

INTRODUCTION.

WE have given in the accompanying work a brief history of the Ottoman Empire, from the earliest incursion of a horde of marauding Tartars into Asia Minor down to the present time; avoiding dry details, yet sufficiently ample to afford the general reader a knowledge of the origin and growth of a power at one time second to none in the Eastern Hemisphere; of the influence which it has exercised upon the politics of Europe; of its retrogression from a position of haughty prominence to one of comparative insignificance; and of the causes which have led to its decline.

Having furnished the reader with a summary of the history of the Turks as a nation, we then proceed to describe more diffusely, as being the more entertaining portion of our theme, the fertile and extensive country embraced within the boundaries of the Turkish Empire, which is undoubtedly, both historically and geographically, one of the most important and interesting portions of the earth's surface. Beautifully situated as it is upon the shores of the Mediterranean, upon the highway to the East, the coveted prize of many of the nations of Europe, embracing within its area portions of three continents, and including under its sway the whole of that country known as the "Holy Land," and endeared to all Christians as the location of the wanderings, the battles, the hopes, the fears and trials recorded in Holy Writ, and more especially as the scene of the labors and suf-