UNDER THE TURK IN CONSTANTINOPLE

BY

G. F. ABBOTT

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UNDER THE TURK

IN CONSTANTINOPLE

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TORONTO



SIR JOHN FINCH.
From the Portrait by Carlo Dolci at
Burley-on-the-Hill.

UNDER THE TURK IN CONSTANTINOPLE

A RECORD OF SIR JOHN FINCH'S EMBASSY

1674-1681

BY

G. F. ABBOTT

AUTHOR OF
"TURKEY IN TRANSITION," "TURKEY, GREECE AND THE GREAT POWERS," ETC.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

VISCOUNT BRYCE, O.M.

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FOREWORD

BY LORD BRYCE

Whoever discovers a dark bypath of history and opens it up by careful research renders a service to scholars. If he has also the gift of presenting the results of his investigation in a form agreeable to the general reader who has a taste for novelties in other books as well as in novels, he earns a double meed of thanks. Mr. Abbott has not only had the good fortune to find such a bypath and the acuteness to note its interest, but is also the possessor of a talent enabling him to make the best use of his materials. To most Europeans and Americans, even among the class which reads for instruction as well as for pleasure, the annals of the Turkish Empire had remained almost a blank from the triumphant days of Solyman the Magnificent through the long process of decay down to the time when Napoleon's campaign in Egypt and Syria and thereafter the Greek War of Independence had drawn attention to the long-forgotten Near Eastern countries. Just in the middle of this period of two and a half centuries several intelligent observers from England and France visited Constantinople and described the singular phenomena of a semi-civilised Empire which, despite its internal corruption and weakness, was still strong enough to threaten its neighbours, maintain a long

sea war against Venice and besiege Vienna. One of these observers was Sir John Finch, a man of learning and ability, who had begun his career by studying medicine at the University of Padua, had held the chair of anatomy in the University of Pisa, and had for five years been King Charles II.'s Minister at Florence. In 1672 he was named ambassador at Constantinople, and accepted, somewhat reluctantly, the post, yielding to the counsels of the influential friends who had procured it for him. There he remained till 1681, and his experiences in the discharge of his functions there are recorded in this volume. The letters on which it is based, and from which many extracts are given, present a vivid picture of what Turkish administration was, and of the way in which the long-suffering representatives and merchants of civilised countries had to adjust themselves to it. Mr. Abbott's book is not only a contribution to history, but a narrative lively enough and dramatic enough to be worth reading as a study in human nature, and more particularly of that Oriental human nature in which guile and folly, inconstancy and obstinacy are so strangely combined.

PREFACE

The history of Anglo-Turkish relations as a whole still remains to be written—a strange and not very creditable fact, considering the part which the Ottoman Empire has played in our commercial and political career since the age of Queen Elizabeth. This monograph deals only with a fraction of a vast subject—the English Embassy to Turkey from 1674 to 1681, though for the sake of intelligibility it glances at the years which preceded and followed that septennium.

Critics, I hope, will not do my work the injustice of thinking that it is not serious because, perhaps, it is not very dull. A piece of historical narrative is a sort of superior novel: it has its heroes and its villains, its vicissitudes, its catastrophes: all of which are eminently capable of administering amusement even to the most seriously minded. Only the amusement must be founded in truth; and the discovery of truth requires painstaking industry. This condition I have endeavoured to fulfil to the utmost of my ability. Every bit of the story here related is the result of careful research among original and, for the most part, hitherto unexploited documents—chiefly the Manuscripts preserved at the Public Record Office (Foreign Archives, *Turkey* and *Levant Company*) and the Coventry Papers in the possession of the Marquis

of Bath, by whose courtesy I was able to make use of them.

It is impossible to convey the impression given by seventeenth-century despatches in any words but their own: nothing can be more striking to modern eyes and ears than their language, their spelling, their grammar and punctuation, or want of it. The handwriting itself betrays not only the writer's normal character, but often the particular emotions which swayed him at the moment of writing: as we peruse those ancient sheets of paper—extraordinarily fresh most of them, with sometimes the sand still clinging to the dry ink—we see the person who penned those lines, the very way in which he held his quill. The same facts, extracted, paraphrased, and printed, no longer arouse the same sense of reality, nor grip the imagination in the same way as they do when presented in their native garb. I have attempted to reproduce something of this effect by transcribing as frequently and fully as it is convenient the original utterances in all the individuality and quaintness which belong to them.

In addition to this mass of manuscript, there exists for the period a surprising amount of printed material, some of which, though available for centuries, has not yet been exhausted, and the rest was but recently made public. It so happened that, besides our Ambassador, there resided at the time in Turkey three other Englishmen who left behind them records of current events. They were our Consul at Smyrna, Paul Rycaut; our Treasurer at Constantinople, Dudley North; and the Chaplain, John Covel: all three men of leading and light in their day. Their letters, memoirs, and journals, written independently and from different angles of

vision, go a long way towards supplementing, confirming, or correcting the Ambassador's reports, as well as the information handed down by several foreign contemporaries.[1] For, by another rare coincidence, the representative of France, Nointel, whose history blends with that of Finch, also had round him a number of Frenchmen busy writing. Joseph von Hammer had access to some of these sources and drew in some small measure upon them; but it was left for a modern French writer to turn them to full account in a book which I have consulted with much pleasure and some profit.[2] Lastly, reference should be made to two new works bearing on the subject. Although both publications deal with matters mostly outside the scope of this book, they have furnished me with a number of suggestive details.[3]

I may take this opportunity of mentioning that, in my dates, unless otherwise stated, I follow the Old Style, which still was the style of England, and, in the seventeenth century, lagged behind the New by ten days; but I reckon the year from the first of January. All lengthy notes are relegated to an Appendix, so that matters calculated to benefit the seeker after solid instruction may not bore the reader who seeks only entertainment.

G. F. A.

CHELSEA, *March 1920*.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] My references are to the following editions:—

The Memoirs of Paul Rycaut, Esq., London,

1679; *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, by Sir Paul Ricaut, Sixth Edition, London, 1686; *The Life of the Honourable Sir Dudley North, Knt.*, by the Honourable Roger North, Esq., London, 1744; *Extracts from the Diaries of Dr. John Covel, 1670-1679* (in *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*), edited by J. Theodore Bent, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1893; *Some Account of the Present Greek Church*, by John Covel, D.D., Cambridge, 1722.

[2] *Les Voyages du Marquis de Nointel (1670-1680)*, par Albert Vandal de l'Académie Française, Paris, 1900.

[3] *Report on the Manuscripts of Allen George Finch, Esq., of Burley-on-the-Hill*, edited by Mrs. Lomas for the *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, vol. i., London, 1913; *Finch and Baines*, by Archibald Malloch, Cambridge, 1917.

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"*Under the Turk in Constantinople.*"

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CHAPTER I

A DIPLOMAT IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

It was apparently an invincible fatality that compelled Sir John Finch to accept, in the month of November 1672, the appointment of English Ambassador to the Porte, in place of Sir Daniel Harvey who had died at his post some weeks before.

Finch sprang from a family which, under the Stuarts, had attained to great eminence in the law and in politics. His father, Sir Heneage Finch, had been Recorder of the City of London and Speaker of the House of Commons in the reign of Charles I. During the same reign his father's first cousin, Sir John (afterwards Baron) Finch, had been Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas and Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, as well as Speaker of the House of Commons: in all these capacities he had shown himself so ardent a Royalist that, in 1640, he was impeached together with Lord Strafford and Archbishop Laud, and barely saved his head by flying to Holland. His elder brother, the eloquent Sir Heneage Finch, whose pleadings, in the years that immediately followed the Restoration, were the delight of the Council Chamber and of Westminster Hall,[4] after serving the Crown as Solicitor-General and Attorney-General, was about to become Lord

Keeper of the Great Seal, and in due time Lord High Chancellor of England and Earl of Nottingham. His nephew (another Heneage Finch), "a celebrated orator in Chancery practice,"[5] was Solicitor-General in 1679, and crowned a long and distinguished Parliamentary career under Charles II. and James II. with a Barony from Queen Anne and an Earldom from George I.

Notwithstanding this remarkable family record, Sir John had evinced no inclination for a public career. After a brief residence at Balliol, he was obliged, when Oxford became the headquarters of the Royalist troops, to migrate to Christ's College, Cambridge, and thence, in 1651, he pursued his studies at Padua, where he took a medical degree. From that University, of which he was made Pro-Rector and Syndic, he went, in 1659, to Pisa, to occupy the Chair of Anatomy, having refused the post of English Consul at Padua, ostensibly because it meant getting drunk "at least forty times in the year," more probably because he did not wish to compromise himself by accepting office under the Usurper. Thus, while Cromwell ruled in England, Finch led a severely private life in Italy, and at the Restoration, like other Cavaliers, he came home to reap the reward of his loyalty. Unlike most of them, he was not disappointed. Honours of all kinds awaited him. In 1661 he was elected an Extraordinary Fellow of the College of Physicians of London, was created M.D. by the University of Cambridge, and was knighted by the King.[6]

Such was the position in which, at the age of thirty-five, when one might think enough of a man's zest and freshness are left to give an edge to ambition, Finch found himself. The embarrassments

which had overcast his earlier prospects were lifting; royal favour seemed assured; the path to fortune lay open before his feet; and there were his brother Heneage and Lord Conway, the husband of his theosophical sister,[7] who wished for nothing better than to smooth it for him. But Finch was a singularly unenterprising man. With a natural propensity to solitude, increased by exile, and with a desultory inclination to poetry and philosophy, he found the boisterous Court of Charles little to his taste. After a very short stay in England, he went back to Tuscany and Anatomy (1663). His friends, amused rather than annoyed at such perversity, did not cease to conspire for his good, and, next year, they prevailed on him to return and let them make his fortune.

Not long afterwards (March 1665) Lord Arlington, then Secretary of State, fulfilled a promise they had extracted from him by appointing Sir John His Majesty's Minister at Florence. If there was any foreign country which Finch liked, it was Italy: he had, since he came to manhood, resided principally there, had learned its language, and had made himself thoroughly familiar with its manners and customs. If there was any Italian State for which he felt a preference, it was that of Tuscany, where he was highly esteemed and beloved by the Great Duke, his brother Prince Leopold, and every one whose love and esteem were worth having. Yet Finch was not happy. He complained that the dignity of his employment far exceeded the emolument: he would gladly have exchanged it for something better paid at home. His friends agreed; but that ideal something could not be found. The only alternative to Florence was Constantinople. To that post the Finch family, since the Restoration, seemed to have established a sort of prescriptive right: Charles II.'s first

representative at the Porte, the Earl of Winchilsea (yet another Heneage Finch), was Sir John's first cousin, and the second, Sir Daniel Harvey, his elder brother's near relative by marriage. Sir John could have Constantinople for the asking. But Sir John cherished a profound and, in the light of subsequent events, one might well say, a prophetic aversion to Constantinople: "Nay, though to be sent to Constantinople were a charge of great gaine, yet I would not buy that charge with the affliction so long a separation would create mee," he wrote to Lord Conway in 1667; and again, a little later: "I doe perfectly abhorr the thoughts of goeing to Constantinople." He would rather "undertake anything then to be banished any longer from seeing your Lordship and my sister." But at the same time he admitted, "any thing is better then my present condition, in which I neither enjoy myselfe nor any thing else."[8] His friends sympathised and continued their efforts on his behalf with indefatigable pertinacity.

There is still extant a letter in which Lord Conway describes how, in 1668, he lingered in London after the adjournment of Parliament on purpose to get an opportunity of speaking to Lord Arlington about him. The Secretary of State hesitated: to attach to himself, partly by services and partly by hopes, the greatest possible number of adherents was Arlington's constant aim; but what if Mr. Solicitor-General should enlist his brother in the hostile camp of the fallen Chancellor Clarendon? Conway overcame these apprehensions by bringing about a personal interview between the Secretary and the Solicitor, who assured his Lordship that Sir John would be his Lordship's faithful retainer. Arlington, satisfied, promised to recall Sir John from Florence and to

recommend him to the King for preferment in connexion with foreign affairs. This arrangement Conway thought much better than bargaining for a reversion of some lucrative Court office—a boon perhaps more tempting, but less certain. As to fitness, he assured his brother-in-law that he would have no competition to fear: “You will have the advantage of coming into a Court where there is not one man of ability.” The King, “destitute of counsel, is jealous of all men that speak to him of business.” All that was really needed was a good word from Lord Arlington, “for though Lord Arlington labours with all art imaginable not to be thought a Premier Minister, yet he is either so, or a favourite, for he is the sole guide that the King relies upon.”[9]

And so, after five years of eminently undistinguished and discontented sojourn at Florence, Sir John returned home, in August 1670, served for two years on the “Councell for matters relating to Our Forreigne Colonies and Plantations,” and then, the ideal office still failing to present itself, he had, after all, to accept the Embassy he abhorred.

He set out in May 1673. His frame of mind on leaving England can be seen from the note by which he bade Lord Conway farewell: “This is the third time I have left my Native Soyl,” he wrote. “If God Almighty make me so happy as to return once more to your Lordship, I shall then thinke it is time to fix at home and leave of (*sic*) all thoughts of further wandering. But [if] my life by its period abroad putts one to my Travell I beseech your Lordship to believe that you have lost the most faythfull and zealous servant the World yet was ever possessed of....”[10]

This letter brings into relief the writer’s characteristic attachment to home and dislike of

separation from dear relatives, heightened by a vague anxiety not unnatural in the circumstances. A man who had fretted for five years in Italy could not look forward to an exile of at least six years in Turkey without some alarm. Turkey was not then the accessible, comparatively debarbarised country of our time: the Grand Signor's dominions were two and a half centuries ago regarded as an obscure and distant region of disease and death. Sir John, in leaving England, felt like one stepping into the unknown: melancholy filled his heart, and pious prayer seemed the only refuge from despondency. Indeed, if he could have foreseen what lay before him, it is a question whether any earthly consideration could have induced him to quit his "native soyl." One of the many dubious blessings granted by the gods to men is the inability to see into the future.

Meanwhile Sir John knew that, short as it fell of his aspirations, the Constantinople post had not a few advantages. It was the only English mission abroad that, under a King who had little money to spare from his personal pleasures, rejoiced in the rank of Embassy; it carried with it a salary of 10,000 dollars, or about £2500, a year, not to mention perquisites of various kinds; and, be it noted, this salary, not coming out of the reluctant purse of a capricious and impecunious prince, but out of the Treasury of a wealthy business corporation—the Company of "Merchants of England Trading into the Levant Seas"—entailed no heart-breaking delays, no wearisome solicitations of friends at Court, but could be depended upon with as much certainty and regularity as any dividend from a sound investment: all the more, because Finch's kinsmen, the Harveys, were leading members of that Company. Distinctly, a

diplomat might go farther and fare worse. As to the duties of the post, Sir John was well equipped. Apart from ceremonial functions, his time at Florence had been taken up by questions arising out of the English trade in the Mediterranean; and both his correspondence from that place and a report on commerce with Egypt which he had drawn up lately[11] prove that he could do that sort of work easily enough. Now, that was the sort of work he would be called upon to do at Constantinople.

Owing its origin to the enterprise of merchants and maintained entirely at their expense, the English Embassy on the Bosphorus existed chiefly for their benefit; the principal part of the Ambassador's mission being to promote trade and to protect those engaged therein both against the Turks and against each other. Politics, it is true, were not altogether lost sight of. The Ottoman Empire, though past its meridian, still weighed heavily in the "Balance of Europe," and the Grand Signor's attitude was an object of no small concern to the rival groups into which Europe was divided. In the abstract, political writers continued to echo, with unction, the admonitions which the celebrated Imperial Ambassador Busbequius had addressed to Christendom a hundred years before. But since no means had yet been devised "to unite our Interests and compose our Dissensions,"[12] what were we to do? Obviously, what everybody was doing. When occasion arose, it was part, if only a subsidiary part, of an English envoy's business to intrigue for the good of his country and try to defeat the intrigues of those wicked foreign diplomats who intrigued for the good of theirs. Thus, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, her representatives had exploited Turkey's hatred of Spain to some purpose; and again during the Thirty

Years' War the representative of Charles I. made strenuous efforts, not of course to set on the "common enemy of Christendom" against the Emperor directly—that, as he recognised, would have been too great a "scandal"—but to procure the Sultan's indirect support for the Prince of Transylvania who was fighting the Emperor. During the earlier period of Charles II.'s reign, too, Lord Winchilsea had exerted himself to prevent the establishment of friendly relations between Stambul and Madrid, and both he and his successor Harvey had endeavoured to bring about a cessation of hostilities between Stambul and Venice. The former of these ambassadors, in fact, was very eager to play a great political rôle, urging that, as, with the acquisition of Tangier, English sea-power and possessions were expanding Eastwards, the English envoy should no longer confine himself exclusively to mercantile affairs.[13] But Charles had neither funds nor thoughts for such ambitious schemes. So his representative at the Porte had nothing more to do, as regards State affairs, than "to be truly informed of all negotiations and practices in that Court which may disturbe the peace of Christendom in any part of it,"[14] and to transmit his information to London: a passive rôle which suited Sir John's temperament admirably. As his *alter ego* wrote to Lord Conway: "Your Lordship will say your Brother here will have little to doe in State Affayrs, which my Lord is very true and so much the more is his quiett."[15]

This was only one of several happy auspices under which Sir John Finch entered upon his new employment. As a rule, the diplomatic seat on the Bosphorus bristled with thorny peculiarities—peculiarities that had proved trying to most of his

predecessors and to some even fatal.

To begin with, our representatives at Constantinople, unlike their colleagues at other capitals, had not one master, but two: the Court from which they held their commission and the Company from which they drew their pay. It is proverbially difficult to serve two masters to the satisfaction of both, and in this case the difficulties of the servant were often accentuated by differences between his employers. With characteristic repugnance to clear definition, our ancestors had left the question of appointment open. There was neither fixed rule nor consistent precedent to show with which of the two masters lay the choice of servant. Hence a periodical feud between the Court and the Company, each claiming a right which the other was loth to concede. Under James I. and Charles I. the Court had more than once forced upon the Company its own nominees, with disastrous results to all concerned. Sir John Eyre, appointed in 1619 under pressure from the Duke of Buckingham, after barely two years, which he spent making himself obnoxious to the English residents and contemptible to the Turkish Ministers, had to be recalled in disgrace. Sir Sackville Crow, similarly appointed in 1638, rivalled Eyre in incompetence, surpassed him in iniquity, and was at last brought home by force and cast into the Tower (1648). At the outbreak of the Civil War, the Company, having thrown in its lot with the Rebels, obtained from Parliament a recognition of its claim to elect and remove the Ambassador, and, much as Cromwell would have liked to follow the example of the Stuarts, he had found it expedient to acquiesce. When the Commonwealth collapsed, the Levant Merchants, who had joined in acclaiming the Restoration as heartily as they had acclaimed the

Rebellion, got Charles II. to renew their Charter (April 2, 1661). But submission to the Crown had become so much the fashion that this Charter again left the question of the Ambassador's election open, thereby affording zealots for the royal prerogative a chance of stirring up discord.[16]

In practice, however, a new spirit seemed to animate the rival authorities now. Both sides had learned by suffering the wisdom of compromise. Now the Merchants begged from the King, as an act of grace proceeding solely from his goodness, leave to offer for his Majesty's approval such a person as they esteemed most competent to manage their affairs at Constantinople, thus loyally acknowledging the King's right; while the King, on his part, graciously granted their request, thus waiving the exercise of it. In this way the dignity of the Crown was saved, and the interests of the Company did not suffer. This sweet reasonableness breathes through the petition by which, on Sir Daniel Harvey's death, the Levant Merchants approached the King for a successor: "They have," so runs the document, "at a General Meeting of their Company, presumed to fix upon the Hon. Sir John Finch, as one they humbly desire may undertake that affaire, if your Majestie will be graciously pleased to afford your Royal assent; which they humbly beg, wholly submitting the same to your Majestie's pleasure."[17] The King, as was expected, readily assented; and thus Sir John set out with the goodwill of both his employers. He travelled across France and North Italy to Leghorn, and there met the *Centurion*, a frigate of 52 guns, which was to carry him to Turkey.

If we turn from those who sent the Ambassador to those to whom he was sent, we shall see here also

Finch greatly favoured by circumstances. Most of his predecessors had found themselves engaged in a Sisyphean labour. For the wrongs to which the English, like other Frank dwellers in the Grand Signor's dominions, were constantly exposed at the hands of insolent and rapacious officials they could only procure redress, if at all, by purchasing the friendship of the Grand Vizir and of the two or three other grandees who between them ruled the Empire. But, such had long been the stability of the Ottoman Government, none of those personages remained in power for more than a few months—a military mutiny, a popular upheaval, or a palace intrigue was sure to hurl them down the moment after they had reached the top; and our Ambassador was obliged to seek new friends. This state of things had come to an end. In 1656 Mohammed Kuprili assumed the Grand Vizirate with a free hand to purge the body politic of its corruptions, and he performed the task by cutting off all the parts that he could not cure: a dreadful remedy, but not more dreadful than the condition of the patient demanded. Turkey was so split up by factions that it could not have survived, unless all rebellious spirits were implacably extinguished. This great practitioner, who alone had preserved the Empire from falling into as many fragments as there were Pashaliks, died in 1661 of old age, and was succeeded by his son Ahmed—a fact which, being utterly unprecedented in a country where the hereditary principle, except in the royal family, was unknown, amazed the Turks even more than the miracle of a Grand Vizir maintaining himself in office for five whole years and then dying peaceably in his bed.[18]

Ahmed Kuprili at first seemed to have inherited,

together with his father's power, his father's recipe. The late Vizir's dictatorship had raised up a multitude of malcontents who imagined that his successor's youth offered them an opportunity for revenge: "every hour he has a new game to play for his life," wrote our Ambassador.[19] But once rid of his enemies, the son presented a pleasing antithesis to his father. Mohammed had been an uncouth and illiterate warrior who cared for no laws that stood between him and his will, who valued no arguments that conflicted with his preconceived notions, who even in his dealings with foreign envoys employed methods only one degree less savage than those he applied to the treatment of domestic problems. Ahmed, on the other hand, was the first Grand Vizir with a political, instead of a martial, mind. He had been bred to the study of the Law and had actually practised as a judge in civil causes. By temperament and education alike he was averse to violence. It is true that he had already carried out two successful campaigns and was now engaged in a third. But to this he was impelled by necessity: the Ottoman Empire, having arisen out of war and being constituted for war, would perish in peace. Its rulers could only avoid rebellion at home by providing their turbulent subjects with constant and congenial occupation abroad—a bleeding operation intended to relieve the body politic of its "malignant humours"—and it was particularly necessary for Ahmed, in order to keep his place, to show that he could graft the soldier on the lawyer. But he never became a general. His successes were won in spite of his strategy. In his war against the Emperor he was defeated at St. Gothard (Aug. 1, N.S. 1664), yet immediately after, profiting by the Emperor's difficulties, he secured a treaty (Peace of Vasvar,

Aug. 10, 1664) as advantageous as if it had been the fruit of victory. In Crete his military operations against the Venetians (1666-69) were so clumsy that at one moment he seriously meditated abandoning the siege of Candia, “his ill success having given his enemies hopes of supplanting him.”[20] Yet he obtained by negotiation the surrender of a fortress which until then had been deemed impregnable, and brought a twenty-five years’ struggle to a glorious conclusion. The Polish war which he was now conducting was likewise a matter of diplomatic as much as of military manœuvring. There can be no doubt that, if he had the choice, Ahmed would never have striven to get by force what might be got by subtler means.

To these traits, common among lawyers, he added a genuine love of justice and a scrupulous integrity rare among lawyers everywhere, and nowhere rarer than in the East. Endowed with such qualities, Ahmed proved himself one of the most moderate, and, at the same time, one of the least pliant Ministers that Turkey ever knew. Under his firm and equitable administration the Ottoman Empire recovered some of its prosperity, and, what is more pertinent to note here, the Frank residents enjoyed a Sabbath of rest. Tyranny, of course, could not be altogether avoided. But, on the whole, the privileges conferred upon them by their Capitulations were respected, extortions (*avanias*) were seldom indulged in with impunity, and the foreign merchants were treated with unexampled forbearance.[21] Towards the English the Grand Vizir was particularly well disposed, and with good reason.

The main principle of Charles II.’s policy in foreign as in domestic affairs was to avoid friction. Indolent,

unambitious, and a hater of everything likely to disturb the even flow of his voluptuous existence, the Merry Monarch would sooner have surrendered his rights than have taken the trouble to defend them. No prince ever stood less upon his dignity; perhaps because no prince ever had less dignity to stand upon. In the course of their protracted struggle for the conquest of Candia, the Turks repeatedly pressed English ships into their service. Cromwell had opposed vigorously all encroachments of the sort; but the representatives of Charles, after some feeble and ineffectual protests, not only acquiesced tamely, but bitterly blamed those captains who ventured to resist; and, while the Grand Signor violated the neutrality of England, the English Secretary of State overwhelmed him with assurances that his Majesty "does inviolably observe his peace with the Grand Signior."[22] Nor were these empty assurances. Individual Englishmen might assist the Venetians in what contemporary Christendom regarded as a holy war, but, unlike the French, whose volunteers passed on in a steady stream from Paris itself to reinforce the garrison of Candia, they did so at their own risk and peril without the least countenance from their Government. Indeed, such crusaders were so few and far between that Ahmed Kuprili commented on the fact that he did not find "soe much as an English seaman amongst his enemies att Candia."[23]

To these general conditions which at the time rendered our Embassy unusually comfortable for any tenant of average tact, must be added an event that secured for Sir John Finch's person special consideration.

Soon after his appointment, an English ship, the *Mediterranean*, on her passage from Tunis to Tripoli,

had been met by the redoubtable corsair Domenico Franceschi—a Genoese by birth, but then domiciled at Leghorn and holding a privateering commission from the Great Duke of Tuscany. Normally an English vessel had nothing to fear from a Tuscan man-of-war; but the *Mediterranean* happened to carry the retiring Pasha of Tunis, homeward bound with his family and the spoils of his province, and, as the Duke was at perpetual war with the Sultan, Domenico could not well forgo such a chance of serving his sovereign and enriching himself. The *Mediterranean* managed, before the corsair could come up with her, to set the Pasha with some of his belongings ashore at Tripoli, but she was captured, taken to Malta, and pillaged of the bulk of the Pasha's treasure, including his women. The incident was serious: it was one of those incidents which often strained Turkey's relations with Western Powers in those days; and with no Western Power more often than with England. Not to dwell on remoter instances,[24] only a year before some other Turkish passengers on another English ship, the *Lyon*, whilst sailing from Tunis to Smyrna, had been carried off with their goods by the same pirate. At that time Sir Daniel Harvey addressed to the home Government an energetic protest against "the insolence and piracy" of a person in the service of a friendly prince, pointing out that his exploit endangered the safety of the English colonies in Turkey, and, if not taken notice of, might be an encouragement to him and others to do likewise.[25] But nothing was done, and the late Ambassador's prediction had now come true even beyond his anticipation. For in that case the victims were Turks of very humble rank (a cap-maker with his two servants, and two old men who had just been

redeemed at Malta, one after 48, the other after 50 years' captivity), and the booty a trifle—3 chests of caps, 3 bales of blankets, and 3 boxes of botargoes. [26] This time the victim was a high functionary of the Porte, and the loot enormous. The Turks' wrath was proportionate. They threatened that, if the property was not restored, the loss should be made good by the English residents; the Porte's position always being that a Frank nation was collectively responsible for any Turkish passengers or goods that fell into the hands of pirates whilst travelling under that nation's flag. Matters were not improved by the fact that the *Mediterranean* had offered no resistance, but was seen sailing away in the corsair's company with every appearance of being a willing captive.

The directors of the Levant Company in London were not slow to realise the gravity of the situation. As soon as official reports from the Consuls at Leghorn and Tripoli reached them, they petitioned the King to write to the Great Duke and to demand complete restitution of the Pasha's property and reparation for damages, with due punishment of "so notorious an offender."[27] The King hastened to indite an epistle in that sense to the Duke,[28] and, at the same time, instructed Sir John Finch, then on his way out, to repair to Florence and make the necessary representations to his Highness by word of mouth. These instructions found Finch at Genoa; and he applied himself to the task with energy, anxiety for his own future in Turkey lending a spur to his concern for the public good.

In order to simplify matters, he procured, before leaving Genoa, the banishment of the corsair from that State, and then proceeded to Leghorn. There he found an Aga whom the Pasha of Tunis was sending

to England as his Procurator on that very business. When he heard of Finch's arrival, the Aga thought to save himself the journey to London by laying his case before him. Finch made the most of this lucky encounter. Concealing from the Aga his instructions, he gave the affair a totally different turn. The *Mediterranean*, he argued, was not an English ship. It is true that her Master, Captain Chaplyn, was an Englishman; but he had changed his religion, renounced his country, and, having for ten years lived at Leghorn and married there, had become a Tuscan subject, so that his Majesty of England was no longer concerned in him. With these "and other motives" (a delicate euphemism for the motive vulgarly known as bribery), the Ambassador prevailed on the Aga to give him a declaration in writing, attested by public notaries, that he had no claim upon Captain Chaplyn or any other Englishman; only, as Finch was accredited to the Porte, it would be taken very kindly of him if he would assist a Pasha in distress, the more as he lay under no obligation to do so. Having had this document signed and sealed, the resourceful diplomat approached the Duke in another way—the way dictated by the facts of the case and his instructions.

In that quarter also, Sir John's efforts, thanks to his long connection with the Tuscan Court, met with success. At Florence itself he recovered 5000 dollars in ready money and a portion of the stolen goods. Then, armed with letters from the Duke, and accompanied by the Aga and Captain Chaplyn, he went on to Malta, where he managed, though not without great difficulty, to obtain the restitution of 75 more bales of goods and the redemption of seven captives, among them the Pasha's sister-in-law,

whom the Pasha afterwards made his wife. At Smyrna, where the Ambassador, still accompanied by the Turkish Aga and the English Captain, landed on the 1st of January 1674, he caused the former to give him before the Cadi of that place an official receipt for all the recovered goods—30,000 dollars—and a full discharge to Captain Chaplyn.[29]

We are told that the Turks expressed boundless admiration at this action—an action without a parallel in the annals of piracy: who had ever heard of a corsair being made to disgorge? They applauded the Ambassador's skill and regarded his success as a manifest proof of his sovereign's influence over foreign Governments. They were also impressed by his luck—no small recommendation to a superstitious people in an astrologically-minded age. Had not his landing on Turkish soil synchronised with the celebration of the holiest of Moslem feasts—the Feast of the Bairam?[30] As to the English Factory, its sixty members (merry young blades most of them) manifested their joy at the sight of their long-expected Ambassador after a fashion which must have made it a little difficult for his Excellency to maintain the reserve and gravity proper to his exalted station.

From Smyrna Sir John continued his journey to Constantinople, arriving there about the end of March; and some two months after, in the absence of the Grand Vizir, he had audience of the Vizir's Kaimakam, or Deputy. On this occasion the new Ambassador gave the first evidence of that meticulous devotion to forms which made up then an enormous, and still makes up a very considerable, part of the complete diplomat's mentality. Before going to audience he took care to find out how many

kaftans, or robes of honour, the Kaimakam meant to present him and his suite with. “I was offerd’,” he says, “But 15: no English Ambassadour ever having had more from the Chimacam: But understanding the Venetian Bailo had 17, I would abate nothing of what he had had.” After a tug of several weeks, he wrested the two extra vests from the Turk.

One or two other features of that ceremony remain on record.

“I am,” said the envoy to the Kaimakam, “I am come Ambassadour from Charles the Second, King of England, Scottland, France and Ireland; sole and Soveraigne Lord of all the seas that environ His Kingdome: Lord and Soveraigne of Vast Territory’s and Possessions in the East and West Indy’s: Defender of the Christian Faith against all those that Worship Idolls and Images, To the Most High and Mighty Emperour Sultan Mahomet Ham, Cheif Lord and Commander of the Mussulman Kingdome, Sole and Supream Monarch of the Eastern Empire, To maintain that Peace which has bin so usefull and that Commerce which has bin so profitable to this Empire; For the continuance and encrease whereof I promise you in my station to contribute what I can; And I promise to myselfe that you in yours will doe the like.”

Sir John had written this speech in Italian and given it to his two chief Interpreters, with orders to study it carefully beforehand, so that they might not omit one word in interpreting what he should say. The Interpreters having fulfilled their function, some conversation ensued, in the middle of which the Kaimakam, abruptly, “as if he had much reflected on what his Lordship said,” asked whether the King of England had any fortresses in the Indies. Finch

answered: “He had very many and not a few of those Inexpugnable.” The Kaimakam did not carry his cross-questioning any further. Presumably he understood that the English were imbued, like other nations, with a very sincere opinion of their own greatness.

Sir John reported this his début on the official stage of Turkey to his patron with evident self-satisfaction.[31] He had every reason to feel proud of the past and confident of the future. He had shown himself possessed of energy, finesse, firmness, and, though innocent of any acquaintance with the habits and prejudices of the Turks, he was already *persona gratissima* with them. The flattering way in which he had been received on his arrival in the Grand Signor’s dominions gave him not only the hope, but the certainty of a residence agreeable to himself and profitable to his country. Clearly, the Turks had been much maligned by common report. These feelings are faithfully reflected in a letter which Sir John’s *alter ego* penned to Lord Conway, while Sir John himself was penning his report to Lord Arlington:

“Give me leave to turne to ... your Brother my Lord Ambassadour’s condition under this Embassy: He hath dealt with the crafty close Genevese; with the wise and stayd Florentine; with the untameable and rugged Maltese; with the faythlesse Greek and false Jew; and lastly with the sober and stubborne Turk,”—then, leaving the others to rejoice in their respective epithets, the writer fixes his penetrating eye upon the Turks: “Under correction and with modesty I will say that I find them a sober and ingenious people; sober they are because they never drink wine, ingenious I call them from the Bassa who came to visit my Lord at the galley, so soon as he

arrived at the port, for I seldom heard in Europe a more dextrous, short, and courtly reply then what the Bassa made to my Lord. I, over and above, find an Ambassadour here to have, according to their customes, as much respect as they have in most places in Europe. Certainly there is a mutuall and reciprocall jealousy betwixt the Court and foreign publick Ministers, between which there is neither religion nor custome of life, nor laws that beget any confidence or publick tie, and to the captious it gives many exceptions. But, setting these things apart, as yett I can call nothing strange." Thus wrote this acute judge of national characters, after seeing only one Turk for a few moments; thus he wrote, no doubt with my Lord Ambassador's concurrence, and thus he thought. Yet even in the midst of his rosy illusions, he had some dim, subconscious perception of realities. For he adds: "But, my most noble Lord, these are my first sentiments, perhaps when I have stayed here longer, I may have as much reason to reclaime against them as other men...."[32]

FOOTNOTES:

[4] Evelyn's *Diary*, Oct. 27, 1664; Pepys's *Diary*, May 3, 1664, April 21, 1669.

[5] Roger North's *Life of Guilford*, p. 226.

[6] *Dictionary of National Biography*; Malloch's *Finch and Baines*.

[7] Anne, Viscountess Conway—a very learned lady and a very odd. There is a notice of her in the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, where her father's name is given wrongly as "Henry."

[8] Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 54.

[9] *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1667-68*,

pp. 258-9.

[10] Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 59.

[11] Finch to Arlington, Dec. 23, 1672, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[12] Rycaut's *Present State*, p. 404.

[13] Winchilsea to Secretary Nicholas, March 18-28, 1660-61, June 12, 1661, *S.P. Turkey*, 17.

[14] Instructions for Sir John Finch, Cl. 6. See Appendix I.

[15] Sir Thomas Baines, May 25, 1674, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[16] See Appendix III.

[17] *Register, 1668-1710*, p. 22; *S.P. Levant Company*, 145.

[18] Winchilsea to Nicholas, March 4, 1660-61, Nov. 11-21, 1661, *S.P. Turkey*, 17; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, p. 68; J. von Hammer's *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, vol. xi. p. 111. Winchilsea mentions only the "six thousand Bashaws and great men," whom Mohammed put to death "partly by his own hands and by his commands." Rycaut gives the total of the Vizir's victims as "thirty-six thousand persons." Hammer, though he does not consider this statement excessive, is content with an estimate of "trente mille personnes," or an average of 500 executions a month—figures which, even if reduced by a nought, would still appear respectable.

[19] Winchilsea to Nicholas, May 20, 1662, *S.P. Turkey*, 17.

[20] Harvey to Arlington, Jan. 31, 1669 [-70], *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[21] See Appendix IV.

[22] For illustrations of this timorous attitude see Winchilsea to Nicholas, March 4, 1660-61, Feb. 11, 1661-62; the Same to Arlington, March 26, 1668; Rycaut to Arlington, July 18, 1668; Letters from Messrs. Thomas Dethick & Co., Smyrna, Feb. 7, March 1, 1667-68; Harvey to Arlington, June 19, 1669, *S.P. Turkey*, 17 and 19.

[23] Harvey to Arlington, Aug. 18, 1669, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[24] See Appendix V.

[25] Harvey to Arlington, Jan. 24, March 15, 1671-72, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[26] "A Relation of the Damage rec. by me, Thomas Parker, Master of the *Lyon* pinke from a Corsair near the Island of Delos. Smyrna, 9 Dec. 1671," *ibid.*

[27] *Register*, p. 39, *S.P. Levant Company*, 145.

[28] *Ibid.* pp. 40-41. This letter, written in Latin, is dated "ex pallatio nostro Westmonasteriensi, Quarto die Augusti, Anno Doñi 1673, Regni nostri 25º."

[29] Sir John Finch's own Narrative, Sept. 24, 1680, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[30] Rycaut's *Memoirs*, p. 312.

[31] Finch to Arlington, May 25, 1674 (with Inclosure), *Coventry Papers*.

[32] Sir Thomas Baines to Conway, May 25, 1674, *S.P. Turkey*, 19. The letter, though unsigned and unaddressed, carries within it conclusive proof of its authorship and destination.

CHAPTER II

SIR JOHN'S PROGRAMME

Sir John regarded his audience with the Kaimakam as nothing more than a prologue: the real action had yet to begin. His first business was "to make my selfe an Ambassadour by delivering His Majesty's Credentials to the Gran Signor and His Letter to the Gran Visir."[33] But that could not be done at Constantinople. For over a dozen years the seat of the Ottoman Empire had been at Adrianople.

Mohammed IV. nourished an unconquerable detestation of Constantinople. It was said that when any of his Ministers ventured to urge upon him the advisability of showing himself there, he used to answer: "What shall I do in Stambul? Did not Stambul cost my father his life? My predecessors, were they not always the prisoners of rebels? Rather than go back to Stambul, I would set fire to it with my own hands." True or apocryphal, these words describe the position accurately. Constantinople under the Sultans, like Rome under the Caesars, was the home of an insolent militia and a turbulent mob. The maladies which infected the Empire had their breeding-ground in it. It supplied a centre for all the intrigues and seditions which time and again had brought Turkey within an inch of disruption. Its

revolutionary habits made it insecure. So the reigning monarch, except for occasional visits reluctantly undertaken and speedily terminated, kept away from the ill-omened city. Love of sport conspired with fear of death to drive the Grand Signor from his capital. For never had Turkey known so great a Nimrod. With other Sultans the chase had been a recreation; with Mohammed IV. it was an obsession—a monomania. “When He cannot range to Hunt,” says Finch, “He is never well.”[34] Hence his nickname of *Avji*, or the Hunter. The fatigues he underwent in the indulgence of this consuming passion are almost fabulous: in the height of summer as well as in the depth of winter, he sallied forth two or three hours before sunrise and spent the whole day dashing up hill and down dale like one possessed by a thousand restless demons. The courtiers whose privilege it was to ride in the Sultan’s train looked back with unfeigned regret to the soft vices of his father: what were the amorous whims of Ibrahim compared with the strenuous vagaries of Mohammed? But if he spared his courtiers as little as he spared himself, this sportsman spared his humbler subjects even less. Wherever he hunted, the inhabitants of the district were obliged either to provide beaters—sometimes as many as 30,000—or to beat the woods themselves. In the summer, they had, in addition, their crops ruined. In the winter, numbers of these wretched peasants, exposed to cold and hunger during several days and nights, paid for their master’s pleasure with their lives. So it came to pass that, while the titular capital of the Empire, in the absence of the Grand Signor’s luxurious Court, drooped like a flower in the shade, the Imperial sun shone upon Adrianople: the environs of that town affording exceptional facilities for the pursuit of

game—of all pursuits the one this degenerate son of Osman loved the most and understood the best.[35]

To Adrianople, therefore, Sir John would have to betake himself. The journey was expensive, and the Levant Company extremely close-fisted. But in this juncture our Merchants could not stint the piper, seeing that they called the tune. For the presentation of his Credentials, though the first, was the least of the motives that impelled Finch to the Sublime Threshold.

It had been the ambition of every English Ambassador up to that date to renew the Capitulations originally granted to the English by Sultan Murad III. in 1580,[36] with a view to obtaining a confirmation and elucidation of old and the addition of new privileges. During the reign of the present Sultan the Capitulations had already been renewed twice, by Sir Thomas Bendyshe and by Lord Winchilsea; and Sir Daniel Harvey would have renewed them for the third time, if death had not prevented him. Sir John Finch was anxious to tread the path of his predecessors and to go farther than they.

There were, in the first place, tariffs to be revised and Customs-duties to be reduced, or defined to our advantage. For instance, by a Hattisherif, or Imperial decree, granted to Sir Sackville Crow, the Merchants of Aleppo had to pay 3 per cent *ad valorem* on the goods they imported—cloths, kerseys, cony skins, tin, lead—as well as on the goods they exported—raw linen, cotton yarn, galls, silk, rhubarb and other drugs. This decree determined what was to be called 3 per cent in terms of Turkish weights, measures, and money, leaving no loop-hole for extortion. But, resting as it did solely upon the Sultan’s word, it was

regarded as reversible at his pleasure. Therefore, Sir John's predecessors had laboured to have it inserted in the Capitulations, but without success, and the Hattisherif had gradually become so antiquated that not only the local Customs authorities refused to obey its provisions, but the Grand Vizir himself refused to enforce them. Finch wished to embody this decree in the Charter, so that the English should henceforth have not only the Grand Signor's signature but also his oath, and convert what was a mere concession to merchants into a covenant between prince and prince.

Another Article coveted by the Ambassador aimed at securing a similar definition for duties levied upon our Factors at Smyrna and Constantinople. By the Capitulations they were obliged to pay 3 per cent on imports and exports. But differences had lately arisen between them and the Customs authorities concerning English cloth. The duty had been fixed when the English imported only a kind of coarse cloth called "Londras," for which they were content to pay *ad valorem*; but since they had begun to import finer cloths they demurred, insisting that the Customs authorities were not entitled to more than the amount of duty established of old. The authorities, on their part, to avoid what they considered an attempt to cheat the Grand Signor, insisted that the duty should be paid in kind. Sir John had so far let the merchants compound with the authorities underhand, in order that our case might not be prejudiced by the judgment of inferior Courts; but it was his intention to have the matter settled at Adrianople: success on this point, he reckoned, meant some 60,000 dollars a year saved; and besides, it would enable the English to trade in cloth of equal fineness with that of their Dutch

competitors on infinitely more advantageous terms—paying only two where the Dutch paid six dollars per piece.

Next, there was in our Capitulations a clause by which Englishmen engaged in litigation with natives for a sum above 4000 aspers were entitled to bring their case before the Divan. But this clause, being limited to private individuals, did not protect the English against the Grand Signor's officials, whose arbitrariness grew in proportion to their distance from the "Fountain of Justice"; for they had it in their power to squeeze the defendants by detaining them and sequestering their ships and goods. The Ambassador wished to deprive the local tyrants of every temptation by introducing into the Capitulations an Article which authorised the English Consul on the spot to become surety for his countrymen.

Another abuse Finch sought to remedy was of a converse nature. Native defendants used to evade prosecution by putting in a claim not to be sued except before the Divan, where the practice was for the successful litigant to pay 10 per cent on the debt recovered, instead of the 2 per cent with which the provincial Cadis were nominally content. This frightened Englishmen from suing in the best Court of Justice, and gave the Cadis a chance of extorting from them 6 or 8 per cent. It was the Ambassador's object to render such evasions and extortions impossible by obtaining an Article which made the fees uniform.

Further, Sir John wished to establish uniformity in the anchorage charges imposed upon English shipping, and to remove a chronic grievance by exempting a ship which had paid anchorage at one

Turkish port from a like liability in another she might call at in the course of her voyage.

Such were the most important innovations Sir John contemplated. But the most piquant of all referred to the contingency of English factors in Turkey robbing their principals in England and shielding themselves from English justice by becoming Mohammedans—"turning Turks," as the phrase went. This interesting problem had arisen out of a recent incident at Smyrna. In September 1673 a young gentleman of good family and rigid religious upbringing, one, too, who had a fair fortune of his own, was tempted by the Evil One to commit a deed that covered the English "Nation" in the Levant with shame. Availing himself of his partner's absence, he appropriated a large quantity of goods and gold belonging to several merchants at home. Then he went before the Cadi and made a solemn profession of Islam, so that he might shelter himself under the Moslem Law, which admitted no Infidel's evidence against a True Believer. We possess a full account of this scandalous affair from the pen of our Consul at Smyrna, who tells how, after seven months' unremitting pursuit, he managed to recover the best part of the property and to reduce the culprit to such distress that at last the wretch humbly begged him to contrive his return to Christendom and Christianity in the frigate which had brought Sir John out.[37] As a safeguard against similar accidents, the Ambassador proposed that the Porte should be asked to allow in future Christian witnesses in such cases.[38]

Over and above all these matters of business, there was a point of honour to be struggled for—a point by which Sir John set immense store. The French enjoyed a privilege which the English had for

generations craved in vain: the King of France, alone among Christian monarchs, was honoured by the Turks with the title of *Padishah*, or Emperor; the King of England was styled simply *Kral*, or King. The representatives of Queen Elizabeth, it seems, not caring much for titles, had acquiesced in that modest designation, and the precedent once established, all the efforts of later envoys had failed:[39] "So hard a thing it is to unrivitt what Time has fixd'," moralised Sir John; but the hardness of the thing, instead of damping, fanned his ardour. If he could only get that high-sounding title for his sovereign, what a feather would it be in his cap! He had already, at his audience with the Kaimakam, taken the first step towards that goal. He had commanded his Interpreters most particularly not to forget, in translating his speech, to render the word "King" by "Padishah," *not* "Kral"; and as they, aware of the tenacity with which the Turks clung to established customs, evinced some reluctance to attempt an innovation, Sir John had agreed, when he uttered the word "King," to add "or Padishah," thus securing the Interpreters by his authority. That was done accordingly, and "taken without any exception." But it was only the thin end of the wedge. Sir John was resolved to prosecute "with my utmost Vigour" the insertion of the title into the new Capitulations;[40] and so to score off all the ambassadors who went before and bequeath a legacy of imperishable lustre to all those who should come after him.

A comprehensive programme, excellent in conception; but for its execution Sir John had to wait.

While the Grand Signor hunted, his Grand Vizir was busy conducting hostilities with Poland and,

simultaneously, negotiations for peace. Sir John was kept informed of these proceedings by the Dutch Resident, who, with his wife, his children and his Secretaries, followed the Ottoman camp, having orders from his Government to watch the march of events in concert with the Emperor's Resident. Holland and Germany were then at war with France, which endeavoured to bring about an agreement between Poland and Turkey and to induce the latter Power to turn her arms against the Emperor. England, on the other hand, had recently made peace with Holland, and the Dutch Resident, before his departure from Constantinople, had recommended his "Nation" to Sir John's protection. He now wrote to him about the prospects of peace.

An envoy from the new King of Poland, John Sobieski, was expected in the Grand Vizir's camp every moment; and in case of an agreement, it was said that the Ottoman Army would join the Polish in a common campaign against the Muscovite. What inclined the Turks to an accommodation, besides Sobieski's conciliatory attitude, was the fear of an attack from Persia. So Sir John's informant reported. "But, My Lord," said Sir John, "notwithstanding these fayr Intimations of Peace there can be no certainty of it, For the Publique Prayers have bin made these ten dayes over the Empire for the Gran Signor, which begin not till He is out of His own Territory's, and must continue till victory or Peace.... In the Interim it seems by the vast Quantity of Slaves that dayly from the Black Sea are sent hither, that the Turke meets with little opposition."[41]

In the interim, we, for our part, cannot do better than take a look round at the place in which Sir John lived, the people among whom he moved, and the

things that occupied his enforced leisure. Such a description will make the subsequent narrative more intelligible and instructive, without unduly delaying the action; for, truth to tell, many months had to elapse before there was any action worth mention.

FOOTNOTES:

[33] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675, *Coventry Papers*.

[34] Finch to Coventry, Jan. 11-21, 1674-75, *Coventry Papers*.

[35] See Winchilsea's despatches, *passim*, *S.P. Turkey*, 17, 18, 19; *Finch Report*; Rycaut's *Memoirs*; Covel's *Diaries*, p. 207.

[36] The Latin version of that Charter is preserved at the Public Record Office, *S.P. Turkey*, 1. A copy of it, with an English rendering, will be found in Hakluyt's *Navigations* (Glasgow, 1904), vol. v. pp. 178-89.

[37] Rycaut's *Memoirs*, p. 311. For an amusing example of the young man's Puritan scrupulosity see Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 107-8.

[38] See "New Articles added to the Capitulations," together with "The Grounds and Advantages" thereof, by Sir John Finch, in the *Coventry Papers*.

[39] *E.g.* Sir Thomas Glover to Salisbury, March 3, 1606-7; Winchilsea to Nicholas, Nov. 11-21, 1661, *S.P. Turkey*, 5 and 17.

[40] Finch to Arlington, May 25, 1674; the Same to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675, *Coventry Papers*.

[41] Finch to Arlington, July 27, S.N., 1674,

Coventry Papers.

CHAPTER III

LIFE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

To a man who had passed the better part of his life in the elegant cities of Italy—cities like Florence, famous for its neat streets and palaces of sculptured stone—Constantinople assuredly was no paradise. Its streets were narrow, crooked, and dirty. The houses, built of timber and sun-dried brick, soon fell into decay. Nor was there the least attempt to make up in style what these ephemeral habitations wanted in solidity. In the whole of the Ottoman capital you would not have found one stately house. Western visitors, impressed by this phenomenon, endeavoured to account for it, each according to his lights. Some saw in it a manifestation of Turkish other-worldliness; making the Turk say to himself: "'Tis a sign of a proud, lofty and aspiring mind, to covet sumptuous houses, as if so frail a creature as man did promise a kind of immortality and an everlasting habitation to himself in this life, when alas! we are but as pilgrims here. Therefore we ought to use our dwellings as travellers do their inns, wherein if they are secured from thieves, from cold, from heat, and from rain, they seek not for any other conveniences."[42] But this pretty theory was refuted by the fact that not only the Turks, but the Greeks,

the Jews, and the Armenians manifested the same studious avoidance of any approach to architectural display. The true explanation was much more prosaic: a fine dwelling would have been a proof of wealth, and wealth, in a country where all men were slaves except one, was a dangerous thing. A trumped-up charge, on the sworn testimony of two incredible witnesses, was enough to bring about the ruin of the man who had the misfortune to be rich. So, while the interior of an Eastern home might teem with all the luxury that vanity could prompt and money procure, outwardly it presented to the onlooker a picture of abject meanness.[43] The picture had its charm; but it was a charm too subtle for ordinary seventeenth-century eyes. Judged by contemporary aesthetic standards, the metropolis of the Ottoman Empire was, as a predecessor of Sir John's had described it, "a sink of men and sluttishness."[44] Sir John must have often wondered what his cousin Winchilsea could have meant when in years gone by he had written to him: "This city I hold much better worth seeing then all Italy."[45]

On the other hand, there were the magnificent relics of Greco-Roman antiquity, brought into strong relief by their paltry surroundings: towers and arches, aqueducts and temples, that had defied the havoc of the ages. For such antiquarian treasures seventeenth-century Europeans had an eye, and they lavished upon the past all the enthusiasm which the Orient of their day failed to evoke in them. There were also the public buildings added by the Turks—superb mosques, vaulted baths, and bazaars resplendent with the fabrics and redolent of the spices of the East. Above all, there was the matchless beauty of the situation—a natural privilege which rendered the capital of the Sultans beyond

comparison the most wonderful city on the face of the earth; and of all parts of that capital not the least advantageously situated were the suburbs of Galata and Pera in which the Franks had their residence, separated from Stambul by the harbour of the Golden Horn.

Galata, the business quarter, occupying the lower slopes of a hill, and Pera, where the Embassies stood, the higher, formed an amphitheatre which commanded a panoramic view of the circumjacent seas with all their bays and islands. Down below gleamed the Golden Horn: a scene of ceaseless animation: merchant ships of all nations riding at anchor; light caïcks flitting to and fro with the grace and the swiftness of swallows; enormous, heavily gilded galleys sailing in and out, some bound north for the Black Sea, others south for the Aegean. From behind this ever-moving panorama, the city of Stambul surged up in all its majesty; a sierra of seven hills broken by the massive domes and slender minarets of innumerable mosques, it glittered in the sunlight and moonlight of the East like a jewel in a silver setting. The most precious gem in this regal jewel was the Grand Signor's Seraglio—a gorgeous assemblage of palaces, mosques, baths, and kiosks scattered amidst gardens and groves. It covered a walled space four miles in circumference, with the Golden Horn on one side, the Sea of Marmara on the other, while round the third side, blue and limpid as the sky itself, swept the rapid stream of the Bosphorus. Across the Bosphorus, on the coast of Asia, rose the bold promontory of Scutari, its slopes encrusted with kiosks and grottos, thickets and hanging gardens, its summit crowned with the domes and minarets of a stately mosque. And close by, in striking contrast, were seen the dark cypress-groves

of Scutari—a procession of mourners watching over a city of the dead. In these congenially solemn groves the Turks loved to sleep their last sleep, permitting the infidels to plant their cemeteries with other trees, but reserving the cypress jealously to themselves. Hither, to the soil of Asia, whence he had come, the Turk loved to return at the last, as if he considered himself a stranger and a sojourner in Europe, as if he felt that here alone his remains would not be disturbed by the revengeful Giaour, when the day of reckoning dawned.

Amidst these exotic scenes, the witchery of which no artist has yet found means to represent on canvas, our countrymen dwelt in spacious and commodious, if unpretentious, houses, with many servants and slaves to minister to their wants. His rank naturally imposed upon the Ambassador proportionate magnificence, and before leaving England he had laid out no less than £2500 on clothes and plate: he knew that his foreign colleagues tried to outshine each other, and he was resolved not to be eclipsed by any of them.[46] The merchants also, though free from such onerous obligations, lived on a scale which at the present day would be pronounced extravagant. Every self-respecting factor kept horses, dogs, and hawks; dressed, drank, gambled—led in the East the existence his contemporaries led at home: we are dealing with English gentlemen of the Restoration, a period when the excessive austerity of the Puritan regime had yielded to a reaction of debauchery.[47] Only in the East the opportunities for self-indulgence were more ample.

No part of the globe has been so liberally blessed with the things that enter into the mouth as the Levant. Western residents and travellers grew

ecstatic at the abundance of good cheer they found in Turkey and its amazing cheapness. For a halfpenny it was possible to buy bread enough for three meals; for little more than a halfpenny a robust man might get as much mutton as he could consume; a pheasant could be had for five pence, and a brace of partridges for nine farthings.[48] The soil there yields its fruits and the sea its fish in equal profusion and variety; and a temperate climate imparts to everything an exquisite flavour. Not less remarkable than the abundance of food was the multiplicity of forms under which it made its appearance on the table. Greek, Turkish, and Italian Masters had combined for centuries to bring the gentle Art of Levantine cooking to a height of perfection that only the Archimageirus of Zeus could have excelled. It is not hard to understand the sentiments of mingled pleasure and mystification with which these succulent dishes were approached by people fresh from a land where a sirloin of beef or a venison pasty represented the utmost achievements of the kitchen, and where every meal was haunted by the unsalted and unsanctified presence of the tedious boiled potato. Turkey was, indeed, a veritable Academy for any Englishman who chose to devote himself seriously and single-mindedly to the cultivation of his stomach.

As for drink—a mighty question!—at home few Englishmen could afford to intoxicate themselves and their guests properly with anything less coarse than beer; in the Levant the choicest wines were common beverages; and those Franks whose palates craved greater variety supplemented their cellars with the products of the West. Ambassadors were even privileged to import 7000 measures of wine a year duty-free. Sir John Finch, who loved the wines of

Italy dearly, but could not consume in his own household more than 2000 measures, was thus able, by selling the surplus, to have his annual supply for nothing.[49]

Things being so, Britons, on the whole, found life in Turkey tolerable enough, and in a place like Constantinople well worth living. To be sure, there were frequent earthquakes and fires, which always caused inconvenience, often grave trouble, sometimes severe suffering. But the most vexatious affliction of all—Turkish oppression—was least felt at Pera. In that suburb Europeans tasted a snatch of liberty not to be found elsewhere throughout the Ottoman Empire, except at Smyrna. There hats and wigs might show themselves abroad with little fear of being struck off the wearer's head. In each other's houses the merchants could indulge their sociable proclivities without let or hindrance. Those among them who had more room than they knew what to do with harboured paying guests, and every now and again there arrived from England a transient visitor whom the residents entertained with hospitable prodigality; for the English in the Levant had caught all the geniality of the Levantine climate, and prided themselves on nothing more than on their warmth towards strangers.

When the summer heats and the Plague, which visited every Turkish town with devastating regularity, made Pera unendurable, the English "Nation" resorted to Belgrade—a well-wooded and well-watered, peaceful little village not more than ten miles distant, open to the fresh and wholesome breezes of the Black Sea. Here, in the company of other Franks, they could dine and dance on the grass near the rivulets and fountains as freely as in any

country-place in Europe. Here the ladies also, who at Constantinople were obliged to efface themselves, more or less, in conformity to Oriental notions of decorum, joined in the amusements of the men. All this served to alleviate the pains of exile for ordinary Britons.

But alas! the best of these sources of happiness—the happiness that comes from free and unrestrained human intercourse—was sealed to seventeenth-century ambassadors. The trammels of Etiquette lay upon them heavily, and their method of living was calculated to inspire respect, not to promote good fellowship. Although they might receive any visitors they liked, they visited only their colleagues, and those rarely. When they issued from their houses, they did so with all the pomp and circumstance of Eastern satraps—attired in the most sumptuously uncomfortable clothes, attended by numerous servants in gaudy liveries, hampered by half-a-dozen led horses. This state they affected, were it only to cross a narrow street. For the rest, they never appeared in the streets of Pera on common occasions, nor went over to Stambul except on ceremonial occasions. With such solemnity and mystery they surrounded themselves in order to create among the Turks the impression that an ambassador was a different being from the common run of his countrymen—that he stood in the scale of creation as far above them as the Grand Signor stood above his own subjects. This splendid isolation, whether impressive or not, was very irksome. Men used to liberty and to living in their own way could not easily submit to such constraint, self-imposed though it was; and, indeed, there were few among those arrogant Excellencies who could afford to dispense with society, who could find a sufficient fund of

entertainment in their own minds to make solitude pleasant.

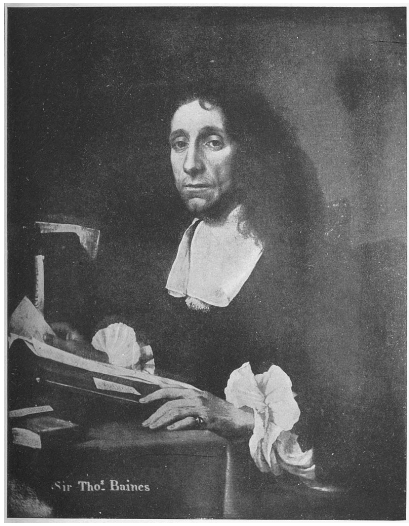
Fortunate in this respect also, Sir John Finch had under his own roof all the society he needed. It consisted of one person—Sir Thomas Baines, another Doctor of Medicine, some years his senior. Finch had made Baines's acquaintance at Christ's College, and from that moment the two had become inseparable. Together at Cambridge, they went together to Padua, where they read the same books and took the same degrees. When Finch returned to England in 1661, he saw to it that Baines shared his good fortune. Both were elected Fellows of the College of Physicians of London on the same day, and together they were made Doctors of Medicine at Cambridge. Finch's devotion knew no bounds. When he was appointed Minister at Florence, he got his friend appointed physician to the Legation, interested all his relatives in him, and, through the influence of his brother-in-law, Lord Conway, procured him the honour of Knighthood in 1672. After living with Finch in Italy and England, Baines followed him to Turkey in the character of a comrade and confidant.

His life-long attachment to this College chum is the one romantic episode in Sir John Finch's history. Without wife and children, he had concentrated all his unused affections on this friend for whom he entertained an admiration little short of idolatry, to whom he communicated all his thoughts, and whose advice he sought in all his difficulties. At Constantinople it soon became a current jest that there were two Excellencies, and the merchants humorously distinguished between them, by referring to the one as the Ambassador, and to the other as the Knight or the Chevalier.[50] It must be

owned that the sight of that eternal pair of middle-aged physicians turned diplomats, each wrapped up in the other and each sufficient unto the other, had its comic as well as its romantic side. They presented to our ribald factors an object lesson in what the French call *égoïsme à deux*—natural only in the case of married couples, especially if they have not been married long.

Truly, it was, in Sir John's own words, "a beautiful and unbroken marriage of souls"—*suave et irruptum animorum connubium*; and, like all unions of the kind, it owed its strength to a happy meeting of opposites. If we may judge from the correspondence of the pair, their minds belonged to widely different types. The letters of the younger man are, on the whole, simple, straightforward, and spontaneous; the writer every now and again proves himself capable of a picturesque phrase, of a pithy statement, of a sound, if not very profound, observation. On the other hand, the elder man's ponderous and pedantic epistles are unreadable, often unintelligible; his attempts at pleasantry painful; his whole style that of a pompous pedagogue. Of the talents which Sir John attributed to him no trace is visible in these dissertations. It is impossible to find in any of them a single remark on philosophy, religion, or society which is not dreary commonplace. And the same thing applies to the records of his conversation: they reek of stale school-learning. There can be no doubt that Finch, though no dazzling genius, had the finer intellect of the two. But intellect is not everything. As the portraits of the two friends stand confronting each other, Finch's sensitive face with its weak mouth and melancholy eyes contrasts very suggestively with Baines's stronger and coarser countenance: look at those lips still shaped in a firm, superior, benignant smile—the

smile of one sure of his own wisdom and of his power of guiding weaker mortals! It is easy to guess at a glance to whom, in this “marriage of souls,” belonged the masculine and to whom the feminine part.



SIR THOMAS BAINES.
From the Portrait by Carlo Dolci at Burley-on-the-Hill.

To face p. 42.

Further, Finch’s face reveals vanity, and Baines’s letters a turn for flattery—gross and inflated beyond even a seventeenth-century measure. Thomas, clearly, had established over John an ascendancy by accustoming him to lean upon his strength and to feed upon his praises. There is also evidence to show that Thomas was not the man to relax his hold: to surrender or share a domination which interest and sentiment alike made precious to him. In 1661 Finch met in Warwickshire a young lady who had the good fortune to please him. The moment Baines got wind of this matrimonial project, he set vigorously to work

to defeat it. He used many arguments of a prudential nature, but the one that clinched the matter was this: Suppose you have children, then you die, and she marries again, how can you be sure that she will not dispose of her estate to her second husband and his progeny?[51] The logic of Thomas triumphed over what John called his love, and he never again caused his friend any uneasiness upon that score. Thenceforward his whole life was annexed and welded to the life of Baines in a degree which, perhaps, has no counterpart in authentic history. As to Baines, he does not seem to have ever loved anybody except Finch and himself.

Needless to say, Sir Thomas did his best to solace Sir John for the loneliness which is the penalty of greatness. That he was a cheerful companion it would be absurd to imagine: he was just as cheerful as could be expected from one who often lay, as he himself tells us, "under the torment of gout and stone both in bladder and rheyns"[52]—common distempers of the times. Not that Finch enjoyed wild spirits either. Both were of a studious and sedentary disposition, and their long residence in Italy had confirmed their constitutional languor: so much so that their friends in England had found the ways of these "Italians," as they nicknamed them, a little hard to understand. As a consequence, they both indulged rather freely in exercises of a theologico-philosophical character and in the pleasures of the table. For the rest, their recreations appear to have been of a strictly conventual innocence. Let us intrude for an instant upon their domestic privacy.

It is the beginning of summer, 1674, and Sir Thomas is seated at his escritoire, writing to Lord Conway. After enumerating "my Lord

Ambassadour's" multitudinous achievements, he descends to matters of a less exalted and more pleasing nature. His very style loses much of its rhetorical affectation as he writes:

"As to the House in itself, it affords no great aspect to the eye without, but truly it is very convenient within, and I think it gives great content to my Lord, as I am sure it does to me. We both taking a great delight to set in our chairs and see the birds in the court lodge upon the cypress tree with as much alacrity and security as the malefactors fly into a church in Italy or a publick Minister's house, upon the foresight of which my Lord from his first coming gave order to all his servants not only [not] to shoot a gun at them, but not to throw a stone: insomuch that at this time we have little wrens which begin to learn to fly first from bough to bough, then from tree to tree, then from tree to the top of the house and so back again, and all under safe protection."[53]

It is a vividly realised picture, sympathetically painted. We see, across the dead years, that long since vanished courtyard at Pera, with its tall bird-haunted cypress tree—and on the open gallery above, behind its wood railing, two clean-shaven, middle-aged English bachelors in full-bottomed wigs, seated side by side, watching the young wrens try their wings; while around them lay the splendour and the havoc of the East: a world in which semi-tones existed not—in which the dominant note was exaggeration—where life was a singular, often a sinister, mixture of brilliant light and deep gloom, and reality partook alternately of the enchantments of a dream and the horrors of a nightmare.

FOOTNOTES:

[42] *Busbequius* (Eng. Tr., 1694), p. 18.

[43] Roger North's *Life of Sir Dudley North*, pp. 118-19; Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 178-9.

[44] Sir Thomas Roe to Lord Carew, May 3, 1622, *Negotiations* (London, 1740), p. 37.

[45] March 30, 1663, *Finch Report*, p. 247.

[46] Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 58.

[47] See Appendix VI.

[48] Henry Blount's *Voyage into the Levant*, in Pinkerton's Collection, vol. x. p. 263; Thevenot's *Travels into the Levant* (Eng. Tr., 1687), Part I. pp. 27, 92; Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 58. More than two generations later, the famous French renegade Comte de Bonneval could keep an establishment including six wives and twenty horses at less than 20 sequins, or £10, a month. See his *Mémoires* (Paris, 1806), vol. ii. p. 339.

[49] Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 58.

[50] See *Life of Dudley North*, *passim*.

[51] Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 33.

[52] Baines to Conway, June 1-11, 1677, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[53] Baines to Conway, May 25, 1674, *ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

THE MEN ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR

Not the least of the many features that differentiated the Constantinople Embassy from all other embassies was the institution of the Dragomans[54]—persons through whom all transactions with the Porte were carried on and upon whom therefore the Ambassador had to depend for the most essential part of his work. The Dragomans, in their dual capacity of Intelligencers and Interpreters, had always been important members of the Embassy staff. But their importance had increased immeasurably since the Elizabethan tradition of appointing ambassadors who had served their apprenticeship as secretaries to their predecessors had yielded to the practice of sending out diplomats new to Turkey, her language, and her ways. Cut off from direct contact with the country, the Ambassador now relied almost entirely upon his Dragomans' reports. The Dragomans were his eyes and his ears, as well as his mouth: they were, in fact, absolute masters of business and of their employer.

