

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER

VOL. XXXI (No. 8)

AUGUST, 1917

NO. 735

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THE WINGLESS VICTORY.
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Frontispiece to The Open Court.

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TURKEY IN ASIA.

BY HESTER DONALDSON JENKINS.

TURKEY in Asia is practically the whole of Turkey of to-day, although but a short time ago there was a Turkey in Africa and a large and important Turkey in Europe. Step by step, and indeed such steps as are taken by seven-leagued boots, the Turks have been driven back into Asia.

Asia was the original teeing-off place for the Turks, although, wielding the scimitar instead of the brassy, they strode into Europe until they were putting on the green about Vienna. But the Ottoman ball did not drop into the Viennese hole but rolled back to Hungary, and from there the Turkish arms have extended to Africa and the gates of India.

Their origins are Touranian and Tatar, and they are distantly related to the Chinese so that, except for the Finns and the Hungarians who are said also to be of Touranian origin, they have no kin in Europe. Nor are they related to any other of the people who live on the shores of the Mediterranean; neither Armenian, Egyptian nor Semite can call them brother. That is, of course, the pure Turk; intermarriage and the ravishing of nations to fill their harems have made them a mixed race with many blood ties. One of the most common mistakes about the much misunderstood Turk is to confuse him with the Arab or Saracen, but they are entirely different races.

It would be interesting to trace the Turk as he comes from the Chinese steppes over Asia Minor into Europe, taking Constantinople for his capital and moving on to the gates of Vienna, but our concern here is with his Asiatic adventures.

In the tenth century occurred the momentous encounter with the Arabs. Had the Turks reached Byzantium without the en-

counter what might have been the history of a Christian Turkey? But on the Asiatic plains they met the enthusiastic followers of Mahomet who was conquering the world for Islam. A heathen people with no strong religion, the Turks were easily converted to Islam, becoming in time its greatest champions.

They were also an illiterate people who naturally accepted the Arabic alphabet, and as their men became learned they turned to the Arabic Koran for their inspiration as we of the west turned to the Bible. Had not a counter influence reached them, they would doubtless have modelled their literature on the Arabic, but instead they fell under the influence of Persian literature, of which their own for several centuries is mainly an imitation.

What was the effect on the Turks of the adoption of Islam?

Islam sprang from the genius of an Arab, the prophet Mahomet, and inspired the Arabs as it never has the Turk. It served also to bring to the Arabs a great intellectual and artistic impetus as well as power for conquest; hence we have the wonderful civilization of the Moors in Spain and the Saracens in Bagdad, the outburst of Arabic literature, and an intellectual and artistic accomplishment that gave Europe the Alhambra, algebra, chemistry, the Arabian Nights and the Koran.

Islam has no such creative inspiration for the Turks, who seemed to accept it in its sense "resigned to." If anything, it seemed to check initiative in them, to call out all their native loyalty for an alien creed, and to stifle original thought. But it may be that they would have shown little originality in any case, for the Turks have given to the world no original contribution but the fez and the minaret. Islam, like other religions that believe in the efficacy of the truth as they see it, is fanatical, that is, it is extremely zealous. The Turks are, however, not naturally fanatical, they are temperamentally tolerant, but their loyalty to their religion has forced them at times into persecution. But on the whole they have persecuted for religion's sake less than the Christians have done, as underneath every apparent religious persecution there will be found a political or racial motive. Islam has, nevertheless, given the Turks an excuse for persecution.

In one respect at least, the Turk is behind his religion, namely in his attitude toward women. Islam does not give women a very high place, but Mahomet did promise one of his wives a place in Paradise, and in the Koran he offers Paradise to all chaste and true and faithful men and women. In his day women were poets and leaders, and his favorite wife, Ayesha, was very powerful, but the

Turks to-day allow no such freedom nor power to women. This is, however, Oriental rather than Mohammedan.

