epiros, who won the admiration of Byron, were Orthodox Albanians, who formed a sort of military commonwealth and maintained practical independence by their swords.<sup>45</sup>

Of all the Christian races beneath the rule of the Turk, the Greeks were at that time the most important and the most prosperous. They had had, like the Serbs, the advantage early in the eighteenth century of being, though for a very short period, under the administration of a western power, and the Venetian government of the Morea, though not by any means popular while it lasted, nor remembered with any gratitude, was a great advance upon anything that the Turks had done. Although Russia, when she invaded the Morea in 1770, clearly demonstrated that her aim was not to make the Greeks free but to make them her subjects, and abandoned them so soon as it suited her purpose, the treaty of Kainardji placed them more or less under her influence, and later arrangements entitled the Greek islanders to trade under her flag. The French revolution not only provided the Greeks, and especially those who inhabited the Ionian Islands during the first French occupation, with majestic phrases about the liberty of nations and the equality of men, but indirectly favoured Greek commerce, owing to the fact that the Turkish government was generally neutral and its flag could therefore go anywhere. The Greeks combine two usually irreconcilable qualities—great aptitude for business and great love of book-learning. Both these qualities, already developed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, tended to prepare them for national independence, though neither of them implied the possession of that political training which nations only acquire, as a rule, after centuries of experience. Commerce led them to visit other and better-governed countries, and so to draw inferences as to their own future prospects; literature, as created by Bulgares the Corfiot, and Koraes the Chiot, formed a bond of national union, and Rhigas of Velestino gave to the impending Greek revolution its *Marseillaise*.

Travellers noticed that the Greeks bore 'the Turkish yoke with greater impatience than other Christians,'<sup>46</sup> although they had perhaps less to complain of than their fellows. They were, indeed, regarded by most of the sultan's other Christian subjects with quite as much aversion as the Turks. For the Greek patriarch

<sup>45</sup> Cuniberti, *L'Albania ed il Principe Scanderbeg*.

<sup>46</sup> Eton, p. 330.

was the ecclesiastical head of all the Christian population, irrespective of race, throughout the Balkan peninsula. The services of the Greek church and clergy in the struggle for Greek independence were very great, but it is a travesty of facts to represent them as having preserved the national conscience of the other Balkan peoples. No impartial student of Balkan history can help reiterating, however reluctantly, the remark of Finlay, that the Ottoman Turks were better masters than the Phanariot Greeks.<sup>47</sup> In Bulgaria, in Servia, and still more in Moldavia and Wallachia, the Greek bishop was regarded as an oppressor of the people. With the suppression of the two ancient autocephalous Serb and Bulgarian churches of Ipek and Ochrida in 1766-7, the last ecclesiastical bulwarks of those Slav races fell before the influence of the Greek clergy, who had long been as supreme in the spiritual life of the peninsula as the Turkish officials were in its political affairs. The Greek bishop, who rarely spoke the language of his flock, bought his see, just as the Turkish pasha bought his post, and made the people pay him back what he had expended. He was generally a valuable ally of the pasha, because he wanted the latter's aid to compel the peasants to comply with his exactions, while he could render various diplomatic services to the pasha in return. His luxury was a sign of his worldliness, and he treated his clergy in the usual manner of a slave who has become a master. No wonder that the Bulgarian prayed to be 'delivered from the Greeks,' who lived upon him; no wonder that the Rumanian regarded as enemies the alien clergy, which held one-fifth of the land and lived at ease in the monasteries, while he died of starvation in his miserable hut.<sup>48</sup> Under the influence of these spiritual pastors Slavs and Rumanians alike became outwardly hellenized. Their own languages were despised as barbarous jargons, to speak Greek came to be considered as the mark of a gentleman, and foreigners might be excused for considering the Greek church as co-extensive with the Greek race and reckoning up the Christian population of the Balkan peninsula at this period as collectively 'Greeks.'<sup>49</sup> Rhigas poetically assumed that 'all the Macedonians' would 'rise together,' that 'Bulgarians and Albanians, Serbs and Rumanians' would 'draw the sword' for the cause of Greece and liberty. Even in our own day, enthusiasts have imagined the beautiful picture of the Christian races of the East united against the Turk. But the cardinal difficulty of the Eastern question always has been, is, and probably always will be, the mutual animosities of these very same Christian races. And for the continuation of this feeling the tyranny of the Greek church over the non-Greek Christians is largely responsible.

<sup>47</sup> Finlay, v. 244.

<sup>48</sup> Jireček, pp. 505-16; Kállay, pp. 197-9; Eliade, p. 31.

<sup>49</sup> Bérard, *La Turquie et l'Hellénisme contemporain*, pp. 175-6.

