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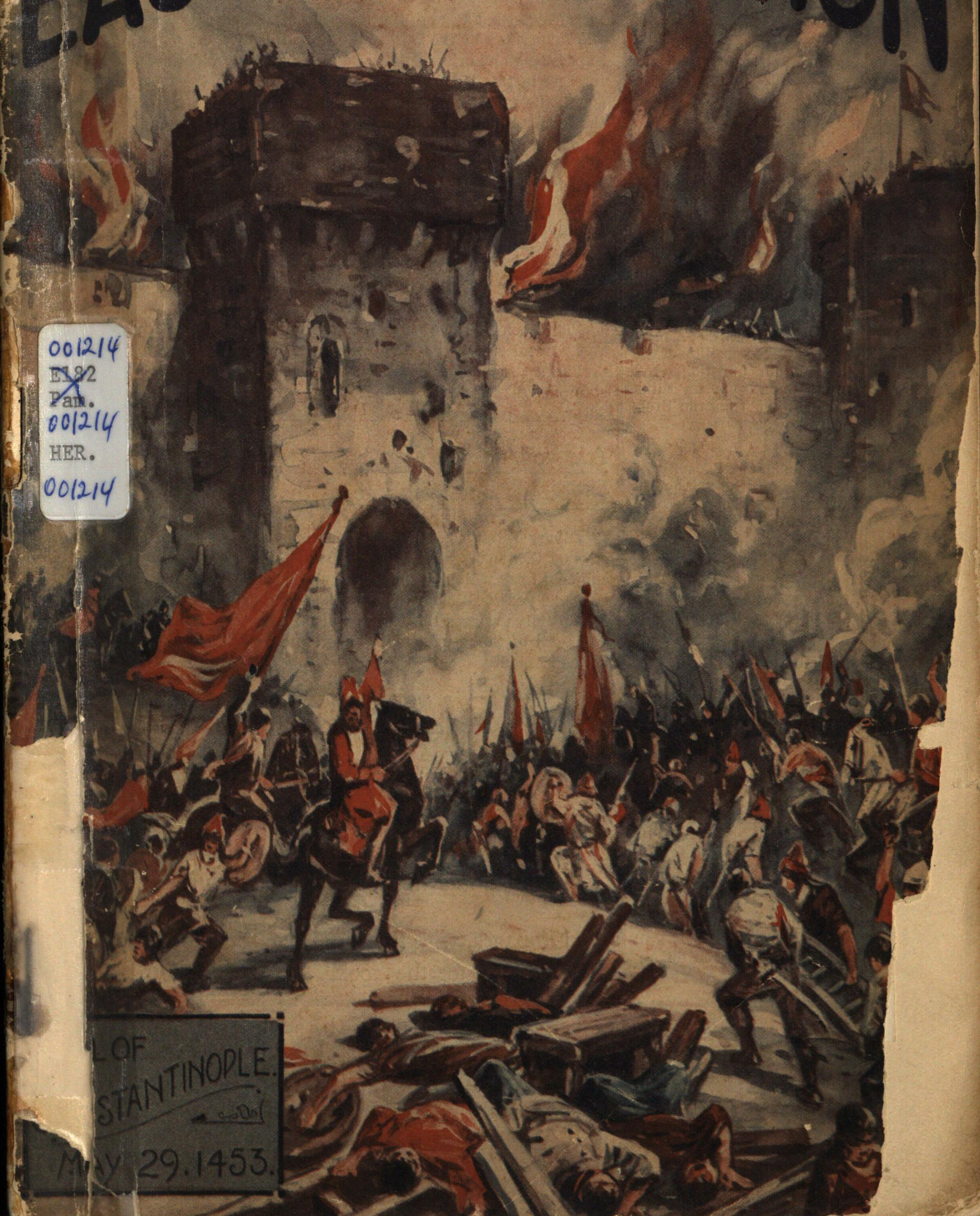
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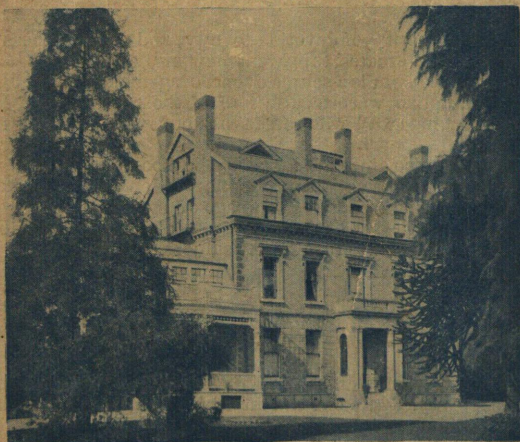
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R. L. Odum

H. H. Prescott

Apparently written between early
1913 (p. 53) and Aug., 1914 (no mention
of World War I. Note p. 55, Panama Canal.
H.H.P.

The writer of this booklet may
have been W. J. Fitzgerald. See p. 77 of
my MS on Armageddon and Yearbook 1913.
H.H.P.



MAHOMET II, THE CONQUEROR.

From the painting by Gentile Bellini. This Sultan reigned over the Ottoman Empire from A.D. 1451 to A.D. 1481. The first enterprise of his reign was the conquest of Constantinople which fell on 29th May, 1453, after a heroic resistance of fifty-three days led by Constantine XI, last ruler of the Greek empire. Other conquests followed in Servia, Asia Minor, Bosnia, Albania, and the Crimea.

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HER.

A Disappearing Empire.

WHO who watch to-day the gradual extinction of the Ottoman Empire are perusing an intensely interesting chapter of history.

That empire has played a mighty part in human affairs since it was founded by Othman in the early years of the fourteenth century. For long it threatened to swallow up Christian civilization in Europe. Seizing upon stronghold after stronghold, and absorbing kingdom after kingdom, it advanced in the sixteenth century to the very gates of Vienna. Greece and Servia had been entirely swallowed up and a beginning was made in Italy by the conquest of Otranto. It began to look as though the boast of one of the sultans might come true, that he would stable his horse in St. Peter's at Rome, and feed it with a bushel of oats on the high altar. The greater part of Hungary was in the possession of the Turk, and for several generations the German emperors and the Turkish sultans waged continuous war upon a frontier that retreated or advanced with the temporary triumph of either side. The Ottoman Empire enclosed the Black Sea and commanded two-thirds of the Mediterranean. The Crimea was Turkish territory. The Danube, with its great tributaries, was for the most part a

Turkish river. Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and the lands about the Euphrates and the Tigris acknowledged the Sultan's dominion, and the whole of the North African coast to the borders of Morocco, including Egypt, Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers, was part of the great empire.

