THE FIRST LETTER

Vienna, 1 Sept. 1555 (n).

I PROMISED, when I parted from you, that you should have a full account of my journey to Constantinople. I am now preparing to fulfil this promise; nay more, if I mistake not, I shall discharge the debt with interest, for to the story of my journey to Constantinople I intend to add that of my expedition to Amasia, a much less hackneyed and ordinary undertaking. If you find that I have met with delightful adventures, you will partake of my enjoyment; we are such old friends that we share in each other's pleasures. If, on the other hand, as must necessarily happen in a journey of such length and difficulty, any disagreeable incidents occurred, you must not take them to heart; they are past and over, and the greater the annoyance they caused me at the time the greater is the pleasure which I take in relating them.

You will remember my return home from attending the marriage of King Philip and Queen Mary (n) in England (where I was in attendance upon Don Pedro Lasso, whom my most gracious master Ferdinand, King of the Romans, sent to do honour to the royal pair), and the summons which I received from Ferdinand to undertake this journey. I was at Lille when his letter reached me on 3 November, and I only delayed my journey to turn aside to Busbecq and bid farewell to my father and my friends, and then hurried through Tournai to Brussels. There I met Don Pedro himself, and he, as they say, spurred on the willing horse by showing me a letter from the King, in which he commanded him to
secure my immediate departure. I therefore hastily took post-horses and hurried to Vienna with all possible speed. It was a trying journey; for I was unaccustomed to this uncomfortable mode of transport, and the season of the year, with its bad weather, muddy roads, and short days, was anything but favourable to travelling. I was obliged to journey far into the night and to hurry in a dangerous manner through the densest darkness over roads which were almost impassable.

On my arrival in Vienna I was introduced by John Van der Aa, one of the Privy Counsellors, into the presence of Ferdinand, who welcomed me with those marks of goodwill which His Majesty always shows towards those of whose loyalty and honesty he has conceived a favourable opinion. He was eloquent of the hopes which he entertained of my mission and of the importance which he attached to my acceptance of the embassy and my immediate departure. He had given an undertaking to the Pasha of Buda that his representative should reach Buda without fail by the beginning of December, and he was anxious not to give the Turks any excuse, by unpunctuality on his part, for not performing the engagements which they had made in reliance on his promise.

 Barely twelve days remained—a brief period to prepare for a short journey, all too brief when so long a journey lay before me. Even from this short space several days had to be subtracted that I might pay a visit, by the King's wish and command, to John Maria Malvezzi at Komorn. His Majesty deemed it most important that, since I had no knowledge or experience of Turkish affairs, I should meet Malvezzi and obtain from his lips some information about their customs and character and advice about their previous policy. Malvezzi had been for some years Ferdinand's representative at the court of Soleiman, in fact ever since the Emperor Charles had, for very good reason, made the truce with the Turks which was negotiated by Gerard Velduvic (n); for on that occasion he had made an eight years' truce in the name of King Ferdinand as well. Malvezzi had been attached to Velduvic's mission, and on his return Ferdinand had sent him back to Constantinople as his representative.

[Busbecq then tells how Malvezzi had been thrown into prison by the Turks, when Ferdinand annexed Transylvania, and barbarously ill treated, and had eventually been released and had returned to Vienna. He was setting out again for Constantinople when he was taken ill at Komorn.]

The illness caused by Malvezzi's imprisonment broke out again with such violence that, feeling his life to be in danger, he halted and sent a letter to Ferdinand begging him to appoint some one else to his post as ambassador. Ferdinand neither entirely believed nor altogether discredited what Malvezzi said; but he was inclined to suspect that his desire to withdraw from his post as ambassador was due rather to his recollection of the past and his dread of future hardships than to any serious illness; yet he thought that it would be hardly seemly to compel one who had done good service to himself and the State to continue a mission which he wished to avoid. The death of Malvezzi a few months later made it quite clear that his illness was neither a pretence nor assumed to suit his own convenience. Thus I was appointed in his
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I place; but since I was without experience of Turkish politics or manners, the King was of opinion, as I have already said, that it would be well if I visited Malvezzi and were put on my guard by his instruction and advice against Turkish duplicity. So I spent two days with him and learnt, as far as I could in so short a time, the attitude which I ought to adopt and the precautions which I ought to take in my daily intercourse with the Turk.

I then hurriedly returned to Vienna and set myself with all diligence to make the necessary preparations for my journey. But so much was there to do, and so short was the time, that the day appointed for my departure arrived and found me still unready, though the King continued to urge my departure. I spent the whole day from the early hours of the morning arranging my affairs and my baggage, but it was nightfall before my loins were girt up for departure. The gates of Vienna, which are always locked at that hour, were unbarred, and I set out. The Emperor, on his departure that morning for the chase, said that he was sure that before his return in the evening I should be already on my way; and so I was, though there was only a brief interval between my departure and his return. At 11 p.m. we reached the Hungarian town of Fischament, some ten miles from Vienna; here we had our supper, for in our hurry we had started without it. Thence we journeyed to Komorn. [Here, to his great annoyance, Busbecq waited in vain for two days for Paul Palnai, who was to accompany him to Buda.] The next day I crossed the Waag and continued my journey towards Gran, the first fortress within the Turkish dominions.

TURKISH LETTERS

John Pax, the governor of Komorn, had given me an escort of sixteen of those horsemen whom the Hungarians call hussars, and had ordered them not to quit me until the Turkish outposts came in sight. The Governor of Gran had intimated that his men would meet me half-way. When I had journeyed for three hours, more or less, over a vast plain, four Turkish horsemen appeared in the distance. My Hungarians continued to accompany me, until I ordered them to retire; for I was afraid that, if they came too near, some embarrassing quarrel might arise. When the Turks saw me approaching, they rode up and halted by my carriage and saluted me. We then proceeded for some distance conversing together; for I had a lad with me who could act as interpreter. I was expecting no further escort, when, on descending to rather lower ground, I suddenly found myself surrounded by a troop of some 150 horsemen. They formed a charming spectacle to my unaccustomed eyes, with their brightly painted shields and spears, their jewelled scimitars, their many-coloured plumes, their turbans of the purest white, their garments mostly of purple or bluish green, their splendid horses and fine trappings. Their officers rode up and welcomed me with courtesy and congratulated me on my safe arrival, and asked me if I had had a pleasant journey; to which question I made a suitable reply. I was thus escorted to Gran, which is the name given to a fortress situated on a hill, below which flows the Danube, and to the neighbouring town lying in the plain, where I put up for the night. The archbishop of this place, in virtue of his position of authority and vast wealth, ranks high among the Hungarian magnates. My accommodation had all
the severity of a camp; instead of beds, shaggy rugs of rather a rough kind were spread over planks, and there were no mattresses or linen. Thus my followers had their first experience of Turkish luxury; I had my own bed, which I always carried with me.

Next day the Sanjak-Bey of the place did not cease to urge that I should visit him. This is the title which the Turks give to the commanding officer, whose sanjak, that is a gilded bronze ball, is carried as a standard fixed on the point of a spear at the head of a squadron of cavalry. Although I had no letter or recommendation to him, he was so persistent that I had to go and see him. He really only wished to have a look at me, to offer me his courteous salutations, to ask me what my purpose was, to exhort me to promote peace, and to wish me a prosperous journey. On my way to visit him I was surprised by the croaking of frogs in the month of December and in such cold weather; it was due to the existence of hot sulphur springs which form pools in these regions.

I left Gran for Buda after a breakfast which was destined to serve as my dinner, as there was no halting place until I reached Buda. I set out escorted by the Sanjak-Bey with all his household and the cavalry which he commanded, though I did my best to dissuade him from paying me this honour. The cavalry, when they had passed through the gates, galloped hither and thither and amused themselves by throwing a ball to the ground and then, after urging their horses to full speed, catching it on the point of their spears, and indulging in other similar sports. Among them was a Tartar with long thick hair, who was said to go bare headed in all weathers and in battle, his hair form-
to prescribe for him. I willingly agreed, but I came very near to repenting bitterly my readiness to oblige him; for when the Pasha's illness grew daily more serious, I felt no little fear that, if he went to join Mahomet in another world, the Turks would allege that he had been killed by my physician. This would have involved my worthy friend in danger, while I myself would have incurred great disgrace as his accomplice. However, Providence put an end to my anxiety by restoring the Pasha to health.

At Buda I first came across the Janissaries, which is the name they give to their footguards. When they are at their full strength, the Sultan possesses 12,000 of them, scattered throughout his empire, either to garrison the fortresses against the enemy or to protect the Christians and Jews from the violence of the populace. There is no village, town, or city of any size in which there are not some Janissaries to guard the Christians, Jews, and other helpless folk from the attacks of malefactors. In the fortress of Buda there is a perpetual garrison of Janissaries. They wear robes reaching to their ankles, and on their heads a covering consisting of the sleeve of a cloak (for this is the account which they give of its origin), part of which contains the head, while the rest hangs down behind and flaps against the neck. On their foreheads rises an oblong silver cone, gilded and studded with stones of no great value. These Janissaries generally visited me in pairs, and, on being admitted to my dining-room, saluted me with an obeisance and then hastened, almost at a run, towards me and took hold of my garment or hand as though they would kiss it, and offered me a bunch of hyacinths or narcissi. They would then rush back again to the door at almost the same speed, taking care not to turn their backs upon me; for this, according to their ideas, is unbecoming. At the door they would take up their stand silent and respectful, their hands crossed on their breast and their eyes fixed upon the ground; you would think they were monks rather than soldiers. However, on receiving a few little coins, which was all they wanted, they would again make obeisance and utter their thanks in loud tones and depart with every kind of good wish and blessing. Really, if I had not been told that they were Janissaries, I could well have believed that they were a kind of Turkish monk or the members of some kind of sacred association; yet these were the famous Janissaries who carry such terror wherever they go.

At Buda many Turks were attracted to my table by the lure of my wine, a luxury which they appreciate all the more because they have little opportunity of enjoying it, and which therefore they consume with all the greater avidity whenever they have the chance. I invited them to stay late, but, when I grew tired and rose from the table and retired to my bedroom, they departed, sad at the thought that they were not yet entirely overcome by the wine and could still walk. Presently a slave arrived, who asked on their behalf that I would give them a supply of wine and some silver cups; they would, they said, spend the night drinking in any odd corner. I gave orders that they should be provided with all the wine that they required and the vessels for which they asked, and they then went on drinking until they all lay stupefied on the ground.

The drinking of wine is regarded by the Turks as a serious crime, especially among the older men; the
younger men can commit the sin with greater hope of pardon and excuse. They think, however, that the punishment which they will suffer in a future life will be just as heavy whether they drink much or little, and so, if they taste wine, they drink deep; the punishment being already deserved, they incur no additional penalty, and they count their drunkenness as all to the good. Such are their ideas about drinking and others which are still more absurd. I once saw an old fellow at Constantinople, who, when he had taken the cup into his hand, began to utter loud cries. When we asked our friends the reason of this, they declared that he wished by these cries to warn his soul to betake itself to some distant corner of his body or else quit it altogether, so that it might not participate in the crime which he was about to commit and might escape pollution by the wine which he was about to swallow.

