

Turkey and its resources: its municipal organization and free trade [&c.]

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The lingering adhesion of the parts of Turkey to each other, is far more surprising and less easily accounted for, than the dismemberment of that empire. The destruction of the Janissaries dissolved its internal bond of union, relieved it from the pressure that had brought it so low, but threw off entirely the weight which had steadied so long the jarring elements of which it is composed. Rebellion has been successful, habits of resistance have been formed, the hands of the government have been weakened, its authority insulted, and it may be truly said at this moment, the political organization is in a state of paralysis; authority, under whatever name it is exercised, whether of the Sultan or Mehemet Ali, is only a form; and this vast body lies with life in each articulation, without corresponding sympathies, without a ruling mind, or the powers of common action. But even still more alarming than its internal state, are its foreign relations. Its political weakness and administrative corruption would render it a miserable antagonist in the field of diplomacy, with the most trifling European state; yet, its position implicates its interest with those of all the great states of Europe, or at least of four out of five. One has for its chief end, to create anarchy in Turkey; one, that order and tranquillity should be maintained, but under the most despotic form of government; the third endeavours in vain to conciliate a general system of support with a particular scheme of dismemberment; and the fourth, which alone has a direct and philanthropic interest in preserving its integrity and in reforming its abuses, unfortunately, by the very absence of a specific and interested object, is either unprepared, or interferes when too late. It is the deep conviction, that the future condition of Turkey hangs at this moment on foreign policy, and that to this country will belong, as the event will decide, the honour or the reproach, nay, more, the profit or the loss, of her preservation or her destruction, that induces the writer of the following pages, at so critical a moment, to publish his opinions on the elements of re-organization which Turkey possesses. It is not merely the circumstances of the last few years, that have led Europe to look forward to the dissolution of the Turkish empire as an approaching and certain event. For a hundred and fifty years the same event has been as confidently anticipated; may not this historic conviction year by year, disproved in practice, yet perpetuated by education and habit, be the offspring of a false estimate of the operation of institutions in every respect dissimilar to ours; of which we cannot easily judge as a whole, and of which the exceptions are more likely to strike us than the rule? The writer thinks that the explanation of the permanency of the Mussulman power is to be found in a principle of non-interference in the local administrations of the countries ruled. The effects of this non-interference have made themselves felt in various ways, which it will be the object of the following pages to point out. He cannot offer any more solid testimony of the sincerity with which he entertains these opinions, than the liability to criticism he incurs at a moment when facts outstrip arguments, and when the next post may bring their practical confutation, if they are unfounded. Several months ago it was sufficiently evident, that unless the career of Ibrahim Pasha were arrested, an occasion would be found or made for an interference fatal to Turkey; that catastrophe is still impending, and the belief that the backwardness of England, at such a moment, can only originate in the doubt of the possibility of maintaining a power which has no elements of organization within itself—has led to the present publication. The moral legislation of Turkey, even if the preservation of that empire were beyond the support of political influence, is of principal importance in calculating the new combinations that may arise from its ruin, and in judging of the states that have been and that may be detached from it. The higher portions of the administration of Turkey have been minutely described, and its errors and vices have been a thousand times repeated. That portion of it which the present volume is intended to describe, has hitherto been unfortunately neglected, and consists of the popular and elementary parts, through the intervention of which the revenue is collected; whence two

principles of vast practical importance have sprung—perfect freedom of industry and commerce, by the placing of taxation directly on property; and a rural municipal organization, which, called into existence and maintained in activity for financial purposes, had been the means of dispensing justice, of mitigating oppression, and of replacing patriotism by local affections and common sympathies. The daily increasing attention which is given in this country to similar questions, may give more importance to the existence of such institutions, and to the operation of such principles in Turkey, than they would have excited even a short time back. Finally, the writer has endeavoured to make the application of these principles to the state of Greece, by pointing out the form of administration which, in accordance with her previous state and experience, ought to be adopted for that country.

MUNICIPALITIES

TURKEY.

CHAPTER I.