A very serious result of the adoption of Islam was the organization of the Ottoman Empire as a Mohammedan state. Mahomet, unfortunately for the world, legislated for his people, thus imposing an inelastic code and laws of behavior on all Islamic peoples. Church and state in Turkey are so closely intertwined, the priests being the jurists and the Sultan the head of the church, that progress is extremely difficult and there is no room for non-Moslems under Moslem rule. Hence the special treaties, capitulations and extraterritoriality for Christians in the empire, each people of a non-Moslem religion having to be ruled by another than the Koranic code.

Closely allied to this trouble is the disuniting effect of separate religions with separate laws within one empire, keeping the population of Turkey from ever becoming homogeneous. These are some of the effects of the adoption of Islam by the Turks.

The conquering Turks turned their attention from Europe to Asia under Selim the Grim, grandson of the conqueror of Constantinople, and conceived by the Turks to be their greatest and truest Ottoman.

When he came to the throne, Turkey in Asia consisted merely of Asia Minor, or Anatolia as they call it, extending from the southern coast of the Black Sea southwest to the Mediterranean, and including most of ancient Armenia. When Selim's brief reign of nine years was over, he had added the whole of Kurdistan and Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine, Egypt and Arabia to the Ottoman domain. His successor carried the boundaries to their farthest point, southeast to the Persian Gulf, with Bagdad as his greatest prize. Selim's conquest included the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina and the control of a large part of Arabia, and with them he took over the rights of the ancient caliphate of the Mohammedan world. Thus the Sultan of Turkey became Caliph of Islam, to whom all the Moslems in the world owed a spiritual allegiance.

The limits of Asiatic Turkey as fixed by Selim and his son have remained until our own day Turkey in Asia. Turkey in Europe has dwindled and dwindled until only Adrianople and the city of the Sultans remain of its one time grandeur; but Asiatic portions of the empire remained practically as Selim left it until the World War hurled its hammer at it, cracking off great provinces and weakening the whole.

In 1914 Turkey in Asia consisted of two great peninsulas and

the continent that joins them, the western peninsula being Asia Minor, the southern, Arabia and the continent containing Armenia, Kurdistan and Mesopotamia.

The peninsula of Asia Minor is a high plateau extending from the Black Sea southwest to the Mediterranean. Arabia is a barren tableland washed by the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, and consisting of a great central desert and some narrow strips of cultivated coast. The continent is a low tableland sloping to the Persian Gulf from the Taurus and Lebanon mountains and intersected by the two mighty rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates.

This vast territory contains a great variety of climate and scenery. As one writer describes it: Arabia is as large as the Sahara with a similar burning climate; Syria is as large as Italy, with its olives and vines; Mesopotamia is larger than Egypt, with its sun and wind; the Black Sea coast forms a chain of provinces as big as Bavaria, with the forest of South Germany, while extensive high Armenia has winters more severe than those of Switzerland.

Within Turkey in Asia lie most of the great cities of antiquity: Troy, Nineveh, Babylon and Palmyra, Ephesus and Antioch; Sardis, Pergamos and Ephesus; Bagdad and Damascus; Baalbeck and Nicaea; Aleppo and Tarsus; Mecca, Medina and Constantinople.

From these cities come to us our earliest inspiration and we still thrill with their memories and the heritage they have bequeathed us. The foundations of all progress were laid in Turkey in Asia, which is the source of European civilization and the cradle of the three great religions. Much of it is a land of the past—the happy hunting-ground of the archeologist—interesting mainly from its ruins. It is also, however, a land of the future, with great mineral deposits, a fine soil, and a mild, fruitful climate. But the Turk has failed to develop its possibilities and his past tyranny has created a barren waste in what should be one of the richest territories of the world.

Let us consider the three divisions of Turkey in Asia separately:

Asia Minor along the Caspian and Black Seas is the seat of the Christian Armenian people, a race of farmers and tradesmen, and the mountain home of the Moslem Kurds, a fierce warlike people who prey on the Armenians of the valleys. At one time this part of the empire included all of Armenia, but in the nineteenth century the Russians pressed down through the Caucasus passes, taking a considerable slice of the land to the east and south of the Black Sea. The Armenians have been a subject people for nine centuries, divided as to nationality, but preserving their peculiar characteristics

as tenaciously as have the Jews, seldom marrying outside of their race, and in default of a country to love, cherishing passionately their ancient church, the Gregorian. Within our generation the Armenians have been fairly evenly divided between Russia, Turkey and Persia. They have been victimized by all three of these nations, but since 1900 they have been treated worse by the Turks, and have received increasingly better consideration from Russia, until in 1914-15 those near Russia went to her aid in the war, bringing upon their fellows the most terrible massacres ever known in history—nearly the annihilation of the nation.

