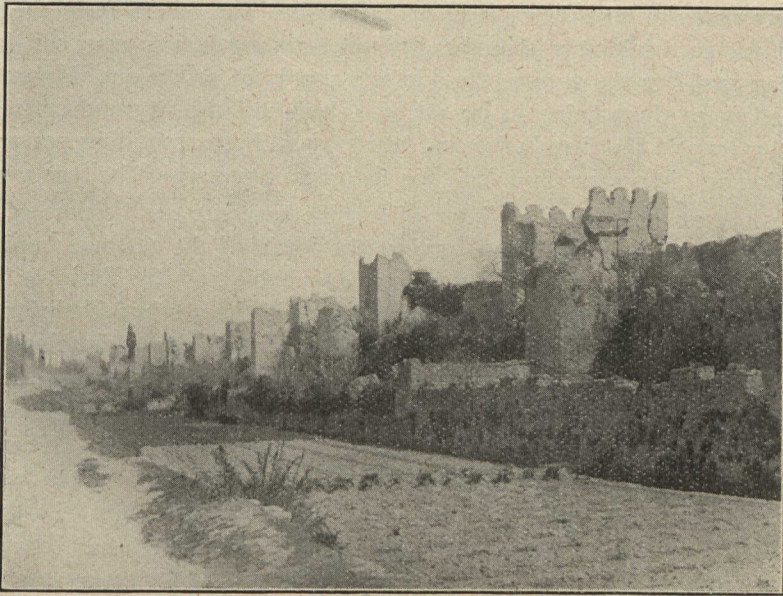


filled with the one idea and ambition of taking this wondrous home of the Caesars. It is said that once at midnight, he sent for his Grand Vizer, who came, at that unusual hour, in fear and trembling for his life, and bearing in his hands a vessel filled with golden coin to buy, if possible, freedom from the doom which he expected at the hands of his dread sovereign whom he thought he had unconsciously enraged. "Away with your gold," exclaimed the Sultan, "I do not want it. Come help me to do this one thing—to capture Constantinople. See! here is my bed ! All night long, I toss from side to side. Come let us stoutly and bitterly fight these Greeks, putting our trust in God and His great Prophet. Let us win for ourselves this residence of the Caesars!"

From the last letter which Constantine, the Emperor of the Greeks, sent to Mahomet, shortly after this incident, it is evident that as a result of this inter-



THE LAST MILE OF WELL PRESERVED LAND-WALLS
TOWARDS THE SEA OF MARMORA.

view, the Sultan had sent some communication to the emperor which was practically and intentionally impossible in its demands. The response is one that awakens sympathy and admiration for the quiet heroic character of the Christian ruler. "As it is clear," he writes, "that thou desirest more war than peace, as I cannot satisfy thee either by my protestations of sincerity, or by my readiness to swear allegiance, so let it be according to thy desire. I turn now, and look alone to God. Should it be His will that the city be thine, where is he who can oppose His will? If He should inspire thee with a desire for peace, I shall be only too happy. However I release thee from all thy oaths and treaties with me, and