The system laboured under the usual disadvantages of dealing by proxy, and a good many more peculiar to Turkey. As Intelligencers the Dragomans were not all that might have been desired: their information was often inaccurate, and

sometimes, when information failed, they, in order to keep up their reputation for omniscience, had recourse to invention. Our Ambassadors had already learnt from experience to receive their news with extreme caution.[55] Hardly more satisfactory were the Dragomans in their character of Interpreters. Absurd as it may sound, the persons who performed this most delicate and confidential function were not subjects of the sovereign they served, but of the Grand Signor: natives of Pera, mostly of Italian extraction. This rendered them very indifferent vehicles of the ambassadorial mind. When the message with which they were charged happened to be disagreeable to the Porte, they manifested the strongest disinclination to deliver it. Fear tied their tongues: they would much rather risk their employer's displeasure than the brutal fury of an angry pasha. There was nothing to wonder at in this: Dragomans had often been drubbed, sometimes even hanged or impaled, for doing their duty. So real was the danger and so powerless was the Ambassador to protect his own servants against the savagery of their liege lords that even in his presence the Dragomans dared not translate faithfully his words, if they were of a nature to irritate his Turkish collocutor. At the mere sound of such words, they were seized with panic: their faces grew red and white by turns, their foreheads were covered with beads of sweat, their limbs trembled, their mouths went suddenly dry—as if they already felt the stick on the soles of their feet or the halter round their necks. It was no unusual thing to see the Dragoman of a European Ambassador, after stammering out an expurgated version of the message, drop on his knees before the Turkish Minister and burst into abject apologies for his temerity. At times, ingenious interpreters gifted

with presence of mind were known to improvise imaginary dialogues—to substitute speeches of their own inspiration for those really made by the parties on whose behalf they acted. The position was both tragic and ludicrous; but no ambassador not utterly devoid of reason and humanity could complain. He himself, if he were in the Dragoman's shoes, would behave as the Dragoman behaved. Even as it was, despite his non-subjection to the Grand Signor, despite also the theoretical inviolability of his person, a prudent ambassador shrank from irritating a Turkish pasha: envoys of various Powers who had forgotten to hold their tongues had been affronted, assaulted, dragged down the stairs by the hair of their heads, imprisoned in noisome dungeons. All things considered, the wonder is not so much that the Dragomans fulfilled their perilous task inadequately, as that they dared undertake it at all.

Other inconveniences connected with the system enhanced its inherent viciousness. The Dragomans of the English Embassy were Roman Catholics, and as all Roman Catholics in Turkey were protected by the representatives of the Catholic Powers, they were so much biassed in favour of their patrons that, when the interests of England clashed with those of a Catholic Power, the English Ambassador could scarcely trust them. Again, the Dragomans were often men with large families, and they were very poorly paid. The temptation therefore to betray their trust for money was hard to resist. Further, motives of religious sympathy and cupidity apart, there was the lure of vanity which frequently impelled a Dragoman to babble out the secrets of his employer in order to show his own importance. As if to multiply the dangers of indiscretion, Dragomans serving different ambassadors were often nearly

related to one another, or a Dragoman who served one embassy at one time might later on transfer his services to its rival. It was even possible for a Dragoman of an embassy to become a Dragoman of the Porte, or, while employed by the embassy, to have a kinsman similarly employed at the Porte. How secrecy and fidelity under such conditions could ever be looked for it is not easy to understand.

The vices of the system were flagrant; but the difficulty of finding a remedy was no less great. An interpreter to do his duty satisfactorily had to be both competent and courageous. But no interpreter, under the Turkish rule, could possess both these qualifications in the same degree. If he was a foreigner, he could not have the necessary knowledge of the Turkish language, customs, and character. If he was a native, he could not have the necessary courage. The French, whose Dragomans had suffered most grievously from Turkish ferocity, were the only European nation to attempt a solution of the problem. Their great Minister Colbert had, a few years since, initiated a reform by sending twelve young Frenchmen to Smyrna, there to be taught in the Convent of the Capuchins Turkish, Arabic, and Modern Greek, and then be distributed among the French Consulates, the ablest of them being destined for the service of the Embassy. This departure secured to the Diplomatic and Consular services of France in the Levant a supply of interpreters who, though they might not possess a native's intimacy with Turkish ways, could be trusted to carry out their instructions honestly and boldly. The advantage gained by this change was so patent, that the best-informed Englishmen hastened to recommend its adoption;[56] and, in fact, it was adopted by England —two hundred years later.

Meanwhile, Sir John Finch had to work through his Perote, Italian-speaking "Druggermen." The chief of them, Signor Giorgio Draperys, "knight of Jerusalem, and of the most noble and ancient family in this country,"[57] was a man well stricken in years. He had served the English Embassy for half a century, and had witnessed all its vicissitudes under six different occupants. His long and varied experience made Signor Giorgio invaluable to a novice: no man had a more thorough acquaintance with the rules of Turkish procedure or with the usages and precedents that governed the mutual intercourse of foreign envoys than this Patriarch of Pera. His honesty was not above the normal. For instance, a Prince of Moldavia, who owed his elevation to Lord Winchilsea, presented the Dragoman with 6000 sheep for himself, and with 12,000 sheep—as well as 4000 crowns in cash, a ring worth 1000 crowns, and a horse worth 300 crowns—for the Ambassador. There is reason to believe that none of these tokens of Moldavian gratitude ever reached His Excellency.[58] Of the second Dragoman, Signor Antonio Perone, who eventually succeeded Signor Giorgio, we shall hear enough in the course of this story.

In addition, Sir John had an English Secretary, a Mr. William Carpenter, of whom little more than the name is known to us; and, besides, he was assisted by the Levant Company's Cancellier, an officer whose business it was to draw up all legal documents and to register them in the Embassy Cancellaria. This office was at the time filled by Mr. Thomas Coke, a man small in stature, but, it would seem, of great ability and amiability.[59]

Three other Englishmen with whom business

brought Sir John into frequent contact were personages sufficiently notable in themselves, and they play sufficiently prominent parts in our story to deserve special notice.



Paul Rycaut Esq. late Consul of Smyrna; Fellow of the Royall Societie.
From the Engraving by R. White after the Portrait by Sir Peter Lely.

To face p. 53.

At Smyrna he had met our distinguished Consul, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Paul Rycaut, a graduate of Cambridge, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and an author of European reputation. As his name implies, Rycaut was of foreign extraction—the son of a wealthy banker of Brabant who, having settled in England under James I. and ruined himself for Charles I., died leaving a large family all but destitute. It fell to the lot of Paul to provide by his labours for most of these victims of Loyalty. After six arduous years at the Constantinople Embassy, as

Secretary to Lord Winchilsea—who found him "so modest, discreet, able, temperate and faithfull" that he transferred him from the steward's table to his own and treated him "more like a friend than a servant"[60]—he obtained from the Levant Company the Consulate of Smyrna. Important and lucrative as this post was, it was hardly one of those that give tranquillity to an ambitious heart or enjoyment to a cultivated mind. While performing its duties with exemplary energy and conscientiousness, Rycaut looked upon it as a stepping-stone to higher things. In 1666, during a long visit home on public business, he had brought himself to the notice of the Court by his work on *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*—a book which, running into many editions and translated into French, Italian, German, and Polish, made the author famous,[61] without, however, making him what he wished to be. Lord Arlington testified to Rycaut's "good parts" and other good qualities,[62] but did nothing for him. We may congratulate ourselves that his promotion was postponed so long; to that circumstance we are indebted for much valuable information. But Rycaut had small cause to feel pleased. The Smyrna Consulate cramped him like a prison cell. His discontent is written as plain as large print can make it in the Epistle Dedicatory prefixed to the *History of the Turkish Empire* which he published a few years later: "Ever since the time of Your Majesties happy Restauration," he grumbles, "my Lot hath fallen to live and act within the Dominions of the Turk." The same feeling is not less plain in the portrait (a fine engraving after Sir Peter Lely) which adorns the volume. It shows us a refined face that combines the irritability of a scholar with the keenness of a place-hunter; an emaciated face with eyes large, expressive

and aggressive, thin lips tightly pressed, and a chin of remarkable pugnacity—the face of a man determined to get on and very angry at Fortune's slow pace. It is said to resemble Molière's. The resemblance certainly does not extend to a sense of humour. Perhaps it was this want (for assuredly it was not want of push) that condemned a person of Rycaut's abilities and attainments to rust in the Consulate of Smyrna, when his intellectual inferiors became Secretaries of State in London. Charles II. had little use for men who could not laugh.

Many were the prickly problems that Sir John Finch and Mr. Paul Rycaut had to handle together during the next few years; and on all occasions the Ambassador found a most loyal and respectful lieutenant in this highly accomplished and polished Cavalier.

Of quite a different mould was the Rev. John Covel, Chaplain to the Embassy and afterwards Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge. Like Finch and Baines, Covel hailed from Christ's College. Like them, too, he had studied Medicine in early life, but eventually discovering an easier vocation, he threw physic to the dogs, took holy orders, and got a Fellowship at his College. To him also, as to the others, the Restoration had come as a providential blessing: witness the Latin prose and English verse wherein he vented his feelings. The merits of his Latin performance were such as might have been expected from an erudite young don. Those of his English effusion may be judged by the following sample:

The horrible winter's gone,
  And we enjoy a cheerful spring;
The kind approach of the Sun
  Gives a new birth to every thing.

Among other things, it gave a new birth to the songster's prospects.

In 1670 an adventure beckoned the Rev. John from afar, and his heart leapt to greet it. The Constantinople chaplaincy had fallen vacant by the retirement of the learned Dr. Thomas Smith (known to history as "Rabbi" Smith). There was the romance of the East with its new skies and seas and lands; there were curious old creeds to be investigated, a strange world of Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Franks, with their various ways of life: by all means let us go! He obtained the appointment from the Levant Company, and from the King a dispensation which enabled him to retain his Fellowship at the same time. Thus, while drawing at Constantinople a handsome salary and considerable perquisites for the little he did, our lucky divine also received from Cambridge, for doing nothing at all, "all and singular the profits, dividends, stipends, emoluments, and dues belonging to his Fellowship in as full and ample manner to all intents and purposes as if he were actually resident in the College."[63]

It may be doubted whether a happier Englishman ever trod the soil of the Grand Signor than the Rev. John. He revelled in the rich colours and savours of the Levant. The ceremonies of the Turkish Court and the rites of the Greek Church were a perennial fountain of interest to him, while the noisy wrangles of theology touched a vibrant chord in his sympathetic breast. Did Eastern Christians believe that the bread and wine in the Eucharist turned into flesh and blood, or did they believe that it remained bread and wine? This riddle raged just then at Constantinople; and the reverberations of the controversy, expanding in wider and yet wider

circles, reached Rome, Paris, London, stirring up everywhere suitably attuned minds to intense, passionate, and to us almost incomprehensible virulence. The Rev. John plunged into the transubstantial vortex with all the polemical zest of a theologian and with a vague notion of writing a big book about it one day. He discussed the holy and unwholesome question with everybody—Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant—he could lay hands on, always ending at the point whence he started—the creed of Christ's College, Cambridge. Not less eagerly did our Chaplain plunge into the ecclesiastical politics than into the metaphysical polemics of the place. The age-long feud between Greek and Latin was then blended with the squabbles of rival Greek pretenders to the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople: Patriarchs arose and Patriarchs fell as Grand Vizirs did formerly; anathematising their predecessors cordially and being as cordially anathematised by their successors, to the Rev. John's indescribable delight. [64] That was life, pardieu—the absorbing interplay of warm human hearts and even warmer human heads.

Though Covel devoted some attention to archaeology, it was with a lack of interest which he is at no pains to conceal. He could hardly express his scorn for the "whiflers" who came out of England and France and careered over the Ottoman Empire buying or stealing classical antiques. The lore he really loved was folklore: Greek legends, Turkish songs, living superstitions. If we except manuscripts dealing with early Heresies, for which he had a passion (even the sanest of us are mad), the Rev. John only collected curios that appealed to his sense of the beautiful—if he came across them cheap. For the same reason he had an appreciative eye for

costumes, jewels, carpets, and other articles of personal or domestic adornment: they all served to make life pleasant. On all these topics our Chaplain would talk and scribble with unflagging volubility —"at full gallop," to use his own racy simile— repeating himself, digressing, returning to the subject, straying from it again, losing himself in a labyrinth of minute irrelevancies. Fond of shooting and riding, a friend of gay young men and no enemy to gay young women, especially pretty ones, the Rev. John was immensely popular with our factors, who found in him a "papas"[65] after their own hearts.

To the Ambassador also the Rev. John was very acceptable. Going everywhere, seeing everybody, and hearing everything, the divine had much to say that was useful for a diplomat to know, particularly about Greek Patriarchs, Latin friars and their quarrels; a subject, as we shall see hereafter, by no means foreign to an English ambassador's business in those days. Precluded by his dignity from crossing the water in person, Sir John could employ the Rev. John as a channel of communication between Pera and the Phanar. And the Rev. John, as one gathers from his own voluminous writings, was versatile enough to act as the friend of all contending parties in turn, according to the exigencies of the political vane, far too worldly-wise to let consistency interfere with preferment. For Covel, though content with the present, never forgot the future; he was not less anxious to get on than Rycaut, only built on softer, more supple and sinuous lines, he glided where the other stumbled.[66] Altogether an astonishingly brisk, jovial, garrulous parson of six-and-thirty this, full of harmless little vanities, human levities, and healthy little profanities.

But the most striking personality among the English residents, and the one Sir John Finch had most to do with, was the Treasurer of the Levant Company at Constantinople, the Honourable (afterwards Sir) Dudley North, younger son of Lord North,—a handsome man of thirty-three, already eminent and destined to be famous. In literary attainments North fell far short of Rycaut and Covel, but in natural intelligence, in initiative, in resource, in tenacity, in self-command, in knowledge of the world, and in the other qualities which conduce to success in life, he was surpassed by no man of his time. His career is one of the most deeply interesting documents that have come down to us from the seventeenth century; even episodes apparently trifling in themselves become full of meaning when viewed in connection with the general character of the times.

Like all younger sons Dudley had to carve his own way to independence. One of his brothers went to the Bar,—ending as Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in succession to Sir John Finch's own brother,—another went into the Church. Dudley might have followed in the footsteps of either. But the Bar required much reading, the Church imposed many restraints. Dudley, not studious enough for the one profession and too lively for the other, revealed at an early age the calling for which Nature designed him. At school, while proving himself a hopeless dunce at book-work, he drove a most profitable trade among the other boys, buying cheap and selling dear. Manifestly commerce was his metier.

In seventeenth-century England no social cleavage existed between the world of commerce and the world of the Court. Since Feudalism had expired in

the Wars of the Roses, differences of birth had ceased to divide the landed from the moneyed classes. All the county families had their kinsmen in the towns, and the ambition of many a nobleman's younger son was to become an alderman, to attain which eminence he had to serve his apprenticeship behind the counter and to work with his hands like a menial. The snobbishness which again divides the two worlds in our day did not set in until the latter part of the eighteenth century. It is necessary to emphasise this fact in order to correct an erroneous impression promulgated by brilliant and superficial historians.[67]

So young Dudley was forthwith placed in a London "writing school" to acquire the arts of book-keeping and penmanship. At that school he gave further evidence of his financial genius by extricating himself from the clutches of his creditors through the simple device of presenting his noble parents with faked bills of expenses—not crudely, as an amateur might, but as a born artist would. The next step in our promising youth's fortunes was his being bound apprentice to a Turkey Merchant. By this time Dudley, with remarkable precocity, had sown his wild oats and had made up his mind on the one thing needful. As his master's limited business left him ample leisure, he employed it in helping his landlord, a packer, at the packing-press, whereby he not only eked out his slender allowance, but also acquired experience which was to be of great value to him—the skilful packing of cloth sent to Turkey being one of the first mysteries of the trade a novice had to master. His initiation over, North at the age of eighteen was sent out to Smyrna as a factor. For capital to trade with on his own account he had only four hundred pounds advanced him by his family,

and he depended therefore chiefly on the commissions from his master, supplemented by an occasional order from some other Turkey Merchants he had ingratiated himself with in London by officiously doing odd jobs for them. These resources were very meagre, and the standard of living in the Smyrna Factory, as at the other Levant factories, was very high. Nowhere did conviviality reach greater heights.[68] With extraordinary strength of mind young North refused to bow to fashion. He lodged humbly, dressed plainly, fed simply, kept no horses, dogs, or hawks, made in every way a virtue of penury; his settled principle being to save abroad that he might one day be able to spend at home. From that principle neither the gibes of his fellows nor the impulses of his own young blood ever swayed him. Once the others pressed him very earnestly to go a-hunting with them. The wise youth, not to give offence, complied—but with characteristic originality, instead of buying a horse he hired an ass.

In this thrifty way, mindful of his high aim and philosophically indifferent to public opinion, North passed several years at Smyrna, working hard, thinking hard, conciliating by his wit the young whom his eccentricity would otherwise have alienated, earning by his capacity the respect of the old, and making his company sought after by "the top merchants of the Factory." His letters are full of acute observations and mature reflections on all matters that fell within his vision. His curiosity was as voracious as Covel's, but it did not feed on the external aspect of things. North took nothing for granted. He burnt with a desire to know the cause and reason of everything—from an earthquake to a fever, from the navigation of a ship or the

construction of a building to the government of an empire. He was perpetually on the path of inquiry and discovery, never allowing his faculties to rest or rust. While engaged in the practice of commerce, he brought his vigorous analytical mind to bear on its underlying laws, striking out, in opposition to the generally accepted views of his day, a theory of trade which anticipated David Hume's and Adam Smith's economic philosophy by nearly a hundred years.

The chance for which North waited and prepared came at last. There was a celebrated house of English commission agents and merchants at Constantinople —the house of Messrs. Hedges and Palmer. Their business was very large, but through mismanagement it had fallen into the utmost confusion. North was invited to become a partner and set things straight. He jumped at the invitation. Through his doggedness, resourcefulness, and adroitness, old debts were recovered, compounded for, or written off, the book-keeping department was reorganised; and order was evolved out of chaos. As soon as Mr. Hedges saw the business fairly under way he retired to England at the beginning of 1670, leaving him and Palmer to carry on by themselves. Then the trouble began. Palmer was everything that North was not. He lived in a great house and at great expense. His table was loaded with plenty, and guests were never absent from it. They came at noon and spent the rest of the day helping their host to empty his bottles. By the time North had finished his work Palmer had finished his dinner. North returned home very tired and found his partner very drunk. After many unpleasant scenes, he took a strong line. He wrote to all the correspondents of the firm in Europe, explaining the reasons which led him to break with his partner and soliciting the continuance

of their patronage to himself. His reputation stood so high, and apparently Palmer's so low, that the principals did not hesitate.

This may be described as our Factor's first stride. He was now captain of his own ship. Only, as English merchants did not care to trust single agents abroad, because on their deaths, or even in their lives, there was always danger of embezzlement, he thought fit to take into partnership his younger brother Montagu, who, like himself, had been bred a Turkey Merchant and then resided as factor at Aleppo. Henceforward North's career was one continuous run of prosperity. He soon became the chief English merchant in Constantinople, was elected Treasurer by the Levant Company, and went on amassing wealth at a great rate, deeming no enterprise too high or too low for the end he had in view, imparting to everything he did a touch of his own original genius.

The ordinary Englishman in the polyglot Levant was content to transact his business through interpreters. North would have nothing to do with vicarious communication. He acquired Italian, which was the Lingua Franca of the Near East, the debased Spanish spoken by the Jews of Turkey—descendants of the refugees expelled by Ferdinand and Isabella—who had made themselves indispensable as brokers to Franks and Turks alike, and (a much rarer accomplishment) the Turkish tongue. Moreover, he learnt the laws of Turkey. In litigation before a Turkish court he was his own pleader, as in conversation he was his own interpreter. He did not, however, trust implicitly to his own intimacy with the subtleties of Ottoman Justice. He kept a tame Cadi to whose advice he had recourse upon occasion.

Further, before a trial, he took care to make his case known to the judge and to quicken the judge's intelligence with a present. When his case came on, if North had no true witnesses to produce, he produced false ones. Indeed, he preferred the latter kind on principle, having found by experience that a false witness was safer; for, if the judge had a mind to confuse a witness, an honest man who did not know the game could not so well wriggle through the net of captious questions as a rogue versed in all its rules.

The Honourable Dudley showed equal tact in his other dealings with the Turks. Not the least remunerative of his occupations was usury—lending money to necessitous pashas at 20 or 30 per cent. Now, by Turkish law all interest was illegal, and the debtor could not be forced to pay a farthing on that score. So a world of cunning and caution was needed, and the wisest might suffer through inadvertence. To avoid accidents, North combined hospitality with business. He built and furnished a room where his victims could loll on soft cushions, sip endless cups of coffee and liquids stronger than coffee, smoke endless tchibooks in safety (under Mohammed IV. tobacco was rigorously forbidden), and be fleeced in comfort. The host, it goes without saying, was not fastidious about the morals of his guests. No narrow prejudices of virtue ever hindered his familiarity with all human beings that chance might fling in his way. The sinner and the saint were equally welcome, so long as there was anything to be got out of them. Among his most intimate boon companions and clients was a particularly unsavoury captain of one of the Grand Signor's galleys. North used to lend him money and also to palm off upon him his rotten cloths.

The fertility of North's invention did not stop there. His shrewd study of human nature had taught him that men are influenced by externals far more than by essentials. He endeavoured to make the Turks feel at home with him by making himself outwardly like one of them. Knowing their prejudice against clean-shaven faces he grew a prodigious pair of moustaches, such as the best of them had. He tried to sit cross-legged, as they sat, and learnt to write as they wrote, resting the paper on his left hand, and making the lines slope from the left top corner downwards. He taught himself to use parables, apologues, and figures of speech, as they did, and to swear as they swore. Of this last accomplishment he was especially proud. He held that for purposes of vituperation Turkish was more apt than any other language, and he grew so accustomed to its aptness that even when he returned home his tongue would run into Turkish blasphemy of itself. Let us add another external trait that tended to make this infidel acceptable to true believers, though it was a trait for which he was indebted to nature rather than to self-culture. "It seems," says his biographer, "that after he found his heart's ease at Constantinople he began to grow fat, which increased upon him, till, being somewhat tall and well whiskered, he made a jolly appearance, such as the Turks approve most of all in a man."

North's pains to please had not been wasted. The Turks whom he entertained at 30 per cent were so delighted with this wonderful Giaour that they pressed him to become really and wholly one of them by abjuring his false religion. North always parried these awkward blandishments with his usual adroitness. He never argued on religion, or indeed on any other subject, with the Turks. Nobody likes to be

contradicted, and the Turks were not accustomed to bear dissent from a Giaour. Our Treasurer would not lose profitable customers for any consideration. He had not gone to Constantinople to quarrel but to climb; and he had long since learnt that at Constantinople, as elsewhere, climbing could only be performed in the same posture as crawling. So without attempting to argue, he laughed away the suggestion of apostasy by saying, “My father wore a hat and left that hat to me. I wear it because my father left it, and”—clapping his hands on his head —“I will wear it as long as I live!” He knew the Turks well enough to know that he lost nothing in their eyes by his attachment to the paternal hat. For though keen on proselytising—always by temptation and persuasion, hardly ever by constraint—they had little respect for the proselyte.

By such means our Treasurer waxed not only wealthy but also wise. The Turks, as a rule, were too proud to converse familiarly with Christians, thinking (perhaps not without reason) that few Christians were worthy of their confidence. The result was that the English and other Franks who lived amongst them and dealt with them knew about as much of Turkish life, of Turkish ways of thought, of Turkish maxims of conduct, as an undesirable alien dwelling in Whitechapel knows of English life. Dudley North was the only Frank who, thanks to his natural adaptability and flexibility, had contrived to insinuate himself, more or less, into the spirit of Turkey. On those occasions of convivial expansion, while his guests sedulously swilled his liquids, North not less sedulously pumped their minds. He picked up every hint that dropped from their lips, hoarded it in his retentive memory, connected it with other hints, and, assisted by uncommonly quick powers of

deduction and induction, learnt a good deal more in five minutes than the average European would in as many months. Conscious of his unique position as a first-hand authority on the Turks, he thought very little of Rycaut as an expert in the religion, manners, and politics of the Ottoman Empire. He described his work as very shallow. Once he went over the whole of it, and noted on the margin its errors. That copy, with some other curiosities he had collected and a Turkish dictionary he had compiled, was stolen from him. He could never discover the thief, but he thought that the things he had lost might perhaps be found among the belongings of the Rev. John Covel.

From this it would appear that the Consul and the Chaplain had not an admirer in our Treasurer. Nor, it may be presumed, had he in them fanatical worshippers.

Such was the Honourable Dudley: independent, self-reliant, holding in profound contempt the weaknesses, stupidities, and conventionalities of his neighbours; yet withal knowing how to use them for his own ends; a man infinitely flexible of plan, but fixed of purpose, and, happen what might, intent not to play the dilettante in this world.[69]

FOOTNOTES:

[54] "Dragoman" is of course a clumsy transliteration of the Turkish, or rather Arabic, *Targuman*, interpreter. Seventeenth-century Englishmen gave to this word many forms, more or less fantastic and more or less remote from the original (*drichman*, *truckman*, etc.), but it most commonly figures as Druggerman (pl. Druggermen).

[55] See *e.g.* Harvey to Arlington, Dec. 4, 1670; April 30, July 19, 27, 1671, *S.P. Turkey*, 19. But the most eloquent testimonial to Dragoman information is furnished by Harvey's Secretary: "Here seldome happens anything worthy remarke and when there does it is so uncertainly reported to us by our Druggermen who are our only Intelligencers, that experience makes us very incredulous; what wee heare one day is com-only contradicted the next, and shou'd I give you a dayly account of things according to your desire, my busines wou'd bee almost every other Letter to disabuse you in what I had writt to you before."—Geo. Etherege to Joseph Williamson; Endorsed: "R. 8 May, 1670," *ibid.*

[56] Rycaut's *Present State*, pp. 169-70. For examples of the terrorism exercised by the Turks towards European envoys and their Dragomans, see that work, pp. 155 foll., as well as the same author's *History of the Turkish Empire*, and his *Memoirs*, *passim*.

[57] Finch to Coventry, Jan. 6-16, 1675-76, *Coventry Papers*.

[58] See *Finch Report*, p. 521.

[59] "A man of singular parts, an excellent gentleman's companion, capable to undertake and go through with any business whatsoever."—Lord Pagett to the Right Hon. James Vernon, July 23, 1698, *S.P. Turkey*, 21.

[60] Winchilsea to Sir Heneage Finch, Jan. 11, 1662 [-3], *Finch Report*, p. 233. How much the Ambassador owed to his Secretary is shown by a comparison between his despatches and Rycaut's *Memoirs*.

[61] Pepys, after the Great Fire, which burnt most of the first edition, had to pay 55 shillings for a copy. It is true that this was one

of the six copies printed with coloured pictures, “whereof the King and Duke of York and Duke of Monmouth, and Lord Arlington had four.”—*Diary*, March 20, April 8, 1667.

[62] Arlington to Winchilsea, Oct. 13, 1666, *Finch Report*, p. 442.

[63] “Extracts from the Diaries of Dr. John Covel,” in *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, Introd. p. xxix. This essay can be safely recommended only to experts capable of checking its innumerable ineptitudes.

[64] See such a scene in his *Diaries*, p. 145, where for the printed date “Nov. 8th 1674” read “Nov. 8th 1671” (cp. his *Account of the Greek Church*, Pref. p. xi).

[65] Greek for priest: so the English in the Levant styled their parsons familiarly.

[66] Among the State Papers at the P.R.O. (*Turkey*, 19) there are several letters from him to Lord Arlington and his secretary Joseph Williamson. The one in which Covel congratulates this very mediocre gentleman (to whom he was a perfect stranger) on his elevation to the post of Principal Secretary of State, dated “Pera, Jan. 8th 1674-5,” breaks all the records of adulation known even to that sycophantic age.

[67] See Appendix VII.

[68] See Appendix VIII.

[69] My sketch of Dudley North is based on the *Life* of him by Roger North. It is amusing to find the biographer, who idealised and idolised his brother, holding him up as a pattern of truthfulness, probity, and honour, and at the same time relating all the above facts, without the least suspicion of the impression that some of them might convey to

an unbiassed reader.

CHAPTER V

STRENUA INERTIA

We must now return to Sir John Finch.

We left him in the middle of 1674 at Pera, and there we still find him at the end of the year. In the interval the Grand Vizir, after a successful summer's campaign, had returned to Adrianople and taken up his winter pastime—negotiations for peace. French emissaries and Hungarian malcontents fostered these attempts with all their might in the hope of turning the attention of the Turks against their Austrian enemy. The Turks, Sir John understood, were "heartily weary of this lean warr in so cold and beggarly a country, having spent allready in it 13 Millions of Dollars," but as the Poles were in precisely the same mood, Ahmed Kuprili, like a good diplomat, had no mind to come to terms in a hurry. Hostilities, therefore, were to be continued, but in a languid fashion, and to be pleasantly diversified with festivities. The Sultan had decided to pass the next season in mirth and jollity, celebrating the circumcision of his son and the marriage of his daughter. Both these interesting domestic events had been in contemplation since 1669—when the boy was about six and the girl not more than one year old; but circumstances over which the happy father

had no control had caused their postponement. They were at last to take place in the spring of 1675, “with all the magnificence that at such a feast can be shown. The Records of the Serraglio here being to this effect sent for to Adrianople, it being 60 years since this publick festivall has bin celebrated.” So Sir John reported, adding, “My Audience I have designd’ to be at the same time that I may see the Grandeur of this Empire in all its glory; I imagine that I shall see a Great Army, Great Quantity of Excellent Horses; Most rich furniture and Livery’s as to Jewells and all Pompe of Embroaderys.”[70]

It would have been better for Sir John, if he had hastened to a Court whither business called him, and where he was expected, instead of waiting for festivals to which he had not been invited. But, at any rate, in the months that were yet to elapse before he moved, he found at Constantinople plenty of scope for his diplomatic skill.

First of all, it was in these months that the thread of Sir John Finch’s career became intertwined with that of his French colleague, the extravagant, eccentric, magnificent, and altogether picturesque Marquis de Nointel, who aimed at notability and achieved notoriety. He broke in upon Sir John’s life at this moment like a flaming meteor, to illumine it or otherwise we need not say: perhaps the story itself will show. The connection was inevitable. By the Treaty signed at Dover in May 1670, Charles, for a consideration which he hoped would enable him to settle domestic affairs to his own liking, had bound himself, in foreign affairs, to the chariot of Louis. Thanks to this covenant, the secular antagonism between the Governments of England and France had ceased, and together with it the friction between

their representatives at the Porte. This is not to say that English diplomacy in Turkey had become entirely subservient to French diplomacy. Sir John's immediate predecessor Harvey, as is made abundantly clear by his despatches, knew perfectly well where to draw the line. During his last two years at Constantinople (1671-1672) he had lived on the most intimate terms with Nointel. Yet not only he never did anything calculated to prejudice the interests of his country, but showed the greatest vigilance in checking every encroachment on the part of his friend: watching his attempts to obtain from the Porte privileges detrimental to English commerce or prestige, preparing to counteract all such attempts, if necessary, and reporting home the French Ambassador's failures with undisguised satisfaction.[71] In the queer business of diplomacy co-operation on some points does not preclude opposition on others, and the closest friendship can flourish beside the bitterest enmity. It is perhaps the only field of human activity that presents such a constant combination of incompatibles. It was part of Sir John's duty to continue this qualified cordiality.

Unfortunately, since his arrival, there had occurred some incidents which, unless very tactfully handled, threatened to jeopardise the success of his efforts.

Although the Courts of England and France were at this time allies, the English and French nations in the Levant continued to be as, without interruption, they had always been, jealous rivals in trade and everything else; and the intercourse between them had not been improved by the character of that alliance: the English felt irritated at the humiliating position in which the policy of Charles placed them, while the French felt proportionately vain of the

eminence they owed to the power of Louis. In these circumstances every tiff was magnified into a tempest, as must be the case whenever the point at issue, however trivial in itself, can be brought into any relation with national pride. When men meet each other in a spirit of discord, predisposed at every moment to give or receive offence, how soon is difference converted into hostility, hardened into hatred, exasperated into rage. What folly and outrage may not be expected to ensue! These psychological conditions rendered the incidents Sir John had to deal with serious—even alarming.

The first had occurred at the very moment of his landing at Smyrna. A number of French merchants had been sent by their Consul to greet him and to grace his entry into the town. But the cavalcade had scarcely moved when a lively dispute about precedence broke out between the French and the English Factors, and the former—hot-tempered and not overbred Marseillese for the most part—in spite of Consul Rycaut's endeavours to appease them, left the procession, hurling at the English words unfit for polite ears. After this scene Sir John during his sojourn at Smyrna received from the French "Nation" none of those civilities to which the representative of a Court in alliance with theirs was entitled, nor any mark of respect from the French ships on his departure, though all the other European vessels in the harbour hoisted their flags and fired their guns in his honour. Sir John was sorely vexed: he had intended his advent to be an occasion for strengthening Anglo-French relations, and it had been the signal for fresh animosities. Doubtless he would have offered an explanation to the French Ambassador as soon as he reached Constantinople, but that gentleman was at the time away on a tour

through the Levant—visiting the various centres of French enterprise, commercial and religious, and spreading the fame of France over the Orient. Thus the matter remained pending, and meanwhile to the Smyrna incident had been added another at Aleppo.

On June 22nd, 1674, three Majorca corsairs—part of a squadron of 20 that was infesting the Syrian coasts—entered the port of Scanderoon, where an English man-of-war, the *Sweepstakes*, lay refitting after a bad storm, and two French merchantmen ready to sail for home. On the appearance of the corsairs the French vessels besought the protection of the English warship, the captain of which, though in a sad plight himself—his topmast was down—promised to protect them, on condition they took no action until they saw him begin. In accordance with this promise, when the pirate flagship came within speaking distance, he hailed her and warned her not to violate the peace. The pirate replied in the affirmative, and then, passing under the stern of the *Sweepstakes*, cast anchor between her and the French vessels. The latter, panic-stricken, fired, whereupon the Majorcans made short work of them. The French of Aleppo furiously denounced the English commander to the Turkish authorities as an accomplice of the pirates, and, when they had cooled a little, referred their grievance to M. de Nointel, who just then was at Tripoli in Syria. The English Consul of Aleppo stopped the mouth of the Turkish governor with a bribe of 1500 dollars and wrote to the French Ambassador the truth of the matter. But Nointel, unconvinced, sent to Sir John the French version of the affair, accusing the English commander of treachery and collusion, and asking that Finch should give a proof of his friendship and at the same time furnish the King of England with

the means of restoring the honour of his flag by procuring the punishment of one who, whether from interest or from whatever other motive, had tarnished it in such a cowardly manner.[72]

This “imbroyl” had cost the English Factory no small trouble. Nevertheless, when presently M. de Nointel came to Aleppo, our factors went out in a body to meet him—a troop of young cavaliers whose looks, mounts, and garments excited in the French Ambassador’s entourage admiration and envy mingled with astonishment. Why, these English traders were cadets of good family—even “des fils de milords,” making their own fortunes in a far-away land! But M. de Nointel spurned them, for they had come without their Consul, and therefore their homage was not “dans les formes.”[73]

Evidently the noble Marquis was, to use the slang of the times, “in a Huff”; and it was in no amiable frame of mind that, on the 31st of December, the very anniversary of Sir John’s arrival, he touched at Smyrna on his return voyage.

Our Factory seized the opportunity to pay the French back in kind: neglect for neglect, and slight for slight. Twenty-four boats, carrying the French Consul and all his compatriots—also the Consuls of Venice, Genoa, and Messina, each in a boat flying his national colours—met the man-of-war that bore the noble Marquis in the middle of the bay; but of the English Nation there was no sign or ensign. Neither did the good ship *Hunter* that chanced to be in port hang out her “Ancient” or fire a gun as the French Ambassador passed by. We simply did not know that “any such person was come.” The French received exactly the treatment they had meted out to us a year ago. “Onely our Consul did more like a

Gentleman then theirs." That this snub might not seem strange to the noble Marquis, Mr. Rycaut sent him a letter in beautiful French, explaining at length the weighty reasons of national dignity which compelled us to abstain from paying his Excellency the homage, etc. M. de Nointel returned a verbal answer: he was sorry for that misunderstanding, but he was none the less the courtly Consul's friend and servant. "Thus farr things seemd' to looke like reciprocations, and to be layd asleep." But Eris—the dread goddess of strife—slept not. She lay awake revolving in her heart how to set the "Nations" by the ears. And behold: twenty-four hours after, at break of day, discord broke forth afresh.

As dawn spread her saffron twilight over the Bay of Smyrna, two French ships sailed in: they came from Marseilles, bringing, among other things, many letters for the English Factory. The *Hunter* did not salute them. And M. de Nointel retaliated by detaining the English letters. Let it be said at once that this fresh neglect had nothing of human design in it: it was a pure accident—solely the work of the mischievous goddess aforesaid. The commander of the *Hunter*, in Sir John's own words, "having bin merry over night, was not so early in the morning fitted either for ceremony or buisenesse." Mr. Rycaut, after reprimanding him very severely, sent to the French Consul his excuses, protesting that what seemed a deliberate affront was really done without order and was due entirely to the fact that Captain Parker had passed the night ashore—folk at all acquainted with the traditions of Smyrna did not need to be told more. He begged that the letters might be delivered. But our candid apology met with a worse response than it deserved. The French Consul, in a mighty passion and with much noise,

cried out that his Ambassador was highly offended with Mr. Rycaut, that he regarded both him and his Nation as enemies, and that his Excellency was resolved not only to keep those letters, but also to give orders at Marseilles to throw overboard all English despatches that should be consigned to French vessels.

This was surely hitting below the belt: this was degrading a stately duel to the level of a sordid business squabble. Not thus did Mr. Rycaut understand the law of retaliation. He sent his passionate colleague word that this was more than the English in time of war did to their foes; but it mattered not: every day the Smyrna factors expected English ships which would bring them copies of their letters, and also many letters for the French, which he would deliver, notwithstanding the detention of ours. But both this and several subsequent applications remained fruitless: the English mail was kept from the 2nd of January until the 8th of February, to the great prejudice of the whole Levant Company and to the scandalisation of all disinterested foreigners who, looking upon letters as the life of trade, pronounced the interception of them an act unfriendly and all the more unpardonable since the Dutch, who were actually at war with France, had their mail duly delivered to them. Meanwhile Mr. Rycaut makes another effort “to moderate,” as he says, “the heat of contests, not knowing how farre they may proceed nor in what point they may terminate.” Two English ships, the *William and John* and the *Bonaventure*, as they came into port, saluted, by order of their Consul, the French man-of-war; but they received no return of the compliment by express order from the French Ambassador. So pass the days; and one’s hopes of

reconciliation are baulked; and Eris goes on adding fuel to the flame....

The French then, as now, were governed by their hearts more than by their heads. But, in the present instance, they were not prompted wholly by wounded *amour propre*. Their vindictiveness had its roots somewhat deeper. Just before M. de Nointel's arrival at Smyrna a French manufacturer of spurious dollars had been detected by an interpreter of the English Embassy who had had a number of such coins foisted upon him, and through Mr. Rycaut's exertions had been caught in the act and committed to the French Consul's prison, whence, however, he was soon after released. In the same way, during the last year, two or three other French coiners had been exposed and allowed to escape, the French authorities, in order to save the face of their Nation, smothering the crime and spiriting away the criminals. The English, however, whose business suffered by the circulation of false money, considered it a vital interest to bring the culprits to book, and Mr. Rycaut, despite the rejection of his apologies, lodged a vigorous protest with the French Ambassador against the release of that offender. M. de Nointel, in a very short and very sharp reply, characterised the Consul's Memorial as "ripiena di falsità"—"full of falsehood"—denouncing the English factors as abettors of the forgeries, and declaring that he would demand from their Ambassador reparation for the "calumny." This scurrilous reply inflamed the whole English colony. In a petition to Sir John Finch they indignantly repudiated Nointel's aspersion—"an accusation of this nature, given under the handwriting of an Ambassador," they said, "carry's force of beliefe and weight and authority in it selfe": what would the Levant Company think of them:

what would be the impression upon their principals, “and perhaps some of our Relations at home?” Therefore, they concluded, “Wee most humbly beseech Your Excellency to take this matter into your serious consideration, that in some publick manner the ancient repute of our Nation may be justify’d and maintaind’, and that this occasion may be so improved by a strict examination of this affayr as may wholely discover and disappoint the farther progress of false coyners by the punishment of whom others taking example may be deterr’d.”[74]

Here was a pretty state of things for a diplomat anxious to consolidate the Anglo-French alliance. But diplomacy is nothing if not the application of intelligence and tact to the management of international susceptibilities. Sir John could not believe that M. de Nointel would push matters so far as to make accommodation impossible. Their correspondence had hitherto been marked by a friendliness which he hoped a personal interview would not diminish. Certainly he intended to do all that in him lay to preserve a good understanding with the impetuous Frenchman. At the same time, he was not prepared to sacrifice one jot of his dignity. “If He comes in Person to make me a Visit as Ambassadours of long Residence, are obligd’ to them that come after them;” he wrote to the Secretary of State, “Our Intercourse will not easily breake off; But if by the returning newly from a long Journy, He hopes, or designs, to evade that Act of respect due to my character; His Majesty’s Honour will never permitt us to meet. But,” he added, “the Prudence of His Excellency conversant with buisenesse; will I presume never putt me upon that necessity.”

A few days afterwards M. de Nointel arrived at

Constantinople,[75] and immediately Sir John sent his Secretary to inform him of a fact with which the Marquis was already perfectly well acquainted: namely, that he had come here, whilst Nointel was touring, as English Ambassador to the Porte, and to congratulate him on his safe return to his accustomed residence: so there could be no doubt which of the two was the new-comer and entitled to the first visit. Very politely Nointel, within half-an-hour, sent *his* Secretary to tell Finch that it was that Secretary's fault that he had been forestalled, adding that he desired very close relations with him. Finch thanked the Marquis, assuring him that, on his own part, nothing would be wanting to promote such relations, "since that, there passing between both the Kings our Masters a friendship of most entire confidence, t' would be scandalous in the face of the world for their Ministers to admitt of a conversation that had anything repugnant to intimacy." Would the noble Marquis take the hint? Desire for cordiality battled with sense of dignity in Sir John's bosom, filling it with tremulous speculation: "When He has made me a visit, as according to His obligation He is bound, and His Secretary tells me He designs; I shall then see upon what Basis our conversation is like to be built. I have reason to believe, if once wee meet, that all the past misunderstandings will be rectifyd' and redressd." But would they meet? Would the noble Marquis be reasonable enough to pay the first visit?

For about a fortnight this question racked the bosom of Sir John. During that fortnight the Carnival ended and Lent began. M. de Nointel, a good Catholic, sent to Sir John "for some white Herrings." Sir John gave his Excellency not only herrings, but "all the sorts of our English salt fish" that were to be

found among our factors at Galata. Not to be outdone in generosity, his Excellency “made a return of a Doz: bottles of Vin de St Laurens and a Barell of Cyprus Birds”—a veritable Trojan of a Frenchman this: rare wines and birds for white herrings. It augured well. Better still, at the end of the fortnight M. de Nointel’s Chief Dragoman made Sir John “a very large complement in his Name; and the Visit is appointed at three of the clock this afternoon.”

Sir John, you see, and from this you may gauge his trepidation, rushed to his escritoire and picked up his quill the moment the Dragoman was gone: he could not wait until the visit was over to let the Secretary of State know how it went off: he must needs relieve his heart by pouring out what was in it: “When I receive him, this being the first time wee have seen each other, I shall give a fayr guesse how affayrs are like to proceed between us.” It would all depend on the Marquis’s manners and pretensions: he would have measure for measure: neither more nor less: “This, Sir, you may be assurd’ of, I shall not part with the least puntiglio of the King’s Honour, or the Publick Interest. And I am halfe perswaded He will decline the trespassing against either, for I hear that He is a Prudent, and Good Naturd’ Gentleman, but how he comes to be misled by false informations I know not.”

The momentous interview took place on the 24th of February 1675. It lasted three hours—three hours spent mostly “in Expostulations upon the mutuall dissatisfactions receivd’ and given.” Item was set against item, in the usual debit-and-credit style, so that it might be ascertained on whose side lay the balance of offence. And now it transpired that, after all their neglects at his entrance into Smyrna, our

factors had inflicted upon M. de Nointel an affront of a peculiarly exasperating nature. It was this: one fine day, as the noble Marquis was passing by the sea-shore, he espied on a gallery that overlooked the sea three or four of those blades. Did they salute him? Far from it: the moment they saw him, they set their hats fast upon their heads, lest peradventure the wind should blow them off and the accident be construed into a salute, and then sat still with their arms "a kimbow." Stifling his wrath, the Marquis tried a ruse, by ordering those of his retinue who followed close behind him to salute first, which was accordingly done; but it worked nothing: the young Englishmen kept their original posture, for all the world as if they were not aware of his Excellency's existence. What had Sir John to set against this piece of cool effrontery? Sir John rose to the occasion: "As to the unmannerly young men; I could not but confesse That it was high rudenesse"; but when he was at Smyrna he passed, not once but several times, under the French Consul's gallery without his taking any notice of him: "And this was done by a Magistrate in goverment who should know and practise more Civility." Having thus beaten back the attack, Sir John proceeded to carry the war into the enemy's territory: "I told Him He must now Give me Leave to Instance in Two things which I had reason to beleive He could not Parallel." The first was the detention of the English mail, the second the aspersion on the English factors' character. Nointel answered the first by explaining that it was done upon the petition of the French Captains whom the *Hunter* had omitted to salute, but it was only a temporary delay: the letters were delivered after his departure. As to his accusation of our factors, he confessed that he had been provoked to it by Mr.

Rycaut's assertion that the French coiner had paid to one of Sir John's interpreters "35 false Dollars, which in Truth were but five."

Enough has been said to show that in this combat of wits, which was continued for three more hours on Sir John's return visit three days later, the French Marquis found more than his match in the English Knight. On this, as on other occasions of the same kind, Finch proved, to the satisfaction of any impartial critic, that he had inherited a sufficient share of his family's forensic talent. It is pleasant to hear that the combat was conducted on both sides "with patience, mutuall deference, and reciprocall respect." It ended as it ought. "I thought it most proper," says Sir John, "that they who had first divided us, should make the first step towards the uniting us. And therefore I propounded that the French Consul meeting our Consul at Smyrna in the usuall walke of the Cappuchin's Garden; Should Be the First to addresse Himselfe to our Consul Telling Him That He had orders from His Ambassadour to endeavour to begett a mutuall good understanding between themselves and the reciprocall Nations; which passe being made, our Consul is to reply That He has the same orders from me." The proposal, after some hesitation, was accepted, and the incident closed, to Sir John's no small content with himself and with his French colleague: "I cannot but say That the character I formerly gave His Excellency is fully made good by Him; of being a Gentleman of Great Prudence and Civility."[76]

No sooner was this bone of contention "buryd" than another affair rose on our Ambassador. The Barbary Corsairs—those redoubtable sea-wolves who seemed to take a perverse pleasure in harassing the

friends of their suzerain—were once more at their old game. For some time past English navigation in the Mediterranean had enjoyed exceptional prosperity: all sorts of foreign merchants, whose nations were at war, choosing to convey their goods under the flag of the only country that was at peace with the whole world. By these voyages between Spanish, Italian, and Turkish ports, our countrymen not only reaped the benefit of the foreign freights, but besides put out their money at "Cambio Marittimo"—that is, on security of the merchandise they carried, at 20 and 25 per cent: an immense gain. But lately the Tripolines disturbed this lucrative traffic by seizing two of the vessels engaged in it. The English Consul at Tripoli managed to free the ships, as well as the English men and goods in them, but the property of foreigners, which constituted the bulk of the cargoes, could not be rescued: even as it was, the liberation of the ships and crews had raised a loud outcry against the Dey, whose subjects were either pirates or such as got their livelihood from them; and a revolt had barely been averted. In the circumstances the Dey, even if he had the will, lacked the power to restore the booty, claiming that by her Treaty with England Tripoli had the right to search English ships and to confiscate foreign goods.

These outrages had dealt a severe blow at the prestige of the English flag, and it was feared that they might prove a cause of greater damage still, if left unavenged: "unlesse His Majesty is pleasd to resent this searching of His ships and taking out Strangers Goods," wrote Finch to the Secretary of State, "T' will be impossible to keep long Argiers and Tunis from the same Trade and liberty; and at last the Maltese and other Christian Corsari will pretend to the same." He went on to suggest that the

appearance of an English squadron in the Mediterranean would have a salutary effect both as a corrective and as a preventive.[77] As a fact, the English Government had anticipated the suggestion; and presently the Ambassador received from Smyrna a letter enclosing a communication from Sir John Narbrough to Mr. Consul Rycaut: the Admiral, having been denied by the Dey satisfaction, had commenced hostilities. This vigour, no doubt, redounded to the glory of England; but at the same time it created a delicate situation for her representative at the Porte.

The Barbary States still were, at least in name, parts of the Ottoman Empire. When their enormities were brought to the notice of the Porte by European ambassadors, the Grand Signor's Ministers professed themselves greatly shocked. But what would you? they said. The Barbary people were rebels for whose sins the Grand Signor could not be held responsible. When the ambassador requested that, such being the case, the Grand Signor should not consider himself aggrieved if his master should take his own vengeance and right his own wrongs, the Ministers used to answer that it was only just that malefactors should suffer and that those who inflicted injuries on others should receive injuries themselves. But the Grand Signor could not see with indifference his vassal States attacked: the utmost he would permit was reprisals on pirate ships afloat—an assault on the towns ashore would be regarded as an act of hostility against himself. Hence, every time an English fleet came forth to punish the African rogues, the English in Turkey trembled lest it should do something that might draw the Sultan's wrath down upon them. Such was the situation created in 1661 by Sir John Lawson's, and in 1669-71 by Sir Thomas

Allin's and Sir Edward Spragge's expeditions against Algiers.[78] As Winchilsea and Harvey on those occasions, so Finch now had to bestir himself to prevent disagreeable developments. He began by transmitting the news of the rupture with Tripoli to the Grand Vizir, "that it might not be thought His Majesty Our Master had broken with those Vile People an Agreement subscribd' by both Monarchs, but according to the Tenour of the Articles."[79]

And that was not all: troubles seldom come single. The Pasha of Tunis, it now appeared, was not satisfied with the 30,000 dollars the Ambassador had recovered for him. He affirmed that this sum represented only a fraction of his loss, and claimed 60,000 dollars more. As to Sir John's settlement with his Aga, the Pasha had already shown what he thought of that transaction in an unmistakable manner. The moment the Aga reached home he received, in lieu of thanks, a merciless drubbing. When he could walk, the wretched Procurator came to Finch, told him how he had been treated, and left with him the written dismissal he had from his master, saying that the Pasha was a bad man, and that document might be of use to the Ambassador one day. Then he went away to Trebizond, where he died. In the meantime the Pasha had obtained a new post at the Porte, and now favoured Sir John with a list of his alleged losses, sent through no less a person than the Grand Vizir's Kehayah or Steward. How much this unexpected missive perturbed Sir John may be judged by his own expression: "The storm which I had thought had bin blown over, as to the depredation of the Pashah of Tunis, is turnd' upon me more violent then ever."[80]

He did not think it politic, however, to betray his

agitation by taking direct notice of the claim. But he immediately despatched to Adrianople his second Dragoman, Signor Antonio Perone, under pretence of finding lodgings for his Audience, with instructions to own no other errand: only, after he had been there four or five days to invent an excuse for waiting upon the Kehayah and, in case that official made no mention of the matter, to say nothing about it; but if he broached the question, the Dragoman was primed what to answer. Should the Kehayah prove obstinate, the Dragoman was to address himself, in the Ambassador's name, to the Grand Vizir and complain of the Tripoline outrages, thus meeting the Pasha's grievance with a counter-grievance. Even if the Grand Vizir did not allude to the subject of his own accord, Signor Antonio had orders, unless he found him out of humour, to open it himself and predispose him in Sir John's favour. It was not the weakness of his case that troubled our Ambassador: he believed that in an argument he could more than hold his own; what made him fear was the fact that the Pasha had presented one half of his claim to the Sultan, who just now wanted money badly to defray the cost of the coming festivities: "in order to which extraordinary expense He has imposd' a great Taxe upon all those that have any charge under Him throughout the Empire."[81]

The inadvisability of further inaction thus borne in upon our Ambassador from more quarters than one, he hurried on his preparations for the trip to Adrianople.

It was "a grand equipment," and the task of providing the thousand and one things needed for it —tents, horses for saddle and carriage, hired servants, and so forth—devolved on the Levant

Company's Treasurer. The Ambassador was far too great a man to concern himself about matters of this sort. He serenely abandoned to Dudley North all the drudgery, and, with the drudgery, all the amusement and emolument. North enjoyed both. The only matters connected with the expedition that Sir John seems to have considered worthy of his care were matters which gave rise to points of honour—sundry acts of commission or omission, mere pinholes, maybe, to the ordinary eye; significant enough to one whose guiding maxim was, "Never to part with the least Puntiglio of the King's Honour."

Signor Antonio at Adrianople demanded a Command for the Kaimakam of Constantinople to supply the Ambassador with carts. The Command was issued, but it was worded in a way which suggested that the Porte had been annoyed by Sir John's delay in presenting his Credentials: the Kaimakam was ordered to *send* the Ambassador to Audience. Signor Antonio returned the document, saying that his Excellency would never come on such terms: why should he be sent, when he had offered to come? The phrasing was altered accordingly. But when the Command reached Constantinople, Sir John found himself obliged to fight for the King's honour on another "puntiglio." The Kaimakam allotted him thirty carts, as he had done to his predecessor (Harvey, it would seem from this as well as from other instances, was not very sensitive on "puntiglios"—but then he had not the advantage of an Italian education). On being informed that the French Ambassador, when he went to Adrianople, had double that number, Sir John declared that he "was an Ambassadour of no lesse King, and had as good a Retinue," consequently he required an equal

number of carts. The Kaimakam said it was true that Nointel had been assigned sixty, but had been content with fifty. Very well, was Sir John's rejoinder, "I would have the same assignment to me and I would be content with fifty-five."[82]

These points carried, Sir John could proceed to his Audience with an easy mind.

FOOTNOTES:

[70] Finch to Coventry, Jan. 11-21, 1674-75, *Coventry Papers*.

[71] Harvey to Arlington, July 1, 1672. Cp. Rycaut to the Same, June 29, 1671, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[72] Nointel to Finch, A Tripoly le 12 Juillet 1674; Consul Gamaliel Nightingale to the Same, Aleppo, July 10, 1674; Finch to Arlington, July 27, S.N., 1674, *Coventry Papers*.

[73] A. Vandal, *Les Voyages du Marquis de Nointel*, p. 155.

[74] Rycaut to Nointel (in French), Smirne ce 31 Décembre 1674; the Same to the Same (in Italian) 8, 4-14 Jennaro, 1674-75, with Nointel's reply (in Italian); the Same to Joseph Williamson, March 8, 1674-75, *S.P. Turkey*, 19. Finch to Coventry, Feb. 1-11, 4-14; the Factory of Smyrna to Finch, Jan. 19, 1674-75, *Coventry Papers*.

[75] The exact date of his Excellency's arrival can scarcely be a matter of deep concern to any man now living; yet, as an example of the discrepancies which beset the path of the historical student, the following may be of some interest: "The French Amb.: the Marquis de Nointell arrivd' here the 13th at breake of

day." Finch to Coventry, Feb. 5-15; "His Excellcy: arrivd' here Saturday Febr. the 15-25." Same to Same, Feb. 24-March 6; "Le 20 février 1675, Nointel rentrait à Constantinople," Vandal, p. 175.

[76] Finch to Coventry, Feb. 5-15, Feb. 24/ March 6, March 1-11, 1674-75, *Coventry Papers*.

[77] Finch to Coventry, Jan 11-21, 1674-75, enclosing letter from Consul Nathaniel Bradley, dated Tripoli di Barbaria, Nov. 23, 1674, *Coventry Papers*. Cp. Rycaut to Arlington, Smyrna, Nov. 21, 1674, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[78] Winchilsea to Nicholas, March 4, 1660-61; Aug. 20, Oct. 19, Nov. 11-21, 1661; Jan. 13, 1661-62; May 24, 1662; Harvey to Arlington, Aug. 18, 1669; Jan. 31, 1669-70; April 30, 1672, *S.P. Turkey*, 17 and 19.

[79] Finch to Narbrough, May 24: S V. 1675, *Coventry Papers*.

[80] Finch to Coventry, Feb. 24/March 6, 1674-75, *Coventry Papers*.

[81] Finch to Coventry, Feb. 24/March 6, 1674-75, *Coventry Papers*.

[82] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675, *Coventry Papers*.

CHAPTER VI

SIR JOHN GOES TO COURT

On Sunday, the 2nd of May 1675, after morning prayers and a sermon by the Rev. John Covel, his Excellency set out from Pera with a very great retinue. Besides the Embassy staff and servants, there were all the English merchants of Constantinople and some of Smyrna with their own servants—altogether one hundred and twenty horsemen, fifty-five baggage-wagons, three led horses in rich trappings, a gorgeous coach-and-six with postillions, a coach-and-four for the Chief Dragoman, and a double litter canopied with fine wrought cloth and carried by four mules harnessed together two and two: in that litter, attended by four muleteers and preceded by two link-bearers, Sir John Finch and Sir Thomas Baines lay in state.

It must have been a comely sight to watch these English travellers on that spring day, two hundred and fifty years ago, clatter over the wooden bridges which spanned the streams at the head of the Golden Horn, skirt the walls of Stambul, and enter upon the highway to Adrianople. We will follow their slow progress along that dusty road; for the details of their journey are all on record, and one might do sillier things than that.

Four hours through clouds of dust brought our wayfarers, hot and hungry, to their first *konak* or stage: Kuchuk Chekmejé—a township "about the bignesse of Newmarket," half Turkish, half Greek, near the Sea of Marmara. There they halted for the night. His Excellency with his suite was lodged in a Moslem hostel—one of those pious foundations which, by their statutes, were obliged to afford travellers shelter and some food. As to bed, they had to bring their own. The Ambassador and the Knight, after supping on rice boiled with onions, fish, and bread, had their travelling beds set up indoors and slept in stuffy state. The Chaplain and two or three other humble mortals, as the night was very warm, slept on carpets in the cloisters that ran round a fair-sized quadrangle with a fountain murmuring in the middle—not unlike, thought the Rev. John, a Cambridge College court. The Treasurer—there had been little or no sleep for him that night; for here he was surprised with a "jolly fever" (his own phrase), got by over-harassing himself about the expedition. For this reason next morning, when the journey was resumed, the coach-and-six fell to his share. The Ambassador and the Knight continued their progress as before, leaning back in their canopied litter, so that, though all the rest might sweat and swear at the sun, the dust, and the flies, they were cool and collected, free to doze or to survey the scenery at their ease.

The country traversed was, to speak in the language of that time, "perfect champion ground"—a lovely plain, here swelling to low mastoid hills, there sinking into green valleys. But though the land appeared naturally fertile, our wayfarers were struck by its desolation. About the towns and villages they

saw good husbandry; but elsewhere they saw nothing to remind them of man and his works. For many miles the Rev. John could discover neither cornfield nor vineyard, neither flock of sheep nor herd of cattle: only a fair wilderness—an ideal place for beasts to lie down in. It was easy to understand the Imperial Hunter's attachment to this plain.

On our pilgrims crept and on, at the rate of three miles an hour and an average of six hours a day, every evening halting at some township or village—Buyuk Chekmejé, Selivria, Chorlu, Karistran, Lule-Burgas, Eski-Baba, Hafsa—and always sending ahead to each stage a caterer with two chaoushes to procure them board and lodging by force: "else the people would in most places not afford us anything." Small wonder. The Grand Signor's subjects had long since learned to shun travellers of quality as they shunned other robbers. For such a traveller's progress bore a strong resemblance to a hostile invasion: his Janissaries raided the villages, slaughtering all the sheep and fowls they could lay hands on, with absolute impartiality and, of course, with absolute impunity. When provincial governors travelled to or from their Pashaliks, it was even worse. The Pasha drained the very vitals of the country he passed through, sparing neither Turk, nor Christian, nor Jew; and (in Turkey humour was seldom far from horror), after cramming himself and his numerous retinue, he levied upon his hosts what was called "teeth money" (*dishe parassi*)—a tax for the use of his teeth, worn in the process of devouring their substance.[83] The peasants had recourse to all sorts of prophylactics dictated by the instinct of self-preservation. Among other things, they made their doors just big enough for a man to creep in at, so that distinguished travellers might, at least, not be

able to use their houses as stables.

So the English Ambassador journeyed on, extorting the necessary provisions from the Greeks, for his myrmidons knew better than to touch Turks on behalf of a Giaour. All this was in strict accord with the custom of the country. And so was this: wherever his Excellency took up his lodging, as soon as it began to grow dark the link-bearers would come and plant their beacons before his door and intone a sonorous prayer for the Grand Signor, the Ambassador and all his company, naming every one: the Treasurer, Secretary, Chaplain, Dragomans, and the rest, even as was done to the Grand Vizir and all other grandees on their journeys.

For eight days the long train of horses and carriages and baggage-wagons straggles across the Thracian plain in mediaeval caravan style: of all styles of travel the most delightful as an experience, the most refreshing as a memory.

At the last konak, Sir John sends for Signor Antonio Perone, to make sure, before it is too late, that the arrangements for his reception are correct; and "taking an account," he finds, to his immense satisfaction, that the Dragoman has not only kept a vigilant eye on "the King's Honour," but has "exceeded any example." And so he moves forward, another day's march, five and a half hours, say seventeen miles, to the consummation of his journey. He moves, rehearsing in his mind the ceremonial theatricalities that lie ahead; and by and by, as a sort of curtain-raiser, we have the first of them. When within six miles of his destination, our Ambassador is met by a party of Frenchmen and Dutchmen—residents of Pera who were then at Adrianople sight-seeing; mere private, unofficial folk, yet well-

meaning, and they help to swell our train. We move on, and presently, in the early afternoon, the sight we long for bursts into view: stately cupolas, slim white minarets, brown tile-roofs amidst green leaves —a dream of urban beauty completely realised.

About two miles from this magic city, at a spot where a fine *kiosk*, or summer-house, stood beside a sparkling fountain, a dozen grooms are waiting, with a dozen of the Grand Signor's horses—"all admirable good ones, and set out as rich as possible": bridles, saddles, stirrups, and buttock-cloths aglow with gold and silver; the animal destined for the Ambassador himself glittering, in addition, with precious stones and pearls "most gloriously." My Lord, quitting his litter, mounts this steed, the staff follow suit, and the cavalcade moves on. They have not gone far before they are met by a guard of honour of sixty chaoushes under the command of the Chaoush-bashi, who acts as Master of the Ceremonies, and the Capiji-bashi, or Marshal of the Court. The two parties exchange the usual compliments, then the guard of honour faces about, and the procession enters the city.

It was a triumphal entry, attended with an éclat that left nothing to be desired. The chaoushes, in their tall white turbans of ceremony, marched first, two abreast. After them rode the Chaoush-bashi and Capiji-bashi in their gala uniforms: long sleeveless cloaks of cloth of gold lined with rich furs. His Excellency followed, with the French and Dutch holiday-makers before him; then came the Englishmen, with their servants behind them; then the link-bearers with Sir Thomas Baines; then the coach-and-six; then the Chief Dragoman's coach-and-four; the baggage-wagons bringing up the rear. Janissaries flanked the narrow streets through which

the procession threaded its way. Everything was marked by a splendour that did the Chaplain's ritualistic heart good, and wrung even from our cynical Treasurer a grudging admission that the Merchants had full value for their money. As to the Ambassador, no sordid thought of cost, we may be certain, sullied his soul, as he rode in, high-headed, high-hearted, proud of his trappings, horses, chaoushes, and what not, feeling that he was received with all the honour and glory due to his character. In this fashion our visitors reached the house allotted his Excellency—and there, by one of those strokes of grim humour in which (as has been said) the Turkish genius delighted, the whole scene underwent a sudden transformation.

"The house," says the Rev. John, astonished into a fit of most unclerical eloquence, "was the damn'dest, confounded place that ever mortall man was put into: it was a Jewes house, not half big enough to hold half my Lord's family—a mere nest of fleas and cimici [bugs] and rats and mice, and stench, surrounded with whole kennells of nasty, beastly Jewes."[84]

In his wildest nightmares Sir John had never seen himself living in a Ghetto. And this was no nightmare, but hard, solid, filthy reality. A spasm of rage came over him—rage at everybody, but more especially at Signor Antonio Perone who had had two months in which to provide for his honourable accommodation. He swore at the miserable Dragoman as perhaps no ambassador had ever sworn before. "He vowed," says our Treasurer, whose mischievous spirit had been moved to impish glee, "he vowed with the most execrable protestations never to be reconciled to him." He ordered him off to

Constantinople in twenty-four hours, else he would have him drubbed.[85] Apparently Sir John knew not that the magnificent Marquis de Nointel had been treated to precisely the same fragrant surprise;[86] or if he did, the knowledge carried no comfort.

Signor Antonio retired to his private lodging to wait for the ambassadorial wrath to evaporate; and three days later, by the mediation of Mr. Hyet, the oldest English merchant, he received plenary absolution. Meanwhile, after an unforgettable night in that salubrious abode, Sir John had sent his Chief Dragoman, the venerable Signor Giorgio Draperys, to the Grand Vizir to beg for a better residence. With gratifying celerity the Vizir turned a rich Jew out of his home; and the Ambassador, accompanied by his staff and the friend of his bosom, removed thither, still keeping the other house for the servants. Mr. North turned Signor Antonio out of his quarters and made himself comfortable therein. The others shifted as best they could, until little by little every infidel dog found his kennel.

Quickly as these transmigrations were effected, Sir John had had time, in the midst of them, to save the King of England's honour from some fresh perils that menaced it. There were at Adrianople several foreign diplomats: Count Kindsberg, the German Emperor's Resident; the Ambassador, as they called him, of the little Republic of Ragusa; and M. de La Croix, second secretary to the Ambassador of France. Contrary to Sir John's expectations, none of these, save the Ragusan, had sent out to meet him on his approach to the city. So, the instant he set foot to earth, he "searchd' into the Point Whether the Emperors Resident was wont to send to meet the Ambassadour of France," and heard that "for certain, yes."

Immediately after, one of the Resident's gentlemen came to tell Sir John that the Caesarean Excellency desired to wait upon him. Sir John answered that the house he was in "was so infamous" that he could receive no one, but when in a convenient lodging he would invite the Resident, "unlesse He, as I was informd', had sent to meet the French Ambassadour, which He had not done to me." Similar overtures from the French diplomat met with a similar rebuff. Count Kindsberg hastened to explain that his Excellency was terribly misinformed: "He never sent to meet the Ambassadour of France in his life, but he had sent to meet me, had not the Gran Signor at the same time sent for Him to Audience; which I knew to be true, and amongst other Reasons this was one that he would have sent out to meet me, because my Lord of Winchelsea did so to Count Lesley"—Walter Leslie, the Scottish Ambassador Extraordinary from the Emperor to Turkey, whose mission had created a great sensation ten years before.[87] Mollified by these explanations, Sir John intimated to the Resident that he "would gladly receive His Favour in another House." When he moved to that new house, Count Kindsberg came; Sir John returned his call two days after; and their intercourse acquired a distinct flavour of familiarity thenceforward. The Resident turned out to be "a Civill understanding Gentleman. He invites me to Dinner, and I Him, and frequently comes to visitt me."

Would that all "Publick Ministers" were equally reasonable! "But Monsieur Le Croix (*sic*) Huffs and gives out that He could not come to see me being once refusd." He had reported this affront to his master and was waiting for instructions. When these arrived, however, La Croix called to apologise. He was, he said, "tender of His Master's Honour"—

Nointel "had raisd' Him from nothing, and all he had was owing to Him." The Frenchman's words and his tone appealed to Sir John's magnanimity. With a gracious air and a smiling look, he told the penitent that "He did ill to take exceptions at that at which Ministers of farr greater figure took none, and so Wee friendly parted."[88]

It was well for Finch that he established good relations with these gentlemen: their society would go a long way towards making his sojourn in that environment bearable. The Greeks have a saying, "Without fair as a doll, within foul as the plague." To this description Adrianople answered admirably. Despite its Seraglio, its mosques, its baths and bazaars, it was, in our Chaplain's words, a "very mean and beastly" city, and just now it was crowded to overflowing by all sorts and conditions of strangers drawn to the spot by the lure of profit or pleasure, or by the Grand Signor's commands. And of all quarters of this dirty and congested city the most dirty and congested was the Jewish quarter where our pilgrims had their habitation: a slum that offended every sense at every hour. At night rest was impossible: a multitude of pests conspired to murder sleep: rats, mice, bugs and fleas indoors; outside, carts rumbling over the rough cobbles, and legions of pariah dogs brawling in the moonlight. During the day, as during the night, "the stink of the Jewes did give us no small purgatory," wails the Rev. John. Even the sense of novelty could not atone for the sense of discomfort and disgrace.