West of Armenia in Asia Minor along the Sea of Marmora lies the first home of the Ottoman Turks with the capital cities of Konia and Broussa. Should Turkey be reduced to a small kingdom and shorn of its alien provinces, it is here in western Asia Minor that the Turk should start afresh an Ottoman rule.

Continental Turkey consists of Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia.

Syria was a national highway between ancient Egypt and the land of the Hittites and Babylonia, over which passed many a conquering army. It is a varied land of mixed race, whose only common bonds are the Arabic language and Turkish citizenship.

Since before the Crusades and despite them, Palestine has been a Turkish province. But it belongs to the world, a land of memories and pilgrimages. In its holy city, Jerusalem, we find not only Christian pilgrims but Hebrew and Moslem as well. There are to be seen the Wailing Place of the Jews, the sacred Mosque of Omar and the place of agony of our Saviour.

But the land is of the past, killed by bad government. Has it a future? and if so, is it in the hands of the Zionists? Their plan, to return as many Jews as possible from the alien West to their early home, has received an impetus from the war, many of the Zionists seeing a better chance for them if Palestine be taken from Turkey. An English protectorate would be the choice of some of the leaders of the government.

East of the coast countries stretches Mesopotamia.

This country depends for its prosperity, almost its life, on the twin rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. These rivers are less reliable than the Nile, and as they derive the whole volume of their water from the distant Armenian mountains, they can only fertilize their banks by artificial help. Thus the land has been rather the product of men's culture than the moulder of their destinies. Let alone it is a land of drought and floods; Noah hailed from this

district. But the ancients very early learned to irrigate this land and under the rule of Babylon and Nineveh the country was very rich and boasted a high civilization.

"O thou river who didst bring forth all things!
When the great gods dug thee out
They placed prosperity on thy banks."

But the coming of the Arabs into Mesopotamia soon after the Hegira ushered in the ruin of the land, a ruin completed by the raids of Tamerlane and sealed by the Turks. In our day the great rivers do not keep the land fat, for their waters are not controlled. The once splendid cities are ruins, the peasant who digs the soil is poor and struggling and crushed with taxes. England has her eye on Mesopotamia and one of her great engineers is even now making plans for the retrieving of this land of the twin rivers, by vast dams and engineering works. Turkey has ordered such plans since the revolution of 1908. Time will tell which country will execute them and restore Mesopotamia to prosperity.

Now let us turn to the great peninsula of Arabia of whose early relations with Turkey we have spoken.

Turkish possessions in Arabia have until recently consisted of the Province of Hedjaz, of which Mecca is the capital, and that of Yemen of which Medina is the capital, with the smaller province of El Hasa, all forming the long strip on the west coast, with a population of over one million inhabitants. On the southwest coast England owns the port of Aden and has a sphere of influence. In the center is the vast uninhabited desert, with a few oasis settlements ruled by independent sultans such as those of Oman and Nedj. The Arab of the desert is naturally a nomad, a herdsman, a rapacious raider and a great lover of liberty.

The city of Mecca on the coast was once a great trading center, deriving its strength from a mysterious shrine, the black stone called the Kaaba. Here the prophet Mahomet was born, and although he was driven from here to Medina, later he returned and used the old habit of making pilgrimages to Mecca to draw people to his faith. Every true Moslem whose health and means permit, must make a pilgrimage or Haj, to Mecca once in his life. Here is the sacred enclosure, holding 25,000 pilgrims, or Hadji, here is the only mosque in the world with seven minarets, here is the magic Kaaba. Hither flock Moslem pilgrims from all over the East: Tartars in their sheepskin coats and high caps, Egyptians bringing the holy carpet from Cairo; Turks, Algerians, Mohammedans from

India, little brown men from Bokhara in striped silk gowns, wild dervishes from Africa, Berbers and Moors. Here no non-Moslem is supposed to place his desecrating foot, although some half dozen Europeans in the course of the centuries have run the imminent risk of death to make the pilgrimage disguised as Moslems.