The tide of conquest began to turn in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The Turkish forces sustained a crushing defeat outside Vienna in the year 1683, and from that time they were gradually driven out of Hungary and Transylvania. In 1774, by a treaty with Russia, Turkey relinquished her territory in the Crimea. In 1829 the independence of Greece was recognized by the Treaty of London, and about the same time Servia became a separate state, although it still acknowledged the overlordship of the Sultan. In 1861 the State of Roumania was formed. By the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia became practically independent, and by the same treaty the independence of Montenegro, which had never been surrendered, was recognized. At the same time Austria took over the administration of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Great Britain did the same for Cyprus. Meanwhile Algiers and Tunis had fallen into French hands, Egypt was occupied by England

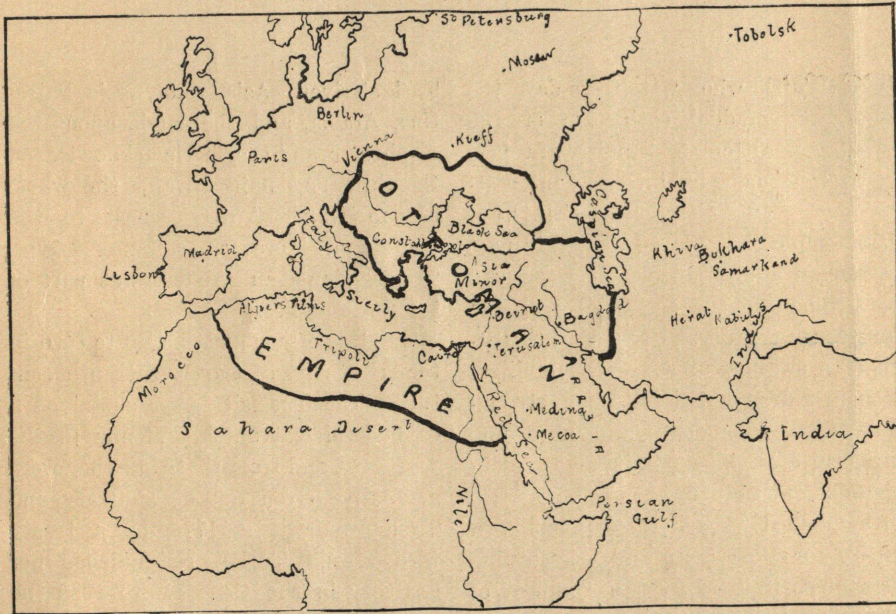
in 1882, and Italy in 1912 became possessed of Tripoli.

The pain of these successive mutilations has usually been mitigated by diplomatic arts. The first step has been the grant, under compulsion, of a measure of autonomy by the Sultan to the territory in question, which sooner or later declares its entire independence,

its possessions in North Africa. The course that events have been taking for the past two hundred years can obviously lead only to one termination. The departure of Turkey from European soil is as certain as anything earthly can be.

Turkey in Asia.

And what then? Will Turkey be



Map of the Ottoman Empire at its fullest extent in the reign of Solyman the Great.

and after a further lapse of time decides to exchange its status of a principality for that of a kingdom or empire; after that it seeks additional slices of territory for itself from the diminishing body of the empire.

The most formidable blow yet aimed at the Ottoman Empire was struck when the four allied nations of Montenegro, Servia, Greece, and Bulgaria, declared war in October, 1912. Their victory brought the end of Turkey as a European power within sight, and during the same year Turkey was compelled to part with the last fragment of

permitted to maintain itself as an Asiatic empire? Once driven out of Europe, Turkey will have ceased to rule over hardy, virile races of different faith from her own. True, she will still have Christian peoples in her Asiatic empire, but these are of another type than the Bulgarians and Montenegrins, and are not so likely of themselves to trouble her with insurrections and nationalist agitations. It was equally true, however, in the case of her possessions in Africa that these involved little or no tyranny for Christian peoples, yet these dominions have slipped from her grasp.

And what the Powers of Europe have done to Turkey in Africa, they may be tempted to repeat in her Asiatic dominions. France and Italy and England have divided the African heritage among themselves; Germany and Austria and Russia would be willing to follow their example in Asia; and it is by no means certain that England and France would consent to be mere spectators of such further division.

Germany's Ambitions.

In the "Christian World" of February 8, 1912, Mr. P. W. Wilson, M.P., contributed an interesting article on "Anglo-German Antagonism—The One Way Out," in which he wrote:—

"The fundamental question which has to be answered by each of us is whether and in what quarter Germany shall obtain an empire beyond Europe. The question would be less urgent if the map of the world were rigidly defined. Germany, whatever her desire for a 'place in the sun,' might then be asked to respect the *status quo*. But to-day the *status quo* has disappeared. Russia, a reactionary despotism, has seized Mongolia, and half of Persia. France, with a stationary population, has captured Morocco. Italy has Tripoli for her booty, and England has rectified her Egyptian seaboard, while reluctantly swallowing Southern Persia. This is a vast rearrangement of what Americans call 'futures.' What is to be Germany's 'future'? . . . As every statesman

knows, it is on the middle-east that German hopes are set—that vast no man's land which stretches from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. In name it belongs to Turkey, but so does Egypt, and in reality the Ottoman writ runs sluggishly."

A little later the Berlin correspondent of the same journal referred to Mr. Wilson's "admirable and well-informed article," and said of the Bagdad railway scheme:—

"I think it is beginning to be pretty evident that here we must allow the Germans to have their own way, to build the line to Koweit on the Gulf, and to content ourselves with international securities which will protect our immediate interests in Mesopotamia and Arabia, and our far-flung

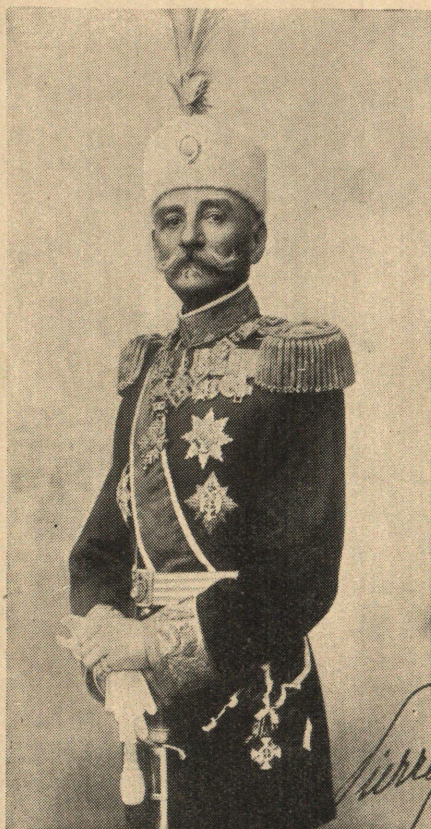
Indian interests as well. The Bagdad Railway in German hands cannot be regarded as a menace to India, even with Russia and Germany in close association. Mr. Wilson is excellent on this point. Germany engaged in the Euphrates Valley would probably relax her apparent intention to challenge Great Britain's naval supremacy. We should gain Germany's friendship by withdrawing our opposition, and the dangerous concentration in the North Sea, on the Dutch, Belgian, and French frontiers, the source of so many war scares, would be sensibly relaxed. With Germany engaged in the Near East we have an additional hostage for peace."