The only compensation for Sir John was the promptitude with which the Grand Vizir granted him an audience, in little more than a week after his arrival (May 19). This smoothed somewhat the

Ambassador's ruffled feathers and, moreover, induced the consoling belief that his purgatory would, at all events, not last long. Why should it, anyhow? Lord Winchilsea had started for Adrianople on December 5th (1661); by January 13th he had the Capitulations renewed with all the additions obtainable; and by January 23rd he was back at Pera.

The audience, as all men conversant with such matters assured Sir John, was "very courteous and very honorable"—even the most captious eye could detect no "puntiglio" to cavil at.

Like all state apartments in Turkey, the room in which this function took place had for its main feature a Soffah—part of the floor raised a foot or so higher than the rest and furnished with cushions and bolsters. When an ambassador was received with great formality two chairs appeared on this dais: one for him and the other for the Vizir; when the audience was less formal, the Vizir sat cross-legged on his cushions in the corner, and the ambassador had a stool set for him upon the dais—a point worth remembering. It was upon such a stool that Sir John was now placed, while his suite stood close behind him, on the common level of the floor. Round about the room stood many chaoushes and other attendants, motionless and mute. At the end of a quarter of an hour, there was a loud "*Whish! whish!*"—to impose silence, rather unnecessarily—and the Grand Vizir entered.

He was a man of about forty, of medium height and somewhat inclined to corpulence. He had a small round face thinly fringed by a short black beard, and a smooth erect forehead crowned, as far as his turban permitted to see, by thick, close-cut hair. His

complexion was of a dark brown, and as his cheeks were deeply pitted with small-pox the general impression was hardly one of enchanting beauty.[89] Walking with a slight limp and a slight stoop—though young in years, Ahmed Kuprili was already loaded with infirmities—he dropped down upon the cushions and crossed his legs.

The Ambassador's stool was moved nearer to the Vizir, and, once seated again, his Excellency delivered the royal letter,[90] saying that his Master commanded him to do so and withal to give him a message by word of mouth: namely, to solicit for his Majesty's subjects trading in the Grand Signor's territories protection in the enjoyment of all their privileges and immunities, according to the Capitulations, assuring him, on the other part, of his Majesty's desire, not only to confirm the good relations already existing between the two Courts, but also to improve them. He was told in reply that, as long as his Master observed the laws of friendship with the Grand Signor, the Grand Signor would reciprocate. These mutual civilities were exchanged through the Dragoman of the Porte, Dr. Mavrocordato, who stood at the edge of the Soffah, in stereotyped phrases which had suffered no variation since the foundation of the Ottoman Empire.

At that point, the Ambassador and the Vizir were treated to coffee, sherbet, and perfume; and then Sir John and his gentlemen were clothed with *kaftans*, or robes of honour—loose garments, shaped like night-gowns and bespangled with large yellow flowers, half-moons, and other decorative devices. The material of which they were made varied according to the rank of the recipient: cloth of gold or silver, or

silk with more or less of gold and silver wrought in it. At most audiences such garments were given to the visitors, in return for the many valuable cloaks of cloth, silk, velvet, cloth of gold and silver, which the visitors had to give at all audiences: as the English of the period proverbially said of the Turk: “if he gives you an egg, he will expect at least a pullet for it.”[91]

While refreshments and investments were proceeding, the Ambassador and the Vizir continued their conversation. Sir John dwelt at some length on the steadfast friendship the English nation had shown towards Turkey for nearly a hundred years, laying stress on the fact that during the protracted war for the conquest of Candia, which the Vizir had brought to a happy conclusion, not one Englishman had appeared amongst the numerous Christian volunteers who had assisted the Venetians. Ahmed replied that it was true: he himself was witness to it. Next Finch thanked him for so speedy an audience. Ahmed said it was a time of mirth, great affairs were laid aside for a while, so he had leisure. Finch expressed the wish that it might always be a time of mirth with him, and went on emitting many other compliments, to which he got the briefest of answers —or no answer at all.

Ahmed Kuprili was no great dealer in words. Platitudes, especially when the speaker repeated himself, as Sir John was prone to do, wearied him. But he did not interrupt: he simply did not listen. He sat in the corner of the Soffah, with his hands glued to his knees, and his countenance fixed in a sort of stony composure: hardly did a hair of his beard stir to show that he breathed. He was somewhat short-sighted, which caused him to knit his brows and peer very intently when a stranger entered his presence;

but after that one searching look his small eyes, having taken the visitor's measure, remained resolutely half-closed. Once, and only once, when he said it was a time of mirth, his English guests fancied they saw some shadow of a smile on his lips: so faint that it was hardly perceptible. Thus he sat, dark, remote, silent, and inscrutable, looking at the verbose Frank through half-closed, bored eyes. Such calm, such silence, such hauteur, in any other man, would have been exasperating. As practised by Ahmed Kuprili, they were simply subduing. For even his quietude conveyed somehow a suggestion of latent energy—of strength in reserve. On the present occasion, however, we discern a little relaxation from this glacial grandeur. "He look't very pleasantly," says the Rev. John, "and as we were inform'd, with an unusuall sweetnesse; though, at best, I assure you, I thought he had Majesty and State enough in his face all the time."[92] Sir John describes the Vizir as "in his discourse very free and affable, oftentimes inclining his body towards me, which I am told was not usuall."[93]

These exceptional tokens of affability emboldened the Ambassador, contrary to the rules and the plain hints given him that this was no time for affairs, to broach the question of Tripoli. As we know, he had already notified to the Vizir the rupture. "Here," he says, "I renewd' my complaints desiring him over and above that the Gran Signors owne hand being to that Treaty he would not onely approve of the King my Master's just vindicating the Right of his Treaty by Arms, but also make his due resentment upon their perfidiousness to his Imperiall Majesty. Answer was made me that he would take nothing ill of the Kings part in that affayr, but that he would seek to remedy what they had offended in, as to their owne

score."[94] Whereupon Ahmed rose to his feet, and with a slight bow to the Ambassador limped out of the room.

The visitors departed carrying away with them a mental picture of an overpowering personality, and sixteen *kaftans*, which they had the curious taste to appraise. The Ambassador's was valued at 25 or 30 dollars; those of the Treasurer, Secretary, and Chief Dragoman at about 8 dollars apiece: the Chaplain sold his for 6½ dollars.[95]

All this was most interesting, but it was not business. The interview was an empty formality. Nor could Finch hope for many direct business dealings with the Vizir. It is true that Ahmed Kuprili's established monopoly of power saved an ambassador a world of trouble. Often the Grand Vizirs were mere ciphers, and the Palace usurped all the functions of the Porte. At such times the Grand Signor's minions counted for a good deal more than his Ministers. The ambassador, therefore, was obliged to discover those minions and the subterraneous channels which led to them, and, while openly carrying on formal conversations with the Vizir, to conduct real negotiations secretly with the Kislar Aga, or Chief of the Black Eunuchs, and other magnates of the Harem. Again, common Grand Vizirs, even when they had no rival in the Harem, had a master at home. They were generally governed by some old friend, or perhaps a favourite slave, through whose hands the great man's most momentous affairs passed, and who had such an ascendancy over his mind that he could bring him to accept any proposals he liked. To discover and propitiate this omnipotent adviser was no easy matter. Ahmed had simplified a foreign envoy's task in this respect also. He never

had any favourites, or if he had, he was never governed by them.

But still Turkey was Turkey. The Grand Vizir did not quite correspond to a European Prime Minister. Sir John spoke with awe of “this most great and most important charge; the like to which no age at no time under any Christian prince could ever parallel, either as to grandeur or authority.” In fact, Ahmed, though more accessible than many of his predecessors and successors, being the Grand Signor’s vicar, was only less unapproachable than his master. The way to him lay through his Kehayah, or Steward, and his Rais Effendi, or Chief Secretary. With these officers all preliminary negotiations had to be conducted.

Sir John, already initiated in the rudiments of Turkish procedure, shaped his course accordingly. In consultation with the leading English merchants, he had the new Articles of the Capitulations drawn up, translated into Turkish, and sent by his Dragomans to the Kehayah that he might submit them to the Vizir, after first taking the advice of the Rais Effendi, who had been gained in advance. The Kehayah had received the document very favourably and promised his assistance. That was done as soon as Finch had settled down at Adrianople. Since then nothing more had been heard from the Porte. The Ambassador thought the Pashas should not be allowed to go to sleep. So he despatched his Dragomans, soliciting an answer from those obliging functionaries, but he was put off with the reply that he must wait till the festivities were over.[96]

Alas, poor Ambassador! What maladroit demon had inspired thee to select for business a time of mirth?

FOOTNOTES:

[83] See Appendix IX.

[84] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 190.

[85] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 103.

[86] "Imaginez-vous la puanteur et la vilenie des Juifs causées par la quantité de misérables familles qui logent ensemble, et vous jugerez qu'on a besoin de bonnes cassolettes pour s'en préserver."—Nointel à Lyonne, in Vandal's *Nointel*, p. 58.

[87] See Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 180-2, 188. Cp. *Present State*, Epistle Dedicatory to Lord Arlington.

[88] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675, *Coventry Papers*.

[89] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 195; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, p. 332. J. von Hammer's portrait of Ahmed Kuprili (*Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, vol. xi. p. 434) is singularly inaccurate.

[90] See Appendix II.

[91] Covel's *Account of the Greek Church*, Pref. p. lv.

[92] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 195.

[93] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 196.

[96] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 104.

CHAPTER VII

THE FESTIVITIES

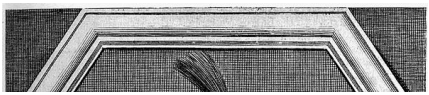
Recking nothing of State affairs, the Turks, from the highest to the lowest, rejoice as they have not rejoiced for many a long year. The scene is the plain outside the walls. There, in the part farthest from the city, the Grand Signor, the Grand Vizir, the Mufti, and all the great pashas have pitched their sumptuous pavilions. Opposite, in the part towards the city, stand poles and frames for the illuminations. The space between lies open for the sports. Every day about noon there is an entertainment of the craftsmen and tradesmen, not only of Adrianople but also of Constantinople, all of whom have been invited for the sake of the presents they have to make. Each guild comes out of the city in procession, with some pageant representing its particular occupation, and passes before the Sultan, who sits on a lofty platform, upon a richly-wrought quilt, under an awning of cloth of gold stretched between two tall elms.

At this time the Hunter is in his prime: a lean, long-visaged, sparsely-bearded man of thirty-five, with a skin tanned to a shiny brown, a “beetled” nose, and sparkling black eyes—not disagreeable to look at, though generally accounted almost as ugly

as his son.[97] He sits with unsmiling gravity, and about him stand eight or ten handsome youths continually fanning him by turns. Day after day he takes up that position to receive the offerings of his subjects—according to rigidly fixed scale: from him who has much, much being expected; and woe betide him whose performance disappoints expectation! Thus, the shoe-makers present shoes adorned with precious stones; the bakers and butchers velvet cushions and rich Persian stuffs; the jewellers a garden with begemmed nightingales perched on silver trees; the farriers horse-shoes of silver; and so on. As Mr. North gazes upon this great idol of human worship, to which so much gold is offered up every day, his mind whirls: "What a world of riches must be gathered from such a vast concourse of people! I say no more...."[98]

The gifts delivered, all the givers retire to their appointed places, where they are regaled liberally with mountains of boiled rice and oceans of cold water.

After the meal, those who have children of a suitable age bring them to the Grand Signor, and he bestows upon each some garments and a pension of three *aspers* (about 2d.) a day for life—quite a competence for a Turkish artisan of the period. In addition, there is no dearth of Christian converts to Islam appearing to be circumcised with the others.





SULTAN MAHOMET THE FOURTH,
EMPEROR OF THE TURKS.
From an Engraving by F. H. van den Hove.

To face p. 106.

To the solemnities of the day succeed, after about an hour's respite, the jollities of the night. They are ushered in by public prayers held just as the dusk begins to overcast the plain. From every minaret in the city and every pavilion in the encampment outside, the muezzins lift their sonorous voices. For a few minutes the message floats, with a strangely touching sweetness, through the deepening twilight: a chorus of aerial criers calling upon each other to worship the Creator of all things. Suddenly the chants die away; and then the whole multitude from the Grand Signor to the meanest of his slaves, wherever each happens to be, single or in groups, begin their prostrations: kneeling, sitting back on their heels, rising, bowing, kneeling again, and again, and again, in perfect silence and with the regularity of a perfectly drilled army on parade.

Who, having once witnessed, can ever forget the sight, so simple and so sublime?

Devotions ended, the music bands strike up: trumpets, hautboys, great drums, little kettle-drums, brass platters. At the signal, a broad glare is seen to appear from the Grand Signor's stables—a troop of link-men march forth, with lighted grates in their hands: onward they come chanting; and soon the plain is ablaze with myriads of lamps arranged in various patterns in the frames prepared for the purpose. By their light the sports go on: wrestling-matches, athletic feats, acrobatic performances, conjuring tricks, puppet shows, dances of young men disguised as women (like the ancient Romans, the Turks believed that no man danced unless he was drunk or mad), and theatrical exhibitions—farces amusing, obscene, or insipid, according to the spectator's point of view. These pastimes go on with all alacrity till about midnight, and conclude with a display of fireworks, which does credit to the ingenuity of the two renegades—a Venetian and a Dutchman—responsible for them.

There are monstrous giants, many-headed and stuffed with rockets, which burst out of their eyes, nostrils, and ears, fly writhing and hissing up into the night air, leaving a trail of sparks in their wake, and then break into a rain of stars. There are artificial trees with all manner of explosive fruit fastened to their boughs. There are fountains gushing forth jets of fire. There are hobby-horses which, taking fire, run up and down and encounter one another most bravely. There are hanging galleys most dexterously contrived: each with a crew of two or three men who manage the guns and fireworks on board, and pull the vessels backwards and forwards

to imitate sea-fights against Christian corsairs. There are huge castles of pasteboard: one of them, the biggest of the lot, representing the Castle of Candia. After an infinitude of rockets discharged from its battlements, it catches fire at last and burns in a most realistic manner, till the whole fabric collapses in one vast heap of flames and smoke. Besides these and countless other pyrotechnic devices, there is one that thrills the spectators with more dread than delight: iron tubes, much like the chambers of petards, but far larger and longer, fixed into the ground, which vomit up a continuous stream of fire at least sixty feet high, with a roar that makes the very earth tremble.

In this fashion the circumcision festival goes on from May 11th till May 25th, with little variation, the same things being done over and over again. It culminates in a stupendous cavalcade in which all the grandees with their guards take part and of which the young Prince himself, blazing with jewels, forms the central figure: “an ugly, il-favour’d, and (I guesse) very ill-natured chit” of about twelve, with a low forehead, a short flat nose embellished by a little lump at the end, and ears the size of which even his turban cannot hide.[99] He is mounted on a splendid horse, smothered from head to tail under precious metals and stones, led by two richly clad officers of the Janissaries, one on each side, and fanned by two others with large fans of bustards’ feathers. The press is immense: men and women of every degree throng the lanes through which the procession passes; yet the order is perfect, and the silence almost uncanny.

After an interval of two weeks begin the wedding celebrations and continue from June 10th till June 25th: the same old sports, the same old dances, the

same old plays and pyrotechnic displays over again; punctuated by similar processions to and from the Seraglio, with drum-beating and pipe-blowing enough to sing in one's ears for a lifetime. First there is the procession of the bridegroom's presents to the bride—strings of mules loaded with sweet-meats and sugar-works made up in all sorts of fantastic shapes: elephants, camels, lions—so fashioned that there is no breach of the commandment which forbids Moslems to counterfeit the likeness of any living thing; then rows of men loaded with vests of silk, cloth, velvet, and cloth of gold; then open baskets exhibiting jewels worth half-a-million dollars. Next comes a counter-procession of the bride's dowry: including a dozen coachfuls of female slaves and three dozen black eunuchs. Lastly, the world beholds the carrying of the bride to the bridegroom's house. She is conveyed hidden in a closely-latticed, gold-plated coach drawn by six plentifully plumed and bejewelled white horses, and escorted by troops of black eunuchs, some of whom scatter handfuls of aspers among the rabble. The pageant is headed by hundreds of slaves carrying pyramidal candelabra as tall as the masts of ships (*Naculs*)—perhaps emblems of phallic significance; and it closes with scores of music-makers perched upon camels, whose gruntings and gurglings contribute a vocal note to the instrumental din.

Such, by all first-hand accounts, pruned and trimmed into legibility, were these famous entertainments—a medley of grandeur and grotesqueness which could hardly have been matched outside Turkey. Sir John had postponed his journey in order to witness this grandeur. But, having received no invitation (only envoys from tributary States had that expensive honour) he felt

compelled by his dignity to hold aloof, and never saw anything. The other Englishmen, however, were not so punctilious. They mixed with the mob which, on foot or on horseback, filled the plain and was kept in disorder by a body of policemen armed with oil-smeared sheep-skins. Wherever they saw the crowd pressing most, they rushed to disperse it by laying about them with their skins. To save their holiday garments from greasy defilement, the crowd surged this way and that, in terrible confusion, those on foot treading on each other's heels, those on horseback being flung by their stampeding steeds one over another in a hundred different directions. "There never was such a dance of brave horses seen as at that place," declares our Treasurer; adding, with an engaging candour, "to tell you the truth, I had small joy in this diversion; and, however we endeavoured all that was possible to procure horses that were temperate, yet I could not help making one in the dance, and that not without much hazard, which not a little retrench'd my enjoyments, till I found out the way to leave my horse at a good distance from me."[100]

Our Chaplain had to pay much more dearly for his insatiable curiosity: "My horse snorted and trembled, so I suspected no good, yet I was resolved to stay and see all. Just as the fireworkes began, he and many other horses by ran mad and rising up fell on his hams, then, trembling, on his side; [he] fairly layd [me] along [the ground] and ran away as if the Divel had drove him. I was getting up, but seeing many, many mad Jades coming, I fell flat on my face, and committed the event to God." Thus the Rev. John lay prostrate on the broad Thracian plain that dreadful night, while crazy stallions with cocked ears and flying manes dashed about, snorting, squealing,

thundering this way and that. The reverend gentleman listened to the drumming of their hoofs with a horror which his dislike of death rendered agonising. His terror grew as the sound of those irresponsible, irreverent hoofs drew nearer. He heard the frantic animals as they went by, rocking, leaping, plunging, slipping, recovering themselves within the ever-narrowing circle of which he formed the unhappy centre. Their iron shoes rang in his ears—an odious knell. He could do nothing but crouch, stupefied, against the Thracian plain. He had just enough initiative left to pray to God that He might save a future Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, from a premature demolition under infidel hoofs. Never before, and never after, did the Rev. John Covel feel so paralysed or so pious. But God did not forsake him: "His name be ever praised! for though I dare sware at least 100 horse and people came over me, I got not the least harm imaginable in the world."[101]

After this miraculous escape, our Chaplain hastened to attach himself to the Ambassador of Ragusa, "a lusty, gallant fellow," who, as the representative of a tributary State, had the privilege of participating in the celebrations and making presents. Under this minor Excellency's wing, he was able to go everywhere, to stare at everybody, to pry into everything, to glut himself on pomp, without the least danger. They had always a Janissary or two who looked after them and treated them to sherbet. Thus attended, they strutted about as they liked, sat on quilts, and lolled on cushions near the Grand Vizir's own tent—nay, several times the Rev. John found himself near to the Grand Signor himself: once he actually stood within five yards of his Majesty, all the time his Majesty prayed! How eagerly he noted

everything, how glibly he gossiped afterwards to his companions, how keenly he enjoyed their envy! And the friends at home—those poor untravelled Fellows in Cambridge: think of their wonder and awe as they perused his immense, discursive epistles from Adrianople—messages from fairyland, sent to reveal to them the existence of a strange, wondrous world, beyond the humdrum of their drab academic routine. The Rev. John could hear himself quoted in every Combination Room as one versed in all the secrets of the mysterious East. Verily our Chaplain had much to praise God for.

How did the Turks view the intrusion of these unbidden and inquisitive unbelievers? Covel speaks with rapture of the "strange prodigious civility all Franks found everywhere at these festivals." The Turks, he says, "took the greatest pride that we should see and (at least seem to) admire everything." He gives examples from his own experience. He had been taken twenty times to see the sights, while the Turks themselves were being "huncht away." He had been many times "very, very near the G. Signor himself (sometimes ½ an hour together, as long as I pleased), with my hat and in my hair, both which they hate as the Divel." He had walked right through the city, once or twice, "al alone," in the midst of great Moslem multitudes, and "never met the least affront in the world, but rather extraordinary kindnesse."[102] No one who knows Covel's writings can doubt that he believed what he said. Only he failed to make allowance for the privileged position he occupied in Turkish eyes, first, as the guest of their Ragusan guest, and, secondly, as a priest; the Turks had unbounded respect for all religious ministers quite irrespective of their creed. North's evidence, as always, is less uncritical. The Turks, he

tells us, incurious themselves, did not suffer curiosity in others gladly, and were "apt to beat a man that pretends to it. They look upon those idlenesses and impertinences (as at best they account them) with a sinister eye; and always suspect mischief at the bottom, though they do not discern it."[103] In other words, strangers were tolerated as long as they did not make themselves conspicuous. Once our Treasurer had the misfortune to draw attention to himself; and never forgot the result.

The occasion was an acrobatic performance of extraordinary interest: a rope-dancer sliding down from a lofty tower. North, for whom feats of skill possessed a peculiar fascination, thought to time him by his watch. As he stood counting the seconds, the rope broke, and down came the dancer. He heard the Turks around him asking one another how the accident had happened; then he heard some one say that he believed "that fellow," pointing to our Treasurer, was the cause of it: he had seen him hold something in his hand and mutter over it. North, well acquainted with the Turkish fear of witchcraft, and also with the summary methods of Turkish mobs, did not wait to hear more, but slank away as fast as he could. That was the only way: the Frank who did not like being beaten should slink away from an excited Turkish crowd. With many of our merchants this habit of slinking endured after their return home: the sight of a mere church beadle made them think of a Turkish chaoush.[104] Modern tourists who fill their books with scornful comments on the servile attitude of Greeks and Armenians towards the Turk would do well to remember their own ancestors.

While all this went on, what was Sir John doing?

It would argue a profound misconception of Sir John's character to suppose that, because he had been told that no business could be transacted until the feasts were over, he kept quiet. Much otherwise was the fact. His Dragomans, at his behest, seized every opportunity to come to speech with either the Kehayah or the Rais Effendi and to worry these worthies away from thoughts of mirth and sprightliness. The Ambassador himself paid several visits to the Kehayah in person. To quote his own words: "I attempt all wayes I can thinke of, that since I could not have Audience till the Feasts were done, in the mean time my Capitulations may goe forward."[105]

We will look into these activities and try to set them forth as briefly as we can.

FOOTNOTES:

[97] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 206; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, p. 317. Cp. George Etherege to Joseph Williamson, "R. 8 May. 1670," *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[98] Letter from Adrianople, in *Life of Dudley North*, p. 213.

[99] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 203.

[100] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 217.

[101] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 226.

[102] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 205.

[103] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 116.

[104] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 124, 197.

[105] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675, *Coventry Papers*.

CHAPTER VIII

DIPLOMACY—HIGH AND OTHERWISE

Our Ambassador's first interview with the Kehayah had for its primary object a demand of the greatest delicacy, though no way connected with English interests in the Levant: a sort of "side-show" springing out of Charles II.'s secret diplomacy and directed from the inmost recesses of the Cabal. Whether Finch knew the dark inwardness of the policy he served can only be matter of conjecture: his despatches are too guarded.[106] But certain it is that he threw himself unflinchingly into measures which he knew to be agreeable to his master and his patron, Lord Arlington.

The custody of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem had for ages supplied an apple of discord between Greek and Latin monks, who fought for the tomb of the Prince of Peace with more rancour than monarchs ever displayed in their struggles for temporal gains. It was not the ownership of the holy places, which belonged to the Grand Signor; it was not even the exclusive occupation of them that the unholy contest raged about. The whole feud was for certain honorific privileges or tokens of pre-eminence, such as the right to decorate a shrine, to light the lamps, or to keep the keys of a church. For

these trifles both sects were prepared to spend thousands in corrupting the pashas of the Divan with whom the decision lay, and, besides, the Latin friars in Palestine, though being Spaniards, they had no ambassador of their own to assist them, enjoyed the diplomatic support of France, of Germany, of Venice, and of Poland. The Greeks would fain rely on their wits and their dollars. So equipped, each sect had alternately turned the other out. When M. de Nointel came to Turkey in 1670, he found the dispute in progress: it was one of the aims of his mission to have it settled in favour of the Latins, and on renewing the French Capitulations, in the summer of 1673, he had, as he imagined, carried his point.

The Greeks, however, had at that time a powerful champion in the First Dragoman of the Porte, Panayoti Nicusi, commonly called by the diminutive Panayotaki—an exceedingly clever and accomplished Greek, who easily persuaded the Vizir of the impolicy of taking the custody of the Holy Sepulchre from subjects of the Grand Signor and giving it to the protégés of foreign Powers—Powers which once owned the Holy Land and hoped to own it again: religious penetration being but the first step to ultimate conquest. A Hattisherif was, accordingly, handed to Panayoti, confirming the Greek claim. But, as Germany and the other European Powers whom Panayoti, before entering the service of the Porte, had served in the capacity of interpreter, were patrons of the Latins, and Panayoti did not wish to appear as his former employers' opponent, the grant remained dormant until after his death, which took place in October 1673. Once the Dragoman safe in his grave, his countrymen produced the document and asserted their rights. The feud had reached its climax at Easter 1674, when M. de Nointel was on

the spot.

Greek and Latin friars were preparing to adorn their respective portions of the marble shrine that covered the Tomb, when, stimulated by the presence of the French Ambassador, they fell out about the use of a ladder. The quarrel soon grew into a free fight which ended in the murder of one or two—some said two or three—Greek Caloyers. Result, in the French Ambassador's own words, "un enfer déchaîné"—hell let loose. The whole of the Greek community, clergy and laity, men, women, and children, rushed to the Cadi clamouring for help against the Latin assassins; the Latins stoutly denied the deed, affirming that the Caloyer or Caloyers had died of old age. M. de Nointel, in a paroxysm of diplomatico-religious frenzy, wrote to his King, to the Pope, to the Queen of Spain, to all the Catholic princes and potentates in Europe, denouncing the Greeks as usurpers, calling for vengeance, begging for money—much money wherewith to purchase the favour of the pashas and foil the intrigues of the schismatics.

All this, however, had failed to undo the dead Panayoti's work. Ahmed Kuprili never was the man to be moved by any one, least of all by the representative of a nation which, while calling itself the ally of Turkey, openly aided Turkey's enemies: the Vizir had met thousands of Frenchmen fighting against him both in Hungary and in Crete. Moreover, as Sir John remarks, the murder of the Greek or Greeks had "highly displeasd' the Gran Visir." The Spanish Cordeliers of Jerusalem, reduced to their own devices, sent to Adrianople Padre Canizares, their Commissary at Constantinople, armed with letters from the Bailo of Venice and good store of

gold of his own, to see what they could do at the Porte. The Greeks, on their part, sent to Adrianople the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos, armed with the Sultan's Hattisherif and good store of gold of his own, to see that the Spaniards did nothing at the Porte. Thus things stood on the eve of Sir John Finch's appearance on the scene: Greek and Latin Christians wrangling for the possession of Christ's grave before a Moslem tribunal.[107]

Our Ambassador had followed the feud from Pera with profound attention. England, looking upon the Greeks as natural allies against the common enemy—Popery—had, since the time of Elizabeth, consistently supported them in all their quarrels with the Latins. That Queen's representative, Edward Barton, lived on terms of affectionate intimacy with the Patriarch Meletios. His successors, Henry Lello and Sir Thomas Glover, likewise maintained the closest friendship with the successors of Meletios. After enduring unabated throughout the reign of James I., this Anglo-Greek alliance had attained its height in the time of Charles I., during the Patriarchate of the renowned and unfortunate Cyril Lucaris, when the Catholic intrigues against the Greek Church reached their depth. Sir Thomas Roe and Sir Peter Wych, all the years they were at Constantinople, strove to save that prelate from the infamous plots of the Jesuits and their patron the French Ambassador, who, however, succeeded at length in compassing his strangulation at the hands of the Turks.[108] The first departure from this policy appears, strangely enough, to have occurred during the Commonwealth. When Lord Winchilsea arrived at Constantinople, in 1661, the Latin President of the Holy Sepulchre appealed to him for his favour on the ground that his antecessor, Sir Thomas Bendyshe,

was a great defender of the Catholics in Turkey against the Greeks[109]—at a time when the Catholics in England were treated as almost outside the Christian pale and all heretics scattered over the Catholic world regarded Cromwell as their protector! Such a paradox might give food for interesting speculation indeed.[110] What concerns us here is Winchilsea's response to the appeal: it forms a tolerably good example of the edifying ways of diplomacy.

Among the King's Instructions to Winchilsea there is a clause bidding him "show all kindness and humanity to those of the Greek Church," and counteract, by all the means in his power, the machinations of her antagonists, "especially such Jesuits and Friars as under religious pretences compass other ends."[111] This looks as if at the beginning of his reign Charles II. meant to revert to the ancient tradition. Very soon, however, his attitude changed. As everybody now knows, though at the time the thing was a secret known to very few, Charles, already a crypto-Catholic, promised himself to establish papacy in England—to re-unite his kingdom to the Church of Rome. After the displacement of Secretary Nicholas (who, like Clarendon, always opposed the King's favour for the Catholics) by Arlington, in 1662, the Romanist tendencies of the English Court became more pronounced, culminating in the Treaty of Dover which, among other things, stipulated the subversion of Protestantism in England. It was natural, therefore, for a king who entertained such projects at home to foment similar designs abroad; that his representatives at Constantinople should promote in the East the cause which their master promoted in the West.

What verbal orders Winchilsea may have had it is impossible to say; but it can be shown that, even while pretending to exert himself on behalf of the Greek Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, he earned the gratitude of their Latin rivals. After the supersession of Nicholas, he dropped all pretence, obtained His Majesty's authority to disregard the pro-Greek clause, and thenceforward made the protection of the Roman Catholics an integral part of his programme.[112] His successor, Harvey, went out to Turkey with Instructions from which the awkward clause was significantly omitted,[113] and this negative evidence is supplemented by that Ambassador's confidential relations with the Marquis de Nointel who had on his eager mind the "re-union" of the Greek and Roman Churches under the aegis of Louis. The Rev. John Covel, who assisted at many after-dinner discussions between the two diplomats about the doctrine of Transubstantiation and kindred topics, makes it quite clear that in Harvey the Catholic cause had found, at least, a benevolent neutral.[114] In the more zealous and less discreet Finch it was to find an active ally.

From his arrival in Turkey Sir John had shown his bias. The Greek Patriarch of Constantinople who had been deposed in 1674 would, in pursuance of the old tradition, have fled to the English Embassy. But Sir John refused him asylum.[115] In the quarrel over the Holy Sepulchre, without hesitation or examination, he adopted the Latin view and offered Padre Canizares his assistance—an offer which the monk declined, to the Ambassador's intense annoyance: "He thankes me, but desird' not so much as a letter from me. I keep this in Petto." It was not long before the Providence that watches over aggrieved diplomats supplied Finch with a chance of

unburdening his “petto.” The Commissary of the Cordeliers, by means either of the Bailo’s letter or of his own gold, had contrived to obtain from the Porte a suspension of the sentence which assigned the custody of the Holy Sepulchre to the Greeks, and a revision of the case; but in this new hearing the Vizir upheld the Greek side, acting, as the Latin Fathers said, rather the part of an advocate for the Greeks than of a judge. The upshot was that the former sentence was confirmed; and, though no order for its execution had yet been issued, the Cordeliers were in such a fright that Padre Canizares sent an express to Jerusalem requiring them to remove out of the holy places all the costly plate which had been presented by several Christian princes, so that, if the worst came to the worst, their rivals might find the prize denuded. At the same time, two of them came to Finch with an account of their parlous state. This was Sir John’s opportunity: “I told them that I was sorry as a Christian, that they had lost their just Possessions, But as a Publick Minister I was not the least concernd’ in it. P. Canizares having, though I offerd’ him my Assistance at a time when He found himselfe in so great danger, wholely declind’ all application to me, as if the King of Englands Ambassadour weighd’ nothing at this Court: and thus much occasionally I causd’ to be signifyd’ to the Bailo of Venice; and upon occasion shall doe the like to the French Ambassadour.”[116]

The French Ambassador had already written to Finch from Rama[117] on behalf of the Jerusalem Friars, and on his return to Constantinople in February 1675, after adjusting his differences with Sir John, he renewed his efforts to engage the Englishman’s co-operation. With this object in view he paid Finch a visit a little before the latter set out

for Adrianople, and urged him to befriend the Latin Fathers near the Grand Vizir and Grand Signor, vehemently complaining of the Greeks, whom he described as “a company of Traditori, treacherous false wretches.”[118] The Venetian Bailo also approached our Ambassador on the same subject, and our Ambassador was not a little flattered to find himself, all of a sudden, the arbiter of Christendom.

It was, then, as a champion of Papacy that Sir John came to Adrianople: an odd rôle for one who had taken such pains to introduce himself to the Turks as the envoy from a “Defender of the Christian Faith against all those that worship Idolls and Images.” Whether the incongruity struck the Turks, we do not know. It certainly did not strike Sir John. The Jerusalem Fathers hastened to wait upon him, and “having excusd’ themselves and askd’ Pardon,” they “beseechd’ the King of Englands Protection,” declaring that they were prepared to spend for the purpose a sum of 15,000 dollars. Sir John willingly acceded to their request and promised to set about it straightway. What form was the protection to take? Sir John tells us that the money placed at his disposal was to be used “for the obtaining a Hattesheriffe for the clear possession of the Rights that were in dispute.” Dudley North asserts that the Fathers proposed and the Ambassador agreed to get an Article in their favour inserted into our Capitulations, adding that they showed Sir John the Article they desired ready-made both in Italian and in Turkish; and North’s assertion is inherently very probable. Lord Winchilsea in a letter to the Latin Procurator of the Holy Land had long ago stated that he found himself much hindered in his efforts to act as a patron of the Jerusalem Fathers by the fact that their protection was not mentioned in the English

Capitulations.[119] However that may be, Sir John immediately procured a private interview with the Kehayah, and asked him "whether there was any hopes left for the Latin Fathers." He was told that the Grand Vizir had sent to Jerusalem to inquire into the case, and "upon the sentence that was given no execution would be issued forth till the messenger was returnd'." Thereupon the Ambassador prayed "that the execution might not be given out, untill I was heard what I had to say,"—intimating that he was able to bring forward 15,000 arguments. The Kehayah, in the kindest possible manner, agreed that a case so well supported was entitled to respectful consideration; and the Ambassador went away persuaded that the difficulties of the question had been greatly exaggerated: his only fear was lest some other diplomat should steal a march upon him.[120]

Thus blithely did Sir John thrust his hand into that hornets' nest.

As was to be expected, the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem very soon got wind of this step. He had already made the English Ambassador's acquaintance at Constantinople through the Rev. John, who, being intimate with both sides, knew of the Latin design to turn the Greeks out of the holy places even before Sir John Finch's arrival in Turkey, and thought it in his heart an unjust design: they should be kept in, for they were natives and in possession. To the sympathetic Chaplain, therefore, Dositheos now had recourse and through him obtained an audience of our Ambassador.[121]

Simmering with excitement, his Holiness reminded his Excellency of the protection the Greeks had always had from the English nation, and desired that his Excellency should continue it. Finch replied in

most courteous terms that his wish was to adjust the controversy between them and the Latins: they should abide by what was right and reasonable; and he argued at great length in favour of the Latins. The Patriarch went away highly dissatisfied.

A few days later, he wrote that he was not well enough to wait on his Excellency in person again, but asked that Mr. Covel might be sent to him, as he had to say some things which could not be said in a letter. When Covel went, Dositheos told him plainly that he knew well the Ambassador had taken up the Latins' part for a sum of money, and that he meant to write to the King of England and to the Archbishop of Canterbury about it.

Whether these threats would have had any effect upon Finch may be doubted. But, as luck would have it, at this juncture letters reached him from home, relating that the Catholic cause was in a bad way. The Parliament which met on April 13th, 1675, had drawn up a new Bill against Popery. In the circumstances, his Excellency thought it expedient to modify his enthusiasm for the Cordeliers, and began to declare that he would not put their Article into the Capitulations, but would endeavour to procure a Hattisherif on their behalf. At this change of tone the Friars were much troubled, and pressed him to fulfil his original promise, offering more money; but they had to be content with what Sir John now promised them.[122] And even for that they would have to wait.

Sir John was meditating another descent upon the Kehayah, when the latter sent for his Dragomans and told them that the Grand Signor desired an English ship to convey to Tunis an Aga on important business: the old story of requisitioning over again!

The situation was one of those that Sir John loved to deal with and to describe in detail: they called for precisely the sort of qualities he possessed: he felt that in such a situation he looked at his best. Do not let us, then, withhold from him the pleasure of telling how he acquitted himself:

"I make my Druggermen return with this answer, That there could not be a thing more grievous to the King my Masters subjects then to have their ships employd' in this manner, for our ships were not like the French ships and other Nations, but ships that carry'd great wealth, besides that the Captains were bound by Charter Party not to goe out of their way upon forfeiture of their estates, if not their lives; That if I being at the Court could not be heard as to the defence of this Right, what could I doe when I was absent from the Court?"

The Kehayah replied that there were no ships in the port of Smyrna ready to sail but the English, and the Grand Signor's need was urgent: he looked upon Finch as the greatest friend to the Empire amongst all Ambassadors, so that a denial would be taken very unkindly, especially when he came to the Court to ask favours and would grant none. Sir John realised that it would never do to disoblige the Turks at a moment when he needed their goodwill, by refusing what they considered a very small thing—a thing to which they had been used, and, for the rest, a thing which they could take by force. But he thought to try a personal appeal first, "and then, if I must, to doe it in as obliging a manner as I could." So he sent his Dragomans back to tell the Kehayah that he would wait upon him and bring his own answer.

"When I came to him I gave him leave to use all

his Arguments and all his pressures, which he did with great earnestnesse, before I spake one word; but thereby having a sense within my selfe that it could not be avoided, before I answerd' him one word, I plucked out the letter of Command, which I had in my pockett, prepared in case I found things irremediable, which I wrote to the Consul of Smyrna for to land the Aga at Tunis, which I deliverd' him, and told him, Sir, There is the Command, of which you now being in possession you may well give me leave to speak all the Arguments of prejudice that wee lye under by this action, the end of which onely is to make you sensible that you ought not to presse me in this point at any other time. So I made him very apprehensive of the inconveniences he brought us to, and he promisd' me to be very tender allway's in it, and this way of treating with him seemd' to please him very much."

Did diplomat ever yield to pressure with a better grace? And what shall we say of that dramatic plucking out of the letter from his pocket: just when the Kehayah least expected such a thing? It was a great gesture. Then, again, think of the originality of yielding first and arguing afterwards! No wonder the Kehayah was delighted at "this way of treating with him."

But Sir John had not yet exhausted the possibilities of the situation: "Being thus reducd' to order a ship to land him at Tunis, I bethought my selfe how to make use of a bad markett, and so made it my request to him that, finding in my last Audience with the Gran Vizir that he did utterly disapprove the actions of the Tripolines, promised me to endeavour to remedy them, I offerd' him amongst other expedients this for one that the Gran Vizir would be

pleasd' to write a letter of resentment to them at Tripoli, and command them to make restitution of what depredations were made upon His Majesty's subjects ships, which if they gave obedience to, I would write to His Majesty's V: Admirall Sir John Narbrough, to prepare him for it, and that if the Commission He had from His Majesty would permitt Him to accept of it (which I had reason to beleive) Peace would follow."[123]

A promise was given that the Vizir would write in that sense. Whether he did or not (nobody ever saw the letter),[124] Sir John, taking much for granted, wrote on his own account to Narbrough, how in consequence of his representations "the Gran Signor was this day pleasd' to give by the Visir Azem His severe Commands to the Dei of Tripoli and that Goverment, to make you Restitution of whatsoever was by the men of warr of that place taken out of the ships of His Majesty's subjects." He added: "the Gran Visir desird' me to write to you," (a bit of diplomatic licence—nothing to speak of!) "that having Restitution made you, the warr might cease." For such a consummation Sir John devoutly prayed, not without good reason; but, of course, he did not presume to dictate to the Admiral.

"Sir," he goes on, "Persons in your command are under Instructions from which you cannot deviate: I can onely tell you, that His Majesty having Restitution, has a dore opend' with Honour to goe out of a warr that will be of a certain expense but of an uncertain issue, for I am not so great a stranger to your worth, but that I know t' will be harder for you to find the Enemy then to beat Him: In the Interim when Restitution is offerd, the Agreement between the Crowns seems to enjoyn a Peace. If so, your

Prudence knows how to serve yourselfe of this advice, and to endear the manner of doeing what His Majesty's Interest requires to be done howsoever. But if you have orders of a different nature, and of later injunction, then I know of, I cannot who owe entire obedience to the King our Masters Commands to the utmost Puntiglio, speake any thing: Onely if your orders allow you to conclude Peace upon Restitution, I think you will doe His Majesty's Honour right, and your owne Reputation no wrong to renew the Peace; which if you doe, I pray send me early notice of; and if you doe not, the Reasons why, that in this great Empire I may vindicate the friendship his Majesty owns with the Gran Signor and secure the great estates of his subjects the Levant Company."[125]

These transactions illustrate sufficiently the graver side of Sir John's employment during the festive season; what follows exhibits him in a lighter vein.

Our Ambassador knew that there is nothing people like better than attentions: those little offices of civility which, by flattering their pride, never fail to conciliate their friendship or at least their good-will; and he carried his attentions from the highest down to the lowest with an assiduity which would have done credit to Dudley North himself.

For instance, he had a large English mastiff which had worsted bears of the greatest size and savagery in single-fight. Aware of the Imperial Hunter's tastes, he hastened to send him this ferocious dog as a present: "which," the Rev. John tells us, "the Grand Signor took mightily kindly."[126] This courtesy, let us hope, made the Avji more friendly towards us than a more important service would have done. His subordinates had to be wooed according to their own particular weaknesses.

Among these, sad to relate, none was more prevalent than a weakness for wine and spirits. The Sultan, himself an habitual abstainer, had twice (in 1661 and 1670) forbidden the use of intoxicants: the second time by a most drastic edict most drastically enforced: taverns pulled down, butts broken in pieces, wine spilt, and the making and selling of it banned "upon no less penalty than hanging, or being putt into the Gallies."[127] Yet the cult of Bacchus flourished more luxuriantly than ever. Legislation had overreached itself. The abolition of the tax had lowered the price of the article, so that those who before could afford to drink only one bottle openly, now drank two in secret. During Sir John's stay at Adrianople intoxication was common among Turks of all classes, and particularly rampant in Court circles. With the exception of the Grand Signor and the Mufti, there was hardly a sober grandee. Our Chaplain, whom nothing escaped, has much to say about this phase of Turkish life also: "I have seen," he declares, "the Vizier himself *mamur*, that is, crop sick severall times." Alas! it was only too true. Ahmed Kuprili, up to the end of the siege of Candia (1669), had never tasted a drop of anything stronger than sherbet. But on his return from that campaign he stopped at the fair isle of Chios to refresh himself from his toils. This holiday, the first he had ever had, proved his undoing. For a whole fortnight he refreshed himself among the mastic groves of Chios, allowing no public affairs, however urgent, to interrupt his potations. Ahmed was nothing if not thorough. From that date he seemed anxious to atone for his past temperance, and at such a rate that, by 1675, his stomach could no longer keep warm without the most fiery of liqueurs.[128]

It was with wine, therefore, that Sir John wooed

those whom his Dragomans worried. He sent them, at short intervals, samples of his cellar, and anxiously inquired how they were appreciated. “My Florence wines,” he reports, “were not likd’ at the Court, the wines I had out of the Pope’s State well approved; but the sack that I brought with me mightily admird’, and none esteemd’ to come near it; so that I gave Him [the Vizir] all I had, save onely one double Bottle I kept to drink His Majesty’s Health for the day that I should receive my Capitulations.”[129]

This way of dealing with the Turks was so novel that it excited comment among Sir John’s colleagues; and one day Count Kindsberg, as the two were “talking merrily together,” ventured to say “that He understood I went on with this Court by fair and Courtly mean’s, which was not others, nor His practise.” Sir John readily answered, “that he did well, and very possibly I might doe so to, he immitating his Master who hath had allway’s Warr with the Gran Signor and I mine who had allwayes Peace.”[130]

In another matter, too, Sir John showed himself surprisingly careless of his neighbours’ opinion. There was at Adrianople a disreputable Italian renegade, Count Bocareschi. The Ambassador shared this highly undesirable acquaintance with—the Rev. John Covel. Our Chaplain had known the Count for years and cherished no illusions about him: “this Bocareschi,” he told one of his Cambridge correspondents, “was a very parasite as [ever] lived: an excellent wit, and some little learning, the Latin toung perfectly; but for his damned traiterous perfidious tricks, was kick’t out of all publick ministers’ companyes.”[131] Yet, though he knew the

Italian well for “a damned rogue” and “a beast,” as he calls him elsewhere, he cultivated him because the adventurer, being a Muteferrika, or quartermaster, had access to many places which the Rev. John itched to explore. From a like opportunism, his Excellency now entertained the ignoble Count at dinner nearly ever day. Diplomacy, like Providence, is not very particular in its choice of instruments. The proud Lord Ambassadour must stoop to caress a Muteferrika; the representative of a monarch who styled himself Defender of the Faith must consort with a renegade.

Thus during the six weeks that the Festivities lasted Sir John utilised every means he could think of for making himself popular with everybody and anybody who might be of use to him in his mission: bakshishing and flattering the Turks up to the scratch. His methods, scandalous though they might seem to others, to him appeared successful. The officials who received his fine wines gave him in return fair words: the Capitulations, Sir John understood, had been read over to the Grand Vizir several times: article after article was considered and passed. Finally, one day, as his Dragomans went by the house of Hussein Aga, Director of Customs, or, as the English of that day styled him, Chief Customer, that officer called them up and told them that all the demands his Excellency had put forward were granted; but he wondered that they should think such boons were to be had for nothing! Whereupon the Dragomans went to the Rais Effendi, who corroborated the Customer’s statement, adding that he had reason to believe that the Kehayah’s sentiments were the same. When this was reported to Sir John, he sent the Dragomans to the Kehayah, promising him 1000 sequins (£500) for the Grand

Vizir, 1000 dollars (£250) for himself, and a similar sum for the Rais Effendi.[132]

That Sir John was overjoyed at the near prospect of his release it would be superfluous to state. There is a satiety of all things, even of rats, mice, fleas, bugs, Jew-stenches and Turkish festivities. How ill-advised he had been to put off his journey till this season! But now it is only a question of days—he will soon have done now.

FOOTNOTES:

[106] Even in touching upon such an open secret as the Turkish Ministers' susceptibility to the charm of dollars, Finch dares not speak out: "the greatest arguments I cannot write to you without a Cipher, reflecting upon great Persons," he tells Coventry: Sept. 9, 1675.

[107] Finch to Coventry, Feb. 24/March 6, 1674-75, Sept. 9, 1675; Covel's *Greek Church*, Pref. pp. lii, liv; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 315-7; *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 104-5; Vandal's *Nointel*, pp. 136, 141-2; Hammer, vol. xi. pp. 362, 425.

[108] See the despatches of all those ambassadors in *S.P. Turkey*. A few of them are in print: Sir Thomas Roe's *Negotiations* (1621-28). The story may be read, however, in Rycaut's *History* and in Covel's *Greek Church*.

[109] Father Bonaventura to Winchilsea, July 24, 1661, *Finch Report*, p. 137.

[110] At the same time we find "the Eldest Son of the Church" supporting in Germany and Hungary the Protestants he persecuted in France; yet historians with a faculty for generalisation and idealisation tell us that the

struggle which rent Europe at that period was essentially a religious struggle!

[111] *S.P. Turkey*, 17.

[112] Winchilsea to Nicholas, Dec. 19, 1662, *S.P. Turkey*, 17. In contrast with this, see numerous letters, beginning so early as April 1662, in the *Finch Report*. The same volume (p. 297) contains the King's permission to the Ambassador to ignore his Instructions regarding the Greek Church; it is dated, Dec. 23, 1663.

[113] See "Instructions for Our Trusty and Wellbeloved Servant Sir Daniell Harvey, Knt., at Whitehall, Aug. 3, 68," *S.P. Turkey*, 19. The clause in question is also omitted from the Instructions to Finch. It reappears in those to Lord Chandos, 1680—when the anti-Catholic agitation in England was at its height.

[114] Covel's *Greek Church*, Pref. p. xi.

[115] Finch to Arlington, July 27, S.N., 1674, *Coventry Papers*.

[116] Finch to Coventry, Feb. 24/March 6, 1674-75.

[117] Nointel's letter from Rama seems to have been lost, but its purport is preserved in his letter from Tripoli, July 12, 1674.

[118] Covel's *Greek Church*, Pref. p. lii.

[119] Winchilsea to Fra Dominico del Arzival, Oct. 10, 1662, *Finch Report*, p. 218.

[120] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675; *Life of Dudley North*, p. 105.

[121] Covel's *Greek Church*, Pref. p. vi.

[122] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 106-7.

[123] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[124] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 106.

[125] Finch to Narbrough, Adrianople, May 24, S.V. 1675, *Coventry Papers*.

[126] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 238.

[127] Harvey to Williamson, Sept. 5, 1670, *S.P. Turkey*, 19. Cp. Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 105, 285.

[128] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 245; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 282-3, 318.

[129] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[130] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675. Rycaut, who always reflects the conventional view, would have agreed with Kindsberg: "It is certainly a good Maxime for an Ambassador in this Countrey, not to be over-studious in procuring a familiar friendship with Turks," *Present State*, p. 170. This maxim arose from the belief that "a Turk is not capable of real friendship towards a Christian."

[131] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 226.

[132] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 107.

CHAPTER IX

THE SUBLIME THRESHOLD

As soon as the Feasts ended (June 25th) the Ambassador applied for his Audience—"and here," he says, "I find I was mistaken, that it was not the Feasts that hinderd' my Audience, but a Pay day to the Souldiery." The Turks commonly chose that day for the reception of new ambassadors in order to dazzle them with the sight of their strength and wealth. But Sir John, who did not yet know all the ins and outs of Ottoman etiquette, readily believed what he was told—"that the Gran Signor had an Intention to place the highest Respect upon me in giving me audience on the pay day of his Janizarys."[133]

This honour is promised him at once; but the days pass, and it is still to come. Instead, other things come—things enough to try the temper of a saint. Just then—beginning of July—the Plague breaks out in the overcrowded city of Adrianople; and to the nuisance of interminable festivals now succeed the horrors of interminable funerals. Hundreds die every day. It is impossible to stir out of doors without meeting a corpse. All slaves and poor people, the moment they expire, are wrapped up in some rag, thrust upon the back of a *hamal*, or porter, and

conveyed to their destination like bales of cadaverous goods. What is worse, one knows that there lies as much danger of contagion in touching the clothes of the living as the bodies of the dead. There is no protection against the foul disease except in flight. Even the Turks, who are much less given to panic than the Franks, fly in great numbers from the town into the country. The Grand Signor himself, good Mohammedan though he is, sets the example of lack of faith by retiring to a palace which he has built at Ak-bonar, some ten miles north of Adrianople, leaving the Grand Vizir in the infected city to carry on the business of government as usual. What is left for mere infidels?

They retreat as fast as they can to Karagatch—a Greek village about a mile and a half south-west of Adrianople, on the river Arda. There the Ambassador gets a house for himself, Sir Thomas Baines, and their servants; the Chaplain, through the kind offices of his brother-papas, the village priest, obtains a tiny apartment in a cottage close by; and the others lodge, one here, one there, wherever they can find room—no easy matter in a small village for a company of one hundred and twenty persons. For the Treasurer alone there is no escape from the pestilent city. Business compels him to be always there. “Care was taken,” he says, “to find me constant employment, and for the most part I went at the will and pleasure of his Excellency.” North is a philosopher, and takes health and sickness as he does light and darkness or the vicissitudes of the seasons: as things to which a wise man has to accommodate himself; only taking care, whatever befalls him on this moonstruck planet, not to lose his temper with it. Nevertheless, though prudence holds his tongue, he cannot help some sarcastic reflections on “the

Italick caution of the Ambassador and selfishness of the Knight," who thus shift almost the whole burden on to his shoulders.[134]

Curiously enough, while showing so little regard for the English Treasurer's safety, Sir John invites the Spanish friars to share his retreat with him—an invitation which is, naturally, accepted with gratitude and alacrity.[135] Let us hope that they repay him by their saintly exhortations and example of patience under affliction: there is call enough for both from that day onward.

As the weeks go by, and the Plague, with the increasing heat, grows fiercer, the Ambassador's desire to have his Audience and his Capitulations, and to be gone, becomes acuter. His Dragomans are incessantly at work, pressing the Kehayah for dispatch; and, to add weight to their solicitations, Sir John writes to that worthy, desiring to know if there is any hitch in the business, declaring himself ready to argue any point before the Grand Vizir against any one, and asking whether he should make a direct application to the Vizir. The Kehayah answers, with his accustomed suavity, that his Excellency should not fret: all is well. As soon as the Tefterdar, or Lord Treasurer, can get ready the money for the pay of the Janissaries, Sir John will have his heart's desire. There is nothing to be done but to let things take their course.

At last the Grand Signor decides to return to the Seraglio for the Audience. And, on the 27th of July, an hour before dawn, two chaoushes arrive at Karagatch to fetch his Excellency.

"Is my Lord ready?"

Ready for anything is my Lord—anything that

promises deliverance from purgatory. Dressed and wigged and breakfastless, he and his companions follow briskly the thrice-welcome messengers to the head of a wooden bridge on the Arda, and there wait till the rest of the chaoushes who compose the guard of honour make their appearance. Then, crossing the river, our pilgrims mount their horses and set off through the dim twilight. About them the plain lies veiled in pestiferous mists; overhead a few stars still twinkle in the pale sky; the dew sparkles on the bare sandy soil underfoot. In front, with its solemn domes and slender minarets silhouetted against the horizon, looms the city of Adrianople.

They enter, and ride up the crooked, deserted streets, pitch-dark under the overhanging upper storeys of the houses, the noise of the horses' hoofs on the rough cobbles rousing the inhabitants from their feverish dreams. Sir John's heart grows almost merry within him at the thought that he is seeing that mournful city of death for the last time.

At about half-past five they alight at the great gate of the Seraglio. Our old friends, the Chaoush-bashi and Capiji-bashi, reinforced by a new one, the Peskeshji-bashi, or Chief Receiver of Gifts, come forth and conduct the visitors across a vast court lined with Janissaries to whose officers the Ambassador bows as he goes on, prompted by the Peskeshji-bashi, who walks before him with a long silver staff in his hand. After traversing this court, they step through a stone porch into the Divan: a small hall—not more than eight or nine yards square—with a bench running round the three sides, covered, as is also the floor, with embroidered silk. This hall serves many purposes: it is here that laws are enacted, lawsuits decided, troops paid, and

ambassadors made fit to be introduced to the august presence of the Grand Signor: it has no doors, but stands always open for all the world to enter and seek justice.

The visitors look about them curiously: “The Truth is, Right Honorable, it was a sight worthy of any man’s seeing,” says Sir John, “but I have not here any time to dilate upon it.” Fortunately the Rev. John has and does. On one side of the bench sits a Secretary of State designated Nishanji-bashi, whose function it is to affix the Sultan’s cipher (*toughra*) to Imperial decrees. On another sits the Grand Vizir, with the two Cadileskers, or Supreme Judges of Europe and Asia. On the third side sits the Tefterdar. Over the Vizir’s head protrudes something that every one present thinks of all the time, though no one dares for a single moment gaze at—a bow-window screened with gilded lattice-work, through which, it is understood, the Grand Signor watches the proceedings unseen.

Having made his obeisance to the Vizir and the rest, the Ambassador is given a velvet stool to sit on, and, after “a little discourse,” is conducted to the bench on the Vizir’s right-hand side and placed beneath the Nishanji-bashi, “which, as I am told, was a Respect.” Next to him stands Dr. Mavrocordato, the Dragoman of the Porte, and his own two chief Dragomans. The other members of the suite take their appointed places at the farther end of the room: they may turn sideways to look out into the court, but when one or two of them, in so doing, venture to turn their backs to the Vizir, they are sharply reprimanded.

Several hundred small leather bags, each containing coin to the value of 500 dollars, are

brought in and piled in heaps of ten upon the floor. The Tefterdar presents his accounts to the Vizir. He, after kissing them, sends them to the Grand Signor by the Peskeshji-bashi, and by him they are presently returned to the Vizir, who receives them with another kiss. Thereupon the bags are taken out to the porch; the companies of the Janissaries are called by the Peskeshji-bashi, one after another, and each company comes running up to receive its quota. When they are all paid off, their officers step into the Divan and, kneeling down before the Vizir, lift the corner of his cloak to their foreheads and lips; then, retiring three or four paces backwards and sideways, go out again; Ahmed Kuprili all the time sitting as one who does not know what is going on.

This solemn tomfoolery over, there follows another performance more cheering for the wearied and hungry Englishmen. Ewers and basins are brought in, and when the Vizir, Tefterdar, Nishanji-bashi, and the Ambassador have washed their hands, three little round tables are planted respectively in front of the three grandees and covered with leather mats. Upon these tables are laid flat loaves of bread like pancakes, coarse wooden spoons, some saucers of capers, olives, parsley, and pickled samphire, a little salt-cellar and a little pepper-box. The Ambassador sits at the Vizir's table, having beside him only his chief Dragoman, who "rendred us mutuall Intelligible to each other." He sits on a velvet stool, facing his host, who is seated on the bench. Three similar stools are set at the Nishanji-bashi's table for our Treasurer, the oldest merchant, Mr. Hyet, and Dr. Pickering of Smyrna. Three more stools at the Tefterdar's table are occupied by the Ambassador's Secretary, the Cancellier, and the Chaplain. All these are "most Civilly and Courteously entertaind'." The

rest of the suite dine in the porch outside, some with the Rais Effendi, some with the Chaoush-bashi, and are none too gently treated by the Turkish attendants, who shove them with their elbows and address to them rude words. The two Cadileskers dine by themselves—too strict observers of the Law to eat with infidels.

Thanks to our parson's loquacious quill, supplemented with a few touches from the Ambassador's pen, we are able to raise the ghost of that repast of long ago from the limbo of dead dinners. It is a banquet in the very best Turkish style. There are roast chickens and roast pigeons piled one upon another; kebobs, or bits of mutton, both roast and boiled, skewered in alternate layers; gourds stuffed with minced meat, and soups of several sorts, and puff pastry pies, both plain and stuffed, and pillaf, and dates, and pine kernels, and very, very many other things, sweet or savoury, solid or sloppy —anything from fifty to a hundred courses—served up in dishes of a glazed metal (*martaban*) much heavier and costlier than china, and whipped away with disconcerting swiftness, to be scrambled for by the Janissaries in the courtyard. The soups are eaten with the wooden spoons; for the meats the banqueters have to use the implements provided by Nature. At each table the host begins by pinching the flesh with his finger and thumb and inviting the guests to fall to; which they do, nipping and tearing lustily with hands and teeth. About half-way through this "horse-feast," as the Rev. John calls it, the Ambassador asks for something to drink, and is given —a cup of water. As he takes it, he catches the Grand Vizir's eye fixed upon his Dragoman with a quizzical smile, "knowing very well that I usd' to drink very Excellent Wines, for He Himselfe had tasted of it."

But, at the other tables, the diners have excellent lemon sherbet to wash down the viands with; the host at each table beginning with a hearty draught and then passing the cup round. The Rev. John deeply regrets that after this one round he sees that blessed cup no more.

Turkish banquets, as a rule, were funereal affairs. But this one was enlivened by some “very free and merry discourse” between the Ambassador and the Vizir, the latter “often laughing out right, though the Gran Signor stood in the window all the while to look on us.”[136] It was over much sooner than the hungry Englishmen would have liked or than might have been expected from the number of courses; but the waiters at each table kept such good time that all ended, as they had begun, together: even in their dinners the Turks forgot not their discipline.

After the necessary ablutions, the guests are led by the Dragoman Mavrocordato out into the porch, where they sit on a long bench and are vested with kaftans. In this masquerade they wait for half an hour, till the Vizir and the other Ministers come forth on their way to the Grand Signor’s Audience Chamber. Shortly afterwards the Ambassador is summoned to proceed in the same direction, and he does so, followed by his presents and accompanied by all his gentlemen; but only six are allowed to enter—the two Dragomans, the Treasurer, the oldest merchant, the Cancellier, and the Secretary, who carries the royal letter on his head. The Rev. John is bitterly disappointed. Both the Ambassador and the Knight had solemnly promised him before they set out from Constantinople and all along that he should infallibly be one of the persons admitted to the presence—and he has been left out. ’Tis no use for

the Rev. John to assure us that he does not mind a bit, because, forsooth, he has already seen the Grand Signor again and again—that it is only the furniture of the room he wishes to see. He does mind, very, very much. But he consoles himself with the reflection that he has not missed much that was worth having.

The proceedings appear to have been marked by rather more than the ceremonial violence customary on such occasions: so much so that those who took part in them could afterwards give only the vaguest and most confused account of what had happened: it looked as if the Avji wished to pay the giaours back for bringing him into the plague-stricken city.

At the entrance they were each seized by two capijis, one holding them under one arm, the other under the other, and were dragged in. As soon as ever they crossed the Sublime Threshold, their conductors, laying their hands on their necks, forced them to bow down till their foreheads touched the floor: once-twice-thrice; and immediately afterwards all, except the Ambassador, his Secretary, and Chief Dragoman, were hustled out again in such a manner that the Treasurer who came out first swore that he saw practically nothing—only in a general sort of way he had an impression of a very large, dimly lighted room with in it something that looked like a thing they call the Grand Signor. The poor Cancellier, being a little man, was crushed quite down at the door, and the oldest merchant nearly tumbled over him as he lay sprawling over the Sublime Threshold: so they saw even less than the Treasurer.

The Ambassador stayed in about four minutes altogether: the Chaplain timed him by his pulse—a

method of measuring time which the Rev. John had often practised at sea by a half-minute glass. All his Excellency could tell of the interview was this: the Grand Signor sat upon a sort of four-post bed covered with a crimson counterpane embroidered with pearls, and had by him "a Rich Cabinett or Standish, sett all over with larg Diamonds to a great Value." The front of his cloak from the neck down was also set with large diamonds and pearls. He wore on his head a small plain turban with a little feather fastened to it by a jewelled brooch, and upon his face a most severe, terrible, stately scowl.

After the three compulsory prostrations, Sir John's Dragoman was ordered to read his Excellency's address—just twelve and a half lines given to him beforehand in Italian: "wherein was all His Majesty's titles that I could thinke of, and the word Padesha in, where there was occasion to putt it, at which my Druggerman being a little startled when I gave Him the Paper the day before I went in, I bad Him fear nothing for I was to be by Him."[137] But in spite of the brevity of the speech, in spite of his rehearsal of it, in spite of the Ambassador's protecting vicinity, poor old Signor Giorgio, what with the violent exercise he had just undergone, what with the Grand Signor's scowl, was so flurried that he very nearly lost the thread. That done, the Secretary handed the King's Letter to the Dragoman, who passed it on to the Vizir, who laid it on the bolster at the Grand Signor's right hand, who cast a kind of scornful eye towards it and said—nothing. Whereas, the Rev. John well remembered, he had spoken to Finch's predecessor Harvey a great deal. Clearly, the Avji was sulking. The Vizir spoke instead, saying, "All right," and, without more ado, Ambassador, Secretary, and Dragoman were dragged out again.

[138]

Pitiful to see the representative of a great Christian Power crawling to the Ottoman throne in such a manner—and glad to arrive there at all. The more we gaze on the picture, the more pitiful it seems: that free men should from interest adopt an attitude to which slaves are compelled by fear! That is the permanent fact we discover in this passing show; and it is inevitable that we should discover it. As long as our policy has an essentially illiberal aim—be it dollars, be it domination—so long will our posture be servile: to reach what lies low, you must stoop. Such is the tragic moral of the picture; yet there are many touches of comedy in it, too. A picture well worth looking at, in more ways than one.

FOOTNOTES:

[133] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[134] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 227, 116; Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 242, 244.

[135] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[136] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[137] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[138] Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 257-67. See also Appendix X. For the King's Letter to the Sultan, see Appendix II.

CHAPTER X

HOPES DEFERRED

Having duly "wiped the dust of the Sublime Threshold with his face"—a Turkish figure of speech not far removed from a literal statement of fact—Sir John expected that the Capitulations would forthwith be handed to him. There was not, in his mind, the shadow of an excuse for putting him off longer. But when he applied to the Kehayah, he found that, instead of everything being settled, as he had been led to believe, the Grand Vizir and his Ministers had only just begun to study the Articles. Indeed, the draft which he had sent in two and a half months ago had been lost during the festal confusion, and, after a long search (the Kehayah and the Rais Effendi each saying that the other had it), was but lately discovered in the hands of a page of the Grand Vizir's.[139] So all those messages about the Articles being read over, considered, passed, etc. etc., had been from beginning to end a tissue of poetic inventions! The trick was gross, but not unusual. Nor, fairly viewed, was it undeserved: the Turks had begun by telling Sir John frankly that no business could be transacted during the Feasts; as he went on pestering them, they had no alternative but to lie—politeness forbade any other course towards a man

whose wine they drank.

Although unspeakably disgusted, our Ambassador would fain suppress his mortification: he was old enough, and man of the world enough, to know that, where one cannot strike, one must smile. But never was smiling more difficult. The Plague from Adrianople now travelled to Karagatch, and first seized the daughter of our Chaplain's landlady.

Up to that moment the English had dwelt there as happily as might have been expected. In spite of the Grand Signor's edicts, the village was a notorious resort for citizens in quest of liquid solace. Every now and then the Aga of the Janissaries came to see that the law was observed; but, as he made at least 10,000 dollars a year by its breach, he gave at least one hour's notice of his raids. The greatest purveyor of spirituous consolation in the locality was Covel's friend, the village priest, who used to secure his stock by hiding it in the church. Englishmen could not, of course, let themselves be outdone by Turks and Greeks. It has always been the way of our race to develop its greatest capacity in the hour of sternest need. So they drank deeply to find joy, more deeply still to drown fear: trying all the while to appear outwardly unconcerned. The Rev. John wrote home that he frequently went into Adrianople, and had become so inured to funerals that he minded no more meeting a dead man than a dead calf. That may be; but when the little girl with whom he had been prattling died, it was not so pleasant.

In a few days the epidemic spread through the whole village, and drove the Ambassador and his party out into the fields, where they set up their tents, and waited.

The Articles, once recovered from the Vizir's page,

were studied by the pashas, revised by the Rais Effendi, and brought to the Ambassador in what he understood to be their final form. When they were read over to him, Sir John heaved a sigh of relief: this time there could be no doubt that his ordeal was at an end. But alas! when they were shown to the Grand Vizir, he caused some of them to be straightway incorporated in the Capitulations, but the financial clauses to be submitted to the Tefterdar for his opinion, and the Article regarding Englishmen turning Turks to be referred to the Mufti. So the pudding that had for a moment appeared ready to be served up, was once more in the pot.[140]

The situation might have been amusing, but for the fact that Sir John did not think it so. Sir John felt intensely unhappy, and when Sir John was unhappy nobody connected with him could be happy. How those wretched Dragomans must have blessed him!

