

**A WORD ABOUT
TURKEY AND
HER ALLIES**

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A word about Turkey and her allies by Anonymous

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CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHY, physical and political, is a subject which in all times has attracted the attention of thoughtful men, more especially of those who, owing to social conditions, have been placed in the position of legislators and administrators. Those natural barriers of mountains, rivers, seas, and oceans by which Nature has separated some countries from others, and the political divisions by which circumstances dependent on the will of man have drawn a line of demarcation between one kingdom and another, deserve at the present day more grave consideration, especially on the part of Englishmen, than was ever the case before. In the England of to-day every man is a politician ; he belongs to a political party, and he studies and supports the newspaper that represents his opinions. He will even read the opposition journals, either to strengthen his belief in his own political creed, or to seek an opportunity of refuting what he deems the errors of those

who differ from him. Nay, more; reverencing that freedom of speech which is represented and guarded by the Press, the Englishman of to-day may take up his pen, and addressing the editor of a journal that advocates the political opinions he follows, or even the editor of an opposition journal, his letter will in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred find a place in the columns of the newspaper addressed. Or he may attend a public meeting, and there express his opinions orally; or he may content himself with expressing his assent to opinions uttered by some speakers, or his dissent from those expressed by others. In short, the Englishman of the nineteenth century enjoys, or rather possesses, more political liberty than the native of any other country on earth. I advisedly say *possesses*, but he seldom *enjoys* his privileges in the sense of exercising them. It is only after some terrible blunder has been made by his rulers that the Englishman raises his voice and asserts his rights as a free citizen. But to denounce faulty administration which has entailed irremediable evils, is but a poor satisfaction to those upon whom the evil has fallen. Denunciations pronounced in the strongest language cannot repair the mischief that has been done. An awakening, a thorough rousing of public opinion, may serve as a warning to ministers, and may be the means of averting

in the future calamities similar to those which have excited national indignation.

At the present moment, when the rose of England is bathed in the blood of an English hero, and trampled under foot in the sands of the African desert, it may not be amiss for Englishmen to look steadily on the map of Europe, and taking a lesson in geography, physical and political, endeavour to form a correct idea of the relations existing between their country and the Powers of the European continent.

In order to appreciate these international relations, it will be well to examine the condition and aspect of each individual state with which England is brought most nearly into political contact.

Let us first cast a glance on Russia, that giant empire which covers the entire north of Asia from the Caucasian Range to the Pacific Ocean, and which occupies the north of Europe from the Baltic Sea to the Ural Mountains. What is the internal political condition of these vast territories over which the Czar rules? Need the most ordinary newspaper reader be told? The spirit of Nihilism enwraps Russia even as an encompassing atmosphere, and permeates every social grade of the empire. In the ranks of the Nihilist brotherhood are to be found Russians

of every rank, from the highest noble down to the humblest citizen and the hard-worked serf. Nay, more; in the ranks of the Nihilists are to be found youthful maidens as well as bearded men. The entire Muscovite social system is permeated by a fearful political force, which works in every direction; at one moment striking down the highest placed on the social edifice, at another engulfing the humblest.

This fearful political epidemic has inoculated, so to speak, Russians of both sexes and of every age and rank, and having entered into the blood is propagated from father to son, from mother to daughter, like to those contagious maladies which once introduced into a country are seldom thoroughly eradicated, the germs remaining latent to reappear when favouring circumstances arise. If needful reforms, thorough and complete, are not originated and carried into operation by the governing authorities in Russia, they will inevitably burst upwards from the foundations of the social structure, and with seismic force will scatter ruin and devastation, regardless of order and unobservant of rule.

But though Russia is thus shaken internally by Nihilism she still undeviatingly pursues her traditional foreign policy of extension, whether by annexation or by conquest. That policy, which though initiated by the

predecessors of Peter I., received from that monarch its first great impulse, has been steadily carried out by each succeeding occupant, whether male or female, of the throne of Russia. Indeed, so uniform has been Russia's course of action in regard to the extension of her dominions, that believers in the metempsychosis might say that the soul of Peter the Great has continued to animate each of his successors.

And thus we find the Russia of to-day carrying out the foreign policy inaugurated more than two centuries ago by the great monarch who may well be reputed the founder of the Russian empire. And so Russia advances cautiously and steadily towards the object she has in view, retiring before repulse, but retiring only to return to the pathway from which she has been driven, at a period more or less remote according to the opportunities that present themselves; advancing with giant strides where impediments do not exist, and stealing onwards with lynx-like watchfulness where she apprehends observation. Russia has known how to profit by the supineness of England, and keeps her eyes ever open to her Indian interests. "Emperor of Central Asia" would form a well-sounding addition to the titles of the Czar of all the Russias, and would counterbalance, phonetically, the title of "Empress of India," assumed by the Queen of England in virtue of her Indian dominions.

The Crimean war has passed into the regions of history, but that war was a tentative at the realisation of the grand aim of an ancient hereditary Russian policy. When Catherine II. named her second grandson Constantine, when she surrounded him with Greek attendants, and had him instructed by Greek professors, she was preparing a way, as she thought, to place a Russian prince on the throne once occupied by the Emperor Constantine. And when the Semiramis of the North, by the instrumentality of Potemkin, acquired possession of the Crimean peninsula, she was working her way towards Constantinople. She did not expect to reach the goal herself, but she, who had become inoculated with the Russian spirit of patient onwardness, was satisfied to transmit to her successors the task of creeping a few more paces forward towards the desired terminus. And when Catherine uttered what Burke termed a "royal syllogism," to explain why and how she had become mistress of the Crimean peninsula, she gave *veiled* expression to the policy of which she was an exponent, and the perfected development of which would crown a Russian prince emperor in Constantinople.

It is incontestable that had the Emperor Nicholas at the commencement of the Crimean war possessed railway

communication with the southern portions of his European dominions, the result of the conflict might have been other than it was. England by her blundering in that war lost the *prestige* which up to that time she had enjoyed amongst the nations of Europe; and Russia, though *nominally* defeated, had exhibited in the warfare resources which augmented her importance as a great military power. England blundered egregiously in the mode in which she played her part in the Crimean war, and it must be honestly confessed that the checks suffered by Russia were inflicted by France. Napoleon III. was a powerful ally for England on that occasion. How she repaid his services it is not at present needful to inquire; but had England entered single-handed in that contest, it is scarcely probable that history would have had to record the brilliant pyrotechnic display that delighted the eyes of Londoners on the occasion of the signing of the peace that followed the termination of the Crimean war.

Checked in her great effort to reach Constantinople, Russia, with what could not be termed a bad grace, turned her steps towards Asia, and there continued her eastward progress. Nothing is more noteworthy in history than the mode in which Russia has won her way through the regions north of the Himalayan Range even to the Pacific