Apart altogether from their ecclesiastical influence, the Greeks found many profitable careers open to them in the Turkish service. Their supple intellects and linguistic skill enabled them to attain distinction as dragomans and envoys of the Porte. Their happy hunting-ground was beyond the Danube in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, where thrones could be bought by the great Phanariot families of Constantinople and extortion practised with impunity on the luckless inhabitants.<sup>50</sup> It was noticed by travellers that the Greeks of the Turkish capital were less moral than those of the islands, and the descriptions which contemporaries have left us of the Phanar, or Greek quarter in that city, at this period represent it as an academy of all the vices. Few portions of even oriental history are so full of petty meanness as that which records the reigns of the Phanariot *hospodars* at Bucharest and Jassy during a large part of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The luxury of the two alien princes contrasted as strongly with the poverty of their subjects as did their proud demeanour to the Rumanians with their cringing humility to the Turks. 'The two *hospodars*,' said a Turkish proverb, 'are the eyes of the Ottoman empire, turned towards Europe.'<sup>51</sup> They were, in fact, the real foreign secretaries of the sultan, but they betrayed their master, whenever it suited their own purpose to play the game of Austria or Russia at his expense. The one aim of the *hospodar* of Wallachia, the richer principality, was to keep his place and make money out of it; the one object of the *hospodar* of Moldavia was to obtain promotion to Bucharest. Thus, the two became bitter rivals, while all the time there were hungry place-hunters at Constantinople, eager to dispossess them both. Under their misrule, these two provinces, justly called 'the granary of the capital,'<sup>52</sup> became perhaps the most miserable part of the whole empire. Nature had done much for the great plains of the Danube, the fine slopes of the Carpathians; but the government had ruined the country for the poor Rumanian peasant. His songs are full of lamentations over his woes and of denunciations of the oppressors who caused them—the Turk, who was his over-lord, the Russian, who came to 'deliver' him in the name of religion, the Jew, who plundered him, the Greek, who misgoverned him; but of all his enemies, he hated the Greek most.

In Greece itself, though there were no such brilliant openings for talent as in Moldavia and Wallachia, scope was found for the administrative abilities of the natives. The primates, or *codgabashees*, formed a kind of official aristocracy, whose business it was to assess the share of the taxes that each person had to pay. They were agents of the Turkish dignitaries, who farmed the taxes, and, in some respects, imitated their Turkish patrons. In the

<sup>50</sup> Xénopol, ii. 308, 314.<sup>51</sup> Eliade, p. 109.<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12.

Peloponnesos, where local administration was better organised than elsewhere, there was, even under the Turks, some attempt at self-government. Every village elected a head-man, and these head-men collectively with the townsfolk elected representatives, who chose the primate of the province. All the primates resided at Tripolitza, and their interests were represented by a delegate at Constantinople.<sup>53</sup> Here and there Greek communities enjoyed even greater privileges. The island of Chios was the most favoured of them all. Before the Turkish conquest, it had been governed by a Genoese mercantile company—the first instance of one of those chartered companies so common in our own day. The Turks continued the enlightened Genoese system of government, and the Chiots were better off than any other Greeks at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>54</sup> Even during the Greco-Turkish war of 1897 a Greek friend of the present writer, then staying in Chios, gave him an account of the island's flourishing condition, which afforded at that moment a marked contrast to the economic state of free Greece. Tinos, after five centuries of Venetian rule, was another example of a Greek island, in the affairs of which the Turks interfered but little; while Naxos, once the capital of a catholic duchy, retained, together with some vestiges of Latin civilisation, the right to govern itself according to its own customs. In the mountainous districts of Pindus and Olympus, the Christians had another and more dangerous privilege—that of bearing arms, and so forming, under the name of *armatoli*, a local militia. In their 'free villages,' or *cleutherochoria* (the name may still be found in that region), they formed military communities, which in the eighteenth century had excited the apprehensions of the government. Repeated attempts were made to weaken them, but it was not till the time of Ali of Joannina that these efforts were successful.

Thus, at the dawn of the nineteenth century, we find religion, rather than race, the dividing line between the subjects of the sultan. The Mussulmans, whether Turks or the descendants of Bulgarian, Bosnian, Albanian, or Cretan converts from Christianity, formed a dominant caste; the Christians, except the comparatively few catholics in Bosnia, Albania, Servia, Bulgaria, and in one or two of the Greek islands, were classed together as Greeks, because they belonged to the Greek church and owned the spiritual authority of the œcumenical patriarch. European statesmen, except perhaps in the case of the Serbs, had scarcely become conscious of the fact that the Eastern question would have to consider the claims of other Christian races than the Greeks as heirs to some part of the Turkish empire. The principle of nationalities was not yet a powerful force in politics, and the career of Napoleon in the near east, as elsewhere, was its negation. W. MILLER.

<sup>53</sup> Finlay, vi. 25

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* v. 70-81, 232-8.