It would be a long task to describe the city of Buda in detail. It would require a whole book, and a few remarks suitable to a letter must suffice. It lies in a pleasant situation in a very fertile district on sloping ground bordered on one side by vine-clad hills; on the other side flows the Danube, with Pesth and a view of wide plains beyond. It seems to have been purposely designed to be the capital of Hungary. The city was formerly adorned with the splendid palaces of the Hungarian nobles; these have now fallen in ruins, or are only prevented from doing so by the liberal use of props. They are inhabited by Turkish soldiers, whose pay only suffices for their daily needs, and does not allow them to mend the roofs or repair the walls of these vast buildings. They care little if the rain comes through or the walls are cracked, as long as they can find a dry place to stable their horses and make their own bed. The upper stories they regard as no concern of theirs, and leave them to be overrun by rats and mice. Moreover, it is characteristic of the Turks to avoid any magnificence in their buildings; to care for such things is in their opinion a sign of pride, vanity, and self-conceit, as though a man expected immortality and a permanent abode upon this earth. They regard their houses as a traveller regards an inn; if they are safe from thieves and protected from heat and cold and rain, they require no further luxuries. This is why in the whole of Turkey you would have difficulty in finding even a rich man in possession of a house of any elegance. The common people live in huts and cottages; but the rich are fond of gardens and baths, and have roomy houses to accommodate their huge establishments, but no well-lighted porticoes or halls worth looking at or anything else magnificent or attractive. The same is practically true of Hungary. Except at Buda, and possibly in Pressburg, you could scarcely find a single city with any at all splendid buildings. This is due in my opinion to the mode of life which the Hungarians have followed through the ages; devoting themselves to warfare and camp-life and distant campaigns, they have always neglected to put up buildings, and they dwell in cities as though they may shortly have to quit them.

An interesting phenomenon which I observed at Buda is a spring outside the gate on the Constantinople road, the water of which is boiling on the surface, while below you can see fish swimming about, so that you would imagine that they could not be taken out except ready cooked.
At last, on 7 December, we were introduced into the presence of the Pasha, who had recovered from his illness. We tried to mollify him with presents, and then complained of the insolence and misdeeds of the Turkish soldiers and demanded back the places which had been taken from us in violation of the truce and which he had promised in his letter to my sovereign to restore on condition that he sent a representative. [Busbecq describes his unsatisfactory interview with the Pasha.] I effected nothing except the conclusion of a truce pending the arrival of an answer from Soleiman.

Our business at Buda having been thus, as far as was possible, concluded, my companion returned to the King, and I boarded the vessels which were awaiting us on the Danube; and, when my horses and carriages and attendants had been embarked, we started downstream for Belgrade. This method of travelling was safer and quicker; for the journey by land to Belgrade would have taken at least twelve days, especially with so much baggage; and, besides, there would have been danger from the depredations of the Heydons. This is the name given by the Hungarians to those who, from being herdsmen, have become soldiers, or rather brigands. There was no danger from them on the river, and the voyage only occupied five days.

The vessel on which I travelled was towed by a rowing-boat with twenty-four oarsmen; the other boats were propelled each by a pair of longer oars. We never halted by day or night, except for a few hours when the unhappy rowers and sailors refreshed themselves from their incessant toil with food and rest.

The rashness of the Turks seemed to me quite remark-able; they never hesitated to continue their voyage in spite of the densest darkness, the absence of any moon and the violent gales, and they had continually to encounter danger from the mills and the trunks and branches of trees which projected from the banks. It frequently happened that the violence of the wind caused my boat to come into such violent collision with the stumps and boughs of trees which overhung the stream that it seemed to be in imminent danger of being broken in pieces. In fact, on one occasion part of the deck was carried away with a loud crash, which caused me to spring from my bed and admonish the sailors to be more careful. Their only reply was to shout out 'Alaure', that is, 'God will protect us'; and all that remained for me to do was to return to bed and recapture my sleep, if I could. I venture to prophesy that this method of travelling will some day prove disastrous.

During our voyage we saw Tolna, a fine Hungarian town, which deserves mention for the excellence of its white wine and the courtesy of its inhabitants. We also noted the fortress of Valpoyat (a), which stands on high ground, and other castles and towns, also the places where the Drave on one side and the Theiss on the other joins the Danube.

Belgrade itself lies at the confluence of the Save and Danube. In the extreme angle, as it were, of the pro-montory between them lies the old town, of ancient construction and fortified with numerous towers and a double wall. It is washed on two sides by the said rivers; on the side which unites it to the land is a very strong fortress on higher ground, with many lofty
towers built of squared stones. In front of the city is a large mass of buildings and extensive suburbs inhabited by various races, Turks, Greeks, Jews, Hungarians, Dalmatians, and many others. Indeed it is quite usual throughout the Turkish Empire for the suburbs to be larger than the towns themselves, the towns and suburbs together giving the impression of very large settlements.

This was the first point at which we were offered ancient coins, in which, as you know, I take great delight. William Quacquelben, whose name I have already mentioned, is a devoted and welcome participant in this pursuit of mine. We came across numerous coins, on one side of which was a Roman soldier standing between a bull and a horse, and inscribed 'Taurunum'. It is well known that the legions of Upper Moesia had a stationary camp there.

Twice within the memory of our grandfathers determined attempts were made by the Turks to capture Belgrade, first by Amurath and afterwards by Mahomet, the Conqueror of Constantinople; but the barbarian attacks failed before the valiant defence of the Hungarians and the Crusaders. At last, in the year 1520, Soliman at the beginning of his reign arrived before the city with large forces. Finding it deprived of its proper garrison and open to attack owing to the negligence of the young King Louis and the quarrels of the factious Hungarian chiefs, he had little difficulty in reducing it to submission. It is clear that this event threw open the flood-gates and admitted the tide of troubles in which Hungary is now engulfed. Its first approach involved the death of King Louis (n), the capture of Buda, the enslavement of Transylvania, the

overthrow of a flourishing kingdom, and an alarm among neighbouring nations lest the same fate should befall them also. These events ought to be a lesson to the princes of Christendom and make them realize that, if they wish to be safe, they cannot be too careful in securing their fortifications and strongholds against the enemy. The Turkish armies are like mighty rivers swollen with rain, which, if they can trickle through at any point in the banks which restrain them, spread through the breach and cause infinite destruction. Even so, and with still more terrible results, the Turks, when once they have burst the barriers which restrain them, spread far and wide and cause a devastation which passes all belief.

But it is time to return to Belgrade, so that we may continue our journey on to Constantinople. When we had completed the preparations which seemed necessary for our journey by road, we started for Nish, leaving on our left Semandria, which lies on the banks of the Danube and was formerly a stronghold of the Despots of Serbia. From the higher ground the Turks showed us the snow-clad mountains of Transylvania in the far distance, and pointed out the place where there still remained traces of the piles of Trajan's Bridge (n).

Having crossed the river which the natives call the Morava, we put up in the Serbian village of Jagodina, where we observed the funeral rites of that people, which differ greatly from our own. The corpse was laid out in the church with the face exposed; near it was placed food, bread and meat, and a cup of wine. The wife and daughter of the deceased stood near in their best clothes, the daughter wearing a head-dress
of peacocks' feathers. There was heard wailing and moaning and cries of lamentation; and they inquired of the dead man what they had done that they deserved to lose him; in what act or duty or comfort had they failed him; why did he leave them lonely and wretched; and so on. The rites were carried out by Greek priests. In the burial-ground were numerous figures carved in wood of stags and roebucks and other such animals mounted on poles or posts. When we asked the meaning of these, we were told that husbands and fathers testified by these monuments to the willingness and diligence of their wives or daughters in the performance of their domestic duties. On many of the tombs there were also hung locks of hair, which the women and girls had placed there as a sign of mourning for the death of their relatives. We also learnt that it was a local custom that, after the parents had arranged a match between a young man and a girl, the bridegroom should carry off the bride by force; for it was thought unseemly that a maiden should voluntarily submit to her husband's first embraces.

Not far from Jagodina we encountered a small river which the inhabitants call the Nisava, and we kept it on our immediate right until we reached Nish. A little farther on we saw on its banks, where there remained traces of a Roman road, a small marble column still standing with an inscription in Latin, but so mutilated as to be illegible. Nish is a little town of some consideration, and well populated for that part of the world.

It is time that I should tell you something of the inns which we frequented; you have probably been long expecting an account of them. At Nish I was lodged in the public inn, or caravanserai, as it is called in Turkish. It is the most usual form of lodging in these parts, and consists of a vast building, rather long for its breadth. In the middle is an open space for the baggage, camels, mules, and vehicles. It is usually surrounded completely by a wall some three feet high, adjoining and built into the outer wall of the building. The top of the low wall is flat and about four feet broad, and serves the Turk for bed and dining-table; on it they also cook their food, for there are fireplaces at intervals built into the outer wall. This space on the top of the wall is the only place which the traveller does not share with the camels, horses, and other animals; and, even so, these are tethered to the foot of the wall in such a way that their heads and necks project right over it, and they stand there like attendants, while their masters warm themselves and even dine, and at times take bread or fruit or other food from their hands. On this wall also the Turks make their beds, first unfolding a rug, which they generally carry attached to their horse-cloths, and laying a cloak on the top of it. A saddle serves as a pillow, and they wrap themselves up at night in the long robes reaching to their ankles and lined with fur, which they wear in the daytime. Thus they have none of the usual blandishments wherewith to court sleep.

These inns provide no privacy; everything must be done in public, and the darkness of night alone shields one from the sight of all. This kind of inn inspired me with particular disgust; for the Turks kept their gaze fixed upon us in astonishment at our habits and customs. I always, therefore, tried to find accommodation beneath the roof of some unhappy Christian; but
their hovels are so small that very often there is no
room to place a bed; so I often slept in a tent or in
my carriage.

I sometimes lodged in a Turkish khan. These are
most spacious and quite imposing buildings with
separate bedchambers. No one is refused admittance,
whether Christian or Jew, rich or poor; the door is
open to all alike. They are used by Pashas and
Sanjak-Beys when they travel. I was always given
as hospitable a reception as if it were a royal palace.
It is customary to offer food to all who lodge there;
and so, when dinner-time arrived, an attendant used to
present himself with an enormous wooden tray as
large as a table, in the middle of which was a dish of
barley-porridge with a piece of meat in it. Round the
dish were rolls of bread and sometimes a piece of
honeycomb...

Sometimes, if I could find no quarters in a house,
I put up in a shed. I used to look out for a large,
roomy shed, one half of which contained a fireplace
and chimney, while the other was intended for the
sheep and cattle; for it is the usual arrangement for
the herd or flock and the shepherd to be housed under
the same roof. The part where the fireplace stood
I used to screen off with the canvas of my tent, and
setting up my table and bed by the fire I lived as
happy as the King of Persia. My attendants reclined
in the other part of the shed on an abundance of clean
straw, or fell asleep in the garden or field near the fire
on which our meal had been cooked. This fire enabled
them to withstand the cold at night, and they were as
careful not to let it go out as the Vestal Virgins at
Rome in the olden days.

It will perhaps occur to you to ask how I consoled
my followers for such bad lodging; for you will sur-
mise, and quite rightly, that wine, the usual remedy
for uncomfortable nights, is not too plentiful in the
middle of Turkey. Wine, it is true, is not to be found
in every village, especially where the inhabitants are
not Christians. Now it often happens that the Chris-
tians, weary of Turkish insolence and contempt, with-
draw from the main roads into more inaccessible parts,
which are less fertile but safer, and leave the better
land to their masters. Whenever, therefore, the Turks
saw that we were approaching a wineless district, they
would warn us that no wine would be obtainable; and
then our steward was sent a day ahead, accompanied
by a Turk, to seek a supply from the nearest Christian
villages. Thus my people were never without this
alleviation of their hardships; and wine took the place
of soft mattresses and cushions and all the other appli-
cances for wooing sleep. For myself, I had in my
carriage bottles of a better brand of wine, and was thus
well supplied. So there was always a provision of
wine for myself and my followers.

