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THE

EASTERN QUESTION;

FROM A

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL POINT OF VIEW.

A Lecture

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THE EASTERN QUESTION ;

FROM A

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL POINT OF VIEW.

THE Eastern Question has come upon us like a political and intellectual thunderstorm. Thunderstorms in the ideal world, like those in the real, are produced by accumulations of acting and counteracting electric or religious and social streams or currents. The negative and positive electric currents rise up and concentrate, some motion of air brings them into collision, and the storm with its fierce lightnings and roaring thunder bursts out, often devastating whole districts, but always purifying the air, and leaving traces of a beneficial influence behind it. For more than a year the thunderstorm of the "Eastern Question" has been raging amongst us with the lightning of well-set, sensational phrases, real or unreal atrocities, flashes of horrifying contradictory telegraphic messages, reports of special, unspecial, "our own," and "nobody else's correspondents," and the thunders of angry pamphlets and platform speeches, delivered at boisterous indignation meetings. East and West are one again, not in mutual love, but in mutual hatred and animosity. There are people who would like to see Cross and Crescent arrayed against one another in deadly combat, and who would like to see the Turks leave Europe at a moment's notice with "bag and baggage."

What is this Eastern Question? Has it been asked only recently, or is it a historical problem, that has long stood before the eyes of Europe awaiting a solution? How and when did this Eastern Question arise? Where and when did it originate?

The Eastern Question began with Constantine the Great, when he saw a burning cross hovering above the sun with the inscription "*in hoc signo vinces!*" (in this sign thou wilt conquer). The same night, according to Bishop Eusebius, Christ appeared to Constantine, and ordered him to have a banner made, bearing the sign he had seen during the day, and assuring him that under this banner (the labarum) he would conquer. It so happened that Constantine disposed his troops with consummate skill, while his

adversary, Maxentius, occupied a very spacious plain, having the Tiber in the rear of his army, which rendered retreat impossible. The cavalry of Maxentius was composed of unwieldy cuirassiers, or light Moors and Numidians, whilst Constantine had at his disposal the vigour of splendid gallic horse "which possessed more activity than the one and more firmness than the other." The defeat of the hostile army was—in consequence of his better tactics, and not in consequence of his dream and vision—complete. Maxentius was driven into the Tiber, his head was cut off and publicly exposed, and Constantine became master of the Roman Empire, after having put the two sons of Maxentius to death, and extirpated his whole race. Constantine undoubtedly abolished the Prætorian guards by the sword, deprived the Senate and people of their dignities, exposed Rome to the insults or neglect of the Emperors, and transferred the seat of the Roman Emperors to Byzantium, which as Constantinople became from that time a new Rome, and the centre point of the Eastern Question. Constantine was an ambitious and genial character, as cunning as he was generous, and as bigoted as he was cruel. He recognised in Christianity a means for effectually destroying the old heathen world (for monotheism stands so much nearer to "monodespotism" than polytheism), and exalting himself as omnipotent ruler on earth and in heaven through the new state religion.

The means he employed were not very Christian. He had his own son, Crispus, executed on an unsupported charge brought against him by his stepmother, Fausta; at the same time he murdered his nephew, the son of Licinius; and finally, convinced of the groundlessness of the charge brought against his son, he had his wife, Fausta, killed. Murder, superstition, visions, dreams, apparitions, and sacred symbolic signs, mixed with heathen ceremonies and a theocratic organization of the Church, were the elements of which Constantine formed a new Christianity in the East.

The Church suddenly raised to power soon arrogated to herself infallibility, and assumed the terrible right of taliation, waging sanguinary war against those who were not of her opinion. Having the mighty arm of the lay power at her disposal, the Church became by degrees omnipotent, and Christ's simple teaching "of a kingdom that is not of this world" was used, to found the most sanguinary Empire.

At the beginning of Christianity there were only loving communities that chose their own elders; the communities increased,

and overseers of the elders were found necessary; the overseers again required patriarchs, and the patriarchs needed one above them, the Bishop of Rome. This hierarchical crystallisation went on gradually and slowly, became sterner and more powerful through the increasing number of false prophets, mock-philosophers, necromancers, Taumathurgi, miracle-workers, Egyptian priests of Isis, Persian Magi, Jewish controversialists, and Greek casuists, who all united to seek first, a living, and then a position, in order to prosper through the credulity, superstition, and ignorance of the masses. There was at that period a vast crowd of adventurers in the East, who all traded in mystic doctrines, symbolic little charms, incredible miracles, visions, dreams, and prophetic calculations.

The Spiritualists abounded; they filled the market-places, where they exhibited the most incredible feats before the eyes of the gazing, wondering, and believing masses. In reading history backwards, we may imagine what the effect of those tricksters in supernatural wares must have been, when we find in the nineteenth century, in spite of our advanced state of civilization and learning, numbers of weak-minded men and women, even of the better classes, who believe in any nonsense, so soon as it is labelled "supernatural."

So long as the Church had no material support from the State, Christianity spread through love and persuasion in spite of competing miracle-workers, in spite of treachery, deceit and innumerable incredibilities that hindered its progress amongst the so-called educated classes. When Constantine took it up, and lent it the imperial sword; when the tiaras and Mitres felt themselves supported by the consuls, pro-consuls, magistrates, lictors, and especially the executioners of the Roman Empire—then the miracles ceased, and the supernatural became quite natural. "Woe" to any one who would have doubted that the supernatural was not quite natural, and yet the dissensions amongst the Christians, the heresies amongst the believers, and the views the unbelievers took, were of an astonishing variety. But the mighty State Church was equal to the terrible task which faith imposed upon it. The massacres and executions of the unbelievers, infidels, and heretics increased in a corresponding ratio with the wealth and power, the sweet humility and self-abnegation of those who styled themselves the followers of Christ. The unification of the Christian Church, the purification of the different doctrines all more or less tainted with abominable heresy, became the supreme

duty of the Church. It is a well-known and indisputable fact, that after the death of Christ, his disciples dispersed, and formed nearly as many sects as there were disciples.