A fresh series of conferences ensues. First the Dragomans are sent to the Tefterdar, who wishes to know what do we want these new clauses for, and why the Capitulations may not stand as they are. They reply that the reason is very simple: we want to be certain and not fall every day into disputes with ignorant and impertinent Custom-House officials. The Tefterdar smiles: That, he says, is not the true reason: we intend to start importing a finer cloth and want to pay no more duty than for the cheaper. The Tefterdar has hit the mark with wonderful accuracy; but the Dragomans repudiate the vile insinuation. Then again, he goes on: that Aleppo Hattisherif—why can it not remain as it has been for so many years: why must it needs be put into the Capitulations now? However, in the end, he declares himself satisfied and promises to pass everything. [141]

But Sir John, whose soul has been stirred to most dismal scepticism, cannot rest. “What troubled me most,” he says, “was for the three Articles referrd’ to the Tefterdar which were of the greatest concern, knowing that he was a Judicious, sower, severe man, and in His apprehension very quick also.” What harm might not this shrewd Turk work? Full of misgivings, next morning the Ambassador goes once more into Adrianople and seeks a personal interview with the Kehayah. At this conference he surpasses himself: “I muster up all the Arguments that I could think of.” After listening to his Excellency’s oration, the Kehayah, suave as ever, says: “Ambassadour, all things by the Grace of God will be well, for I will stand by you to the outmost, but send not your Druggermen to the Tefterdar till I advise you the hour.”[142] This speech brings sweet balm to the soul of Sir John, who then proceeds to touch upon the title, Padishah. He is very proud to have been the first to give His Majesty this title before the Grand Signor; but that was only planting the seed: the fruit had yet to be plucked. He receives assurances that, as the Kehayah thinks the claim just and reasonable, he will move the Vizir again about it. Further, our Ambassador mentions the question of the Latin friars, and on this point also the Kehayah is eager to oblige: only he needs a Petition (*Arz*) for the Vizir. Sir John, who has the paper ready, hands it to him, and departs recomforted.[143]

The Cordeliers had all this time been with Sir John, filling his ears day and night with the tale of their misfortunes, exaggerating them, and laying the chief blame for them upon the French Ambassador. They had received him at Jerusalem with all honour imaginable and at great cost, expecting wonders from his protection, and he had caused their ruin.

The object of these tirades obviously was to inspire Finch with the desire to capture the position which Nointel had forfeited; and Finch would very much like to do so. But he was cautious. He defended Nointel, telling the Friars that the noble Marquis certainly did intend nobly, according to his power; but the inexpedient murder of the Greek Caloyers, added to Ahmed's dislike of the French, had made the Grand Vizir implacable. Of course, he would do all he could for them. But the Ambassadors of France and Venice were their official protectors. Therefore he advised them to inform those Ambassadors that he was disposed to protect them, but that he would be more earnest in it if they who had orally solicited his aid before he left Constantinople would repeat their request in writing. The "good Fathers" did as they were bidden; but the result was negative. The Venetian replied that, for certain reasons, he could not write to Sir John to undertake their protection, and that he verily believed his undertaking it would not be pleasing to the French Ambassador. The French Ambassador did not reply at all. While both diplomats wished to make use of the Englishman as an auxiliary, neither wanted to be supplanted by him. Sir John understood the position perfectly: "if a Hattesheriffe had bin procurd' by me in favour of the Fathers it must have runn in the King my Masters name, which the Fathers Protection being in both their Capitulations had bin a slurr to them."[144] Nevertheless, he pursued his way, and after that most satisfactory interview with the Kehayah he had great hopes of success.

Meanwhile he thought it advisable, plague or no plague, to go into Adrianople again and pay his respects to the Mufti, upon whose decision depended one at least of the new Articles. He found the "Wisest

of the Wise" sitting cross-legged, with a coarse kind of linsey-woolsey blanket over his knees and three or four books beside him: a swarthy, good-natured elderly gentleman, who received the Ambassador with the same ceremony as the Grand Vizir. There was no conversation worth mention. After some formal compliments, Sir John hurried back to his rural retreat.[145]

There was another personage that Sir John would have been well advised to cultivate even at some personal risk: a certain Mustafa Pasha, the Grand Vizir's brother-in-law, who, having already acted as Ahmed's Deputy, was destined to rise at no distant date to the highest post open to a Turkish subject. But Sir John, whose energy was limited and whose fear of the Plague was unlimited, contented himself with sending to that pasha his Dragomans with a present and an excuse. No doubt, he felt that by calling on the Mufti he had done his part. It was now Sir Thomas's turn to do his. Had they not always hunted in couples?

To the Knight's lot fell a far more interesting figure —the much-honoured and fawned-upon Sheikh Vani Effendi, chief counsellor and preacher to the Grand Signor: a holy man who knew how to retain the Imperial favour by reassuring the Imperial conscience on such points as giving to hunting and to the harem what was meant for the Empire. Ahmed Kuprili had wisely avoided making a rival of this redoubtable saint by taking him as an ally. In personal appearance, the two had nothing in common. What Ahmed was like, we know. Vani, as painted by the Rev. John, was a repulsive old hunch-back with shrivelled flesh and one eye smaller than the other, as if it had shrunk in the washing: an

uglier saint could not easily be imagined. Yet they shared a common passion. Ahmed was animated by a statesman's love for political morality; Vani burned with a fanatic's zeal for religious purity. It is hard to determine which of the two unclean things he hated most: Moslem heretics or Christian infidels. But it was amongst the latter that his fervour had found its choicest victims. As far back as 1661 he had announced that the decline of the Ottoman Empire was due to the excessive liberty permitted to its Christian subjects—the liberty to live amongst the Turks and to sell wine to them. The fires and plagues which afflicted Constantinople were likewise traced to divine anger at such unseemly tolerance. It was at his instigation that Imperial edicts were issued forbidding the reconstruction of ruined churches and the consumption of wine, and commanding all infidels to clear out of the capital. While the Sultan threatened wine-bibbers with death in this world, the Sheikh promised them eternal damnation in the next. Every Friday he fulminated in one mosque or another, and the Grand Signor himself was an assiduous listener to his sermons.

Nevertheless, one regrets to hear, Vani Effendi imbibed in his closet vast quantities of the liquor he cursed from the pulpit. It may be, of course, that, like other saints, he issued some kind of a special dispensation to himself in the matter. He certainly held that indulgences which in an ordinary man would be sinful were lawful to a saint. When one of his disciples asked him how he reconciled the anathemas he continually hurled against the use of gold and silver, of silk and pearls, and against certain other joys of the flesh, with his own marked predilection for such things, he replied: "Worldly goods are not evil in themselves; it is the manner

they are got by and used that decides the cases in which and the persons to whom they may be permitted or forbidden." For the holy nothing is impure.[146]

Benighted unbelievers looked upon the Sheikh as a ranting hypocrite—he reminded the English Cavaliers in Turkey of the Puritan Pharisees they knew at home. But among his own co-religionists Vani was above scandal. He was "more than a Pope amongst them," says the Rev. John: nay, in a sense, "this old coxcomb" was more than the Grand Signor himself. For your Grand Signor could only put you to death. But your saint could put you in a particularly unpleasant corner of a particularly unpleasant place, where people had garments of fire fitted unto them, boiling water poured on their heads, and were beaten with maces of iron for ever and ever. Or, on the other hand, he could procure you an exceptionally comfortable pavilion in Paradise, furnished with green cushions and beautiful carpets, and couches of silk and gold; and a garden planted with shady trees full of all kinds of fruit growing close at hand; and rivers of milk and honey flowing conveniently by; and troops of fine black-eyed dancing girls with complexions like rubies and pearls, to ensure domestic peace and felicity. Either of these lots it was in Vani Effendi's power to bestow, and he made a very good thing of it in the way of presents: a poor saint's only recognised source of revenue.

From all this it is easy to understand the Knight's anxiety to win over Vani Effendi.

One of Sir John's Dragomans and the renegade Count Bocareschi were sent to solicit an interview. They returned with the answer that Sir Thomas

would be welcome. He went and acquitted himself after a fashion which showed that he had not spent so many years in diplomatic circles for nothing. With exquisite tact he attacked the Sheikh on his weak side, putting to him a number of questions in the tone of one consumed with a violent thirst for illumination. Did women and children have souls of the same size as men's? Could women go to heaven? What infidels might be suffered to live amongst True Believers? Had a good Christian a chance of salvation?

The Sheikh found some of these questions rather embarrassing, and met them with evasions; but on others he was as precise and positive as became one who had direct access to the Creator's inmost secrets. He seemed very glad to parade his exclusive information, and very pleased with the man who gave him the opportunity. The crafty Knight followed up his advantage by becoming confidential. He told the Sheikh what kind of Christian he was: he would rather die than worship images, pictures, crosses, or the like abominations. He adored only one God, and he believed that a Mohammedan who lived up to his Law would undoubtedly be saved. For his part, he would never hurt a hair of a Mohammedan's head on account of religious difference, but would rather help and cherish him in every possible way. On hearing this confession of faith, all the bystanders (needless to say, the saint had taken care that there should be a full house) cried out:

"*Ey adam*—a good man!"

Vani Effendi burst into tears, and said he had never thought any Christian could come so near to being a Mussulman. But—but there was no real perfection except in Islam. Would not Sir Thomas

——?

Sir Thomas shook his curls, sadly. He was now over fifty-five years of age, he said; his bones were hardened to their shapes, and so were his opinions; it would be a difficult process, and one that would require some time, to unrivet his mind.

Vani did not despair of completing the education of so promising a pupil. He pressed him to come again, guaranteeing him full security and freedom of speech. The Knight went no more. If the way to Mohammed's Paradise lay through the plague-stricken streets of Adrianople, he preferred to stay outside it. But he continued the discussion through the disreputable Count, until Vani (with better taste) intimated that Bocareschi was not a fit channel for divine truth, and desired the Knight, if he had any more questions, to put them down in writing, and he would answer in like manner. But the Knight had had enough.[147] By that time the necessity which had impelled him to brave the sickness and enter the lists of Moslem theology appeared to be over, or nearly over.

The Tefterdar, having made it quite clear that he was not duped by our diplomacy, passed the clauses submitted to him; and the Kehayah, having thus redeemed his pledge, reminded Sir John's Dragomans of the bakshish they had promised. Sir John wasted no time. He gives twice who gives quickly; besides, the reminder was tantamount to an intimation that his deliverance was now actually at hand. In the plenitude of his gratitude, Sir John even proposed to bestow some of the Levant Company's gold upon the Tefterdar, who had never asked for any. Then, contrary to every expectation, new difficulties sprang up; bringing with them fresh

doubts and disquietudes.

When, on the appointed day, the Treasurer of the Levant Company and the Dragomans came to the Kehayah with the cash, that gentleman said he could not touch it before he had spoken with the Vizir. The Rais Effendi proved less coy. He very kindly pocketed his present and showed the bearers the Capitulations being drawn up fair. Fair they were, indeed, so far as calligraphy went; but the Dragomans noted that one Article—the Article about English factors turning Turks—had, in the process of copying, undergone a curious transmutation. In the draft read to Sir John, though the evidence of Christian witnesses was not granted, it had been conceded that the proofs of embezzlement should be derived from the Levant Company's books and bills of lading: wherewith his Excellency was well satisfied. This concession had entirely vanished.[148] In Sir John's own phrase, "the Mufti castrats the Article as to manner of Proofe," or, "the Byshop had His foot in it." However, the point was not worth fighting for—English factors were not likely to turn Turks every day. The thing that made Sir John uneasy was the Kehayah's new-born repugnance to bribery. What did it mean?

Sir John was not left in doubt long. When his Dragomans went to the Kehayah for an answer to his Petition on behalf of the Latin Fathers, they brought back word that his Excellency would do well to give up all thoughts of that matter. The Vizir was inflexible: "He cannot deferr the Execution of the sentence any longer; for the messenger being now returnd' from Jerusalem which He had employd', He was resolvd' to issue out the Gran Signor's Command immediately in order to putt the sentence in

execution." Sir John bore this blow with comparative equanimity. He had at first been led to believe that the sentence involved expulsion of the Cordeliers from Jerusalem and confiscation of their convents. But two months' close intercourse with the "good Fathers," assisted perhaps by the wish to minimise in his own eyes the magnitude of his failure, enabled him to see things in their true proportions. "Now, Sir," he tells the Secretary of State, "you will wonder that so great a noise should be made about so small a thing, the sentence being onely this, That the Latin Fathers who were in possession of the Luoghi Santi at Jerusalem are to be lookd' upon as living in the Patriarchicall See of Jerusalem, and so under the Patriarch: which jurisdiction is onely to be shown in this, that when the Greek Easter and theirs fall on the same day, the Ceremony's of Palme Sunday and Easter Day are to be performd' first by the Greeks, and the Latins are to pay a small recognition besides in mony; Both which points the Latin Fathers look upon as renouncing the Pope's Supremacy; For the rest they are to enjoy their convents and freedome of Mass as formerly."[149]

It was less easy for our Ambassador to bear another disappointment. For months the Kehayah had nourished his hopes about the title of Padishah; and now he sent him word that this also was a thing that the Grand Vizir would not hear of: "He was loath that I above all should depart from this Court any wayes discontented, but He could not with safety alter the ancient style."[150] Had mortal ever suffered such vexing frustrations? Why did the Turks tease him so—holding the cup to his lips only to snatch it away?

On the other hand, the copying out of the

Capitulations seems to be going on satisfactorily. The Dragomans daily report progress; they are engrossed; signed by the Rais Effendi; decorated with the Imperial cipher by the Nishanji-bashi; and so on. At last it is announced that they are in the hands of the Grand Vizir, who only waits for an opportunity to present them to the Grand Signor for signature. That opportunity seems to the sorely tried Ambassador very long in coming, and he thinks to accelerate matters by ordering his Dragomans to inquire into the Vizir's pleasure concerning his bakshish. But here also the unexpected happens: the Dragomans are told that Ahmed Kuprili has never hitherto taken anything from any ambassador and will not now: what he did, he did purely for right and justice.[151] It was an astounding statement for a Grand Vizir to make, and the most astounding part of it was that it was true. Ahmed had never soiled his hands. His probity was notorious. Strange, that Sir John alone should never have heard of this peculiarity.

At any rate, it now became evident to him that the Vizir knew nothing of the demand made on his behalf by his underlings. It was another of their little tricks; and another lesson for Sir John in the mysteries of Ottoman procedure. He does not seem to have profited greatly by it. For he sends his Dragomans again to press the Kehayah about the title of Padishah. The Kehayah replies that he has done all he could, but without effect. Yet, that wily and oily one adds, the Ambassador need not despair: so desirous is he to oblige the English, and to spite the French, that he would gladly spend five purses (or 2500 dollars) of his own money to get this feather for the King of England. On whom was he to spend that money? The matter rested entirely with the Vizir, and the Vizir was proof against corruption.

Obvious as these reflections were, they did not occur to Sir John. The Kehayah's suave message, and the gentle hint it conveyed, spur him to fresh exertion: he immediately orders the Treasurer and the Dragomans to renew to the Kehayah their offer of bakshish, and moreover, since the Grand Vizir has so courteously refused money, to tell his Steward that the Ambassador has a copy of the Atlas which the Dutch Resident some time before had presented to the Grand Signor—a work in twelve volumes which had pleased the Sultan so much that he had commanded its instant translation into Turkish.[152] If the Kehayah thinks this gift would be acceptable, his Excellency will bring it to the Vizir together with some superfine vests of cloth at his final audience. The Kehayah undertakes to sound the Vizir, and meanwhile graciously signifies his own readiness to pocket the English gold without further delay.

Even bribery, however, did not run in Turkey smoothly. Early next morning the Treasurer and Dragomans carried the moneybags to the Kehayah's house and waited for him to come out of the women's apartments. After waiting for some time in vain, they were informed that he had taken horse at the door of his harem and was riding away to the Vizir's. Swiftly they ran after him with the coin. He bade them deliver it to his Hasnadar or Treasurer. Back to the house they went and begged the Hasnadar to relieve them of their burden. But the Hasnadar absolutely refused to touch the money without a formal order from his master. He had many times suffered in such cases—the sum paid him proving less than it ought to have been. So the Dragomans went to the Vizir's palace and spoke to the Kehayah of this new difficulty. He was kind enough to write two words on a scrap of paper,

which removed the Hasnadar's scruples. The transaction was concluded as if it had been payment of a debt: the Hasnadar bending and testing the pieces of gold and counting them twice over.[153]

By this time Sir John was fairly tired. Italian diplomacy was simple, transparent, and child-like beside this Ottoman maze with its supple turns and sudden twists, its infinite ambiguities and bewildering mutabilities. The game was much too elusive for Sir John's grasp: the moment you thought your fish safe in the net, somehow it slipped through the meshes; the moment a concession seemed crystallised, it melted again. Nothing was ever fixed; everything was fluid. Our metaphors are rather perplexed; but so was Sir John's mind: so would be anybody's mind after several months of promises and refusals continually interchanging. He did not know what to think. "I am sensible enough," he confesses, "that all buissenesse of moment is hardly done; but here the perplexity of doeing affayrs is still attended with more of difficulty and intrigue, by having to doe with a people who neither in language, custome, manners, or religion, have any affinity with us."[154] He longs to leave this baffling scene of suave, slippery Kehayahs and be back in his peaceful house at Pera—that scene of retirement and wrens from which he set out—how long ago? But hitherto his fortitude has not been tried beyond easy endurance.

FOOTNOTES:

[139] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 108.

[140] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 108; Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[141] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 109.

[142] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[143] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 109.

[144] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[145] Covel's *Diaries*, p. 268.

[146] See Winchilsea to Nicholas, May 20, 1662; Harvey to Williamson, Sept. 5, 1670, *S.P. Turkey*, 17 and 19. Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 105, 154, 285; Hammer, vol. xi. pp. 163-4, 336.

[147] Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 269-72.

[148] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 110.

[149] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[150] *Ibid.*

[151] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 110.

[152] See Rycaut's *Memoirs*, p. 318.

[153] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 111.

[154] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

CHAPTER XI

FROM PURGATORY TO PERA

The price had been paid. Yet the goods were not forthcoming. The pashas were always about to act, but never acted. And, in the meantime, the Plague grew fiercer and fiercer. There was no escaping the foul visitant: it pursued the fugitives even into their privacy. Count Bocareschi came constantly to dine with the Ambassador, and one day, as he sat next to him at table, Sir John noticed that, contrary to habit, he ate little. After looking at him he remarked that his countenance was changed. The Italian answered that he died daily of fear: he was not yet Moslem enough to despise the Plague, but his wife, a born believer, would not hear of moving: however, whether she would or not, he had made up his mind to move. Alas! it was too late—the noble parasite had eaten his last free meal.[155] All this was very depressing, and it was not all: "The weather was excessive hot, and the air stagnated in a manner, we being placed in a pan or flat: so that it was plague enough merely to stay there.... The terrible heat of the sun reflected from a dry barren sandy soil, and the fulsome foggy aire, broyled us and choked us."[156] So pass the sultry dog-days in the most purgatorial manner; and the whole month of August.

And still nothing accomplished.

Under these conditions the poor Ambassador's patience and temper broke down utterly. For weeks he had waited weary and dissatisfied with everything and everybody: not knowing what to trust to after so many disappointments, or where to lay the fault, whether in the incapacity of his Dragomans or the insufficiency of his own diplomacy. In this uncertain and perplexed state, often abused and deceived by the men who professed to be his friends, Sir John had possessed his soul. He could possess it no longer. One day his feelings burst through all restraint and leapt from his lips. He railed against the Dragomans, blaming them for all the delays and vowing that, if in forty-eight hours he had no categorical answer as to when his business should be done, or where it had stuck, he would apply to the Grand Vizir through Dr. Mavrocordato, or himself go to the Kehayah without them. This explosion braced up Signor Giorgio and Signor Antonio to fresh efforts, and about three days after they brought Sir John word that all was arranged: next Friday, please God, his Excellency would have his farewell audience of the Grand Vizir and receive from his hands the new Capitulations as well as the Grand Signor's and his own answers to the King's letters.[157]

A little psychological essay would not be out of place here. The English of that day attributed the Porte's dilatoriness to sheer indolence intensified by debauchery. They noted that, since Ahmed Kuprili had espoused the bottle, State affairs had suffered as much as his health, "soe that all business which must pass the Vizir is done with great disadvantage and after many delays."[158] That was true; but perhaps it was not the whole truth. In the first place, we know

that the Turks had been offended by Sir John's delay in coming to present his Credentials, and we may surmise that they paid inertness for inertness. This so far as the Vizir's subordinates are concerned. As to the Vizir himself, Ahmed may have been above petty pique; but Ahmed, as the Rev. John described him, as everybody who had dealings with him said, was "a subtle cunning man."[159] All his actions and inactions were premeditated, all his steps were measured, all his words were carefully weighed. The whole of his life was nothing but a part which he played with that consummate astuteness, dissimulation, and suppleness of mind which mark the born diplomat. He knew human nature, and he had apparently gauged pretty accurately Sir John's nature. The Ambassador, the Vizir reasoned, if he only made his sojourn long enough and disagreeable enough, would get impatient to return to his comfortable home at Pera, and would waive points that he might otherwise have insisted upon. All he had to do was to wear him out by a process of procrastination. For the rest, Ahmed had tried exactly the same system a few years before in the same place on another highly-strung Frank, the Marquis de Nointel, with complete success. That he was no less successful now can easily be shown.

Just as things had reached that point, there arrived from Smyrna an express courier with a letter from Consul Rycaut. It was signed by all the English merchants, who prayed his Excellency to protect them against an administrative innovation that threatened their interests and privileges. In different circumstances, Sir John would have turned every stone: as it was, he did not even acknowledge receipt of the complaint.[160] The same lassitude and anxiety to shake the dust of Adrianople from off his feet were

manifest in what follows.

On the Thursday before the Friday fixed for his farewell audience, Signor Antonio Perone went to the Kehayah to see if the appointment held. He found that the appointment stood good, but that—the Capitulations lacked the Grand Signor's autograph (*Hattisherif*). To his protest the Kehayah blandly replied that, as the Venetians, the French, and the Dutch were content to do without the Imperial autograph, there was no need for it. The Dragoman insisted; but all the answer he obtained was, *Olmaz*—it could not be! Thereupon, without going back to the Ambassador for instructions, he ran straight to the Rais Effendi and besought his help. The Rais Effendi also said, *Olmaz*: the Grand Vizir had decided that there should be no Imperial autograph—only the Imperial cipher. It was no use pressing him: he knew the Vizir to be a man who never changed his mind. Signor Antonio returned to the Kehayah and implored him so earnestly that at last he got him to write to the Vizir's Muhurdar, or Keeper of the privy seal, and ask him to approach his master on the subject. But the Muhurdar also declined to interfere. The Dragoman, at his wits' end, ran and fetched the old Capitulations, as renewed by Lord Winchilsea, and, laying them before the Kehayah, showed him the Grand Signor's handwriting upon them: here is the precedent, he said, and pointed out what an unreasonable thing it was that the new Charter should want the force of the old. In the end the Kehayah unbent so far as to send a Memorial to the Grand Vizir, and by and by informed Signor Antonio that the thing was as good as done: "Give the Ambassador my salaams," he said, "and tell him that I hope to get everything ready in a few days more: you may say three to the

Ambassador, but I doubt not that I shall have it done in two." Meanwhile, the audience, naturally, was postponed.

The news was calculated to perturb a nature much less combustible than Sir John's. No language could express his rage and despair. He was furious—furious with the Kehayah and Rais Effendi for not informing him of the hitch sooner, but at the eleventh hour putting him off; even more furious with the Dragoman for having insisted on the Hattisherif! Rather than wait another day, Finch would have gone without, thinking it enough that the other Europeans had none, and forgetting how it must have reflected on his diplomatic dexterity to lose an advantage his predecessors had secured—and one, too, "whereof," says Dudley North, "we had swaggered and gloried so much!" So efficacious was Ahmed's system for dealing with ambassadors. Luckily, there was our Treasurer to prevent mischief. In him both the Vizir and the Ambassador had found their match. To Ahmed's impassivity North opposed his tireless perseverance, and to Sir John's febrile impatience his imperturbable phlegm. Often, disapproving of his Excellency's orders to the Dragomans, he countermanded them behind his back, and now he defeated his insane inclination to play into Kuprili's hand: all the time managing Finch's pride by an attitude of absolute submissiveness.[161] North had a sense of humour.

"In two days," had said the Kehayah. But many more than two days pass, and the thing is not yet done. The Dragomans are at their old trade of soliciting for dispatch, prodded on by the Treasurer. Sometimes they find the Kehayah arguing against the necessity of having the Grand Signor's autograph,

but he always ends by telling them that they will have it. One day he says that the Capitulations are in the hands of the Vizir's Muhurdar, waiting to be presented to the Grand Signor with several other documents as soon as the signing-time should arrive. Thereupon Sir John orders four vests to be sent to the Muhurdar.

At length, the Turks having exhausted the possibilities of delay, news comes that the Grand Signor has signed the Capitulations and that his Excellency should be ready to receive them from the Grand Vizir's hands on Wednesday, the 8th of September, at three in the afternoon.

Of a truth, the long-promised will now be done!

Sir John, in his eagerness, went too soon and had to wait in the Kehayah's apartment till prayers were over. Coffee and sherbet were served, while Dr. Mavrocordato, like Finch a medical graduate of Padua, entertained him with light talk about the Plague—no topic could be more topical: in that very apartment there were many sick Turks. After a time Ambassador and suite were conducted into the Vizir's room. Ahmed's face, especially about the eyes, looked bloated. The guests understood that the Vizir had had as much as he could carry the night before. Yet he was in very good humour. "He vested eleven of my Retinue, besides my selfe: my Druggerman informing me that my Predecessor had none at all, and that usually besides the Ambassadour but one was vested who was thought to be Him who was to carry the Gran Signor's Letters to the King. Thus the Vizir and I setting downe after welcome given me, in the first place He gives me with His owne Hands (which He did not to the French Ambassadour) the Capitulations."[162]

No bond could be more binding. It secures to the English all their privileges “so long as Charles the Second King of England (whose end may it terminate in Happynesse) maintains good friendship and corrispondence with Us,” and it concludes with a solemn oath to this effect: “Wee swear and promise by Him that has created the Heaven and the Earth and all creatures: By that Creator, the One God, Wee do promise, that nothing shall be done contrary to this Imperiall Capitulation.” There follows the name of the Sultan “in a knott of Great Letters”—and the famous autograph: “Lett every thing be observd’ in conformity to this Our Imperiall Command, and contrary to it lett nothing be done.” So much concerning the form; as to substance, besides the additional articles already familiar to the reader, the Charter contains a surprise: “There passing good corrispondence between Us and the King of England, out of regard of this good friendship, Wee doe grant that two ships lading of Figgs, Raisins, or Currants, may be yearly exported for the use of His Majesty’s kitchin.”[163]

Sir John rose up to receive the imposing document and kissed it. How his fingers must have trembled as they clutched at last that precious, never-to-be-enough-valued parchment which had cost him so many hours of unutterable anguish!

Next the Grand Vizir handed to the Ambassador the Grand Signor’s Letters for his Majesty. Sir John received them standing and likewise kissed them. Then Ahmed gave him his own letter for his Majesty, “which I onely carryd’ to my Breast, at which He smild’.” This done, Sir John, in touching and dignified language, thanked the Vizir for his particularly tender care of our interests, adding that

he would see that it received a particularly grateful acknowledgment from our King. Ahmed replied “He knew there was great favour done in them [the Capitulations], but all was owed justly to the Friendship of the King your Master; for He was esteemd’ here for one of the best friends amongst the Christian Princes that the Emperour had.”

There ensued some conversation about international affairs. It turned on the seizure of Prince William of Furstenberg, a plenipotentiary at the Congress of Cologne, by the Imperialists and the consequent breakdown of the negotiations between France and Germany. In reply to a question from the Vizir, the Ambassador said this outrage made Peace very difficult: the French king declared that the Prince was under his protection and refused to treat before his release; while the Emperor would not deliver him until after a Treaty was concluded.

“That,” said Ahmed, “is easily adjusted: Lett the Emperour take off His head, and then all Questions about Him are ended.”

“This had better bin done the first day then now,” replied Sir John, and went on to give another reason why he thought the prospects of peace remote: “The King of France had many of the Town’s and Fortresses of the King of Spaines in Possession, which would hardly be deliverd’, and particularly France could not abandon nor Spayn quitt Messina.”

“This is something,” said Ahmed.

“But Sir,” came from Finch, “now I think better of it, there is one way which if it is taken an adjustment will questionlesse suddainly follow.”

“What is that?”

"Your Excellency's goeing once more as a Generall into Germany with a Powerfull Army."

"At which the Gran Vizir laughd' profusely; and so Wee made a friendly Parture."[164]

Jubilant at such issue of his labours—not quite equal to the best he had hoped, yet far above the worst that, in moments of despondency, he had feared—our Ambassador returned to the camp outside Karagatch; and drank his Majesty's health in the double bottle of sack he had saved up for the occasion.

Next morning he proceeded to draw up his report: not a syllable had he yet written to the Secretary of State from Adrianople, reserving all he had to say for the end. The letter (eighteen pages) is as interesting as it is long, and not the least interest of it lies in the light it throws upon the writer. The honours he received are accented, while only the faintest allusion is made to the Jew's house; Kuprili's affability is heavily underlined; the Grand Signor's ungraciousness is entirely suppressed; and the whole of the ceremonial part of his mission is presented to the best possible advantage. But it is when he comes to business that Sir John shows how little free he was from the weakness of glorifying his own achievements. He speaks of the "Five Moneths and some dayes" spent on this negotiation and dwells upon the difficulties and dangers it entailed: "I was never under a more tedious, troublesome, and more perplexd' Negotiation in my life." But it was worth it. Such Capitulations had never been known: "Taking them at the worst and lett the lowest estimate passe which can be made of them, yett I think, with modesty I may say, that they are farr the greatest Present that ever was made to the Company since the

first forming of this Trade."[165]

For this estimate Sir John had the authority of the crafty Rais Effendi who affected wonder at his phenomenal success, "saying he never knew the like before,"—"that I went away with an honour No Ambassadour had ever receivd' in this Court, which was the having every Article granted me that I gave in writing"—this, while admitting that one of the Articles had been so eviscerated as to be worthless. Likewise as to the title of Padishah upon which he had set his heart, that it proved unobtainable Sir John could not deny; but he flattered himself that "it was not wholely lost, for at another time it should be brought again,"—so "the Kehayah assured me." Such was Sir John's capacity for believing what he wished. In the same way, if he realised how much he owed to others, he was not the man to admit the debt, even to himself. His self-esteem was of that sensitive quality that the slightest wound to it had to be carefully avoided. Not only in general terms he attributes the whole of his success, under God (whom he duly thanks), to his own resourcefulness, energy, and resolution, but he specifically states that it was he who carried the point of the Imperial autograph.[166] Perhaps if the Treasurer's account had not come down to us, the Ambassador's claims would have been more convincing. But that he himself was convinced that everything was due to him and him alone can hardly be doubted. The Rais Effendi had told him, "Two things, the first was that I came into this Empire with a great stock of reputation in having bin able to doe so much in Christendome for the Bassà of Tunis; but that I had like to have forfeited it all by staying so long before I came to Audience: The Court being putt upon resolutions to oppose my Instances for that Neglect;

But in the second place he told me my way of Treaty had regaind them."[167]

The "Bassà of Tunis"—yes, indeed, not the least of the results of his trip to Adrianople that Sir John congratulated himself upon was connected with that gentleman. The Vizir was so far from countenancing the Pasha's pretensions, that he publicly thanked Finch for the service he had done, and sent the Pasha away to a Governorship in the uttermost confines of Arabia. This curious affair was not really over. Resentment had struck root so deeply in the bosom of the Pasha of Tunis that afterwards it shot up and flowered afresh, and grew into a noxious umbrage which was to darken Sir John's latter years. But of this Sir John knew nothing at the time: he only knew that he had triumphed.

Thus ended the most adventurous and most important transaction Sir John Finch had ever been engaged in. But his troubles had not yet ended. Before he could get away, he had to take out Commands to give effect to the new Articles, also to pay farewell visits to the Kehayah and the Rais Effendi—to thank those worthies for their help. In the houses of both the Plague was more rife than at the Vizir's; but he "must run the Gantlett." Fortunately, "both did me the Civility to appoint me a meeting in *luogo terzo*: the Kehaiah at an Appartment of the Visir's and the Rais Affendi at his Garden House. A condiscension seldome practisd' by any Turkes, especially of so great a Figure."

These "visits of congé" took place on September 16th. "The Kehaiah was very melancholy, having that very morning buryed four out of his house, two of which were his near kinswomen." The Rais Effendi felicitated Sir John on his release, saying that there

never had “bin in the memory of man known such a Plague in Adrianople.” At one of these calls, two men with running sores stood for a full quarter of an hour within a yard of the Ambassador: even the *luogo terzo* offered no security.[168]

The final departure for Constantinople was a hustling and thoroughly undignified affair: all other considerations yielding to that of self-preservation. Not only the ceremonies but the very decencies of life were sacrificed, without scruple or shame, on the altar of the primitive goddess who knows no law. At her behest all those acquired habits fell away from our punctilious diplomat like so many borrowed plumes.

After his leave-takings, the Ambassador went back to the tents, where thirty carts had already arrived to load for the return journey; and there, within twenty-four hours, five of his retinue were stricken with the hideous pest. Sir John and Sir Thomas fled incontinently to the village again, leaving the rest to shift for themselves—and even leaving one of their Greek servants unburied in the fields. The other Greek and Armenian servants, utterly unable to appreciate this knightly conduct, mutinied and were going up to the Ambassador’s cottage in a threatening tumult, when the invaluable Mr. North came to the rescue, and quelled the riot. After this, Sir John would not wait another minute. With the carts already provided he set out, leaving his luggage to be sent after him, and two of his Dragomans to receive the Commands which had been promised.

But notwithstanding his haste, Sir John had not yet seen the end of his woes. Just as he was starting, one of his carters dropped dead beside his cart; and before he reached the first station, news overtook

him that a servant of one of the Dragomans left behind had fallen sick. His anxiety on account of the long-suffering and indispensable Dragomans increased as he went on, for though they had both given him assurances to overtake him before the end of the journey, he heard nothing from or of either of them for weeks.[169]

All the way home our pilgrims felt miserable in a transcendent degree. The road was full of the disease and full of robbers. To escape the first peril, they shunned the towns and camped in the open. Every day they sent their tents before them to be pitched at the next *konak*. When they arrived there, they drew all the carts and coaches around them, made a great fire, supped, and then lay down to rest, as best they could, in their boots and clothes. But though they themselves did not go into the towns, most of their wagoners and servants did, so the danger of infection was, in a measure, the same. As to the other danger, not a day passed but they heard of some fresh exploit of the gangs that scoured the country-side. These stories had a most deplorable effect upon their nerves. They dared not straggle an inch from the road, and, the Rev. John says, “a calf with a white face disheartened them all”; observing thoughtfully, “if we had not had guards, it would have been very easy cutting our throats.”[170]

In this dishevelled manner our friends journeyed back the way they came, reaching their destination on September 27th.

It was a very weary ambassador who returned to Pera. But there was no rest for him yet. The Plague raged at Constantinople as at Adrianople. And that was not the worst. Two of his retinue, it now appeared, had the disease all the way home

undiscovered. One of them, an Arab conductor of his litter, died the day after his arrival. The other, a young footman who always was about Finch and Baines, fell sick two days later in the Embassy. “I suspecting it might be the Plague, sent him out of my House to be attended by Armenians that are accustomd to it; and within two days the Boy dyed of the Plague.” With wondrous agility both knights fled to St. Demetrius Hill, which henceforth became Sir John’s summer resort.[171]

Distressing as all this was, it might have been worse. Lord Winchilsea had lost not only two servants, but also his daughter, and fled from place to place—from Pera to Yarlikioi, from Yarlikioi to Belgrade, from Belgrade to Zacharlikioi—in “perplexity where to find security unless in the providence of the Almighty,”—he fled with a wife in hourly expectation of a child, pursued by “this disconsolate disease.” Sir John’s other predecessor and kinsman, Harvey, on his way to Salonica had to carry in his own coach a friend who had fallen sick of the Plague on the road, “as longe as he was able to suffer the Journie,” and “to leave him att last at a town,” in Macedonia, where he died.[172]

It was all in the day’s work.

FOOTNOTES:

[155] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675.

[156] Covel’s *Diaries*, p. 246.

[157] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 111.

[158] Harvey to Williamson, Nov.... 1670, *S.P. Turkey*, 19; Rycaut’s *Memoirs*, p. 318.

[159] Covel’s *Diaries*, p. 195.

[160] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 111; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 327-8.

[161] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 112-13, 116.

[162] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675; *Life of Dudley North*, p. 113; Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 272-3.

[163] "New Articles added to the Capitulations Renewed by Sr John Finch Knt, and Deliver'd to His Excell^{cy} by the Hands of the Gran Vizir In Adrianople, September the 8-18th 1675," *Coventry Papers*.

[164] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675. The Rev. John mentions this dialogue as taking place at the banquet of July 27. See *Diaries*, p. 263.

[165] Finch to Coventry, Sept. 9, 1675. Seeing that Sir John did not arrive at Adrianople till May 10, it is a little hard to understand how he arrives at his "Five Moneths and some dayes." Dudley North also speaks of "our tedious Attendance at Adrianople," as having lasted "near five Months," *Life*, p. 113. No doubt, to them the time seemed longer than it was.

[166] See Appendix XI.

[167] Finch to Coventry, Oct. 6-16, 1675.

[168] The Same to the Same, Oct. 6-16, 1675. Cp. Covel's *Diaries*, p. 274.

[169] Finch to Coventry, Oct. 6-16, 1675.

[170] Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 274-5.

[171] Finch to Coventry, Oct. 6-16, 1675.

[172] Winchilsea "Intelligence," Aug. 24 [1661]; Harvey to Arlington, Jan. 31, 1669 [-70], *S.P. Turkey*, 17 and 19.

CHAPTER XII

HALCYON DAYS

The Plague over, Sir John resumed his quiet life at Pera; and for the space of a twelvemonth we find him resting on his laurels and garnering the fruits of his labour complacently.

He had, indeed, much cause for complacency. Our Levant Trade flourished as never before, and the Constantinople Factors were guilty of no exaggeration when they told the Ambassador that it was twice, if not thrice, bigger than the trade of all other European nations put together. Sir John took the keenest interest in this progress and foresaw even greater development at the expense of our rivals, if only we would sell on credit, as they did, and if we could keep the privileges secured by the new Capitulations in force. As to the first point, the Ambassador's exhortations fell on deaf ears. The Levant Company had a rooted objection to the credit system, being on the contrary persuaded that the growth of their business was due to the prohibition of "Trusting" which they had enacted a few years before.[173]

Nor did the home authorities sufficiently appreciate the Ambassador's services with regard to

the Capitulations. As so often happens, the giver and the recipient differed widely about the value of the gift. Indeed, the Levant Company's attitude in this matter was so ungracious and ungrateful that Sir John, stung to the quick, wrote to the Secretary of State: "Lett them make the Service as mean as they please now they are in possession of it; were the new Articles I obtaind, to be again procurd', I very well know at what rate they would be content to purchase them. Neither in the estimate of their advantage which I sent your Honour, did I write any thing more, then what fell from the Merchants mouths here, before I had obtaind them. But it may be tis esteemd' by some a good Method, to depretiate that Merit, which being ownd'; would become an obligation, and begett the incumbence of an acknowledgment."[174] Like others before him, and after him, Sir John had to learn the lesson that "He who serves a community must secure a reward by his own means, or expect it from God."[175]

Particularly hurt was our Ambassador by the total lack of enthusiasm which both the Merchants and the King showed on the Article of the figs. The former made no haste to avail themselves of the concession, and their indifference filled Sir John with the fear lest the privilege should lapse through disuse. The latter did not, as he expected, write to the Grand Signor and Vizir to thank them for the favour conferred upon his kitchen. After waiting long and in vain, Sir John felt constrained to urge his Majesty to rectify the omission, though late, "as having tasted and bin pleasd' with some of that fruit." It was clear that people at home did not care a fig for Smyrna figs. They were wrong; for, under the "two ships lading" figment, the English were able as time went on to export vast quantities of dried fruit

from Smyrna—and housewives yet unborn would have blessed the name of their benefactor, if they knew it.[176]

However, happily for his peace of mind, it was some time before Sir John heard of this ingratitude; and meanwhile he did everything to ensure the execution of the Articles he had obtained at the cost of so much hardship and hazard. The task presented some difficulties; for, though the Grand Vizir granted the Commands which the Ambassador asked readily enough, the local officials evinced the strongest disinclination to part with any profit to which they had been used. A test case was offered by the Chief Customer of Constantinople, who, on the arrival of the first English ship, detained five bales of cloth—the duty in kind which he had been in the habit of levying under the old Capitulations. Finch immediately sent his Dragoman with the new Capitulations and required Hussein Aga to restore the goods at his peril. The Customer complied, but, at the same time, got the Vizir's Kehayah to write to the Ambassador complaining that the English merchants were trying to defraud the Grand Signor. Sir John's reply was that his good friend the Kehayah was misinformed: the merchants were not to blame, for they acted by his own order. To the Customer also he declared that if any English merchants should dare, directly or indirectly, pay for any cloth one asper more than the sum specified in the new Capitulations, he would imprison them, adding that for what he did he had the Grand Signor's oath and hand, and if the Customer engaged in a dispute on that point, either he or the Ambassador must sink. This peremptory message made Hussein Aga submit to the new dispensation. Sir John, however, did not rest satisfied with his victory: to prevent any "after

claps," he exacted from the Customer a letter to the Kehayah formally acknowledging the justice of our proceedings, and this letter he caused to be registered by the Cadi as well as in his own Cancellaria. The effect of his action appeared when, on the arrival at Constantinople of two more ships, the goods passed through the Custom-House without the least controversy. At Aleppo he met with similar opposition and overcame it with equal success. And all this without any bakshish, except a few judiciously distributed bottles of Canary, "which the Grandees at Court baptize by the name of English sherbett." In the same way, every other question relating to commerce was settled as it arose by means of Imperial Commands, so that in a year's time the New Articles were firmly established over the Empire.

Not a little of this success was due to the happy termination of our Tripolitan enterprise, which "has given great reputation and terrour to His Majesty's arms in this Court." While Finch was negotiating at Adrianople, Narbrough had been capturing or destroying pirate galleys; and, on January 14th, 1676, the boats of his squadron had even forced their way into the port of Tripoli and there burnt four men-of-war. The upshot of these bold operations was a Peace by which the Dey agreed to release all English captives, to pay an indemnity, and to grant a number of commercial privileges. The Ambassador made the most of our triumph. As soon as he received from the Admiral the terms of the Treaty, he sent his Dragoman to inform the Kehayah, who said that he believed the Grand Vizir's letters had helped to bring the Tripolines to reason. The Dragoman was far too polite and prudent to contradict a Turk, but he remarked that "the firing of

their men-of-warr in port had much of perswasion in it." "Wee know it, wee know it," replied the Kehayah, with a laugh.[177]

Other circumstances helped Finch to strengthen his position at the Porte. In the spring of 1676 the Grand Signor, after ten years' absence, surprised Constantinople by appearing in its environs: a step which was hailed as a sign that the sovereign's distrust of his capital had vanished, and that henceforth he would refresh the eyes of its inhabitants with his presence and fill their purses by his extravagance. It is true that these expectations were not fulfilled. Instead of taking up his abode in the Seraglio which had been prepared for him, the Grand Signor encamped outside the city "like an enemy," and only ventured to pay spasmodic visits to some of its mosques. Nevertheless, the vicinity of his camp, with all its pomp, created a welcome diversion for the Franks as well as for the Turks. The Rev. John Covel was once more in his element. With a roving, inquisitive eye, he prowled about the Imperial tents, comparing them with those he had seen at Adrianople and taking stock of every detail.[178] The Ambassador himself was not less excited. He reports to the Secretary of State the various theories current about the motives which had induced the Sultan to come so near and those which prevented him from coming any nearer; he describes his movements; and he relates how adroitly he managed to turn them to account. The Sultan often went by water from place to place. Finch noted this, and one day, "making inquisition when His Majesty would passe," he ordered the two English ships in port to give him a salute; and that the performance might be more impressive he ordered the guns to be fired from the lower tier: so that they might speak louder than

those of two Algerine men-of-war which were also then in port. His orders were carried out to the letter. As the Grand Signor passed by our ships, a fanfare from their trumpets entertained him: when he was a little past them, they began to fire: 31 guns from the *Mary and Martha*, and 21 from the *Hunter*. The Grand Signor stopped his barge to receive the salute, and till it was quite done rowed very slowly. The performance was repeated on his return; "which was very kindly taken."[179] Presently, "by reason of dust in foule weather, dust in fayr weather, and want of water," the Grand Signor pitched his camp in a new place—"just before my house, and I sitt at dinner in the Prospect of His own Tent and His Trayn about Him!"[180]

Then, suddenly, turning from the contemplation of externals, our Ambassador penetrates for a moment into the passions that seethed inside those stately pavilions.

There lived in Stambul an unvenerable old Princess, popularly known as Sultana "Sporca," or "the Dirty"—an epithet which she had earned by making it her profession to bring up young girls for the entertainment of the grandees. Among her troupe of nymphs she had "a Circassian slave that was extraordinaryly beautifull, and did dance, sing, and tumble in the height of perfection after the Turkish mode." During the previous year the Grand Signor, hearing of this prodigy, had sent for her. But the old lady, unwilling to lose so lucrative a pupil, evaded the Imperial command by alleging that she had given the girl her freedom and therefore could not dispose of her. Now, however, the truth came out. One day, while the girl was exercising her arts for the amusement of some pashas, she attracted the

attention of the Captain of the Grand Vizir's Guard, who gave her 300 sequins and sent 1000 more to the Sultana on condition that she let the damsel and her companions perform in his house. The Sultana readily agreed to the bargain; but she reckoned without her client. After the performance the gallant Captain, while dismissing the other members of the troupe, kept the handsome slave. Next morning the Sultana petitioned the Grand Signor, confessing her former deception. The Grand Signor, enraged at his own disappointment, ordered the Sultana to be banished, the damsel to be annexed to his harem, and the Captain's head to be exposed in his camp: "So true is that of Virgil:

"Quisquis amores
Aut metuet dulces, aut experietur amaros."[181]

His Christian colleagues this year afforded our Ambassador as much food for self-satisfaction as the Ottoman Court. There had lately arrived at Constantinople two new Ministers: a Venetian Ambassador and a Genoese Resident. The former, Signor Morosini, who had already represented Venice at Paris and Vienna, was "an experiencd' and dexterous" diplomat with whom one found it easy to maintain "good corrispondence." The latter, Signor Spinola, "really acts such low and mean things that he exposes the dignity of a Publique Minister both to Turkes and Christians" and renders friendly intercourse with him impossible.

On Spinola's arrival, which occurred during our absence at Adrianople, Finch had ordered the merchant left in charge of the Embassy to compliment him in his name. Yet when the Genoese sent his Dragoman to Adrianople, he gave him no orders to make any compliment to Finch. We

magnanimously passed this slight by, attributing it to "his want of breeding and experience." Some weeks later, finding himself embroiled with his predecessor, Spinola begged for our mediation—a request to which we acceded, only to hear suddenly, not from Spinola himself but from a third quarter, that a reconciliation had been effected through the good offices of the Bailo of Venice and the Resident of Holland. This discourtesy also we put up with patiently. But at last the Genoese did something we could not digest.

"The story is this. S: Spinola brought over with Him a pittifull fellow under the name of a Merchant, who sett up His onely Trade of Distilling strong waters (a thing in the highest degree forbidden by the Turkes). For secrecy He with Jewes that assisted Him make their Destillation in an upper Room where there was no chimney; This comes to the Notice of the Community of Pera, amongst whom three of my Druggermen are the chief; The Community reflecting upon the last firing of Galata by destilling of strong waters, Resolvd' amongst themselves to goe to the Laboratory and complain of the danger Apprehended. My First Druggerman, being Prior or Chief Magistrate, accompanyd' with others went to the House, and finding at the Door two Jew servants to this Distiller, tells them that the Community if they did not leave of (*sic*) their distilling of strong waters where there was no chimney nor hearth, they would complain to the Chimacam, who immediately would send those Jewes to the Gally's. Their Master comming home the Jewes tell him what happend', The small Merchant Recurrs to his Resident, His Resident sends him to me, He relates His story, I askd' Him what He was, He told me He was a Merchant that came over with the Resident, I told

Him that I usd' not to receive messages from Publick Ministers but by Druggermen or their own Secretary's, nor to other Informations would I give any credence. However having taken my Informations from my First Druggerman I sent my Third Druggerman to the Resident, first to tell him that either He knew not the Respect due to Publick Ministers Here, or else that He was very wanting in it towards me, in sending me a message neither by his Secretary nor his Druggerman, That the grounds of this complaint were so just, that must in my own name renew the complaint against this Destiller in order to the Preservation of my Merchants' estates, as well as of my Druggermen's Houses, That what my First Druggerman had sayd' was to the Jewes and not to His Merchant and that they would certainly goe into the Gally's if the Destillator continud' His Trade there, That however he had never enterd' into the House, but sayd' this to them in the street. The Resident answerd' That he knew Signor Giorgio Drapery's very well, and knew as well that he was not within the House, For had he gon in, he should have mett with Bastonate.

"Upon the return of this answer I sent him word, That both with the Ambassadour of France and Bailo of Venice, Persons of the same character with me, our meanest servants were mutually treated with greater respect then he showd' to my First Druggerman, Knight of Jerusalem, and of the most Noble and Ancient family in this Country, and that therefore, unlesse that the Resident did make Him some Reparation or Satisfaction, I must be forcd' to resent it: wondring both at His Passion and Indiscretion to say at the same time he knew him to be my First Druggerman, he should tell the other Druggerman the Jewes should have bastonadod' him,

had he said those words within the House."

Thereupon Signor Spinola's Secretary came to beg Sir John's pardon, offering him all reparation in his master's name, "even submitting himselfe to be bastonadod'." Sir John, however, who felt that he had been wounded in his most tender point, was not yet satisfied: to appease him, it was necessary that the atonement should be as public as the injury: "the thing being Publick and making no passe to Sigr Giorgio I told him, till he had sent some message to him I could not admitt of any corrispondence." Accordingly he cut off all relations with the Resident and declared to the Secretary of State that he would continue "so to doe till I have farther satisfaction." The Secretary of State duly expressed his resentment to the Genoese Minister in London. But in the meantime Sir John had received Spinola's submission as he desired, in the form of "a passe toward the personall satisfaction of my Druggerman done in Publique before my servants, and then after four moneths I returnd' him his visit."

Thus ended "this Storm in a Bason."[182]

Not very long afterwards our Ambassador found himself involved in a difference with his French colleague.

Sir John's religious activities at Adrianople had led to a little coolness between those hitherto firm friends. In five months Nointel had not paid Finch one visit, and now that he had to see him on a matter of business (a dispute between the English and French merchants of Aleppo referred to the adjudication of their respective ambassadors), he pretended that it was Finch's turn to call. Hence a pretty quarrel. Finch declared that he had made the last visit. Nointel maintained that that visit was a

return to one he had made and insisted that Finch should begin afresh. Finch protested that this was contrary to the diplomatic practice of Pera, and "a most dangerous point—to make two visits for one, it being the note of distinction between Ambassadours and Residents." No doubt the noble Marquis's *amour-propre* would be gratified by such a recognition of French superiority, but the honour of his Majesty did not permit Sir John to afford him that gratification on any account. Both by letters and by oral messages he assured Nointel, blandly but firmly, that, unless he made the first visit, all intercourse between them would cease. "And certainly," he wrote to the Secretary of State, "I shall not give way to him one hair, without the orders of the King my Master." Courteous as Sir John was, he could be very obstinate where his King's honour was at stake.

For three weeks both ambassadors remained immovable; and then the Frenchman sent to inform the Englishman that he desired to call on him in the afternoon. But it so chanced that Finch had just engaged himself for that very afternoon to the Bailo of Venice. He was therefore forced to beg Nointel to excuse him for that day. It was a most unfortunate *contretemps*: Finch, on one hand, feared that Nointel might think he had put a slight upon him by feigning that engagement, and on the other he suspected that perhaps Nointel had heard of it and, knowing that it was impossible for him to receive his visit that day, imagined that the offering of it should serve for the having paid it and oblige Sir John to make one in return. Tormented by these doubts, he sent his own Dragoman to repeat his explanations and excuses. Great was his relief when Nointel appointed the day following for his visit, which accordingly he performed; and the day after Finch returned it. "So

that all things were reducd' to the ancient friendship and cheerfullnesse."[183]

We may picture the noble Marquis once more adorning Sir John's dinner-table. Nointel was a great table-talker, and he had varied experiences which he could narrate with all the vivacity of his race. But the conversation at our Ambassador's board must have seemed to him painfully restrained in its tone and restricted in its range of subject. It turned persistently on religion, and was carried on under the unexhilarating auspices of Sir Thomas Baines. He was the conductor of the theological concert, and there was a deferential manner in the bearing of the host towards him which must have stifled in the guest all sense of freedom. What weighty dogmas Baines uttered, what profundities of erudition he disclosed, how he answered the arguments he provoked—all these things Finch noted down with the reverence of a disciple and the vicarious pride of a lover. In such an atmosphere thoughtless loquacity was obviously out of place, memories gained in wanton ways had to be kept under lock and key: the only proper demeanour was that of a prig or a prude. One day the Frenchman, who was neither, stirred by Florentine wine or by the spirit of mischief, kicked over the traces. After a discussion concerning the Crucifixion, he wandered off into some reminiscences of his early life in Paris. Sir Thomas listened scandalised but self-possessed: of the jarring sensations that ran along his spinal cord there was no sign upon his austere countenance; only when the raconteur had done, he leaned forward and remarked:

"*Che dirà il Crucifisso?*"

The reproof brought the errant Marquis back to his

actual milieu and its proprieties. He was, Sir John tells us, “struck dumbfounded and was filled with astonishment at so unexpected a glosse, which he sayd was a more efficacious sermon then he had heard from the Capuchin Fryers.”[184] What he said to himself we do not know.

From these trivialities, which enveloped his mind like fine-spun cobwebs, Sir John was suddenly roused by a very serious event: nothing less than the death of the great Ahmed Kuprili.

At the approach of the autumnal equinox the Grand Signor broke up his camp and began his migration to Adrianople. The Vizir was then ill—so ill that he refused Sir John’s request for a farewell audience with these words: “If God pleasd’, wee should meet in the Spring, but then he was not in a state to receive my Visit.” Nevertheless, Ahmed followed his master in a galley as far as Selivria, where our Ambassador’s Dragoman, who had been sent to obtain some Commands, saw him, on his landing, carried by four persons to a litter, on which, too weak to sit upright, he stretched himself at full length. In this critical condition he went on another day’s journey, and at that point, his strength failing him, he had to be taken a mile off the road into a private house. Mindful of the public interest to the very last, he called his Kehayah and ordered him to march with the army to Adrianople. The Kehayah, with tears in his eyes, begged to be allowed to stay and wait upon him, saying that no man could serve him with so much care or so much affection. “No,” replied Ahmed, “the Gran Signor’s Army ought not to want a Head, and since I cannot, you must Head them.”

The Grand Signor at the moment was, as usual,

hunting; but as soon as news of the Vizir's state reached him, he hastened to his bedside—a signal proof of the sentiments which the master cherished towards his illustrious servant. Sir John was deeply impressed: "I must needs say," he writes, "That I have read of the Privacy's of many Great Ministers of State with their Prince, I have livd' to be no stranger to the story's of the Modern one's. But Nothing in Christendome neither Card: Richlieu, Card: Mazarin, or Don Louis de Haro, or any other Christian favourite can parallell either the Power, Influence, or Intimacy, That this Gran Visir had with this Emperour." Thus Ahmed lingered on till the 24th of October, when he succumbed to a dropsy inherited from his father but intensified by worries of government, hardships of war, and excessive indulgence in strong waters. He had ruled the Ottoman Empire for fifteen years, and at the time of his death he was not above forty-five.

His body was brought back to Constantinople in a plain coach drawn by six horses and attended by only half-a-dozen footmen. It was taken to a mosque where the Kaimakam and other dignitaries awaited it with the religious ministers, and was laid in the same sepulchre as his father's. No pomp distinguished Ahmed's funeral from that of an ordinary pasha. But the mourning was universal. Moslems and Christians, natives and aliens joined in paying tribute to the virtues of the departed statesman, to his moderation, his justice, his inflexible probity. He was a pasha free from greed; he was an autocrat who knew how to temper absolutism with gentleness: a memorable, and in some respects a unique exemplar of a beneficent despot. The English, in particular, remembered with gratitude Ahmed's scrupulous observance of their Capitulations, and his readiness

to punish any official who violated them. It was not probable that they would see his like again.

To Sir John Finch the death of Ahmed, “my Great and Good friend,” came as a severe shock, and it evoked from him a eulogy more eloquent in its unaffected simplicity than any elaborate panegyric: “Most certainly He was a Great Minister of State, and Master of Great Resolutions; For whatsoever He sett upon He allwayes went through. He was undoubtedly Just; and the freest from Corruption of any that ever held that charge, for He was no lover of mony.” How was the event likely to affect himself? This question, naturally, mingled itself with Sir John’s sorrow: “I hope things will not upon the change of the Ministers change their Face too; But the Truth is In the Visir I lost a True friend, and with Him all the Rest, For they will be Turnd’ out of their severall charges, so that I must begin my Interest anew.”[185]

Immediately on Ahmed’s death the Seal was carried by his brother to the Grand Signor and, according to general expectation, was conferred upon Mustafa Pasha—commonly called Kara Mustafa, or Black Mustafa, from the darkness of his complexion. He was a man of fifty-three. Having begun as a page in the household of old Mohammed Kuprili and married his daughter, he had risen under that Vizir to the position of Capiji-bashi. Ahmed had made him Capitan Pasha, or Lord High Admiral, and, on going to Candia, left him as his Deputy with the Sultan. Mustafa had taken the utmost advantage of this proximity to the sovereign, pandering to all his passions and always accompanying him in his hunting. He was just about to marry one of the Grand Signor’s daughters—a damsel of six.

As soon as the appointment was announced, Sir John hastened to find out all about Kara Mustafa's character and antecedents, so that he might from the past form a forecast of the future. Information was easy to obtain: a person who had for so many years been the second grandee in the Empire had naturally become an object of interested study to every one that came into contact with the Court. Had he access to the Foreign Office archives, Finch would have found a terse summary of the new Vizir's character from the pen of Sir Daniel Harvey's secretary: "well spoken, subtill, corrupt, and a great dissembler."[186] As it was, he learnt that Kara Mustafa was reputed "a Great Souldyer, and a Great Courtier; and of a very Active Genious." But these qualities were marred by two very pronounced vices: avarice and arrogance. The English merchants had suffered from his cupidity, and all the foreign envoys from his pride. These reports made Sir John uneasy: he saw the outlines of trouble in the future: he had a disquieting sense of uncertainty; but he hoped that the example of his famous predecessor and the responsibility of his present position might cure Kara Mustafa of his propensities.

The new Grand Vizir began his career after a fashion which justified Sir John's best hopes. He removed no Minister from his post, except the Kehayah, a necessary measure, and he softened it by making him Master of the Horse to the Sultan: a place which, if less profitable, was not less honourable. Neither did he put any man to death, except a paymaster, and that was an act of justice rather than of severity, for the official had been convicted of paying out false money. In brief, Ahmed's death did not seem to have produced any

change at the Porte other than the change of the Vizir's person. Sir John felt reassured: much as he missed the suave Kehayah, he was glad to know that he still occupied a position of influence; and that, apart from this alteration, he would not have "to begin his Interest anew." As late as the first of March 1677 he was able to write: "Both with the Court it selfe and the Publick Ministers that reside Here, things passe with me so peaceably that I am in a perfect calme." Indeed, the Government was so "regular," that, in the dearth of "occurrences of remarque," the Ambassador could scarcely find "materialls enough to furnish a Dispatch."[187]

For the fact is that Kara Mustafa was to be six months a Grand Vizir before anything happened. But what then happened was in itself a drama.

FOOTNOTES:

[173] See Appendix XII.

[174] Finch to Coventry, May 26: S.V. 1677. See also Appendix XIII.

[175] Such was the mournful reflection of a contemporary merchant who, after doing the "Nation" a great service at Constantinople, got not "common thanks and scarce good looks" for his pains. See *Life of Dudley North*, p. 102.

[176] Richard Pococke, who visited Smyrna in 1739, notes: "they export a great quantity of raisins to England, under the pretence of a privilege they have by our Capitulations of loading so many ships for the King's table."—*A Description of the East* (London: 1745), Bk. II. ch. i.

[177] Finch to Coventry, May 4-14, *Coventry*

Papers; the Same to Right Hon. [Joseph Williamson], May 31: S.V. 1676, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[178] Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 163-8.

[179] Finch to Coventry, May 4-14.

[180] The Same to the Same, June 20-30, 1676.

[181] Finch to Coventry, Aug. 4-14, 1676. Cp. Covel's *Diaries*, pp. 160-2; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 331-2.

[182] Finch to Coventry, Jan. 6 16, 1675-76; May 4-14; Aug. 4-14, 1676.

[183] Finch to Coventry, Aug. 4-14, enclosing Nointel to Finch (in French), Aug. 11 and 13 (N.S.); Finch to Nointel (in Italian), Aug. 2-12 and 4-14. The Same to the Same, Aug. 29/ Sept. 8, 1676.

[184] Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 68.

[185] Finch to Coventry, Oct. 26, S.V. 1676. Cp. Rycaut to John Field "At Mr Secretary Coventry's office att Whitehall," Dec. 13, *Coventry Papers*; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 332-3.

[186] George Etherege to Joseph Williamson, letter endorsed "R. 8 May, 1670," *S.P. Turkey*, 19. It is interesting to compare this verdict with this: "One of the most refined witts, the most accomplished Courtier, and a person of the greatest experience," Rycaut to Field, *loc. cit.* Etherege was a poet, Rycaut a historian; which of the two had a truer insight time was to show.

[187] Finch to Coventry, Nov. 20-30, 1676; March 1-11, 1676-77. Cp. Rycaut to Field, *loc. cit.*, Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 334-5.

CHAPTER XIII

THE STOOL OF REPENTANCE

Early in March 1677 Mohammed IV. returned to Constantinople, followed three weeks later by his Vizir; and behold, all of a sudden, the government which hitherto had been a model of mildness took on a face such as “the Oldest Man here never saw.”[188] Of this metamorphosis the representatives of foreign States became aware when they asked to be permitted to offer the new Grand Vizir their felicitations.

Before this epoch Christian envoys had often been subject to contumely, violence, and outrage at the hands of the Grand Signor’s curious Ministers. But no attempt had ever been made to treat them systematically as pariahs. To Kara Mustafa—“an embitterd’ enemy to all Christians,” as Sir John calls him—belongs the credit of evolving out of those desultory essays in truculence a regular system of calculated indecency—a system which was to endure for more than a hundred years, becoming, in course of time, as established things do, respectable, consecrated, all but decent. He it was who collected every planless affront, threat of rage, artifice of greed —every caprice of a decrepit despotism,—and wove them all together into one net of humiliation out of

which only force could liberate its victims.

The process was inaugurated with the representative of France, the excitable Marquis de Nointel, who, eager for precedence, hastened to seek the first audience, and after a month's solicitations secured an appointment. His Dragomans then, according to custom, asked to have the number of *kaftans* which were to be bestowed upon the Ambassador fixed; but they were told that the Ambassador was to expect none. This was only a slight prelude to what was to follow: "where," as Sir John sententiously remarks, "the Preface speaks innovations, the body of the discourse will have them at large."

On arriving at the Porte on the appointed day (Sunday, April 22nd), Nointel had to wait three whole hours in the room of the Kehayah—a surly Turk—without conversation or any other entertainment; and when at last he was called in, he found the narrow corridor that led to the Audience Chamber crowded with chaoushes who jostled him most rudely. Truth to tell, this rudeness, at all events, was not premeditated. The poor chaoushes had come in the turbans of ceremony worn on such occasions, but had been ordered by the Vizir to go and exchange them for their ordinary headgear: hence their hurry to get back to their places before the Ambassador made his entry. Nointel, however, whose nerves were already on edge with the long waiting, saw in their behaviour a fresh insult, and he elbowed his way down the passage fiercely flinging the chaoushes to right and left against the walls. In this temper he entered the Audience Chamber, and there he observed something at which his resentment reached the height of exasperation: the stool destined

for him was not upon the Soffah, but on the floor below! He ordered his Dragoman to set it where it should be; one of the Vizir's pages brought it down again. Then the Ambassador, in a towering rage, seized the stool with his own hand, carried it to the Soffah, and sat upon it.

When this act was reported to the Vizir, who was in an adjoining apartment, he sent for the Ambassador's Dragoman and commanded him to tell his master that he must move his seat back where he had found it. The trembling Dragoman delivered the message and was bidden by the angry Ambassador to hold his tongue. Next the Vizir sent his own Dragoman, Dr. Mavrocordato, with whom Nointel maintained the closest friendship. In vain did the Greek try to soothe the enraged Frenchman, imploring him to moderate his temper and yield gracefully to the inevitable. Nothing could prevail over M. de Nointel's obstinacy: the pride of the wig was pitted against the pride of the turban, and it must be remembered that both wigs and turbans were then at their zenith. In the end, Mavrocordato, finding argument useless, changed his tone and said, in Italian: "The Grand Vizir commands the chair to be placed below." Nointel replied: "The Grand Vizir can command his chair: he cannot command me." At that moment the Chaoush-bashi burst into the room, roaring, "*Calder, calder*—Take it away, take it away!"—and before he knew what was happening, Nointel found the stool snatched from under him. In an access of fury, his Excellency dashed out of the room, sword on shoulder, pushed his way through the throng, and, ordering the presents which he had brought to follow him, mounted his horse and departed, exciting, as he boasted, by his firmness, "the astonishment of the Turks and the joy of the

French." Kara Mustafa alone remained calm. His comment, when he heard that the Ambassador was gone, was one word: "*Gehennem*" (Let him go to Hell).[189]

One barbarous word, that can be shown to be authentic, is worth volumes of descriptive writing.

Such was the beginning of the celebrated "Affaire du Sofa"—a quarrel which drew the attention of all Europe and nearly led to a rupture between France and Turkey. The question arises: was Nointel justified in resenting so violently Kara Mustafa's innovation? Here, more fitly perhaps than afterwards, we may discuss this question, and try to obtain that true perspective of things, without which there can be no true understanding of our story, nor any appreciation of the agitations and mortifications which its chief character underwent from that day onward for about eight months to come.

Much ridicule has been poured by modern English writers upon the vanity of seventeenth-century French courtiers—a foible which made the most insignificant trifles swell in their minds to matters of the highest moment. What, indeed, could be more puerile than for the representative of a great monarch to quarrel with the head of the Government to which he was accredited about the position of a stool? But we, wise democrats of to-day, ought not to be surprised that frivolous nobles of the old régime displayed such childish folly and petulance: these are the natural characteristics of every monarchical régime, of every hereditary aristocracy, melancholy features of a state of things which has now happily passed away.

That the French nobility under Louis XIV. carried punctiliousness to the length of absurdity is well

known to readers of contemporary French literature: the memoirs and letters of the men and women who composed the Court of Louis are full of serious, sometimes dangerous, disputes arising out of the most ludicrous points of etiquette, and narrated with a becoming sense of their importance. Nowhere was this triumph of Ceremonialism over common sense more notable than in the rules that governed diplomatic relations. But—a thing forgotten by modern critics—the French Republic of our time is hardly less tenacious of ceremonial forms in its international relations than the French Monarchy was. Nay, democratic America herself, as everybody acquainted with her State Department will bear witness, sets as much store by these trifles as any country of aristocratic Europe. The truth is that, when nations deal with one another, they have to stand on strict ceremony: forms have been invented to prevent friction; and States which wish to cultivate mutual friendship are therefore extremely wary of departing from established usages.

The extreme irritability of M. de Nointel may have been relative to the nation—a great nation, but a thin-skinned—to which he belonged. But its cause, however contemptible it may appear to us, to English diplomats of his time—men not wholly devoid of understanding—did not appear so.

Sir John Finch was at dinner with some of the merchants, when one of the Embassy Janissaries, whom Nointel had borrowed from him for the solemn function, returned home bringing the sensational news that the French Ambassador, after four hours' stay at the Porte, had gone away without audience.

From all he had heard of Kara Mustafa Finch had

foreseen that many strange things would befall; and for that reason, instead of competing with the Frenchman for precedence, as his habit was, he had deliberately let him have the first audience: much as the polite fox in the fable let the elephant try first the rickety plank that bridged a dangerous-looking stream. Nevertheless, he was greatly startled by the news. What had happened to Nointel might happen to him. So, dismissing his guests, he set at once to work to ascertain what *had* happened: there was not a moment to lose; and indeed, before he had completed his investigations, a messenger arrived from the Porte. Finch easily guessed the purport of his errand, and in order to gain time for further information and reflection, he decided to have an attack of diplomatic fever. To give his fiction verisimilitude, he retired hastily to his bedroom and received the messenger in his bed. The message was as he expected: “The Grand Vizir desired that His Excellency should come to audience on the following morning.” Sir John answered from his couch that it was a favour which he had sought for, but he was sorry that his “indisposition of body” would not permit him to accept it. He prayed the Grand Vizir to excuse him.