There remained one annoyance, which was almost
worse than a lack of wine, namely, that our sleep used
to be interrupted in a most distressing manner. We
often had to arise early, sometimes even before it
was light, in order to arrive in good time at more
convenient halting-places. The result was that our
Turkish guides were sometimes deceived by the
brightness of the moon and waked us with a loud
clamour soon after midnight; for the Turks have no
hours to mark the time, just as they have no milestines
to mark distances. They have, it is true, a class of
men called *saltmans*, attached to the service of their mosques, who make use of water-clocks. When they judge from these that dawn is at hand, they raise a shout from a high tower erected for the purpose, in order to exhort and invite men to say their prayers. They repeat the performance half-way between sunrise and midday, again at midday, and half-way between midday and sunset, and finally at sunset, uttering, in a tremulous voice, shrill but not unpleasing cries, which are audible at a greater distance than one would imagine possible. Thus the Turkish day is divided into four periods, which are longer or shorter, according to the time of year; but at night there is nothing to mark the time. Our guides, as I have said, misled by the brightness of the moon, would give the signal for packing-up long before sunrise. We would then hastily get up, so that we might not be late or be blamed for any untoward incident that might occur; our baggage would be collected, my bed and the tents hurled into the carriage, our horses harnessed, and we ourselves girt up and ready awaiting the signal for departure. Meanwhile the Turks, having realized their mistake, had returned to their beds and their slumbers... I dealt with this annoyance by forbidding the Turks to disturb me in future, and undertaking to wake the party at the proper time, if they would warn me overnight of the hour at which we must start. I explained to them that I had clocks which never failed me, and would arrange matters, taking the responsibility of letting them sleep on; they could, I said, safely trust me to get up. They assented, but were still not quite at their ease; they arrived in the early morning, and, waking my valet, begged him to

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go and ask me 'what the fingers of my timepiece said'. He did this, and then indicated as best he could whether a long or a short time remained before the sun would rise. When they had tested us once or twice and found that they were not deceived, they relied on us henceforward and expressed their admiration of the trustworthiness of our clocks. Thus we could enjoy our sleep undisturbed by their clamour.

From Nish we journeyed to Sofia, both the weather and the road being tolerably good for the time of year. Sofia is a fairly large town with a considerable population of natives and foreigners. It was once the capital of the Despots of Bulgaria, and afterwards, if I remember right, of the Despots of Serbia, as long as their dynasty lasted and until it succumbed to the Turkish arms. After leaving Sofia we journeyed for several days through the pleasant, fertile valleys of the Bulgarians.

During this period of our journey we ate bread baked under ashes; the natives call it *fugacia*. It is sold by girls and women, for there are no bakers in those parts. When they hear of the arrival of strangers from whom they hope to earn something, they hurriedly knead flour, mixed with water but without yeast, and put it under the hot cinders, and then bring the loaves for sale at a low price, still hot from the fire. All kinds of food are quite cheap; a sheep costs 35 *aspres* (50 aspres make a crown), a cockerel or a pullet one *aspre*.

I must also describe the women's dress. They usually wear a single garment, a linen shirt or shift, quite as coarsely woven as our sack-cloth, and ornamented with clumsy and ridiculous embroidery, of
which, however, they are inordinately proud. When they saw our shirts, which were of a very fine texture, they expressed their astonishment at our sober taste in wearing garments so plain and so devoid of colour and decoration. The most unusual features of their attire are their towering head-dresses and bonnets (if they can be so called), which are of a quite extraordinary shape. They are made of straw interwoven with threads, and in form are the exact contrary of those of our own peasant women, whose hats reach down to their shoulders and are broadest at the bottom and rise into a pyramid above. In Bulgaria they are narrowest at the bottom and then rise in a curve over the head to the height of about nine inches. Where they face the sky, they are very wide and open, so that they seem as well adapted to catch the rain and sun as our hats are to keep them off. From top to bottom they are covered with little coins and figures and pieces of glass of different colours; and anything else which glitters, however worthless, is hung on as an ornament. A bonnet of this kind greatly adds to the wearer’s height and also to the stateliness of her carriage, since it is easily dislodged by the slightest jar. So the women carry themselves as you would imagine that Clytemnestra would take the stage, or Hecuba while Troy still flourished.

I was reminded here of the fickleness and uncertainty of what men usually call nobility of birth. Noticing some girls who had an appearance of unusually good breeding, I asked whether they were the daughters of some great family. I was told that they traced their descent from the greatest rulers of the land and even from the royal house itself, but were now married to ploughmen and shepherds. Such is the lowly estate of nobility in the realm of Turkey. Subsequently I saw elsewhere the descendants of the imperial families of the Cantacuzeni and Palæologi (n) living in a humbler position than Dionysius at Corinth (n); for in Turkey, even among the Turks themselves, no value is attached to anything but personal merit. The house of Othman is the sole exception to this rule, being the only family in which birth confers rank.

It is generally held that, when many nations were migrating of their own accord or under compulsion, the Bulgarians left the river Volga in Scythia and settled here, and were called Bulgarians, that is Volgarians, after that river. They settled among the Balkan mountains between Sofia and Philippopolis in a naturally strong position which long enabled them to despise the power of the Greek Emperors. They captured in a skirmish and put to death Baldwin the Elder, Count of Flanders (n), who had seized the throne of the Eastern Empire. They could not, however, resist the might of the Turks, who conquered them and reduced them to a state of miserable servitude. They speak the Illyrian tongue, like the Serbians and Rascians.

Before descending into the plain in which Philippopolis lies, one has to traverse a pass over a very rough mountain-ridge, called by the Turks ‘Capi Derwent’, that is, ‘the Narrow Gate’. In the plain one soon reaches the River Iebrus (Maritza), which rises not far off in the Rhodopean mountains, the summit of which, covered with deep snow, was visible before we had traversed the pass...
Philippopolis is situated on one of three hills, which lie apart from the rest of the mountains and look as if they had been torn away from them. While we were there we saw rice growing like wheat on wet, marshy ground. The whole plain is studded with tumuli, which, according to the Turkish account, are artificial, and were set up to commemorate the many battles which they say were fought in this region and mark the tombs of those who fell in the fray.

We followed pretty closely the bank of the Maritsa, which flowed for some time on our right, leaving on the left the Balkan range, which extends towards the Black Sea; then crossing the splendid bridge of Mustapha we reached Adrianople, or, as the Turks call it, Endere. This city, before it received the name of Hadrian and was greatly enlarged, was called Oresta. It is situated at the junction of the Maritsa, or Hebrus, and the smaller rivers Tundja and Arda, which from this point onwards bend their course towards the Aegean Sea. The extent of this city, as enclosed by the ancient walls, is not very great; but it has spacious suburbs, the buildings of which, added by the Turks, greatly increase its size.

We stayed one day in Adrianople and then set out on the last stage of our journey to Constantinople, which was now close at hand. As we passed through this district we everywhere came across quantities of flowers—narcissi, hyacinths, and tulips, as the Turks call them. We were surprised to find them flowering in mid-winter, scarcely a favourable season. There is an abundance of narcissi and hyacinths in Greece, and they possess so wonderful a scent that a large quantity of them causes a headache in those who are unaccustomed to such an odour. The tulip has little or no scent, but it is admired for its beauty and the variety of its colours. The Turks are very fond of flowers, and, though they are otherwise anything but extravagant, they do not hesitate to pay several aspers for a fine blossom. These flowers, although they were gifts, cost me a good deal; for I had always to pay several aspers in return for them.

In fact, a man who intends to go among the Turks must be prepared, as soon as he has crossed the frontier, to open his purse and never close it till he leaves the country. Meanwhile he must sow money broadcast and pray that it may not prove unfruitful. If there is no other result, it is at any rate the only method of softening the fierce heart of the Turk, who hates all other nations. Money acts like a charm to soothe their otherwise intractable minds. Were it not for this expedient, their country would be as inaccessible to foreigners as those lands which are supposed to be condemned to perpetual solitude by excessive heat or cold.

About half-way between Adrianople and Constantinople is the little town of Tchorlou, famous as the scene of the battle between Selim (n) and his father Bajazet, whence Selim, thanks to his horse Carabuluk ('Black Cloud'), escaped in safety to his father-in-law, the King of the Crime-Tartars.

Just before we reached Silivri, a small sea-side town on our route, we saw clear traces of an ancient ditch and rampart which are said to have been constructed by the later Greek Emperors from the Sea of Marmora to the Danube, in order to include their territory within a line of defence and secure the estates of the
inhabitants of Constantinople from the inroads of the barbarians. There is a story that an old man of those days declared that, in his opinion, the enclosure of this territory did not so much protect it against danger from the barbarians as mark the surrender of what lay beyond, with the result that it was likely to encourage an attack, while it discouraged the Greeks from defending it.

At Silivri the view of the calm sea tempted us to halt, and we enjoyed picking up shells and watching the shoals of dolphins, while the waves played upon the shore. The warmth of the air was delicious; the softness and mildness of the climate defied description. At Tchorlu the wind was still rather chilly with something northerly in it, but afterwards the climate was wonderfully mild.

As we neared Constantinople we crossed by bridges over two lovely arms of the sea (πελάγος). It is a district like of which for beauty could not, I think, be found anywhere, if only it were cultivated and art gave a little assistance to nature. As it is, the land seems to lament its fate and the neglect and scorn of its barbarian lords. Here we ate our fill of delicious sea-fish, caught before our very eyes.

While staying in the inns (which the Turks called İmaret), I often happened to notice pieces of paper thrust into the chinks of the walls. These aroused my curiosity, and I pulled them out, for I suspected that they were not placed there without some purpose. I took the opportunity of asking my Turkish friends what was written on them, but discovered that they contained nothing to account for their being thus preserved. This made me all the more anxious to dis-

cover why they were kept; for I had often noticed the same thing elsewhere. The Turks made no reply and refused to tell me the reason, either because they were ashamed to tell me a thing which I was unlikely to believe, or else were unwilling to reveal such a mystery to a stranger in religion. Afterwards, when I grew more familiar with the Turks, I learnt from my friends that the Turks have a great respect for paper, because the name of God may be written upon it; so they never allow a scrap of paper to lie about, and immediately pick up any that they find and thrust it into some hole or cranny, in order that it may not be trodden underfoot. With this practice you will probably find no fault; but listen to the rest of my story. On the day of the Last Judgement, when Mahomet summons the faithful to heaven from the purgatory where they are being punished for their sins, in order that they may partake of eternal bliss, the only path which they can tread will be a huge white-hot gridiron, over which they must pass with bare feet. (You can imagine how painful this will be; picture to yourself a chicken hopping over hot embers.) Then, wonderful to relate, all the paper which they have preserved from being trampled underfoot in the manner we have described will suddenly make its appearance and adhere to the soles of their feet and serve them well by preventing them from receiving any hurt from the hot iron. So great is the merit to be acquired for saving paper from ill treatment! I remember on one occasion when our guides were most indignant with my servants for putting paper to an ignoble use, and reported the matter to me as a serious crime. I told them that there was nothing
remarkable in such an act on the part of my servants, since they were also in the habit of eating pork!

So superstitious are the Turks that it is a terrible crime to sit down, even unwittingly, upon a copy of the Koran, their book of sacred law; for a Christian it is even a capital offence. Also they never allow rose-leaves to lie upon the ground; for they believe that the rose sprang from the sweat of Mahomet, just as the ancients thought that it came from the blood of Venus. But I must stop, lest I bore you with such trifles.

I reached Constantinople on 20 January. . . . The Sultan was away in Asia with his army, and no one was left in the capital except the Governor, the eunuch Ibrahim Pasha, and Roostem, who had then fallen from his high estate. Nevertheless, mindful of his former greatness and his hopes of a speedy restoration, we paid him an official visit and saluted him and made him presents.

It will, perhaps, not be out of place at this point to relate why Roostem was deposed from his high official position. Soleiman had had a son by a concubine, who, if I mistake not, came from the Crimea. His name was Mustapha, and he was then in the prime of life and enjoyed a high repute as a soldier. Soleiman, however, had several other children by Roxolana, to whom he was so much attached that he gave her the position of a legal wife and bestowed a dowry upon her, an act which is the surest pledge of a legal marriage among the Turks. In doing this he violated the custom of the Sultans who had preceded him, none of whom had contracted a marriage since the time of Bajazet I (v). Bajazet, having been defeated and having fallen, together with his wife, into the hands of Tamerlane (n), underwent many intolerable sufferings, but there was nothing which he regarded as more humiliating than the insults and affronts to which his wife was subjected before his very eyes. Mindful of this, the Sultans who followed Bajazet on the throne abstained from marrying wives, so that, whatever fate befall them, they might not suffer a similar misfortune, and only begat children by women occupying the position of slaves, upon whom, as it was thought, disgrace would fall less heavily than upon legal wives. The Turks, indeed, do not think less highly of the children of concubines or mistresses than of those born from wives, and the former possess equal rights of inheritance.