There were the Gnostics, who most elaborately worked out the theory of good and evil, of original sin and emanation, but they could not see "how the word became flesh," and though they believed Christ to be the Demiurgos, that is, an emanation of the supreme Deity, they were extirpated as heretics in the sixth century, A.D.

There were the Kerinthians, who could not see how any human being could be born of a virgin: they did not doubt that Joseph was the father of Christ, but they could not believe in the resurrection of Christ, and were extirpated in the sixth century, A.D.

The Ebionites objected to the genealogy of S. Matthew. Through one of their leaders, Symmac, they propounded that Jesus was never incarnate, that the Jews crucified one Simon the Kyerenian, that Christ witnessed his own execution, ascended into heaven to join his father, and was neither known by angels nor by men. These theorists were extirpated in the sixth century, A.D.

The Karpokratians believed in Christ as a superior human being, endowed with a divine genius, but they disbelieved the resurrection of the body, and they were extirpated in the sixth century, A.D.

The Cainists looked upon Judaism as full of immorality, and did not believe that Christ could have come into the world to fulfil the old law. They were also extirpated about the sixth century, A.D.

Marcion dared to teach that the gospels contradicted one another: fortunately he founded no school, and when the authenticity of the four gospels was settled by Church and State, there was no more room for such wicked doubts.

The Alogians rejected the gospel of St. John, but were sacrificed to that terrible error, and extirpated in the sixth century, A.D.

The Manicheans founded by Manes, who believed himself the promised "Paraklitos" (St. John, xiv. 26), wished to bring harmony into the comfortless teachings of the Gnostics and Zoroastrians, and maintained a general return to God of all purified emanations. Manes did not believe in the annihilation of matter, assuming it to have been uncreated. This in itself was, of course, a most wicked and erroneous assumption. Though Manes believed that Christ and the Holy Ghost were sent into this world by God in order to save humanity from the triumphant spirit of egotism, embodied in Judaism and heathenism; though he himself and his followers led a life of virtuous simplicity and ascetic self-denial, he was put to

death 274 A.D., and his followers extirpated by fire and sword with all possible love and kindness in the sixth century, A.D.

The Montanists, founded by Montanus, a Phrygian, who without the permission of the Church believed himself, like Manes, to be the promised "Paraklitos," professed Buddhistic tenets with the most irreproachable vigour. "To renounce this world, was according to Montanus, the duty of every free Christian, to live in God and to rejoice in death his only aim." He proclaimed all knowledge and earthly enjoyments as sinful. Until the sixth century, A.D., the Montanists formed a special sect, but their tenets concerning the duty of profound ignorance, and the sinfulness of all earthly enjoyments, found favour with the State Church, and they were kindly received in the motherly bosom of Catholicism.

Arians, Novitians and Donatists fared no better than the others. they were extirpated by fire and sword during the sixth century, A.D.

But the fathers and apologists, primitive writers and propounders of Christianity, were not less numerous in their divergent opinions with reference to tenets and dogmas, gospels and writings than these sects. Simeon and Cleobius published works in the name of Christ and his Apostles. Eusebius published a letter from Christ to King Abgarus, but Pope Gelasius declared this document a forgery. A letter from the Virgin Mary to the inhabitants of Messina is preserved in that town, dated Jerusalem, 42 A.D. Though this was a clear forgery, a Jesuit, Inchofer, proved its genuineness with great lucidity, and one must be obdurate indeed not to be convinced by his proofs.

St. Justinus the martyr refers to certain documents relating to Christ which must have been lost or voluntarily destroyed. Tertullian mentions that Pontius Pilate sent the minutes of the trial of Jesus of Nazareth or Bethlehem to the Emperor Tiberius, who was so struck with the innocence of Christ that he ordered the Senate to pay divine honours to the memory of Christ, which the Roman Senate refused, not having been directly asked by those concerned in the matter. It is scarcely necessary to mention that this statement of things induced many pious forgers to write reports in the name of Pilate. Gregory of Tours sternly believed that he possessed the authenticated accounts of the miracles at the death and the resurrection of Christ, just as Pilate sent them to Tiberius. Scarcely had Christ expired on the cross with a prayer for his enemies on his lips, when a host of forgers inundated the world with descriptions and details of his private and public life. S. Luke informs us "that many have taken in hand to set forth

those things which are most surely believed among us" (c. i. v. 1), and notwithstanding that S. Mark and S. Matthew had written their accounts, S. Ambrosius, Théophylaktes and other learned commentators, assure us that this Évangélist only undertook to write his gospel in order to counteract the great number of false gospels, which S. Jerome finds too long to enumerate (*ennumerare longissimum est*). Origen, S. Ambrosius, S. Jerome and others, mention a gospel of the twelve apostles; there were gospels of S. Barnabas, S. Andrew, S. Bartholomew, S. Mathias, S. Peter and S. James the younger; there were gospels of the Egyptians, Hebrews, Nazarenes and a gospel of Truth. According to some, there were some seventy and according to others about 146 in all.

