

and we have curiously enough the same social fact brought about by apparently contrary causes.

Though the Rumanians seem to have contributed but little, up to the nineteenth century, to the advance of civilization, their part in European history is nevertheless a glorious one, and if less apparent, perhaps of more fundamental importance. By shedding their blood in the struggle against the Ottoman invasions, they, together with the other peoples of Oriental Europe, procured that security which alone made possible the development of western civilization. Their merit, like that of all with whom they fought, is not to have vanquished time and again the followers of Mohammed who always ended by gaining the upper hand, but rather to have resisted with unparalleled energy, perseverance, and bravery the terrible Ottoman invaders, making them pay for each step advanced such a heavy price, that their resources were drained, they were unable to carry on the fight, and thus their power came to an end.¹

From the phalanx of Christian warriors stand out the names of a few who were the bravest of a time when bravery was common.

Mircea the Old, Prince of Wallachia, led the Rumanians in the battle of Kossovo, in 1389, when the united Balkan nations attempted for the first time to check the Ottoman invasion. The battle was lost, and Mircea had to consent to the payment of a tribute to the Turks. Nor were they more fortunate at Nicopoli, in 1395, where they fought with the army of Sigismond, King of Hungary, and were aided by a strong contingent of French cavaliers sent by Charles VI, King of France. Shortly afterwards, however, the Turks having invaded Wallachia, Mircea utterly defeated them at Rovine,

¹ Xenopol, *op. cit.*, i. 266.