

the Turks exploited the Rumanian countries in the most shameless fashion, making the candidates to the throne pay enormous sums of money for their support. This money was usually borrowed, and once on the throne the princes impoverished the population by ever increasing taxation. Tribute, as well as provisions, means of transport, and all kinds of services for the Turkish armies were exacted.

Nevertheless the Rumanians had not lost all consciousness of national strength, and they proved it when *John the Terrible*, nephew of Stephen the Great, succeeded to the throne in 1572. He refused to pay tribute to the Turks, and repeatedly defeated the Turkish forces. This greatly alarmed the Sultan, who ordered prayers to be said in all the mosques, whilst a new army of 100,000 men advanced against John. Anxious on account of the news which reached them, the soldiers of John asked him how many were their enemies. 'We shall count them on the battlefield,' was the reply. Unfortunately his cavalry, composed of nobles who were not over-loyal to a prince who defended the peasants, deserted to the enemy. John entrenched himself and would have been able to resist for a long time, save that he had no water. His soldiers spread pieces of linen over the dew-drenched grass to be able at least to moisten their lips, but in the end they had to surrender. The Turks tore the Rumanian prince to pieces and dipped their swords in his blood, that his courage and his gallantry might pass to them. Thus died the last hero of Moldavia.

The Rumanian provinces were suffocating, strangled by the bloodthirsty hands of the Turks. The reigns of John the Terrible and Michael the Brave were like the last convulsions of a struggling victim.

*Michael the Brave*, Prince of Wallachia (1593-1601),