With Constantine the Great, at last, some kind of harmony was brought into the discordant spiritual life of the believing, but disagreeing, Christians. This union was not fostered by persuasion leading to conviction; but by the inexorable formula of old Imperial Rome, that was suddenly enunciated in matters of faith. The "sic volo, sic jubeo" of the episcopal majority at the council of Nicea brought about union, but at the same time the most sanguinary dissension between the Western and Eastern Churches. They both agreed in the persecution of so-called heretics, who could not at once detach themselves from the ancient holy books, holy dogmas, and holy symbols which they had received on trust from those who had stood so much nearer to the founder of Christianity, and who could not follow the new theological casuists into all their intricate windings of Egypto-Hebrew and Indo-Greek mysticism.

West and East, however, separated.

The small letter *i* was the real cause of that deadly separation. "Equal but not like," and "like and equal," this "equal likeness" and "equality but not likeness" worked marvels of animosity, hatred, and persecution amongst those who received the eternal divine command, "Love thy neighbour as thyself!" The disputes all bore upon the *nature* of Christ, not upon his glorious enactments of love and forgiveness, tolerance and peace, but upon the mystic words, "Homousion," meaning equality, sameness, or oneness of essence or substance or being, and the equally mystic word, "Homoiousion," meaning likeness of essence or substance or being—as if anything could be like and not equal, or equal and not like. With the East, Christ's nature was *like* God the Father, but not *equal*—not one and the same; and in the West, Christ's nature was not only *like and equal*, but the same as that of the

Father. The East began to abhor this blasphemous assumption, and to prove their subtle distinction with fire and sword. The West, on the other hand, began to introduce more and more Pagan ceremonies and festivities, the worship of saints, whose images were painted and sculptured, in order to bring the originals nearer to the senses of the believers, and to exhort them through visible concrete forms to a more exalted spiritual life. No lover of art will find fault with this tendency. Those painted walls and painted windows, the sculptured saints and prophets served Christianity as our modern illustrated alphabets or spelling books. The child remembers so much easier that A stands for ARCHER, if it has at the same time the picture of a big-faced, fierce-looking archer before it, who stands with crooked legs, letting fly an immense arrow at an enormous black eagle with big claws, or at a clumsy-looking frog; or that B stands for BUTCHER, killing a ferocious, well-chained bull. Whilst the West laid down the foundations of architectural, sculptural, and pictorial art, the East demolished statues and quarrelled over abstruse formula. Turning from statues to human beings, the Eastern Church extirpated sectarians root and branch, murdered and poisoned and changed the Christian religion into a perfect mockery, a system of most incredible superstition and hypocrisy, and nameless crimes defiled the once flourishing, glorious provinces of Asia Minor and the Greek Peninsula. Temples and statues were hurled into ruin and dust. In the West the old heathen gods and goddesses became Christian saints: Venus was revived as the Virgin Mary; Minerva was turned into St. Sophia: in Hermes, the good shepherd, and Apollo, the sungod, they worshipped Christ; Bacchus became St. Paul: Janus was turned into St. Peter; Hercules into St. Christopher: Poseidon into St. Nicholas; the "Lares" of the Romans were advanced to household saints; St. Florian had to watch over fire, like Vulcanus or Hepheistos; the Titans were declared to have been the fallen angels, and Cupid or Eros was revived as Asmodæus, a mischief-making demon in matters of love. The forces of nature that had been personified as lovely nymphs, tritons, naiads, and nereids were degraded to ugly witches, imps, devils, or infernal spectres. Whilst this idolatrous transformation scene took place in the West, the East, with iconoclastic rage, disputed on how the hand should be held when blessing, whether the three fingers should be stretched out, or whether the thumb should be joined to the third finger, and the first two fingers alone held up erect with the fourth, whether to have

carved or only painted saints on a gold ground, and similarly important questions.

In the meantime, trade, industry, commerce, arts and sciences languished, and the new faith that ought to have stimulated the vitality of humanity into new activity of love and kindness, excited it to an utter dissolution of the religious and social condition of the Byzantine Empire. Add to all this the variety of nationalities, the scattered remnants of house and homeless *Jews*, *Greek* sophists, *Egyptian* mystics, *Roman* plunderers, *Persian* necromancers, fantastic gipsy cabbalists, and you will have some idea of the Eastern Question that is to be solved once more after 1552 years of continuous confusion.

Free from all such dissensions at this period were the direct descendants of Abraham or Joktan, the son of Heber, or of Ishmael, the semitic race of the Arabs, who lived under Sheiks or Emirs. They were divided into three principal groups: (1) the Arabs or Aribahs, the direct descendants of Iram or Aram, the son of Shem; (2) the Mouta-Aribahs, or the settled descendants of Joktan or Jokatan, according to Freytag from "Katana," to take up a fixed abode, the son of Heber, son of Salah, son of Arphaxad, son of Shem; and (3) the Moustas-Aribahs, the descendants of Ishmael (he who was born in the desert). They had their sanguinary feuds, not referring to theological niceties but to their tribal genealogical tables—each of the Sheiks or Emirs priding himself on a purer and more direct descent from Abraham. They were valorous, loved their independence above all, and combined the perfect freedom of a nomadic and pastoral life with the courteous refinement of daring traders. They possessed settlements, but they hated the corruption of large towns; they were proud of their *one* god, one sanctuary, the Caaba, one horse, one sword, one bow, and as many arrows as they could carry. They were chivalrous, wild in their love as in their hatred and sanguinary revenge, but they were like the northern Teutons of Europe, honest and tolerant of those who had not the honour of being direct descendants of Abraham, or Joktan or Ishmael. There were all the elements of a great historical future in these wandering tribes if they could but be inspired with one common thought, for one common cause; if they could but be made conscious of their irresistible power, if once united to destroy quarrelling and dogmatising Christianity in the East, to spread one creed all over the world, to instal ONE God as the Supreme Lord of the Universe. The moving power to accomplish this

appeared in Mahomet at the right moment. Every right-minded man must blush when he refers to our so-called learned Encyclopedias and finds if he looks for the article Mahomet, the assertion made with surprising unanimity that Mahomet was "one of the greatest impostors." This false notion, this contemptible ignoring of the grandeur and intellectual and moral power of individuals, so soon as they are not of our opinion, produces those entangled questions between East and West, nations and nations that have cost humanity torrents of blood. Ideas, which we would resent with indignation if taught of us, are taught in schools for thousands of years to millions and millions of human beings, and then we are astonished if after having sown contempt and wild hatred we find we cannot reap forbearance and love. If Christians cannot afford to be charitable, when is charity to come into the world?

