

stantinople after the conquest, has left an account of his presentation to Solyman the Magnificent, and of the awe which his presence imposed among the courtiers and officials of the palace. The tradition was kept up—though foreigners had long ceased to cower at the Sultan's name—even as late as the beginning of the second quarter of this century. In describing the visit of Lord Strangford and his suite to Mahmoud in 1826, the Rev. W. Walsh says that the ambassador's speech was translated to the Sultan by his trembling dragoman, and that his majesty's reply, after being hesitatingly repeated by the Vizier, was by the dragoman stammered out in French to the ambassador. "The dragoman's terror," he adds, "was deplorable; the perspiration dropped from his countenance and no wonder: his predecessor had just been executed and he had no hope of escaping the same fate, nor did he." A much less melancholy account of the manner in which the Levantine interpreter discharges his duty will be found in Kinglake's "Eothen."

In Sir John Mandeville's time it would appear that intercourse was sometimes facilitated by the unexpected linguistic accomplishments of the believers in the prophet. The old English traveller was surprised to discover that the Sultan of Babylon (Cairo) and his courtiers could speak French perfectly well. Marco Polo learned to read and write, as well as to converse in four Tartar dialects. Though some have jealously denied that he understood Chinese, he must have been fairly well acquainted with it to administer a province of the empire for three years—the only instance, according to Williams, of a foreigner holding a civil office in China until the present century.

(To be Continued.)