The unfavourable aspect of the Turkish empire at this moment, and the triumphant progress of Ibrahim Pasha through its finest provinces, but too plausibly and too conclusively, as far as they extend, establish that the government retains no influence over its provinces, and that the provinces contain within themselves no elements of internal and independent organization; but this conclusion holds good in those provinces only where the agricultural population is Turkish; namely, Asiatic Turkey; those provinces have hitherto been held in subjection by the superior energy and warlike disposition of European Turkey, and their conquest by Ibrahim Pasha is an additional proof of the weakness of the Porte, but is no accession to Vehement Ali's power, unless the authority of the Porte itself is finally subverted by the indirect effects of his rebellion. The institutions which I propose to examine are those of the Hellenic and Slavonic races, inhabiting European Turkey.

In 1831, after visiting Albania and the greater portion of European Turkey, during the struggle between the Porte and the Albanians, I returned to England with very little hope of seeing the country tranquillized, or the Turkish rule prolonged; but a few months afterwards, returning to that country, I visited almost every portion of it, and was perfectly amazed at the incredible change that had taken place. It was then that I set myself seriously to inquire how the misfortunes of Turkey might be remedied; how the sultan could attach to himself the Greek and Raya population, the proofs of which attachment met me at every turn. It was then that I clearly saw the value of the elementary municipal institutions, and the facilities for political reorganization which they afforded. rained independence, the Bosnians scorned all intercourse with the Sublime Porte, and the whole of Albania was under arms. Albania, on which Turkey had depended for the reduction of Greece, now that Greece was triumphant, turned its arms against the Porte, was supported by the warlike inhabitants of the mountain ranges of and was at that period joined in hatred to the Sultan, and to the new administration, by the Raya Greeks, both agricultural and armed, the first forming the mass of the population of Turkey in Europe, the latter composing a body, powerful by its numbers and its strong positions, and commanding the whole of the passes that surrounded Thessaly and Macedonia. Though the Albanians dreaded the Pasha, the Rayas had not yet felt the good effects of the system, and had therefore no reason to look more favourably than heretofore on the Porte, which has so long to them been an object of terror and of hatred. Europe; few persons in Europe are sufficiently well acquainted with Turkey to see in the revolt of Albania, with Greece and Serbia independent on either side, any thing- more alarming than in a revolt of or Mutualise. The importance of Albania is strikingly illustrated by the events of the Egyptian rebellion. The regulars of Ibrahim positively owed the character which enabled him to push his

daring invasion through Asia Minor, to being resisted by the hordes of Hussein Pasha. What had the sultan to oppose to him? Only the as yet scarcely subdued Albanians. True, they did not muster more than 6000 men in the army of the grand vizier, but they were its nucleus and its strength. If the rash impetuosity of the grand vizier gave the victory unto the hands of the retiring Ibrahim, still is it not the fault of the Albanians if Ibrahim was not expelled from Anatole. The whole dependence of the empire was on the Albanians. The military strength of Turkey in Europe; the Albanians, the industrious population; the Ray as; the Greek Armholes, and the Turkish proprietors, were therefore at this moment all opposed to the new administration. The conservative party were opposed to the Sultan on account of his reforms, the others would not support him unless he granted further reforms; but their opinions were far from being decided or their objects fixed, because they were not certain of the future intentions of the government, because they had no earnest of the effectiveness of that organization which the other party so much dreaded. The Christians had enabled the Sultan to triumph over Ali Pasha, but ten years of subsequent anarchy had given them abundant reason to regret the election they had then made. At the moment to which I allude, had another Ali Pasha existed in Albania, I am convinced that every class of the population, every portion of Turkey in Europe, would eagerly have submitted to his authority. Thus the moral strength of the nation remained for the moment neutralized, dreading on the one hand, the anarchy of the Albanians, and doubting on the other, the intentions of the government. The decision taken in this crisis by the Sultan, to break through old routine and prejudice, to declare equal rights to Ra ya and and the election of the talented individual who has pacified subjugated Albania, attached the Ra ya population to the cause of the Sultan—saved the empire, or preserved to the Po rte the allegiance of those provinces, by granting to them a portion of the demanded reform which the Sultan is supposed in Europe to be forcing on his people. The grand vizier, a man of strong and original mind, and unconnected with the intrigues of the Po rte, was alone capable of carrying such a reform into execution; he was invested with all civil and military authority in Turkey in Europe, without limitation of power or time. Never had such authority been entrusted to a Turkish satrap; never had there been greater occasion for the interposition of a dictator's arm, and certainly the choice could not have fallen on an abler man. From he advanced, in the early part of 1830, westward, into the heart of the disaffected country. With a handful of troops he had to rescue from the Albanians the territory they held, and were fast depopulating; he had to overawe the growing disaffection of the Turks, and, above all, he had to conciliate the Greeks, who were assembling in numerous and armed bodies, exasperated on one hand, by the oppression under which they laboured, and encouraged on the other, by the example of independent Greece. He clearly understood that the campaign he was undertaking was an administrative rather than a military one, and that his success depended rather on the friends he could conciliate to his master by his policy, than the enemies he could subdue by his arms. As far as I could judge from his own opinions, from the opinions of his favourites, and from his first measures in reorganizing the province of Monastic, his plan was as follows :—* This was a brilliant epoch in the history of Turkey; may it not prove the flicker of an expiring light! But for the hopes with which the state of the country, after the subjugation of the Albanians, and the energies that led to that event, inspired me, I should never have deemed the national and local institutions, which I shall endeavour to describe, of sufficient importance to merit attention, at a moment when results are to be considered, and events alone are to be dealt with.

