

**THE EASTERN QUESTION AND
A SUPPRESSED CHAPTER OF
HISTORY: NAPOLEON III. AND
THE KINGDOM OF ROUMANIA**

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The Eastern Question and a Suppressed Chapter of History: Napoleon III. And the kingdom of Roumania by Stuart F. Weld

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REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.

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with the respects of the author,
Stuart F. Weld.

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"A forgotten, or, indeed, almost a suppressed chapter of history."—JOHN FISKE

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MR. WELD has devoted much time and study to unveiling the mysteries which have surrounded the creation of Roumania, and which have attended Eastern diplomacy in all the recent history of that State. Mr. Weld has found, as any student finds who attempts the difficult studies attending the history of the Second Empire, that the part taken by Napoleon III. in the making of that history has been construed in different ways according as men hated Napoleon or as they flattered him. As one of his French authorities says, "Napoleon's history has passed through the double criticism of hate and love." From sources not largely studied, even in Europe,—not studied at all, one might say, in America,—Mr. Weld has constructed an intelligible history of the diplomacy, the intrigue, the failures, and final success which have attended the history of Roumania since that name was given to the provinces which were united in the new-born kingdom. As has been aptly remarked by Professor John Fiske in reference to this study, Mr. Weld has reproduced a lost passage in history.

It will be seen that at the meeting at Osborne, in 1857, of the sovereigns of France and of England, a meeting interesting at the time, and celebrated since, the first important step was taken which led forward to the establishment of the new kingdom. Prince Albert, however, opposed any immediate action; and the plan of Napoleon III. was for the moment delayed. The determination of the people of Wallachia was strongly in favor of such union. The people of Moldavia, if they wanted it, were not at first permitted to express themselves. But not long after the Osborne in-

cident the legislature of Moldavia, by a vote of eighty-one to two, expressed the almost unanimous wish of that province for union. For a considerable time, however, the wish of the people of the two provinces was thwarted by the opposition of England and Austria. A motion introduced by Mr. Gladstone, then in opposition, favoring the union, was defeated in Parliament. All the same, however, the people of the two provinces themselves went forward to carry out their own purposes. By an extraordinary movement of popular enthusiasm, Moldavia and Wallachia, each having the privilege to choose its hospodar, chose the same person, Colonel Couza. He was chosen Prince of Moldavia in January, Prince of Wallachia in February, 1859. Here was practical union; and Napoleon, in his address to the French Chambers, February 7, said with some pride, "If I were asked what interest France has in these countries, I should answer that the interest of France is everywhere where a cause of justice and civilization is to be maintained."

Mr. Weld's history, which is in the reader's hands, shows how very close was Napoleon's connection with the subsequent events which his policy, indeed, up to this time had foreseen and prepared the way for.

The tendency of the last half of the present century has been to union. United Italy and United Germany are illustrations of this tendency on the continent of Europe. The increasing commerce of the States of America, the virtual establishment of the Monroe Doctrine, and the great Pan-American Congress are the most signal illustrations of the same determination in this country. Illustrations on a smaller scale, but not less interesting, are those of the establishment of the States on the Danube, which give to Europe and civilization a new barrier against the barbarism of the crowned assassin of Stamboul. Mr. Weld's study of the history of Roumania will open the eyes of most American readers to the difficulties which ancient diplomacy and the conservative prejudices of half Europe have placed in the

way of such consolidation of States. All the more interesting is a history of one of the great providential movements in which is answered that prayer which foreshadows the Christian civilization of the future.

That prayer was answered in a certain measure in the Constitution of the United States, which made one nation out of many. It was answered when the Italian provinces formed themselves into the Kingdom of Italy; when the petty duchies of Germany united with such kingdoms as Bavaria and Prussia in the formation of the Empire of Germany; when Austrians and Hungarians consent to the dual Empire of Austria; and when the kingdom of Roumania came into being in the face of jealousies and of the sway of ancient prejudices.

Civilization advances and the kingdom of heaven comes as children of God work together with him to bring about the hope and the prayer of the Saviour of mankind,—

“That they all may be one.”

EDWARD E. HALE.

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