Mahomet when he appeared on the stage of the world found human society in a state of dissolution analogous to that which had existed at the advent of Christ. The Arabs were addicted to a rude kind of idolatry; they had but one unseemly sanctuary, the Caaba, a simple square building, by the side of the well in which Hagar found water for her pining Ishmael. The building contained a black stone, the grand national talisman, a meteor which the Arabs believed had been dropped from heaven by their supreme deity Allah or Allah-Taala (the male or active principle of creation), in honour of Alilath (the female or passive principle of creation); the Greek Bacchus and Venus. This black stone was placed in the south-western corner of the Caaba, at Mecca, and was consecrated to Sabba, or Abbah (the Abads of the Zend-people in the centre of Asia, and the Asen of the Teutons in the farthest north of Europe), and entrusted to the care of the Koreish tribe, more particularly to the Hashem family of which Mahomet was a descendant. Abul Kasem Muhammed (the glorious) was born 571 in the sixth century, A.D.—and died 632 (61 years old). His father was Abdallah (the beautiful) who married Amina, and on this occasion two hundred ladies are said to have expired of jealousy and despair. His grandfather was Abdul Motalleb, who saved Mecca from the Abyssinians, and triumphantly carried away the talisman, the black stone, and had it replaced in the sanctuary. His great-grandfather was Hashem, who succeeded in averting a famine by sacrificing all his worldly goods to the suffering. What wonder that a boy, with such a pedigree, should have become a religious dreamer and a fanatic, in times, when he heard nothing but theological discussions. The Persian legends assert that at the birth of

Mahomet the eternal fires on the altars of the Magi were extinguished. It was further said that on the night of his birth all heathen and christian idols sighed and shrieked, and that a wise Jew proclaimed from a watch-tower that the star of Messiah had just risen, and that the Saviour of the world had been born. It was said, that the first spiritual ray proceeding from Allah was Mahomet's soul, of which God proclaimed: "In thee dwells my light, for thy sake let the earth expand itself, and I create paradise and hell. The divine first ray had burned in Adam and Seth, in Abraham and Moses, the prophets and Christ, but became flesh in Mahomet." When such ideas with reference to any mortal teacher are spread, taught, and continually repeated from father to son, he must in time become a mighty spiritual agent, and sway the minds of millions and millions of people.

Divested of all "supernatural" cant, Mahomet must have been a great and powerful mind. He was undoubtedly a wise man in his generation. When twenty-five years old he married an elderly but rich widow Cadijah, and at the age of forty-one he first confessed that he had received a divine revelation, which commanded him to put an end to the idolatrous state of humanity and to teach in the true Semitic sense the absolute indivisible unity of the one indivisible Deity. Mahomet was illiterate and uneducated in theological casuistry, but he read and studied the book of human nature. He travelled as a keenly observant merchant, came into contact with men of all nations and denominations, drew comparisons and analogies between the creeds of all nations, and discovered with a clear perception of combinations the weakness of the fallen Persian and Roman Empires. He saw with a terrified and troubled heart the degeneracy, profligacy, licentiousness of his times, and the division, animosity and hatred amongst the Christian, Jewish, Greek, and Egyptian absolute and dissolute theologians; he conversed with Jewish rabbis, Persian parsees, Syrian monks, and Christian sectarians who found refuge and protection amongst the wild sons of the desert; he made himself acquainted with the laws of Moses, the abstruse doctrines of Zoroaster, and the pure vivifying teachings of Christ. Each year during the month of Ramadan he withdrew from the world in the cave of Hera, three miles from Mecca, and there he dreamt dreams, had lively visions, spiritualistic communications from God, and visits from the angel Namaus (Gabriel), who thundered into his ears these grand words: "Devote thyself to the service of Allah (the one God), the Lord of the East and West, of Winter and Summer; for there is no other

God but He!" During fully three years he succeeded in converting no more than seven or fourteen persons. The majority of his family and the leaders of the Koreish tribe were violently opposed to the reformer, seventy of the latter swore to plunge their swords into his irreligious heart. Mahomet's house was surrounded by these wild fanatics, but he escaped (622 A.D. 16th of July). Ten years later, Syria, the territories on the Euphrates and the Greek Empire were invaded and Mecca taken by the victorious followers of Mahomet, and the surrounding country as far as the Arabian Gulf was conquered and placed under the dominion of this mighty Puritan monotheistic ruler and his sword. Up to the period of his flight Mahomet had wished to teach by persuasion: he was kind and tolerant, but through violent resistance and unexpected victory his wild Asiatic nature and his Semitic egotistic character gained the upper hand. He then declared war—sanguinary war against all those who did not share his religious opinions, and sacrificed them to the wrath of his Allah. The Koran was to be the only holy book of the world, written by the pen of light on God's tablet, containing the eternal decrees of God himself.