Kara Mustafa had no difficulty in diagnosing the “indisposition of body” which afflicted Sir John, but dissembling his wisdom, he promptly ordered that, since the Ambassador of England was indisposed, the Bailo of Venice should take his place next morning, and the Resident of Holland should come in the afternoon. Both these diplomats were content to receive their audiences on the Vizir’s terms, while the Resident of Genoa sought for audience on those same terms and could not obtain it. Such, then, was the position of the Diplomatic Corps on the

Bosphorus in the spring of 1677: the French Ambassador in open defiance of the Porte; the Venetian Ambassador, the Dutch Resident, and the Genoese Resident in open compliance with it; the English Ambassador alone remained uncommitted, "as lying under the Maschera of indisposition of body."

Sir John counted that by his clever strategy he had at least gained this: that he had not set the example of submission. Had he done so, the King would have received complaints from all Christendom that his envoy was the first to put on "the yoke of this high-minded Visir" and by his example had forced the other foreign Ministers to take up the same yoke: ay, the meanest of them would have said that, had he not established a precedent, they would have scorned to submit. As it was, Sir John had freed himself from any imputation, and left the others to answer for their own pusillanimity. "Neverthelesse," he naïvely admits, "this Maschera of a distemper at the first seen clearly through both by Turk and Christian must not be wore long."

Seven days he considered enough to get well. He spent this period of convalescence studying the situation and deliberating what "prudent and wary resolutions" it befitted him to take. Then he called his Dragomans to him and asked them whether they had ever known an English ambassador receive from a Grand Vizir audience with his stool below the Soffah? They answered with one voice No! such a thing had never been known; and their memories served them so readily that they went through eight or nine Vizirates by name, as if they were repeating a lesson they had by heart. Whereupon Sir John bade them deliver to the Vizir a Memorial which he had

drawn up. In this document the Ambassador informed Kara Mustafa that the King his master was known to be equal to the greatest prince in Christendom, but he was even more widely renowned as surpassing all other princes in the sincerity and constancy of his friendship towards the Sublime Porte: his Majesty had at all times not only abstained from sending succours to any of Turkey's enemies, but supplied her with whatsoever served for the convenience of peace or the necessity of war. After thus hinting at his claim to better treatment than his French colleague, Sir John pointed out that not only he himself in all his audiences of the deceased Vizir had his seat upon the Soffah, but that, as far as he could learn, there had never been an instance of a Vizir denying an English ambassador such a seat. Lastly, he declared that he was under rigorous instructions from his King to preserve intact the respect always rendered him in this Court; and his master might justly shed his blood, if he should do anything repugnant to his Majesty's honour and commands.[190]

When the Dragomans came to the passage in which Finch, as his composition originally stood, told the Vizir that he had about him servants of so many years' standing who knew what the practice had been under so many Vizirs, they said that they dared not deliver "such a Paper."

"Why," asked the Ambassador, "is this part not true?"

"Yes," they agreed, "but we dare not say it is so."

His Excellency had the inconceivable fatuity to retort:

"Do I name you as the informers?"

"No," was the obvious answer, "but the Vizir must know it can be none but us."

It is amazing to find Sir John, in his report to the Secretary of State, while moralising on the terrors of Turkish tyranny, also complaining of the "timidity and cowardesse of Druggermen," who refused to risk hanging and impaling in order to please him. However, in the end, finding it impossible to overcome the Dragomans' perverse regard for their lives, he couched his Note in vaguer terms.

To this Note Sir John received no answer for three days, and on the fourth he had one which he did not know what to make of; it looked as if Kara Mustafa had been rather annoyed by his Memorial, though he did not tear it up. So next day he sent his Dragomans to sound the Rais Effendi. This Minister told them that he would be sorry to see an ambassador who enjoyed so good credit at the Porte forfeit it by opposing the Grand Vizir, who, if the Ambassador came to audience, was ready to embrace him. Encouraged by this message, Sir John wrote to the Rais Effendi, thanking him for his friendship, hinting at a more substantial reward for any good offices he might do him with "the Most Excellent Vizir," and protesting his willingness to give his Excellency every possible satisfaction. His one passion was to maintain his ambassadorial character with due decorum, to preserve the peace and commerce according to the "Sacred and Sublime Capitulations," and to render to the Imperial Majesty of the Grand Signor "all acts of obsequiousness and reverence." His heart being thus disposed, he hoped that it would be clear "to the lucid understanding of the Most Excellent Supream Visir" that a first-class Ambassador from one of the greatest potentates in

Christendom ought not to be treated in parity with a Resident of whatsoever prince, much less with the Residents of inferior Republics. Therefore he trusted that some expedient would be found to make a distinction between the highest and the lowest sorts of foreign Ministers; for he burned with a desire to do reverence in person to the Most Excellent Vizir Azem. Such was the tenor of his letter.[191] The Rais Effendi read it but said nothing.

We may observe here that the distinction between Ambassadors and Residents which meant so much to European envoys did not exist for the Turks. Whenever an Ambassador claimed precedence over a Resident upon the ground of superior rank, they used to say: "What, has he not a Commission? have you more?" For all diplomatic agents they had only one name, *Elchi*, and their attitude towards them all was equally contemptuous.[192] This, however, as we shall see in the sequel, did not prevent them from exploiting a prejudice which they did not share.

Having made such advances as he deemed compatible with his dignity to very little purpose, Sir John resolved to wait and see what Kara Mustafa's next move would be. Meanwhile he ordered his Dragomans to frequent the Porte as usual, so that the other foreign Ministers might not think that he had either given or taken offence—M. de Nointel had withdrawn his Dragomans; but Sir John judged himself "to be in no way, nor in no condition, in his case." How long the affair would last or how it would end he had no idea. He wished he were nearer home that he might have instructions from the King for his guidance. As it was, he was obliged to walk by his own lights, hoping that in all he had done hitherto and in all that he should do hereafter, if he

did not deserve his Majesty's approval, he might at least obtain his pardon. Of one thing he asked the Secretary of State to be sure: "I shall to the uttmost of my possibility keep my selfe off from any condescention." "For if I should condescend and the French Ambassadour afterwards gain the Point, then for him to be receivd' with a distinction of Honour from the Ambassadour of the King my Master would be an everlasting Blemish." Of course, if he capitulated, Sir John would do his best to hinder his colleague from stealing a march upon him; but "the best may not be good enough." Then, again, there was another thing to consider: suppose he yielded to the Porte on this point, no man knew what the Porte would exact next: all the present Ministers were "sower, ante Christian Turk's, and very Covetous"; and of them all Kara Mustafa was the worst. Sir John was unaffectedly afraid of Kara Mustafa; "and what gives me to fear him the more," he says, "is that he is like allway's to continue Visir; for there was never no Visir yett that ever was the tenth part, nay the twentyeth, so free or rather profuse in his gifts to the Gran Signor as he is."

Now, Kara Mustafa assuredly deserved all, or nearly all, that Sir John said about him. But it must not be supposed that, in this particular case, he had not something to say for himself. His self-justification, according to Sir John's own report, was this: Though it might be an undeniable truth that no Vizir had ever received an ambassador but with his stool upon the Soffah, yet he, whilst only a Kaimakam, had never received any but with their stools below the Soffah. It was thus that he had received M. de Nointel himself, and, what troubled Sir John most, it was thus that he had received Sir John's own predecessor Harvey. M. de Nointel might

argue that he had paid Kara Mustafa then only a visit of courtesy, and that as Ahmed Kuprili, the then Vizir, received him on the Soffah, he had not thought it worth his while to make a fuss about a subordinate pasha's manners. This argument was not open to Sir John, for when Harvey called on Kara Mustafa, Ahmed Kuprili being away in Candia, Kara Mustafa acted as his Deputy, nor was that a mere courtesy call, but a solemn audience. Therefore, Kara Mustafa reasoned, why should Sir John object to paying him now, when he was a full-blown Grand Vizir, the respect which his predecessor had paid him without the least reluctance, when he was but the Grand Vizir's shadow?

An interesting point, but not worth dwelling upon. Whether right was on Kara Mustafa's side or not, might certainly was; and he exercised it without pity. Leaving Finch for the moment in suspense, he turned his undivided attention to Nointel. After tearing up a Memorial of the French Ambassador's and abusing the Dragoman who presented it, he confined the noble Marquis in his house and threatened to commit him to the Seven Towers—an old Byzantine fortress which served the purposes of an Ottoman Bastille.

M. de Nointel's distress was indescribable. From his King he could expect no support. For some time past, owing to his consistent failures at the Porte, he had been under a cloud at Versailles—a cloud that not one ray of royal clemency or one livre from the royal exchequer came to pierce. An attempt to make both ends meet by fleecing French merchants with the help of Turkish soldiers had deepened his disgrace without relieving him permanently from his financial difficulties. Day after day his debts mounted; day after day his spirits sank. Creditors

clamoured for payment at his door, and not daring to attack him directly as yet, attacked his secretaries. Any day he might find himself in the Seven Towers. At last, in despair, the miserable Marquis sued for peace on the Grand Vizir's terms, and only procured it by agreeing to pay him an extraordinary present of 3000 dollars—in household stuff and plate, for of ready money he had none. In spite, or perhaps because, of his abject surrender, the representative of the great Louis was made to drink the cup of humiliation to its bitterest dregs. Twice Kara Mustafa summoned him to audience, and twice he sent him away without audience; and when the third time he did receive him, he declined to partake of coffee and sherbet, or to be perfumed with him, but let the Giaour have his refreshments alone.[193]

Sir John had not been ignorant of Nointel's overtures to the Porte, nor was he unaware of the fact that, after the Frenchman's capitulation, his own position would be much worse. Yet what could he do? To forestall Nointel by submitting first would have been too great a degradation, and would have afforded the French Ambassador a warrantable excuse for transferring the whole responsibility for his own submission upon Finch's shoulders. In this dilemma, our Ambassador displayed his noted talent for expedients. He ordered his Dragomans to tell the Vizir's Kehayah that he had received instructions from the King of England to thank the Grand Signor by the Vizir's mouth for a favour (meaning the Smyrna figs, though he did not say so), and that he was ready at any time to wait upon his Excellency, if the Grand Vizir would be pleased to receive him "with any distinction from the lowest Minister of the meanest Prince." But in vain: Nointel's pliancy had stiffened Kara Mustafa's back. So Sir John acquiesced

in his destiny, and again let the Frenchman proceed first. The day after Nointel's surrender, he applied for audience without reservations or conditions. He received a patronising reply, that his "Motion was very good"; but the Vizir was so taken up with the Polish Treaty that he could not at present appoint a day. Several times, during the next three months, Sir John repeated his "motion," and every time he met with the same evasive answer.

For the first time since his strategic retreat to his bedroom Sir John doubted the wisdom of that step. Even now he did not regret the deed itself—that was worthily done. Any other conduct would have been inconsistent with punctilious care for the honour of the King his master. Sir John tried to fortify himself with these thoughts. But as week after week came and went, and still there was no invitation to audience, he could not but feel that a deed which is right in principle may be pernicious in its consequences. At length, beginning to grow seriously anxious, he begged his very good friend Hussein Aga to find out the real origin of these delays. The Chief Customer sent back word that there was not the least "disgusto" against him at Court: the Polish Treaty really took up all the Vizir's time, and he would have his audience in due course and with due honour—that was the whole truth of the matter "upon his head." This reassuring message allayed Sir John's anxiety, till—let Sir John himself speak—"till an unpreventable accident disorderd' and discomposd' all things and incensd' the Visir so much that He satisfyd' his passion upon me."[194]

The accident deserves to be related at some length; for, besides the effect it had upon our Ambassador's fortunes, it illustrates very vividly, if not very

pleasantly, the manners of the times and the morals of the men involved.

An English merchant of Smyrna had lent to a Venetian native of Candia, called Pizzamano, 3000 dollars, and received some goods as security. After the merchant's death, his partner, Mr. John Ashby, who at the time of the deal was away, found this pledge among the assets of the deceased, and also found that, in the interval, Pizzamano had gone bankrupt and was hiding from his creditors. Although the term of the loan had not yet expired, Mr. Ashby, fearing no trouble from a man who was unable to show his face, proceeded to sell the goods at the Consul's gate, in the usual Frank fashion, "by inch of candle."[195] Besides being premature, the proceeding was irregular in other respects. Turkish law did not recognise a sale at the Consul's gate by inch of candle, but ordained that all auctions should be held in the market-place, by leave of the Cadi, and after three days' public notice. Further, it must be observed that Mr. Rycaut, in sanctioning the sale, had exceeded his powers: an English Consul's jurisdiction was limited to persons of his own nation, and he had no right to settle an affair between an Englishman and a foreigner.

These grave irregularities gave Pizzamano a chance, when he found that the sale of his goods had yielded not only less than they were worth, but even less than they had been pawned for, to denounce the transaction and to claim compensation. Armed with an authentic copy of the sale, which he had procured from the Cancellaria of the English Consulate, he went up to Constantinople; and there this bankrupt who was regarded as utterly helpless, by a singular piece of luck, found powerful friends in Court. It was

one of those odd coincidences that seem to occur in order to show how much more romantic life can be than the wildest fiction. The Venetian, before setting up as a trader, had served as a purser on a French pirate ship which Kara Mustafa, whilst Capitan Pasha, had captured. Now it so happened that among the captives was a French cabin-boy who had found favour in Kara Mustafa's eyes, turned Turk, and become his Hasnadar or Treasurer. For the sake of old times, the ex-cabin-boy espoused the cause of the ex-purser heartily; several influential Turks, creditors of Pizzamano's, joined the crew in hopes of being repaid out of the loot; and thus supported, the Venetian appealed for redress to the Vizir as a Candiote and therefore now a subject of the Grand Signor.

The Vizir immediately sent a chaoush to fetch Mr. Ashby up to Constantinople, without notifying the Ambassador, who, according to the Capitulations, should have been informed in order to lend the defendant his assistance. This snub, however, did not prevent Sir John from making Ashby's quarrel his own. Ashby had been exalted by the Smyrna factors into a popular hero: great numbers of them accompanied him to the capital, "with swords and pistolls"—quite a guard of honour; and he arrived bringing a petition to the Ambassador signed by the Consul and forty members of the Factory, that the expenses of the case should be defrayed out of public funds. To this request Sir John demurred on purely tactical grounds: "fearing that if I had declard' my sense at first, wee should starve our cause, I told Ashby that it was time enough for my Answer when the thing was brought to a period." With this reservation, which shows that a man can be at once indiscreet and cautious, Sir John made the defendant

an object of his warmest solicitude: the merits of the case seem to have had as little weight with him as with the English colony in general.

At first everything went well. The Grand Vizir, when the litigants appeared before him at the Divan, treated Ashby and his supporters with the utmost indulgence, looking upon them, "as my Druggerman told me, with the same smiling countenance as when he was Chimacham," and even declining to take notice of an aggravating circumstance brought forward by the plaintiff—namely, that the English factors who had accompanied Ashby to Constantinople had tried on the way to rescue him by force of arms and had actually come to blows with the Turks at Magnesia. Ignoring this charge—which, in itself, might have supplied material for very serious trouble—Kara Mustafa referred the case for trial to the Stamboli Effendi, or Chief Justice of Constantinople, precisely as we desired. On the eve of the trial an attempt was made to settle the dispute out of court. Our friend Hussein Aga undertook the part of arbiter and, after estimating the goods in question by the advice of Turkish and Jewish merchants, he condemned Ashby to pay the Venetian 1600 Lion dollars. But as Ashby would not abide by the arbitration, the matter went before the Judge.

And now, to all the other illegalities mentioned, our countrymen added an offence of a truly shocking nature. Ashby and his abettors, from the Ambassador down, had by this time come to see that a sale of pledged goods to which the owner's consent could not be proved was indefensible in Turkish law. They, therefore, thought fit to deny the sale, and to affirm that the goods were *in esse*—an attitude to which they were prompted by the knowledge that the goods

could easily be got back from those who had bought them. In vain did Pizzamano produce his copy of the sale, signed and sealed by the English Consul. Mr. Ashby, backed by the Ambassador's Dragoman and all the Englishmen present, stoutly denied the authenticity of the document. Pizzamano then produced two Turkish witnesses who had assisted at the sale. But these witnesses, not being professional rogues, found themselves unable to answer some questions on matters of detail put to them by the Judge, and the bad impression which their inadequate replies produced was deepened by the vehemence and apparent sincerity with which the English persisted in affirming that the goods had not been sold and would be restored on payment of the debt. The Stamboli Effendi, confounded by this mendacious unanimity, departed from the ordinary Turkish maxim of considering the word of two True Believers worth more than that of a crowd of Infidels, and gave sentence that both litigants should return to Smyrna, the one to receive his money and the other his goods.

So far the English had been guilty only of a crime which, as long as it remained undetected, could not hurt them. From this point they began to commit blunders which were to cost them dearly. Sir John congratulated Mr. Ashby on his victory, but at the same time, knowing its seamy side, strongly advised him to come to an adjustment with the Venetian, who offered to cry quits for 1000 dollars. Ashby, however, would not think of sacrificing an atom of his ill-gotten advantage. And that was not all. Blinded by a false sense of security and by cupidity, he did something that proved fatal. The Grand Vizir's complaisance and his reference of the dispute to the Stamboli Effendi had been procured in the usual

way. At the very outset of this unfortunate business, Sir John had got his friend Hussein Aga to buy off Kara Mustafa's Hasnadar by a bribe of 500 dollars. This sum had been handed to Dudley North and Mr. Hyet, who deposited it by Hussein's order in the Custom-House. Soon after obtaining his verdict, Ashby met in the street a servant of Hussein Aga's who had charge of the 500 dollars, but did not know what they were for. "My master," he said, "has not yet asked for that money. What am I to do with it?" The merchant's avarice got the better of his prudence: "Give it back to me," he said, and carried the dollars away. A day or two later Hussein Aga asked his servant for the money, and on hearing what had happened, sent to Ashby for it. Ashby refused to part with his dollars again. Thereupon the Customer, already piqued by the rejection of his arbitration, lost his temper completely. "He stormd' like a madman, and swore he would be revengd' of the whole Nation for this affront." The Hasnadar was not less enraged at this breach of faith. And the two, seconded by all their friends, revealed to the Grand Vizir the whole plot, telling him how the English Ambassador had, through his Dragoman, deceived the Stamboli Effendi about the sale, and substantiating their damning statements with documentary and other evidence. In great fury Kara Mustafa summoned once more all parties concerned to the Divan, and there and then, without so much as waiting to hear one word in Ashby's defence, shouted to the Chaoush-bashi: "Take that Giaour to prison, till he has satisfied Pizzamano."

Let us now leave Mr. Ashby in his dungeon, with an iron collar round his neck and iron manacles on his hands, ruminating on the fruits of fraud aggravated by folly, and see how this "accident"

affected his august protector.

The great Feast of the Bairam, at which it was customary for all ambassadors to send presents to the Grand Vizir, drawing near, Sir John's Dragoman went to the Porte to ask when he should bring his "Bairamlik," and, incidentally, to see if he could not for once get access to Kara Mustafa, who, "beyond all the example of his predecessours had not yett sufferd' any Publick Ministers Druggerman to speak with him." A fruitless endeavour! Kara Mustafa is invisible, and his Kehayah coldly replies that there is no need of a Bairamlik from you, since your Ambassador has not yet paid his respects to the Vizir. The Dragoman protests that his Excellency has constantly pressed for audience and is ready to come either that night or next morning. "No," answers the Kehayah; adding that perhaps the Ambassador thought the Vizir would be content with the ordinary first audience presents, but that was a delusion —"vests would not doe the buisenesse." From the surly Kehayah our Dragoman goes to Dr. Mavrocordato: they talk the matter over, and it is agreed between them that we should give fifty vests of a much larger size than the usual; but when this agreement is propounded to the Vizir, he rejects it scornfully.

Alarmed by these symptoms of ill-humour, Sir John addressed to Kara Mustafa, through the Kehayah, a conciliatory message: he was very sorry to have incurred the Grand Vizir's displeasure, and begged to know precisely what would restore him to his favour. He appealed to the Vizir's equity by pointing out that he had been obliged to act as he had done by the exigencies of his position: "If I was in the same conjuncture again I could doe no lesse:

in regard that if I had submitted to what the Ambassadour of another Christian Monarch had refusd', the King my master might justly have cutt off my head." He ended by expressing the hope that the Grand Vizir would not enjoin upon him "any thing exorbitant or dishonourable," but that he would rather command his decapitation, "for that I had rather submitt to the latter, then the former."

The message was delivered to Kara Mustafa immediately after his noon prayers, and "he seemd' to be very much surprisd'" by it—as well he might. After passing a whole hour in profound meditation, he said to his Kehayah: "Methinkes the Ambassadour should not thinke much to send me four thousand zecchins"—say, £2000. The Kehayah added four hundred on his own account. As the result of much haggling, the demand fell to 6000 dollars, or £1500, which included the usual presents, amounting to 600 dollars.

This was Kara Mustafa's prescription for Sir John's diplomatic fever. It plunged the patient into gloom. What could he do? He could, no doubt, continue staying in his house, even in his bed. But that would have deprived the English of their protector and delivered them up to the tender mercies of every official robber in the Empire. There was already the wretched Ashby groaning in his chains. There was a claim on the Aleppo Factory for silk dues, and an accusation of buying Turkish goods from Christian pirates at Scanderoon. There was the charge, which Kara Mustafa had brushed aside when in a good temper, against the English factors of Smyrna of attempting to rescue Ashby by main force: now that Kara Mustafa was in an ugly mood that charge might be brought on the tapis again. Sir John considered

these things, and also another thing that concerned him more directly—the old pretensions of the Pasha of Tunis, which, should a breach take place, were not likely to remain dormant long. Even as it was, Sir John had reasons to apprehend a revival of that nasty affair. The Pasha, it is true, was still in his distant province on the borders of Arabia, "where," Sir John says, "I pray God detayn him"; but he had at Constantinople a Vekil or Procurator in the person of —the Grand Vizir's Kehayah: an ominous connection. Lastly, Sir John had to consider the feelings of the English merchants about him. Their standard of values was the standard of the counting-house, not of the Court. They thought it worse than futile to resent affronts which we had not the means of resisting. Where the Turks knew that big words were empty bluster, where business men could be hurt without hope of redress—the only way to peace lay through bakshish.[196] The factors with one voice urged Sir John to pay up.

There was not much time for hesitation. The Vizir had presented his final demand in the form of an ultimatum: the Ambassador should give a "categoricall and positive answer," Yes or No, not later than the day following. Sir John said "Yes." He agreed to purchase his audience for 6000 Lion dollars, ready money; and tried to persuade himself that, all things considered, the price was not excessive: he would save on the size of the vests—one yard here, two there-so that "in time, though with length," we should get our money back! But nothing could minimise the cost in self-respect. "I never in my life enterd' upon a Resolution more unwillingly, nor more against my Genious," complains the poor diplomat, and we may well believe him. No Englishman ever "sent to lie abroad

for the good of his country" had a keener sense of honour (we use the term in its technical acceptation). As we have seen, not once or even twice, the "point of honour" was to him what his creed is to a monk, what his flag is to a soldier, what her virtue is to a maiden—and now he had parted with it.

At the same time, we may ask (certain that Sir John will not mind our impertinence), was that solution really as inevitable as it was unpalatable? Was there no other way? On one hand, it is possible to argue as our merchants argued, and to reinforce the argument with such considerations as these: although the Law of Nations which prescribes respect for ambassadors—a law older than Homer—was not unknown to the Turks, no law is binding upon men unless it is backed by fear. This requisite was completely absent in the relations between the Western Powers and the Ottoman Empire. There were no Turkish ambassadors resident in foreign capitals upon whom to retaliate, and the Turks were at liberty to act as they pleased without fear of reprisals. For the rest, their brutality had been encouraged for generations by impunity. A whole series of European envoys had been treated by them in the most revolting manner, and their sovereigns had submitted with true Christian meekness. On the other hand, there is on record a case which suggests the existence of a more excellent way.

In the reign of James I., whilst the Elizabethan spirit still lingered among us, the great English ambassador Sir Thomas Roe, fired with indignation at the contempt shown by the Sultan's Ministers to the representatives of Christian Europe, took a strong line. He began by writing to the Grand Vizir that he

had orders from his King either to obtain the respect due to English ambassadors or else to break off relations. The Vizir promised reform, but forgot to keep his promise. Roe did not waste any more time, but threw the Capitulations at the Vizir's feet, and invited his colleagues to joint action. They all met and set out for the Seraglio, determined to procure from the Grand Signor either the Vizir's head or leave to withdraw their subjects and their goods out of the country. It so happened that a superior power intervened. On the way the procession was met with the news that the Janissaries had risen, that the Vizir had fled, and that orders had been issued that he should be killed wherever found.[197]

Suppose Finch had taken a leaf out of Roe's book? Was it not a fact that the impotence of the European envoys was essentially the result of their disunion? Finch himself confesses that "had Wee all united, the case had bin easily carryd' against the Visir." But he excuses himself to himself for making no attempt to unite them, partly on the ground that the Turks had forestalled him by inviting the Venetian and the Dutchman to audience the moment they got his refusal: "so diligent were they in using this pressure, least Wee Ministers should unite"; partly on the ground that his colleagues neglected to profit by his "indisposition of body": they all knew it was an artifice, why then did they not copy it, or why did they not put off the Vizir by saying that the priority of audience belonged to the Ambassador of England? Thus by hastening to submit, they left him no alternative. It was not his fault: it was the fault of his colleagues, particularly of M. de Nointel: "The French Ambassadour's example and desertion of me, together with the unadvisd' deportment of the Factory (for neither of them alone could have done

it),” compelled him to that ignominious surrender.

Thus Sir John bought his peace. He bought it upon assurances that he would be reinstated in the Grand Vizir’s good opinion, and have his audience at once. But what with the celebrations of the Bairam, the payment of the troops which began as soon as the Feasts ended, and several other excuses (whether real or pretended, Sir John could not say), the audience was deferred from day to day. In the meantime Mr. Ashby continued to groan in his chains; which grew, as such things are apt to do, heavier with every day that passed. The Ambassador, having some grounds to believe that the Vizir did not wish to see him till that disagreeable affair was settled, exerted himself to this end, with the result that the prisoner was first relieved of his collar and wristlets, then had the 5000 dollars to which he had been condemned reduced by one-fifth, and at last, after about twenty days’ incarceration, was set at liberty. Temporarily cured of his avarice, Mr. Ashby, besides paying Pizzamano 4000 dollars, also paid 500 to the Hasnadar, and, we may suppose, resolved not to prevaricate again.

The last obstacle having been removed, our Ambassador found the Porte open to him, and on the 12th of December (nearly eight months since that memorable Sunday when Nointel’s mishap had thrown him into a diplomatic distemper—a truly fatal illness) he had his audience. It went off without a hitch.[198]

Kara Mustafa, at close quarters, appeared somewhat less terrible than Sir John had pictured him at a distance; and, although he did not honour the visitor with any vests, he accorded to him several marks of (shall we say?) respect, which he had

denied to the other foreign Ministers. Instead of three hours, he kept him waiting only a quarter of an hour; he permitted all the members of his suite to enter the Audience Chamber; he deigned to drink coffee and sherbet with him; and (greatest condescension of all!), while he had let no ambassador talk for more than seven minutes, and then only about news, he suffered Sir John to go on for over three-quarters of an hour, and ("bating the first Ceremony of Congratulation," and a few words "of how things passd' in England") all about solid business.

Sir John took full advantage of this unexpected amiability. Very adroitly he began with the Smyrna figs and currants: the King his master was infinitely grateful for the favour conferred upon his kitchen; but the benefit was mutual: the Grand Signor's subjects had already made 130 walled vineyards where there was nothing but stones before, and, if the Vizir was pleased to encourage the trade by enlarging the concession, "gold would grow instead of pebbles"—a million of dollars a year which we now spent in Christendom for fruit would then most probably come to Turkey. The topic was eminently calculated to capture Kara Mustafa's attention. He asked with interest whether this concession was in the Capitulations; and, on hearing that it was, he said that it would be punctually observed together with the rest of our privileges.

Following up this propitious opening, Finch broached a number of kindred subjects, begging, among other things, that in future no Englishman might be dragged to the Divan by a chaoush for debt, until after his creditors had applied to the Ambassador for satisfaction. He implored the Grand

Vizir to consider that the calling of a merchant from his business upon any frivolous or false claim often spelt ruin for the merchant. The Grand Vizir replied that, so long as the English merchants acted with sincerity, they should be protected; but if they acted unjustly and dishonourably, they must answer for their bad actions like other men.

Impartial justice, however, was not quite what the Ambassador wanted. He dwelt on the fact—a fact which, he said, must be well known to "a great captain in warr and a great Minister of State in peace," such as Kara Mustafa was—that the Porte had never encountered at sea any English ships nor on land any English troops operating against it: a proof positive of the reality of the King's friendship for the Grand Signor. After all this, it must surely be a subject of great joy to the enemies of the Porte, and a great discouragement to its well-wishers, to see no distinction made between friend and foe, but its best friends treated, if anything, worse than "those that exercise acts of hostility against it." To this tender appeal, with its covert hit at the French, Kara Mustafa made a suitable answer: "He very well knew our friendship and he had a very great value for it."

Towards the close of the interview Sir John expressed a hope that he was now entirely in the Grand Vizir's good graces and that he might henceforth count on his favour and protection, declaring, upon the word of an Ambassador, that, unless assured of it, he was so unwilling to see the ancient friendship between England and Turkey grow cold on his account, that he would immediately write and ask the King his master to recall him and send some other person who might be more acceptable to his Excellency. "There is no occasion

for any such thing," replied the Vizir, looking very kindly upon the Ambassador: He had both esteem and kindness for him, and the Ambassador would find it so in all his business.

Then Sir John, besides the presents which he had delivered already, presented to Kara Mustafa "an incomparable perspective glasse[199] of 4 feet made by Campana, and a pockett one, also of Campana's, and one of ten feet made in England," and took his leave with a bow which the Grand Vizir was good enough to return.

Such, in substance, is Sir John's own version of this historic interview. His feelings after it may be described as a mixture of relief and doubt, in which doubt predominated. "The misunderstandings between the Visir and me have, like the breaking of a Bone well sett, made our friendship the stronger," he reported to the Secretary of State; and immediately, as if fearing the Nemesis which pursues boastfulness, he hastened to add: "But who can promise himself any thing in these times out of a certain prospect, or who can say that any thing is well done?"

Who, indeed! Turkey was no longer the Turkey to which Sir John had come, in which he had dwelt for three uneventful years so happily—the Turkey "of the two famous Visirs, Kuperli the father and Achmett his sonne; whose Justice, Detestation of Avarice, and Accesse renderd' their Administration and all Buisenesse under it easy." Gone was that golden age, and all men who during that twenty years' interlude of righteousness had forgotten the normal rigour of Turkish rule, protested that "the Violence of this Goverment, as to Pride and Rapine is beyond all Memory and example." Only a man like Dudley North saw that Kara Mustafa's régime was

not a departure from, but a return to normality. Finch, like the rest, stood aghast at a "barefacd'" arbitrariness utterly new to his experience: "I would," he wrote, "all the Mutineers in England against their too much happinesse were exild' for two yeares onely to be under this present Goverment!" and made no attempt to conceal his apprehensions for the future; "I shall count it a wonder, as well as a blessing," he says, "if I scape thus."

Prophetic words!

FOOTNOTES:

[188] This quotation and those that follow (until further notice) are taken from Finch's despatch to Coventry, May 26, S.V. 1677, and the inclosed "Account of what Relates to Publick Ministers and their affayrs"—an astonishing document of fourteen closely written pages, *Coventry Papers*.

[189] Besides Finch's "Account," see his despatch of Nov. 29, S.V. 1677; Rycaut's *Memoirs*, p. 335; Vandal's *Nointel*, p. 230; *Life of Dudley North*, p. 74. If we are to believe the version of the incident transmitted by the Imperial Resident Kindsberg, Nointel's exit was still more dramatic: two chaoushes flung him down from the Soffah, shouting to him, "*Haide, kalk giaour*" (Off with you, infidel), Hammer, vol. xii. p. 8.

[190] Two copies of this Memorial, an Italian and an English one, both dated April 28, 1677, accompany Finch's despatch of May 26. For the instructions to which he refers see Appendix I. Cl. 2.

[191] See copies of it, dated May 12-22, 1677, *ibid.*

[192] See Rycaut's *Present State*, p. 166; *Life of Dudley North*, p. 114.

[193] Finch to Coventry, Nov. 29, S.V. 1677, *Coventry Papers*; *Life of Dudley North*, p. 75; Vandal's *Nointel*, pp. 231-2. This last version, based on Nointel's own despatches, suffers from excess of discretion.

[194] Finch to Coventry, Nov. 29, S.V. 1677. This monumental despatch (22 pages), which the writer himself describes as "rather a History then a Letter," is my main authority for what follows.

[195] Dudley North (*Life*, p. 77) says that the time for repayment of the debt had passed and that Ashby did not proceed to the sale until repeated applications to the Venetian had made him despair of ever getting his money back. A similar assertion appears in a thoroughly partisan "Narrative" presented by the Levant Company to the King (*Register*, *S.P. Levant Company*, 145). But this is flatly contradicted by Finch's definite statement that the sale was carried out "three moneths before the mony was due." The only palliation the Ambassador offers for an act which he condemns as "unjustifiable" is that Ashby had obtained Pizzamano's verbal consent to the sale: a point which, in the absence of written evidence, could not be proved. It need hardly be said that Sir John had no motive to represent things as worse than they were, or that he was not prejudiced in favour of the Venetian, whom he describes as "a Rogue declard'"—"a Merchant that robbd' all his Principles (*sic*) of Venice, and the Captain that brought him thence, and is by order of that State to be hangd' if they can gett him."

[196] On this point see *Life of Dudley North*, p. 76.

[197] See Roe to Calvert, Feb. 9-19, July 1, 1622, *Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* (London, 1740), pp. 18, 61-2.

[198] We have “a precise Account of it, and all the Circumstances that attend it, without the least variation,” in Finch to Coventry, Dec. 15-25, 1677, *Coventry Papers*.

[199] Telescope.

CHAPTER XIV

KARA MUSTAFA AND THE ALEPPO DOLLARS

Sir John Finch, on second thoughts, did not hold the Ashby "accident" entirely responsible for the grievous *dénouement* at which we have assisted. That bit of ill-luck, he believed, had but precipitated a crisis which was bound to come anyway—any spark will set fire to a train already laid. If the Grand Vizir had not met with a ready-made pretext for "satisfying his passion upon him," he would have manufactured one—perhaps even a worse one. For such a belief Sir John had ample warrant. We know how M. de Nointel had been made to purchase his peace. Sir John, who always measured his own fortunes and misfortunes by those of his French colleague, and with whom the wish generally was father to the thought, had by degrees convinced himself that the price paid by the Marquis was much higher than his own.[200] But, after all, Nointel had provoked Kara Mustafa. The Bailo of Venice, though he had tried to propitiate him by taking his seat below the Soffah without demur, was immediately afterwards forced by threats of imprisonment in the Seven Towers to pay 45,000 dollars in settlement of a claim which his predecessor had actually settled four years before, under Ahmed Kuprili, for 1500

dollars. The Resident of Holland had been driven out of his house, and was glad to take 2500 dollars for what had cost him 10,000. The Emperor's Resident was made to disburse daily large sums of money on every idle plea that arose out of the chronic disturbances on the Hungarian frontier. The Ambassadors of Ragusa trembled under an "avania" which menaced their Republic with ruin; Kara Mustafa demanding no less than 1,600,000 dollars as compensation for the Customs-duties which Ragusa had levied on Turkish goods these forty years past, though in so doing the Republic had only exercised a legal right. Sir John ends his list of fellow-sufferers with a most sympathetic account of the plight of the Genoese Resident. How he spoke of Signor Spinola in bygone days, we have already seen. Now he refers to him as that "poor gentleman"; and, in truth, the tribulations of this diplomat were such as to touch a much harder heart than Sir John's. Ever since his arrival he had been begging for an audience; and recently, on the very day before Kara Mustafa sent his ultimatum to Finch, he had been haled to the Porte by an Aga and a Chaoush, like a prisoner, and after being detained there all day without seeing the Vizir, was given the option to sign a promissory note for 7500 dollars or pass the night in the Seven Towers. "And what was his fault? They calld' him Infidell, Dog, and Thief, because he durst keep so long by him the Gran Signor's presents the Republick had sent. It being, they told him, his duty to have sent the presents, though he himselfe was not worthy to see the Gran Signor." Spinola promised, but, on failing to pay up at the appointed time, the Vizir, to punish him for his unpunctuality, raised the sum to 20,000 dollars and, for security, seized a Genoese ship then in port. So prolific was Kara Mustafa in

pretexts for extortion. His subordinates were not less ingenious:

"They have introducd' a new Custome of giving no Commands to any Publick Minister without extravagant Demands: selling them as if they were in a Markett at the highest of their value. The French Ambassadour told me that finding himselfe dayly aggrievd' with this innovation, he went in person to the Rais Affendi to expostulate the matter: he told the Ambassadour he askd' no presents; but the Ambassadour sending the day following the very same Druggerman who had heard and interpreted the words, for some Commands, he had urgent occasion of, the Rais Affendi plainly told him that, if he brought no presents he should have no Commands. The Holland Resident payd' beforehand thrice as much as ever yet he gave for a Command, and after a moneth was past urging the expedition of those Commands, he was told that they knew nothing of the matter, and denyd' the having receivd' any presents, so he was forcd' to present again and has not yet his Commands out. The Venetian Bailo after the payment of his Avania, having gott a Nisanisheriffe for his discharge, though the Visir sent his Command to the Rais Affendi for it, he refusd' to under-write it unlesse the Bailo would give him 500 Dollars, though his Fees were never above 30, or two vests, and he was so insolent that he bid the Venetian Druggerman goe and tell the Visir that he would not sett his hand to it under that summe: so the Bailo thought himselfe well usd' when at last he gott him to take 300. Thus is the Turkish Proverb verifyd': Goverment like Fish beginns to stink from the head."[201]

Let it not be supposed that the Turks themselves

escaped Kara Mustafa's far-reaching shears. His appetite for money was both keen and catholic. He collected it wheresoever he could find it, making no invidious distinctions between True Believer and Infidel, between native and alien. It was enough that a man should have money to become at once an object of the Grand Vizir's special attention. Not without reason did the Rais Effendi ask the Ragusan Ambassadors, when they pleaded for mercy, to consider "how many rich Musulmen the Visir had stript to their shirts." And again, when some despoilt Beys heard the ambassadorial Dragomans murmur at the Porte, they cried out: "You Giaours: how can you wonder at being hardly dealt with, whenas we Musulmen, who for many generations have spent our blood in service of the Empire, are thus dealt withall?"

Kara Mustafa, of course, was not tyrannical for the mere pleasure of being so; he had to think of his finances. No Grand Vizir was ever burdened with heavier domestic obligations. He kept a harem of more than fifteen hundred concubines with at least as many slaves to serve them and half as many eunuchs to guard them. His attendants, his horses, his dogs, his hawks were counted by the thousand. How could he meet all these pressing claims upon him without cash? Besides, all the cash Kara Mustafa collected did not flow into his own coffers: he had to let considerable rivers of it pass into the lap of the Grand Signor, who since Ahmed Kuprili's death had been growing more and more dissolute, and squeezed his Vizir as hard as his Vizir squeezed others. Further, like most great collectors of cash, Kara Mustafa had a conscience; and conscience is an expensive luxury. It made Kara Mustafa devote no small part of his plunder to works of piety, charity,

and public utility: mosques, schools, baths, fountains, bazaars.[202] Let us add that Kara Mustafa was as ambitious as he was ravenous. He cherished grandiose dreams of conquest. He saw in fancy the Ottoman Empire spreading to the West as far as it had spread in the East: swallowing up new kingdoms —fulfilling its Imperialist destiny. Thus, the poor man could not possibly dispense with rapacity—it was his one resource for humbling his enemies and the enemies of his country; for extending the dominion of Islam; for procuring for himself glory and power in this world and bliss in the next. He needed money: he must have it from any hand, on any pretext, by any means—except one. Sir John notes the exception: "hitherto the Visir has showd' no inclinations to shed blood." It is well to remember this virtue of Kara Mustafa's; for it is his only one.

From this exposition of Kara Mustafa's methods and motives it is evident that the case of Mr. Ashby had only served him as an excuse. For all that, the figure which we made in that case must have contributed not a little to our disgrace. Indeed, a better case could not well have been devised for extinguishing in the Grand Vizir every spark of respect he might have had for the English and their Ambassador. As we know from his own despatches, Sir John laboured under no illusions as to the merits of Ashby's cause; yet he did not hesitate to defend in public—and by the most disreputable means—what he condemned in private as unjustifiable. In so doing, of course, he acted as any other ambassador would have done. A diplomat everywhere is essentially an advocate whose duty it is to make the worse case seem the better. And in Turkey, perhaps more than elsewhere, it has always been the tradition of European representatives to shield their

nationals from punishment at all costs; imagining that thus they saved their nation's "honour"—a whimsical conception not very closely related to honesty. What was the use of Sir John telling the Vizir, as he did at his audience, that he was "so great an enemy of dishonesty and injustice that I should begg protection for my merchants no further then they were honest and just"? The Vizir, in listening to him, must have only wondered at the Giaour's effrontery. And how could he, after that shameful exhibition, ever believe an Englishman again? This is not a mere inference of the present writer's. The Treasurer of the Levant Company, who participated in the whole performance, had the candour, after it was over, to acknowledge, without mincing words, that the part he and the rest had played was "impudent," "base," and such as "must needs make an ill impression on the Vizier against our Nation, not easily to be removed."[203]

It was not long before the distrust thus sown in Kara Mustafa's mind bore fresh fruit.

To make this new Avania intelligible to the modern reader it is necessary to say something first about the fiscal chaos that reigned in seventeenth century Turkey.

The only money coined by the Grand Signor's mint, and therefore the only money properly speaking Turkish, was the *asper*—a very small piece of *white* (Greek *aspron*) metal, once upon a time silver and worth over 2 pence, now so much debased that it was worth about 3 farthings, and so badly made and so sadly clipped that it commanded very little esteem even at that price. The coin most generally current in the Empire was of foreign manufacture—Spanish pieces of eight, Lion dollars of

Holland, the Rix dollars of Germany, the Quarts of Poland, Venetian and Hungarian sequins, French scudes, and, lately, French five-sous pieces of silver worth about 5 pence English and called by the Turks *temeens*, by the Franks *Luigini* or *Ottavi*. These polyonymous coins had experienced many vicissitudes, and our tale is indissolubly intertwined with the history of their rise and fall in the Ottoman Empire.

First introduced about 1660 by a French mariner, they immediately acquired a great vogue among the Turks. They were bright little things, most attractive to the eye by their pretty stamp of fleurs-de-lys, most agreeable to the touch, and altogether ideal for small change. The mariner made a handsome profit out of his adventure, bartering his five-sous pieces at the rate of 8 to the dollar—getting, that is, about 5 shillings for 3s. 4d. Tempted by his success, the merchants of France began to import *temeens* in enormous quantities, till the market was glutted, and the dealers had to pass them at 10 to the dollar. To make up for the decrease of profit, they increased the alloy; of course, that could not be effected in the Royal Mint of France: it was effected by a French lady who had the privilege of coining and who luckily bore in her coat-of-arms three fleurs-de-lys. The fraud was not detected by the Turks, and the *temeen*, debased, once more became so profitable a commodity that others stepped in to compete with the French in fraud: the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Republic of Genoa, all the petty Italian States that could by hook or by crook put in fleurs-de-lys; and those who were not fortunate enough to boast such flowers put in something else that looked more or less like them—for example, spread eagles so cunningly contrived as to need an expert in heraldic

natural history to tell the difference. Never was the subtle East more grossly outwitted by the West; and the swindlers had the impudence to add ribaldry to injury by adorning their bastard coin with such legends as "*Voluit hanc Asia mercem*—That's the stuff Asia wants," or "*De procul pretium ejus*—Don't look at it too closely." Dutch, German, and English speculators joined in the nefarious traffic, so that by 1668 it was estimated that there was forty million dollars' worth of this debased currency in Turkey, and more was coming—whole shiploads of it. Naturally, the more *temeens* flowed in, the lower they sank in value (in 1668 they passed at Smyrna for 20 or 24 to the dollar); and the lower they sank in value, the higher rose the proportion of alloy. By gradual transmutations the original silver of the coin became almost pure copper. Rascals had the time of their lives. All men who failed as merchants became bankers, flooding the country with counterfeit silver and draining it of all the gold and genuine silver that fell into their hands.

Hitherto the Porte, engrossed by the Cretan War, had made no effort to check the evil. But it was thought that, the moment peace was signed, the first thing taken in hand would be the regulation of the currency. And if the Sultan's Ministers were not disposed to move of their own accord, there were those whose interest it was to instigate them. English merchants considered that the vast importation of false money must at last redound to their serious prejudice: the French and Italian importers, making 50 per cent profit on the *temeens*, were able to outbid us in the Turkish market. Therefore, in 1668, the Levant Company forbade under severe penalties its Factors to receive this money, and, at its instance, the King ordered Sir Daniel Harvey to call the

attention of the Grand Signor to “the mischiefs and ill consequences of that abuse.” The Ambassador was so successful as to get the Turkish Government to forbid the circulation of the *temeens* by Proclamation: “I have,” he reported, “spoyld I hope the Trade of the French and Italians, with thare false mony, every body refusing to take them.” But this sudden and absolute denunciation of the most common coin in the country spelt ruin for millions of people, especially of the poorer classes, and the distress was heightened when the tax-gatherers refused to accept the *temeen* as legal tender, but demanded Lion dollars or Seville and Mexico pieces of eight, coins which had by now become almost unobtainable. The upshot was drubbings and imprisonments on one side, riots on the other: at Brusa and Angora the outraged taxpayers rose in rebellion, and some of the Grand Signor’s officers fell victims to their wrath. However, from that hour the *temeen* was irrevocably doomed; and fraudulence had to seek a new field in the false dollar, which was now pushed into the market with as much vigour and as little scruple as its predecessor. Harvey lost no time in obtaining samples and in lecturing the Grand Vizir on the subject, with the result that, in 1671, a severe inquiry was instituted and several officials who connived at the importation of these products of Western Art smarted for it.[204]

Nevertheless, the traffic continued to flourish, Lion dollars being manufactured even at Smyrna, as we have seen from Mr. Rycaut’s dispute with the French Consul at the end of 1674;[205] and the Levant Company, fearing lest, in spite of its prohibitions, some Englishmen should again engage in it, passed an order that all specie arriving in Turkey on English bottoms should be examined by the Ambassador and

Consuls, and none, save such as was of perfect alloy, should be permitted to enter the country. Further, to prove their good faith, the directors of the Company ordered that the examination should be carried out in the presence of Turkish officials. From this well-intentioned measure were to spring some very serious ills. The Turkish officials displayed the liveliest reluctance to meddle in the matter. They frankly regarded the whole business as a blind designed to cover the importation of false money, and were afraid of laying themselves open to the charge of connivance. In fact, the more earnestly the English invited the Turks to witness their probity, the worse grew the Turks' opinion of the English. Their attitude, not unreasonable in men who had had such experience of Western probity, might have warned our Ambassador that he was skating on exceedingly thin ice. But he did not heed the warning. It was the Company's order, and Sir John, who had in a superlative degree the fault that so often belongs to conscientious public servants—an excess of zeal over discretion—was anxious not only to carry out his instruction, but even to better it. Not content with inviting the Customer, he invited the Kaimakam himself to the inspection. Nor did anything occur to demonstrate the injudiciousness of these proceedings until the Ashby case.

At that inauspicious moment the Levant Company's "General" ships arrived at Aleppo carrying, over and above their freight of cloth and other English manufactures, 200,000 new Lion dollars. The unusual quantity of the coin was in itself calculated to engender doubts about its quality: never before had so vast a sum of new money been imported in a lump—30, 40, or 50 thousand dollars had hitherto been the maximum. And as if the

quantity alone was not enough, “our back friends” (Sir John’s expression), the Dutch and the French, did all they could to confirm the Turks in their scepticism by positively asserting that our dollars were bad. However, the Pasha of Aleppo would have let the consignment pass: 2000 or 2500 dollars was all that he needed to be fully persuaded of our probity. But as our Consul, having already been reprimanded by the Company for indulging the Turks with bakshish, dared not gratify him unless he was prepared to do so out of his own pocket, the Pasha, in revenge, notified the Grand Vizir that the English had imported so many thousands of false dollars and asked for instructions.

Kara Mustafa caught fire at the news, and all the foreign Ministers at Constantinople hastened to blow the coals: the Dutch were angry with us, because the coin was coin of Holland and by dealing in it we, as it were, took the bread out of their mouths; the French, because we had taken away from them all their Turkey trade, and more particularly because our Aleppo Factory had just erected a Company to trade directly with Marseilles in those very commodities which the French had until now regarded as their exclusive monopoly. The Venetians were dissatisfied because the influx of silver dollars in such quantities hindered the advantageous vent of their gold sequins. And all of them owed us a grudge for exposing their fiscal frauds. Thus stimulated, Kara Mustafa ordered the consignment to be sequestered, and two dollars out of each bag to be sent to him for trial.

The English at Constantinople heard of these proceedings by accident a few days before Sir John’s audience of reconciliation; and the Ambassador

seized that opportunity to discuss the matter with the Grand Vizir, who told him plainly what he had done, stating that, if the money proved good, it would be restored to the owners, "for God forbid that any man should loose an Asper"; but, if it proved bad; it should all be confiscated. Sir John, after assuring him that it was perfectly good, pleaded that, in case some small part of it, "either by the mistake of good men or malice of ill men," turned out bad, the error or knavery should not be visited upon the innocent; let only that part of it be confiscated. For the rest, he urged, all the English factors were under an oath to receive no imported money till it was inspected by the Turkish authorities, and if the Inspectors approved it not, they were obliged to send it away again; so, as there was no clandestine importation, there could be no possibility of fraud. Lastly, he added, if difficulties were put in the way of good money, we who now imported more than any other nation should be forced to give up importing any at all. The Vizir, in answer to this plea, merely said that, when the money came, he would communicate further with the Ambassador.

Sir John, *en attendant*, could do nothing more than pray, "God give me a just cause, and a just Judge!"

He was not kept long in suspense. On December 28th—a fortnight after his audience—the Aga despatched to Aleppo returned bringing with him 1000 dollars as a sample, and within two hours of his arrival the Ambassador was invited to assist at the trial in the courtyard before the Divan. He hurried to the scene, attended by his Dragomans, the Treasurer of the Levant Company, and some of the English merchants. There he found everything ready, and all the principal Officers of State waiting: the Tefterdar,

the Kehayah, the Chaoush-bashi, the Chief Customer, the Master of the Mint, the Dragoman of the Porte, and several others; the Grand Vizir himself watched the performance from a window—not openly, but just "peeping out."

Decorum was the order of the day. As soon as the Ambassador appeared, a seat was brought for him, and he sat down upon it for a moment to assert his right; but, seeing that all those Ministers of State stood, he rose too and sat no more—a courtesy which, as he was afterwards informed, "was kindly taken by them." Meanwhile, the sample, in eight bags of 125 dollars each, was shown to him, sealed up as it had left Aleppo with the Consul's and Cadi's seals; and the test commenced. Two hundred and fifty dollars were taken out. Young Dollars, fresh from your Maker's hands, what destiny awaits you? Are you pure and innocent, or born in sin? All eyes are fixed upon them, spell-bound with hope and fear. They are melted down—refined—the silver that is in them is carefully weighed.... But we must not go into details. On the whole, the result seems satisfactory, and our friends go away in high spirits.

The Dutch raise a mighty and malicious clamour: your dollars are 7 per cent below the standard—we know all about them. Were they not coined at Kampen? Here is a "Placart" sent to our Resident by the States, wherein you may read, and the Turks may read, in a translation we have taken good care to make for their edification, that "certain false Lyon Dollars coynd' at Campen this year were prohibited, and that orders was given to enquire after the Persons that coynd' that false mony, whose punishment was to be boyld' in oyl." Let the Grand Vizir release them, if he pleases, no Dutchman will

take any of them. A studied revenge, Sir John believed, for a like boycott by the English Factory of Smyrna, which had banished all the Dutch new dollars out of the country. Thus cry out the Hollanders, and others, whom Sir John could name if High Diplomacy did not forbid. Notwithstanding these ill-offices of “our back friends,” the English persisted in their optimism that night; then came the awakening.

Next morning Hussein Aga sent for Sir John’s Dragoman and the Levant Company’s Treasurer, to inform them by order that the Grand Vizir considered their dollars bad and had determined to fetch the whole lot from Aleppo, melt it down, and return them the silver.... A very sore stroke—most stunning in its unexpectedness. What they said to the Customer we are not informed. But the Customer, after putting them in a fright and enjoying their emotions, hinted to them that the catastrophe might be averted—the Vizir was not implacable: he could be mollified.

Kara Mustafa, without a doubt, felt much disappointed by the result of the trial. He had made sure that the money was defective, and had counted on gobbling up the lot: otherwise he would hardly have given himself the trouble of a public test. Hence his need of consolation. The emollient suggested was 12,500 dollars for the Vizir, and 2500 for his Kehayah: in all, 15,000 dollars. Could we refuse such a trifle to a lenient Judge in want of cash?

Sir John called a meeting of the Factory, at which it was unanimously decided to give the Vizir his due without delay: else the merchants calculated that the loss would be nearly thrice as much—to say nothing of the expense of getting the molten silver out of

Kara Mustafa's grasp. Accordingly the Ambassador sent to Hussein Aga word that "the least mischiefe being the most eligible, Wee were resolvd' to comply with the Visir. Upon which promise, what doe you imagine they did?" They instituted a second trial, conducted before the same high dignitaries, with the same publicity, and palpably with a view to finding a favourable verdict: so that the release of the money might appear as the effect of justice, not of bribery. Ten ancient Lion dollars—some of them aged 106 years—were produced as a pattern, and, after being melted down, came out with a proportion of pure silver equal to or even smaller than ours; which was not to be wondered at, considering the attrition they had undergone in the course of their long career. This done, the Judges solemnly reported to the Grand Vizir that the new money was quite as good as, if not indeed better than, the old!

One might have thought that a termination of their trials which fell so much short of the hopes of their ill-wishers, would have been welcomed by our countrymen with thankfulness. But, glad as they were to have got off so cheaply, they imagined, in the simplicity and cupidity of their souls, that they might get off more cheaply still—thereby very nearly spoiling the comedy. Mr. North and Sir John's Dragoman went to Hussein Aga and pleaded for a remission, or at least an abatement, of the fine they had agreed to pay. "What fault was committed," they asked, "since our Dollars had proved as good as the old ones?" Not without humour, the Customer replied, "As to fault, it was no small one in these times to bring in 200,000 Dollars at a clap." "But," they insisted, "they have been found as good as the old ones." This was too much even for the friendly Hussein. He retorted angrily that they owed that

finding to the bakshish they had promised. However, if they were not satisfied, he would cancel the bargain and leave them to make a new one with the Grand Vizir as well as they could.

The rebuke brought our friends to their senses. Without another word they parted with their 15,000 dollars, besides 1000 which the Turks wanted for the Aga who had fetched the sample; and, in return, they got back what remained unmelted of the sample, together with the melted silver. Here ended the comedy—no, not quite. The Pasha of Aleppo, before letting the treasure go out of his grip, squeezed the merchants to the tune of 4000 dollars, "which," Mr. North wistfully observes, "was more than at first would have done the business with him."[206] It was not the first, or the last, time our Turkey Merchants went near to losing the ship for the sake of a ha'p'orth of tar.

Sir John's reflections upon this fresh experience of Kara Mustafa's cash-collecting mania are interesting. That the Grand Vizir was right in subjecting every importation of silver and gold to severe scrutiny he would not deny: nor could we complain of measures which we ourselves had instigated. "But," with characteristic imperception of the exquisite irony of the situation, he thought "this is no reason why he should begin with us who have allway's bin innocent." Worse still, he mulcted us, the authors of the measure! "Here you see the justice of this present Goverment. It is impossible if the Visir once getts ready mony into his power that he can make any pretence upon whatsoever to lett it goe free without his share of it. Neither is there any officer about him, that has not the same tincture, but of a deeper dye."

In the circumstances, the poor Ambassador sees

ahead of him nothing but “disasters from dormant pretensions awakend or from unforeseen miscarriages.” He sees himself “being further preyd’ upon by Ravenous and Insatiable appetites upon dormant or future pretences.” In the first category he places “the reviving of the old Pretensions of the Bassà of Tunis.” In the second, “the probability of a warr with Argiers.” Admiral Narbrough, shortly after his return from Tripoli, was ordered back to the Mediterranean to chastise the Algerine pirates: “if wee should chance to batter any thing upon Terra firma, God knows what use this Visir would make of it.” The prospect fills Sir John with a dismay that has something of terror in it: “Capitulations being now declard’ to be but contemptible things and like a peice of wett parchment that may be stretchd’ any way, renders this place to me very wearysome and tedious, for it does me a great deal of hurt, both in body and mind, to see your estates rent and torne from you, and no help to be avaylable, neither prudence nor language having any place, where all accesse to the Visir is denyd’ not onely to the Druggermen but to the Ambassadours themselves.” Thus he wrote to the Levant Company, ending with a pious “God give you and me patience for from Him alone must come deliverance.” In his communications to the Secretary of State he was even more piteously emphatic: “It makes my condition of life here very uneasy to me who have the care upon me of the whole estate of His Majesty’s subjects in the Levant.” And again, striking a more poignant note: “God preserve us from unreasonable and inflexible men,” he cries. “I beseech Almighty God to deliver me from unreasonable and wilfull men; in the maintenance of His Majesty’s honour and defence of the estates and Interest of His subjects.”

It is evident from these utterances that, by the end of 1677, Sir John Finch felt the burden too heavy for his shoulders. But his contract with the Company had yet some time to run, and besides he did not wish to return home before his friends had found him some other employment. His mentor Baines, to whom as usual Finch delegated the task of string-pulling, had already discussed the subject in a letter to Lord Conway, in the course of which he said: "If your Brother leaves this charge without being in possession of a fayr and convenient post in England, I shall think that He hath not a friend there, or at least very few, and those of no influence."[207] Pending the fruition of these exertions on his behalf, Sir John could do nothing but set his teeth and stick to his saddle like a fearful rider.

FOOTNOTES:

[200] It is amusing to watch the process as mirrored in his reports. On Nov. 29 Finch tells Coventry that his audience cost Nointel "near the same with me," which was not true. On Dec. 15 he emends this statement: "I now judge His Expense to have bin much higher; for one Persian carpett alone is valud' to me by a Jew that serves the Visir, at three thousand five hundred Dollars. This," he adds, "I mention, not to advantage my Own Condition, but to compassionate His." Very likely!

[201] Finch to Coventry, Nov. 29, S.V., 1677.

[202] Hammer, vol. xii. p. 136.

[203] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 78.

[204] See Rycaut's *Memoirs*, pp. 258-60; *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 79-80; and the following State Papers: Intelligence for Lord Arlington,

Constantinople, Feb. 22, 1667-68; Unsigned Letter dated Smyrna, June 1, 1668; The King's Instructions to Harvey, Aug. 3, 1668; Inclosure in Winchilsea's despatch of April 4-14, 1669; Harvey's despatches March 10, 15, 1668 [-69]; Jan. 31, 1670 [-71]; April 30, 1671. *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[205] See above, p. 76. Cp. Instructions to Finch, Appendix I. Cl. 7.

[206] *Life of Sir Dudley North*, pp. 81-4; Finch to Coventry, Dec. 15-25, 1677; Jan. 19-29, 1678; the Same to the Levant Company, Jan. 19-29, 1678, *Coventry Papers*; *Register, S.P. Levant Company*, 145. Wherever there is any slight discrepancy between North's and Finch's accounts of this Avania, I have, for reasons which seem adequate to me, followed the latter.

[207] Baines to Conway, June 1-11, 1677, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

CHAPTER XV

INTERLUDE

Despite his forebodings, Sir John during the year 1678 had no oppression to complain of.

Hussein Aga, whom our Ambassador considered, in point of influence with the Grand Vizir, to be the third man in the Empire, continued most friendly. He swore by his head that he would make the Pasha of Aleppo refund the sum he had extorted from our Factory, and, in the event of a new importation of specie by the English, he promised all possible favour. The first of these pledges could not be taken seriously: as a predecessor of Sir John's had observed long ago, "Restitution of money was never yet procured from a Turk; his head more easily."[208] But with regard to the second, the Customer proved as good as his word. A consignment of 30,000 dollars that reached Constantinople was, thanks to him, brought off for nothing; while a much larger sum (200,000 dollars) was landed at Smyrna for a trifle—2180 dollars: "as Times goe, no ill Bargain." Nay, in another matter, the Customer proved even better than his word: though he threatened, in pursuance of his old policy, to raise the duty upon the finer cloth we now imported, "yet," says our Ambassador, "I have brought Him to Acquiesce with those very

duty's I had ascertaind upon our Cloth by the New Capitulations I made; to the grief of heart of them who have reason to envy our Great and Vast Trade, because it Ruines Theirs." In truth, both French and Dutch had cause to gnash their teeth. The rigour with which Hussein Aga treated them seemed to keep pace with the favour he showed to us: he made both pay for goods that came from Smyrna to Constantinople the difference between the duty levied at the former and the latter port, while he ostentatiously let our goods, once taxed at Smyrna, enter Constantinople scot free. This in addition to the preferential tariff we enjoyed under the New Capitulations. No wonder both the French Ambassador and the Dutch Resident struggled by might and money at the Porte to resist the intolerable tyranny of the Custom House. But nothing availed. They had "a hard head to deal with, and one whose obstinacy is powerfully backd' at Court." All they gained was Hussein Aga's anger: irritated by these attempts to undermine his position, the Customer detained the French merchants' cloth till they paid up, and let that of the Dutch rot in the Custom-House.[209]

What Frenchmen and Dutchmen thought of Hussein Aga's partiality for the English may be imagined. But it is to be noted that neither our Ambassador's despatches nor our Treasurer's comments contain any hint that the motives which dictated the Customer's attitude towards us were of a mercenary nature. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we must assume that he spared us because he liked us. Hussein and Dudley North were fast friends: they often dined together at each other's houses, the Turk even partaking of the Giaour's pork and getting drunk on his wine like a good Christian.

From Finch, too, he had received more than once samples of his cellar, as well as other civilities.[210] That seems to have been the extent of his obligations to us; and he repaid us with interest.

Equally satisfactory was the attitude of some other Turkish grandees. By the new Bostanji-bashi, to whom Sir John paid a visit, he was received "with all possible demonstrations of respect and kindnesse," while he was captivated by the affability of the new Capitan Pasha—a personage who by his place was the second man in the Empire, and by his intimacy with the Grand Vizir certainly the first. At the audience which he granted to the Ambassador he was very polite, and they had "many pleasant Reparty's upon each other;" and what seemed more significant, he honoured the visitor with six vests. Now, as Kara Mustafa made a practice of vesting no man, and as the Capitan Pasha was Kara Mustafa's prime favourite, Sir John could not but think "that this was done by the Visir's Privity," and drew therefrom the hope that maybe Kara Mustafa at last "*Malis nostris mitescere discit.*"

As regards the pretensions of the Pasha of Tunis also Sir John's fears went off like other forebodings; and the emergency he apprehended from Narbrough's operations did not arise: the Admiral managed to wage a successful war of reprisals against the Algerine pirates—seizing their ships and blockading their ports—without any infringement of the Sultan's suzerain rights.

"In short," Finch sums up, "though wee cannot bragg of our usage, yet wee may justly say wee have fard' better then any other Nation. For hitherto though in the worst of Times, I have maintaind' all the Capitulations Inviolable." He knew that he was

well off, and meant to continue so. He had had his lesson. If his cherished Capitulations were attacked, he would indeed defend them to the utmost of his ability. But as to matters of etiquette, the King having graciously granted him his "dispensation for that complyance" on the point of the Soffah, he registered a vow to "be caught no more in a Ceremoniall Nett."[211] Acquiescence, after all, has this merit: it prevents noise and saves time.

In the absence of personal history, the Ambassador gives us the history of others. Time was when Sir John, as we have seen, could not find "materialls enough to furnish a Dispatch." Now it is "conveyances, not matter" that he wants, in order to keep abreast of the "variety's of change and newes" which crowd upon him. Whatever else Kara Mustafa could not make, he could make things move; and, under his rule, Turkey found herself transformed from a placid lake into a foaming torrent. This transformation is well depicted in our Ambassador's despatches. A rich chronicle, alive with events, domestic and foreign, civil and military, supplying abundant food for reflection to those who have accustomed themselves to meditate on the characters of men and the fortunes of nations. A thoroughly honest chronicle too. Sir John scrupulously discriminates between reliable intelligence and irresponsible rumour. When dealing with first-hand information, he gives us its sources; when not, his favourite expression, "Tis said," serves us as a warning that the writer relates what he has heard, but cannot vouch for. He is deeply conscious of the extreme difficulty of getting at the truth of things in Turkey, and does not by any means profess always to believe the reports he transmits.[212] We have variant accounts set forth with perfect candour, and

statements previously made corrected as the result of further inquiry. Fond though he is of speculating on the causes and consequences of events, our chronicler takes care to keep surmise severely distinct from certainty. He never pretends to do more than present to the Secretary of State the most plausible conjectures he can form, with the proviso, “Time will make all things plain.”

Not the least interesting, or the least melancholy, of these events is the conduct of Kara Mustafa—the ruler of a mighty Empire—towards the representatives of the little tributary Republic of Ragusa: one of them, Signor Caboga, the “lusty, gallant fellow” whom we saw in happier days disporting himself at Adrianople with our gay Chaplain. The Vizir had consented to treat for an adjustment upon payment of a preliminary instalment of 200,000 dollars, and despatched an Aga to collect this sum, threatening that, in case of refusal, he would order the Pasha of Bosnia to seize the City and territory of the Republic and make slaves of the inhabitants. The messenger returned with the answer that the Ragusans offered 100 purses (50,000 dollars) as a ransom. This offer was rejected, and the Ambassadors were summoned before the Divan, where they were asked whether they would pay the sum demanded or not. On their replying that they could not, Kara Mustafa “calld’ them Doggs, Infidells, Hoggs, and Atheists; commanding them to be carryd’ to prison.” By and by one of their pretended creditors visited them, and finding them sitting upon their beds, cried out that this was not the way to pay their debts. Signor Caboga was unwise enough to retort, “You see us on our beds, but wee hope ere long to see you impald’ upon stakes.” For this speech they were removed, by

order of the Vizir, “into a common and filthy gaole.” While they lay in that “infamous prison,” among the vilest criminals, two more envoys arrived from Ragusa “to mitigate the implacable mind of the Visir. But they no sooner came to Silistria where the Gran Signor was, but they were suddainly clapt in chaines and one of them dyd with the insupportable weight of the chaines about his neck.”[213]

Hardly less drastic was Kara Mustafa’s treatment of the representative of a much greater State than Ragusa. In the previous autumn the Palatine of Kulm had come from Poland, with a magnificent suite of at least three hundred persons, as Ambassador Extraordinary, to conclude the long-drawn-out negotiations for peace. On his arrival, Sir John had showered upon the newcomer those tokens of friendship which he had never known to fail of their effect: “I presented him with five chests of Florence and other choice Wines out of Christendome, amongst which was one chest of the Pope’s Wine; which he never drank of but that he first signd’ himselfe with the crosse and rose up and was uncoverd!” But Kara Mustafa nipped this friendship in its juicy bud. For reasons which Sir John could not fathom, the Vizir forbade all further intercourse with the Pole, at the same time ordering our Ambassador to keep the prohibition secret. This embargo placed Sir John in a very awkward position: the world wondered why he paid no visit to his colleague, and Sir John had to dissemble until the Plague breaking out in the Pole’s house afforded him a plausible excuse for holding aloof.[214] But though he had no direct communication with the Palatine, he kept himself informed of all that passed between him and the Porte.

It is by no means our intention to recite the Iliad of miseries, the humiliations, the terrors and utter harrowing to despair, which the poor Palatine underwent incessantly till the end of his mission. Let the following extracts from Sir John's despatches speak for themselves.