Mustapha, on account of his remarkable natural gifts and the suitability of his age, was marked out by the affection of the soldiers and the wishes of the people as the certain successor of his father, who was already verging on old age. His stepmother, on the other hand, was doing her best to secure the throne for her own children, and was eager to counteract Mustapha's merits and his rights as the eldest son by asserting her authority as a wife. To effect her object, she employed the advice and help of Roostem, with whom her fortunes were closely linked by his marriage to her daughter, the Sultan's child; so that their interests were identical.

Of all the Pashas Roostem enjoyed most influence and authority with the Sultan. A man of keen and far-seeing mind, he had been largely instrumental in promoting Soleiman's fame. If you wish to know his origin, he was a swineherd; yet he was not unworthy of his high office but for the taint of mean avarice.
This was the only quality in him which aroused the Sultan's suspicion; otherwise he enjoyed his affection and approval. Yet even this vice of his was employed in his master's interest, since he was entrusted with the privy purse and the management of his finances, which were a cause of considerable difficulty to Soleiman. In his administration he neglected no source of revenue, however small, even scraping together money by selling the vegetables and roses and violets which grew in the Sultan's gardens; he also put up separately for sale the helmet, breastplate, and horse of every prisoner; and he managed everything else on the same principle. The result was that he amassed large sums of money and filled Soleiman's treasury...

The position of the sons of the Turkish Sultans is a most unhappy one; for as soon as one of them succeeds his father, the rest are inevitably doomed to die. The Turks tolerate no rival to the throne; indeed, the attitude of the soldiers of the bodyguard makes it impossible for them to do so. For if a brother of the reigning monarch chances to remain alive, they never stop demanding largesses; and if their requests are refused, cries of 'Long live the brother!' 'God save the brother!' are heard, whereby they make it pretty clear that they intend to put him on the throne. Sultans of Turkey are thus compelled to stain their hands with their brothers' blood and to inaugurate their reign by murder. Whether Mustapha was afraid of this fate or Roxolana wished to save her own children by sacrificing him, it is certain that the action of the one or the other of them suggested to Soleiman the advisability of slaying his son.

The Sultan being at war with Sagthama, King of Persia, Roostem had been sent against him as commander-in-chief. As he was approaching the Persian frontier, he suddenly halted and sent a dispatch to Soleiman saying that he was in a critical position, that treachery was rife, and that the soldiers had been bribed and were zealous for no one except Mustapha. The Sultan, he added, alone possessed the necessary authority; he himself could not cope with the situation, which required the Sultan's presence and prestige; if he wished to save his throne, he must come at once. Alarmed at this news, Soleiman hurried to the spot, and wrote summoning Mustapha, warning him that he must clear himself of the crimes of which he was suspected and now openly accused; if he could do so, no danger threatened him. Mustapha was confronted by a difficult choice: if he entered the presence of his angry and offended father, he ran an undoubted risk; if he refused, he clearly admitted that he had contemplated an act of treason. He chose the braver and more dangerous course. Leaving Amasia, the seat of his government, he sought his father's camp, which lay not far off. Either he relied on his innocence, or else he was confident that no harm could come to him in the presence of the army. Be that as it may, he went to meet certain doom.

Soleiman before he left home had determined upon his son's death, having first taken the advice of his Mufti (who is the chief religious authority among the Turks, as the Pope of Rome is among us), so that he might not seem to have neglected the dictates of religion...

On the arrival of Mustapha in the camp there was considerable excitement among the soldiers. He was
introduced into his father's tent, where everything appeared peaceful; there were no soldiers, no body-servants or attendants, and nothing to inspire any fear of treachery. However, several mutes (a class of servant highly valued by the Turks), strong, sturdy men, were there—his destined murderers. As soon as he entered the inner tent, they made a determined attack upon him and did their best to throw a noose round him. Being a man of powerful build, he defended himself stoutly and fought not only for his life but for the throne; for there was no doubt that, if he could escape and throw himself among the Janissaries, they would be so moved with indignation and with pity for their favourite, that they would not only protect him but also proclaim him as Sultan. Soleiman, fearing this, and being only separated by the linen tent-hangings from the scene upon which this tragedy was taking place, when he found that there was a delay in the execution of his plan, thrust his head out of the part of the tent in which he was and directed fierce and threatening glances upon the mutes, and by menacing gestures sternly rebuked their hesitation. Thereupon the mutes in their alarm, redoubling their efforts, hurled the unhappy Mustapha to the ground and, throwing the bowstring round his neck, strangled him. Then, laying his corpse on a rug, they exposed it in front of the tent, so that the Janissaries might look upon the man whom they had wished to make their Sultan.

When the news spread through the camp, pity and grief were general throughout the army; and no one failed to come and gaze upon the sad sight. Most prominent were the Janissaries, whose consternation and rage were such that, had they had a leader, they would have stopped at nothing; for they saw him whom they had hoped to have as their leader lying lifeless on the ground. The only course which remained was to endure with patience what they could not remedy. So, sad and silent, with their eyes full of tears, they betook themselves to their tents, where they could lament to their hearts' content the fate of their luckless favourite. First they inveighed against Soleiman as a crazy old lunatic; then they railed against the treachery and cruelty of the young man's step-mother and the wickedness of Roostem, who together had extinguished the brightest star of the house of Othman. They passed that day in fasting, not even tasting water; nay, there were some who remained without eating for several days.

Thus for some days there was general mourning throughout the camp; and it seemed as if there was no likelihood of any end to the grief and lamentations of the soldiers, had not Soleiman stripped Roostem (probably at his own suggestion) of his dignities and sent him back to Constantinople without any official position. Achmet Pasha, a man of greater courage than judgement, who had occupied the second place when Roostem was Chief Vizier, was chosen to succeed him. This change soothed the grief and calmed the feelings of the soldiers, who, with the usual credulity of the vulgar, were easily led to believe that Soleiman had discovered the crimes of Roostem and the sorceries of his wife and had learnt wisdom, though it was too late, and had therefore deposed Roostem and would not spare even his wife on his return to Constantinople.
But I must return to my subject. A messenger was
sent to Soleiman with a dispatch announcing my ar-
ival. While we were awaiting his reply, I had an
opportunity to see the sights of Constantinople at my
leisure.

My first desire was to visit the church of St. Sophia,
admission to which was only granted as a special
favour; for the Turks hold that the entrance of a
Christian profanes their places of worship. It is
indeed a magnificent mass of buildings and well worth
a visit, with its huge vault or dome in the middle and
lighted only by an open space at the top. Almost all
the Turkish mosques are modelled upon St. Sophia.
They say that formerly it was much larger and that its
subsidiary buildings spread over a large area but have
now been done away with, and that only the central
shrine of the church remains.

As for the site of the city itself, it seems to have been
created by nature for the capital of the world. It
stands in Europe but looks out over Asia, and has
Egypt and Africa on its right. Although these latter
are not near, yet they are linked to the city owing to
case of communication by sea. On the left lie the
Black Sea and the Sea of Azof, round which many
nations dwell and into which many rivers flow on all
sides, so that nothing useful to man is produced
through the length and breadth of these countries
which cannot be transported by sea to Constantinople
with the utmost ease. On one side the city is washed
by the Sea of Marmora; on another side a harbour is
formed by a river which Strabo calls, from its shape,
the Golden Horn. On the third side it is joined to
the mainland, and thus resembles a peninsula or pro-

monitory running out with the sea on one side, on the
other the bay formed by the sea and the above-mentioned
river. From the centre of Constantinople there is a
charming view over the sea and the Asiatic Olympus,
white with eternal snow.

The sea is everywhere full of fish, either making
their way down, as is their habit, from the Sea of
Azof and the Black Sea through the Bosporus and the
Sea of Marmora to the Aegean and Mediterranean, or
else on their journey up thence to the Black Sea. They
travel in such large and densely packed shoals that
they can sometimes even be captured by hand.
Mackerel, tunny, mullet, bream, and sword-fish are
cought in great abundance. The fishermen are usually
Greeks rather than Turks. The latter, however, do
not despise fish when they are placed before them,
provided they are of the kind which they regard as
clean; they would sooner take deadly poison than eat
the other kinds. I may mention in passing that a Turk
would rather have his tongue cut out or his teeth
drawn than taste any food which he looks upon as
unclean—frogs, for example, and snails and tortoises.
The Greeks entertain similar scruples. I had engaged
a boy of the Greek religion to serve as a caterer in my
household. The other servants had never been able
to induce him to eat shell-fish, until one day they
placed before him a plate of them so cooked and
seasoned that, thinking that they were some other kind
of fish, he ate most heartily of them. But when he
learnt from their laughter and derision and from the
shells which were afterwards shown to him that he
had been deceived, you cannot imagine how upset he
was. He retired to his chamber and indulged in end-
less vomiting and tears and misery. It would take fully two months' pay, he said, to atone for his sin; for the Greek priests are in the habit of charging those who have confessed to them a greater or a less sum for absolution according to the nature and gravity of the offence, and will only grant absolution to those who pay them the price they ask.

At the end of the promontory, which I have mentioned, is the Palace of the Sultans, which, as far as I can judge (for I have not yet myself entered it), is not remarkable for the splendour of its architecture or decoration. Beneath the Palace, on lower ground, stretching right down to the sea, lie the Imperial Gardens. It is usually held that the ancient Byzantium lay in this quarter. You must not expect me to tell you why the people of Chalcedon, the site of which was opposite Byzantium and scarcely shows a trace at the present day, were called blind (n) ; nor about the perpetual and tideless current which flows down the Straits; nor about the pickled delicacies which are brought to Constantinople from the Sea of Azof and are called by the Italians moronella, botarga, and caviare. All these details are unsuited to a letter, the limits of which I have already exceeded; besides, they can be learnt from authors, both ancient and modern.

But to return to Constantinople. No place could be more beautiful or more conveniently situated. As I have already said, you will look in vain for elegant buildings in Turkish cities, nor are the streets fine, being so narrow as to preclude any pleasing appearance.

In many places there are remarkable remains of ancient monuments, though one cannot help wondering why so few have survived, when one considers the number which were brought by Constantine from Rome. It is beside my present purpose to describe them in detail; but I will mention a few of them. In the space occupied by the ancient Hippodrome two serpents of bronze (n) are to be seen, also a fine obelisk (n). Two remarkable columns are also to be seen in the city. One of them stands in the neighbourhood of the caravanserai where we lodged, the other in the market which the Turks call Avret-Bazar, that is, the Women's Market. This column is covered with reliefs (n) from top to bottom representing some expedition of Arcadius, who set it up and whose statue long surmounted it. It would be more accurate to describe it as a spiral than as a column, on account of the interior staircase which gives access to the summit. The column (n) which stands opposite the apartments usually occupied by the imperial representatives is composed, except for the base and capital, of eight solid blocks of porphyry so fitted together that they appear to form a monolith; and indeed this is the popular belief. Where the blocks fit into one another there are laurel-wreaths surrounding the whole column, so that the joints are hidden from those who look up from below. This column, having been shaken by frequent earthquakes and burnt by a neighbouring fire, is splitting in many places, and is bound together by numerous iron rings to prevent it from falling to pieces. It is said to have been crowned by statues, first of Apollo, then of Constantine, and finally of Theodosius the elder, all of which were dislodged by gales or earthquakes.
The following story is told by the Greeks about the obelisk in the Hippodrome, which I have mentioned above. It was torn from its base and for many centuries lay upon the ground, until in the days of the later Emperors an architect was discovered who undertook to re-erect it on its base. When the price had been agreed upon, he set up an elaborate apparatus consisting chiefly of wheels and ropes, whereby he raised the immense stone and lifted it into the air, so that it was only a finger’s length from the top of the base on which it had to rest. The spectators imagined that he had wasted his time and trouble on such vast preparations and would have to make a fresh start with great labour and expense. However, he was not in the least discouraged, and, profiting by his knowledge of natural science, ordered an immense quantity of water to be fetched. With this he drenched his machine for many hours, with the result that ropes which held the obelisk in position gradually became soaked and naturally tightened and contracted, so that they lifted the obelisk higher and set it upon the base, amid the admiration and applause of the multitude.