Mahomet's faith stood to the other religions of the East exactly in the same relation as Puritanism to the Established Church in England; his soldiers were the mighty valiant covenanters of the East, who rushed with their Koran as these with their Bibles into battle and conquered. "To believe in the one God, to fast, to drink no wine (which neither our covenanters have observed, and least of all their descendants do observe), to remove the sense of speciality and consequent separation from the infinite, arising from bodily limitation, and to give alms, that is, to get rid of particular private possession," were Mahomet's principal injunctions; but the highest merit in a believer on earth was his dying for the orthodox faith of the prophet. "He who perished for this faith in battle after having killed at least *one* infidel, was sure of Paradise." For twelve centuries Mahomet's ideas have ruled the daily life, the hopes in a future world, the prayers, morals and destinies of nearly one-fifth of the human race. Since he first proclaimed his revelation to the world, 3765 generations have passed away, amounting to about thirty-six thousand millions of human beings (at a low rate), who all acknowledge him as a special messenger from God. His followers kindled in the West an analogous fanatic religious excitement, first in Charlemagne, who was a Christian Mahomet, wielding the cross instead of the crescent, obeying a pope, instead of Allah and his prophet; next in the mighty crusaders. Through

the Mahometans poetry, arts and sciences, chivalry and philosophy were revived in the West. Scholasticism with all its brilliant *negative* successes, its division into realists and nominalists, its fierce battles on inherited sin and grace, regeneration, predestination, and the eucharist—and its final *positive* results, showing at last the utter uselessness of the dry, barren, dialectical efforts leading to mere verbiage—or to speak with Hamlet to “words—words—words!”—had its root in Mahometanism. Whilst our ecclesiastical wise men contended that it is sinful to use blood, or to eat things strangled, to partake of lard, to wear rings on the fingers, that the priests ought to have beards, and that at baptism men ought not to be contented with one single immersion, the Arabs in the East still retained a high degree of zeal for the culture of the sciences. They studied astronomy, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, anatomy, chemistry, botany, and above all geography and philosophy, especially in the more practical sense of Aristotle through the immortal Averroes. Architecture and decorative art received new impulses—for as long as Persians and Arabs were the apostles of Mahometanism it had vitality. Thirty-six thousand fortified camps and places in Persia, Asia Minor, Africa, and Europe were stormed and taken. More than twenty thousand four hundred mosques, pointing with their slim minarets to heaven, were constructed from the borders of the Ebro in Spain to the shores of the Ganges, from the Oxus and Euphrates to the Atlantic Ocean, proclaiming the glory of Allah. All this was accomplished a few decades after Mahomet’s flight to Medina. Without the quarrelling Christians there could have been no Mahometans. The appearance and success of Mahomet prove the eternal law of action and reaction in the intellectual as well as in the physical world. The disturbed balance between morals and intellect, between professions and actions, between mind and matter, was to be adjusted in the East, and Mahomet with his faith worked at this task. Religion was freed from all metaphysical subtleties. The simplicity of faith was concentrated in one single indisputable sentence: “There is but one God”—or “one first incomprehensible cause.” Allah was to be the God of all, whether poor or rich, wise or ignorant, who believed in Him, and his worship was to be purely intellectual. No ceremonies, no symbols, no mystic representations, no images of animals or men were tolerated. When Omar came from Medina on a camel, carrying only two bags, one with rice, the other with dates, a wooden dish and a leathern water-bottle, constituting the whole of his furniture, and took possession of

Jerusalem, the sacred town of Judaism and Christianity, he proved the power of the fanatic faith on which Mahometanism was based. In opposition to the Christian Church, pomp and vanity were to give way to stern and shapeless faith. Theological discussions had to yield to a deeper study of nature and science. The ink of the doctors, not discussing incomprehensible mysteries, but the powers of nature or the abstractions of geometry and mathematics, was considered "equally valuable with the blood of martyrs." Under the gentle sway of the Caliphs, paradise was as much for him who had rightly used his pen, not in questions of faith, (for these were all settled in the Koran), but in subjects of medicine or alchemy, as for him who had fallen by the sword. The world was declared to be sustained by *four* things: the *learning* of the wise, the *justice* of the great, the *prayers* of the good, and the *valour* of the brave. Instead of erecting dim-looking churches and splendidly decorated public-houses in close vicinity, they built the school near the mosque, and often the mosques were merely schools. Every thing changed, when by degrees the wild Mongol hordes came down from the highlands of Northern Asia, took possession of the kingdom of the Caliphs, superseded the gentler rule of the Persians and Arabs, and developed all the hidden faults and incongruities of the Koran. The Eastern question became from that moment not a religious, but a racial or tribal and social question. About 1100 A.D. the Mahometans were divided into several states, namely, the Persian, Syrian, Median, Khorasan and the territory beyond the Oxus river. The Tartars rose to power in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and these hordes, under their leader Osman, meaning the "bone-breaker," strengthened by robbers, fugitive Christian slaves, founded a mighty Ottoman Empire on the ruins of the Seldshooks, Arabs and Persians, aided by the dissensions of the degenerated subjects of the Byzantine Emperors. This Empire expanded under his successors, especially Mahomet I., who advanced as far as Salzburg and Bavaria, whilst the pious fathers of Western Europe tried to give spiritual peace to the Church by burning Huss at Constance and deposing three popes. His son Murad II. though opposed by the heroic Skanderbeg, and the still more heroic Johannes Hunnyady, augmented the Empire till Mahomet II. took Constantinople on the 29th of May, 1453, with the help of Christian soldiers, who felt themselves more comfortable under the sway of the Turks and Tartars than under their more implacable theological masters. We may sneer at the Turks, who struck terror into all Europe by their conquests, but it is a fact, that for three centuries