The city of Mecca has always been ruled by its own governor, a Grand Shereef, a pure Arab descended from Ali, one of the first four caliphs.

In Medina the prophet with his daughter Fatima and two of the first caliphs are buried. The two holy cities were centers of Islam until 629 A. D. when the Caliph of Mecca was killed and the caliphate passed to Damascus. From that time Mecca and Medina, except as places of pilgrimage, disappeared from the pages of political history not to reappear until 1916.

Gradually the caliph became degraded from the Servant of Allah to a kind of paid official with no spiritual authority. Schism took place and a separate caliph sat on the throne of North Africa. So when Sultan Selim conquered both North Africa and Arabia, he naturally took over the caliphate. It meant little to him beyond a tribute to his position as the greatest of all Moslem princes. Although he assumed the most exalted title in Islam, that title never added one jot to his power.

The political importance of the Turkish assumption of the caliphate was not realized until in the nineteenth century the Turks have coined some advantage from the doubtfully legal title. It is doubtfully legal because according to Moslem law the caliph is not such by inheritance, but by election by the great body of believers, and he must possess these requirements; he must be a descendent of the daughter of Mahomet, rule in the holy cities, possess the relics of the prophet (now in Constantinople) and be recognized by the great schools of law. The Shereef of Mecca, except that he has not ruled independently in Mecca and Medina, fulfils these requirements better than the Sultan of Turkey.

Abdul Hamid II in his long reign contrived a vast number of Pan-Islamic intrigues; that is, he zealously disseminated false ideas about the caliphate, trying to win all Moslems to a universal Mohammedan alliance. He had general discontent to build on, for some 230,000,000 Moslems in the world feel that the times are out of joint and sigh for the good old days, vaguely fancying that a restored caliphate might better them.

But even Abdul Hamid the wily could not form any real organization. The Moslems of Persia deny his right to the caliphate,

those of Arabia begrudge it, and those of Morocco claim the caliphate for their sultan. And even over the millions who do acknowledge it the sultan has not tangible power outside of Turkey. Pan-Islam depends on the old Mohammedan law which teaches that the whole world is to be subject to the Moslem community politically and spiritually, and that in order to accomplish this the faithful must do *jihad*, that is carry on a holy war at least once in two years to subdue the non-Moslems. The leadership of the *jihad* belongs to the caliph as supreme governor, judge and commander of all the Faithful. The heathen must be converted, but the people of the Book, namely, the Jews and Christians, may be merely subjected. A Moslem should never accept subjection to a non-Moslem power.

Unfortunately for these ideals, the progress of the world dominion has gradually brought ninety-nine percent of the Moslems of the world under Christian rule or protection. Poor old Abdul Hamid who was losing province after province to the Ghaur, could hardly hope to work out any such Pan-Islamic program. At most his propaganda could cause little resistance but could never have a conclusive influence. But one way in which Abdul Hamid made the idea count was in dealing with the British who for generations have had hanging over their heads the fear of an uprising of all the Indian Moslems if they did not support Turkey: hence this pro-Turkish policy by which Abdul Hamid benefited.

The Young Turks in 1908 wanted to abandon the medieval union of church and state and give up the caliph idea. In a modern constitutional state there is no room for a caliph and *jihad*, but Turkey has been too weak, the ideal was too high and she was forced into successive wars or *jehads*. And Germany has revived the idea for her own ends.

Germany started her Turkish policy by obtaining the concession of the Anatolian railway in 1888, which was followed by the Bagdad railroad concession. Germany's plan was to save Turkey from her other enemies (the great powers) and develop her commercially, but not to annex territory because she was too far away to defend and hold it.