At Constantinople I saw wild beasts of various kinds—lynxes, wild cats, panthers, leopards, and lions. One of these was so well broken in and tamed that it allowed the keeper before my eyes to pull out of its mouth a sheep, which had just been given to it to eat, and remained quite calm, though its jaws had barely tasted blood. I also saw a quite young elephant which greatly amused me, because it could dance and play ball. I imagine you will be unable to suppress a smile and will exclaim: ‘What! an elephant playing ball and dancing!’ But why not, when Seneca tells us of one which walked the tight rope, and Pliny is our evidence for another which knew the Greek alphabet? Now listen to my account, so that you may not think I am inventing or misunderstand what I say. When the elephant was ordered to dance it advanced on alternate feet, swaying to and fro with its whole body, so that it obviously meant to dance a jig. It played with a ball by cleverly catching it, when it was thrown, with its trunk and hurling it back, as we do with the hand. If you are not satisfied from my account that it danced and played ball, you must find some one to give a clearer and more learned description.

There had been a camelopard (giraffe) among the animals at Constantinople, but it had died just before my arrival. But I had its bones, which had been buried, dug up for my inspection. This animal is much taller in front than behind; it is, therefore, ill adapted for carrying a rider or a load. It is called a camelopard because it has a head and neck like a camel’s and a skin covered with spots like a leopard’s.

If I had not visited the Black Sea when I had an opportunity of sailing thither I should deserve to be regarded as very lazy; for to have seen the Black Sea was regarded as not less difficult than to have sailed to Corinth (n). I had a delightful excursion, and was allowed to enter several of the Sultan’s country-houses, places of pleasure and delight. On the folding doors of one of them I saw a vivid representation in mosaic of the famous battle of Selim against Ismael, King of Persia (n). I also saw numerous parks belonging to the Sultan situated in charming valleys. What homes for the Nymphs! What abodes
of the Muses! What places for studious retirement! The very earth, as I have said, seemed to mourn and to long for Christian care and culture. And even more so Constantinople itself; nay, the whole of Greece (n). The land which discovered all the arts and all liberal learning seems to demand back the civilization which she has transmitted to us and to implore our aid, in the name of our common faith, against savage barbarism. But all in vain; for the lords of Christendom have their minds set on other objects. The grievous bonds wherewith the Turks oppress the Greeks are no worse than the vices which hold us in thrall—luxury, gluttony, pride, ambition, avarice, hatred, envy, and jealousy. By these our hearts are so weighed down and stifled that they cannot look up to heaven, or harbour any noble thought or aspire to any great achievement. Our religion and our sense of duty ought to have urged us to help our afflicted brethren; nay, even if fair glory and honour fail to illumine our dull minds, yet at any rate self-interest, the ruling principle of these days, ought to stir us to rescue from the barbarians regions so fair and so full of resources and advantages, and possess them in their stead. As it is, we seek the Indies and the Antipodes over vast fields of ocean, because there the booty and spoil is richer and can be wrung from the ignorant and guileless natives without the expenditure of a drop of blood. Religion is the pretext, gold the real object.

It was far otherwise in the days of our forefathers. So far from thinking that, like traders, they ought to seek those lands where gold was most plentiful, they went wherever the best chance was offered for show-
before their attack on Constantinople; the former with its strong towers was built by Mahomet some years before the storming of the city, and is used at the present day as a prison for distinguished captives (n). . . .

At this point you will perhaps expect me to give you some account of the floating Cyanean Islands, also called the ‘Clashing Rocks’ (n). I must frankly confess that during the few hours that I spent there I could find no traces of any such islands; perhaps they have floated away elsewhere! . . .

One thing I ought to mention, namely, that Polybius was quite wrong when he argued on many grounds that in course of time the Black Sea would become choked by accumulations of sand owing to the alluvial deposits brought down by the Danube, Dnieper, and other rivers, and would thus be unnavigable. The Black Sea is not a whit less navigable than it was in his day. Thus time and experience often overthrow theories which no argument can refute. . . .

When the Sultan received the news of my arrival, a dispatch was brought to the Governor of Constantinople ordering that we should be conducted across into Asia and then sent on to Amasia. Accordingly, having made our preparations and procured guides, we crossed over into Anatolia, as the Turks now call Asia, on 9 March. That day we only got as far as Scutari, a village on the Asiatic coast opposite to the ancient Byzantium, at, or a little below, the site on which the famous city of Chalcedon is thought to have stood. The Turks considered that they had done quite enough travelling for one day in having conveyed us and our horses, carriages, and attendants across the straits. In particular they urged that, since Constantinople was still quite near, we could easily send back thither, if, as often happens, anything requisite for our journey had been forgotten or left behind.

The next day we left Scutari and journeyed through fields of fragrant plants, especially lavender. We noticed immense numbers of tortoises in this region wandering fearlessly about. We would have gladly caught them, if we had not preferred to spare the feelings of the Turks who accompanied us; for had they touched them or even seen them brought to our table, they would have considered themselves so much polluted that no washing could possibly have cleansed them. I have remarked before upon the scruples which forbid both the Greeks and the Turks from coming into contact with animals of this kind. The result is that, since no one would snare so harmless an animal, tortoises abounded everywhere. I kept one which had two heads for some days; and it would have lived longer if my carelessness had not allowed it to die.

The first day we reached a village called Cartali. It will be well if I give you henceforward the names of our halting-places; the journey to Constantinople has been undertaken by many, but, as far as I am aware, no one in our days has traversed the route to Amasia. From Cartali we reached Gebiæ, a town of Bithynia which is thought to have been the ancient Libya, famous as the burial-place of Hannibal (n). It commands a charming view over the sea and the Bay of Ismid, and is remarkable for cypresses of extraordinary height and girth.
Our fourth halting-place after leaving Constantinople was Nicomedia (Ismid), a famous city in antiquity, where we saw nothing noteworthy except some walls and fragments of architraves and columns, the sole remaining traces of its ancient glory. The citadel, which stands on a hill, is better preserved. A short time before our visit a long wall of white marble was brought to light by digging, part, I imagine, of the ancient palace of the Kings of Bithynia.

From Nicomedia we crossed the ridge of Mount Olympus and reached the village of Kasockli, and thence journeyed to Nicaea (Isnik), where we arrived rather late after nightfall. Hearing in the distance a loud noise as of men laughing and jeering, I asked what it was, thinking that perhaps some sailors—for we were near the shores of the Ascanian Lake (n)—were jeering at us, because, contrary to the Turkish custom, we were travelling at night. I was told that the noise was the howling of animals which the Turks call jackals. They are a small species of wolf, larger than foxes, but quite as voracious and gluttonous as ordinary wolves. They go about in packs and are harmless to human beings and flocks, obtaining their food rather by theft and cunning than by violent methods. Owing to these characteristics, the Turks call swindlers and cheats 'jackals', especially if they come from Asia. They make their way at night into the tents, and even into the houses, of the Turks, and devour any food that they find. If they can find no food, they gnaw anything made of leather, such as shoes, gaiters, belts, sword-sheaths, &c. They are very clever at thieving, except that, ridiculously enough, they sometimes betray themselves; for if one of the pack having

remained outside begins to howl, they all immediately do likewise, forgetting where they are. The noise then awakes the inhabitants, who snatch up their arms and take vengeance on the thieves thus caught in the act.

We spent the following day at Nicaea (Isnik), sleeping, I think, in the actual building in which the Nicene Council was held (n). Isnik lies on the shore of the lake of that name. The city walls and gates are well preserved. The latter are four in number, and are all visible from the middle of the market-place. They all bear ancient Latin inscriptions stating that the city was restored by Antoninus—which Antoninus I cannot remember, but he was certainly an emperor. Remains of his baths also exist, which the Turks were using as a quarry for public buildings at Constantinople. While we were there, they had discovered a fine statue, almost intact, representing an armed soldier, but they quickly mutilated it by blows from their hammers. When we showed our annoyance, the workmen laughed at us and asked whether we wished, in accordance with our custom, to worship it and pray to it.

Leaving Nicaea we came first to Yenishehr, then to Ashbyuck, and then to Bazarjik, whence we journeyed to Boz-Euyuk (or Cassumbasa), situated in a very narrow pass over Mount Olympus. Almost all the journey from Nicaea to this point lay along the slopes of that mountain.

At Boz-Euyuk we lodged in a Turkish inn. Near to it was a rather lofty rock, high up in which a large square cistern had been hewn with a channel leading down from the bottom to the public road. The
ancient inhabitants used to fill up this cistern in the winter with snow, so that, when it melted, it might flow down the channel to the road and provide cold water for the refreshment of the traveller's thirst. Public works of this kind are regarded by the Turks as the noblest form of alms, being of universal benefit to all alike. Not far from this place Otmanlik is visible on the right—the abode, I imagine, of the famous Othman, who first brought glory to the family of that name.

From this pass we descended into a broad plain, where at a place called Chiausada (α) we spent our first night under canvas; for this seemed the best method of supporting the heat. Here we saw a subterranean building, lighted only by a skylight. We saw also the famous goats from whose fleece or hair—I avoid the controversy about goat’s wool—is made the well-known cloth, known as camlet or watered cloth (mohair). The hair of these goats is very fine and wonderfully glossy, and hangs right down to the ground. The goat-herds do not shear it, but comb it out, and it is hardly less beautiful than silk. The goats are frequently dipped in the streams. Their food, which is the thin, dry grass of the district, is supposed to contribute to the fineness of their wool; for it is certain that, if they are removed to other pastures, their coats change with the change of food, and their species is scarcely recognizable. The thread spun from this wool by the women of the district is taken to Angora, a city of Galatia, and there woven and dyed in a manner which I shall describe hereafter. In this country is also frequently found (indeed their flocks consist of little else) the breed of sheep with fat,

heavy tails, weighing three or four, and sometimes even eight or ten, pounds. In the older sheep they sometimes reach such a size that they have to be laid on a little platform on two wheels, so that the sheep may drag what they cannot carry. You will not, perhaps, believe this, but it is quite true. While it cannot be denied that such tails may serve a good purpose on account of the fat which they yield, yet the rest of the meat seemed to me tougher and less tasty than our mutton. The shepherds who look after these flocks spend day and night in the fields, and take their wives and children about with them in wagons which serve them for houses, though they sometimes put up small tents. They wander over wide stretches of country, seeking out the plains, or high ground, or valleys, according to the time of year and the available pasture.

I think I discovered in this district several kinds of birds which have never been seen and are quite unknown in Europe, including a species of duck, which might well be called a ‘trumpeter-bird’, so exactly does it imitate the sound of the horns blown by the conductors of posting carriages. This bird, although it has no means of defence, is bold and turbulent. The Turks even believe that it frightens away evil spirits. It is certainly fond of liberty, for after being kept for three whole years in a farmyard, when it has the chance it prefers its freedom to a liberal diet, and flies away to its former haunts in the beds of the rivers.

[Busbecq passes through a series of villages, crossing the river Sakariyeh (Sangarius), and reaches Angora (Ancyra).]

At Angora we remained one day. In view of the
great heat we did not hurry, and the Turks were of opinion that we had no need to do so; for the representative of the King of Persia was still on the road, and they wished us both to reach Amasia about the same time.

