

Emperor once had designed to found his city on the plain to the south of Troy, near Rhaetium, where the brave Ajax had fallen. No more favoured spot than that on which Constantinople stands could exist for beauty of situation, salubrious climate, the accumulation of wealth, and safety against attack. In its gardens are flowers of richest hue, and fragrant shrubs, and trees laden with luscious fruit. The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles are two gateways through which come the produce, the treasures, and people from the four quarters of the globe. Through these highways have come the riches of every nation into the Golden Horn. A part of the ancient walls are yet standing, together with the aqueducts, and colonnades, which Constantine built at a cost of over twelve million dollars. The works of genius were brought from distant countries to adorn the city; all that ambition, wealth, and power could command were employed in building and embellishing it. On the site of the old city was the Forum, the only monument of which, that has survived the ravages of time and war is the burnt pillar. It is a part of a lofty column that stood in the centre of the Forum. Originally it was a hundred and twenty feet high and supported a statue of Apollo, as the sun god, holding a sceptre in his right hand, and a globe in his left. Not far from this spot is the Atmeidan, the old hippodrome. The site is marked by the twisted pillar of brass, in the form of three serpents. Their heads once supported a golden tripod taken from the temple of Delphi, where it had been dedicated to the god by the victorious Greeks after the defeat of the Persians. When Mahommed the Second captured Constantinople in 1453, he rode through the city admiring its palaces, churches, and monuments. In passing through the hippodrome, he saw the triple-headed pillar, and in his ignorance, believing the three serpents were the gods of the infidel Christians, he swung his battle axe and shattered