

beneath the next assault of its hungry and rapacious foes.

The first Othman Princes were most able rulers, many of them successful warriors down to the time of Solyman the Magnificent, who died in 1566—himself the ablest of them all. Unhappily for Turkish greatness, this Sovereign, desirous of preventing the recurrence of the rebellions so often caused by Princes of the Royal blood, ordained that in future, the heirs of the Turkish throne, should be confined to the harem, and educated among women and slaves, till they were drawn from their seclusion, to sway the sceptre of statesmen and heroes. The consequence of this change, has been visible in the marked degeneracy of the Turkish Sultans, who have, since the death of Solyman, been enthroned in the Golden Gate.

In 1826, the Sultan Mahmoud destroyed the Janizaries; these turbulent troops having often strangled the sovereigns, who sought to restrain their violence or improve their organization. The Turkish Sultan is an absolute Ruler—he is the Commander of the Faithful, the supreme spiritual head of the Orthodox Moslem Faith. There is no class of nobles in the Ottoman Empire. All Turks are nominally upon a level. All Christians were regarded as an inferior race, not permitted to serve in the Ottoman armies, and compelled to pay a degrading poll tax—they were not permitted to give testimony in a Mahommedan court of justice, and were often the victims of crushing misrule. Within the last twenty years, however, most remarkable improvements in the condition of the Turkish Empire, have taken place. The army has been disciplined and trained, according to European tactics, of which improvements, in the recent contests on the Danube, the Turks have reaped manifest advantage. Commerce has been considerably