Dec. 15-25, 1677.—"The Polish Ambassadour has the Plague very hott in his house, 14 persons of quality being dead out of it (for the Visir would suffer none of the Nobility to depart), and two particularly last night; and yet I found one Druggerman who had the courage to goe to him and wish him in my name a happy Christmas: He sent me word that he intended to visit me before he left this place; not knowing, good gentleman, the restraint that I am under: tis hard really that in all this danger the Visir will not permitt him to change his house, calling the motion when it was made by him, a Christian Panick fear."

Jan. 19-29, 1677-78.—"The Polish Ambassadour is here still and yet alive, though the Plague was very hott in his house, he could not get leave to remove to another, having no other answer but this, Let him run his destiny."

March 1-11, 1677-78.—"At last the Peace between the Port and the Poles is concluded; which was effected three dayes since but is not yet underwritten.... The Ambassadour was so long inflexible, but he gott nothing by his standing out thus long but bad words and worse Treatment, a great part of his trayn being dead of the Plague by ill accommodation when Infection was gott amongst them." So if this treatment, as seems probable, was the result of policy rather than of mere cruelty, it proved efficacious. "The Peace was patchd' up by the

Tartar Han or Crim Tartar ... the Polish Ambassadour applying himselfe to the Mediation of this Prince with such Humility that though His Principality is so qualifyd' ... He kissd' the very Hem of his Garment that touchd' the Ground."

March 2-12, 1677-78.—"The Peace with Poland is subscribd' on both sides ... the Poles have deliverd' up not onely a great part of Ukrania, two places there onely remaining to them, but what is of worse consequence to them, they have surrenderd' all Podolia entirely, the richest province they had."

In return for these territorial sacrifices, the Ambassador expected some religious concessions, among them the restoration of our old friends, the Latin Fathers, to the possession of the Holy Sepulchre. The Poles set immense store by this point, "for their wisedome tells them, that if the Restitution of the Holy Sepulchre depends upon the Peace with that Crowne, they shall be sure hereafter of the assistance of all Christian Princes upon any new warr with the Turk." And in fact they had managed to insert an Article to such effect in the Treaty. But it was not for nothing that the Porte had for its chief Interpreter a Greek. The Treaty had been drawn up in two languages—Latin and Turkish. Now, in the Turkish version, that Article, from possession and guardianship of the Holy Sepulchre—the form under which it figured in the Latin text—had been whittled down to mere access to it: a privilege that the Latin Fathers already enjoyed. The Ambassador demanded that the Article should be interpreted according to the Latin text; the Porte adhered to the letter of the Turkish text. Hence several stormy conferences, in the course of which the Grand Vizir's Kehayah and the Rais Effendi told the Pole that they would give

him war if he would not have peace on their terms, called him a faithless Giaour who would fly from what he had signed, and reviled him with such violence that at length the poor Palatine, terrified for his liberty, if not for his life, fairly gave in.

Immediately messengers were despatched to Jerusalem to acquaint the Cordeliers "with to them most dreadfull Newes." What made the news exceptionally dreadful was the sinister circumstance that, as this year the Latin and Greek Easter fell on the same day, the Greek Patriarch had an opportunity of celebrating his victory with a *Te Deum* at which they themselves, as well as all Eastern Christians, would of necessity be present. Sir John, who describes all these diplomatic manœuvres in detail, could not have been very sorry to see another foiled where he himself had striven in vain. So much at least may be inferred from his sardonic comment on the sole favour for the Faith his unhappy colleague seemed likely to secure: "He shall have the honour of rebuilding two churches that have bin burnt down: so wee encrease our churches here though the number of Christians decreases dayly; and the Pastours are here equall in number allmost to their sheep."[215]

It should be mentioned that, apart from the other forces that compelled the Palatine to an over-hasty signature of Articles he did not fully understand, there was the fear of an agreement between Turkey and Russia, which appeared imminent. Yet the envoy from Muscovy, whose advent at that critical hour hastened the Polish surrender, had little reason to feel pleased with the good turn he had unwittingly done the Turks. He came from a Power which by its military resources, its proximity to the Sultan's

Persian enemies, and its influence over his Orthodox subjects, inspired respect in the Turks. But he came at a moment when respect was eclipsed by resentment.

In the preceding autumn, when peace with one country had come in sight, Kara Mustafa had begun provoking war with another. Turkish troops attacked the Russian fort of Zechrin, were badly beaten, and only escaped a total rout by a speedy retreat. The news of this disaster had been the signal for an Ottoman mobilisation on a colossal scale and accompanied with commensurate squeezing. No class or creed was spared: Moslems, Christians, and Jews, high and low, laity and clergy, were all mulcted indiscriminately. The Turkish ecclesiastics had to give up one-third of their income. The feudal land magnates had to renew their ancient conveyances at great expense, under pain of forfeiting their fiefs. The Prince of Moldavia was ordered to contribute 150 purses, and the Prince of Wallachia 300 purses, besides enormous quantities of provisions. Throughout the Empire old taxes were increased and new ones imposed: “All which things,” says Sir John, “make the people of the Country ready to hang themselves.” The Janissaries alone were left untouched by Kara Mustafa’s lash; for they alone could make a revolution. Before the Muscovite envoy had crossed the frontier the mobilised bodies had begun to move from the various provinces to the place of rendezvous three miles outside the capital, where the Grand Signor and Grand Vizir joined them about the middle of March, with more than the parade usual on such occasions. It was an astonishing sight. It lasted four days, and each day had its peculiar pageant. Sir John was present at the most important parts of the ceremony, and he sent to the

Secretary of State a minute description of what he saw.

On the first day the Grand Vizir's retinue marched out under the command of his Kehayah—over one hundred pages clad in cloth of gold and coats of mail. On the second day there was a solemn procession of the Guilds—weavers, tailors, shoe-makers, bakers, blacksmiths, and so forth, about 12,000 men in all—one-third of whom would accompany the Army on its campaign and minister to its wants. Some of them rode past in glittering coats of mail with long lances in their hands and swords at their sides, while musketeers of the same trade marched on either side of the mounted squadrons. In the middle of each squadron there were representatives of each Guild engaged in their peculiar craft either on foot or perched on the backs of camels, according to the exigencies of their occupation. In this fashion they went on, fifty-three companies of warrior-workers, with their kettle-drums, their great drums, their trumpets and other instruments of barbaric music: "So the Turkish Military Camp," comments the chronicler, "is nothing else but a civil camp being furnishd' with all the Arts of Peace in Time of Warr." The third day witnessed the exodus of the Janissary Aga at the head of his Janissaries—about 20,000 of the best Infantry in the whole world. And then, on the fourth day, the Grand Signor in person made his *Alloy*, as the Turks called this marching out in state.

He went forth accompanied by his son, his son-in-law, the Grand Vizir, the Vizirs of the Bench, the Capitan Pasha, and all the other great pashas of the Empire with their retinues "most proudly clad, jackd', and mounted." Here was, indeed, the

grandeur of which Sir John had dreamed. He gazed on, dumbfounded by the profusion of wealth that met his eyes; the Sultan's led horses were almost hidden under embroideries of gold, thick-set with jewels of fabulous value. Behind them came a camel on the back of which was strapped a chest of beaten gold, made in the form of a square tower, richly encrusted with precious stones, and enclosing the Alcoran. Immediately after rode the young Prince on "as fine a Horse as Nature ever producd'"—bridle and trappings aglow with diamonds. Last of all came the Grand Signor himself, attired in a vest lined with black fox fur worth ten thousand crowns, and bestriding a steed the furniture of which was "all over besett with Jewells of Immense Price"—"really He appeard like an Emperour." He was followed by a numerous body of royal attendants of all ranks and stalwart Spahis.

The procession closed with a caravan of camels, some laden with the Imperial baggage, others carrying the Treasure—"a Million and a halfe in Gold, and as much more in Silver: every cammel carrying fifty thousand Zecchins, or ten Purses of silver"—under a guard of trusty Janissaries.

"I do not know," says the Ambassador, "whether what in the sight gave so much divertisement, can afford any in the reading." The actual description of the pageant may not—descriptions seldom do. But it is enlivened by notes which are certainly more diverting than they could have been intended by the writer. One of them reveals the diplomat's keen eye for points of etiquette; he observes that the Vizir rode with the Sultan's son-in-law on his left; "which seems to me to evidence that the right hand is amongst the Turkes the Place of Precedence; though

even in Turky tis generally thought otherwise." Another reveals his credulity: in the train of the Sultan's son-in-law Sir John saw, or imagined that he saw, eight tamed tigers warmly clad, carried behind eight horsemen: "of these I am informd' the Gran Signor makes use when He Hunts Hares and other Animals; They having gott their prey, leap again upon the Horses behind their Masters." What wag supplied His Excellency with this valuable information must remain matter of conjecture—one suspects the Honourable Dudley. A third note reveals the Ambassador's vanity. Speaking of the Guilds, he says: "T was pretty to see the Respect of the Blacksmiths towards me; for seeing me they layd one of their companions upon His back; and placing Boards upon His Belly they layd' a Great Stone upon them for an Anvill and putting a Red Hott Iron upon the Stone, eight of them with their Great Hammers fell to worke." Another tribute of respect paid to Sir John on the same occasion makes a less severe demand on our faith: a large boat, like a brigantine, armed with half-a-dozen small guns was drawn along on sledges: when it passed by the Ambassador, the commander stopped and fired all the guns for a salute—"a thing," his Excellency adds modestly, "of no great moment, but that any Civility is so when Turkes make a solemnity; and especially No others having receivd the like." For all that, Sir John was very glad to see the backs of Kara Mustafa and his satellites: "T' is sayd that they cannot returne hither this following winter. If so, t' is very good new's for me, for from thence I hope for some quiett and repose after the turmoyls and vexations I and all others have bin under."[216]

It was shortly after this exit that the envoy from Muscovy arrived and met with a reception which

showed how little reasonable accommodation was to the Grand Vizir's taste. The first thing Kara Mustafa did was to ask the envoy to hand over to him the letters he had for the Grand Signor, and as the envoy refused to deliver them into any but the Grand Signor's hands, he had recourse to a ruse. A day was appointed as if for an Imperial Audience, and the Russian set out holding up his letters before his forehead, after the Muscovite manner. On the way, the chaoushes who pretended to be conducting him to the Sultan snatched the letters from him and carried them to the Grand Vizir, who, on finding that they contained expostulations for his hostile designs and expressions of a desire for an amicable settlement, informed the envoy that it was too late; the army was ready for a campaign; only if, before it crossed the frontier, Muscovy would give satisfaction war could be averted; the price of peace being a cession of the object under dispute. With this message and without "any Testimony from the Port of the least imaginable respect," the envoy was dismissed. And the march towards the Danube began.[217]

At this point Sir John ceases to be a mere spectator of the international drama and becomes for a moment an actor. For some time past a strong feeling of opposition to Charles II.'s Francophile policy had been growing up in England; and at last the King, yielding to public opinion, made an attempt to curb the power of Louis, who so far had carried everything before him against the whole Continental Alliance. France was asked to come to terms, and as she returned an evasive answer England began preparations for forcing her. News of the crisis had reached Turkey early in March, and created a considerable flutter in the diplomatic dovecote; but it

was not until the end of April that the consequences of an Anglo-French conflict, should it arise, were brought home to our Ambassador.

A drunken English sailor at Smyrna met some Frenchmen in the street and, addressing them as "French dogs," cried out that he hoped ere long to get one of their jackets and be "Allamode." The Frenchmen fell upon him and wounded him in the head. Thereupon a body of about thirty English seamen gathered together and rushed to the French Consul's house, breathing vengeance. The French merchants hastened to the defence of their Consul, and tried to repel the attack with stones and cudgels; but with no success. The English, after breaking all the windows, climbed up into the outer gallery, drove the defenders into the inner rooms, and were already beginning to pull down the house, when our Consul, accompanied by Sir Richard Munden, who was then in the Levant with H.M.S. *St. David* for the protection of English trade, and the other Commanders then in port, arrived upon the scene. The assailants at first refused to obey; "one of them swearing a desperate oath that He would not give over till He had drunke the Bloud of a Frenchman." But in the end they were induced by threats of martial law to abandon their sanguinary design.

This incident filled Sir John with alarm as to what might have happened, "had these Mad fellows executed their fury according to their Intentions either in Murdring the Consul or pulling down His house." Even in normal times the mutual animosities of the Franks exposed them to rapine on the part of the Turks; in time of war, and under a government like Kara Mustafa's, such animosities might lead to utter ruin; and the English, whose property in Turkey

was twenty times greater than that of the French, would suffer in proportion: “where most mony is, the most will be extorted even in a Parity of Crime.” Prompted by these considerations, Sir John took a step never before taken in Turkey: he invited the French Ambassador to a frank and free discussion of a situation which was disagreeable for the present and might in the future prove extremely dangerous. The result was as pleasing an example of sweet reasonableness as is to be found in the whole domain of Anglo-French diplomacy. The two ambassadors, after recalling to each other’s mind what quarrels of this nature had cost in the past (the Cancellarias of both Embassies abounded with cases in point) —“when sometimes one Nation, sometimes the other sufferd’ highest under Avanias that arose from thence; though in the Conclusion neither scapd’ without severe payments,”—agreed, if war broke out between their Governments in Europe, to continue living in Turkey “with all the same Circumstances of Civility and formality as also respects towards each other; as if there was no Warr: That by our Example the Factory’s under us might practise the same.” Further, “considering that Example without Precept is little, as Precept without Example is lesse,” they agreed to send to their respective Consuls and Factories orders couched in identical terms, requiring them to conform unswervingly to the line of conduct pursued by the Ambassadors themselves.[218]

So unprecedented an action, taken by the Ambassador on his own initiative, needed justification; and Sir John, in reporting it to Whitehall, explains his motives at length, adding that, when all the circumstances are weighed, he has reason to hope that the King will be pleased to think

that what he has done is “for His Majesty’s Honour, and for the Interest of His Subjects.” As a matter of fact, there was every reason to believe (and both Finch and Nointel must have known it) that Charles, in his heart, had no desire to fall out with France; and in due course Sir John received His Majesty’s approval. But long before that approval reached him all danger of war had blown over. The English Parliament, while urging Charles to fight Louis, refused him the means of doing so, for fear lest the arms placed in his hands for the humiliation of France should be turned against the liberties of England. The only practical fruit of the agitation was an interdiction of trade with our rival. And so Louis, profiting by England’s neutrality, made a peace (Treaty of Nimeguen, 1678) which put the coping-stone on his power.

After this little ferment Sir John relapsed into his rôle of chronicler. At the beginning of summer a German Internuncio, Hoffmann, arrived from Vienna, with a new Imperial Resident, Sattler. Whereupon the old Resident, Kindsberg, broke up his household, took leave of his colleagues, and set out, with the newcomers, for the Vizir’s camp. But they had scarcely gone three days when an express command from Kara Mustafa obliged them to return to Constantinople and stay there till further orders. Kara Mustafa had his reasons for postponing an interview: the Internuncio’s business was to renew the truce between the Ottoman and the German Empires, which was about to expire, and Kara Mustafa wanted to see how the Polish Treaty was observed and how the Russian campaign went, before he committed himself to peace or war with Germany. The consequences were ghastly for the Caesarean diplomats: Sattler died of the plague,

Hoffmann was seized with an apoplexy which paralysed him, Kindsberg, after losing his brother and a number of his attendants through the plague, himself fell victim either to the disease or to poison. The plague also carried off the Venetian Bailo's chief Dragoman and Treasurer. Sir John, however, in his summer resort at St. Demetrius, was safe from the terrible epidemic. As for that other pest, he reckoned that, what with Muscovy and Germany, the Vizir was certain to be away for two years at least, and his reckonings seemed confirmed by a reported resolution of the Grand Signor's to build a palace on the Danube—"a sign there's no quick Dispatch expected either with the Muscovite or the Emperour. So that during the short remainder of my Time, I have now a Probable prospect of Quietnesse and a Calm, which I have not enjoyd hitherto One Moment Since my Arrivall." He could now take a dispassionate, even an amused, view of his past calamities and cap Latin verses thereon with the Secretary of State, sending him, in return for a line out of a Comedian, two out of a Tragedian.[219]

But alas for the futility of human calculations! In the very midst of his self-gratulation, Sir John received the news "that Zechrin is taken by storm, And that the Triumphant Visir will return hither this winter. When that Lion comes, if successe don't make Him milder, the contrary of which is to be feard, God direct me."[220]

FOOTNOTES:

[208] Sir Peter Wyche to Lord Conway, Constantinople, July 26/Aug. 5, 1628, *S.P. Turkey*, 14. The occasion for this apophthegm was supplied by another predatory Pasha of

Aleppo.

[209] Finch to Coventry, March 1-11, April 12-22, May 14-24, 1678, *Coventry Papers*.

[210] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 60-1, 107.

[211] Finch to Coventry, March 1-11, May 14-24, 1678.

[212] "I doe not find it easy to arrive to a true knowledge of them; For things passe here under Great Taciturnity."—Finch to Williamson, May 31, 1676, *S.P. Turkey*, 19. "The New's of this Court (which would to God Christendome could imitate) is secrecy."—The Same to Coventry, June 20-30, 1676; "Things are so secretly transacted at this Court that there is no certainty to be had."—The Same to the Same, March 9-19, 1677-78, *Coventry Papers*.

[213] Finch to Coventry, Jan. 19-29, March 1-11, 9-19, April 12-22, Sept. 2-12, 1678.

[214] The Same to the Same, Nov. 29, S.V. 1677.

[215] The Same to the Same, March 2-12, 9-19, 16-26, 1678.

[216] The Same to the Same, March 9-19; 16-26, 1677-78.

[217] The Same to the Same, April 12-22, 1678.

[218] The Same to the Same, May 14-24, 1678, and inclosures: Two Orders from Finch to the English Consuls of Smyrna and Aleppo (in Italian), dated April 20-30 and May 2-12; and two from Nointel to the French Consuls of the same places (in French), dated May 1 and 9.

[219] The Same to the Same, June 20-30; Sept. 2-12, 1678.

[220] The Same to the Same, Sept. 2-12, 1678.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CASE OF MRS. PENTLOW

Among the numerous devices for the collection of cash to which the Grand Vizir had recourse before setting out on the war path, were some that touched foreign residents directly. Until his time all Franks had been exempt, by virtue of their Capitulations, from the *Haratch*, or poll-tax, levied upon non-Moslem Turkish subjects. The immunity extended to the Dragomans of the various European Embassies and Consulates, as well as to other natives under foreign protection. Every Ambassador received from the Porte a number of *Barats*, or Patents, which, though given to him for the benefit of his own servants only, he was, by an abuse of privilege, in the habit of selling to wealthy *rayahs*—Greeks, Armenians, or Jews: so that the suburbs of Galata and Pera had come to be peopled very largely by privileged persons (*Baratlis*). For some years past the Farmers of the Revenue had been drawing attention to this state of things, and even overstating it, in order to beat down the Farm; but their representations had produced no effect until 1677, when by order of Kara Mustafa an inquisitor was appointed to ascertain the facts. This official came over, and not being offered a bribe, as he expected

and as one who had come on a similar errand some time before had received, executed his commission with exemplary conscientiousness. The upshot was an edict limiting foreign Ministers and Consuls to three Dragomans and obliging them to obtain fresh Barats for them. Moreover, the Grand Vizir ordained that every Frank who was married to a country-born woman should henceforth be deprived of the benefits of the Capitulations, pay *Haratch*, and be treated in all respects as a *rayah*.

As was natural, married Franks denounced the measure bitterly: they had come to Turkey on the understanding that they should live in it as free men, and now by a stroke of Kara Mustafa's pen they were suddenly reduced to the position of slaves. The outcry was loudest among the French and the Dutch, upon whom the innovation fell most heavily: some forty Frenchmen, including the chief merchants, and three of the principal Dutch merchants had native wives. But notwithstanding all that the French Ambassador and the Dutch Resident could say or do, and all the endeavours of private individuals, and all their offers of money, not the least grace was shown to them. The rich French merchants escaped the consequences of the edict by purchasing titular Consulships at Gallipoli, Athens, and so forth; but their poorer compatriots were disfranchised. The English had so far been very little affected. Sir John had easily obtained the necessary Patents for his Dragomans. Nor did the marriage disqualification trouble them, as, with very few exceptions, our colony consisted of gay bachelors.[221]

But now—soon after Kara Mustafa's return to Adrianople—there arose a case which was to cost our countrymen dearly.

Mr. Samuel Pentlow, a wealthy English merchant of Smyrna, who was married to a Greek lady, had just died, leaving his widow and his children—a son about three years of age and a daughter three or four months old—to the care of his Assigns, Mr. Gabriel Smith and our old acquaintance Mr. John Ashby, with instructions that they should be sent home to enjoy the lands and other possessions he owned in England, together with his Smyrna estate, which was commonly estimated at something between two hundred thousand and half a million dollars: fruit of thirty years' labour in the Levant. In obedience to the wishes of the deceased, the Assigns took passage for his family in an English ship about to sail from Smyrna. But the other residents, fearing, in view of Kara Mustafa's recent edict, that the departure of the woman and children without official permission might expose the colony to the Grand Vizir's attentions, protested to the Consul and the Ambassador, who agreed that this business could not safely be done in a clandestine manner. The Assigns, therefore, entered into negotiations with the Cadi. This gentleman was quite willing to wink; but he demanded his reward in advance, while Messrs. Smith and Ashby would not part with a single asper until after the thing was done. Their caution offended the sensitive Cadi, who, out of spite, hastened to inform the Grand Vizir of the contemplated elopement.

Kara Mustafa so far had only had enough of English gold to stimulate his appetite, not enough to satisfy it: gratification but gave him ampler zest. He only waited for an occasion to take another and bigger bite. And here was the best of all imaginable occasions. Without delay he passed the information on to the Grand Signor, who, in his turn, consulted

the Mufti: What should be done to Turkish subjects that attempted to fly the country? The oracle responded that they deserved to have their property confiscated: that was the Law. A decree was accordingly issued, and despatched to Smyrna by an Aga, who also had orders to bring Messrs. Smith and Ashby to Adrianople that they might give an account of the estate. This done, another messenger was despatched to Constantinople with a letter from the Grand Vizir for the Ambassador, notifying to him the fact and asking him to send to Adrianople a Dragoman to be present at the examination of the Assigns: which, Sir John said, was very civil of the Vizir; "but this civility was attended by a Sting in the Tayl bidding me take care that in Smirna nothing was acted contrary to this Command."

The message upset Sir John very much. He did not want to have any more trouble with the terrible Vizir. Things had been going on so well—and now this Sting in the Tayl! Sir John was angry—not with Kara Mustafa, nor even with Messrs. Smith and Ashby: strange to say, he was angry with the late Mr. Pentlow. His thoughts of the deceased, when he reported the case to the Secretary of State, became winged words—his quill an arrow barbed and envenomed: "He is the onely man since our Trade into Turky that ever marryed Here, and was worth any thing," he wrote, and as he wrote, his wrath grew into virulence: "How it [Pentlow's estate] was gott I know not, How he livd' I know, He would not afford Himselfe bread, but livd' upon other Merchants' Tables; After the Birth of His Sonne the first child, when the Mother was bigg of a second, He dischargd' a Pistoll unwares just behind her back to make Her miscarry, That charges might not encrease."[222]

It would be idle to enter into a serious examination of these scurrilous irrelevancies. That the Pentlow fortune had not been built up wholly with clean hands, may easily be credited (few great fortunes ever are); and there is some evidence that the late merchant had not been exceptionally careful about his methods.[223] But what, in the name of common sense and common decency, had the ethics of the deceased to do with the case? The question at issue was one of law: it all turned upon the interpretation of a clause in the Capitulations, which ran as follows: "If any Englishman shall come hither either to dwell or traffique, whether he be married or unmarried, he shall be free." Hitherto this clause (which figured in the Capitulations of all other nations also) had been construed by everybody as including Europeans married to native as well as to foreign women; and the Turks had never questioned that construction, until Kara Mustafa, the year before, had thought fit to announce that "that Article was to be understood onely of such who were marryd' to those that were not subjects of the Gran Signor." Was he justified in so doing? The Levant Company thought not. In an account of this case presented to the King, it emphatically maintained that the Turkish contention that "Pentlow his wife and children were subjects to the Grand Signor" was a breach of "the Article wee have in Our Capitulations to the contrary."[224] On the other hand, the Company's Treasurer at Constantinople, after recording both interpretations, refused to commit himself to a definite pronouncement, though, on the whole, he thought that, "in a case any thing dubious, it is shrewdly to be feared that their [the Turks'] interpretation will stand before ours."[225] The Ambassador, however, preferred the line of least resistance. Rather than risk

another conflict with the Grand Vizir, he accepted without question his view of the matter. “Pentlow,” he wrote, “by marrying a Greeke made Himselfe a subject to the Gran Signor, as the Visir in Pentlow’s life time had declard’; the Turkish Law making them all so. But Pentlow having children They without all dispute were by the Turkish Law born subjects.”

Acting upon this trouble-saving view, Sir John had tried to dissuade the Assigns from sending away the widow and children, and when he perceived that his remonstrances made no impression upon them, he advised the Consul to keep out of the affair. But he did not venture to issue a categorical prohibition, lest he should be accused of betraying the Pentlow estate into the hands of the Turks, “who,” it might have been said, “had not otherwise taken notice of their advantage.”[226] From this neutral attitude nothing could induce Sir John to depart. However, he sent his Dragoman with a letter to the Vizir, to assist the Assigns—at least so he says; though, according to another version, before the Grand Vizir’s disturbing message had reached the Ambassador, his Dragoman, Signor Antonio Perone, had gone to Adrianople with Mr. North on some other affairs, and to their surprise they found the Assigns with the Chief Dragoman of the Smyrna Consulate already there. Be that as it may, Messrs. Smith and Ashby certainly did not profit by the presence of those gentlemen; but, left to their own resources, made a mess of the business.

To begin with, they declared that all the property entrusted to them amounted to no more than 50,000 dollars. Kara Mustafa was not convinced; common report credited the late merchant with ten times that amount; and he already knew Mr. Ashby. He therefore informed him and his co-administrator

that, unless they rendered a true account, they would have their arms and legs broken, or at least be put into the galleys. At the sound of these gruesome threats, Messrs. Smith and Ashby raised the inventory to 70,000 dollars: and that, they said, was all. But the Turks still refused to believe them: the whole truth or torture! At length the Assigns, overcome by fear, agreed to deliver within two months 90,000 dollars: 50,000 for the Grand Signor's Exchequer; 30,000 for the Grand Vizir; and 10,000 for his Kehayah. Then the Turks proceeded to give a final turn to the screw—one of those humorous little turns that marked every Turkish extortion: Messrs. Smith and Ashby were made to promise the Aga, who had escorted them from Smyrna and who would escort them back and keep them in custody until payment was completed, a present of 3500 dollars "for his pains and charges."[227]

Kara Mustafa, too, had his little joke. After finishing with the Assigns, he informed the Ambassador that he had done *him* a friendly turn: he had interceded with the Grand Signor on his behalf and had prevailed upon his Majesty to pardon him—for 90,000 dollars—the crime of endeavouring to send away the Grand Signor's subjects: the Ambassador must now take care that the money was paid within the time agreed upon.

The humour of this message was lost upon Sir John: "Two things here I cannot understand," he gravely told the Secretary of State, "First, How I come to be taxd' of an Action I expressely wrote against to the Consul at Smirna many moneths together, and made him disown it. Secondly, how I come to be responsible for a summe of mony, for the freeing of Private Persons and a Private Estate, by

virtue of an Agreement made without my Notice: Suppose the Rack and Tortures had made them subscribe 10 Times that summe?" Was this what he got after all his strenuous efforts not to enmesh himself in the snares of that unspeakable Kehayah and his master? Verily, the ways of the Turks were past comprehension. "It seems they looke upon Publick Ministers Here as Publick Hostages; and will have the Prince to answer for the miscarriages of every one of their subjects."[228]

Meanwhile the subjects in question were beginning to regret at leisure the bargain they had huddled up in panic. On their way to Smyrna they paid the Turks 10,000 dollars on account, and when they got there they made some further payments. But presently they perceived that they had not so many assets of the deceased in their hands as they thought, and what they had it was not easy to dispose of—who dared buy goods that lay under Kara Mustafa's thumb? After selling all they could at such prices as they could get, they still found themselves short of the stipulated sum by 20,000 dollars. In their perplexity they asked the Nation for a loan wherewith to clear themselves. Both the Factory of Smyrna and that of Constantinople unanimously petitioned the Ambassador to advance the money out of the Levant Company's Treasury, in order to avoid an "avania." Kara Mustafa, they knew, would stick at nothing. But the Ambassador refused to interfere. He would do nothing to countenance the Turkish pretension that the Public was in any way responsible for the liabilities of individuals.

To crown the wretched Assigns' embarrassment, the Turks would not wait for the day of payment. They demanded the balance at once, and, on being

told that the money was not available, they seized the house in which the widow lived, broke open her late husband's warehouses, and put the goods they found therein up for sale. But the plunder meeting with few buyers at Smyrna, most of it was sent up to Constantinople, and the remainder, as was natural in the circumstances, fetched only a fraction of its real value. When the Turks had counted the proceeds, they declared that there was still a deficit of 15,000 dollars to be made good. Utterly demoralised by this catastrophe, Messrs. Smith and Ashby abandoned all thoughts of fulfilling their bargain, and fled to the Ambassador for protection. His Lordship answered that what they suffered was entirely their own doing: he could not free them from an engagement to which they had set their signatures; but he would see what he could do to mitigate their distress by obtaining for them, if possible, an extension of the time limit. The Assigns declined such qualified assistance, and declared that they washed their hands of the whole business. So the Turks, who, on their part, were determined not to remit one asper of their bond, put them in prison.

This brought upon the stage Mrs. Pentlow. While our men of the West were content with a rôle of Oriental passivity, this lady of the East decided on direct action.

In the springtime of the year (1679), when the Imperial Court arrived at Constantinople, the widow, taking one of her children, went up to the capital with the intention, it was said, of making a personal appeal to the Grand Signor. The Grand Signor's Ministers, alarmed, endeavoured, partly by fair and partly by other means, to deter her. She persisted, and at last got back her house and some money for

her expenses, and, as to the Assigns, the promise that they should be released for 2000 dollars—a concession which Kara Mustafa could well afford to make, for the tin brought to Constantinople from Pentlow's warehouse, when sold, had yielded a large sum above the estimate at which it had been taken, almost making up the balance due.

Mrs. Pentlow returned to Smyrna thinking that the Assigns would be pleased with her efforts. But Messrs. Smith and Ashby were past being pleased with anything. Though their liability had narrowed down to a matter of only 2000 dollars, they refused to pay. In vain did their friends urge them to be sensible. They met all counsels with the angry obstinacy of exasperated sheep: they would not disburse another penny: they would rather lie in prison till a new Ambassador came out, when, they doubted not, justice would be done them. They had been robbed, they cried, by the Kehayah and his accomplices. The Grand Signor knew nothing of it: it only required a competent ambassador to bring their case to his notice, and all would be well. The Turks, failing to bend, decided to break, their obstinacy by throwing them into a dungeon. Our merchants, however, had by this time lashed themselves into furious recklessness: they resisted and very nearly killed the officer who came to remove them.

Things had reached this dangerous climax when the Smyrna Factory stepped in to avert a tragedy. By the instrumentality of the Chaplain there was raised a fund for the prisoners' redemption; and so Mr. Ashby is out of it again, without bone broken—not, we hope, without instruction from the adventure. As for Mrs. Pentlow and her children, we shall hear of them again in due time.

Sir John Finch, as usual, praised God that the trouble was over, and took to himself credit for keeping it off himself and the Consul of Smyrna and for saving the Company 20,000 dollars by his non-interference. Things, he believed, might have been much worse but for his masterly inactivity: “so high did the Sea’s run, which God be thanked, are now brought to a Calm.” But how long would the calm last?—“the being in Turky under this Goverment,” he says, “is like the being in a ship, where though Wee are this houre under a fair wind and a serene skye, the Next hour may bring us a cloudy Heaven, and a fierce Storm. And I protest to you, it takes my whole thoughts to become a Good Pilot.”[229]

FOOTNOTES:

[221] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 84-5; Finch to the Levant Company, Jan. 19-29, 1677-78, *Coventry Papers*.

[222] Finch to Coventry, Feb. 17-27, 1678-79.

[223] See *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1672-73*, p. 114: “Thomas Bankes to the King. Petition for the needful order to Sir John Finch, now going ambassador to Constantinople, to call to account Samuel Pentlow, John Folio [Foley], and other merchants of Smyrna, to whom he sent a large estate 13 years ago, which they enjoy at their pleasure, that they may give satisfaction for the same.”

[224] *Register, S.P. Levant Company*, 145. See also Appendix XIV.

[225] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 86.

[226] Finch to Coventry, *loc. cit.*

[227] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 87.

[228] Finch to Coventry, Feb. 17-27, 1678-79.

[229] Finch to Coventry, Aug. 19-29, 1679.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PILOT AT REST

For about ten months—that is, till the summer of 1680—Sir John Finch had no further opportunity of displaying his skill as a pilot. He was a mere passenger in the diplomatic vessel, and he availed himself of the privilege which belonged to his position by diligently noting the behaviour of his fellow-passengers. Sir John's despatches have none of the verve of M. de Nointel's descriptions of life and manners: he is never less entertaining than when he means to be so. Yet casual notices—occurrences mentioned as matters of course—sometimes creep in to relieve the formality of the narrative. "This Imperiall City," he writes in June 1679, "is now filld' with the whole Court; and the Gran Signor has filld' all his Serraglio's to the heigth of any former Precedent, with the choice Virgin beauty's of his Empire, giving order for the providing of no lesse then five hundred at one time." The writer, however, knows that this is not business: it has nothing to do with those "negotiations and practices" which it was his duty to keep an eye on. So he proceeds: "In the midst of all these enjoyments, there wants not the application of Christian Ministers in order either to the making or preserving peace." There follows a

record of these efforts for peace which, thanks to Kara Mustafa's statesmanship, were to end in a war that brought the Ottoman Empire to the brink of the abyss. Little did Kara Mustafa dream that, in browbeating the representatives of Poland and Russia, of the German Empire and the Venetian Republic, he was digging his own grave. But that was still in the future. Meanwhile the Grand Vizir had all these Powers at, or rather under, his feet.

On the departure of the Palatine of Kulm, a Polish Resident was left at Constantinople. Nevertheless, King Sobieski now sent a special envoy charged to inform the Porte that the Poles had renewed their truce with the Muscovites for fifteen years longer. Poland thought it necessary to give this notice, lest the Turks should take umbrage: "Such is the awe which that halfe conquerd' Kingdome hath of this Empire."[230]

An envoy from Muscovy, at the same time, laboured for peace under conditions which anywhere outside Turkey would have been intolerable. Sixty Janissaries kept strict watch over him to prevent all access to his person; while Kara Mustafa sent the Capitan Pasha to fortify the Black Sea. By this move the Turks put "a Bridle into the Muscovites mouthes." For the rest, it seemed unlikely that they had any desire to advance farther northwards, "their camels and horses not being able to endure the rigour of that climat."[231]

The duped diplomat departed in disgust; but six months after another came to treat with the Porte and fared no better. Before admitting him to audience, the Grand Vizir obtained a translation of the letter he had brought: it was couched in the usual style of the Tsars, who loved to fill their letters

with as high threats and as hyperbolical boasts and titles as the Sultans. The Vizir, incensed by so good an imitation of Turkish arrogance, when the envoy appeared in the Audience Room, asked him whether this was indeed his letter, and on the envoy replying "Yes," he dismissed him with a "*Chick Haslagiack*—Be gone, you Rogue, you deserve to be hangd'!" One would think, says Sir John, that this "studyd' affront" might give a stop to the negotiations. But such was not the case: "the Visir learnes dayly, that He looses nothing by the rough treatment of forreign Ministers; as the Ambassadour of Poland's ill usage, as well as others have confirmd' to him."[232]

Take, for instance, that other great Empire, which, calling itself (Heaven only knows why) "Holy" and "Roman," claimed to be the bulwark of the Christian West.

The Emperor's Internuncio Hoffmann, since the previous summer when he arrived to renew the truce, had been accorded only one business audience and that was little to his satisfaction: a circumstance from which it might, Sir John thought, justly be suspected that the Grand Vizir meant to keep him in suspense till he drew the army to the Danube, and then suddenly to clap up a peace with the Muscovites and turn his course upon Hungary. Other circumstances pointed in the same direction. Before he could obtain a second interview, Hoffmann died, and was soon followed to the grave by his successor Terlingo. A little earlier, as we have seen, Kindsberg and Sattler had had their careers cut short by death. So that in fifteen months the Emperor had lost four Ministers. Sir John could not help regarding this mysterious mortality as "a presage of a warr, but," he adds, "omens then worke upon me when they are

accompanyd' with naturall reasons, and a considerable one is this, that the Turke cannot live without a warr."[233]

That Sir John, eminently a man of peace though he was, prayed for war, is plain from the eagerness with which he dwells on every symptom of a bellicose intention, from the disappointment with which he notes the absence of any bellicose preparations. Hopeful and despondent by turns, he ends with the sad admission, "Wee are like to have the Gran Signor's and Visir's company here, much to the advantage of our commerce but as much to the disquiett of all Ministers here."

Our Ambassador's sentiments can easily be understood. For at this time Kara Mustafa, who was always most at ease when he was violent, appears to have indulged his peculiar genius at the expense of foreign Ministers a little too far.

We know already the "avania" brought against the Bailo of Venice. Sir John had since learnt from a person present at the inspection of the Venetian Treasurer's books after his death, that the sum extorted was not, as he had been told, 45,000, but 85,000 dollars. Now a fresh claim for Customs-duties lay upon the Signoria, and the Vizir threatened that, if a bond for 20,000 dollars was not given him, he would bring the case before the Divan and there condemn the Bailo to more than double that amount and shut him up in the Seven Towers till it was paid: afterwards His Excellency might complain to the Sultan, if he liked. Signor Morosini had no option but to comply. Including the supplementary fleecing by the Vizir's Kehayah, Treasurer, and Rais Effendi, Sir John reckoned that the operation would come to 40,000 dollars. This treatment made so painful an

impression upon the Bailo that he told Finch that he intended, on his return home, to advise the Senate to break off relations with Turkey once for all rather than "be thus eaten up by degrees."[234]

A new Venetian Ambassador who arrived to relieve the much-tried Morosini was treated like an envoy from a vassal State. The Turks searched the men-of-war that escorted him, and detained them on the plea of having stolen slaves and killed them. Several corpses found floating about the vessels lent colour to the accusation, though the Venetians protested that the corpses came from shipwrecks in the Black Sea. Be that as it may, the affair was finally settled for an amount which no man knew: it was said that both the Vizir and the Bailo wished to keep it private, for, if the Grand Signor heard of it, he would want his share. And so at length the new-comer had his audience. From the Venetians themselves Sir John obtained a graphic account of the function. The Commander of one of the men-of-war told him that, just as he went out of his boat, a ragged Turk stepped up to him and, calling him "Giaour," gave him a blow with his fist in the nape of the neck, which for some time deprived him of consciousness: and this was done in the presence of the Turkish officers who conducted the Ambassador. The Ambassador's own son informed Finch that his father sat at a great distance from the Vizir, who, for all welcome, brusquely asked him, "When do your ships depart?" though he very well knew that he was the person who detained them, and throughout the interview looked another way.[235]

Likewise from the Genoese, whose trade with Turkey, since the suppression of the traffic in false coin, was worse than nothing, Kara Mustafa wrung a

large sum, though Sir John could not learn how large nor upon what ground. This secrecy annoyed our Ambassador sorely: “I much wonder,” he wrote, “that men endeavour to smother their Avanias whenas I proclaim mine rather by sound of Trumpett not that I hope for Pity, but that our Great Trade might be lesse envious.” However, thus much was certain: Signor Spinola, unable to bear any more bleeding, asked that he might be allowed to ship off his Nation and quit the country; but he was answered that, if he again repeated such an unmannerly motion, he should be clapt into irons. Spinola was presently superseded. But Genoa had to pay fifteen purses before her old Resident was permitted to go away, and as much more before the new one could enter. And that, apparently, was only the beginning of a fresh innovation. Kara Mustafa’s Kehayah gave out that the Vizir intended thenceforward to make every new Resident pay 25,000 dollars, and every new Ambassador double that sum. Further, a high official of the Porte was heard to say that the Vizir expected monthly presents from all foreign Ministers, and that they who forgot their duty should quickly be put in mind that the Vizir was here.[236]

Evidently, success had not made Kara Mustafa milder. The victor of Muscovy could afford to despise Genoa, Venice, and every other Power. But it was upon the tributary and vassal States that he thought himself at liberty to vent the full measure of his greed and ferocity. It was the Ragusans’ obvious interest not to multiply their hostages in the Vizir’s hands. But they could not help themselves: the annual tribute had to be paid. Two new Ambassadors were accordingly sent with it, and added to the number of prisoners. They were thrown into the

same “loathsome Dungeon” as the others. “They have been beaten there, stript naked, and threatned Torments.” All the appeals which the Republic addressed to Italy for aid had remained fruitless. “The Pope, who will be concernd’ for Ancona if the Turkes take possession of Ragusi; that City loosing all its Trade and the Casa Santa it selfe being in danger; contributes not an Asper to their relief; Hereticks it seems being in his judgment more dangerous to the Romish Religion then the Turk’s.” As to the Prince of Moldavia, our Ambassador briefly informs us that he had “24 times the Torment for non payment of mony agreed for.”[237]

In this way, to quote Sir John’s phrase, “the Gran Visir thunders amongst us.” The phrase is one of those that make a picture leap to the mind’s eye: the picture of a monster, half-human, half-diabolic, whose voice was thunder and whose gesture lightning. This picture is, of course, over-drawn and over-coloured. But there can be no doubt that it is a faithful enough portrait of Kara Mustafa as he appeared to the contemporary diplomats who had the misfortune to come into contact with him. They all speak of his cruelty, avarice, and cunning in terms of unqualified abhorrence. They all describe him as a creature whose soul was as black as his face, whose heart held not one generous or merciful sentiment, whose appetite for gold was as insatiable as that of a ghoul for blood: a fiend incarnate.[238] In truth (things have become sufficiently remote to be visible in their true perspective) Kara Mustafa, a miscreant of imposing magnitude as he was, was not much more violent, grasping, and unprincipled than the average Grand Vizir:[239] he was only more consistent. His iniquities, historically viewed, are but a memorable instance of the misery which it was in

the power of a Turkish Prime Minister to inflict. But men who smarted under his lash could not be expected to see current events in the proportions in which, after the lapse of centuries, they appear to the philosophic historian. “These things,” says Finch, “will appear to others as they doe to me my selfe incredible.” He consoles himself, however, by reflecting that “*Res nolunt male administrari*—Things mend themselves when they become insupportable.”

Sir John based his hopes of a “mending” on France. A new French Ambassador, M. de Guilleragues, had arrived in the autumn of 1679, with instructions to demand redress for all the wrongs which M. de Nointel had failed to prevent: restoration of the Holy Sepulchre to the Latin Fathers; exemption from the poll-tax for Frenchmen married to country-born women; and, above all, restitution of the Stool upon the Soffah. He was understood to be a man of determination, and he had shown the spirit in which he meant to approach the Porte on his very arrival by refusing to salute the Seraglio as he sailed into the Golden Horn, or to suffer his men-of-war to be searched before they left. In the treatment that awaited M. de Guilleragues the other foreign Ministers would read their own fate. They could not hope, as Finch said, to fare better than the envoy of France, seeing that he possessed two great advantages over everybody else: a large quantity of new presents, and a number of French renegades in high places about the Vizir. Would his advent make the clouds grow lighter, the thunders roll away, and the horizon at length clear up?

The Turks had let the French men-of-war depart unsearched—carrying, it was said, seventy fugitive slaves with them—and otherwise had given the

Frenchman a much more respectful reception than the new Venetian and Genoese envoys. This was a good omen; but nothing could be predicted with certainty until M. de Guilleragues had his audience—that would be the real test. Sir John awaited that crucial event with keen interest: but the months passed, and the audience did not take place. As far as he could learn from the Ambassador's own mouth, as well as from other sources, M. de Guilleragues was making no progress. Kara Mustafa had positively refused to move the Stool: whereupon the Ambassador had refused audience, averring that he must wait for fresh orders from his King. "How this matter will end," Finch wrote on the 1st of March 1680, "I know not."

Meanwhile his friend and partner in many good and evil days had left in the vessel that had brought out his successor, making the third colleague gone during the year. Ruined in pocket and reputation, Nointel must still have been an object of envy to Finch: he had, at all events, reached the end of his martyrdom: he was gone home—to Christendom, to civilisation, where Grand Vizirs raged not, nor were gentlemen treated like galley-slaves. Another person, even nearer to Finch, was also just gone: the Honourable Dudley North. He went not ruined in pocket and reputation like Nointel: far from it. He went to enjoy at home, according to plan, the wealth he had piled up abroad, while his brother carried on the prosperous business at Constantinople. North was the third English associate to vanish from Sir John's circle since the accession of Kara Mustafa. Mr. Paul Rycaut, after seventeen years' residence in the East, had found himself suddenly "affected with a passionate desire of seeing my owne country," and forthwith "signifyed as much to the Levant Company,

desiring them to send me their favourable dismission, and to supply this office with another Consul."[240] He retired with the consent of his employers, who expressed their high appreciation of his services. The Rev. John Covel had also resigned his engagement with the Levant Company and "left Stambul, which, for many reasons, I may well liken to the prison of my mother's belly."[241]

Lucky, indeed, were all those who could leave a land in which life had become so hard. But Sir John himself would not now be very long. His six years' contract had expired, and he had informed the Levant Company that he cherished no wish to renew it—nor, we may easily surmise from many hints, was the Company reluctant to dispense with his services. All that he waited for was the appointment of a successor. As to another post, he had put himself in the hands of his brother, the Lord Chancellor, and would acquiesce in whatever was done for him: any seat would be a seat of roses after Stambul.[242]

The waiting was not now so irksome to Sir John as it would have been a year or two ago. It is true that in one of his despatches there occurs a passage tinged with pessimism: "I must," he wrote towards the end of 1679, "committ all to the Protection of the Almighty, and God direct me in these difficult times in the carrying on His Majesty's concerns in the commerce of His subjects, which is at this time greater then ever in this place, and by consequence more envious and more exposd."[243] But this was only a passing mood. In the same despatch he thanked God for not being "strooke" by Kara Mustafa's thunder; and some months later we even detect in his tone an optimism to which he had long been a stranger: "As to *my* condition here, I must

needs say, that I loose no ground as to the Publick Interest, but advance"[244]—we seem to hear again the complacent, self-satisfied Finch of the pre-Mustafa period. And then, all of a sudden, we hear him asking the Secretary of State to guess how he is "tossd'" by "the present tempestuous Goverment in Turky."

What had happened?

The curious will find it in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES:

[230] Finch to Coventry, June 17-27, 1679.

[231] *Ibid.*

[232] The Same to the Same, March 4-14, 1679-80.

[233] The Same to the Same, Jan. 3-13, 1679-80.

[234] The Same to the Same, Dec. 12-22, 1679.

[235] The Same to the Same, March 1-11, 1679-80.

[236] The Same to the Same, Dec. 12-22, 1679.

[237] The Same to the Same, June 17-27, 1679. For details about the treatment of the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia see Hammer, vol xii. p. 41.

[238] *Un diable incarné* is the French Ambassador's verdict, supported by a great many counts which are absent from Sir John's indictment. See Vandal's *Nointel*, pp. 225, foll.

[239] Let one example suffice for many. In

1620 Sir Thomas Roe tersely described the Grand Vizir of his day as “the veriest villaine that ever lived.” *Negotiations*, p. 61.

[240] Rycaut to Coventry, April 18, 1677, *Coventry Papers*. The Same to Williamson, same date; the Same to the King (undated), *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[241] *Diaries*, p. 282.

[242] Baines to Covel, in *Finch and Baines*, p. 70.

[243] Finch to Coventry, Dec. 12-22, 1679.

[244] The Same to the Same, March 1-11, 1679-80.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PRICE OF PARCHMENT

Whenever Sir John thought of his miscarriage over the Soffah—and hardly a day passed without his thinking of that melancholy event—he comforted himself with the reflection that he was the last of all the European Ministers to submit.[245] By holding out longer than the others, he believed that he had gained the respect of the Turks, including that of Kara Mustafa.[246] Hence his comparative quiet amidst the general turmoil. This, however, was but a fancy—one of those pleasing fancies with which we all try to minimise in our own eyes the importance of a thing we are sorry or ashamed to have done. It cannot be questioned that, last or first, by submitting to the Grand Vizir's caprice Sir John had lost caste among the Turks. An ambassador who once endured an affront at their hands patiently could not expect the Turks to respect him ever afterwards. He could only expect them to trespass further on his patience; "for certainly," as our sensible Rycaut remarks, "Turks of all Nations in the World are most apt to crush and trample on those that lie under their feet."[247]

Moreover, there were certain little foibles about Sir John that did not tend to enhance his prestige in

Stambul. Such was his habit of speaking too much. His interminable discourses, with their frequent repetitions, were calculated to inspire a very poor opinion of his understanding in a people which held more obstinately than any other the superstition that silence is golden. Such also was his habit of going about in a sedan chair. He had brought out with him two of these ornamental boxes, one for himself and one for Sir Thomas Baines; and he used to be carried to and fro, instead of riding on horseback. This he did, according to Baines,[248] partly because his country-house was not above half-a-mile from his town residence, partly because his friend was, by reason of his stone, unable to ride, and Finch would not stir a yard without him; but chiefly, if the truth must be told, because he was no horseman. To ordinary Turks our Ambassador's mode of locomotion appeared a vile effeminacy unbecoming a man: a man, they said, should ride a horse and not be carried in a cradle like a baby.[249] To Kara Mustafa it not only appeared unbecoming, which would have simply excited the Grand Vizir's derision, but it also savoured of presumption, which aroused the Grand Vizir's wrath. Once he spoke of ordering his chaoushes "to break that cage on his [Sir John's] head."[250]

In the circumstances, it is rather a wonder that our Ambassador had managed to "maintain all the Capitulations inviolable" so long. But it was not in the nature of things that he should maintain them much longer. All that Kara Mustafa waited for to let loose the forces of his "tempestuous Goverment" fully upon him was an occasion. It presented itself in the summer of 1680, and from that date on there was no more peace for our hapless pilot: nothing but the roar of rushing winds, the awful sight of foam-

crested billows. We see him tossed about at the mercy of the elements, now defiant, now despairing, always anxious to do his very utmost for the ship confided to him, with or without hope, till the very end.

The trouble once again originated at Smyrna. A local Jew had pawned to a member of the English Factory some goods—part merchandise and part wearing apparel and jewels—which, as he was unable to redeem them, were in time eaten up by interest. By and by the Englishman went home, leaving his affairs in the hands of two other merchants, his Assigns; and the Jew, who in the interval had been reduced to the verge of starvation, thinking that if he made noise enough and put in a claim large enough, he would be sure to get something, lodged with the Cadi of Smyrna a complaint against them. An ill-founded complaint perhaps; but we, at this distance of time, have no means of judging. With whatever mental reservations, we must needs tell the story as it has come down to us.[251] Unsuccessful at Smyrna, the Jew carried his grievance up to Constantinople and threw himself at the Grand Vizir's feet with horrid cries, praying to be rescued from the claws of those English harpies. Kara Mustafa was only too ready to believe any charge brought against a Frank, and never denied his sympathy to the oppressed if he saw a chance of turning compassion into current coin. So the two Englishmen were promptly summoned to appear before the Divan.

Sir John, who had consistently protested against these frequent summonings of English factors from their business,[252] could do no less than lend them such protection as the Capitulations afforded. The

defendants, knowing that the Jew relied entirely upon witnesses, thought to cut the ground from under him by appealing to an Article in the Capitulations which provided that no evidence should be valid against a Frank unless supported by a *Hoggiet*, or written statement made in the presence of a Dragoman. This Article had on many occasions proved useful in inferior courts and even, several times, in the Grand Vizir's tribunal itself, when the Grand Vizir happened to be favourably inclined to the defendants. But at other times even the best Vizirs had declared that the Article was intended only for inferior courts and that the Vizir looked upon himself as being above the Capitulations, were they never so precise.

To understand the position we must clear our minds of the suggestion which the word "treaty" naturally produces: it implies a totally false conception of the relations between the parties. The Capitulations were not "treaties" in the ordinary meaning of the word. They were mere concessions made by the Grand Signor, for the sake of his revenues, to wretched Giaours in need of trade. As such they depended for their duration on his pleasure, and for their interpretation on the ingenuity or candour of his Ministers. For that reason ambassadors who knew their business—who knew, that is, the spirit of their environment—urged the Capitulations as seldom as possible, never entered into litigation on their basis, if they could avoid it, and suffered a small injury to pass unnoticed rather than bring it before the supreme tribunal. The English, perfectly aware of these conditions, never cited the Capitulations except when they were assured beforehand that the citation would be received favourably.

Sir John could not plead ignorance of these conditions. Some four years before he had had an object lesson on this very point. In 1676 the Genoese Resident Spinola had tried to swindle a Greek out of a sum of money, and on the matter being brought up to the Divan, had tried to screen himself behind that Article. Ahmed Kuprili was so angry to see a privilege granted to foreigners for their protection used by them for the spoliation of the Grand Signor's subjects that he not only forced Spinola to an adjustment with the plaintiff, but shortly afterwards condemned the Dutch Cancellier also to pay a debt on the bare testimony of witnesses. Finch, considering this procedure "a thing of pernicious consequence" to all Franks, had done all he could to get the sentence against the Dutchman reversed, but with little success.[253] If such was the attitude of Ahmed Kuprili, what might be expected from a Vizir who, in Finch's own words, declared Capitulations to be "like a peice of wett parchment that may be stretchd' any way"? Yet, in the present case, forgetting his experience, Sir John did a most reckless thing.

Although utterly lacking any assurance of a favourable reception, though, in fact, having every reason to anticipate the opposite, he caused the Capitulations to be produced in Court. Whereupon the Grand Vizir ordered them to be left with him, that he might study that interesting article at leisure.

It was not long before the folly of his action became manifest to our Ambassador. When he asked to have the Charter back, he was told that the Grand Vizir perceived in it many things which he supposed had been obtained in former times by corruption, without the Grand Signor's knowledge: he intended

to show it to the Grand Signor and learn his pleasure in the matter.

Sir John listened with blank dismay: “His Majesty’s Capitulations thrice sworn to and subscribd’ by this present Gran Signor,” the Capitulations which had cost him so much “care, paynes, and hazard,” to say nothing of gold and silver and Florence wines—in the hands of Kara Mustafa! And that, too, “at a time when, besides the great estate wee had allready in the country, wee had the accession of 300,000 Dollars in ready mony, and above three millions of Dollars in effects by our Generall Ships which arrivd’ in this conjuncture.”[254] It was a prospect to shudder at. Something ought to be done, and done quickly—before Kara Mustafa should work some great mischief. But what? Before doing anything we must find out what the Vizir’s aim is.

Overtures were made to the Vizir’s underlings—his Jewish man of business acting as a go-between; and it was found that his aim was—money. How much? Fifteen thousand for the Capitulations, and three thousand for the claim against the Smyrna merchant: in all, 18,000 dollars. A big sum; but not too big for the emergency. With all its limitations, the Charter constituted the only safeguard of our estates and persons. Even in the worst of times, when the most cruel and covetous Ministers had governed, we had always fled to that Charter, as to a stronghold; and, though it had sometimes been assaulted and shaken, yet it had never failed to afford us some shelter. Without it we were lost. That was the plain fact of the matter, and however much it might be embroidered by diplomatic phraseology it remained fundamental. Sir John had to choose between a course which wounded his pride and a course which

imperilled the existence of the English colony: he preferred the former. So the sum was paid, and the Capitulations were restored by the Grand Vizir "at a publick Court, in presence of all the Bassàs."[255]

This was a master-stroke of Kara Mustafa's—it threw into the shade the turpitude of any previous Vizir. No Vizir had ever before thought of such a thing. No Vizir had ever before ventured to flout the dignity of the King of England in such a way, or to put the Grand Signor's faith up for sale. It was nothing less than holding the whole English Nation, with its Ambassador and its Consuls, to ransom: an achievement without example.

Having discovered that a European nation could be held to ransom, Kara Mustafa hastened to exploit his discovery for all it was worth. After the English came the turn of the Dutch; and in their case the Vizir's rapacity was aggravated by the brutality that arose from the violence of his temper. A private lawsuit here also supplied the occasion. M. de Broesses, the principal Dutch merchant at Constantinople, who besides was Secretary to the Minister of Holland commissioned direct from the States and had formerly been Resident at the Porte, sued a Greek for a debt before the Divan. The Grand Vizir, after listening to his claim, said that it appeared to be a false demand. "Sir," replied the Dutchman, "we Franks use not to make false demands." Taking this as a reflection on the Turks, Kara Mustafa in an access of fury, ordered him to be laid down and drubbed in sight of the Divan. M. de Broesses had 184 blows upon his bare feet out of the 300 to which he had been condemned, and was carried home in a critical condition. "The poor man is in danger of being crippled all his life, his feet since his recovery

being twice opend'," wrote Finch at the time; but it seems that he never really recovered, and his death, which occurred soon after, was attributed to this cruel punishment.[256]

Presently (August 13th) the Dutch Capitulations were taken away, not by sleight of hand, as the English had been, but by an express command from the Vizir. Nor was it alleged as an excuse for their detention that they contained anything contrary to Moslem Law or detrimental to the Grand Signor's Exchequer. Kara Mustafa no longer thought it necessary to cover his tyranny under an appearance of law. When the Dutch Dragoman asked why they were detained, the Vizir's Kehayah bluntly answered: "You infidel dog, do not you eat the Grand Signor's air, and will you contribute nothing to him?" The Minister of Holland proceeded to negotiate through the Vizir's Jew, as Finch had done; and it was not without some satisfaction that the latter heard from the Jew that the ransom would be at least double of what he himself had paid: "but as to this point," he comments, "wee have but a Jew's word for it." He need not have been so sceptical. Kara Mustafa's dragon-appetite grew in eating. The Dutch Minister, Justinus Collyer, unable to protect his people ashore, endeavoured at least to save their property afloat, and kept their General ships, which arrived at that moment, outside the Castles of Smyrna, declaring that he would not let them come in, until his Capitulations were restored. But Kara Mustafa possessed other means of persuasion. He threatened Collyer with the Seven Towers and similar severities; and Collyer, with the example of his Secretary before him, had no need to be told that the Vizir threatened not in vain. So, after holding out for nearly two months, at last, anxious for peace and persuaded that

peace could be obtained only in one way, he ordered the ships to come in; and immediately got his Capitulations back on payment of 40,000 dollars. [257]

Such was Kara Mustafa's fiscal system. So well did this gifted statesman know how to levy tribute on foreign envoys; and those envoys, instead of joining forces against the common oppressor, invited his depredations by their insane dissensions.

The imbecility of these diplomats and their pettiness never showed in a worse light than at the present conjuncture, the hour of extremest danger for all of them. As our Ambassador played a prominent part in this suicidal squabble he may be allowed to give his own account of it:

"I read in Our printed Gazettes, That the Resident of Holland here, complaining to His Masters that the Ambassadours of France and Venice would not return his visits, they thought fitt to change His Title from Resident into that of Ambassadour. Though my name is left out in the Print, yet there was more reason perhaps to have inserted It then that of the others." He proceeds to demonstrate that he amply deserved the fame which the newspapers had so unaccountably refused him. "During the Warr between France and the States, the Dutch Resident made me constantly two visits for one, as He did likewise to my Predecessours; and is the style of all Residents towards Ambassadours in this place: But no sooner was the Peace made with France, but that the Dutch Resident gave me to understand that He expected Visit for Visit. My answer was, That the King my Master's Ambassadour was never a jot the lesse for the Peace, nor the States Resident the greater: And so wee passd' without visiting each

other." There followed a similar estrangement between the Dutchman and the representatives of France and Venice, so that, when Collyer announced to them his promotion to Ambassadorial rank, all three refused to acknowledge him, alleging that it was neither honourable nor safe for them to do so till the Porte had received him as such; and some of them (Finch says it was not he) had the meanness to inform the Porte of the intrigue. Nothing could be more pleasing to Kara Mustafa than discord among his victims. He hastened to foment it by forbidding them to recognise the Dutchman as Ambassador, and to turn it to account in his characteristic fashion. When Collyer spoke to him about his new Commission, the Vizir said, "Where are then the Letters of Credence to me, and the accustomed presents?" Collyer replied that they were both on the way. "Well," said the Vizir, "when they arrive, we will talk further of the matter," and cut the audience short. The visitor gone, he sent for the Register to find out what presents he was supposed to be entitled to. He found that Cornelius Haghen, who had originally made the Dutch Capitulations, gave presents to the value of one hundred and twenty thousand dollars; and to fix this claim more firmly, the very same night he despatched his Dragoman, Dr. Mavrocordato, to take possession of Collyer's Commission.[258]

Meanwhile the party in England which called for closer relations with Holland had temporarily gained the ascendant, and, in obedience to instructions from home, Sir John would fain support her representative now. But it was too late. The utmost he could do was to send Collyer his compliments privately, and to explain to him the reasons why he dared not do more: by this time himself stood in a "Ticklish

condition" (such is his expression) with the Porte again.

"Ticklish," indeed, was hardly the word for it. Had Finch foreseen all that lay in front of him, he would probably have described his condition as "Tragick."

FOOTNOTES:

[245] "To my dayly comfort I was the last of all the Christian Ministers that submitted."—Finch to Coventry, March 1-11, 1679-80.

[246] "I am fully perswaded that in the Turkes' judgment, nay, that of the Visir himselfe, I am a gainer every way."—The Same to the Same, Sept 2-12, 1678.

[247] *Present State*, p. 168.

[248] Baines to Conway, June 1-11, 1677, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[249] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 124-5. Oddly enough, Sir John himself tells a similar anecdote at the expense of the Polish Ambassador: Finch to Coventry, Nov. 29, S.V. 1677. If we could but see ourselves as we see others!

[250] Vandal's *Nointel*, p. 227.

[251] Owing to a gap in the Ambassador's correspondence and to the absence from the scene of our candid Treasurer, much of what follows rests on the authority of North's second-hand reports (see *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 90-92) and of a Narrative which the Levant Company submitted to the King (*Register, S.P. Levant Company*, 145), both sources in sad need of critical scrutiny.

[252] A parallel case, between an Englishman

and a Greek of Smyrna, had just elicited such a protest. See Finch to Coventry, March 1-11, 1679-80.

[253] Finch to Coventry, Aug. 4-14, Aug. 29/ Sept. 8, 1676.

[254] Finch to Sir Leoline Jenkins, Aug. 21-31, 1680, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[255] *Ibid.*

[256] *Ibid.* Cp. *Life of Dudley North*, p. 100.

[257] Finch to Jenkins, *loc. cit.*; the Same to Sunderland, Nov. 6-16, 1680, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[258] Finch to Jenkins, Aug. 21-31; the Same to Sunderland, Nov. 6-16.

CHAPTER XIX

SIR JOHN'S "TICKLISH CONDITION"

Our Ambassador bad every right to expect that the ransom he had paid down would be accepted by Kara Mustafa as a price of immunity from persecution for the remainder of his sojourn in Turkey. But it was not to be. Kara Mustafa had in store for him another tempest—a tempest beside which all those he had outlived might seem as spells of fine weather. It arose, by a singular irony, out of the very event which had once filled him with so much pride and so many hopes of a serene and prosperous career at the Ottoman Court.

It will be remembered that the late Grand Vizir had relieved Finch from the importunities of the Pasha of Tunis by sending that worthy to a Governorship in the utmost confines of Arabia—somewhere beyond Egypt—near Ethiopia: nobody exactly knew where, but everybody earnestly hoped that, wherever his place of honourable exile was, he would never quit it. Finch, as we know, had not forgotten him: every now and again, in moments of depression, thoughts of the Pasha forced themselves upon his mind; and these apprehensions, once vague, had become particularly vivid of late.

The thing which Sir John feared came to pass at last.

Towards the end of June 1680 the Pasha returned to Constantinople with his grievance, which, carefully nursed in the tropical climate of his residence, had grown to gigantic dimensions. In 1674 he had simply desired that the Ambassador should procure restitution of his remaining goods from the corsair. Now he demands them from him. Moreover, now he alleges his loss to be far greater than he had represented it before, and, indeed, greater than it could possibly be.

He began by applying to the Vizir's Kehayah, to the Rais Effendi, and to the Chaoush-bashi. Sir John sent to them a Dragoman who set forth his case, relating all that he had done for the Pasha in Italy and Malta out of sheer courtesy. The Ministers appeared fully convinced, and Finch thought that the story had ended; but it was only beginning. The plaintiff, disappointed with the result of his first step, addressed himself directly to the Vizir, who appointed the same three officers to hear the Pasha and the Ambassador face to face, and to report to him. Finch confronted the Pasha accordingly; the plaintiff's demands and his own defence were heard, and, to all seeming, the case went wholly as he wished: the Rais Effendi undertook to obtain a favourable verdict from the Vizir for a trifle of two purses, that is, a thousand dollars, which sum was promised to be paid when sentence had been issued. On receipt of the report, the Vizir, as was anticipated, announced that he must take cognisance of the cause himself, and summoned both parties to appear before his tribunal.

Friday, September 3rd, Sir John goes to the Divan,

and finds the Grand Vizir seated on the bench with the two Cadileskers, or Chief Justices of Europe and Asia. All the great Ministers of the Porte are also present. Kara Mustafa opens the proceedings by bidding the Pasha produce the list of his losses, and saying that, if the plaintiff can prove his claim, he will find him a paymaster and clap up the Ambassador in the Seven Towers. The list is produced and read out: it amounts to 700 purses, or 350,000 dollars! The reading over, Finch asks: "Who has taken all those goods?" "The Corsair," answers the Pasha. "He that has taken them, let him restore them"—a good retort; but it does not seem to please the Grand Vizir.

"Ambassador," he breaks in sharply, "you and all other ambassadors are sent hither by your respective princes to answer for the lives and estates of all Mussulmans all over the world that are endamaged or suffer by your respective subjects, and you are here a hostage to answer for all damage done by Englishmen all over the world."

Sir John, "knowing how subitaneous the Visir is in all his motions and not judging it prudent to provoke him at first," would fain decline a direct answer to that strange doctrine—strange, yet, from the Turkish point of view, perfectly orthodox. But as Kara Mustafa, with great heat, calls for an answer, he replies:

"The Gran Signor is a Great Emperour and yet He cannot secure His ships from Gran Cairo from the Corsaros, nor His Caravans by land from the Arabians, both being often robbed. Neither can my Master secure His own subjects or the Gran Signor's from pirates; for none but God Almighty could doe it."

This soft answer turned away the Vizir's wrath, and the case went on.

Finch pleads that he is not in the least concerned in the Pasha's losses, seeing that the ship from which his goods were taken was no English ship, and the captain, a renegade of his country and religion settled and married at Leghorn, was the Great Duke's subject. But even supposing, for the sake of argument, that he were concerned? Here is the discharge by which the Pasha's own Procurator released Captain Chaplyn and all Englishmen from any liability in the matter.

How that discharge had been obtained we know already; also the statement that the *Mediterranean* was no English ship was less accurate than we could have wished. But Sir John is here to defend a case, not to speak the truth; and, it must be owned, he defends it as one to the manner born. Unfortunately, the Grand Vizir has no taste for dialectics. A Turk had come to grief whilst travelling under the English flag, and the English Nation was bound to indemnify him: that is the sum and substance of the whole matter, in accordance with the traditional Turkish view[259]—a view to which, in the present instance, the English Government appeared to lend colour by recovering part of the Pasha's property: if part, why not the whole? Finch, too, by dwelling on the point of the ship's and captain's nationality, did he not implicitly admit the validity of that view? Therefore, the Vizir, breaks into the argument by ordering the Ambassador to write to his King to cause full restitution of the Pasha's goods. Sir John answers that what His Majesty had already done was done out of kindness and not from any obligation; it would be useless to trouble His Majesty. But Kara Mustafa

insists with so much vehemence that Sir John has to say, if His Excellency so commands, he will write, though nothing can come of it, as it is impossible to find what pirates and thieves have stolen. The Vizir presses the matter no further, and the case goes on.