In none of the villages through which we passed did we see anything at all noteworthy, except that in the Turkish cemeteries we often came upon columns and ancient slabs of fine marble, on which were remains of Greek and Latin inscriptions, but so mutilated as to be illegible. It gave me great pleasure, on arriving at each halting-place, to inquire for ancient inscriptions and Greek and Roman coins, or, failing these, for rare plants.

It is the custom of the Turks to fetch huge stones from a distance and use them for covering the tombs of their relatives, which would otherwise be exposed, for they do not fill them in with earth. Their object is to provide the deceased with a convenient place where he can sit and raise himself erect to plead his cause, as they believe he has to do, with his evil genius as his accuser and critic of his life on earth, and his good angel as counsel for the defence. A further reason for putting a heavy stone over the grave is to protect the corpse from the attacks of dogs, wolves, and other animals, especially the hyena, which is very common in those parts. It digs down into the tombs and pulls out the bodies, which it carries off to its lair, round which can be seen a vast heap of the bones of men, pack-animals, &c. The hyena is rather less tall than a wolf, but quite as long in the body; it has a similar skin, but more bristly and covered with large, black spots; its head is attached directly to its spine without any connecting joints, so that it has to turn completely round in order to look back. It is said to have a continuous bone in place of teeth. The Turks, like the ancients, attribute to the hyena a great potency in love affairs, and, although there were two hyenas in Constantinople during my stay there, their owners were reluctant to sell them to me, saying that they were keeping them for the Sultan (ns), as the Sultan's wife is called, who is commonly reputed to retain his affection by love-charms and magic arts. . . .

We found everywhere a great abundance of ancient coins, especially of the later Emperors, Constantine, Constans, Justinus, Valens, Valentinus, Numerianus, Probus, Tacitus, &c. In many places the Turks use them as weights, especially for drachms and half-drachms, and call them giusr monguri, or 'infidels' money'. There were also many coins of the neighbouring towns of Asia, Amisos, Sinope, Comana, Amastris, and also of Amasia, the goal of our journey. A coppersmith, from whom I inquired for coins, greatly aroused my wrath by telling me that, a few days before, he had had a whole jarful of them and had made some bronze vessels out of them, thinking that they were of no use or value. I was very much grieved at the loss of all these relics of antiquity; but I avenged myself by telling the man that, if he had still had them, I would have paid him a hundred gold pieces. I thus sent him away quite as saddened at so much profit having been snatched from his very grasp as I was annoyed at his destruction of ancient remains . . .

Angora (Anzyra), our nineteenth halt since leaving Constantinople, is a town of Galatia (n), the former
abode of a Gallic tribe, the Tectosages. It is mentioned by Pliny and Strabo, but the modern city probably only covers a portion of the ancient site.

At Angora we saw a very fine inscription (a), a copy of the tablets upon which Augustus drew up a succinct account of his public acts. I had it copied out by my people as far as it was legible. It is graven on the marble walls of a building, which was probably the ancient residence of the governor, now ruined and roofless. One half of it is upon the right as one enters, the other on the left. The upper paragraphs are almost intact; in the middle difficulties begin owing to gaps; the lowest portion has been so mutilated by blows of clubs and axes as to be illegible. This is a serious loss to literature and much to be deplored by the learned, especially as it is generally agreed that the city was consecrated to Augustus as a common gift from the province of Asia.

Here we also saw how the watered camlet (mohair), which I have already mentioned, made from the hair of goats, is dyed and given by means of a press its watered appearance from the 'waves' produced by pouring water upon it. The pieces which have received the marks of very broad 'waves' in continuous lines are considered the best and choicest. If the 'waves' are smaller and of varying lengths and run into one another, though the colour and material may be the same, this is counted as a defect, and the cloth is valued at a price less by several gold pieces. The wearing of this cloth is a mark of distinction among the older Turks of high rank. Soleiman himself does not like to be seen wearing any material but this, and prefers a green colour, which, though to our

ideas unsuited to a man of advanced years, is commended by their religion and the practice of Mahomet, their prophet, who even in old age habitually wore it. Black is considered by the Turks a mean and unfortunate colour, and for any one to appear in black is unlucky and illomened; so much so that on several occasions the Pashas expressed their astonishment, and even seriously complained, because we approached them clad in black. No one in Turkey ever appears publicly in black raiment, unless he is the victim of serious financial loss or some other heavy calamity. Purple is held to confer distinction, but is regarded in time of war as prophetic of death; white, yellow, blue, violet, and mouse-colour, &c., are considered luckier. The Turks indeed attach great importance to auguries and omens. It is well known that a Pasha has before now been removed from office because his horse has stumbled, this being regarded as portending some great calamity, which by his deposition from office can be transferred from the State to the private individual.

From Angora we journeyed to the village of Balygazar, thence to Zarekuct and Zermez Zii (a), whence we reached the banks of the river Halys (Kizil-İrmak). As we traversed this district toward the village of Algeos we could see in the distance the mountains near Sinope, which owe their red colour to the red ochre, which derives its name (sinopis) from that town.

The Halys is the famous river, formerly the boundary between the kingdoms of the Medes and the Lydians, about which the ancient oracle foretold that if Croesus crossed it to make war upon the Persians he would overthrow a mighty empire'—his own,
though he knew it not. On its banks was a small wood, which at first attracted an interest as containing a strange kind of bush; we soon discovered, however, that it was the liquorice-tree, and we took our fill of the juice extracted from its root. A peasant happened to be standing by, from whom we inquired through our interpreter whether there was an abundance of fish in the river and how they were caught. He replied that there were fish in plenty but that they could not be caught. On our expressing our surprise he explained that, if any one tried to put his hand upon the fish, they rushed away and did not wait to be caught!... 

The Turks are so frugal and think so little of the pleasures of eating that if they have bread and salt and some garlic or an onion, and a kind of sour milk, which was known to Galen (n) as oxygala, which they call yoghoort, they ask for nothing more. They dilute this milk with very cold water and crumble bread into it and take it when they are very hot and thirsty. We often experienced great benefit from this drink in the extreme heat; it is not only palatable and digestible, but also possesses an extraordinary power of quenching the thirst. At all the caravanserais, which, as I have explained, are Turkish inns, there was an abundance of sour milk on sale as well as other kinds of relish. For the Turks, when they are travelling, do not require hot food or meat. Their relishes are sour milk, cheese, prunes, pears, peaches, quinces, figs, raisins, and cornel-cherries, all of which are boiled in clean water and set out on large earthenware trays. Each man buys what takes his fancy, and eats the fruit as a relish with his bread, and when he has finished swallows the remaining juice by way of drink. Thus their food and drink costs them very little—so little that I dare say that a man of our country spends more on food in one day than a Turk in twelve. Even their formal banquets generally consist only of cakes and buns and sweets of other kinds, with numerous courses of rice, to which are added mutton and chicken. Capons, however, are quite unknown to the Turks, and they have never even heard of pheasants, thrushes, beccaficoes, and the like. If there is a little honey or sugar in the water which they drink, they would not envy Jupiter his nectar.

There is one drink, however, which for completeness sake I must not omit. They take raisins and have them ground up, and, when they are ground and pounded, they throw them into a wooden vessel. They then pour over them a fixed quantity of hot water and mix it in and carefully cover over the vessel and allow the mixture to ferment for two days. If the process of fermentation is too slow, they add lees of wine. If you taste it when it is beginning to ferment, it would seem insipid and disagreeable owing to its excessive sweetness; but afterwards it takes on a somewhat acid flavour, and if mixed with something sweet it is very pleasing to the palate. Thus for three or four days it makes a delicious drink, especially if cooled by plenty of snow, which is always obtainable in Constantinople. They call it ‘Arab sorbet’, that is to say, the Arabian drink. It does not keep good for more than this period and soon become absolutely sour and affects the head and feet to no less a degree than wine, and so comes under the ban of the Turkish religion. I must admit that I found this kind of
drink very pleasing. I also found grapes, which they preserve for use in the summer, often wonderfully refreshing. The method of preservation, which I heard from their own lips, is as follows. They take a bunch in which the grapes are large and thoroughly ripe, a condition which is easily brought about by the heat of the sun in that part of the world. This they place in a wooden or earthenware vessel after first putting a layer of ground-up mustard seed in the bottom; on the top of this they place the grapes and press them tight with a packing of the same mustard-flour round them. When the grapes fill the vessel to the top, they pour in unfermented wine, as new as possible, and fill the vessel up and finally close it. They allow the grapes to remain till the season of the year induces thirst and demands a remedy against drought and heat; they then unseal the vessel and offer the grapes for sale together with the juice, which the Turks like quite as much as the grapes themselves. Personally, I found the taste of the mustard unpleasing, and used to have the grapes carefully washed; I found them most pleasing and enjoyable in the great heats. The Egyptians had the preposterous custom of worshipping as deities the produce of their gardens from which they had experienced benefit; so you must not be astonished that I gratefully sing the praises of those edibles which I found beneficial. But it is time for me to return to my journey.

From the banks of the River Halys (called by the Turks, I think, the Atocca), we reached Goukurtchay and then Tchoroum and afterwards Tekke Thioï. Here is a famous establishment of Turkish monks (n), whom they call Dervishes, from whom we learnt much about a hero called Chederle, a man of great physical and mortal courage, whom they declare to be identical with our St. George and to whom they ascribe the same achievements as we ascribe to our saint, namely, that he rescued a maiden by the slaughter of a huge and terrible dragon. They add many other stories and invent them according to their own pleasure, saying that he used to wander to distant climes and at last reached a river whereof the water gave immortality to those who drank it. They could not say in what part of the world this river was; it should probably be placed in No-man's-land. All they could affirm about it was that it was hidden beneath a pall of dense darkness and obscurity, and that no mortal had managed to find it since the time of Chederle, who himself, freed from the laws of death, wanders to and fro on a splendid horse, who likewise had put off mortality by drinking of the same water. They say that he takes pleasure in battle and comes to the assistance of the righteous cause in the fight and of those who have implored his help, whatever their religion. The tales are laughable enough, but the following is still more deserving of ridicule: they declare that he was one of the companions and friends of Alexander the Great! The Turks have no idea of chronology and dates, and make a wonderful mixture and confusion of all the epochs of history; if it occurs to them to do so, they will not scruple to declare that Job was master of the ceremonies to King Solomon, and Alexander the Great his commander-in-chief, and they are guilty of even greater absurdities.

In the mosque, as the Turks call their shrines, is a fountain of the purest water constructed of splendid...
marble, which they would have us believe sprang from the urine of Chederle’s horse. They also tell many tales about the companions of Chederle, his groom, and his sister’s son, whose tombs they point out in the neighbourhood, and they tried to persuade us that many benefits are daily conferred by heaven on those who invoke their aid. The same superstition leads them to declare that fragments of stones and the actual earth on which Chederle stood while he was waiting for the dragon, if taken mixed in a draught are a sovereign remedy against fever and pains in the head and eyes. The whole region is full of snakes and vipers, to such a degree that, in the great heats, it is unapproachable by man owing to the number of the beasts who are basking in the sun. I must not omit to mention that the Turks are much amused at the pictures of St. George, whom they declare was their own Chederle, in the Greek churches, in which he is represented with a boy sitting behind him on the horse’s haunches, and mixing wine and serving it to him; for St. George is usually thus painted by the Greeks.

I am now approaching the end of a long journey; there was only one halting-place, at Baglison, before we reached Amasia, where we arrived on the thirtieth day after our departure from Constantinople, namely 7 April. As we approached some Turks met us to congratulate us on our arrival and honour us by their escort.

Amasia is the principal town of Cappadocia, and the governor of that province usually holds his court of justice and has a stationary camp there. . . . It lies on two hills facing one another on either bank of the river Iris, which divides the city into two parts, so that from their slopes there is a view of the river as from the rising tiers of seats in a theatre, and one side of the town is completely visible from the other side. The hills approach one another so closely that there is only one road which gives entrance to and exit from the city for carriages and beasts of burden.