When the war opened Germany saw a chance to injure England, France and Russia through their Mohammedan subjects, and did all in her power to arouse the old Moslem fanaticism that was fast dying out. The Kaiser had made two visits to the Sultan in 1889 and 1898, the latter being also a "political pilgrimage to the Holy Land." He won the friendship of Abdul Hamid, but the Moslems who consider the one who pays the visit as inferior to the

one sought, thought that his visit proved that the princes of Europe were vassals to the Sultan. Over the tomb of Saladin the Kaiser said:

"The three hundred million Mohammedans that are scattered through the world may rest assured that the German emperor will eternally be their friend."

The Young Turk revolution upset the German plans a bit, but it was not long before Enver and Talaat were as good friends to the Germans and more pliant tools than Abdul Hamid had been, and the Kaiser proceeded with his "friend-to-Islam policy." This culminated when at German instigation the Sheik-ul-Islam was forced to proclaim a jihad. By this proclamation it became the duty of all Moslems in the world to take part with life and goods in the holy war against the Entente Allies, having faith that the mercy of Allah would turn the struggle against the enemies of Islam.

This is a distinction so little cleancut that it places the faithful Moslems with infidel Germans and Bulgarians and sets them against the Moslem subjects of England and France. Of course, the Germans hoped for Moslem uprisings in India, Egypt and Algiers. As a German writer said, "Germany counted on a jihad especially in India to begin the decline of England's greatness." But the common sense of the modern Moslem has rejected such folly, and the jihad has been recognized as a "Holy War made in Germany."

In the three years of the war a number of significant changes have taken place in Turkey in Asia.

Germany has won Turkey as her ally and tool, virtually rules in Constantinople and has cleared the Bagdad corridor. But within these last weeks she has faced the unpleasant sight of an English army at the Bagdad door.

England's recent successes in Mesopotamia have wiped out the humiliation of the earlier expedition, and have given her a firm hold on the region of the twin rivers. Cyprus and Egypt, although neither is Asiatic, are two further prizes wrested from Turkey. The forces now coming north from the Suez Canal may change the ownership of Palestine and further the Zionist plans.

The Russian army, marching down the Black Sea coast, won a series of victories, taking many Armenian towns. After Erzincan, the railroads were so remote that further progress became difficult and now the Russians are advancing southward past Kermanshah towards the junction with the English.

One of the most interesting changes that has taken place in Turkey in Asia is the revolt of the Grand Shereef of Mecca. In

the summer of 1916 he proclaimed the independence of Arabia from Turkey. Troops attempted to put down the revolt, but were unsuccessful. In September the Emir of Nejd proclaimed his adherence to the newly revolted state and Medina followed the others. In the winter of 1916-17, the kingdom of Hedjaz was organized, the Red Sea littoral was captured and the King of the Hedjaz announced his intent to reorganize Arabia as a modern industrial state. Of the great peninsula of Arabia there remains only El Hasa to the Turks.

In these war times all is fluctuating and uncertain; what Turkey may lose further and what she may regain by the war are on the lap of the gods.

If the Allies win the war Turkey will probably be partitioned, Syria going to France; Mesopotamia to England; Armenia and Constantinople to Russia; Arabia will remain independent; Palestine may become Zionist, and what is left of Turkey will work out its political salvation in Asia Minor.

If the Teutons win the war, Turkey will still lose Arabia and Egypt, but will remain nominally independent, but under German military and economic control—a hollow independence.

Should the war end in a stalemate, Turkey might preserve the *status quo ante bellum*.

ENGLISH DIPLOMACY.

BY THE EDITOR.

BRITISH diplomacy has lately assumed a new aspect, especially with regard to Turkey, and it has introduced changes whose wisdom may appear in the distant future though at present their advisability seems to be doubtful, and so we will point them out without either recommending or condemning them. We will only say that with the formation of the Entente a spirit seems to have possessed British diplomacy the result of which will be shown in the end of the present war.

England has always exercised a kind of patronage over Turkey. When "the sick man of Europe" was a moribund power England stood up for it, while Greece and afterward the Christian nations on the banks of the Danube and south of it were fighting for their independence. It was England who insisted on the necessity of keeping Constantinople in the hands of the Moslem and on Turkey's privilege of closing the Dardanelles against the Russians.