and a half, under twelve heroic sultans, they were invincible: they subdued Egypt, the Barbary States, and all the Arabian Coasts on the Red Sea. "In Europe they conquered the Crimea, and the countries along the Danube; they overran Hungary and Transylvania, and repeatedly laid siege to Vienna. At sea, notwithstanding the gallant resistance of the Venetians, they subdued Rhodes, Kyprus, and all the Greek islands," says the immortal Cobden in his pamphlet on Russia, written exactly a quarter of a century ago, in which he gave us sound advice with reference to Turkey. He was, however, a preacher in the desert. Cobden referred to the social and religious organization of the Turks, which dates from 1538, when Soliman united in the Sultan the dignities of the Vice-regent of the Prophet and the lay-ruler. The Koran became from that time the only guide in social and political matters: all other fields of learning and art were cordially despised. The Turks are religiously ignorant of all that forms the education of an Italian, Englishman, Frenchman or German. A Turk, or rather Ottoman, knows nothing of the countries beyond the bounds of the Sultan's dominions. "Notwithstanding that this people have been for nearly four centuries in absolute possession of all the noblest remains of ancient art, they have evinced no taste for architecture or sculpture, whilst painting and music are equally unknown to them." But why? Because they have to bow down to the most bigoted and intolerant branch of the Mahometan faith. They have become what we should have become if the intolerant bigots had borne all before them. Our own bigots whitewashed our sacred buildings, smashed in our painted windows, abominated sculptured men and women, whether saints or heathen gods and goddesses. They tried to stop all progress, cursed astronomy, zoology and geology as contrary to the word of God, despised learning as creating sceptics and infidels; and some of their leaders, who pretend to learning, even now force chronology in the narrow time-boundaries of Rabbi Hillel's and Bishop Usher's dates. They composed garbled inscriptions in our own British Museum, which they keep closed on Sundays, fearing lest the masses should find greater spiritual delight in draughts of knowledge than in alcoholic spirits. They are afraid that comparative mythology might dawn upon the people; that Egyptian monuments and relics might teach them that their important symbols, about which they quarrel with the same bitterness as the Turkish theologians on the knotty point, "whether the feet should be washed at rising, or only rubbed with the dry hand," are only purloined from old heathens; that their

eastern and western postures are as irrelevant to piety, as the Turk's turning towards Mecca (the birth-place of the prophet), in saying his prayers.

From the moment when the Turks placed their home-rule and foreign affairs under the stable, immovable dictates of the Koran progress became impossible. For the nomadic character of the shepherd predominates in them. "The Divine Glory," is said, in a speech of Mohamet's, "is among the shepherds; vanity and impudence among the agriculturists." The accredited collections of traditions tell the following of Abû Umâmâ al-Bahili: "Once on seeing a ploughshare and another agricultural implement, he said, I heard the prophet say: "These implements do not enter into the house of a nation, unless that Allah causes low-mindedness to enter in there at the same time."—(Abuchân Recueil). Of Chalif Omar the Turks believe, that when dying he recommended in his political testament the Bedâwi (nomads) to his successors, "for they are the root of the Arabs and the germ of Islam," and "how little this Arabian politician could appreciate the importance of agriculture," says Dr. Goldziher in his work, "Mythology among the Hebrews" (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1877), "is evident from the edict in which he most strictly forbade the Arabs to acquire landed possession and practise agriculture in the conquered districts. The only mode of life equally privileged with the roving nomad life, was held to be the equally roving military profession, or life of nomads without herds and with arms." These few lines permit us a deep insight into the state of Turkey. The Turks keep too faithfully to their sacred book and the traditions of the military founders of their faith.

We advance because we possess the great talent of bringing our sacred laws into harmony with the exigencies of our times and social condition. It is enacted that "the hare because he cheweth the cud (which the hare, however, does not do), but divideth not the hoof (which the hare most extraordinarily does), he is *unclean* unto you;" but we eat it. It is enacted that "the swine, though he divided the hoof and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud, he is *unclean* to you;" yet we eat bacon for breakfast, and pork in many ways. It is enacted "that if anyone asks your coat, we ought to give him our cloak;" but if anyone writes to us a mere begging letter, we give him in charge as an impostor, and leave him to the tender mercies of the police, or of a Rev. County magistrate, who sends a little girl of nine years of age to

jail, because she picks up a few potatoes or a half-rotten cabbage in some rich farmer's field. It is enacted "that if anyone smites your right cheek, you should turn to him your left:" but if any good believer were to smite anybody's right cheek, he would soon find out in a police-cell that we refuse to hold out our left cheek, but have, in the interest of society, the man locked up who would dare to live up to the literal sense of our holy book. Unhappily with the Turks all this is not the case. They still believe with blind faith in fatalism, or as we call it, in predestination. "What must happen will happen!" For Allah's will must be done.

I have often had the pleasure of visiting mighty Pashas in the East, they lived in castles and fortresses at Belgrad, Widdin, Rustshuk, Varna, and Constantinople; half the windows were broken, sometimes mended with paper, sometimes left broken—"Allah will mend them;" but Allah does not do so. The Pasha, however, who lived in a castle with broken windows, dilapidated staircases, broken doors, without any furniture, smoked a "tshibuk" that had an amber mouthpiece set with diamonds worth from two to three thousand pounds; the coffee was brought in on a tray of pure gold, and served in "filtchans" of gold studded with precious stones. Everything here still betrays the nomadic character—they hoard moveable goods, but have no concern with agriculture or a settled state of life. Their administration is as bad as was that in France before the grand and sanguinary revolution. The judges administer justice according to the dictates of the Koran. The tax-gatherers are farmers of the public revenue. "The situations of Pasha, *cadi*, or judge are all given to the highest bidders," and all offices are publicly sold. Under such an administration progress must be very slow or altogether impossible. A fierce unmitigated military despotism, swayed by a gloomy, religious fanaticism, that teaches its followers to rely solely on Allah and the sword crushes all vitality in the state-body, checks arts, and makes science subservient to the requirements of the army or navy, hinders the growth of cities, the increase of knowledge, and the accumulation of wealth. The first step with the Ottomans in the direction of reform must be to separate politics and religion, and obtain an honest and conscientious administration for Greeks, Turks, Jews, Christians, Roman Catholics, Nestorians, Unitarians, Armenians, and *Bashi-Bozouks*. Above all they must emancipate their women!