On the night of our arrival a great fire occurred, which the Janissaries extinguished by their usual method of pulling down the neighbouring houses. The Turkish soldiers certainly have reason to wish that fires should occur; for since they are employed to extinguish them—usually, as I have said, by the destruction of adjoining buildings—they plunder the goods not only of those whose houses are burning but also of the neighbouring houses. They often, therefore, themselves secretly set fire to houses in order to have an opportunity for theft. I recall an example of this practice when I was at Constantinople. Many fires had occurred, and, though it was almost certain that they were not accidental, the incendiaries were not detected and the blame was popularly laid upon Persian spies. It was eventually discovered, after a more careful investigation, that bands of sailors from the harbour had caused the fires, in order that, under the cover of them, they might have an opportunity for plundering.

On the loftiest hill overlooking Amasia there stands a very considerable fortress which is held by a permanent Turkish garrison, either against the tribes of Asia who, as I shall explain later, are not very patient of the Turkish rule, or against the Persians, whose raids sometimes extend thither in spite of the great
distance. On this hill there are extensive remains of ancient monuments, perhaps actually those of the Cappadocian kings. Neither the houses nor the streets of Amasia have any remarkable beauty. The houses are made of clay on almost the same principle as is employed in Spain. They have flat roofs of the same material without any gables. If the roof is damaged at all by rain or wind, they use the fragment of some ancient column as a roller and move it backwards and forwards, and thus compress and flatten the surface again. In the summer the inhabitants sleep in the open air on these roofs. The rain in this region is neither heavy nor frequent; but if it does rain, the clothing of passers-by is greatly soiled by the mud which everywhere drips from the roofs. I saw a young satrap in the neighbourhood of our quarters dining on a house-top reclining on a couch quite in the ancient style.

On reaching Amasia we were taken to pay our respects to Achmet, the Chief Vizier, and the other Pashas (for the Sultan himself was away), and we opened negotiations with them in accordance with the Emperor’s injunctions. The Pashas, anxious not to appear at this early stage prejudiced against our cause, displayed no opposition but postponed the matter until their master could express his wishes. On his return we were introduced into his presence; but neither in his attitude nor in his manner did he appear very well disposed to our address, or the arguments which we used, or the instructions which we brought.

The Sultan was seated on a rather low sofa, not more than a foot from the ground and spread with many costly coverlets and cushions embroidered with exquisite work. Near him were his bow and arrows. His expression, as I have said, is anything but smiling, and has a sternness which, though sad, is full of majesty. On our arrival we were introduced into his presence by his chamberlains, who held our arms—a practice which has always been observed since a Croatian sought an interview and murdered the Sultan Amurath (ii) in revenge for the slaughter of his master, Marcus the Despot of Serbia. After going through the pretence of kissing his hand, we were led to the wall facing him backwards, so as not to turn our backs or any part of them towards him. He then listened to the recital of my message, but, as it did not correspond with his expectations (for the demands of my imperial master were full of dignity and independence, and, therefore, far from acceptable to one who thought that his slightest wishes ought to be obeyed), he assumed an expression of disdain, and merely answered ‘Giusel, Giusel’, that is, ‘Well, Well’. We were then dismissed to our lodging.

The Sultan’s head-quarters were crowded by numerous attendants, including many high officials. All the cavalry of the guard were there, the Spahis, Ghourebas, Ouloufedjia, and a large number of Janissaries. In all that great assembly no single man owed his dignity to anything but his personal merits and bravery; no one is distinguished from the rest by his birth, and honour is paid to each man according to the nature of the duty and offices which he discharges. Thus there is no struggle for precedence, every man having his place assigned to him in virtue of the function which he performs. The Sultan himself assigns to all their duties and offices, and in doing
so pays no attention to wealth or the empty claims of rank, and takes no account of any influence or popularity which a candidate may possess; he only considers merit and scrutinizes the character, natural ability, and disposition of each. Thus each man is rewarded according to his deserts, and offices are filled by men capable of performing them. In Turkey every man has it in his power to make what he will of the position into which he is born and of his fortune in life. Those who hold the highest posts under the Sultan are very often the sons of shepherds and herdsmen, and, so far from being ashamed of their birth, they make it a subject of boasting, and the less they owe to their forefathers and to the accident of birth, the greater is the pride which they feel. They do not consider that good qualities can be conferred by birth or handed down by inheritance, but regard them partly as the gift of heaven and partly as the product of good training and constant toil and zeal. Just as they consider that an aptitude for the arts, such as music or mathematics or geometry, is not transmitted to a son and heir, so they hold that character is not hereditary, and that a son does not necessarily resemble his father, but his qualities are divinely infused into his bodily frame. Thus, among the Turks, dignities, offices, and administrative posts are the rewards of ability and merit; those who are dishonest, lazy, and slothful never attain to distinction, but remain in obscurity and contempt. This is why the Turks succeed in all that they attempt and are a dominating race and daily extend the bounds of their rule. Our method is very different; there is no room for merit, but everything depends on birth; con-

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siderations of which alone open the way to high official position. On this subject I shall perhaps say more in another place, and you must regard these remarks as intended for your ears only.

Now come with me and cast your eye over the immense crowd of turbaned heads, wrapped in countless folds of the whitest silk, and bright raiment of every kind and hue, and everywhere the brilliance of gold, silver, purple, silk, and satin. A detailed description would be a lengthy task, and no mere words could give an adequate idea of the novelty of the sight. A more beautiful spectacle was never presented to my gaze. Yet amid all this luxury there was a great simplicity and economy. The dress of all has the same form whatever the wearer's rank; and no edgings or useless trimmings are sewn on, as is the custom with us, costing a large sum of money and worn out in three days. Their most beautiful garments of silk or satin, even if they are embroidered, as they usually are, cost only a ducat to make.

The Turks were quite as much astonished at our manner of dress as we at theirs. They wear long robes which reach almost to their ankles, and are not only more imposing but seem to add to the stature; our dress, on the other hand, is so short and tight that it discloses the forms of the body, which would be better hidden, and is thus anything but becoming, and besides, for some reason or other, it takes away from a man's height and gives him a stunted appearance.

What struck me as particularly praiseworthy in that great multitude was the silence and good discipline. There were none of the cries and murmurs which usually proceed from a motley concourse, and there
was no crowding. Each man kept his appointed place in the quietest manner possible. The officers, namely, generals, colonels, captains, and lieutenants—to all of whom the Turks themselves give the title of Aga—were seated; the common soldiers stood up. The most remarkable body of men were several thousand Janissaries, who stood in a long line apart from the rest and so motionless that, as they were at some distance from me, I was for a while doubtful whether they were living men or statues, until, being advised to follow the usual custom of saluting them, I saw them all bow their heads in answer to my salutation. On our departure from that part of the field, we saw another very pleasing sight, namely, the Sultan’s bodyguard returning home mounted on horses, which were not only very fine and tall but splendidly groomed and caparisoned.

We came away from our audience with small hopes of obtaining what we demanded. The Persian ambassador had arrived on the 10th of May and had brought with him many splendid presents—carpets of the finest texture, Babylonian tent-hangings embroidered on the inner side in various colours, harness and trappings of exquisite workmanship, scimitars from Damascus adorned with jewels, and shields of wonderful beauty. But all these presents were eclipsed by a copy of the Koran, the book which contains their ceremonies and laws, which the Turks believe to have been composed by Mahomet under divine inspiration. A gift of this kind is very highly esteemed among them.

Peace was granted on the spot to the Persian representative, in order that greater attention might be paid to us, with whom it seemed likely that there would be more trouble. No possible honour towards the Persian was omitted, that we might have no doubt about the genuineness of the peace which had been made with him. In all matters, as I have already said, the Turks are in the habit of going to extremes, whether in paying honour to their friends or in showing their contempt by humiliating their foes. Ali Pasha, the second Vizier, gave a dinner to the Persians in a garden, which, though it was at some distance and separated from us by a river, was visible from our quarters; for, as I have said, the situation of the town on sloping ground is such that there is scarcely a spot which one cannot see and in which one cannot be seen. Ali Pasha, a Dalmatian by birth, is a delightfully intelligent person, and (what is surprising in a Turk) by no means lacking in humanity. The Pashas reclined with the ambassador under an awning which shaded the table. A hundred youths, all clad alike, served the meal, bringing the dishes to the table in the following manner. They first advanced, drawn up at equal distances from one another, towards the table where the guests were reclining, with their hands empty, so as not to hinder their salutations, which consisted of placing their hands on their thighs and bowing their heads to the earth. After they had performed this salutation, the attendant who had taken up his position nearest to the kitchen received the dishes and handed them on to the man next him, who passed them on to a third; the latter then handed them on to a fourth, and so on, until they reached the attendant who stood nearest to the table, from whose hands the chief butler received them and placed them on the
table. In this manner a hundred or more plates streamed, so to speak, on to the table without any confusion. When this was accomplished, the attendants again saluted the guests and returned in the same order as they had come, except that those who had been last when they came were the first to withdraw, and those who were nearest to the table now brought up the rear. The other courses were brought to the table in the same manner. Thus in matters of small moment the Turks like to observe due order, whereas we neglect to do so in matters of the gravest importance. The ambassador's suite was entertained by some Turks not far from their master's table.

Peace having been, as I have said, ratified with the Persians, we could obtain from the Turks no terms which had even the semblance of justice. All that could be arranged between us was a truce for six months, during which an answer might be sent to Vienna and a further reply brought back. I had come to assume the functions of an ambassador in ordinary, but, since nothing had been arranged about a peace, the Pashas were resolved that I should depart to my royal master with a letter from Soleiman and bring back a reply if the King were pleased to send it. I was, therefore, again introduced into the Sultan's presence. Two ample embroidered robes reaching to my ankles were thrown about me, which were as much as I could carry. My attendants were also presented with silken robes of various colours and, clad in these, accompanied me. I thus proceeded in a stately procession, as though I were going to play the part of Agamemnon or some similar hero in a tragedy, and bade farewell to the Sultan after receiving his dispatch wrapped up
in cloth of gold and sealed. The more distinguished of my suite were also admitted to salute the Sultan. Having afterwards paid my respects to the Pashas in like manner, I left Amasia with my colleagues on June the 2nd. It is customary to offer a breakfast to ambassadors who are on the point of departing in the Divan, as they call the place where the Pashas administer justice; but this is only done when they are friendly, and our relations had not yet been placed on a footing of peace.

You will probably wish me to describe the impression which Soliman made upon me. He is beginning to feel the weight of years, but his dignity of demeanour and his general physical appearance are worthy of the ruler of so vast an empire. He has always been frugal and temperate, and was so even in his youth, when he might have erred without incurring blame in the eyes of the Turks. Even in his earlier years he did not indulge in wine or in those unnatural vices to which the Turks are often addicted. Even his bitterest critics can find nothing more serious to allege against him than his undue submission to his wife (η) and its result in his somewhat precipitate action in putting Mustapha to death, which is generally imputed to her employment of love-potions and incantations. It is generally agreed that, ever since he promoted her to the rank of his lawful wife, he has possessed no concubines, although there is no law to prevent his doing so. He is a strict guardian of his religion and its ceremonies, being not less desirous of upholding his faith than of extending his dominions. For his age—he has almost reached his sixtieth year—he enjoys quite good health, though his bad complexion may be
due to some hidden malady; and indeed it is generally believed that he has an incurable ulcer or gangrene on his leg. This defect of complexion he remedies by painting his face with a coating of red powder, when he wishes departing ambassadors to take with them a strong impression of his good health; for he fancies that it contributes to inspire greater fear in foreign potentates if they think that he is well and strong. I noticed a clear indication of this practice on the present occasion; for his appearance when he received me in the final audience was very different from that which he presented when he gave me an interview on my arrival.

We started on the return journey in the extreme heat of June, which was more than I could endure, with the result that I fell into a state of fever. It was accompanied by headache and catarrh, and, though mild and gentle, it was continuous, and only left me when I reached Constantinople.

