

## ST. SOPHIA.

Among the various temples erected for the worship of the universal Deity, "Jehovah, Jove or Lord," that dedicated to, and, even under its present application, retaining the title of "St. Sophia," is not the least celebrated. It is a church whose history is of a highly interesting character, resulting from one of the most important revolutions ever effected by religious fanaticism, or which ever changed the history of the world. It was originally built by Constantine I., but was destroyed by an earthquake; subsequently rebuilt by Constantius, and again destroyed by a fire, which, in the reign of Justinian, consumed nearly the entire city of Constantinople. That potentate then built the present church, or mosque, (as it is now called.) The dome of the temple is very faulty, and contributes to give the entire building a decidedly inferior effect, compared with others in the city, and especially that of the Sultan Ahmet, which is, probably, one of the most superb mosques in the possession of Islamism. The sight of this temple awakens a thrilling interest in him whom study has made acquainted with the history of Byzantium; and, whatever belief he embraces, he cannot contemplate, without a deep feeling, the site over which once floated, in all the pride of Roman greatness, the banner of Christianity. This mosque is splendidly situated; it is visible from every direction—from the Bosphorus—the harbour, and the sea of Marmora. It is not the privilege of Christians to visit it; but to them the other mosques are comparatively accessible. There is no inconsiderable chivalry necessary on those occasions; and, indeed, the life of the Christian visitor, when thus detected in the gratification of his curiosity, is not considered too great a sacrifice to the offended spirit of Islamism. On the occasion of a visit by a late Christian traveller, to this mosque, the Imam would not enter, so convinced was he of the danger attending it. This individual, and another, changing their hats for fezes, and otherwise substituting the most admissible costume, reached the vestibule, where they took off their shoes, (a necessary ceremony) and entered. Their stay in the mosque was not very accommodating to their curiosity, and less so to their personal safety—as a precipitate retreat alone preserved to them the enjoyment of their existence.

The beholder of this trophy, won by decidedly the most daring revolutionist of the day, from defeated Christianity, cannot, in surveying it, but lift the lid under which the glorious and chivalric past is buried. The temple of St. Sophia possesses a very superior claim to the contemplation of the Christian; but looking at it as a mere historical record, it is not much less attractive. Indeed, Constantinople, or Stamboul, as it has been called, is one of those spots, which, when viewed from any approach to the city, is an evidence, a living evidence, of its former greatness. There are very few cities which, during so many centuries of existence, have been so much spared from the destructive action of time, and so perfectly free from the equally destructive hand of human hostility. Nor does this city of the Sultan—this chiefest of cities conquered by the followers of the Prophet—claim more attention, from us, to its origin, progress, and unique ascendancy, than to the recent instability of its political and religious existence. The history of the rise of the empire, of which St. Sophia is decidedly the trophy, is pregnant with interest to the historian and philosopher—but not more so than its sudden fall: which possibly cannot be viewed in a more instructive light, than as exhibiting a portion—a fraction, as it may be termed—of the universal mental revolution, of which the world is at this day abundant. It is not, happily, the revolution of arms—it is not the result of physical power—it is the achievement of intellectual prowess; and, whatever be the result, the present mosque of St. Sophia will be, in future days, what it has ever been—a great monument to perpetuate the name of an individual who has had no equal, and whose single mind has changed the history of the universe.

One of the most effective views of St. Sophia, in connection with that of the city, is obtained from the Eski Serai, the Seraskier's tower, whence you view a panorama which words cannot describe. On this subject the late and descriptive traveller, Slado, observes:—

The aqueduct of Valens, the seven towers, Saint Sophia, the Seraglio domes, the Propontis—circuit of beauty studded with ocean gems—Mount Olympus, the gloomy grand cemetery, the wide-flowing Bosphorus, the golden horn, covered with caiques gliding like silver fish, are a few, only, of the features beneath him. Long may he look before being able to trace any plan in the dense mass of habitations that cover the hills and fill the valleys, which are so thickly planted, and so widely spread, that the countless mosques, and public baths, and numerous khans, besides the charshays, (of a moderate city's dimensions) are scarcely noticed for the space they occupy; although, in other respects, they attract attention—for no one can look at the seven hills, each crowned with a superb mosque, with numerous smaller ones on their sides, without being duly impressed with the piety of the Ottoman monarchs, and of their favourites, unsurpassed, save in Rome. Their good taste has led them to imitate Saint Sophia; the Turkish architects have improved on the model, and their taste and vanity combined to erect them on the most commanding spots, whereby Constantinople is embellished to a degree it could not have been in the time of the empire—that is, in an external view. I sincerely hope that whenever the cross displaces the crescent, (which it must do) a mistaken zeal for religion will not remove the stately minarets. Another pictorial charm, which it also owes to Mussulman customs, is the union of the colours, green, white and red, visible in the cypresses, the mosques and the dwellings. The perpetual and varied contrast is food for the eye, and excitement for the mind. We leave Pera, and in five minutes are in scenes of Arabian nights. The shores of the Bosphorus realize our ideas or recollections of Venetian canals, or the Euphrates' banks. Women, shrouded like spectres, mingle with men, adorned like actors. The Frank's hat is seen by the Dervish's Colpack; the gaudy-armed chavass, by the Nizam-geditt; the servile Greek by the haughty Moslem; and the full-blown Armenian by the spare Hebrew. The charshays resound with Babel's tongues, the streets are silent as Pompeii's. We stumble over filthy dogs at the gate of a mosque, clean-plumaged storks cackle at us from the domes, a pasha with a gallant train proceeds to Divan, harpy vultures fan him with their wings; and in the same cemetery we see grave-diggers and lovers, corpses and jesters. A lane of filth terminates with a white marble fountain, and a steep narrow street conducts to a royal mosque. In a moral sense, also, the parallel holds. We have an absolute monarch, a factious people; pashas, slaves *de nomine*, despots *de facto*; a religion breathing justice and moderation, a society governed by intrigue and iniquity. The Mussulman is mighty in prayer, feeble in good works; in outward life modestly personified, in his harem obscenity unmasked. He administers to a sick animal, and how-strings his friend; he believes in fatality, and calls in a doctor. In short, every thing, and every person, and every feeling, and every act, are at total variance in this great capital."

## NAPOLEON.

The love of power and supremacy absorbed and consumed him. No person, no domestic attachment, no private friendship, no love of pleasure, no relish for letters or the arts, no human sympathy, no human weakness, divided his mind with the passion for dominion, and for dazzling manifestations of his power. Before this, duty, honour, love, humanity, fell prostrate. Josephine, we are told, was dear to him; but the devoted wife, who had stood firm and faithful in the day of his doubtful fortunes, was cast off in his prosperity to make room for a stranger, who might be more subservient to his power.—DR. CHANNING.