Although they are at present able to



Photo by Pietzner, Vienna.
Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria.

support but a scanty population, the Asiatic possessions of Turkey in earlier times have proved rich and fruitful. And what has been done in Egypt under English rule might be done in the country of the Euphrates. At one time Asia Minor was filled with flourishing cities. The progress of the Balkan kingdoms since they escaped from the Turkish yoke is an indication of what might yet be accomplished in the Near East. Then, too, there are the rich possibilities of commercial gain that will certainly come to life when Asia Minor and the Persian Gulf are joined to Europe by efficient means of transportation. Mr. W. T. Ellis, in the "Independent" (New York) of Dec. 19, 1912, says: "Remove the menace of militarism, and the Bagdad railway system would swiftly go



King Peter of Serbia.

through to completion with the co-operation of the world; and where now are a few decadent cities and occasional villages, a population of 12,000,000 prosperous people could be supported within five years." Through these countries lies the overland route, too, that might link up Europe with the railway systems of China. And what power in Europe would not be delighted to seize the

prize that the Crusaders fought for in vain, the honour and prestige of being possessor of the Holy Land, guardian of all the cherished associations it holds for Christendom. What lustre would radiate from the crown of any Christian monarch who counted Jerusalem among the cities of his dominions!

For many years Europe has been accustomed to think of Constantinople as necessarily under the dominion of Mohammedan rulers. For one thing, because these were warlike enough to make its conquest dangerous and doubtful; and for another, because no European power would be willing to see another in possession of it. But now that the weakness of the Turk has been fully demonstrated by the Little Nations of the Balkan States, and Europe has seen

the fruit she so long feared to pluck almost fall into bolder hands than her own, the Great Powers are not likely to be so timorous much longer. There will be more energetic and unscrupulous plotting than we have hitherto seen. And the intrigues that contemplate the disposition of Constantinople already include in their scope more of the Sultan's dominions. The sharpness of

the European appetite for territory has been very noticeable of recent years. When Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, and France took Morocco, while Italy sprang for Tripoli, and Russia moved into Persia, the journalists of Europe expressed amazement and horror at the spirit that had taken

compensation idea, and her growing weakness doubtless dooms her to suffer yet further.

Turkey in Prophecy.

In the book of Revelation there is a prophetic reference to the last stage of this once powerful empire: "The sixth



Constantinople.

possession of the Powers, and remarked that the "morals of the jungle" appeared to have dominated the greedy seekers after more territory. Whenever such a display of rapacity takes place nowadays, the less fortunate Powers immediately begin to talk about the "compensation" that is due to them, and soon take steps to compensate themselves with a portion of the territory of some weaker country. Turkey has been the principal victim of this

angel poured out his vial upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sun-rising." Rev. xvi. 12, R.V. In our next chapter we shall see clearly that this passage refers to the Turkish Empire. But even before any proof is furnished to this effect it is not difficult to understand the expressions used. A river is a symbol of a nation. See Rev. xvii. 15: "The waters

which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The great harlot that John saw was seated upon many waters (verse 1), symbolizing many peoples: Euphrates is but one river, and would therefore represent but one people. The same figure is used by the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the river strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory." Is. viii. 7. For thirteen centuries the country about the river Euphrates has been under the power of Moslem rulers, and in the sixteenth century it became a part of the conquering Ottoman Empire, so that the drying up of the Euphrates would symbolize the final disappearance of the Moslem power as a government. The prophecy indicates that the kings of the east are only waiting for that development in order to press their way into the Asiatic regions occupied up to that time by the Ottoman Empire. During recent years the valley of the Euphrates has been brought before the public mind in connection with vast schemes for damming the waters of the Euphrates, and restoring the ancient system of irrigation. This would convert an almost worthless country into one of abounding fertility, and would make it a prize worth the winning.

The Last Stage.

The prophetic picture of that final stage of the Moslem dominion forms a natural conclusion to the process we are watching to-day. For one hundred years the kings of the west have been waiting for the demise of the "sick man," some of them with the interested affection usually displayed under such circumstances, and as one part of his property after another has become avail-

able, the waiting heirs have promptly entered into possession. To-day they stand with eager eyes and outstretched hands in a narrowing ring around what remains of the Sultan's western possessions. They have already taken all that he owned in Africa, and only the jealousy they feel toward one another, and toward the new heirs that have appeared, delays the appropriation of the European portion of the estate. But if there is not enough in Europe to satisfy the claims of all, some will have to content themselves with the prospect of "compensation" out of the Asiatic inheritance. That this process is to be continued until there is no more to divide, the language of Rev. xvi. 12 clearly indicates, and as the empire breathes its last we see already on the spot fresh claimants from the east, hungry for a part in the spoliation that has for so long been in progress in the west.

"Kings of the East."

Who are these "kings of the east"? A few years ago we might have wondered with futile speculation as to their identity, but modern developments in the Far East have helped us to read the language of the Revelator. There is Japan, victorious over the greatest of land powers, the Russian Colossus, and deemed worthy to enter into close alliance with the greatest of naval powers. There is China, which has amazed the world by its sudden transformation into a republic and which, if it should abandon its ancient principles and decide to play a military rôle, will be able to put vast armies into the field. And we know not what other surprises are yet to break upon us out of the mysterious, awakening East.

For some years Europe has contemplated the possibility that the kings of

the east may one day rally round a common standard and invade the west in irresistible numbers. To that vague menace has been given the title of "the yellow peril." It would not be the first time in history that the yellow races had emerged from the Orient and hurled themselves in enormous masses upon the peoples to the west of them. Tamerlane came at the head of his Mongol hordes in the fourteenth century, and left behind him as mementos of his visits huge pyramids of human skulls. One such gruesome monument in Persia contained 70,000 skulls and another is said to have required 90,000. The more warlike races of the east have to a considerable extent embraced the Moslem faith with its militant traditions. If the passing of the Mohammedan rule should liberate this explosive force, or perchance enlist it in some crusade of vengeance, the expedition of the kings of the east may well deserve a place among the events of the seven last plagues in which is visited the judgment of God upon a sinful and rebellious world.