The Pasha denies that the Aga in question was his Procurator. Finch produces a document under the Pasha's own hand and seal, drawn up at Constantinople before a Cadi, in which he recognised him as such. This unexpected stroke disconcerts the Pasha, but it does not disarm him. Changing his ground, he denies that he has received any of the goods recovered at Leghorn or Malta. Finch produces the receipt which the Pasha had given to his Aga. Unabashed, the Pasha changes his ground again and alleges that the English Consul at Tunis had given him a *Hoggiet*, guaranteeing the property laden on Captain Chaplyn's ship: but for that guarantee, he says, he would have gone overland. Finch replies, First, that the Barbary Coast is not under his jurisdiction and therefore the Consul must answer for himself; Secondly, that, even if the Consul were under him, an inferior could not bind his superior, any more than any Pasha in the Empire could bind the Grand Vizir; Lastly, that he cannot believe that any Consul of His Majesty's would become surety. Therefore he asks to see the *Hoggiet*. The Pasha says that it was taken from him with the rest of his property. Finch retorts that a document of such importance could easily have been carried about him, and that, though he is not concerned in the loss of his gold and jewels, yet it is probable he has lost neither, since he had time to carry out of the ship five boatloads of goods before the Corsair came up with the *Mediterranean*, and men do not usually leave gold and jewels to the last. This the Pasha does not

deny; but changes his ground once more by denouncing the Captain. Finch replies that, although he is not answerable for the Captain, yet he had brought him along with him to answer for himself: Captain Chaplyn had stayed at Smyrna seven months, and the Pasha's Procurator had given him, before a Cadi, a certificate of good conduct.

At this point the Cadilesker who was to pronounce judgment began to write down his verdict. But the Vizir stopped him, saying that the case could not be decided at one hearing. Finch "much misliked" this; but, of course, he could do nothing. So the case was adjourned.

In spite of that ominous move, the Ambassador left the Court not without hopes: both the Cadileskers had throughout declared for him, and the Vizir had distributed his thunders pretty evenly between the litigants. He was not, however, allowed to continue in this hopeful state of mind long. Next day, the Vizir's Kehayah and Rais Effendi sent for his Dragoman and told him that a very large sum was demanded from the Ambassador: the Pasha, who governed Tunis during an insurrection, had raised his great fortune by plundering rebels and, in addition, had given the whole of it to the Grand Signor: therefore, the Vizir would expect a good deal to rid him of this claim. Sir John's answer was that "he could as a gentleman thank his friends, but could not as an Ambassador treat by way of contract for an asper." This brought a milder demand: 15 purses for the Vizir and 7 for the other Ministers—altogether 11,000 dollars.

To those who made it, this demand no doubt appeared moderate, considering the amount of the claim involved; but our Ambassador thought it

monstrous, considering that the claim was nothing but a false pretence. Besides, would compliance really free him from further molestation? Sir John did not believe it would. He knew the Turks too well by now, and simply looked upon these overtures as a new example of "their old way of inviting a man to treat and then screwing him up to what they please." So he returned a categorical answer in writing to the effect that he was in no way to blame; he had not only a most just cause, but also a cause full of merit; that this suit was directed against the King his master, the merchants being not in the least concerned in it, and that, consequently, he could not treat for a single asper; but to those who should free him from this injurious pretension, when the business was done, he could and would show his gratitude. "So," he concluded, "remitting my selfe to the justice of the Gran Visir, I implore the Divine Protection, and shall acquiesce in His Holy Will, happen what will." In answer to this, the Kehayah sent Finch word that he should repent his rejection of the proposed adjustment.[260]

That, indeed, was the opinion of the English merchants, too. So far from not being in the least concerned in the matter, they were terribly interested, and warned the Ambassador that, if the Vizir's mouth was not stopped at once, they might have to pay very heavily in the end. Some even reproached him for driving the Company to a dangerous precipice. But the Ambassador, having been censured by the Company for his other adjustments, was this time determined to stand firm at all hazards and let Kara Mustafa do his worst.[261]

Some twenty-four days passed, and then the Vizir's Jew came to inform Sir John "with many threats

intermingled" of the resolution taken at the Porte—that he should enter into negotiations for an agreement. Sir John referred the emissary to his former declaration, adding that, far from seeing any reason to recede from it, he must confirm and ratify it again, "and the rather because since the writing I had receivd positive orders from England not to enter into any contract"—he could not make one step further: the Vizir "might doe what he pleasd." "Thus," he reported on September 29th, "stands this case, either victory or imprisonment of my person is like to be the result of it."[262]

It is impossible to contemplate without admiration the intrepidity with which Finch faced the alternative before him. Happen what might, he had decided to hold out, and the only effect which the expostulations of the English and the threats of the Turks produced on his decision was to strengthen it. Courage, as we have seen, was by no means a conspicuous feature of Sir John's character; yet on this occasion he displayed all the steadfastness of a hardened fighter. He would not let the Turks lure or intimidate him on to ground which no Ambassador could consent to occupy without grave detriment to the interests confided to him. The question was vital "not onely in regard of the Great Summe which under all the variety of demands is at the lowest very high: but in regard it is a Precedent of pernicious consequence to Our Commerce, so long as this Visir livs."[263]

Kara Mustafa's choler at this calm defiance is not inconceivable. It behoved him to teach the English, as he had taught other Giaours, what they got by defying his thunder. You refused all terms of peace? You shall have war.

On October 1st the Ambassador was once more summoned before the Grand Vizir's tribunal—to plead the same cause for the third and last time. He went, accompanied by five of the leading English merchants and his Dragomans. What his emotions were as he went we know from his own mouth. Victory or imprisonment, he had said, with a certain glow of internal pride—like that of a resolute pilot amid the piled tempests. But Sir John was not either a hero or a martyr by nature: he was merely a man with a sense of duty—which does not exclude other senses. With perfect frankness he confesses that "When I went to the Tryall, accompanyd' onely with five of the chief of the Factory, wee all, and our Druggermen too, had apprehensions of imprisonment."

The manner in which the proceedings were conducted was not calculated to reassure the defendants. The Pasha's claim had in the interval risen to the colossal figure of 1000 purses, that is, half-a-million dollars: so much for this, so much for that. He went on specifying the various items, until the Grand Vizir himself ordered him to stop—he had heard enough. Then turning to the Ambassador, he asked for his answer. Sir John's answer was the same as before: a flat denial of responsibility, backed with the familiar arguments. But how poor is the eloquence of him who advocates a cause which we disapprove: how inadmissible his statements, how unconvincing his reasons! Kara Mustafa, who had put on his most thunderous look for the occasion, overruled everything that might be said for the defence with such truculence, that "when wee saw how prodigiously things were carry'd against us, wee thought imprisonment unavoidable"—we already saw ourselves in the cell of the condemned....

In this fearful emergency Sir John had an inspiration—one of those inspirations that panic sometimes begets. It occurred to him suddenly to beg for time to write home for instructions. Contrary to his own expectation, Kara Mustafa agreed to suspend proceedings till the end of February—five months being necessary for an interchange of communications between Constantinople and London. This prompt assent could easily be accounted for. In Turkey a request for time was commonly understood to be equivalent to a hint that the party had a mind to come to terms.[264] Certainly so the Grand Vizir understood it, though Sir John, far from suspecting the construction put upon his words, congratulated himself upon his strategy. "Had I not thus prevented the pronouncing of sentence," he wrote next morning, "Wee had all not onely bin clapd' up in prison, but the estates also of the Levant Company had bin violently seizd' till I had complyd' with the summe." It was not, to be sure, an acquittal, but it was the next best thing—a respite. "Now I must say with the Italian, *chi da tempo, da vita*. I should think that, when the five moneths are expird', it would not be hard to get three moneths more, though I doe not say that it is to be relyd' upon for who knows this Visir." Thus checking his own elation, he went on to press for his supersession. He had occupied that thorny seat on the Bosphorus long enough; it was time that somebody else had his turn. "I believe," he told the Secretary of State, "most men will be of opinion that a new Ambassadour, accompanyd' with particular orders and fresh Letters from His Majesty relating to this case, will, in so palpably a just cause, make the false pretensions of the Bassà of Tunis wholely vanish."[265]

People at home entirely agreed that a new broom

was needed to clear up the mess in Stambul, and steps had already been taken to provide one. After some discussion on the advisability of sending out an ambassador at all whilst Kara Mustafa raged in Turkey, the Levant Merchants, at a Court held on October 3rd, 1679, had decided to take the risk; six months later they petitioned the King to order Sir John Finch's return, so that they might select a successor; and, having obtained the King's permission so to do, they took a ballot on April 22nd, 1680.[266]

It is a very curious thing that, though the Constantinople Embassy was a byword for difficulty and even for danger in the diplomatic world, and though few of its tenants had not, sooner or later, begged for recall as for an inestimable boon, yet there never were wanting keen candidates: the pay and perquisites offered an irresistible attraction, and, apparently, each would-be ambassador flattered himself that Fortune would prove kinder to him than she had done to his predecessors. No fewer than eight individuals (some of whom ought to have known better) were eager to step into Sir John's tight shoes. One of these was our friend Paul Rycaut. As soon as the recall of Finch was decided upon, the ex-Consul, encouraged by his former chief Lord Winchilsea with assurances that "neither his person nor endeavours towards this promotion would be displeasing to his Majesty," hastened to put in a claim with the Crown, dwelling on his past services, his qualifications, and "the knowne loyaltie of his family." At the same time he canvassed the Levant Company, which, on his return home, had acknowledged its obligations to him with a gratuity. Everything tended to make Rycaut think that "he stood as faire in the nomination as any person

whatsoever." But suddenly the Earl of Berkeley, Governor of the Company, put an end to Rycaut's expectations by announcing that the King did not wish that any one who had lived in Turkey "under a lesse degree and qualitie then that of an Ambassadour" should be chosen.[267]

Another aspirant was the Hon. Dudley North. He also felt sure that, with all his experience of Turkey, he would be able to do the nation better service there than anyone else. But his aspirations never got beyond the stage of aspirations. Before leaving Constantinople he had sounded his brothers, and they laughed him out of the project by telling him that he knew "as little of London and interest at Court here, as they did of Constantinople and the Turkish Court there."[268] This, in fact, was the one fatal objection to North, as it was to Rycaut. Either of these gentlemen would have made an ideal envoy at the Porte: no contemporary Englishman could be compared with either in all the essential qualifications for the post. But neither stood the slightest chance; for neither possessed the influence (or, as they said in those days, the "interest") without which qualifications then, as now, were of little account.

The other six suitors were men of weight in Court and commercial circles: Sir Thomas Thynne, Mr Thomas Neale, Major Knatchbull, Sir Phi. Matthewes, Sir Richard Deereham, and Lord Chandos. The last-named candidate was particularly well furnished with the qualifications that count. On one hand, he was connected, though remotely, with the Earl of Berkeley, Governor of the Company, and on the other, very closely, with Sir Henry Barnard, an influential Turkey Merchant whose daughter he had

married. To these merits Chandos had just added by taking his freedom of the Company. Thus amply supported, he made no secret of his hopes to get the appointment; and the event showed that he was right. In the ballot mentioned, he was chosen by 72 voices as against the 55 given for Sir Thomas Thynne. There was some little doubt whether the King would confirm the choice, for Chandos was one of the "petitioning lords"—that is, one of the band of politicians who at that time of extreme party virulence were bitterly hated by the Court and its adherents for ventilating their views in the form of petitions addressed to the Crown: a hate which they repaid with generous interest, the nation being, in fact, divided into "Petitioners" and their "Abhorrers," epithets equivalent to those of "Whig" and "Tory" that were just coming into fashion. Although the King could not punish these importunate patriots, he was not obliged to show them any preference. But, in truth, the very argument used to the disadvantage of Chandos was a very strong one in his favour. Charles at that particular moment had every reason to conciliate the popular party. He therefore magnanimously forgave Chandos his little indiscretion, and before the end of the year 1680 the Letters which accredited "Our Right Trusty and well belov'd James Lord Chandos, Baron of Sudely and one of the Peeres of this Our Kingdome of England" to the Porte, were signed at Whitehall.[269]

Meanwhile Sir John at Constantinople had enough to keep him busy. Two days had hardly elapsed since the adjournment of the case, when he received from Kara Mustafa's Kehayah a request not to write to his king, as the Pasha of Tunis would appear against him no more—the Grand Vizir had freed him wholly from that suit—wherefore he expected a present

commensurate with the service rendered. This was, of course, the logical sequel to the grant of time. Kara Mustafa in putting forward his demand was simply asking, in perfect good faith, for the fulfilment of what he imagined to be a tacit understanding. Sir John, as we have seen, had neither understood himself nor had he asked some more experienced Englishman to enlighten him. So he also in perfect good faith answered that, as to not writing, he could not oblige the Vizir, having already done so. As to his being wholly freed, he could not think himself clear of the Pasha's pretensions until he had a formal sentence given in his favour, and a copy of it delivered to him. Had that been done, the Grand Vizir would not have found him wanting in due acknowledgments, but, as things stood, he was far from having any such security. Although he had appealed to the Capitulations, and to the Pasha's own acquittances, he had been overruled on every point; nay, indeed, he had not heard one word in his favour except from the Cadilesker, who had rejected the Pasha's witnesses. In the circumstances, he was "out of all capacity of answering the Visir's expectation."

The Kehayah, shocked at the Giaour's perfidy, sent him word that he would make him, some way or other, pay the sum demanded thrice over, and drove his Dragomans out of the room with the coarsest abuse, calling them "infidels" and "dogs." The wretched Interpreters fled in dread of being drubbed. Sir John's feelings on hearing of this—who could paint them better than he?

In great amazement, the Ambassador sat down to give an exhaustive account of what had happened to both Secretaries of State at once, so that, if the Earl

of Sunderland should be too preoccupied, he might at least secure the attention of Sir Leoline Jenkins. To Sunderland he writes: “My Lord, affayrs in this Court are incredible, indicible, nay really inconceivable. What is true to-day, is not true to-morrow. No promise is strong enough to bind. No reasons, be they never so cogent, powerfull enough to perswade. Impetuous passion, accompanyd’ with avarice, over rules all Laws and Capitulations....”[270]

The letter to Jenkins is even more pregnant with comments which depict the writer’s mental condition: “This is the State of things. I pray Acquaint his Majesty with it, that the Ambassadour here may be sure not to want Positive Orders and Directions, how to proceed by the end of February; that being the uttmost Time limited by the Visir. Nay Truly, The Violence of the Times here is such that I know not whether they will have Patience with me till the 150 dayes from the first of October are expired. For it may justly be feard, That by the Turkish Violence offerd’ to my Person, and to the Estates of the Kings Subjects under my Protection here, that I may be compelld’ to doe that, which is abhorrent to the Trust reposd’ in me, and my own reason. I have twice in Person appeard’ before this Visir in Publick Divan, a thing that no Publick Minister ever yet durst doe under this Visir, though His Prince was attacqud’. In these Appearances I may modestly say, I usd’ some resolution even when the Visir expressd’ much anger: I gott from Him 150 dayes respite, which I believe He now repents to have granted, thinking that all Ministers will from this Precedent, make the like plea when any demands are made upon them.”

He had written thus far when the Dragomans

whom he had sent to the Porte about the present, given in accordance with the usual etiquette by all ambassadors at the Bairam, returned and told him that the Kehayah had said curtly, They had no need of his presents. If a Turk's demand for bakshish was disturbing, his refusal of bakshish was terrifying. It was an act which, as the poor Ambassador added in his despatch, "every one that knows Turky, knows how to interpret." It meant the Seven Towers. At the best that Ottoman Bastille was a miserable gaol, and even robust ambassadors had been known to contract in it mortal diseases. Sir John was anything but robust. The possibility that at any moment he might find himself shut up in that hideous prison—his body wasting away with sickness and his soul withering with hope of deliverance deferred—was more than he could bear. He closed his despatch with a heart-rending cry, which seems still to ring in the reader's ear across the gulf of the dead centuries: "God Almighty protect me!"[271]

Shortly afterwards the Grand Signor left for Adrianople, followed by the Grand Vizir and his Kehayah, whose parting words to Sir John's Dragoman were: "Let your Ambassador vaunt that he has outwitted us." Outwitted them! when? how? Incredible though it will sound, Sir John even now has no inkling of the tragedy of cross-purposes in which he has entangled himself: so utterly out of touch, after seven years' residence in Turkey, he remains not only with the Turks and their ways, but also with his own countrymen. Any factor at Galata could have solved the riddle for him; his Dragomans likewise. But Sir John is too aloof to ask them for a solution, and they do not volunteer one, because obviously they think that he has, indeed, outwitted the Vizir. Thus, while the world about him admires

his astuteness, Sir John dolefully wonders what the meaning of that cryptic utterance may be. “I am apt to believe,” he repeats, “that the Visir was surprisd’ in granting me 5 moneths time; Upon second thoughts imagining that all Ministers would, upon all demands, from this Precedent, recurr to the same Expedient, which made the Kehaiah tell my Druggerman when he parted, in anger, Let your Ambassadour vaunt that he has outwitted us.” The more he thinks it over, the more probable does this explanation appear to Sir John. But, however that may be, “these things being thus, Wee are not to expect now (what I insinuated in my first letter as possible) any prorogation of time, but rigorous Proceeding. In the meantime how they will deal with Me or the Merchants by their forgery’s and Avanias, God know’s; for the Visir I fear sayes within Himselfe Who has resisted My Will? But at the best if His Majesty’s Commands and Directions accompanyd’ with His Letters to the Visir arrive not by the 27th of February next, The Ambassadour here will be at a great losse.”[272]

Sir John casts about for some means of conjuring away the storm he sees hanging over his head. At length an idea comes to him: those Bairam presents —true, the Kehayah had rejected them once; but what if we paid him the respect of sending them a day’s journey after him, “accompanyd’ with the addition of a rare pendulum, an excellent gold watch, and a long Perspective glasse”? Surely, such an act of humility could not fail to soften even an unspeakable Kehayah’s heart. But alas! the Kehayah is uncajoleable: he dismisses both the olive branch and the dove that brought it with contumely.

The days drag on, and the face of things remains

as black as ever. It is the beginning of November. A month ago Sir John, buoyed up by his imaginary respite, was proud to feel that he had "carry'd this case so high"—that he had made good his bit of resolution—that he was the one mortal who had prevailed, if but for a short season, against the fiend incarnate. But he does not feel at all proud now. The disdainful silence of the Porte somehow cows him more than the vehemence to which he had been subjected before. He lives trembling at what this silence may portend. Utterly mystified and profoundly alarmed, he sends one of his Dragomans to the friendly Hussein Aga "to penetrate into the sense of the Court." The Customer, being the last man who took leave of the Kehayah, would probably know what dark designs lay behind that cryptic utterance. The Dragoman returned just as Sir John finished his report. We have the result in a Postscript. Before the emissary opened his mouth, Hussein of his own accord said that he had twice spoken to the Kehayah, telling him that the King of England had suspended commerce with Turkey (he had the news from the Hollanders) and that now he might as well throw up his office and shut up the Custom-House, as the English were the only people who brought any considerable profit to it. That, he said, had made the Kehayah pause, but had not elicited one word. Next day, he added, he told the Kislar Aga, or Chief of the Black Eunuchs, the same thing. He concluded by sending Finch a message to the effect that he did well to keep up his resolution, for "things at last would end well."[273]

The Customer's information was correct: the Levant Company had decided at a General Court to suspend commerce with Constantinople and Smyrna temporarily, in order to "take from before the Turks

those baits and occasion of temptations which the vastness of our trade hath of late years administered." This resolution they submitted to the King and his Privy Council, for approval, justifying it by a minute account of "the many grievous oppressions" which the English merchants and Ambassador "of late years have sustained and at present labour under in Turkey, by the corruption of the Vizir Azem and other Turkish officers."[274] It was a measure which several times in the past, at periods of similar stress, had been proposed as the only remedy for Turkish greed. But it had never yet been tried, with the result that the Turks, arguing that either the trade was lucrative enough to bear any amount of squeezing or that the English could not subsist without it (in the words of a Cromwellian Consul, "that if they should bore out our eyes to-day, yet we would return to trade with them again to-morrow"), set no limit to their rapacity.

It remained to be seen whether the remedy would prove efficacious now. Certainly the impression which the news of the strike had made on the Kehayah, "if true," was encouraging. Also the Customer's friendly message was comforting. These things revived Sir John's drooping spirits somewhat. But they did not quite exorcise the anxiety that was gnawing at his heart. At no time since the Grand Vizir first declared war on him had the hope of peace seemed more remote. The only consolation Sir John had in his affliction was the knowledge that he was not the only sufferer. All his colleagues were in the same ticklish condition. The Dutch Minister's difficulties have been described. The Bailo of Venice, notwithstanding the vast sums Kara Mustafa had already wrung from him, was faced with a fresh claim on his purse. The Resident of Genoa likewise

groaned under another "avania." Only the French Ambassador seemed exempt: though, after a full twelvemonth, he still continued to refuse audience unless he had it on the Soffah, nothing, "to all men's astonishment," had happened to him: yet even his position was so precarious that he bitterly repented having brought his lady and his daughter, an only child, with him.[275] Sir John noted the troubles of his neighbours with all the fortitude with which we note other people's troubles; but, as the days went by, he was less able to endure his own.

Thus matters stood till the end of November—when the situation underwent a sudden change.

FOOTNOTES:

[259] See Appendix XV.

[260] Finch to Jenkins, Sept. 24, 1680, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[261] The Same to Sunderland, Oct. 2-12, 1680; *Life of Dudley North*, p. 95.

[262] Finch to Jenkins, Sept. 29.

[263] The Same to Sunderland, Oct. 2-12.

[264] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 97.

[265] Finch to Sunderland, Oct. 2-12.

[266] *Register* (*S.P. Levant Company*, 145), p. 71; *Hist. MSS. Com. Seventh Report*, pp. 475, 478.

[267] "To the King's most Excellent Majestie: The humble petition of Paul Ricaut late Consul of Smyrna," *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[268] *Life of Dudley North*, p. 114.

[269] *Register*, pp. 95 foll.

[270] Finch to Sunderland, Oct. 8-18.

[271] The Same to Jenkins, Oct. 8-18.

[272] The Same to Sunderland, Nov. 6-16.

[273] *Ibid.*

[274] *Register*, pp. 73-81.

[275] Finch to Sunderland, Oct. 8-18, Nov. 6-16.

CHAPTER XX

A LULL IN THE STORM

"God be praisd' that I can once write your Lordship Good Newes out of Turky: the Kehaiah of the Gran Visir is cut off!"—with these words Sir John Finch began his next despatch; and then went on to describe "the occasion of the fall of this Tyrant and worst of Men" as follows.

Whilst hunting in the Thracian plain, the Grand Signor had learnt that at Constantinople, despite his edicts against drunkenness, *boza*—a fermented liquor made from millet-seed—was openly sold! In a transport of prohibitionist frenzy, the Sultan ordered all the *boza*-vessels to be smashed. Whereupon the *boza*-sellers submitted to His Majesty a protest: They had not only paid to the Vizir's Kehayah 70 purses for their license, but also bound themselves to pay a similar sum every six months; further, the Kehayah had created a Head for their Guild and vested him with one of the Grand Signor's *kaftans*: was it just, after such a solemn and costly recognition of their trade, that they should have their vessels smashed? When the Hunter heard this, his rage knew no bounds. It was then for this—to enrich a miserable Kehayah—that he had deprived himself of the 400 purses per annum which the wine-tax yielded him!

Let his head fly off—and straightway the Kehayah's head flew off.

Truly a fine piece of work; no finer done in Turkey for many a year; and the fruits of it manifold, immediate and remote, tangible and otherwise. Take this, for a beginning: "His Hoggera's and Houses Seald' Up, and His whole Estate confiscated to the Gran Signor. As yett they have onely opend' one Hoggera, where they found in ready mony 700 Purses, and 500 Purses in rich Persian furniture: They goe on dayly opening the rest, and at last They intend to open His Mansion House. The expectation is of finding No lesse then 3,000 Purses in all; from which hopes if they fall or find any clancular Imbezzlements, they have in hold His two Treasurers, Him of Adrianople, and the other of this Place, who will be forcd' by Torture to confesse all." This is the sum-total: three thousand purses (or a million and a half dollars) amassed in three years! Lost in as few minutes! No people in the world ever were more greedy of wealth than Turkish pashas—or less certain of its enjoyment. But on these aspects of the work—the economic and the moral—Sir John is silent: he feels, perchance, that little which is new can be said of the one, and little which is helpful of the other. Instead, he gives us a glimpse into the fiend incarnate's invisible world, which so long submissive had thus suddenly risen in revolt. Let us, for Sir John's sake, and to illustrate the situation, quote:

"The Visir was extreamly Jealous of two Great Men about the Gran Signor: Soliman, Kehaiah to the former Visir and Master of the Horse at present to the Gran Signor, was one; and the Kisler Aga, the Black Eunuch, was the other. The former, the Visir

endeavourd' to have removed by preferring Him to great Bassalikes. Against the latter He had workd' so farr, that He had separated Him from the Gran Signor and the Queen Regent in this present removall of the Court, under pretence of giving Him the Honour of conducting the Queen Mother to Adrianople. But the Kisler Aga was not without a true friend, the Gran Signor's Secretary, who had Confidence and Witt, and He took upon Him to acquaint the Emperour, that there were dayly Quarrells amongst His Women and that till the Kisler Aga returnd', things would never be in good Order. Hereupon the Gran Signor gives order for His returne and He came doubly armd', First with Presents to the Gran Signor of the value of Seventy Purses to regain His favour; for which the Emperour said to Him, Thou art now Twice My Sonne; then in the Second Place, He caused Seven Men to appear with an Arrs [Memorial] to the Gran Signor, wherein was expressed', That His Majesty having deprived Himselfe of 400 Purses Per Annum, which the Custome of Wines did yield Him, to the End that the Mussulmen might not be drunk and kill each other, that His Ministers had introducd' and licensed the publick Selling of Boza." Hence that smashing of *boza*-vessels and flying off of Kehayah-heads: followed, in the orthodox Turkish course, by sealing up of dollar-crammed hoggeras and houses: a sequence as inevitable as any ever planned by a Harem-bred brain.

Going deeper into this Oriental labyrinth of plots, stratagems, and spoils, our Ambassador adds, though as a thing "which I cannot averr for certain," that secret information of the Imperial rage had been conveyed in advance to the Vizir by one of his creatures, and that Kara Mustafa, to exonerate

himself and to prevent awkward revelations, hastened, before the fatal command arrived, to give a striking demonstration of his public spirit by cutting off his Kehayah's head and sending it to the Grand Signor. Probable enough! Not the least use of the delegation of powers in which the Ottoman polity delighted was to provide a superior with a handy scape-goat—some one upon whom, on emergency, he could shift the responsibility and the odium. The Grand Signor had such a convenient deputy in his Grand Vizir, the Grand Vizir in his Kehayah, and so every other grandee. For the rest, this was not the first time Kara Mustafa had saved his own head by offering up to justice that of another.[276] "But be it as it will,"—what really concerns us—"Dead He is, and a great Blow given by it to the Gran Visir; and many thinke that now the Gran Signor hath once Tasted of Blood that the Sword will not stop here: Nay further the Gran Signor Himselfe hath placd' a New Kehaiah about the Visir who was an Officer of the last Visir and had the reputation of a Man of great Integrity; and when the Gran Signor conferrd' the Charge upon Him, He told Him, Look you to it that things of this Nature doe not passe, else Your Head shall answer for it as Your Predecessours has done. All Men from this one Action expect a great change of Affayrs so that what were judgd' Impossibility's before become Now possibility's, and possibility's become Now Probability's in effecting any thing. The French Ambassadour may Now at last in all likelyhood obtain His Audience upon the Saffà, and Our Affayrs Now give Us also a better prospect." The age of thunder has gone—the lightnings of Kara Mustafa are extinguished for ever! Never, never more shall we tremble at thoughts of the Seven Towers. The

spirit of servitude is dead: hail to Freedom, the nurse of manly sentiment, of that sensibility to "puntiglios," which feels a slight like a wound. The King my Master's honour will once again become a reality, instead of a mockery. All this, and much more of the same exalted nature, we may credibly suppose, radiated through Sir John's mind, as he concluded: "I hope Your Lordship will Every Day hear better Newes and that My Successour will find as great a Calme as I have done a Storm."[277]

In all this one thing stands conspicuous—not by its presence. The opposition to Kara Mustafa in the Seraglio is led by our "good friend" the late Vizir's Kehayah, and by the Kislar Aga who, as we have heard, had with that other good friend of ours, the Customer, a pointed talk about our grievances on the very eve of our great enemy's fall. It is impossible to avoid the surmise that our grievances and the consequent peril to the Grand Signor's revenue had contributed something towards the Imperial fire which consumed the Kehayah. Yet in vain do we search our Ambassador's reports for any hint that he played the humblest part in bringing about the happy conflagration; or for any indication that he tried to feed it, once kindled by others. Some presents to the "Queen Regent"—such as Elizabeth's envoys knew so well how to distribute—one imagines, would not have come amiss. Sir John has here an excellent opportunity of reaching the Grand Signor behind the Grand Vizir's back; and Sir John does not even see, much less stretch forth to seize it! Not to do, but to look on: commenting, chorus-like, upon the wonderful ways of Providence, speculating upon the benefits that may accrue to him from a situation he has neither helped to create nor to consolidate—such is his function in the drama of life.

Does not here, in this monumental inadequacy, properly lie the source of the maltreatments and all the other “sinister Accidents” that befell us ever since that thrice-unfortunate strategic retreat to our bed?

However, in his prognostications, at least, Sir John was not wholly wrong. The fall of his Kehayah had a sobering effect upon Kara Mustafa. It revealed to him the limits of his power and the existence within the Seraglio of elements of danger hitherto unsuspected. With such an example staring him in the face, it was incumbent upon the Vizir to avoid all actions likely to furnish those hostile elements with handles against him: such, for instance, as the persecution of foreign Ministers. The result was a holiday for the Diplomatic Corps. Their Excellencies took advantage of the relief so miraculously vouchsafed them to renew their petty squabbles. Sir John as usual was among the first in the fray. The quarrel was with the representative of Holland: it was, of course, about a point of honour. Let him relate it himself: “According to the Custome sending my Druggerman to wish Him a happy Christmasse (his Christmasse falling Ten dayes before Ours) He Detaind’ Him above half an houre in Expectation of an Answer, and at last His Secretary came out and askd’ my Druggerman what He came for, who saying that He came to His Excellency from me to wish Him Le buone Feste, the Secretary told Him That His Master being now an Ambassadour could not receive a Druggerman but expected My Secretary and so sent Him away, My Druggerman with a smile telling Him, that He just then came from performing the same office to the Holland Ambassadour’s Superiours, for indeed I had sent Him before to the Ambassadour of Venice who receivd’ Him with respect, and afterwards to the Ambassadour of France who was not inferiour in his

Civility's. And really, My Lord, it hath bin a custome near thirty yeares for the Ambassadours to send reciprocally to each other upon this Ceremony their Druggermen, as my Druggermen under their hands have attested to me.... The French Ambassadour is at irreconcilable odds with him, for diverse other neglects He hath receivd' from this Holland Minister, and the Venetian Ambassadour is no lesse sensible of the disrespects placd' upon Him. As for my own Part, I found in few dayes some way of expressing my resentment, for some Holland Merchants comming to wish me a happy Christmasse, I bid my Secretary thank them for their Civility, but withall to tell them that my Character would not permitt me to receive any that depended upon the Holland Ambassadour S. Justinus Collyer, till he had made reparation for the publick disrespect shown to my Character. In short the Truth is My Lord, that when He was Resident onely, He would make himselfe equall to me in challenging Visit for Visit: And now He is but half an Ambassadour He would make Himselfe Superiour to Us all, in pretending that Wee must send Him a Secretary; when Wee three are well satisfyd' with the sending of Our Druggermen to each other."[278]

In this ridiculous way Sir John Finch began the new year—to such account he turned the calm Providence had vouchsafed him. However, the calm continued, and our Ambassador went on anticipating all manner of blessings therefrom, even "it may be hopd' that My Lord Chandos is now also in some possibility of procuring reparation for what is past." Kara Mustafa did nothing to discourage such anticipations. Quite the contrary. Here is an instance. Early in February, Sir John, understanding from the letters which reached the merchants that Lord Chandos was not likely to arrive, at soonest, before

the middle of March, and the time assigned by the Vizir in the case of the Pasha of Tunis expiring at the end of February, thought it necessary to despatch a Dragoman to Adrianople with a letter for the Grand Vizir: "acquainting Him that the King My Master, upon the account of the many Sinister Accidents that befell Me in this Charge, had namd' a New Ambassadour to succeed Me, who was like to come fully instructed; Therefore I desird' the Visir that there might be no further proceeding in that Case till the arrivall of my Successour. To which the Visir readily assented, and that with some Ceremony also, patiently hearing my Druggerman. It is the opinion of all Men, that the fury of this Great Storm is blown over. So great and suddain a change does the taking away one Kehaiah's Head make in this Vast Empire."[279]

When, towards the end of March, the Court returned to Constantinople, Kara Mustafa still lay under this strange spell of uncongenial geniality. Indeed, he was more genial than ever. Sir John had another proof of his curious conversion: "For all the Ministers here sending Him in their Presents at His return, I was forcd' to follow their Example, having more need of Him then all the rest putt together; which, though it was but a small one, He receivd' with great kindnesse, presenting my Druggerman Ten Dollars, though never before He had given Him a Penny."[280] Dollars instead of a drubbing: the Dragoman must have nearly fainted. A change, indeed!

The subordinate officials, as always, took their cue from their Chief. About a month later Sir John wrote to the Levant Company:

"I receivd' two messages at different times from

the Rais Affendi, both to this effect: That I might rest quyett with a contented Heart, in regard that the Bassà of Tunis should give Me No Trouble, He having His beard in His Hand. A third passe was also made to Me, which was, That the Rais Affendi seeing My Druggerman, calld' to Him and askd' whether the Ambassadour of England had any occasion of His service. Laying these things together I sent My Druggerman with this message, That I was extreamly obligd' to Him for His Civilitys, and that reciprocally I desird' to know wherein I could any way's testify my respects to Him; And as to that repeated message sent Me, that neither I nor My Successour need to fear, He having the Bassà of Tunis his beard in His Hand, I desird' Him more particularly to explain it to Me; I having still the power in My Hand to gratify them that should doe me right, and revenge My Cause, though I could, not treat about it. Upon this I receivd' the following answer: That until the new Ambassadour was arrivd' at Smyrna, He could not unfold and open Himselfe fully; but that in the very moment I sent Him notice of my Successour's arrivall there, that He and I should adjust it here.

"What the meaning of this message was I did not then understand, nor doe not as yett fully comprehend. Most certain it is that they doe not yett fully believe that I have a Successour upon the way. Neverthelesse I made this return to Him: In the first place, I thankd' Him for the Civill offices past in behalfe of My selfe and My Successour; and that in case the same Powers rested in Me upon the arrivall of my Successour which now I am invested withall, that I should make use of His favour; but not knowing whether His Majesty's fresh Commands may wholely devest me from power of acting, in case they did I should pray His Excuse, and begg from Him the

same acts of kindnesse towards My Successour."[281]

But strong as was Sir John's desire to believe in the permanence of the change, it did not quite befool him. Notwithstanding these promising appearances, he knew too well that, until the harbour was reached, there could be no sleep with safety. He therefore kept a vigilant eye on the horizon, ready to note every disquieting sign. Such signs became visible before spring was far advanced. The Grand Signor had been prevailed upon to send his Master of the Horse, Kara Mustafa's sworn enemy, away to Mecca—"to see that place repayrd'." From this and several other circumstances our Ambassador deducts, with such sensations as may be imagined, that the Vizir, "after the last violent shock, beginns to take firm root again." In proportion as he regains confidence, Kara Mustafa recovers his natural amiability. Only, pending complete rehabilitation, he deems it expedient to go slowly: where delay was necessary Kara Mustafa could display the most indefatigable patience. Sir John by this time has learnt to read the Vizir pretty accurately. Personally he has nothing to complain of; but his colleagues have. In the past every indication of differential treatment was for him a ground for exultation, for self-glorification. He knows better now: "like a Bear that hath bin freshly bated, I am left to some repose that I might recover strength, whilst other Ministers are brought upon the Theatre." He proceeds to describe the performance. His reports are coloured by prejudice; but it may well be asked whether reporters of any kind ever have described, or could ever have been reasonably expected to describe, much more than the ways in which facts impinge on their own individual minds.

"As to the Holland Resident or Ambassadour, for as yet I know not what to call Him, His Intrigues upon the score of his new sought for Honour alwayes encreasing, and his Titles alwayes diminishing; His Condition is this. By the last conveyance He receivd' Letters of Credence from the States His Masters to the Visir owning Him for their Ambassadour; upon which He demands Audience of the Visir, and Having obtaind' it, He carryd' with Him the Presents of an Ambassadour, viz. 20 Vests, and 2 gold watches. The Visir receives his Presents and bids the Rais Affendi or Chancellour take his Papers; but tells Him that the G. Visir had no power of constituting Ambassadours and that it was presumption in Him to thinke He could, that the G. Signor must have his Letters of Credence and Presents also, and that He must give a Talkish or Memoriall to the Gran Signor of this Proceeding of the Dutch Minister. So He was dismissd' without so much as receiving One Vest, or being perfumd' which is the characteristicall distinction of the reception of an Ambassadour from that of a Resident. The World knows what this meanes, which is mony, and his Enemys say (for I thinke He hath not one friend) that the Summe will amount to 50,000 Dollars; but though mony will be the conclusion of it, yet a farr lesse summe will doe the buisenesse." From the tone of this lively narrative it is plain that Sir John had not forgiven Collyer the disrespect he had placed upon him at Christmas. On the contrary, he had since had fresh causes for annoyance, some of which he shared with the Dutchman's other colleagues and some were peculiar to himself. It appears that, at the audience just mentioned, Collyer, before he sat down, kissed the Vizir's vest, and, moreover, instead of giving the Vizir the usual appellation of Excellency, he

bestowed upon him the title of Highness. For these concessions “all the Ambassadours vehemently exclaim against Him”—“And I have particular Reason to complain of Him for the Visir asking Him, What Newes, He told Him that England was in Civill Warrs and like to be ruind’; the Duke of Yorke being retired into Scotland, whither His Most Christian Majesty had ordred a Fleet in His assistance, but that the States His Masters had ordred 60 sayl of Men of Warr to helpe the Protestants of England against His Royall Highnesse and the Roman Catholicks.”[282]

In view of these grievances, how could Sir John sympathise with the Dutchman’s distress? No such animosity clouds his account of the French Ambassador’s predicament.

M. de Guilleragues, after defying the Grand Vizir for eighteen months, had resolved to force a decision —as he might have said, *brusquer un dénouement*. Letters from his King had reached him for the Grand Signor and the Grand Vizir. In these letters Louis disavowed M. de Nointel’s surrender, demanded audience for his Ambassador on the Soffah, declaring that he would not be satisfied with less, and, in case of refusal, requested leave for him to return home. Guilleragues informed Kara Mustafa through his Dragoman of the arrival of these letters and said that, if the Vizir would not give him audience on the Soffah, he would not present them in person, but deliver them through his Secretary. The Vizir answered that he could not grant the Soffah; and as to the Secretary, he would not do the Grand Signor and His Majesty of France the disrespect to receive Royal letters by other hands than those of the Ambassador. This passage of arms had taken place in March, while Kara Mustafa’s position was still

shaken;[283] and Guilleragues was so confident of victory that he put himself to the expense of rigging out his attendants in new rich liveries, and made many of his gentlemen provide costly clothes for the Audience. But all his thrusts were skilfully parried by Kara Mustafa, who now brought the duel to a halt by telling Guilleragues that, "If he would have audience, he must receive it as the other Ministers had done, or be gone."[284] There was a deadlock.

The whole of Constantinople, from both banks of the Golden Horn, watched this queer combat for a foot-high eminence with breathless interest: Stambul gnashing its teeth at the Giaour's unheard-of impudence; Pera rejoicing, as openly as it dared, at his prowess. For the Soffah was a symbol. To the Turks it typified their superiority, to the Franks their abasement. Therefore all Franks, irrespective of nationality, saw in M. de Guilleragues their gallant champion. Like a paladin of olden times he stood forth as a defender of Christendom and its dignity against the arrogant hosts of Islam. In fighting for the Soffah, the Ambassador of France fought the battle of Europe. The anxiety was universal; but no one felt more anxious than Sir John Finch. To him the recrudescence of Kara Mustafa's obduracy was of ill augury for his own affairs: "Methink's," he wrote with reference to the Pasha of Tunis case, "the Visir should be enclind' to something of Temper in this Concern."[285]

In the midst of these melodramatic doings, news came that Lord Chandos had reached Smyrna in the *Oxford*. Immediately Finch sent a special messenger to inform him of the Rais Effendi's mysterious overtures and to ask for guidance in the matter without delay. "The noble Lord's answer from thence

was that he was hastening all he could to communicate to me His Majesty's Commands and the Company's Instructions, adding that he feard' our latitude was not great on the submissive part."[286] On receipt of this reply, Sir John notified the Rais Effendi that his successor was at Smyrna and that he hourly expected him at Pera: the pulling of the Pasha's beard would have to be put off for a while. That and all other operations henceforth passed out of his hands.

For the first time after many years Sir John felt able to breathe. But patience to a man in a state of suspense is difficult. He counted the days, the hours, he consulted the weather prophets: it was the time of year when the Etesian winds setting N.E. rendered navigation in that corner of the Mediterranean exceedingly slow. The ship, faced by a thousand snares of sea and land, had to struggle along the Asia Minor coast, continually tacking and taking careful soundings, frequently casting and weighing anchor, and casting it again—now before Mytilene, now before Tenedos, until after a whole week's voyage from Smyrna it reached Gallipoli—there to meet the millrace of the Dardanelles. So fierce was the current in that season and, owing to the tortuous nature of the channel, so dangerous, that ships had to wait at the mouth of the Hellespont for the wind to change before they could even enter the Straits. Sometimes they had to wait so long that, it is said, in Byzantine times, the corn which was transported from Egypt to Constantinople rotted on board. Sir John could not wait: "I long for dispatch, all delay being a just ground (if any can be so) of impatience."[287] The moment he heard that the *Oxford* had arrived at Gallipoli, he sent thither a brigantine with twenty oars and four boats to expedite the last stage of Lord

Chandos's journey. His Lordship, no less sensible of the need of dispatch, promptly left the *Oxford* at Gallipoli and with a few servants performed the last 125 miles in the brigantine, landing at Constantinople incognito on Friday, July 22nd, "to my no small joy."[288]

Of course, Sir John could not get away at once. The Pasha of Tunis's beard had to be pulled first. Until that operation was over, he was practically a prisoner. But he relied on Lord Chandos to release him from captivity.

The new Ambassador came armed with a double set of Letters of Credence from the King, two addressed to the Grand Signor and two to the Grand Vizir: the one set was couched in milder, the other in sterner terms; and his instructions were to present the one or the other, as he should think most suitable to the actual posture of affairs and most likely to achieve the end in view—namely, security for the present, guarantees for the future, and, if possible, reparation for the past: all this had to be managed with due regard to "the frowardness of the present Ministers and the state of a fixed and Radicated Tyranny." Courage tempered by circumspection was the word. But a postscript to his Instructions, dictated by the Levant Company, empowered the Ambassador, in case "the Vizier doth persist in his great oppressions upon Our Subjects," to acquaint him (and the Grand Signor, too, if need be) that he would only remain at the Porte until he should receive final directions from home "how to dispose of Our Subjects and their Trade for the future."[289] This, translated into plain language, amounted to a threat of a rupture of relations.

Long has the Majesty of England suffered insult

and injury meekly. But now it would seem meekness had reached its uttermost limit: an august Monarch, a Most Honourable Privy Council—nay, a Company of timorous traders itself—in their despair, had taken to a new course: we were to make a solemn final remonstrance and appeal for justice; failing which, we were to fling down the wet and worthless piece of parchment at the Grand Signor's feet, and depart shaking the dust of his dominions off ours—or, perhaps, not to depart, but to stay on under entirely new conditions: our ambassadors unaffronted, our merchants going to market sure that they shall come back unplundered? or, horrible thought! to fall once more under the yoke, our remonstrances and veiled menaces alike ending—in smoke?

FOOTNOTES:

[276] When Governor of Erzerum, he had by his oppression driven the inhabitants to complain to the Sultan. Ahmed Kuprili shielded him as a kinsman: so the fault was laid upon the Governor's Kehayah, who lost his head, while Kara Mustafa lost only his post. See Finch to Coventry, inclosure in despatch of May 26, S.V. 1677, *Coventry Papers*.

[277] Finch to Sunderland, Dec. 3-13, 1680, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[278] Finch to Sunderland, Jan. 1-11, 1680-81.

[279] The Same to the Same, Feb. 9-19, 1680-81.

[280] The Same to the Same, April 12-22, 1681.

[281] Finch to the Levant Company, May 9-19,

1681.

[282] Finch to Jenkins, May 10-20. The law of retaliation may be pleaded in extenuation of Collyer's garrulity; and, at any rate, what he told the Vizir was the common talk of Europe. The actual facts were as follows: Just then the Duke of York had "obtained leave to retire to Scotland, under pretence still of quieting the apprehensions of the English nation, but in reality with a view of securing that Kingdom in his interests."—Hume, vol. viii. p. 118.

[283] Finch to Sunderland, April 12-22.

[284] The Same to Jenkins, May 10-20.

[285] The Same to the Levant Company, May 9-19.

[286] The Same to Jenkins, July 25.

[287] The Same to Jenkins, July 25.

[288] *Ibid.*

[289] "The Humble Addresse of the Company" "to the King's most Excelent Majestie and to the Lords of his most Honourable Privy Councill," dated Oct. 27, 1680, *Register* (*S.P. Levant Company*, 145), p. 81. The same Register contains the Company's and the King's Instructions to Chandos, the latter dated Dec. 29; the former Jan. 28 (pp. 82-95); copies of the two sets of Credentials, dated Dec. 29 (pp. 95-101); also a supplementary letter from Charles to the Sultan, dated Jan. 24, (pp. 103-4) dealing exclusively with the Pasha of Tunis affair, and demanding "the said Pasha and his false witnesses to be brought to condigne punishment." In his sterner Letter of Credence, Charles desires the Grand Signor "to make enquiry" into, "besides many other insupportable greivances," the taking away "of those Imperiall Capitulations which are the

onely security of their Trade" and "to doe Justice upon all such as shall be found culpable therein."

CHAPTER XXI

RELEASE

How Lord Chandos would have acquitted himself of his delicate mission, had he been left to his own resources, it is impossible to say. As it was, the unaccountable Power which, for want of a better term, we call “luck” seconded him beyond his own or any one else’s most sanguine hopes. Just as he arrived on the scene, the strain between France and Turkey ripened to a crisis.

Besides her grievances against the pashas on the Bosphorus, France had many scores to settle with the pirates of Barbary. Louis had put up with their depredations for eight years—so long, that is, as his war against Holland, Denmark, Spain, and Germany tied his hands. But the pacification of the West had set him free for action in the East. The monarch who had humbled all the Powers of Europe would no longer brook humiliation at the hands of the petty principalities of Africa. He decided to deal with them summarily and, at the same time, with their patron in Stambul: the combination, in truth, was unavoidable, for the corsairs were permitted to prey upon the French even in the ports—nay, in the very towns—that lay directly under the Grand Signor’s rule. Only a few months ago the French Consul at

Cyprus and a French merchant were carried out of their houses during the night aboard a Tripoli man-of-war, and after being soundly drubbed were forced to ransom themselves. M. de Guilleragues could obtain from the Grand Vizir no satisfaction for this outrage; and the pirates improved the occasion by taking a French ship worth 100,000 dollars as it sailed from Smyrna.[290]

So the famous Admiral Duquesne was sent with a squadron to scour the Mediterranean. His orders were to seek and destroy the pirates wheresoever he found them. After sweeping everything before him farther west, Duquesne entered the Archipelago. The Grand Signor's Capitan Pasha met him with his Fleet and asked what he came into these seas for. The Frenchman quoted his orders. "Nay," said the Turk, "the Grand Signor will never allow the Tripolines to be attacked in his own ports." "We shall see about that," replied Duquesne, and made for Chios, where four Tripoli men-of-war and four petaches lay careening with their guns all ashore. The Admiral sailed into the port (July 13, 1681) and, without any ceremony, went for the disarmed pirates. They fled into the Grand Signor's Castle, which fired two guns. Duquesne retorted with thirty, and a message that, if the Grand Signor's Castle protected them, he would knock it down about the ears of the Grand Signor's garrison. The Turks, terrified, desisted from further acts of hostility, turned the Tripolines out, and sent word to the Admiral that they would remain neutral. Duquesne then set to work: in four hours, and at the expense of 8000 shots, he disabled the Tripoline vessels (how he managed not to destroy them does not appear), slaying about 300 of their crews and, incidentally, doing some damage to the town. Some of his shots battered down several buildings, among

them a minaret, and killed some of the inhabitants. Whereupon loud uproar in Stambul: it was the greatest affront the Ottoman Empire had ever received since its foundation! Rumour added that Duquesne had sailed to the Dardanelles, whence he had addressed, through the Turkish commander of the Castles at the Straits, a message to the Vizir demanding to know how the French Ambassador would be treated as to the Soffah and stating that he would shape his conduct accordingly! Cause enough for uproar.

At the Porte all is confusion. Councils are held in quick succession; orders are despatched to the Capitan Pasha to put his Fleet in a place of safety; couriers fly in different directions on secret errands. Until their return, what steps Kara Mustafa will take, no man can tell, he least of all.

Among the French residents all is consternation. M. de Guilleragues, after repeated demands and denials, had only a week before obtained leave for his wife and daughter to depart on the plea of ill-health: now, fearing lest the Porte should cancel the permission, he hastens to send them away; but he is not quick enough: the vessel has fallen down the Sea of Marmara some leagues, the ladies are on the very point of following in a boat, when a peremptory command from the Vizir stops them and compels the vessel to turn back. Simultaneously the Ambassador is summoned to give an account of what was done at Chios; but before he has set out, a countermand comes, ordering him to hold himself ready for another summons. While waiting for this summons, M. de Guilleragues gives out that, when he appears before the Vizir, he will not utter one word, unless he has his seat on the Soffah: he will only hand to

him the King's letters—which all these months still remain undelivered—and, let him do his worst, Kara Mustafa shall have no other answer. Very fine—but the French merchants, in great alarm, apply to the various foreign Ministers to save the best of their effects.

The English await developments with tense interest: "Every day is like to produce great matters," writes Sir John, and the writing, much larger and with wider spaces between the lines than usual, illustrates his excitement. "The result of these resolute orders of His Most Christian Majesty can end in nothing mean." France, he thinks, has gone too far to draw back: she must either come to an absolute breach with the Porte, or "make the Proud Heads of this place to stoop"—in which case all Christendom will reap the benefit: "If the Turk once finds that things are not tamely putt up, transactions here will be more easy, and I hope My Lord Chandos will find the good effect of this passe."[291]

The anticipation was abundantly verified. Chandos made the most of this fortunate conjuncture. During the weeks he remained incognito waiting for the *Oxford*, he prepared the ground, and in his audience with Kara Mustafa he delivered the sterner letter from the King: the Vizir read it through most carefully and bade the Ambassador welcome, without any allusion to its contents. But it was obvious that he had been deeply impressed; and the Ambassador did not fail to strike while the iron was hot. He struck so vigorously and skilfully that by the 5th of September he had obtained full satisfaction on the two main points: The money extorted from Finch for the Capitulations was refunded to the Treasurer of the Levant Company by Kara Mustafa's Jew, who,

to save the Grand Vizir's face, pretended that it came out of the dead Kehayah's hoard. This was a triumph of which Chandos might well be proud—restitution of money had never yet been procured from a Turk; and it was followed by another, not less pleasant: in his own words, "the false demand upon his Excellency for a prodigious sum of money by the Pasha of Tunis is also for ever damn'd by the most valid way in their Law we could desire without parting with one asper." And even that was not all: "We are also now promised several other Articles of considerable benefit to trade in these parts and shall have them in our custody in a few days." On one point only the Ambassador found the Vizir adamant and was forced by the haste which the Company's interests required not to lose time in disputing it, but to accept his "parole of honour that if any prince in the world ever had the priviledge of the Suffra we should have it the first"—a promise which the Vizir had no difficulty in making, as he went on to add that "heaven should be earth and earth heaven before any such thing should be condescended to by them!"[292] That a man, while parting with solid cash, should cling so passionately to an empty form, is but another manifestation of the mysterious workings of the official mind. However, we were more than satisfied with a liberality which would have been more meritorious, but could not have been more welcome, had it been voluntary.

At the same time Lord Chandos obtained leave for Sir John to depart when he pleased. But alas! the boon which a little while ago would have filled Sir John with joy found him now unable to enjoy anything. On the 22nd of August his friend Baines had been seized with a malignant double tertian, of which he was very certain that he would die, in

accordance with the method of Providence. “For,” he told Finch, “God had under many diseases preserved him so long as he could be any wayes usefull or serviceable to me, but that now, returning into England where my friends were all so well in their severall posts, he could no longer be of any use to me, and therefore God would putt a period to that life which he onely wished for my sake.”

His comrade’s condition, reacting upon Finch’s own system through the subtle laws of sympathy, “cutt off the thread of all my worldly happinesse and application to business,” so much so that he himself fell ill of a tertian. Then, on September 5th, the very day on which the leave to depart was brought to him, Baines died: the friend from whom during thirty-six years he had never been separated for more than a week or two at a time—“the best friend the world ever had, for prudence, learning, integrity of life and affection”—was taken away from him.

For this calamity Sir John’s mind ought to have been prepared. About a year before, while he and Sir Thomas were sitting in their gallery after supper, there came upon the table a “loud knocking.” Such was the first warning. The second was not less significant. A few days before Sir Thomas’s illness one of Sir John’s teeth dropped out of his head without any pain whilst they dined together: “which,” notes the ex-Professor of Anatomy, “seemes to confirm the interpretation of those who make the dreaming of the losse of a tooth to be the prediction of the losse of a friend.”[293]

These reflections, however, came to poor Sir John afterwards. At the moment he was not in a state for coherent thought of any kind. The blow fell upon him with all the stupefying force of an unforeseen

catastrophe: it prostrated him: his tertian rose to a double continual tertian, which reduced him to such weakness that he was given over by his physician and all others. Thus he lay, forlorn, desolate, broken in mind and body, for about a fortnight. By September 22nd, however, he had recovered sufficiently to indite a lengthy despatch, in which, after touching upon his bereavement, he gives the sequel of the French Admiral's exploit.

So far the only outcome of the debates held at the Porte had been an embargo imposed on French ships and men throughout the Empire. The Turks did not find themselves in a condition to express greater resentment; for Duquesne's squadron, small as it was, was "more than doubly able to fight all the force the Ottoman Empire is able to make appear at sea. So that, contrary to the bilious and proud procedure of this Court, they go on with Spanish phlegm. The Porte are very sensible that France can doe them all manner of mischief, both by its power and its vicinity, and that they can take no other but the small, pitifull revenge of exercising their indignation upon the French Ambassadour and as many of the King's subjects as reside in the Empire." The Tripolines, left in the lurch, sued for peace. But "Mons. de Quesne refusd' to treat with such a company of rascalls." Some fruitless negotiations between the Admiral and the Capitan Pasha ensued. Then, Sir John adds three weeks later, a courier from the Capitan Pasha came with the news that the Admiral had blocked up his whole Fleet in the port of Chios. On receipt of this fresh instance of the Giaour's temerity, "the heat of the Gran Signor was such that he ordred the Gran Visir to send for Mons. de Guilleragues and send him to the Seven Towers. The Visir sent for the Ambassadour using great

threats towards him; but his Excellency carry'd himselfe with great courage, not onely refusing to sit below the Saffa, but being pressd' to doe it, kickd' his stool down with his feet, and then delivring the Letter from the King his master, which for more than 8 moneths the Visir had refusd' to receive." When Kara Mustafa urged reparation for the affront and damage done to the Grand Signor's port of Chios, M. de Guilleragues retorted that the King of France had received none for the affront and damage done to his Consul and subjects at Cyprus, concluding that, "it was as lawfull for the King his Master to set upon his enemy's in the Gran Signor's ports, as for them to attack the French." Thanks to his "dexterous and resolute prudence," the French Ambassador was only detained in custody of the Chaoush-bashi for a while, and then, on signing a paper to acquaint his Most Christian Majesty with the Grand Signor's desires, was released; and it was thought now that in the agreement the point of the Soffah would be included. "Certainly Mons. de Guilleragues has shown himselfe in this a Great Minister."[294]

This is Sir John's last official report from Pera. While penning it, he was busy with his preparations for leaving a spot to which he was now bound by nothing save memories of suffering. Every hour he passed in that house only accented his sense of desolation. With Sir Thomas Baines all that had made Turkey bearable had vanished. He was no longer there to support him. The hapless bachelor, physically and mentally worn out, and relieved of all public concerns, had now nothing to do but brood over his personal grief. He was like a shipwrecked mariner stranded on an alien and hostile shore. His one desire was to hasten home. It is much to his credit that of all this inner misery the only hint we

have is contained in a paragraph of unwonted self-restraint: "I with some impatience attend the recovery of my health that I may be once freed from the commands of a Goverment so irregular that they are wholely irreconcilable to all methods of reason and honour and return into my native soyl."[295]

It was with the same wish, expressed in the same words, that Sir John had left his "native soyl" in 1673. Eight years had passed—had he known what lay at the end of it all, would he have had the strength to persevere? And now, more than ever, he languishes for home: the longing grows, as the days go by. At last, in November 1681, he set sail in the *Oxford*, carrying with him the body of his friend embalmed. But he was destined to have one more experience of Kara Mustafa's "irregular goverment" at Smyrna, where the *Oxford* put in that she might take under her escort four English merchantmen which lay there richly freighted. The convoy was ready for its homeward voyage, when a command from the Porte forbade it to sail. Why, oh why had he not departed two months ago? Why had he waited to recover: will accidents never cease to dog his steps? Without sharing Sir John's superstition, no one that studies his life can help being struck by the continuity of his bad luck: everything seems to go wrong with him—not always through any wrong calculation of his own; and when something lucky happens, it is not he that reaps the gain and the glory, but his successor.

The causes of this latest check were as follows:

The panic into which Duquesne's feat had thrown the Porte had subsided. The French admiral was still cruising about the Levant coasts, but did nothing. Kara Mustafa saw that he had little to fear from

France. Nor had he much to fear from England. Scarcely had Lord Chandos received satisfaction for past injuries, and he had not yet received the additional privileges promised to him, when news reached Constantinople that English ships laden with a vast estate were on their way to Turkey. For this injudicious precipitancy the Levant Company was not to blame, but only some members of it, our old friend Dudley North chief among them. For reasons of his own he had from the first opposed the suspension of trade, and now, by representing the scheme to the King and the Privy Council, through his brother the Lord Keeper, as a treacherous design inspired by the Opposition with a view to hurting the Royal Exchequer, he got the Government to force the merchants to rescind all they had done.[296] The result was such as might have been foreseen. Kara Mustafa, concluding that the English were anxious for trade at any price, decided to make them pay for the blow they had dealt at his purse and his pride. All that he needed was a specious pretext; and he had not far to look for one.

The English by their Capitulations were obliged to pay a 3 per cent export duty on silk. But the Turks, to avoid fraud—an art in which foreigners surpassed the natives—preferred to collect this duty from the native seller, who charged it to the foreign buyer and handed over to him together with the goods the official receipt. Such had been the established practice for over thirty years. Nevertheless, the letter of the law remained unaltered; and it was in this pure technicality that Kara Mustafa found his pretext. Suddenly our merchants were called upon to pay the duty on all silk they had exported for five years past, a sum amounting to over 100,000 dollars, and it was suspected that this was only a beginning,

the intention being to extort ultimately the duty for the whole thirty years. On their refusal to comply, the Customer of Smyrna stopped the ships which the *Oxford* was to convoy.

Lord Chandos was summoned by the Grand Vizir to the Divan and asked if his Nation ought not, in accordance with their Capitulations, to pay a 3 per cent duty. He replied in the affirmative. “But,” said the Vizir, “do you?” Chandos naturally answered that the duty was paid by the sellers on account of the buyers. “Oh,” said Kara Mustafa, “that shall not serve your turn. The sellers are the Grand Signor’s subjects, and he may lay what he pleases on them. What they paid was on their own account, but you must pay for yourselves,” and, without further argument, he gave a kind of sentence against the English. The Ambassador protested, but was told that, if he did not obey, he should be put in irons, and was sent away to think about it. What a clap of thunder to our merchants: their victory turned suddenly into a ruinous disaster!

Chandos thought of nothing less than submitting; but Finch, who itched to see the last of Turkey, positively declared that he would not stay more than a few days: if the matter was not settled quickly, he would sail in the *Oxford*, leaving the four merchantmen behind. Chandos considered what this would mean: an indefinite detention of the ships, to the great loss of freighters and owners, not to mention the danger of confiscation. He therefore offered the Vizir 25,000, 40,000, 55,000 dollars. But all these offers were rejected. Thereupon the English had recourse to “other means, wherein by a marvellous Providence we succeeded.” This providential intervention consisted of a bribe of 12

purses, or 6000 dollars, administered to the Smyrna authorities. It acted like a charm: the vessels were suffered to slip away, and Sir John was able to pursue his voyage in peace.[297]

The shores of Turkey gradually merged in the sea-mists. That harsh Eastern world lay hushed behind him. Before him, ready to welcome the exile, friendly Italy; and beyond, England, dear relatives, and leisure, and rest.

On January 18th, 1682, we hear of the ex-Ambassador's arrival at Argostoli on the island of Cephalonia, where he was treated by the Venetian Governor very courteously.[298] On March 11th he was at Leghorn, purchasing Italian pictures, statues, and wines. From Marseilles he intended to travel overland to Calais in a litter; but he changed his mind and continued his journey by sea, visiting Seville on the way and purchasing Spanish wines. By the time he reached the Downs he had with him, besides some sixty trunks, nineteen enormous chests of books, twenty-three of Italian pictures and statues, fifteen of Florence wine, a butt of Smyrna wine, and six of Saragossa. From the *Oxford* he wrote to his nephew, giving him minute directions about this baggage: "I believe a barge will be most convenient as I can put three or four trunks upon it which cannot well be left for any other passage." The chests of books and pictures and statues "will require a hoy or vessell that hath a dry hold to keepe them from rain above and sea water below." "If wine in bottles pay no custome, I will have 50 dozen bought for me with good corks."[299]

That a man who had suffered such a bereavement should have any thoughts left for pictures and statues; that he should, to the sad cargo of his

friend's coffin, be adding chests of wine and ordering corks, may to the impercipient seem strange, and to the cynical convey a suggestion of insincerity. But those acquainted with the psychology of grief will understand. In reality it was distraction from thought which these thoughts brought him. Sir John sought some antidote—he felt the need, which certain natures under the stress of intolerable sorrow feel, of turning to commonplace occupations, of busying himself with trivial details, as the only means of reducing the dreary melancholy which else would crush him utterly.

His attempt was rewarded by a measure of success. Although during the early part of the voyage he had been so depressed that he made his will, in July he landed on his "native soyl" in much better spirits than he could have hoped "after so much weaknesse and sicknesse and sorrow." But the rally was only temporary: the anxieties, the mortifications, the apprehensions he had endured at Constantinople had undermined his delicate constitution: the worm of grief had gnawed too far into his heart for anything to be remedial now; and after laying the remains of Sir Thomas in the chapel of Christ's College, Cambridge, as if the last frail tie that held him to life had snapped, Finch himself succumbed to an attack of pleurisy on the 18th of November 1682.

His body was conveyed to Cambridge and buried, as he had desired, beside his friend's under the tomb which is still visible: a marble monument, the laboured elegance of which reflects the Italian tastes of the age and of the men in whose joint memory it stands. It is adorned with a Latin epitaph from the pen of Henry More—the tutor who had first introduced the two friends to each other. Thus years

that were far asunder were bound together, and the hand which had started Sir John and Sir Thomas on their common course rounded off its common end.

Beneath that stone the Ambassador whose doings and sufferings we have witnessed sleeps quietly—the sleep of clay and dust. Of all those agonies and vanities: emotions once so real and vibrant—of that personality so impulsive, so susceptible to flattery, so prone to anger and fear—remains only a pale reflection in the letters we have deciphered. Out of those fussy despatches he who cares may still call up the phantom of Sir John Finch: there, if anywhere, he still lives—a soul infinitely pathetic.

For Sir John was nowise great; and such elements of greatness as may have been in him were frustrated by his one life-long attachment. From the time he met Baines, Finch lost every chance of self-development and self-realisation. Tied, heart and mind, to that monotonous, masterful pedagogue, he never used his own powers. The universe had contracted round him to the narrow circle limited by that pedant's exiguous vision. How completely Baines kept the world, its inhabitants, and its interests from Finch may be seen from the fact that, after seven years' residence, our Ambassador knew almost as little of Turkey as on the day of his landing. During all those years the realities about him took a second place in his thoughts: the first place was filled by abstractions according to Sir Thomas: on Sundays the twain composed essays on Theology, and on week-days they talked what Sir Thomas imagined to be Philosophy. Life-long tutelage must have a debilitating, devitalising effect; and it can hardly be questioned that the benignant Baines exercised over his friend a most malignant

influence. Not intentionally, of course: Baines, we are persuaded, meant well; but much of the mischief done on this planet is done by people who mean well.

It was a sound instinct that made Finch shy at public life. As a diplomat he displayed all the faults of one to whom zeal and judgment had not been given in equal proportions. He was not born for diplomacy: certainly not for Turkish diplomacy. In all those oscillations of mood and fluctuations of the will which he so naïvely betrayed when wrought up by his feelings, we see a temperament very ill adapted to a profession which requires above all things coolness and firmness. That he failed at Constantinople cannot be disguised. But, despite his foibles and his friend, he would have done as well as any average ambassador, if he had had no exceptional difficulties to contend with. So much is clear from his history: as long as the sun shines and the waters are smooth, we see him steering on, happily enough; as soon as the tempest bursts, the helm slips from his hold and he flounders on in thick darkness, inward and outward—a fair-weather pilot, like many another. To drop metaphor, the man—everything reckoned—was essentially a victim of circumstances: chief among them the death of Ahmed Kuprili. Even more mediocre natures would have succeeded under that Grand Vizir; under Kara Mustafa only talents of the very first order could have availed. And it is poignant to reflect what a trifle would have turned Sir John's failure into a success: had he accepted the Turkish Embassy when it was first offered to him, in 1668, his career at Constantinople would have terminated before the death of Ahmed—on such little ironies hang the destinies of poor mortals.

FOOTNOTES:

[290] Finch to Sunderland, Nov. 6-16, 1680.

[291] Finch to Jenkins, July 25, 27, 1681.

[292] Chandos to Jenkins, Sept. 23, St. Vet. 1681.

[293] Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 72.

[294] Finch to Jenkins, Sept. 22, Oct. 14-24.

[295] *Ibid.*

[296] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 171-2.

[297] Chandos to Jenkins, April 17-27, 1682; Petition of the Levant Company to the King in *Register*, pp. 114-17; *Life of Dudley North*, p. 98.

[298] Sir Clement Harby to Jenkins, Zante, Feb. 10, 1681-82, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[299] Malloch's *Finch and Baines*, p. 77.

CONCLUSION

The death of Sir John Finch forms so fitting an end to the drama in which he bore a principal, if not a leading, part that, in a work of the imagination, any further addition would have been an artistic crime. But in a book like the present the claims of artistic fitness must yield to those of historic completeness.

After getting their ships out of the Vizir's clutches, the English endeavoured to come to an arrangement with him on the basis of their original offer of 55,000 dollars, in which the sum paid at Smyrna should be included; but they failed. Kara Mustafa, infuriated, meant to have his revenge; and a few days later he summoned the merchants to the Porte —the merchants only, for his policy now was to treat the matter as a quarrel between them and the Customer—a purely commercial lawsuit in which neither the King of England nor his representative had any concern. But Lord Chandos would have none of these fictitious distinctions. He assembled all the merchants in the Embassy, and when the Chaoush came to fetch them, he positively refused to let them go without him. After a day's parley, he carried his point; and so, on Sunday morning, January 15th, 1682, Ambassador and merchants went together. They were shown into the Kehayah's room, where

they found, besides that officer, the Chaoush-bashi, the Customer, and three or four other dignitaries. The discussion soon degenerated into a violent altercation, until the Kehayah, proceeding from words to deeds, ordered a Chaoush to seize the two chief merchants, Montagu North and Mr. Hyet. Chandos at once interposed and, getting hold of them, declared that he would go to prison in their place: he was there to act as surety for the Nation under his protection. “No, no,” said the Kehayah, “the King of England and the Grand Signor are good friends, and you shall be treated accordingly: this is a mere matter of trade, in which the merchants are the only parties concerned,”—and he asked his Lordship to sit down and drink his coffee and sherbet! His Lordship hung on to the prisoners, as the Chaoush dragged them out—he hung on to them across the courtyard: the Chaoush pushed him off, but he still hung on with true bull-dog tenacity: so that the Chaoush had to resort to a ruse: he carried the prisoners back into the house, shut Lord Chandos out, and got them off by a back-door.

