

**THE CLAIMS OF THE CHRISTIAN
ABORIGINES OF THE TURKISH
OR OSMANLI EMPIRE UPON
CIVILIZED NATIONS, PART I-III**

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The claims of the Christian aborigines of the Turkish or Osmanli empire upon civilized nations,
Part I-III by W. F. Ainsworth

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W. F. AINSWORTH

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THE CLAIMS
OF
THE CHRISTIAN ABORIGINES
OF THE
TURKISH OR OSMANLI EMPIRE

Upon Civilized Nations.

PART I.—THE CLAIMS OF THE ABORIGINES.
PART II.—THE PRESENT CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF THE
OSMANLI EMPIRE.
PART III.—THE ASPECT AND POSITION OF THE MISSIONARY
ENTERPRIZE IN WESTERN ASIA.

BY
W. F. AINSWORTH, F.G.S., F.R.G.S.

LATE IN CHARGE OF AN EXPEDITION TO THE ORALDRAK CHRISTIANS FROM THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUT D'AFRIQUE, &c., &c., &c.

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PART I.

THE CLAIMS OF THE ABORIGINES.

THE claims of the Aborigines upon the protection of their conquerors is a subject which is lately beginning to attract much attention in Colonial Britain; and not less interesting and important are the claims of the uncivilized upon civilized nations.

In the practical operation of the first of these benevolent considerations, Great Britain stands at present far in advance of other nations. The generally destructive character of the intercourse between the more and the less civilized races, hitherto fatal to the weaker parties, has of late been considerably modified through good men's efforts in our own country. The most obvious examples of this kind are the attempts to abolish the slave trade from Africa to America, the more humane treatment of slaves, the partial abolition of negro slavery, and the attempts to legislate upon the conduct to be pursued in new colonies towards the aboriginal races.

In the second of these philanthropic emanations of a philosophic Christianity, the Germans, perhaps, stand at present among the very foremost of those who are pressing forward the most energetically to advance general civilization. It is not that other nations have been wanting in the genius that can make eloquent and feeling appeals on behalf of the less fortunate members of the human family, whose feebleness and deficiencies in the hour of struggle are mistaken by the prejudiced for essential conditions of

their existence, and whose adverse circumstances, which alone made their progress slow, have been too often aggravated by injustice. England, indeed, has reason to be proud of her Berkeley, her Granville Sharpe, and their followers, the Clarksons, Wilberforces, and Sturges; France may well boast her Gregoires and her Montyons; Spain her Las Casas; and America her Benezets, her Franklins, and her Penns: all men who have been engaged in the struggle of the oppressed of all ranks against the oppressors of all times. But in Germany there has been more steadiness of purpose and singleness of idea in the prosecution of the generous effort; and the genius of benevolence appears, from the number of its advocates, to be there no longer the gift of the few, but to have become a legacy to a nation.

From the days of Iselin, who in 1764 examined the idea that man has innate faculties capable in themselves of a complete development, to those of Gall, Spurzheim, and Tiedemann, a growing belief in this fact, which is now admitted as an incontrovertible position, has been gradually gaining ground, while a host of philosophic writers have been led from these physical facts to consider what also the future presented of promises in the amelioration of the condition of all mankind.

Three distinct schools arose out of the peculiar manner in which different orders of minds viewed the same general facts. Kant held that by nature man is capable of indefinite perfection, and that freedom is the grand means of attaining it. Herder demonstrated the perfectibility of man, from the relations of matter to intellect, and from the innate tendency of matter to improve; and he shews that mankind has advanced steadily from the earliest period of history. Schelling, Lessing, and others, have rested upon religion for the improvement of man; and thus Kant became the leader of what is called the political school; Herder, of the natural school; and Schelling, of the religious school. Infinite subdivisions, as might be expected,

took place in these great divisions; and thus, for example, in the religious school, Gorres pursues Schelling's principles with Roman-catholic views, while Steffens reasons upon principles of protestantism.

But, debarred from all political discussion in the ordinary sense, the philosophies of history of the Germans, while they contain principles which most beneficially affect all uncivilized nations, and are often really well-reasoned schemes for the reform of societies, yet they want both a local and a practical application. The influence of philosophy in advancing schemes for human improvement has been very great indeed; but with it, as the sole panoply, liberty would ever be refused to the slave, and protection to the emancipated negro or the persecuted Rayah would ever be impossible. Great changes in policy—and that in a policy which looks to ulterior as well as to immediate results—can alone effect these things, and help the oppressed in their fearful struggles; and such changes come only through political discussion and political action.