Turkey's Central Position.

For a long time Turkey has served as a kind of buffer state, occupying the middle lands of the Old World. Her presence there has operated as a check in the past upon ambitious conquerors, and helped materially to keep up the age-long alienation between East and West. It is when the Moslem Empire is dried up that the obstacle in the path of the kings of the east is removed, and East and West come face to face as mighty rivals.

It seems to have been Turkey's destiny in the days of her strength to prevent the concentration of too great power in the hands of a single monarch.

When the kings of Europe saw themselves threatened by the undue aggrandizement of one of their number, they equalized matters by calling in the aid of the ever-ready Turk. Charles V of Germany was thus kept within bounds, and even Napoleon turned back baffled from his designs in the east when he met the stubborn Turkish defenders of Acre.

In her time of weakness and decay Turkey has still, by holding the southeastern portion of Europe, prevented any other Power from becoming dangerously strong and predominant in European affairs. Her continued presence at Constantinople has had the effect of postponing that deadly struggle which European statesmanship, by a sound intuition, has always foreseen as the inevitable outcome of a successful attempt to drive the Sultan beyond the Bosphorus. As long as Turkey remained in possession of Constantinople, the evil day might be deferred, and peace still find a precarious home in Europe; but it has always seemed to the political seers that the flight of Turkey from Europe must give the signal for that gigantic conflict which has become associated in the public mind with the mysterious and awful day of Armageddon. Lord Salisbury said in 1895:—

"The Great Powers of the world have resolved that for the peace of Christendom it is necessary that the Ottoman Empire should stand. . . . The danger if the Ottoman Empire should fall would not merely be the danger that would threaten the territories of which that empire consists; it would be the danger that the fire there lit should spread to the other nations, and should involve all that is most powerful and civilized in Europe in a dangerous and calamitous contest."

And the place that Turkey has filled up to now in Europe, seems to be, on a

larger scale, her place in the world as a whole. As long as she occupies her old place in the world's centre, the keen and imperious ambitions of great conquerors are comparatively restricted; but when the Turkish Empire no longer maintains the ancient barrier between East and West, and disappears too at the very time when east and west are filled to overflowing with mighty armies, the time of trouble for the nations has arrived. For, as the Revelation tells us, it is under the same plague which dries up the great river Euphrates, and thus prepares the way of the kings of the east, that the forces of the whole world are gathered to the fatal field of Armageddon. Rev. xvi. 12-16.

A GLORY gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.

The Spirit breathes upon the word,
And brings the truth to sight;
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light.

The hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat;
His truths upon the nations rise,
They rise, but never set.

Let everlasting thanks be thine,
For such a bright display;
It makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day.

—Wm. Cowper.

Mohammedanism in Prophecy.

THE mention of the Euphrates which we have found in Rev. xvi. 12 is the second time that river finds a place in the Apocalypse. The first instance occurs in the ninth chapter, and since that chapter is very generally recognized by commentators as containing a prophecy of the rise and course of Mohammedanism, it must receive our attention at this point.

The ninth chapter of the Revelation forms part of a line of prophecy which may be termed "the seven trumpets," beginning with Rev. viii. 2, and continuing to Rev. xi. 19.

It is hardly necessary to inquire what is symbolized by a trumpet. The language of Jer. iv. 19 associates with the sound of the trumpet a meaning which no one will hesitate to accept as appropriate: "I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, *the alarm of war.*" On the blowing of each of the seven trumpets, great symbolic disasters follow, prophetic of destructive wars. We have not the space to consider in detail the first four, more than to say briefly that they represent the judgments which God permitted to fall upon the ancient empire of Western Rome, by which that empire was dissolved.

The Goths.

The first trumpet gives warning of a terrible storm of hail and fire, mingled with blood. Rev. viii. 7. This was a symbol of the invasion of the empire by Alaric and his Goths from the forests of the north, the region of hail. Beginning with A.D. 401, Alaric over-ran Europe and invaded Italy. In 408-409 he again crossed the Alps and entered Italy, but although at that time bought off with a ransom, in 410 he advanced to Rome, took the Eternal City, and sacked it. Eight centuries before Brennus, leader of the Gauls, had spoiled and burned Rome, but in the intervening ages the city had become the proud mistress of the world. The triumph of Alaric was like a stroke of doom, a signal that the time for her downfall had come.

The Vandals.

At the sounding of the second trumpet (verses 8, 9), a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea, with the result that a third part of the sea became blood, and a third part of the ships was destroyed. This imagery clearly pointed to naval disasters, and such were experienced in full measure at the hands of Genseric, the king of the Vandals. This race of barbarians from the north had crossed over by

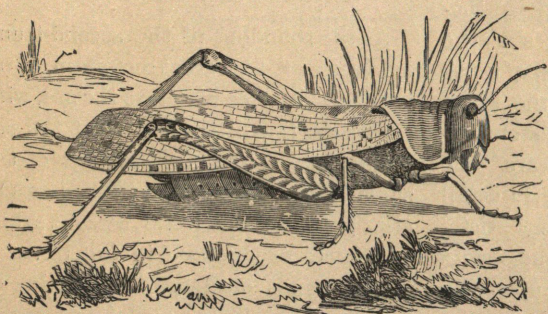
Spain and settled in the north of Africa. From the site of ancient Carthage they waged a fierce naval warfare with Rome, extending over thirty years. In the course of this struggle, in the year 455, Rome was again taken by Genseric, who permitted his Vandals to pillage it for fourteen days.

Attila and the Huns.

The third trumpet sounded (verses 10, 11), and a great star named Wormwood, flaming like a torch, fell from heaven upon the fountains of waters, making them so bitter that many died through drinking of them. This sign was fulfilled in the invasion of the Roman Empire by Attila, at the head of the Huns, 437-453. Attila took to himself the title, "The Scourge of God," and it was his boast that the grass refused to grow where the feet of his horse had passed. The figure employed in the Revelation fitly describes the awful severity of this invasion.

Fall of Western Roman Empire.

The fourth trumpet (verse 12) announced the passing away of the Western empire. The third part of the day was blotted out. The third part of the Roman Empire, the Western portion, was extinguished. This was brought about in A.D. 476, when the last Roman



Migratory Locust of Arabia.

emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was de-throned, and Odoacer, the leader of the Heruli, took his place. The three men whose names we have given, and whose exploits were foretold under the first three trumpets, Alaric, Genseric, and Attila, had, between them, accomplished the ruin of the Roman Empire in the west. Odoacer merely put the finishing touch to their work.