The Turks, like all oriental nations, especially those of the Semitic branch of humanity, degrade the position of women. We ourselves

are struggling against the religious remnants of Asiatic customs, tempered to a certain degree by our Teutonic forefathers, and the teachings of Christianity. We still look upon women as inferior creatures, teach them less than men, and leave them more at the mercy of the spiritual advisers, who often use the powerful female element to create serious mischief in families and even States. Neither Russian police officers, nor Kosacks, nor a mixed committee of European statesmen, none of whom will agree with the other, each of whom will strive to promote some secondary object in the East, will be of any service in the regeneration of Turkey—but the advantage to be gained by replacing woman into her legitimate social and family position would be incalculable.

Neither Cross nor Crescent can bring about freedom and a salutary reform in the East till woman is reinstated in her rights in Eastern society, freed from the stupifying and brutalising influences of the Harem. Women are the teachers of our next generations during the most sacred time of our lives, the dawn of our consciousness, when all impressions are most vivid and leave imperishable traces. And what are the women in the East? They must be elevated to be the companions of the Turk's social life in which woman ought to shine as the static, passive element of humanity, softening man's passions, guiding his taste, and elevating his more boisterous nature. Woman in the East has no share in the administration of the Empire, except the brutal influence under sensual impulses. The disturbed relations between men and women in Turkey practically transform morality into immorality, checking in men the use of their brain-power, and making them peevish women. Men and women, thus deprived of freedom of action, can neither establish the rule of intellect nor the sway of genuine morals. There are, however, many good qualities in the Turks. Mr. W. R. S. Ralston has pointed them out in a masterly article on "Turkish Story-books" in the first number of "The Nineteenth Century Review." "All who know the Turkish common people intimately speak well of them. Sober, honest, and industrious, the Turk, so long as he is poor and lowly, is a respectable member of society." We must not forget that the Turks keep guard with guns and swords at the grave of Christ at Jerusalem, and prevent the dissenting Greeks and Roman Catholics, Armenians, and Nestorians from discussing their theological differences with blows at that sacred place. There is undoubtedly more cohesion amongst the Turks than amongst the motley crowd of Greeks, Jews, Catholics, and Protestants, who all

hate one another, persecute one another, and prefer to bend under the government of their common foe, the Turk, than to allow any of the other tribes or denominations to rule over them. The Jews, Armenians, Greeks, and Roman Catholics are all free under the Turks, but all of them persecute one another. The Jew must not possess in Servia, the Greek is hunted down in Bosnia, the united Armenian will have nothing to do with a Greek not united believer, and to this religious animosity must be added the national idiosyncrasies. The Slavons hate the Greeks, the Bosnians detest the Bulgarians, the Greeks return the feeling with interest to the Slavons. The Turks have not hitherto been able to bring union and cohesion into these antagonistic elements. How then might this difficult question be solved? So long as Sir Stratford Canning (*now* LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE) ruled supreme in Constantinople, Turkey prospered and advanced steadily; for to assert that nothing has improved in Turkey during the last fifty years is a deliberate untruth, or the outburst of utter ignorance; but since Lord Stratford de Redcliffe left, the Turks have relapsed into their "koranic" apathy of fatalism. We ought to send out English administrators to teach the Turks how to rule and become masters of the eternal intrigues of Slavon agitators, conspirators, emissaries, spies, diplomatic agents, missionaries, theologians, and special correspondents, who go out from here, without any historical or social knowledge of the country, and who on arrival become "atrocity-mongers"—reporting one-sidedly, according to the cue they receive—endeavouring to excite a Russian crusade in the name of down-trodden Christianity. Are we perhaps to revive the old rule of the Greek Christian Emperors in the East—are we to have a repetition of the misdeeds that disgraced humanity, and produced the Mahometan reaction? Do we aspire to see another Basilios murder Michael and usurp his throne; is a second Constantine to rule by the grace of his mother, and priests and monks? Is another Theophana to poison her husbands; a second Tzimiskes to become Emperor, after he had murdered Nikepheros in his bed room, to be slowly poisoned in his turn to make room for another murderer? Do we want to see another Basilios II. (976—1015) blind 15,000 BULGARIANS, sending them back to their country, because they dared to attack him? The Turks had in the Christian rulers, that swayed the destinies of the East before them, not exactly the most forgiving teachers in the practice of forbearance and tolerance. Are these times to be revived? Can we hope anything for Turkey from mere diplomatic agents,

settling the destinies of 30,000,000 of human beings with pen and ink? If we are not prepared to support our protocols with Armstrongs and Woolwich infants, with "blood and iron," as Bismarck would say, it would be better for us to pour oil on the troubled waters, instead of fanning the flames of rebellion in the East by frightening the Turks, rousing their fanaticism, or by encouraging the Slavons to disobedience, and then leaving them to the tender mercies of their terrified task-masters, abusing them in their turn, when they dared to imitate our ways to put down a rebellion. The Austrian Government, after it restored peace in Hungary with 80,000 Russians, had more than 1600 of the noblest Hungarian patriots hanged and shot: Louis Napoleon III., after having dragonaded the Bourgeoisie of Paris, shooting down some 4000 human beings, bombarding the Boulevards des Italiens, had from 20—30,000 French citizens, who dared to adhere to the legitimate Republican Government, transported to Cayenne. Men and women were seized in the dead of the night and hurled away to perish in misery and want. Are the rulers of Turkey to govern according to these noble examples? We must teach the Turks to rely upon themselves. Exhausted, down-trodden, over-regulated, the Hungarians gloriously attained their rights and privileges, their freedom and happiness, not through foreign intervention or protocols, newspaper articles, and one-sided speeches, to make political capital out of the sufferings, agonies and despair of Christians and Turks—but by relying on themselves.

