

**THE CHRISTIANS OF  
TURKEY: THEIR  
CONDITION UNDER  
MUSSULMAN RULE**

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# THE CHRISTIANS OF TURKEY

THEIR CONDITION UNDER

## MUSSULMAN RULE

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ETC. ETC.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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THIRTEEN years ago, under the title of 'The Christians in Turkey,' I published a pamphlet, the greater part of which I am about to reprint in the present volume. Unhappily the description which I gave so many years ago of the state and condition of the Christian subjects of Turkey is as applicable at the present time as it was then. In 1863 the minds of the people of England were unprepared to believe that the position of our brethren in that empire was so miserable as they now know it to be, and my pamphlet excited but little attention. I have now, however, been asked by some of those who read it when first printed to allow of its republication, and I respond to that request by embodying the information, sad and harrowing as it is, in the present volume. I have made but few alterations in the parts republished. Some mere temporary references have been omitted, and some few

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illustrations have been added, and in addition I have devoted one chapter to a brief survey of the different races which occupy the European provinces of Turkey, and another to tracing the cause for the outbreak in the Herzegovina which was the herald of the present war between Servia and Montenegro with the Porte. Beyond these additions this volume is mainly a reprint of the pamphlet of thirteen years ago: thirteen years of grave responsibility to us: thirteen years of violated promises on the part of the Turkish Government: thirteen years of intense misery and suffering, of violence and of massacre, for the Christian subjects of Turkey.

I refer to the length of time which has gone by since the original publication of 'The Christians in Turkey,' and to the fact that the survey of the condition of these people is in the main reprinted from that pamphlet, to remove any misconception of my motive in putting forth the present volume. I have no wish to seem even to serve the interests or passions of party. I make no charge against any one set of ministers of state. To do so would be dishonest. The picture which I here reproduce of Turkish rule will at least show that the Ministry of the present day is not more responsible for the evils which weigh so heavily upon our Christian brethren



in Turkey than former administrations. Any words of blame on my part are directed against that 'foreign policy' which has been pursued more or less consistently since the beginning of the Crimean war. I prefer therefore to alter the language of my former publication as little as possible, though some words and references may have but little applicability to the present. There has, however, been no change of circumstance, at least no amelioration in the condition of the Christians of Turkey, but the reverse. Their lot is harder, their condition more intolerable, in proportion to the decline in strength and number of the dominant race.

If, indeed, this question were one of mere party politics, I should not venture to intrude into a region where the presence of a clergyman is rightly regarded as incongruous. It is because the unhappy circumstances which surround so many millions of our brethren inhabiting some of the fairest and most fertile portions of the globe, ought not to awaken party animosities, that I ask the attention of the reader to a review of the present wrongs of the Christians in Turkey, in order, not indeed to enlist the sympathies of Englishmen in their behalf, for this they already have, but to give to these sympathies a definite direction. Indeed, with rare and

noble exceptions, it must be confessed that party politicians of all shades of opinion are almost equally uninformed on this subject, and therefore equally indifferent to the sufferings of the great mass of the people of Turkey. This fact, whilst it removes this great political question out of the arena of party strife, at the same time renders more difficult the attempt to obtain for it an attentive hearing from those who seek, or affect to guide, popular opinion. My object, let me state at the outset, is to ask that our governors should cease from that strange interference against the people of Turkey which has been for some years the policy of the English Government, and that they should no longer actively aid a despotism the most grinding on the face of the earth: one which, not content with the fanatical cruelty which led to the Diocletian and other early persecutions, poisons and pollutes the whole domestic life of the vast majority of the subjects of Turkey.

There is another reason why I prefer to reproduce my former words. In the indignation felt and expressed throughout all England there lurks one danger. In dwelling upon the atrocities perpetrated in Bulgaria we may come to believe that these were exceptional in their character, an outbreak caused by

some momentary panic, or by a sudden uncontrollable frenzy which may possibly never again occur. This is not true. They do but illustrate the normal condition of the provinces of Turkey. What has happened in Bulgaria has happened also in Bosnia. Deeds have been done there as horrible as those done in Bulgaria, even if the number of victims should fall short of those in the latter province. Only by what may almost be called an accident were the atrocities perpetrated at Batak and elsewhere unveiled to us. We were made acquainted with one set of facts, we are in ignorance as to the extent of the other atrocities. Our ignorance indeed is our only excuse for the continuance of such horrors.

In a letter written by an English gentleman resident at Constantinople, and quoted by Mr Cobden in a debate in the House of Commons in 1863, the following passage occurs:—'What is our policy supporting? Some one asked me how to account for this in a people the most moral of all, the English, that these deepest immoralities should be maintained by their patronage? I replied, they are, for the most part, quite ignorant, or unwilling to believe what they hear.' When that ignorance is removed, when they know what is really meant by the phrase 'supporting the integrity of Turkey,' Englishmen,