

Under such circumstances only the coolest judgment and steadiest nerves will carry the explorer safely through. There is no occasion for wonder therefore, however much there may be for regret, that this country is buried in so much darkness. It is fervently to be prayed that, as the result of her last struggle with Russia and the demand of other European powers, an improvement in her institutions may be effected, and that this benighted land may behold the dawn of light. It is our earnest hope that this volume may shed some light on a hitherto dark subject, and that the reader may find instruction and entertainment in studying, in the safety of his own fireside in a Christian land, the ways and customs of this strange and fanatical people.

The rapid progress and still more rapid decline of the Ottoman power, are amongst the most interesting phenomena in the history of Europe. Under Solymán I., surnamed the Magnificent, the most accomplished of all the Ottoman princes, when the Turkish Empire was in the height of its glory and power, it ranked among the foremost nations of the earth, and perhaps had its turn as *the* most powerful empire in the world. Only a few years later it commenced to decline, and so rapidly did this waning process take place that it seemed like a star plucked from its place in heaven and cast headlong into the abyss below.

The Turks have undoubtedly degenerated both in their civil and military institutions; but their present weakness is to be ascribed more to a lack of ability or endeavor to keep pace with the advancing progress of the world than to a positive decline. Haughty and illiterate, they have experienced all the fatal consequences of ignorance without suspecting its cause.

Other causes have had their influence in effecting