Russia can, and will never solve the Eastern question. Of her Government Herzen says in his work, "Russia, and her Social Condition:" "Terrible, nay fearful is the lot prepared for him who dares in Russia to lift his head above the yoke imposed upon us by the imperial Sceptre. The history of Russian literature is a list of martyrs, or a register of criminals." Rylejeff was hanged. Pushkin was shot, when scarcely twenty-eight years old. Gribojedoff was murdered at Taheran. Lermontoff was killed in the Caucasus. Wenewitinoff perished, when thirty-two years old, through the influences of a dissolute society. Kolzoff was persecuted to death by a bigoted relative, and died of grief at the age of thirty-three. Belinsky, when thirty-five, starved to death in misery. Polejaeff died in exile. Bestusheff died when quite young in the Caucasus as a private soldier, after having served a period of hard labour in Siberia. These are the Russian Byrons, Wordsworths, Swinburnes, Buchanans, Macaulays, Maurices, and Carlyles, who are treated in this merciless style. From Russia we have to

hope nothing for the regeneration of the East, neither from an intellectual nor commercial point of view. Freedom and tolerance are even less practised in Russia than in Turkey.

We may hope everything from an internal movement of the united populations of Turkey. Let them become conscious of the beauty, fertility and resources of their soil, which extends from 34 to 48 degrees north within the temperate zone, upon the same parallels as France, Spain, and all the best portion of the United States. Let them revive industry and agriculture, for "Turkey in many parts is more fruitful than the richest plains in Sicily. When grazed by the rudest plough, it yields a more abundant harvest than the finest fields between the Eure and the Loire, the granary of France. Mines of silver and copper and iron still exist (and could be worked to the benefit of the country), and salt abounds. Tobacco, cotton and silk might be made the staple exports of this region, and their culture admits of almost unlimited extension throughout the Turkish territory; whilst some of the native wines are equal to those of Burgundy. The heights of the Danube are clad with apple, plum, cherry, and apricot trees—whole forests cover the hills of Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus. The olive, orange, mastic, fig and pomegranate, the laurel, myrtle, and nearly all the beautiful and aromatic shrubs and plants are natural to the soil. Nor are the animal productions less valuable than those of vegetable life. The finest horses have been drawn from this quarter to improve the breeds of Western Europe; and the rich pastures of European Turkey are, probably, the best adapted in the world for rearing the largest growth of cattle and sheep."

Let the Turks above all discard all religious prejudices and national animosities, and unite in one brotherhood to free their country for the benefit of every citizen of whatever nationality or religion. Freedom will be a stronger bond of union than Russian battalions. But freedom never comes from heaven downwards, it must take root in the lowest layers of a people here on earth and grow upwards, and when grown it will apparently shower down its blessings from above.

Neither Sultan nor Czar will free men, they must do it for themselves. Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Bosnians, Armenians and Turks must hope everything from themselves: they must not refuse to go to their so-called mock-parliament, they must go and make their brethren hear the public voice of wants and complaints, of right and justice. They must take their constitution as we took ours, cherish and fondle it, nurse it during its childhood, educate

it into boyhood and rear it in time into manhood. They must learn to do as we did, and not think that neglected nations can grow over-night into patterns of freely constituted societies. They must, however, do all their reforms amongst themselves, on their own soil unaided, uninspired by foreign secret societies.

“Man’s fate lies in his own hand,” is an old apophthegm, and it stands for nations as well; for nations are but multiplications of individuals. The destinies of nations have generally been most retarded or altogether ruined by foreign meddling.

Our duty in England is to watch over Turkey with a heart full of love for freedom and justice. We have only the sacred interests of humanity to guard, we have nothing in common with the clandestine Bulgarian conspirators nor their mysterious instigators, or the Servian rebels, nor with the wild and wrathful Bashi-Bozouks: we must try to bring them all to their senses and relative duties.

Why does diplomacy not venture to interfere with our Home-rulers or our Fenians or our prosecutions of spiritualists or refractory ritualistic priests? Simply because we have learned to manage our own business. Why did no one attempt to interfere with the North American presidential elections and ask for an international committee for the protection of Republicans and Democrats? Because the American people know how to manage their own business. We should teach the Turks that Bible and Koran, missal and hymn book might go together; that Patriarchs and Sheik-Ul-Islams, Imams and Papas, preachers and Khatibs, rabbis and priests, Great-Logethets and Khakham-Bashis can be made to agree, if they live under an enlightened lay-government that knows how to enforce respect for the laws, and grants perfect freedom to the individual to develop as an independent member of a well regulated society. A new life would arise on the golden horn—Constantinople would become the most splendid city in Europe, the most attractive resort for civilized Europeans, a kind of Paris of the East. Freedom and equality of religion would bring the three monotheistic religions into fraternal union and glorious harmony—the demoralizing position of women would be changed—Greek, Slavon and Arab, poets and learned men would vie with one another on the fields of glowing imagination and cool reflecting reason. Instead of a burning Eastern question we should then have a solution worthy of the spirit of our age, and should give a new life to Turkey in the North of Asia, as we have given to India in the South.

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