There still remained, however, the eastern portion of the empire, with its capital, Constantinople, which had been built by Constantine in A.D. 330, and named after himself, and it is with the fate of the eastern third of the Roman Empire that the fifth and sixth trumpets are concerned. To these our subject demands that we give a little closer attention.

The Locust-Scorpions.

The fifth angel sounds (Rev. ix. 1), and John sees a star from heaven fallen unto the earth, to whom there is given the key of the bottomless pit. He opens the abyss, and there rises out of the pit the smoke as of a great furnace, so that the sun and the air are darkened thereby. Presently John sees emerging from the thick smoke bands of locusts which go forth to devour. So injurious and venomous is their attack, however, that they are more comparable to scorpions than to locusts. Contrary to the usual habits of the locust, these creatures are commanded not to hurt the grass of the earth nor any green thing: they are to confine their attention to men, and to such as have not the seal of God in their foreheads. These are given into their hands, not to be killed, but to be tormented five months.

So distressing and painful will be this visitation that, while it endures, death would be preferable. But the locusts are not permitted to slay, only to hurt.

As John goes on to describe the locusts more fully, it appears beyond question that they are really mounted warriors: "The shapes of the locusts

abyss: his name in the Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek tongue he hath the name Apollyon [margin, Destroyer]." Verses 7-11, R.V.

As in the case of the first three trumpets, the location of those judgments is indicated by the similes employed, so here the use of locusts directs our minds



Scorpion.

were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads were as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings: and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. They have over them as king the angel of the

to the sandy deserts of Arabia, whence the locust swarms of Palestine mostly came. It was from that very quarter that the next successful attack on the Roman Empire proceeded. A star fallen from heaven represented, in chapter viii. 10, the descent of Attila upon the empire at the head of his Huns. As a destroyer of the Roman Empire, the name of Mahomet is worthy to rank with that of Attila. Under the fifth trumpet, however, the fallen star is only indirectly responsible for the damage wrought. His part is to open the pit

and set free the volumes of dense smoke therein imprisoned, and out of this blackness the locusts come forth to do their work.

Mohammedanism.

Mahomet was the founder of a false religion which has set the seal of sanctity on some of the worst passions of human nature. It has encouraged the very evils which sinful human beings are prone to introduce into the sphere of religion — fanaticism, self-righteous contempt for unbelievers, despotic oppression, and sectarian hatred. On polygamy and slavery it has claimed to set the sanction of heaven. Thus its effect has been to degrade social relations and religious conceptions. It has stimulated bloodthirsty zeal in its own cause, and raised its followers above the fear of defeat, by promising that those who die in battle for its sake shall be rewarded in a paradise where they shall enjoy the lusts of the flesh for ever, without limit and without satiety. No symbol could be employed more perfectly descriptive of the genius of Mohammedanism than the one John saw, the smoke of the bottomless pit. If anything were calculated to introduce the kingdom of darkness into this world, it would be that religion, with its subtle admixture of good and evil. It is true that even those who call themselves Christians have sometimes been guilty of diabolical cruelty and persecution, nothing better than Saracens and Turks, but this was because they disobeyed the instructions of the Founder of their religion; they were bad Christians. Mohammedans, on the other hand, when guilty of polygamy and slave-holding, when putting unbelievers mercilessly to the sword, are following the example and counsels of their founder; they are good Moham-

medans. So foul and choking was the pestilential confusion of doctrines that proceeded from the bottomless pit, the home of falsehood, through the agency of Mahomet, that darkness reigned supreme where his teachings held full sway. And imbued with the venomous spirit of these doctrines, there came forth destroying armies that began to gnaw away, like a herd of locusts in an orchard, at the eastern Roman Empire. It was not long before they made extensive inroads in its domains. Says Gibbon: "A hundred years after Mahomet's flight from Mecca, the armies and the reign of his successors extended from India to the Atlantic Ocean over the various and distant provinces, which may be comprised under the names of Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain."

A Discriminating Charge.

The instruction given to the locusts, that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, but only those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, finds a striking counterpart in the words that were addressed by Abubeker, the successor of Mahomet, to his troops as they went forth to battle.

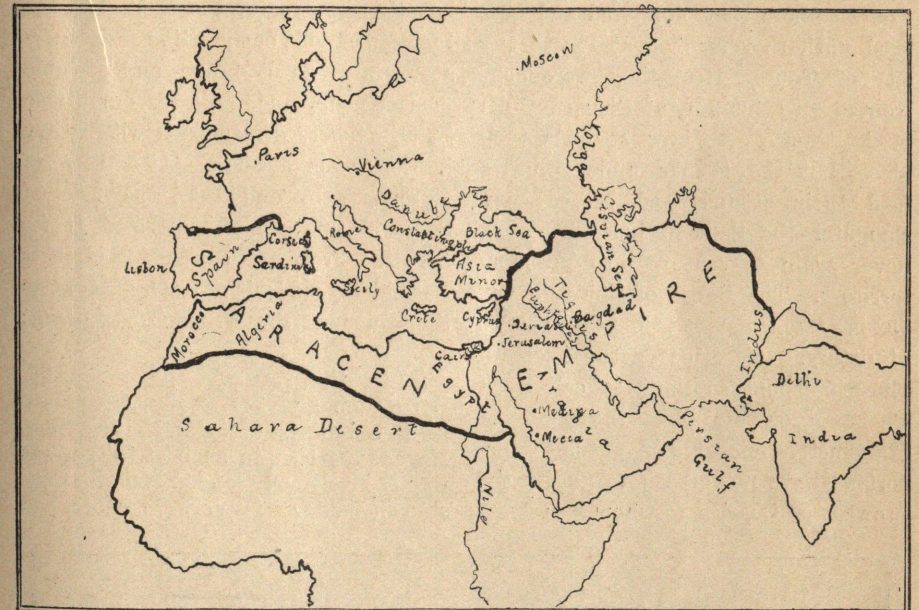
"When you meet with your enemies, quit yourselves like men, and do not turn your backs; and if you get the victory, kill no little children, nor old people, nor women. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons that live retired in monasteries, proposing to themselves to serve God that way: let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries. But you will also find another sort of people who belong to the synagogues of Satan, and have shaven

crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter, till they either turn Mohammedan or pay tribute."—*Ockley's Hist. of the Saracens*, Bohn ed. p. 94.