After the Persian war; after the long and exhausting struggle with Greece, and the all but fatal blow of her independence; after being laid prostrate before the Russians at humbled and unfortunate administration of the Sultan had to make head against domestic enemies of a more formidable character than ever yet had threatened the throne of the successors of the Cal ifs. The Serbians had ob 'The dangers this critical moment were never appreciated in * I mention here only the financial and administrative reforms; but there are others of a moral nature, perhaps equally important, which in the commencement of this year (1832) I observed with no less gratification than surprise in passing through Turkey in Europe.

1st, To substitute for all exactions, legal and illegal, a property tax, to be assessed by their own municipal authorities, on land, houses, shops, and yokes of oxen. The amount was greatly to exceed the sum formerly paid to government, but on this consideration they were relieved from the robbery of all classes of government officers, and from the grievous oppression of forced labour, and that is, furnishing officers, soldiers, and Turks in general, with lodging. The Greeks were allowed to wear turbans, yellow slippers, and generally any dress and any colours they chose. This may appear a mere trifle, but it is far from being so. The marks of distinction between Greek or Christian and Turk, are dress, name, and mode of salutation; the most important, however, is dress; every one must have felt this who for a day has worn the two costumes in Turkey. When these distinctions are no longer matters of right and law, they will fall into disuse; nor would they be considered, as heretofore, even if preserved, badges of oppression or slavery. The two people will, I doubt not, in time amalgamate, if nothing interferes from without to disturb the progress commenced; with the acuteness of the climate (I know not what word to employ to designate the peculiar intelligence of these races) they even themselves anticipate this event. I recollect a Leach saying to me at Monastic "If the grand vizier lives ten years longer we shall sup with the Turks in Lent, and they will dine with us in Ramadan." At the time to which I allude, in approaching Constantinople, I met several deputies returning with fir mans for the erection of churches. The difficulties thrown in the way of the building and repairing of churches by the Turks are well known, as also the heart-burnings thereby caused to the Greeks. Now, not only was permission freely granted, but the grand vizier himself subscribed 80,000 piastres towards the erection of one at Monastic, which was erected of solid stone masonry, in an incredibly short period, the whole Greek population contributing labour as well as money, and was completed by the end of 1831. The Turks asked the Greeks, "Why they had not added four minarets to it." How much meaning lies in this taunt! and board; all servants of the government were henceforward to be paid by the treasury, and were to provide for themselves; and all expenses on government account to be defrayed by government. I am not prepared to say to what extent this arrangement would improve the revenue, or relieve the people throughout

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