The Persian ambassador left Amasia on the same day as ourselves, starting along the same route; for, as I have already said, there is only one way in and out of the city, the ruggedness of the surrounding hills preventing any easy access on the other sides. This road soon divides into two, one of which leads to the east, and was taken by the Persians, the other to the west, which we followed. As we left Amasia we could see the Turkish camp with its closely packed tents extending in every direction over the wide plains.

I do not think that I need detain you by describing my return journey; for we passed through practically the same places and halted at the same spots as in our way out, except that we returned more quickly, and sometimes went twice as far in the day. We thus reached Constantinople on 24 June. I leave you to imagine how trying the journey was to me suffering from continual fever. I arrived back in a much reduced condition; but afterwards, thanks to the rest which I could take and the warm baths, in which I indulged on the advice of my physician Quacquelben, I easily recovered my lost strength. He also made me take a douche of cold water on leaving the bath; though I did not enjoy it, it was most beneficial.

While I was at Constantinople, a man who had just returned from the Turkish camp told me a story which I shall be glad to record as illustrating how much the Asiatic peoples dislike the religion and rule of the Ottomans. He said that Soleiman, as he was returning, had enjoyed the hospitality of a certain Asiatic and had spent a night at his house. On the Sultan's departure, his host, considering his house to have been defiled and contaminated by the presence of such a guest, purified it with lustral water, much fumigation, and due ceremonial ritual. When this was reported to Soleiman, he ordered the man to be put to death and his house razed to the ground. Thus the man paid the penalty for his aversion of the Turk and his zeal for the Persians (n).

After remaining about a fortnight at Constantinople in order to regain my strength, I started on my journey to Vienna, the beginning of which may be said to have been ill omened. Just as we were leaving the city, we were met by wagon-loads of boys and girls who were being brought from Hungary to be sold in Constantinople. There is no commoner kind of mer-
chandise than this in Turkey; and, just as on the roads out of Antwerp one meets loads of various kinds of goods, so from time to time we were met by gangs of wretched Christian slaves of every kind who were being led to horrible servitude. Youths and men of advanced years were driven along in herds or else were tied together with chains, as horses with us are taken to market, and trailed along in a long line. At the sight I could scarcely restrain my tears in pity for the wretched plight of the Christian population.

If this is not enough to prove that I started my journey inauspiciously, here is another incident. My colleagues had entrusted to my care certain members of their retinue, who could not endure further residence in Turkey, that I might take them back with me. After two days' journey I noticed that their headman, who bore the official title of Voivode, was ill and rode in a carriage. His foot was bared in order to give relief to a plague-ulcer which was upon it. We were much troubled by this, for we were afraid that the contagion, as it usually does, might spread. He only held out against the disease until we reached Adrianople, which was not far off, and he there gave up the ghost. This led to further trouble; for the rest of the Hungarians fell upon the dead man's belongings. One took his shoes, another his jerkin, another, for fear anything should be wasted, seized his shirt, another his linen; and it was impossible to prevent them from exposing themselves, and us as well, to the most obvious peril. My physician rushed among them, begging them in heaven's name not to touch the clothing, since the infection would involve certain death; but his words fell on deaf ears. As a result, on the second day after our departure from Adrianople these same men besieged my physician with prayers for a remedy against symptoms of headache and heaviness of the whole body accompanied by mental depression and dejection, which they suspected to be the beginning of the plague. He replied that his warnings had not been uttered without due cause, and that they had caught the disease, which they had done all they could to contract; yet he would, he said, do his best for them, though he pointed out the difficulty of helping them in the midst of a journey, when no necessities could be procured. That very day, when, on our arrival at our quarters, we had gone out, according to our usual habit, to take a walk in search of objects of interest, I happened in a meadow upon a herb which was unfamiliar to me. I picked some leaves, and putting them to my nose and perceiving an odour of garlic, I handed them to my physician to see if he knew what the plant was. After a close examination he declared that it was scordium and, lifting his hands to heaven, he gave thanks to God for having sent so timely a remedy against the plague. He then collected a great quantity of the herb and threw it into a large vessel and put it on the fire to boil, at the same time bidding the Hungarians be of good cheer. He then divided the decoction amongst them, so that, when they were going to bed they might take it with Lemnian earth (ν) and an electuary of dis-sordium, and he warned them not to go to sleep until they had perspired freely. They carried out his injunctions, and next day returned to him saying that they were better and asking for another dose. After drinking this they became convalescent. Thus by the
grace of God we escaped from the terror of this foul disease. Yet even so we were not destined to finish our journey without mishap.

After passing through the countries of the Thracians and of the Bulgarians, whose territory extends to Nish, and of the Serbians, who stretch from Nish to Semandria, where the Rascians begin, we reached Belgrade in exceedingly hot weather, the Lion and the Dog-star being at their height. Here on the day appointed for fasting we were offered an abundance of excellent fish, including carp of great length and girth, which are caught in the Danube and are very highly esteemed. The members of my retinue gorged themselves with this fish, and owing either to their greed or else to the season of the year, many of them contracted fever. This huge quantity of fish, enough to satisfy forty persons, cost less than half a thaler, and almost every other commodity is equally cheap there. Hay, in particular, has no value at all; any one can take as much as he likes from the fields, which are full of it, the only expense being the labour of cutting it and carting it away.

After crossing the Save we could not but admire the good sense of the Hungarians of old who chose to settle in Pannonia, which is so rich in every kind of produce. We had traversed an immense extent of country both in Europe and beyond the sea, where the only grass, barley, oats, and wheat to be found was scorched and meagre and almost killed by drought; but, as soon as we entered Hungary, the grass was so tall that it often hid the carriage in front from the one that followed—a clear proof of the excellence of the soil.

At Semandria, as I have said, the Rascians begin and extend as far as the Drave. They are drunkards and are generally reported to be treacherous. I have been unable to discover their origin or the reason of their name. They certainly showed much goodwill towards us. After passing through several quite uninteresting settlements of theirs we reached the little town of Essek, which is often cut off on almost every side by marshes, and is famous as the scene of the defeat of Katzianer (n) and the destruction of our army. Here, being unable to resist the heat by which we were scorched as we traversed the wide, open plains of Hungary, I was attacked by a tertian fever.

Leaving Essek we crossed the Drave and reached Lasquen (n). While I rested there from the fatigue of the journey and the exhaustion due to the heat and my fever, the local officials came to congratulate me on my safe arrival. They brought me enormous melons and pears and plums of various kinds, besides bread and wine, all of the most excellent quality—I doubt whether even Campania, so renowned and celebrated for the fertility of its soil, could produce anything better. A long table in the room where I was resting was loaded with these gifts. My retinue made the Hungarians stay to dinner with them, making my illness an excuse for not admitting them to my chamber. When I awoke, my glance fell on the table, and uncertain whether I was awake or dreaming, I seemed to see a veritable Horn of Plenty before my eyes. At last I asked my physician whence these fruits had come, and he told me that he had had them displayed there that the sight of them at least might refresh me. I asked him whether I might taste them; and he did not forbid me, provided I did not do more than taste
them. The fruits were therefore cut in slices and I tasted a little of each and was in no small degree refreshed. On the following day the Hungarians came and offered their services, and, after complaining of the wrongs committed by some of their neighbours, asked for the Emperor's protection.

From this place we came to Mohacz, the battlefield which saw the defeat of King Louis of Hungary. Not far from the town I saw the deep stream running between precipitous banks into which the unhappy youth plunged with his horse and so perished. I do not know whether it was by ill luck or ill judgement that he ventured to oppose the numerous and highly disciplined forces of Soleiman with a mere handful of hastily levied troops consisting mainly of unarmed peasants.

From Mohacz I came to Tolna, and from Tolna to Feldvar; then I crossed on to a rather large island in the Danube, inhabited by Rascians, who call it Copphin. Then again crossing the Danube I reached Buda on August the 4th, the eleventh day after leaving Belgrade. We lost many horses on the way, who were choked by eating new barley and then drinking water which was too cold. We escaped many dangers from robbers, by whom the whole district is infested, especially Heydons. How narrow was our escape was subsequently shown by the evidence of some robbers who were punished by the Pasha of Buda. These men confessed that they had hidden in the bed of a broad stream which was spanned by a badly built bridge, in order to attack us from ambush. Nothing is easier than for a small body to surround a large party on a bridge of this kind. On account of the rotten condition of the bridge and the gaping cracks and holes in it you cannot cross, however careful you are, without great danger of your horse falling; and if there are enemies to attack you in front and others pressing on from behind, while your flanks are infested by others fighting in the bed of the stream and hidden in bushes and sedge, while you yourself can scarcely stir on your horse owing to the state of the bridge, you are of course likely to come off worse than the Romans in the Caudine Forks, and to be captured or slain. I do not know whether our numbers deterred the robbers, or the sight of the Hungarians who accompanied me, or the fact that we were proceeding in a long column and did not all halt on the bridge at the same time, or whether something else frightened them; but by heaven's grace we reached Buda in safety.

[Busbecq has a somewhat unsatisfactory interview with the Pasha of Buda, and journeys thence to Raab and Gran. On the way a fracas occurred between his Turkish advance guard and some Hungarians, who seized a horse and cut off the nose of one of the Turks.]

Thus we reached Gran, where, on the next day, the Sanjak-bey gave me a kindly welcome and amongst other things bade me remark the insolence of the Hungarian soldiers, who were not restrained even by the presence of his royal majesty's ambassador from indulging their natural bent. He told me to make sure that the horse which had been stolen was restored. Meanwhile my Turk who had been wounded was standing in the corner of the Sanjak-bey's courtyard with his head all bandaged up on account of his nose,
which had been sewn on again, and emitting a hoarse and miserable noise and demanding that I should console him for his misfortune by a present. I said that I would give him enough to cure his wound, and presented him with two gold ducats. He asked for more, but the Sanjak-bey rebuked him, and declared that it was enough and more than enough to heal him; he ought not, he said, to attribute to me a misfortune which was preordained to happen to him.

Then, after farewells, I journeyed that day to Kornorn. I waited patiently for the recurrence of my fever at the usual interval, but discovered that it had at last left me and, being a Turkish fever, had not ventured to cross the frontier into Christendom. So I gave thanks to God, who had delivered me at the same time from the troubles of sickness and of a long and difficult journey.

Two days later I reached Vienna. I did not find my most gracious sovereign Ferdinand, King of the Romans, in residence; in his place Maximilian, King of Bohemia, was there, and his kindness has caused me to a great extent to forget my past toils; but even now I am so reduced by lack of comforts and emaciation and the hardships of my journey and illness, that many people imagine that I have been poisoned by the Turks. At any rate, when the Archduke Ferdinand was here recently and I went to pay my respects to him, he asked one of his attendants who I was, and the latter replied loud enough for me to hear that I was the man who had just returned from the country whence men generally returned in such a condition. He probably wished to suggest that, like Claudius of old, I had swallowed some sort of mushroom (n). But

I am quite sure that this is not so, and I have no doubt that, when I have rested awhile, I shall recover my complexion and strength and my general physical condition; in fact, I feel a little better each day.

Meanwhile I have reported my arrival to the King of the Romans, and informed him of the six months’ truce and given him a summary of my doings. When he returns home from the Diet, where he is now detained, he shall receive a detailed and more exact account of everything.

Many persons who were deterred by fear or some other motive from going with me to Constantinople would give a great deal to have returned with me. The line of Plautus (n) applies well to them:

He who would eat the nut must crack the shell.

A man is not justified in demanding a share of the profit, who has not taken his share of the toil.

I have now given you an account of my journey to Amasia as well as my journey to Constantinople—a coarsely spun yarn perhaps, just as I should tell it if we were talking together. It must be sufficient for the style that I have written hurriedly in obedience to your request; it would be hardly fair to expect from one who is in a hurry and very busy an elegance of diction which I could not guarantee even if I had time for careful composition and abundance of leisure. I shall console myself for these artless babblings by the consciousness that they are at any rate free from any taint of untruth, which is the greatest merit to be looked for in narratives of this kind. Farewell.