In explanation of this reference to shaven crowns an editorial footnote to Gibbon gives us the following:

"Even in the seventh century the

ing to a multitude of saints, whose images and pictures they venerated, the glory due to God alone. His teaching, false as it was in many respects, was designed by him to bring about a religious reformation in the world, including in its scope, he hoped, the Christian church. And it would seem from verse 5 of Rev. ix. that Mohammedanism was



Map showing Saracen Empire at its fullest extent.

monks were generally laymen; they wore their hair long and dishevelled, and shaved their heads when they were ordained priests. The circular tonsure was sacred and mysterious; it was the crown of thorns; but it was likewise a royal diadem, and every priest was a king, etc."—*Bohn's Gibbon*, Vol. VI, p. 23.

Mahomet had turned away from the idolatry of Arabia with its adoration of many gods to the worship of one God alone, whose prophet he claimed to be. The Christian church in his time had become sadly corrupt, and Mahomet declared that it had thoroughly given itself over to idolatry, that it was pay-

indeed suffered by God to serve as a scourge for an apostate Christendom. By this time the papacy had been fully developed at Rome, where the passing away of the western emperors had left it all the more prominent and powerful. The Bishop of Rome was stealthily but perseveringly putting forth efforts to grasp the prize of temporal power. Against the shaven representatives of that corrupt church, the Saracen power believed itself to have a charge, as shown by the words of Abubeker, and this belief was in harmony with the language of the Revelation.

"Thus Far."

The scope of the mission was, however, limited. It seemed at one time that the Saracen armies were about to sweep over Europe. They had crossed over the straits of Gibraltar into Spain, had conquered the Visigoths, who possessed the greater part of that country, and then passed beyond the Pyrenees into France, where they plundered and ravaged until they reached at length the city of Tours. Here they were confronted with the army of Charles, Duke of Austrasia. A fierce struggle took place, but the Franks under Charles held their ground, and after heavy slaughter the Saracen host retreated, never again to venture into Frankish territory. The Battle of Tours in A.D. 732 is reckoned among the great battles of history. It decided whether Western Europe should continue to call itself Christian, or pass under the banner of Mahomet. But while ever since historians have not ceased to glorify the prowess of Charles, to whom was given



Charles Martel at Battle of Tours.

the title of "The Hammer," and of his sturdy German troops, the student of prophecy may also see in the victory of Tours the limitation set by the divine edict, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." It was not given to the Saracen power to kill, only to hurt.

A few years earlier, Constantinople had been besieged by the Saracen army, but the emperor of the East, Leo the Isaurian, stands out in a line of degenerate princes as a brave and capable monarch, and under his leadership the Saracens were driven back with heavy losses. Thus at both extremities of Europe, west and east, the tide of Saracen conquest was arrested at its height. Freeman, the historian, sets Leo side by side with Charles Martel as the saviour of threatened Christendom:

"Leo the Isaurian, by preserving Byzantium and the Byzantine empire preserved Christianity and civilization. Never were they in such awful peril as when Moslemah landed before Constantinople. As far as we can see, had



ARABS IN THE DESERT.

the Caliph once been acknowledged in Saint Sophia, all that Constantinople then represented, law and literature and theology, all that distinguishes the Christian west from the Mohammedan east, must have perished from the earth."—*History and Conquests of the Saracens*, E. A. Freeman, page 92.

Scorpion Tactics.

The description of the locusts given by John answers well to the appearance of the Arabs when marshalled for war. They have always been famous for their horsemanship; the turbans they wore were often adorned with gold, so as to suggest crowns rather than ordinary headgear. While the Arab physiognomy was marked by stern composure, "like the face of a man," in those days the Arabs wore their hair long "like the hair of women," and coats of mail and cuirasses frequently formed part of their equipment for battle.

In harmony with the limited commission given to the locust-scorpions was the attitude of the Saracen rulers toward the peoples they conquered. They gave the victim his choice of three things, to believe the Koran, to be put to the sword, or to pay tribute. "Tribute is better than spoil, for it continueth," was the saying of Omar, one of the early leaders. The scorpion sting was felt, not once, nor twice, but year by year, season after season. Freeman says:—

"The condition of the subject races within the Saracenic monarchy doubtless differed much in different parts of the empire; certainly it differed much under individual caliphs. Payment of tribute secured the vanquished in possession of his life, his property, and the public exercise of his religion. His condition did not necessarily involve personal oppression, but it opened every avenue to it, and it always involved civil degradation. Such was the theory, once strictly carried

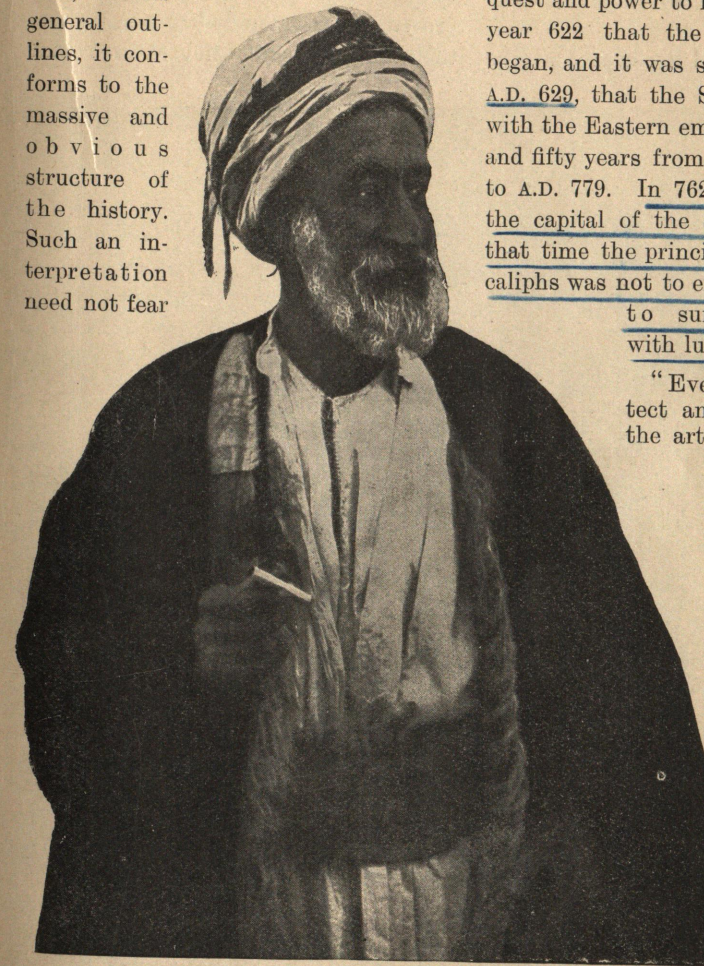
out in practice by the unswerving righteousness of the first caliphs; in after times, sometimes we find policy relax, but more frequently we see fanaticism aggravate the state of bondage to which the vanquished were reduced."—*Id.*, p. 93.

Five Months.