Baulked, angered, thoroughly disgusted, the Ambassador mounts his horse and returns home—to plan such measures as the situation demands. That afternoon he seals up all the English warehouses at Constantinople and despatches to the Smyrna Factory notice to provide against the worst. During the following days he plies the Vizir with memorials, messages, petitions for audience—“too tedious to relate”; to all of which he receives but one answer: the Vizir has given him an audience on his arrival, he has also seen him since about the business in dispute, and has heard all that could be said on that subject: the Grand Signor will soon be back: His Excellency will have an audience of him then, and an

opportunity of saying anything he has to say. An appeal to the Mufti falls equally flat: the Mufti stands in too much awe of Kara Mustafa. And meanwhile our merchants remain in custody: for a month and a week they keep in tolerable health, but on the thirty-ninth day one of them sickens: he seizes the chance of a visit from the Ambassador's Dragoman to say in Turkish that he will not die there—if he owes any man anything, he is ready to pay; if he has committed any crime, let his head fly. All he demands is justice: since the Ambassador cannot free him, he has slaves in his house, and he will send one of them to the Grand Signor with a pot of fire on his head![300] This threat, it was thought, reported to the Vizir by one of his spies, produced, or contributed towards producing, the desired effect. Soon afterwards Kara Mustafa agreed to Chandos's original proposal that, for 55,000 dollars, he should condemn his own sentence and absolve the English from all such claims, past and future. The bargain struck, our prisoners, after forty-two days' confinement, were released, and the Ambassador reported home:

"Thus are we restored to free commerce with these unrightuous people once again, how long it may continue is past my guess for never was there a people more false and ficle in theyr words then I have found thos here I have had to doe with ... but I consider'd it the duty of a faithfull servant to his master to avoid all is possible the necessity of pushing disputes to such extremities as to bring a war or great dishonor on his master and for this reason in the first place and secondly in regard to trade which would infallibly have receiv'd a deadly blow had their violence byn a little more provok'd for 'tis most certain that we have stuck many days at the pit's brink.... I had my *ar's* ready to have gone in

person to the Visier and G: Signor but was overcome and prevented by the merchants reasons and intreaties and I hope all is for the best for there is not one instance of any one's having ever got any good by wrangling with this Visier."[301]

In adjusting this avania Lord Chandos had hoped, as he tells us, to find "some faire quarter" in other matters; but he soon found that "there is no peace with the wicked." When he applied for his Audience of the Grand Signor, Kara Mustafa demanded an extraordinary present—not, he explained, as a price for the Audience, but as a recognition of the great favour he had done us by letting us off the silk claim on such easy terms. Chandos replied that all he had parted with was to purchase the Vizir's goodwill, and he was willing to strain yet further to give him satisfaction; only he entreated his patience till the Audience was over, lest it should be said that he had paid money for it: which, being an alteration of the ancient practice between the Crowns, imported much more than his head was worth. This reply, in spite of its urbanity, set the Vizir in a mighty passion: he doubled his demand, and, as the Ambassador took no notice, he refused to let him deliver his Credentials. Moreover, every time an Englishman was sued before the Divan, Kara Mustafa condemned him out of hand; and, in short, missed no chance of showing his malice against us. Not that we enjoyed the exclusive monopoly of his rancour. The Dutch underwent a fresh fleecing on the same pretext as the English—silk export duties—and were glad enough to compound for 25,000 dollars; the Venetians were forced to pay ten times that sum by way of reparation for an affray between their own and some Turkish subjects in Dalmatia—it was, in truth, reparation for wrongs suffered rather than inflicted,

but that made no difference: the Bailo, finding reason useless, had to employ “the rhetorick of chequins”—’twas the only means “to make faire weather with a Visier who is of a temper to doe anything for mony and nothing without it.” When describing to the Secretary of State how he and his colleagues fared at the hands “of this greivous oppressor of all Christians,” Chandos ventured to drop a hint that His Majesty might, “if the intolerable tyranny of this vile Minister receiv’s not a speedy check,” find “some other way to make him sensible of His iust indignation”—some way more “becoming His great wisedome and high honor.” But what could poor, lazy Charles do, where the haughty and energetic Louis was content to eat humble pie by the plateful? It was, indeed, the “submission,” as the Turks very correctly called it, of the French Padishah that had raised Kara Mustafa’s rapacious insolence to its present pitch. This brings us to the conclusion of the Chios exploit in which the Franco-Turkish quarrel had culminated.

Nothing more humiliating for Christendom, nothing better calculated to inflate Ottoman arrogance, could be imagined. The French Admiral, after hovering aimlessly about the Dardanelles with his squadron for nine months, sailed away leaving the French Ambassador to pay for his feat. It was no longer a question of exacting satisfaction for past insults, but of averting imminent calamities: M. de Guilleragues had to fight not for a stool, but for safety. A three days’ struggle ensued—the French gazettes of the time styled it an “audience.” The first day, when the Ambassador was brought before the Vizir, he spoke and acted with spirit; but Kara Mustafa, unimpressed by what he knew to be empty bluster, ordered him to be locked up. Three days’

confinement brought M. de Guilleragues to reason: he signed a bond to pay within six months an indemnity thinly veiled under the euphemism of a "galantaria" emanating from his private pocket—"a present of such value as became a Chivaliere." When the six months expired, the "present" was duly tendered, but was rejected as falling short of what became a Chevalier in distress to give or a victorious Pasha to receive. After some kicking against the pricks, the Ambassador submitted to a valuation of his "galantaria" by experts appointed by Kara Mustafa, with the result that he was "screw'd up to 100 purses, that is, 50,000 Dollars." This was for the Grand Signor. "What he paid the Visier himself and his inferior officers, by his own confession, came to between 15,000 and 20,000 Dollars and most of this mony was taken up at 18 or 20, and some at 22 per cent."

Thus the long-drawn-out duel between the wig and the turban ended in a decisive victory for the turban. It was not pleasant to witness "the barbarous triumphing of the Turks over all Christians upon this their success against the French, for the Turks judge all things by the event and impute all that hitts right to the great wisedome and conduct of their Visier, for in this business they say (according to their proverb) the Visier *caught a hare with a cart*, and the French who are the loosers have nothing to say, which is hard according to our English proverb." Nothing to say—they who a few months before "made many high brags of great wonders they resolv'd to doe."[302]

But in ascribing their triumph to Kara Mustafa's genius the Turks paid him a tribute to which he was not entitled. The causes of the French defeat lay in

Paris rather than in Stambul. Louis was a calculating politician as well as an arrogant prince. His arrogance prompted him to beard the Turks, his policy forbade him to break with them. It was essential for the success of his ambition in the West that the German Empire should be engaged in the East; and he did not hesitate to purchase the co-operation of Kara Mustafa at any price. Kara Mustafa, on his part, had long nourished the wish to attack Austria, and he had a good opportunity of doing so in the first two years of his Vizirate, when the French harassed the Emperor on one side and the Magyars on the other; but, with characteristic acumen, he had chosen to go to a profitless war with Russia and to postpone the realisation of his favourite dream to a less convenient moment. However, Louis thought, better late than never.

In the meantime, while these machinations were maturing, Kara Mustafa sharpened his sword. Chandos heard of "nothing soe much as the drawing togeather of great forces from all parts of this vast Empire,"[303] and, though he prayed "God defend all Christians from the violence of Turks," he could not help feeling that in a long-protracted war lay his only hope of escaping further molestation. It was therefore with profound relief that he saw the Vizir make his stately exit from Constantinople: "nor doe we dispair of God's mercy either to convert him from or confound him in his malice against us before his returne."

Of the two contingencies it was the more probable that came to pass; and, if the English had good reason to attribute the aggravation of their woes to the Machiavellian policy of Louis, it was to that same policy that they owed their final deliverance.

Kara Mustafa, in the spring of 1683, marched north at the head of as numerous an army as ever Grand Vizir led—the whole strength of the Ottoman Empire was bent against Austria. With this host, augmented, too, by Hungarian rebels, he crossed the frontier, traversed Hungary performing miracles of ferocity and perfidy, and, not finding in his way either fortified towns or armies capable to arrest his progress, penetrated to the very gates of Vienna (July 14, N.S.). At the approach of the enemy the Emperor Leopold fled with precipitation, leaving the Duke of Lorraine with a small force to defend his capital.

The unhappy citizens, isolated and abandoned by their natural protector, presented to the world a memorable example of courage and initiative. But hunger and disease soon began to decimate them. Of succour there was no sign. The beleaguered city seemed doomed, and with it the whole of Central Europe. Only a combination of chances could save Vienna.

Such a combination was provided by Kara Mustafa's multiform imbecility. Eager to secure the treasures of the Hapsburg capital for himself, he declined to stimulate the ardour of his soldiers with the promise of plunder and avoided a general assault which could have reduced the town before the arrival of relief, hoping to take it intact by capitulation. Being as arrogant as he was greedy, he disdained to keep himself informed of the movements of the enemy, took no measures to prevent their passage of the Danube, and allowed them to concentrate close behind his camp without the slightest opposition. At the very moment when Vienna seemed ready to succumb, John Sobieski joined the Imperial forces under the Duke of Lorraine

on the neighbouring heights.

Next day (Sept. 11, N.S.) this army of only 77,000 men descended to the plain like an irresistible avalanche and beat Kara Mustafa's host into confusion, defeat, destruction. Some ten thousand Turks remained dead on the field of battle. The rest, including the Grand Vizir, fled leaving behind them their guns, their tents, their archives, and all their colours except the sacred standard of the Prophet. Not the least notable item in the long list of loot was the Grand Vizir's pavilion: a miniature palace surrounded by baths, gardens, and fountains: which that night afforded a luxurious resting-place to the happy King of Poland—the King whose ambassadors Kara Mustafa had treated as we have seen. And so in a few hours the cloud that had hung over Central Europe for months melted away.

This rout, aggravated by some other disasters which overtook shortly afterwards the demoralised Ottoman army, exhausted the Grand Signor's favour for his Vizir. Kara Mustafa's enemies at Court fanned the Imperial wrath to a white heat, and an Aga was sent to Belgrade, where the would-be conqueror had retired, with orders to relieve him of his head. The Aga arrived on December 25th (N.S.) after sunset; and before sunrise he had fulfilled his mission. Thus perished, in the height of his pride, one of the most wicked Ministers, and one of the weakest-minded, that ever tyrannised over a country. His death was lamented only by those few who had had no cause to regret his birth.

Kara Mustafa's disappearance brought comparative peace and contentment to foreign residents in Turkey. Not long afterwards Lord Chandos had the Audience from which he had been debarred for three

years, and after a prosperous career this shrewd and sturdy Englishman retired, in 1687, with a full purse. [304]

But for Kara Mustafa's country there was neither peace nor contentment. The discomfiture before Vienna afforded a revelation of Turkey's weakness which tempted Russia and Venice to join Austria and Poland in what they called a "Holy League." As we have seen, they all had many scores to settle with the Porte. They settled them now with a vengeance. From 1684 on to 1699 this struggle for dominion and plunder raged under the name of religion. The religious fervour of the Moslems was not less holy than that of the Christians, but Allah fought on the side of the majority. Misfortune followed misfortune and loss came on the top of loss. In 1687 the Turks thought to change their luck by changing their Sultan. But to no purpose: the cycle of their misfortunes went on unbroken. Famine, fires, and insurrections at home heightened the dismay caused by defeats abroad, until at last the mighty Ottoman Empire, stripped of vast territories, distracted, and utterly spent, had to seek the mediation of the Maritime Powers—England and Holland. Lord Pagett and Jakob Collyer, the successors of the diplomats whom Kara Mustafa had outraged so grievously, tried in 1699 to rescue what was possible from the wreck Kara Mustafa had wrought. (Peace of Carlowitz, Jan. 26.)

Not long after this remarkable instance of historic retribution, one of Kara Mustafa's victims reappeared upon the stage. Mrs. Pentlow had, on his fall, endeavoured to obtain reparation for the injury done to her, and the new Grand Vizir, our old friend Soliman, Ahmed Kuprili's suave Kehayah, was very willing to see both that and our other claims settled

out of his enemy's estate. But the Grand Signor, who had confiscated that estate, demanded due proofs, which was demanding the impossible. Avanias were always so conducted that hardly any one besides the persons concerned knew the details: the Turks concerned were Kara Mustafa's creatures who, on his death, were dispersed; the evidence of his Jew and of our Dragomans was inadmissible against True Believers; the only witness who could have helped us was the Chief Customer; but Hussein Aga would not, for prudential reasons, come forward.[305] So the matter dropped, and Mrs. Pentlow went away to England, where she married a member of the St. John family, apparently resigned to her loss. But she had not abandoned all hope, and in the autumn of 1700, when our Ambassador was basking in the sun of popularity, she arrived at Constantinople with her daughter, now grown into a fine young "Mrs. Susanna Pentlow," and a letter from the Earl of Jersey, Secretary of State, to Lord Pagett, requesting him to use his influence for the recovery of the Smyrna estate.

Lord Pagett enjoyed among the English in the Levant the reputation of a diplomat who made "no great figure at Court, contenting himself with being feared by his own nation."[306] And in this case he did precisely as the unfortunate Sir John Finch would have done. He indited a lengthy despatch in which he gave five different reasons why he could do nothing. The records of the Porte had been lost before Vienna, and without them no claim would be considered. The widow had no documents to prove her case. By the Turkish law all debts for which no demand had been made for fifteen years were invalid. The Vizir then in power was the son of Kara Mustafa's sister who was still alive, and there was

nobody in the whole of the Ottoman Empire who respected the memory of that “unfortunate great man” so much or who showed a stronger devotion to his family. Lastly, the Turkish Government had no money to pay off its soldiers and sailors, all of whom were clamouring for their long overdue stipends: “and while pressing, clear, just debts can’t be got in, there’s little hopes of recovering an old, doubtfull, litigious pretence, pursued upon a very cold scent.”[307] His Lordship therefore advised that the matter should be allowed to rest till some favourable opportunity turned up. Such an opportunity, to the best of the present writer’s knowledge, has not yet turned up. And so we may part for ever with Mrs. Pentlow, *alias* Mrs. St. John, and direct our attention to some of the other characters that have figured in our story—those three distinguished Englishmen who, it is hoped, did in Turkey enough to inspire the reader with a wish to know what became of them afterwards.

The subsequent career of Paul Rycaut need not detain us long. On missing the Constantinople appointment, our late Consul entreated the King to cast a gracious eye upon him, when any office which His Majesty’s wisdom should judge most agreeable to his talents and experience became vacant; and in 1685 he obtained the post of Secretary to the Earl of Clarendon who had recently been made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. At the same time he was knighted and sworn of the Privy Council and judge of the Admiralty in Ireland. In this employment the ex-Consul earned his Chief’s commendations for integrity and, among the Irish Catholics, the character of an extortionate official. Whichever of these two opinions was correct, Sir Paul did not hold that office long. At the beginning of 1688 he

returned to England, and about the middle of the following year he was transferred at last to a sphere for which his linguistic attainments and his diplomatic and commercial experience really fitted him—that of English Resident in Hamburgh and the Hanse Towns. He filled that position almost till his death, which occurred in 1700, a few months after his recall. As in Turkey, so in Europe, Rycaut devoted much of his time to literary work, publishing *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches* (1678); *The History of the Turkish Empire from 1623 to 1677*, including his *Memoirs* (1680); and some translations from the Spanish and the Latin. Of these productions the *History* was long considered one of the best works of its kind in the English language; and the *Memoirs* part of it, at least, can still be read with profit and not without pleasure.

To turn to the Rev. John Covel. Thanks to his trip to Adrianople, supplemented just before he left Turkey by some swift excursions to Nicomedia, Nicaea, and the islands of the Sea of Marmara, and by a passing view of such classic spots as the homeward bound ship touched at, our Chaplain returned home with his fame as "a great Oriental traveller" firmly established.[308] Soon afterwards he was made Doctor of Divinity by royal warrant, instituted to two sinecure rectories, and, in 1681, was appointed Chaplain to the Princess of Orange at the Hague. He was now forty-three. With his faculties unimpaired and patronage from high quarters flowing in, he seemed to have the ball fairly at his feet. For about four years he flowered in the sun of princely favour; and then, suddenly, the fair prospect became overcast. Dr. Covel would never speak of the cause which brought his residence at the Hague to an abrupt close—it was, perhaps, the one

subject on which he ever succeeded in holding his tongue. But we know it. Among the various and, doubtless, useful functions a divine had to perform in the Orange household, that of gossip and newsagent was not included. Dr. Covel, however, unable to break himself of an old habit, continued his investigations into other people's affairs with unabated ardour. To put it plainly, he became one of the spies and tale-bearers who were encouraged, if not actually employed, by King James to make mischief between his daughter and his son-in-law. A letter from the Chaplain giving the English Ambassador an account of the way in which William treated Mary was intercepted—and Dr. Covel had to pack at three hours' notice.

King James tried to console the dismissed cleric with the Chancellorship of York during its vacancy (Nov. 9, 1687); and the Mastership of Christ's College falling vacant, the Fellows, to avoid having a certain Smithson thrust upon them by the King, hastily chose (July 7, 1688) Dr. Covel: "a choice," it has been guessed, "they probably would not have made, had they had more time."[309] But the Rev. John was not to be consoled for the loss of his place in the princely sun. He denied the accusation, denounced his accusers, did everything possible to regain the Paradise Lost. But all in vain. That William neither believed nor forgave him became painfully obvious when, soon after the Revolution, he visited Cambridge. That year (1689) Dr. Covel was Vice-Chancellor of the University, and since he could not avoid coming into personal contact with the King he had offended as a Prince, he anxiously inquired how His Majesty would be pleased to receive him. The answer must have made him wince: His Majesty could distinguish between Dr. Covel and

the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Curt, caustic Majesty!

His garrulity had ruined Dr. Covel's chances of ecclesiastical preferment; but it did not stand in the way of his academic career. He retained the Mastership of Christ's all his life, and spent much of his leisure in transcribing, expanding, correcting, and every way spoiling the notes he had made at Constantinople: to the satisfaction of himself, though not of others. No publisher could be found courageous enough to undertake the publication of these masses of immense discursiveness and laborious irrelevance. It was only in our own time that a learned society ventured to print a selection from them. But Dr. Covel was not fortunate even in this tardy and partial emergence. To the author's minute inaccuracies the editor has added a multitude of absurdities of his own; the upshot being the most bewildering bundle of blunders that ever issued from the press of any country in the guise of a book.[310]

So much concerning Dr. Covel's Travels. His *magnum opus* on the Greek Church, after nearly fifty years' incubation, came out at last when it was least wanted, in 1722—more than a generation after the question with which it deals had lost its actuality. It came out in folio, with a florid dedication to the Duke of Chandos, son of our late Ambassador and at the time Governor of the Levant Company: the author hints that, had he been made a Bishop, he would have had time to finish his book sooner. The delay, indeed, had its advantages: *non cito, hoc est, non cito ac cursim agere; vel non temere et inconsulte*. Yet, despite fifty years' revisions and manipulations, he fears "some few things may yet appear Defective, and others Confus'd and Indigested." The fear is well

founded. Its diffused and confused style, and still more its creator's fundamental inability to take an objective view of things, render this *Account of the Greek Church* one of the best illustrations extant of the aphorism *mega biblion, mega kakon*.

But, after all, it is not Dr. Covel the bad writer, but John the good fellow we care most about. In course of time he left off hoping for royal favours and episcopal mitres, and settled down to a mechanical routine of existence such as good dons lead. Whether he knew it or not, Dr. Covel was happy; the jollity which had made the Papas popular with the Factors of Constantinople helped to make the Master popular with the Fellows of Cambridge. This placid existence lasted till December 19th, 1722, when the Rev. John, in the 85th year of his age, went to join Finch and Baines under the pavement of Christ's College chapel.

An inscription commemorates the virtues of Dr. Covel. A good portrait of him, in his congregational robes, preserves the features of his countenance. His voluminous journals and letters, stored in the British Museum, supply an ample and by far the most trustworthy testimony to the traits of his mind and character; they exhibit him as an amiable man rather than one of a very superior understanding.



DR. JOHN COVEL.
From the Portrait by Valentine Ritz at Christ's College, Cambridge.

To face p. 372.

Much more exciting were the fortunes of the Honourable Dudley North. We saw him in Turkey a shrewd merchant, keen and unscrupulous in his pursuit of wealth. We find him in England a shrewd politician, keen and, some said, remorseless in his pursuit of power. He returned at a moment when the feud between Whig and Tory—to give the factions their new-fangled designations—was at its fiercest. By that infamous fiction, the Popish Plot, the Whigs had for a time driven the nation to madness and their principal opponents to an ignominious death. The public was just beginning to find out how it had been duped, and the Tories, profiting by the reaction, were getting ready to pay the Whigs back in their own false coin; the same gang of spies, witnesses, informers, and suborners who had hounded innocent Tories to the gallows, were now employed to hound innocent Whigs. North had come home a firm

believer in Titus Oates's murderous myth. He was undeceived—all the sooner because he was not slow to perceive that his interest lay on the same side as the truth: the Tory side. At the instance of his brother, then Lord Chief Justice, he was called to serve the King's party as Sheriff of London and Middlesex: an expensive office which conferred the power of packing juries and securing convictions. Dudley performed the services expected from him with more energy than scruple. He considered it, indeed, very unfortunate that so many trials for high treason and executions should happen in his year of office; but business is business.

In the midst of all this sanguinary work, he found time to court a wealthy widow, Lady Gunning, and, in spite of her father, to marry her. She loved him, admired him, idolised him, and presided over the splendid banquets he gave in his Basinghall Street mansion. He returned her affection fully, and it was partly that she might not remain, were it only in name, separate from him, but become Lady North, that he accepted the honour of knighthood which a grateful Court bestowed upon him. Thus happy both in his private and public affairs, Sir Dudley climbed from height to height, becoming in quick succession an Alderman, a Commissioner of the Customs, a Commissioner of the Treasury, a Member of Parliament, and the chief advocate for the Crown in all questions of revenue that came before the House of Commons. In this last capacity North shone with a pure light.

Men who spend their lives in making money are usually the least competent to understand the abstract principles that govern the accumulation and distribution of wealth. The distant views and

ultimate conclusions which make up the science of Political Economy are beyond their vision. All the progress achieved in that most important field of knowledge has been achieved by philosophers, to whose discoveries our merchants and manufacturers were the last to be converted. North, by a most rare gift of nature, combined in his mental constitution the contradictory qualities of the practical trader and the speculative thinker. Together with a large fortune, he had brought from the Levant a large fund of original deductions from his experience.[311] Withal, he possessed a faculty of expressing himself, at once homely and forcible, which arrested attention and carried conviction. As a speaker on financial topics the Member for Banbury had no rival.

How much higher a man of so many gifts and so few scruples might have climbed must remain matter of speculation. The Revolution of 1688 pulled the ladder from under him. The day which witnessed the victory of the Whigs was a day of reckoning for the Tories. Forgetting the wrongs they had inflicted and remembering only the injuries they had suffered, the victors were grimly set on revenge. Parliamentary Committees were appointed to inquire into the late judicial proceedings, to punish all persons concerned in them, and to indemnify the victims out of their estates. Among the rest, Sir Dudley North had to stand his trial. Great sport was expected from his baiting. The galleries and benches of the House of Commons were crowded with spectators; but they got very little satisfaction. To all the questions put to him as to the manner in which he had obtained his Shrievalty and his conduct therein, North gave fearless and, apparently, full and frank answers. This was not well! After much whispering into the

Chairman's ear, one of the members of the Committee moved that the ex-Sheriff should be asked to name the Aldermen who, as he pretended, had assisted at his election. The Chairman nodded. That was Sir Dudley's supreme moment. He turned quietly round and with his cane pointed to five Aldermen present, who since the Revolution had gone over to the Whigs, naming them one after another with deadly distinctness. This was worse than ever! To prevent further sensations, a cunning Parliamentarian stood up hastily, and "Mr. Foley," he said, addressing the Chairman, "you had best have a care: you have an honourable gentleman before you: that you do not ask him, etc." Having thus turned the tables upon his prosecutors, the clever Dudley left the House with colours flying, sped away by the very persons who had dragged him there.

For a time he continued in the Commission of the Customs. But, presently, that and his other offices were taken from him; and Sir Dudley relapsed to his original status of a Turkey Merchant. He went back to the buying and selling of cloth with the resignation of a philosopher and the spirit of a veteran trader. But even there luck had at the last rounded upon him. The War with France just begun (1689) hit North as hard as it did most of the other merchants of England trading into the Levant Seas. Their trade was attacked by the enemy both in Turkey and on the way to it. These calamities abated North's mettle and affected his health. He decided to give up the perilous business and turn country gentleman—a quiet rural life, he thought, would restore to him the health of body and peace of mind of which the bustle of the world had robbed him: he would beat his clothyard into a ploughshare; he would raise crops with as much pleasure as he had

raised dollars or cut off heads. Alas! even here his good fortune failed him. After inspecting several great estates and offering great prices for them in vain, he succeeded at last in finding a home in Norfolk; the date was fixed for him to go down to sign the agreement; but on the day before, he was seized with the disease which killed him. He died on the last day of 1691, at the comparatively early age of fifty.

However his character may be appraised, Dudley North will always be remembered as one of the outstanding figures of his time: the most brilliant of those seventeenth century merchant-adventurers who were the founders of our national prosperity and commercial pre-eminence.

So with all our actors off the stage, we may ring the curtain down. *La commedia è finita.*



The Hon.[ble] S.[r] DUDLEY NORTH K.[t]
Commissioner of the Treasury to
King Charles the Second.
From an Engraving by G. Vertue,

1743.

To face p. 376.

FOOTNOTES:

[300] As a rule, all petitions to the Sultan had to pass through the Vizir's hands; but in cases where the Vizir himself was involved a direct appeal was possible through the above formality: which secured to the petitioner access to the throne, but entailed, if his complaint proved false, loss of his head. See Rycaut's *Present State*, p. 84; *Life of Dudley North*, p. 100.

[301] Chandos to Jenkins, April 17-27, 1682; cp. Sir John Buckworth's "Narrative of the Distresses of our Turkey Merchants at C.P.," Jan. 22, 1681-82, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[302] Chandos to Jenkins, Oct. 11, st. vet. 1682. *The Turk catches the hare with a cart* still is a common proverb among the inhabitants of the Near East. It conveys an appreciation of Turkish tactics: slow and blundering in appearance, yet forming parts of a strategic plan, based on the principle that the ultimate outcome of a struggle depends on which side can show the greatest endurance and shall have most reserves when it comes to the final tussle.

[303] Chandos to Jenkins, March 29, 1683.

[304] "Few have made more of the place than he hath. He has doubtless raised his estate considerably by it."—Nathaniel Harley to Sir Edward Harley, Aleppo, Oct. 29, 1687, *Hist. MSS. Com. Thirteenth Report*, Part II. p. 242.

[305] *Life of Dudley North*, pp. 102-3.

[306] Nathaniel Harley to Sir Edward Harley,

Aleppo, July 20, 1694, *Hist. MSS. Com. Thirteenth Report*, Part II. p. 245.

[307] Pagett to Vernon, Jan. 17, O.S. 1700-1, *S.P. Turkey*, 21.

[308] Evelyn's *Diary*, Nov. 23, 1695.

[309] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

[310] It would be invidious to single out particular pearls, but one is too precious to be passed over. Dr. Covel wrote in his Diary: "Just at two o'clock Antonio called us to go to the Alloy." Now, as the reader may remember, "Alloy" was the name for the ceremonial march-out of the Army. The editor, mistaking this Turkish word for the name of an English ship, and then drawing upon his imagination, evolves a pretty myth: "Dr. Covel and Sir John Finch, the ambassador, started together on the *Alloy*, and the new Grand Vizier, Kara Mustapha, came to see them off, and brought them large quantities of presents." He goes on to describe the voyage of the phantom vessel as far as Venice (pp. 282 foll.). The only parallel instance of an editor's mythopoeic faculty working upon a verbal misapprehension known to me is to be found in the *Rigveda*.

[311] See Appendix XVI.

APPENDIX I

[*Ellis Papers* at the British Museum: *Add. MSS. 28937*, pp. 167-9.]

Instructions for our Trusty and wellbeloved Servant Sr John Finch Knt going in Quality of our Amb$^{r.}$ to reside at y^{e} Court of y^{e} Grand Seig$^{r.}$ Given at y^{e} Court at Whitehall the _____ 1672.

1. You shall embarque your self upon y^{e} ship designed to carry you, and dispose thereof according to y^{e} instruc͡ons of our most Dear Brother the Duke of York, our High Adm$^{ll.}$ of England.

2. Being arriued at Constantinople you shall in y^{e} first place informe your self from Mr Newman Secretary to y^{e} late Amb$^{r.}$ Sr Daniel Haruy, and by him left in the care of our affaires, and of our subjects in that Court, in what state things now are, and by him and such others as are best able to informe you, to instruct your self in the manner of making your addresses with our credentialls to the Grand Seignior and the Grand Vizier according to the accustomed stiles used by those inuested with your character, remembering allways not to suffer it to be prejudiced or uiolated in any circumstance either by that Court, or any forreign Ministers residing there.

3. In your Addresses to y^{e} Grand Seig$^{r.}$ and Vizier

you shall expresse the Great Value wee haue for their persons, and satisfac͡on in the obseruance of y^e^ peace & good correspondence these towards our Subjects in their Trade & Com͡erce, wch is so beneficiall to those parts aboue any other nac͡on, and particularly those made with Algiers, Tunis, Tripoly, which wee desire they would continue to protect & recom͡end, assuring them wee shall seuerely punish any of our subjects, that shall in any degree uiolate the same; or if in your passage, or upon the place you shall learne any infringem^ts.^ haue been made on either side, you shall as occasion shall furnish you with matter for it, frame excuses or complaints.

4. In all ye time of y^r^ Residence there you must be carefull to maintain a good correspondence with all ye Amb^rs.^ and Agents of Christian Princes, especially those y^t^ shall be in a nearer degree of alliance and amity with us, But not forgetting it euen towards those that are lesse so: to protect their persons, and render your self usefull to them with all good offices, employing effectually likewise towards the good of all Christians in generall of what Degree, Quality, Sect, or opinion so euer they be, giuing the preference therein still to those of our own profession in Religion in procuring them Justice & Fauour in all things.

5. You will learne best upon the place in what manner you must proceed towards the protec͡on of all the priuiledges and im͡unityes of our subjects of the Turky Company, for whose good and Benefitt you are most especially to reside there, by preseruing firme and inuiolable to them the Capitulac͡ons that are allready in being with the Grand Seig^r.^ and by solliciting & procuring such further additionall ones, as time and other circumstances may make usefull

for them to haue, so wee need not be particular in our Direc͡on to you therein, assuring our self that you will not be wanting in any thing to performe all good offices towards them to their entire satisfac͡on.

6. You shall make it y^{r} particular care & endeauour to be truly informed of all negotiac͡ons & practises in y^{t} Court which may disturbe the peace of Christendom in any part of it, and accordingly informe us thereof under the surest and most speedy conueyance you can, by the hands of one of our principall Secretaryes of State, with whom you usually correspond, who will likewise take care on their parts, to signify our pleasure & further Instruc͡ons to you upon all Emergencyes, com͡unicating to you all such aduices from hence as may be of use to you there.

7. And whereas frequent Representac͡ons haue been made to us by the Turky Company and otherwise of the great mischeifs occasioned in Trade by the permitting of false and faulty monyes to be imported or passed in payment in Turky, you shall take some fitt opportunity to insinuate to the Grand Seig$^{r.}$ and Vizier the mischeifs and ill consequences of that abuse, and shall in some publick way, such as you shall find most fitt, disowne the same in Relac͡on to the English, and in case any English Factor shall transgresse therein, either in importing those monyes or colouring them, or in receiuing them by consignac͡on from others, wee do, with the aduice of our Priuy-Councell, hereby giue you sufficient power & authority to punish such offenders.

APPENDIX II

[*S.P. Turkey*, 19, at the Public Record Office.]

ROUGH DRAFT

Charles the Second by the Grace of the most High God, King of Great Brittaine, France & Ireland, Defender of the Christian Faith &c. To the most High & Mighty Emperor Sultan Mahomet Ham Chiefe Lord and Commander of the Musulman Kingdome, sole and Supream Monarch of the Easterne Empire, sendeth Greeting. Most High & Mighty Emperor, Having received advice of the death of Sr Daniel Harvey, Our late Ambassador in Your Court, and desiring above all things to entertaine firme & inviolable on Our part that Good Amity & Friendship which is between Us & You, to the Mutuall benefit & advantage of both Our Subjects in their Trade & Commerce, We have made choice of Our Trusty & Wellbeloved Sr John Finch K^{nt} a Principall Gentleman of Our Court [lately Our Resident with Our Cousin the Great Duke of Tuscany & Councellor to Us in][312] Our Councell for matters relating to Our Forraigne Colonies & Plantations, who is the Bearer of these Our Letters[313] to reside at Your Port as Our Ambassador in the roome & place of the said Sr Daniel Harvey, We pray you therefore to receive &

admitt him favourably to negotiate with You as Our Ambassador, & to give entire beliefe & Credit to him in whatsoever he shall at any time move, propose, or treate in Our name for the mutuall good & welfare of Our Dominions & People Our Friends and Allyes, the protection of Our Merchants trading into Your Empire from all wrongs, oppressions & violence in their persons or Estates, & in what else may conduce to the strengthening & increase of that Amity, Commerce & good Correspondence, wch hath been soe long continued between our Crownes & Subjects And which We on Our part are resolved to preserve most sacred & inviolable. All whereof We have given Our said Ambassador charge more particularly to assure you, Not doubting but he will find in all things the same favour & good respect with You wch his Predecessor the said Sr Daniel Harvey reported to Us to have ever found from You & Your Ministers in all his negotiations, For which We now acknowledge Our thankes, & shall be ready to make on all occasions those returnes that may expresse the particular esteeme, We have of y^{r} Friendship & Good Will & soe We committ You & Your affaires to the Almighty.

Given at Our Court & Palace of Whitehall the _____ day of November in the Yeare of Our Lord God one thousand six hundred seventy & two & of Our Reigne the four & twentieth.

Charles the Second by the Grace of the most High God, King of Great Brittaine, France & Ireland, Defender of the Christian Faith &c. To the High & Excellent Lord the Vizier Azem, sendeth Greeting.

High & Excellent Lord, Having received advice of

the death of Sr Daniel Harvey Our Ambassador with the Grand Signior Your Lord & Master, & being desirous by all means to provide for the improvement & encrease of that Amity & Friendship wch We have hitherto soe happily entertained with the Grand Signior to the mutuall profit & content of both our subjects, We have made choice of this Bearer Our Trusty & Wellbeloved servant Sr John Finch K^{t} a principall Gentleman of Our Court & one of Our Councell for matters relating to Our Forreigne Colonies & Plantations, as one who by the Employments he hath held on Our part for many yeares in Courts of severall Forreigne Princes, We have judged more particularly qualified to succeed the said Sr Daniel Harvey, to reside with the Grand Signior as Our Ambassador, to negotiate on our part & soe doe & performe those Offices on all occasions, by which the Amity & good Friendship between us may be strengthened & confirmed, & Our Subjects reciprocally reap the fruit thereof in their Trade & Commerce, and therefore considering the eminent place You justly hold in the favour, as well as the businesse, of the Grand Signior your Lord & Master, & in regard of the good affection you have alwayes expressed to Us & Our affaires, of wch We shall ever retaine a very particular sense, We have desired by this to recommend Our said servant to your kindnesse, as one of whose discreet & respectfull carriage towards your Master & your selfe We are very confident & doe therefore pray you to receive him as your friend, to believe him in what he shall at any time deliver to you in Our name, & to be aiding to him in all occasions by your authority and support, in what may concerne the preservation of that Friendship & good correspondence that is between Our Kingdomes & that Empire & wch We are

resolved to observe inviolably on our part, as We doubt not of the Justice & good Disposition of the Grand Signior to doe at all times on his. In wch We againe pray your best Offices, & soe leaving Our said Ambassador in Your favour, We recommend You to that of the Almighty.

Given at Our Court & Palace of Whitehall the _____ day of November in the yeare of Our Lord God one thousand six hundred seventy & two & of Our Reigne the four & twentieth.

Your affectionate Friend.

FOOTNOTES:

[312] This sentence is crossed out; the Great Duke being the Sultan's enemy, the fact that Sir John came from his Court would scarcely be a recommendation!

[313] Here the following is added in the margin: "After haveing served Us with good satisfac͡on ~~several~~ many yeares in severall Foreigne Negotiac͡ons."

APPENDIX III

The Levant Company's Charter of 1605, which established it in perpetuity, superseding the earlier patents granted by Elizabeth for a limited number of years, conferred on the Merchants full power "to name, choose, and appoint at their will and pleasure" Consuls or Vice-Consuls; but on the point of the Ambassador it was silent, unless the Company's right to name him might be inferred from a clause which authorised it "to assign, appoint, create, and ordain such and so many officers and ministers," both at home and abroad, as "shall seem expedient for the doing and executing of the affairs and business appertaining to the said Company." At the same time, the Merchants were authorised, "for the sustentation of the necessary stipends and other charges," to levy upon all goods transported from England to the Levant or vice versa, and upon every ship so employed, such sums of money, "by way of Consulage or otherwise," as "to them shall seem requisite and convenient." [The original is to be found in *S.P. Levant Company*, 107, at the Public Record Office; for a printed copy see M. Epstein's *Early History of the Levant Company*, London, 1908, Appendix I.]

The Parliamentary ordinance of 1643 accorded to

the Merchants explicitly “free choice and removal of all ministers by them maintained at home and abroad, whether they be dignified and called by the name of Ambassadors, Governors, Deputies, Consuls, or otherwise,” and also recognised in specific terms their right to levy import and export duties on foreign merchandise carried under the English flag to and from the Levant (“Strangers’ Consulage”), as well as on English merchandise (“Native Consulage”). Thus the Company obtained an official recognition of its claim to appoint the Ambassador and an undisputed power over all the funds by which the Embassy was maintained.

The new Charter of 1661, though not ratifying the Company’s claim to appoint the Ambassador, sanctioned its hold upon both kinds of Consulage. [See the Charter in *S.P. Levant Company*, 108.] In other words, the Merchants retained the material means of keeping, and therefore, by implication, the right of appointing the Ambassador.

In 1668, when, upon the recall of Lord Winchilsea, the question of a choice of Ambassador once more arose, Sir Sackville Crow, still smarting from his grievances, presented to Charles a vindictive Memorial in which he recapitulated the old disputes and urged him to recover “one of the Supreme Prerogatives of your Crowne, viz. the Election of the Ambassadours for Turky,” by depriving the Company of the Consulage which enabled it to maintain and, in consequence, to claim the right of naming, the Ambassador. Otherwise, he said, His Majesty’s envoys, by depending entirely on the Company for their maintenance, would be the Merchants’ “stipendiaries and vassalls, and obliged to serve theire Lustes and Pleasures (good or badd) agaynst

the Law or Crowne, whereof his late Majestie had too sadde an experience and may justly caution your Majestie to take care of and provide agaynst."[314]

Nothing came of this instigation, and the anomalous position of the Constantinople Embassy continued for ages a source of intermittent friction.

FOOTNOTE:

[314] *Narrative Levant Companies Proceedings with the Crowne And my Petition to His Majesty thereon for Examination*, in *S.P. Turkey*, 19. Cp. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, 1667-1668, pp. 226, 230.

APPENDIX IV

Ahmed Kuprili's age is uncertain: "only thirty years of age"—Lord Winchilsea to Secretary Nicholas, Nov. 11-21, 1661 [*S.P. Turkey*, 17]; "Not exceeding 32 years of Age"—Sir Paul Rycaut, 1661 [*Memoirs*, p. 82]; "The Vizier, they say, exceeds not the age of two and thirty yeares"—Geo. Etherege[315] to Joseph Williamson, "R. 8 May 1670" [*S.P. Turkey*, 19], which would make him at his accession only 24. John Covel in 1675 writes: "He is, they say, 44 years old, though, for my own part, I guesse him not above 40, if so much" [*Diaries*, p. 195]. Covel's guess would make Ahmed at the time of his accession 26—an estimate which coincides with Hammer's statement: "Kœprilu Ahmed, alors âgé de vingt-six ans" [*Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, vol xi. p. 113].

Concerning his merits contemporary English opinion is unanimous. "He was one of the best Ministers that People ever knew" [*Life of Dudley North*, p. 72]. "This great Kupriogle was a Man of Honour ... and just" [Covel's *Account of the Greek Church*, Pref., p. lii.]. "He is prudent and just, not to be corrupted by money, the general vice of this country, nor inclined to cruelty as his father was" [George Etherege, *loc. cit.*]. "Very prudent, honest ... not given to blood as his father, not mercenary, an

enemy to *avanias* and false pretences ... just in his decrees" [Lord Winchilsea, "Memorandums touching the Turkish Empire" (1669), in *Finch Report*, p. 522]. Sir Paul Rycaut gives him the character of "a prudent and Politick Person," speaks of his "gentleness and moderation," and adds that "he was not a Person who delighted in bloud, and in that respect of an humour far different from the temper of his Father. He was generous, and free from Avarice, a rare Vertue in a Turk!... In the administration of Justice very punctual and severe" [*Memoirs*, p. 333].

Equally unanimous is the evidence as regards his favour to the English. "I shall apply myself to the Vizier and doubt not to have all satisfaction from him, being assur'd of his good will to us and aptness to favor us in all our reasonable demands"—Sir Daniel Harvey to Lord Arlington, Jan. 31, 1669 [-70]; "Your Lordship may be assurd our merchants heer in Turkie are soe farr from meeting with any obstruction in their affayrs, that they have all the countenance and incouradgment the publick ministers which reside in those places where we have factories can give them and that not without some preference to other nations"—the Same to the Same, April 30, 1671; "As to the honour and privilege which our Nation enjoyeth here, and security of our persons and estates under the Turkes, it is beyond the example of former times"—Paul Rycaut, Smyrna, July 26, 1675 [*S.P. Turkey*, 19]. Cp. "He was very observant of the Capitulations between our King and the Grand Signior, being ready to do Justice upon any corrupt Minister who pertinaciously violated and transgressed them" [*Memoirs*, p. 333]. "And whereas under the Government of Kuperlee Ahmet Pasha ... our Merchants enjoyed great security and freedome in the Trade...."—Charles II. to the Grand Vizir,

Whitehall, Dec. 28, 1680 [*Register*, 1668-1710, pp. 99-100, *S.P. Levant Company*, 145].

FOOTNOTE:

[315] The celebrated Restoration dramatist. He had gone with Sir Daniel Harvey to Turkey as his Secretary and, in the winter of 1669-70, accompanied him to Salonica, where the Ambassador had his audience of the Grand Signor. Of this, Sir George Etherege's first step in the diplomatic service, no mention is made in the article on him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The one letter from him on Turkish affairs and personalities preserved at the Public Record Office makes us wish for more: a better informed or better written document does not exist in all the Turkey State Papers.

APPENDIX V

Two such instances may be quoted as affording an instructive parallel to the present case. In 1661 the Algerines complained "That the ship the *Goodwill*, bound, with the persons and goods of several Turkish passengers from Tunis to Smyrna, meeting with some Maltese galleys, without any dispute or contest, resigned them up all with their estates into the hands of the Grand Signor's enemies. That another ship, the *Angel*, had done the like to the Venetian fleet and rather sought excuses to cover the treachery than means to avoid the enemy"—Lord Winchilsea to Secretary Nicholas, Adrianople, Jan. 13, 1661-2 [*S.P. Turkey*, 17].

APPENDIX VI

The Instructions given by the Levant Company to every new Ambassador and Consul contain a clause to this effect: “If you shall find any of our Factors or others of the English Nation to be notoriously addicted to Gaming, Drinking, Whoreing, or any other licentious course of life, to the dishonour of God, the scandal of our Religion and Nation, their principalls’ damage, and the ill example of others, wee doe straitly require and recommend to you to endeavour to reclaim them by your good admonitions or, finding them incorrigible, to give us speedy notice of such persons to the end some other course may be taken with them.” [See Instructions to Sir Daniel Harvey (1668); to Lord Chandos (1681); to Sir William Trumbull (1687); to Sir William Hussey (1690); to Lord Pagett (1693); to Sir Robert Sutton (1701); to Paul Rycaut, Smyrna (1668); to Thomas Metcalfe, Aleppo (1687); to George Brandon, Aleppo (1700); to William Sherrard, Smyrna (1703); to William Pilkington, Aleppo (1708)—*Register*, 1668-1710, *S.P. Levant Company*, 145; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, 1667-8.] The repetition of this injunction shows at once how necessary and how ineffective it was.

Another means employed by the Company to

combat licentiousness deserves attention. Macaulay has grossly exaggerated the scarcity of books during the 17th century.[316] From John Evelyn's letters, Pepys's diary, and many other contemporary sources, it is clear that England abounded both in private and in public libraries: Norwich had one since 1608, Bristol since 1615, Leicester since 1632, Manchester since 1653. As to the English in the Levant, that even there books were not lacking for those who cared to make use of them is proved by two documents before me. The first is "A Catalogue of the Library belonging to the English Nation at Aleppo, taken in the year of our Lord 1688"—seven folio pages, giving the titles of 210 works. The other is "A Catalogue of the Books in the Library belonging to the English Nation at Smyrna. Taken in the year of our Lord 1702"—a list of some 110 volumes. [*Register*, pp. 157-164, 301-304, *S.P. Levant Company*, 145.] But these collections, apparently formed under the inspiration of the chaplains and, one might suspect, for their own benefit, consisted mostly of Theological, Classical, Historical, and other ponderous tomes hardly calculated to allure gay young sportsmen. With the exception of "Lovelace his Poems, 8o Lond. 1649," light literature is represented in them by nothing lighter than "Bacon his Essayes, 12o Lond. 1664," and "Lock, of Understanding, Lond. 1690."

FOOTNOTE:

[316] Of that popular historian's way of writing history one instance will suffice. He cites Roger North's Life of his brother John as evidence that the booksellers' shops in Little Britain were crowded by readers who could not afford to purchase books (*History of*

England, 4th ed. vol. i. p. 392). In point of fact, what North says is that scholars went to Little Britain, "a plentiful and perpetual Emporium of learned Authors," as to a Market. "This drew to the place a mighty Trade; the rather because the Shops were spacious, and the learned gladly resorted to them, where they seldom failed to meet with agreeable Conversation. And the Booksellers themselves were knowing and conversible Men, with whom, for the sake of bookish Knowledge, the greatest Wits were pleased to converse." (*Life of the Hon. and Rev. Dr. John North*, 1742, p. 241.) North's whole intention is to draw a picture of the abundance and diffusion of books at the time, in contrast with the opposite state of things which, he asserts, prevailed at a later period, when the bookselling trade had "contracted into the Hands of two or three Persons," with the result that bookshops diminished in number, deteriorated in quality, and, as places of resort, were superseded by the tavern or the coffee-house.

APPENDIX VII

When Macaulay, in his Third Chapter, depicted the English squire of the 17th century as looking down upon those of his neighbours who "were so unfortunate as to be the great grandsons of aldermen," he attributed to a past age prejudices derived from his own. A little serious investigation might have taught him better. The Earl of Danby, afterwards Marquis of Caermarthen (1680) and Duke of Leeds (1694), was the great grandson of an alderman—the clothworker Sir Edward Osborne, one of the founders of the Levant Company. The Norths, whose *Lives* he often quotes, emerged from obscurity when the first North of whom we have any distinct knowledge settled in London and became a merchant, sometime before the end of the fifteenth century; his son rising to the peerage about the middle of the next century. Sir John Finch's brother, the Earl of Nottingham, married the daughter of Daniel Harvey (about 1650); his cousin, the Earl of Winchilsea, the daughter of John Ayres (1681); and his successor at the Constantinople Embassy, Lord Chandos, the daughter of Sir Henry Barnard (about 1670)—all of them merchants of London. Another London merchant, Sir Josiah Child, as Macaulay himself notes, married his daughter to the eldest son of the Duke of Beaufort (1683). Further illustrations

of the absence of any chasm between the two classes will readily occur to any student of literary history. For instance, the father of Sir Thomas Browne (who was born in London in 1605), a merchant, sprang from a good Cheshire family; the father of John Milton (who was born in London in 1608), a scrivener, came of an ancient Oxfordshire stock; Edward Gibbon was descended from a younger son of the Gibbons of Kent, who, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, had migrated to the City of London and become a clothworker. In mentioning this fact, Gibbon very truly remarks that "our most respectable families have not disdained the counting-house or even the shop" (*Memoirs of My Life and Writings*, 1st ed., p. 5). Hume also, in speaking of the Commonwealth, observes, "the prevalence of democratical principles engaged the country gentlemen to bind their sons apprentices to merchants" (*History of England*, chap. lxii.): he is only wrong in the time he assigns to this social revolution —it was much older than the Commonwealth, and was due to economic causes rather than to political principles.

APPENDIX VIII

Of all the excesses of the age the most fashionable was excess in drink. Smyrna was particularly famous for a kind of wine which connoisseurs pronounced only inferior to Canary:[317] so excellent, indeed, was this wine that a butt of it formed a most acceptable present from an English Ambassador to a Secretary of State.[318] The Franks made it in their own houses, buying the grapes in the town. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that inebriation nowhere attained greater heights than at Smyrna. When ships from home came into port, captains and merchants vied with each other in feats of conviviality. Here is a picture of these jollifications drawn by a competent and appreciative eye-witness: "*Les marchands vont quelquefois se divertir à bord des vaisseaux.... Ils y viennent de bon matin et s'en retournent fort tard. Très souvent les conviés ont besoin qu'on les mette dans leurs bateaux avec des palans, de crainte que les pieds leur manquent en descendant par les échelles. Cette précaution est sage et nécessaire après ces sortes de longs festins où l'on a bu beaucoup, et, pour l'ordinaire, beaucoup trop.... Quand les divertissements se font à terre chez les marchands, et surtout chez les Anglois, on ne peut rien ajouter à la magnificence des festins ni à la quantité de vin qui s'y boit. Après qu'on a cassé tous les verres et les bouteilles, on s'en prend aux*

miroirs et aux meubles. On casse et on brise tout pour faire honneur à ceux à qui on boit et on pousse quelquefois la débauche si loin que, ne trouvant plus rien à casser, on fait allumer un grand feu et on y jette les chapeaux, les perruques, et les habits, jusqu'aux chemises, après quoi ces messieurs sont obligés de demeurer au lit jusqu'à ce qu'on leur ait fait d'autres habits."[319]

FOOTNOTES:

[317] Thevenot, *Travels into the Levant*, Part I. p. 92 (Eng. tr. 1687).

[318] Sir Daniel Harvey to Lord Arlington, Dec. 9, 1668; Jan. 31, 1670; Paul Rycaut to the Same, June 29, 1671, *S.P. Turkey*, 19.

[319] D'Arvieux, *Mémoires*, t. i. pp. 131-2.

APPENDIX IX

This outrageous specimen of oppressive impudence, like other abuses, can be traced up to a very respectable origin—to one of those feelings which do honour to human nature. It is still the custom among the Turks, after a banquet, to give the guests a present which, in the quaint language of Oriental courtesy, they style *dishe parassi*—"teeth-money"—a slight return for the trouble the guest gave himself in partaking of their hospitality. But what was originally a delicate token of respectful affection, under the tyrannical circumstances of Ottoman rule, assumed the form of a degrading and disgusting imposition.

In the same way, *bakshish* generally, if considered in its origin, is only a very natural expression of love and respect. Presents have always been and still are the proper tokens of friendship among men the world over. But observances of this kind have a knack of degenerating; and the Turk in power soon learnt to exact presents as tribute, until the institution became one of the greatest political evils that ever afflicted a community: it would be no overstating the case to say that the Ottoman Empire has died of *bakshish*.

APPENDIX X

SIR DANIEL HARVEY TO LORD ARLINGTON

[*S.P. Turkey*, 19]

(*Extract*)

PERA OF CONSTANTINOPLE,
Jan. 31, 1669 [-70].

I was received by ye Grand Segnior according to ye custome of this Court, except in a condescention wch I am told this Monarch does not accustome himself to, for after my Memorial was read by my Druggerman, containing a congratulation for his success in Candy & recomending to his consideration ye senceritie of my Master's frendshipe by such instances as ware proper to doe it, he asked me if I had anything more to say by word of mouth, whareupon I pressd ye renuing ye Capitulations, & ye adding some new Articles to explain & fortify ye rest, wch ware often misinterpreted by inferior ministers to ye prejiduce of my Masters subjects. he replied ye Chimacham was his Deputie to whome he refer'd me, & y^t^ if any of his subjects did any thing contrary to ye Capitulations wth ye King of England, he comanded him to cutt of thare heads.

APPENDIX XI

SIR JOHN FINCH TO SECRETARY COVENTRY

[*Coventry Papers*]

(*Extract*)

CARAGAS NEAR ADRIANOPLE,
September the 9th, 1675.

This done, I thought no other difficulty could remain; but when they were wrote out and the Gran Sig[rs] seale to them, and I appointed to come to receive them from the Vizir, asking whether the Gran Sig[rs] Hattesheriffe or Hand was to them, I was answerd' No. I said then, I could not receive them: Here I send to the Rais Affendi who desires me to desist for it was impossible to be done, for neither France, Venice, nor Holland had a Hattesheriffe to their Capitulations who were renewd' since ours. Then I send to the Kehaiah my good Friend the Capitulations renewd' by my Lord of Winchelsea, to which the Imperiall Hand was sett, with this message by my Druggerman, that it was a point I could not depart from, for the Capitulations would not onely be thought by the King my Master to whome I was to send them to be surreptitiously gott, but also it was the losse of my Head to accept of lesse then what my Predecessors had gott: Whereupon the Kehaiah

immediately takes Pen and Ink, and writes to the Vizir, who had an Answer immediately that it should be done, but I attended a whole week before it was effected, and three days more before the Vizir deliverd' them.

APPENDIX XII

Sir John Chardin, writing from first-hand knowledge, described our export trade with Turkey at that time as amounting to between £500,000 and £600,000 a year (a quarter of the total export trade of the kingdom), and estimated the annual exportation of cloth, the staple commodity of England, at about 20,000 pieces [*Travels into Persia*, London, 1691, pp. 4-6]. These statements are corroborated by an official Account which the Levant Company delivered to the Lords Commissioners for Trade in 1703. We find there the exports of cloth from 82,032 pieces (the total for the six years 1666-1671) rising in the next six years (1672-1677) to 120,451: the high-water mark of our Turkey trade [*Register*, p. 308, *S.P. Levant Company*, 145]. Further evidence that the embassy of Sir John Finch coincided with our commercial zenith is supplied by a Petition from the Levant Company against the Woollen Manufacture Encouragement Bill of 1678. The Petitioners claim that they have advanced the consumption of broad cloth in Turkey from 14,000 or 15,000 to 24,000 or 25,000 a year [*House of Lords Calendar*, in *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, Ninth Report, Part II. P. 111.]

As to selling on credit, the Company's attitude is

illustrated by the comment which accompanies the Account cited above: “My Lords, By the foregoing particulars of our exportations does plainly appear that the Trade hath been considerably increased since the year 1672 when the Oath against Trusting first took place.” Ambassadors and Consuls were instructed to watch over the strict observance of that oath [see the Company’s Instructions to Lord Chandos, Sir William Trumbull, Sir William Hussey, Lord Pagett, Sir Robert Sutton, to Thomas Metcalfe, Consul at Aleppo, to George Brandon, also Consul at Aleppo, and to William Sherrard, Consul at Smyrna, in the *Register* already cited]. It was found, however, that the Factors, in spite of their oath, would “trust.” Whereupon, in 1701, the wise men in London put their heads together to discover “what methods were best to be used to prevent so ill a practice” [Instructions to Sutton, Clause 7], and “made a new Oath against Trusting, more full and comprehensive than the former, to be taken by all our Factors in Turkey, which you are to see strictly observed, with this limitation only: that our Factors may sell on trust such goods of the growth and product of Turkey, Persia, and India as are not proper to be sent to England, upon their own account, being willing to make an experiment of the effects which such an indulgence may produce” [Instructions to Sherrard, Clause 5]. The text of this new Oath was as follows. I reproduce a copy enclosed in a despatch from Sir Robert Sutton to the Secretary of State, dated “Pera of Constantinople, Nov. 30th, O.S. 1702” [*S.P. Turkey*, 21]:

“I A. B. do solemnly swear in the presence of Almighty God and upon the holy Evangelist that I will not sell or barter upon Trust, for my own or any English-man’s account, any Cloth or other goods and

commodities whatsoever, nor suffer it to be done by any other person or persons for or under me directly or indirectly.

And I do further swear that I will not deliver out of my possession, nor suffer to be delivered directly or indirectly any goods or commodities for my own or any English-man's account, before I have received full payment for the same in mony, if such goods and commodities were sold for mony, but if such goods and commodities were sold in barter against goods I will not deliver the goods I so sell before I have received the full value in the goods bartered for, and they to be at my immediate disposal to all intents and purposes as if I had bought and paid for them with mony.

And I do likewise further swear that I will not take in payment or in pawn as security for any goods sold or bartered, neither by myself or any other person directly or indirectly, any Temesooks, Mery Tescarees, Beghlar Tescarees, Sebeb Takrirs, Hojets, or any assignments or other writing or writings of what nature soever of or from any person or persons of what nation soever.

All which I will duely observe without any equivocation or mental reservation so long as I shall remain in Turky, unless the Levant Company shall sooner annul their order in this behalfe.

So help me God.

At a General Court of the Levant Company held at Pewterers' Hall London the 24 October 1701.

Ordered that every person taking this Oath shall repeat the words after him that administers it and the same shall be entered in Cancellaria and subscribed by the respective parties."

APPENDIX XIII

That the Levant Company did not consider the result of Sir John's expedition to Adrianople at all commensurate with the expenditure it had entailed may be seen from its Instructions to subsequent ambassadors: not to go out of Constantinople for the presentation of their Credentials, but to await there the return of the Court, and to forbear renewing the Capitulations, unless the juncture of affairs should happen to prove so favourable that some new Articles for the security and advancement of trade might be obtained; but, in any case, not to entertain any thoughts of renewing them without first consulting the Company [*Register*, 1668-1710, *S.P. Levant Company*, 145].

APPENDIX XIV

To avoid similar complications, the Levant Company instructed the Ambassadors: "Many Evils have ensued upon the marriage of Englishmen with the Subjects of the Grand Signor. We therefore pray your Lordship to discourage and discountenance that practice, it being prejudiciall to themselves as well as to the publique" [see Instructions to Chandos, Trumbull, Hussey, Pagett, Sutton—*Register, S.P. Levant Company*, 145]. But the practice continued. In 1758 the Grand Vizir Raghib Pasha re-opened the whole question by issuing an ordinance which forbade Franks to marry the daughters of *rayahs* or to acquire real estate, and once more the authorities at Galata were commanded to send in a list of all Franks who were in the one or the other category [Hammer, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, vol. xvi. p. 12]. But still the practice went on, and in the end the Turks, whatever they may have held in theory, acquiesced in our view that the descendants of Frank fathers, no matter how remote, did not become Ottoman subjects. Hence the so-called Levantine families settled at Constantinople, Smyrna, Salonica, and other trade centres in the Near East; forming ex-territorial colonies the members of which, amenable to their own laws, administered by their own magistrates, and subject only to the jurisdiction,

within certain limits, of their own Governments, preserved their respective nationalities and their civil and political rights, just as if they lived in the countries of their origin. This régime, unique in modern Europe, though common in antiquity, endured unchallenged down to the Turkish Revolution of 1908.

APPENDIX XV

In 1687 James II. extorted from the embarrassments of the Porte what Charles II. and his predecessors had failed to obtain from its sense of justice. The occasion was curiously similar to the present one. An Italian corsair, operating under a commission from the King of Poland, robbed an English ship, the *Jerusalem*, of some passengers and goods belonging to the Pasha of Tripoli and carried them off to Malta. On the petition of the Levant Company, King James instructed his new Ambassador Sir William Trumbull, who was on the point of sailing for Turkey, to call in at Malta, expostulate with the Grand Master on the protection he gave to pirates preying upon English vessels, obtain liberation of the captives and restitution of the stolen goods, take both to Tripoli and hand them over to their rightful owner. This was done, and King James, in a letter to the Grand Vizir, after describing the service rendered, proceeded "to declare our positive resolution pursuant to the Capitulations in that behalfe that neither We nor any of our subjects shall at any time answer for the persons or estates of such subjects of your Imperial Master as shall of their own accord embark themselves upon any of our Merchants ships. But that all such persons as shall intrust either themselves or their goods upon any

English ship shall bear their own hazard of corsairs and pyrats of what nature soever and sustain all other accidents whereunto the sea is lyable and from which they can only be protected by the one omnipotent God. And to this which is in itself so highly reasonable and agreeable to the rules of common justice, We cannot doubt of your assent."

As at the moment the Ottoman Empire was assailed by four Powers from without and was convulsed by rebellions from within, the Grand Vizir readily gave his assent: "In conformity to the good accord of peace established with the happy Port of the Empire who is the refuge of the world, it is necessary and fit that the subjects on both parts should be in safety one with the other; and if the subjects of these Imperial Dominions shall enter voluntarily into the ships of your Merchants and your Merchants shall give them a writing any ways obliging themselves as security for said loss, or damage, according to that writing which shall be given it shall be obeyed and observed as to the security given for the loss or damage. And if your Merchants are not in this manner obliged nor give a writing of such import, the subjects of this Empire entering voluntarily into the ships of the Merchants, any loss or damage happening so to them, there shall be nothing pretended from your Merchants nor your subjects on any such pretexts. This rule ... We shall keep it an established Rule...."[320]

But alas for promises given under compulsion! Notwithstanding this solemn engagement, the Porte clung to its favourite principle, and every English Ambassador had to repeat, age after age, his nation's disclaimer of corporate responsibility. [See, for instance, the Credentials of Abraham Stanyan (1717)

and of James Porter (1746) in *S.P. Turkey*, 56.] As to the Levant Company, it did what it could to avoid trouble by instructing the Ambassadors either to forbid English ships to carry Turks and their goods, under severe penalties (such as making them pay double Consulage), or at least to see that the necessary precaution was taken by a writing given at the port of embarkation to secure the Company from any damage, in accordance with the Grand Vizir's letter. [See the Company's Instructions to Sir William Hussey (1690), to Lord Pagett (1693), to Sir Robert Sutton (1701), in the *Register* already cited.]

FOOTNOTE:

[320] For the documents (Levant Co.'s petition to Earl of Sunderland; King James to Grand Vizir; Grand Vizir to King James), see *Register*, pp. 132, 134, 151, in *S.P. Levant Company*, 145.

APPENDIX XVI

Dudley North's genius is proved and his place in the history of Political Economy established by an anonymous pamphlet which he published shortly before his death under the title *Discourses upon Trade, principally directed to the cases of the Interest, Coinage, Clipping and Encrease of Money*. This great little treatise, suppressed by the Government of William III. in 1691, was reprinted, from one of the very few copies extant, in 1856 by J. R. M'Culloch among his *Early English Tracts on Commerce*. It embodies, briefly and boldly, a system the originality and completeness of which may be judged from the following abstract—a theory in essence similar to, in some respects more consistent than, that enunciated by Adam Smith generations later:

"The whole world, as to trade, is but one nation or people, and therein nations are as persons. The loss of a trade with one nation is not that only, separately considered, but so much of the trade of the world rescinded and lost, for all is combined together. There can be no trade unprofitable to the public; for if any prove so, men leave it off: and, wherever the traders thrive, the public of which they are a part thrive also. To force men to deal in any prescribed manner, may profit such as happen to serve them,

but the public gains not, because it is taking from one subject to give to another. No laws can set prices in trade, the rates of which must and will make themselves. But when such laws do happen to lay any hold, it is so much impediment to trade, and therefore prejudicial. Money is merchandize, whereof there may be a glut, as well as a scarcity, and that even to an inconvenience. A people cannot want money to serve the ordinary dealing, and more than enough they will not have. No man will be the richer for the making much money, nor any part of it, but as he buys it for an equivalent price.... Exchange and ready money are the same; nothing but carriage and re-carriage being saved. Money exported in trade is an increase to the wealth of the nation; but spent in war and payments abroad, is so much impoverishment....” The tract ends with these weighty words: “No people ever yet grew rich by policies: but it is peace, industry, and freedom that bring trade and wealth, and nothing else.”

The author describes his propositions as “paradoxes, no less strange to most men than true in themselves.” Their truth may still be a matter of controversy; their strangeness at the time at which they appeared is unquestionable. They were rank heresies against the dominant creed of the day. According to the cardinal article of that creed—the “balance of trade”—wealth consisted solely of money: whatever sent the precious metals out of a country impoverished it: whatever tended to swell the quantity of bullion in a country added to its riches. Therefore, no trade with any country was profitable, unless we exported to that country more value in goods than we imported, receiving the difference in money, which was considered the measure of our profit. North, presumably, had his

eyes opened to the fallacy of this mercantile doctrine by the facts of our Levant trade. In the earlier days our exports to Turkey fully paid for our imports, and in those days English writers proudly contrasted our position with that of other nations—the French, Dutch, Italians, Germans—who paid a balance in cash. It did not occur to them that those nations must have found it as profitable to pay for what they got in gold and silver as we did in goods, else they would not have done so: and if they got their money's worth for their money, which no doubt they did, they were quite as well off as the English who, of course, got no more than the worth of their manufactures. [See Munn's *Discourse of Trade*, 1621, in Geo. L. Craik's *History of British Commerce*, 1844, vol ii. pp. 19-20.] However, before North left Turkey, our merchants had got into the habit of sending, in addition to goods, large quantities of specie: in other words, now the "balance of trade" was against us—and yet our Levant trade never was more profitable! Here was a paradox to set a sensible man thinking.

But few men can think. Acting upon the established belief, English public opinion clamoured for the exclusion from the Kingdom of the products of foreign countries, particularly those of our traditional rival, France. In one of these paroxysms of popular frenzy an entire prohibition of French goods was proclaimed by Act of Parliament (1678). On that occasion, indeed, national hatred and religious excitement combined to invigorate and envenom the feelings arising from commercial jealousy, for it was the time of the ferment about the secret designs of France and Charles, out of which sprang the wild delusion of the Popish Plot. But the chief motive of that legislative measure was the prevailing notion that the country was suffering enormous pecuniary

loss in consequence of our excessive importation of French commodities. Dudley North's comments on that notion are refreshing: "trade is not distributed, as government, by nations and kingdoms; but is one throughout the whole world, as the main sea, which cannot be emptied or replenished in one part, but the whole, more or less, will be affected. So when a nation thinks, by rescinding the trade of any other country, which was the case of our prohibiting all commerce with France, they do not lop off that country, but so much of their trade of the whole world as what that which was prohibited bore in proportion with all the rest; and so it recoiled a dead loss of so much general trade upon them. And as to the pretending a loss by any commerce, the merchant chooses in some respects to lose, if by that he acquires an accommodation of a profitable trade in other respects." [*Life of Francis North, Baron of Guilford*, 1742, p. 168.] No wonder such views were obnoxious to a Government bent blindly on crushing France, as the Whig Government of 1691 was, and it may be suspected that in choosing that moment for the publication of his heresies North was actuated quite as much by the wish to thwart the war policy of his opponents as by the desire to promote the cause of Truth.

The Act of 1678 had been repealed in the beginning of James II.'s reign, but immediately after the Revolution all commerce with France was again barred. The boycott continued through the two wars of 1689-97 and 1701-12, and the attempt made by the Tories in 1713, when peace was restored between England and France, to re-open the trade with the latter country, failed: the merchants took the alarm, the Whig politicians exploited that alarm,

public opinion was roused, and the Bill was lost. We have heard the same clamour for breaking off all commercial relations with a rival nation in our own day—over two hundred years after Dudley North exposed the egregious folly of such a policy.

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