It is unnecessary in the present day to advert to the fact that the Osmanli Turks have no other right to the great and rich countries, and for the most part formerly Christian, which they now rule over, than that of conquest. They are not the aborigines of the country; they rose to power within that country, but they came from without, subjugating at first the Greeks, and then all the different races which people that vast empire.

In Syria, Arabia, and Mesopotamia, the subjugation of the oriental Christians by Muhammedanism anteceded the foundation of the Osmanli power. The abuses and corruptions which in the fourth and fifth centuries so grossly pervaded every Christian sect, and the endless religious controversies and contentions which convulsed the eastern world, if they did not suggest the idea of the general incorporation of all sects under one great faith to Muhammed, at least facilitated the overthrow of oriental Christendom.

Abou Bekr, the successor of Muhammed, published his resolution to spread the new doctrine through Syria at the point of the sword. The battle of Ainzadin, in July, 633, decided the fate of the capital. Emesa and Bealbek were taken the following year, and the Syro-Grecians made a last and ineffectual stand on the banks of the Hieromax. Jerusalem sustained a siege of four months. The conquest of Aleppo, A.D. 638, and that of Antioch which followed, completed the subjugation of Syria. The battle of Kadisiyeh and the capture of Al Madayn (Ctesiphon), rendered the Arabs masters of Persia almost to the banks of the Oxus.

In this sweep of Christianity before the Muhammedan Arabs, Christian nations were dispersed, and some even entirely lost: such was the case with the kingdom of Hira on the Euphrates. The Syro-Greeks retreated to the mountains and to Lesser Asia. The Syrians were dispersed, but are still to be met with throughout the East, from Lesser Asia to India beyond the Ganges. The Chaldeans of Mesopotamia retreated to the mountains, those of Susiana partly to India, and partly to the mountains. A few alone of each of these Christian races remained to brave the hostility of these conquerors; and while the Syrians still hung by the antique and venerated sites of Jerusalem and Antioch, the Chaldeans also clung to their episcopal sees of Edessa, Nisibin, Nineveh, and Baghdad.

Before the downfall of the Khalifa, the Turkish Sultans of the Seljukiyan dynasty had carried their arms into the Greek empire, and the defeat of Romanus Diogenes sealed the fate of Lesser Asia, and gave the first permanent footing to their future conquerors.

The Osmanli Turks made their appearance about 1226. The fall of Nicea and Nicomedia was followed by that of Brusa. The Osmanli Sultans crossed the Hellespont, and conquered Adrianople; and from the period of the fall of Constantinople to the present day (now nearly four centuries), has been one long usurpation, characterized

only by a fierce hatred of the conquered, by incapability of civilization, bad government, luxurious and indolent habits, fanaticism, pride, and ambition, which occasionally roused the Osmanlis to a spirit of foreign conquest, and above all, by a stern, unyielding, inflexible hatred to Christianity, and to all that emanates from it, or assimilates them to it.

THE GREEKS.

The great Christian races that at present exist under Osmanli Muhammedan rule, are the Greek, the Armenian, the Slavonian, the Chaldean, and the Syrian. The Rayah Greeks constitute a large proportion of the population of the great cities in European Turkey, and at Smyrna. They are more numerous in the European peninsula than in the Asiatic, in which they do not extend much beyond the districts of Koniye and Kaisariye to the south, being succeeded by an Armeno-Christian population; but to the north they extend to Trebizond, the temporary seat of one of their later dynasties. Weary of the prostration of their religious head at the foot of Islamism, they have openly avowed their fealty to the Russian patriarch; and while the indignation of a national thralldom is too deeply felt to be even whispered abroad, yet it every now and then shews itself in local revolts of districts remote from the capital. At Stambol itself the annual festivals of the Greeks are superintended by an army of Osmanlis, under the command of the Serasker himself.

THE ARMENIANS.

In this country we are apt to form our own notions of an Armenian from the rich, intelligent, but deceitful banker or merchant of Constantinople or Smyrna; but they still exist throughout the Osmanli empire, and especially in their own long-lost country, under a very different aspect, although prostrated by so long a period of misrule and persecution.