In such stings as these resided the Saracen power to hurt men five months. The meaning of this prophetic period has been variously understood. It has been applied to the period beginning with the 27th of July, 1299, the day when, according to Gibbon, Othman, the founder of the Ottoman Empire, first invaded the territory of the eastern Roman empire, and lasting one hundred and fifty years from that date. But there are grave objections to this interpretation. Von Hammer, the great German authority on matters of Turkish history, points out that the date given by Gibbon is a mistake, and should be 1301 instead of 1299, and even if this correction had not proved necessary, it would seem highly improper to apply the five months, which belong to the Saracen empire, to the Ottoman empire instead.

In the application of time prophecies we may surely expect to find that these begin and end with appropriate and indisputable events or conditions. Any interpretation of a time prophecy which reveals principally the ingenuity or the curious research of the interpreter must be regarded with suspicion. When the correct beginning and ending of any period are found, these must be marked by substantial events that require no conjuring into shape. It is necessary to a solid and trustworthy interpretation of prophetic time that it be unmistakably confirmed by the broad and essential facts of the verifying history. If, owing to lack of historical data, it is

impossible to point to the exact day when a certain period begins or ends, the interpretation of a prophecy is still worthy of our confidence if we can show that, in its general outlines, it conforms to the massive and obvious structure of the history. Such an interpretation need not fear



An Arab Sheikh.

years. Looking at the broad facts of Saracenic history, we have no difficulty in seeing that a period of one hundred and fifty years includes its era of conquest and power to hurt. It was in the year 622 that the Mohammedan era began, and it was seven years later in A.D. 629, that the Saracens began war with the Eastern empire. One hundred and fifty years from that time bring us to A.D. 779. In 762 Bagdad was made the capital of the caliphate, and from that time the principal ambition of the caliphs was not to effect conquests, but to surround themselves with luxury.

"Every art of the architect and the designer, of the artist in stone, of the painter and builder, was made tributary to the grandeur of a city which was intended to embody something of the magnificence of a dynasty that counted its wealth by the hundred millions, and hesitated at no outlay that would make a display."—*Gilman's Story of the Saracens*, page 357.

but rather welcome the bringing to light of new or additional facts.

The period of five months would be equal to one hundred and fifty days according to the customary scale of prophetic time. See Rev. xi. 2, 3. A day in prophecy is the equivalent of a chronological year, so that the five months equal one hundred and fifty

In the year 779 Muhammad Al Mahdi was on the throne of Bagdad, and concerning this caliph we read:

"Before the first year of his reign had closed Mahdi determined to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and his arrangements were of the most luxurious description. Tents were carried to protect the prince and his suite from the

sun, and many camels bore freight of snow from Korassan to cool the air still more; every means was taken to guard against all weariness of the flesh, and to ensure the enjoyment of the long journey."—*Id.*, page 361.

The prophecy had declared that the



Bagdad.

scorpions should hurt for a period of five months. When the limit of one hundred and fifty actual years is reached from the beginning of hostilities against the Eastern empire, we find the historian saying: "The former desire for conquest had now given place to the love of luxury."—*Id.*, page 363. <Harun ar-Rashid (786-809) the famous caliph of the "Arabian Nights," succeeded Al-Mahdi, but although he continued to

win victories over the forces of the Greek Empire the scorpion sting no longer inflicted the same agony. "He was constantly victorious; but though the wars in which he was engaged proved that the Arabs had not yet lost their military skill, they showed that

they had greatly deteriorated from the standard of the generals of Omar, who would not have paused till they had reached Constantinople itself."—*Historian's Hist. of World, Vol. VIII, page 212.* >Although we may not be able to put our finger on any particular event about the year 779, that stands out as a landmark to define the conclusion of the one hundred and fifty years, we are quite safe in saying that at that time

the five months of torment have manifestly come to a close. With their termination by the year 779, the first woe is passed. <Yet with the very announcement of this fact is coupled the warning

that there are two more woes to come hereafter. Rev. ix. 12. The language of the announcement intimates that a period of time will separate the first woe from those that follow.



Mahomet.

The Ottoman Empire in Prophecy.

THE sixth angel sounds, and John hears a voice from the horns of the golden altar in the heavenly sanctuary, which utters these words:

"Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." Verses 13, 14. And the Revelator tells us that the four angels were loosed which had been prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year to slay the third part of men. Again it is obvious that great armies are intended by the imagery. The number of the horsemen is given as twice ten thousand times ten thousand, and John goes on to describe their appearance as they rush to battle. Verse 15.

What is meant by the four angels? Already in this line of prophecy an angel has been introduced. "They have over them as king the angel of the abyss." It is hard to see how any human being could be represented by the angel of the bottomless pit. It would be more natural to understand the language as meaning that Satan himself was the great leader and true king of the Mohammedan myriads. He is represented in the book of Revelation as being very closely connected with the Romish Empire and the corrupted Church of Rome (see chap. xii. 3-9), and it would therefore be quite according to the method of the Apocalypse to think of him as primarily re-

sponsible for the rise of the Moslem religion and the results that have followed in its train.

If we may thus understand the term "angel" under the fifth trumpet, it would follow that the four angels spoken of under the sixth trumpet are also fallen angels, to whom has been permitted a limited but important part in earthly affairs. And this interpretation is further strengthened by the fact that under the third woe fallen angels again play a prominent part. See Rev. xvi. 12-14. Thus evil angels are actively associated with all three of the woes.

Bound in the Euphrates.

The four angels are represented as bound in the great river Euphrates until a certain time. The river Euphrates represents the people who inhabit that region. For a long time the city of Bagdad near the Euphrates was the headquarters of the Mohammedan world, the residence of the Abbasside Caliphs. But the Moslem religion that had, at its first appearance, played such a powerful part was chained there at Bagdad for centuries by the weakness of its inert leaders. When the Seljuk Turks came to its assistance in A.D. 1055, and brought with them a new spirit of enterprise and lust for conquest, these also were held in check by the Crusades,

which, beginning in A.D. 1096, ended in A.D. 1291 with the fall of Acre, the last Christian stronghold in Palestine. With the passing of the crusades the Ottoman Turks appear upon the scene, and a steady succession of brilliant conquerors soon built up a splendid Ottoman Empire. Now indeed the day of doom seemed to be drawing near for the long-threatened eastern empire. Sultan Bajazet, the "Thunderbolt," laid siege to Constantinople for six years, and was on the very verge of success when Tamerlane, the Tartar, marched against him in the year 1402 with a vast army, and crushed the Turkish Empire at the battle of Angora. Bajazet died eight months later in captivity. Clearly, not yet were the four angels set free to slay the third part of men. In a few years, however, after the battle of Angora, the Turkish Empire had regained all that it had lost, and once again Constantinople was besieged, this time by Sultan Murad, the Second, who reigned from 1421 to 1451. Murad, however, was obliged to raise the siege in order to put down a brother's insurrection, and the Greek emperor of Constantinople, Manuel, was left in possession on payment of a heavy tribute. On the death of Murad, however, his son, Mohammed II, took the throne, and this Sultan was determined from the outset that the time had fully come to snatch the long-desired prize.

"His first act of sovereign authority showed that a different spirit to that of the generous Murad would now wield the Ottoman power. Murad had left a little son, a babe still at the breast, by his second wife, a princess of Servia. Mohammed ordered his infant brother to be drowned in a bath, and the merciless command was executed at the very time when the unhappy mother, in ignorance of her child's doom, was offering her

congratulations to the murderer on his accession. . . . For craft, capacity, and courage, he ranks among the highest of the Ottoman sultans. His merits also as a far-sighted statesman and his power of mind as a legislator are as undeniable as are his military talents. He was also keenly sensible to all intellectual gratifications, and he was himself possessed of unusually high literary abilities and attainments. Yet with all these qualities we find combined in him an amount of cruelty, perfidy, and revolting sensuality, such as seldom stain human nature in the same individual." —*Creasy's History of Ottoman Turks*, Chap. v., pp. 75, 76.

Fall of Constantinople.

The event showed that the four angels had at last been loosed. When Mohammed II had been on the throne two years, Constantinople, that had successfully resisted twenty sieges, fell before his armies and passed under the Ottoman flag. It was on May 29, 1453, that the city was taken, and with it passed away the eastern portion of the Roman Empire. In the symbolic language of the prophecy, the remaining third part of men was killed.

"The Roman Empire of the East, which had lasted so long, which had withstood and outlived so many enemies, whose princes had beaten back the Persian and the Saracen, the Avar, the Bulgarian, and the Russian, now at last fell before the armies of the Turk. The new Rome, so long the head of the Christian and civilized world, became the seat of Mohammedan and barbarian rule. The Sultan took the place of a long line of Cæsars. And the great church of Saint Sophia, the most venerated temple of the whole Eastern church, the seat of patriarchs, and the crowning-place of emperors, has been, from Mahomet's day to our own, a mosque for Mohammedan worship." —*Freeman's Ottoman Power in Europe*, p. 115.

In the verses that follow John sets



Fall of Constantinople, May 29, 1453.

before us a picture of the forces by which the last stronghold of the ancient empire was laid low. He gives the number of the horsemen as 200,000,000, which is obviously not designed to be regarded as the number taking part in any one siege or battle. It may, however, represent the total number of horsemen enlisted from first to last under the Turkish flag. As to this, it would be impossible for any historian to say precisely; the figures must not be pressed too literally. Griesbach's New Testament suggests that the reading should be "myriads of myriads." The breasplates as of fire and hyacinth and brimstone give a very fair description of the brilliant appearance of a Turkish army in uniform in its victorious period.

Prophetic Foresight.

A notable feature in the prophecy is the fact that John saw, proceeding out

of the mouths of the horses, fire and smoke and brimstone. No ancient army of which he had ever heard presented such an appearance as this on the field of battle. It was not until the use of gunpowder was introduced into warfare that fire and smoke would play a prominent part in a scene of conflict, and the fact that John was able to foresee such an innovation in military weapons is one striking proof of the inspiration of his writings, and an excellent reason for reposing confidence in his prophecies. Gibbon gives a prominent place in his detailed history of the struggle to the use of huge cannon employed to batter down the walls of Constantinople. The Turks were among the first to make a military use of gunpowder, which was first introduced into Europe by the Saracens. As John saw the horses in his vision, the smoke seemed to proceed out of their mouths (verse 18), and if we reflect on the appearance presented

by a mounted warrior discharging a firearm, we can easily see how the sight would suggest to one who had no actual experience of such weapons, that the discharges of smoke and flame were

proceeding from the mouths of the horses. In his account of the taking of Constantinople, Sir E. Pears writes:—



proceeding from the mouths of the horses. In his account of the taking of Constantinople, Sir E. Pears writes:—

"The great superiority of the Turks as regards arms was in the cannon. . . . The siege of Constantinople, in fact, marks an era in the employment of large cannon and gave to the world the first noteworthy intimation that the stone walls of the Middle Ages constituted no longer a sacred defence. Cannon had, indeed, been known a century and a half earlier in Western Europe, and had been employed both by and against the Turks on the Danube; but the astonishment which the introduction of large cannon caused at the siege of Constantinople shows that while the invention itself was new to the people of the East, its development was hardly less surprising to those of the West. Cristobolus remarks upon the siege that 'it was the cannon which did everything.'—*Destruction of the Greek Empire*, p. 252.

"The walls, solid as they had proved themselves in a score of former sieges, were not sufficiently strong to resist the new invention. The huge balls, fired from a short distance amid a cloud of the blackest smoke, making a terrible roar and breaking into a thousand pieces as they struck the walls, so damaged them that they required daily and constant repair. The narratives of those present agree in representing the defenders from the very commencement of the bombardment as being constantly engaged in repairing the injury done by these 'takers of cities.' Large and un-

wieldy as they were, unmounted and half buried amid the stones and beams by which they were kept in position, they were yet engines of destruction such as the world had never seen."—*Id.*, p. 255.

Tails of the Horses.

Another feature in the vision serves to identify the Turkish armies with the horsemen seen by John. He noted that the power of the horses was also in their tails. Verse 19. It is well known that the standard of a Turkish Pasha consists of one, two, or three horses' tails, so that to John it would seem that the tails of the horses guided the movements of the troops and led them on to victory. In its account of Orkhan, the son of Othman, the "Story of Turkey" says:—

"He had lived to carry his arms to the confines of Asia Minor, and had even seen his horse tails flying on the Western shores of the Hellespont."—*Page 35.*

Hour, Day, Month, and Year.

The period of time for which the four angels were loosed is of great interest as showing how unmistakably certain is the application of the sixth trumpet to the Turkish power.

> We have seen that it was not until 1453 that the four angels proved to be entirely loosed and free to put an end to the Eastern empire. Up till that time some obstacle had always arisen between the Turks and the object of their long-cherished ambitions. The actual loosing of the angels, however, preceded the taking of Constantinople by four years. < . . .

When Sultan Murad II abandoned the siege of Constantinople in the year 1422, a treaty of peace was signed between himself and the Greek emperor,

[the fall of Constantinople]

Manuel, by which, in consideration of an annual tribute, Manuel was left in possession of Constantinople and a few other cities. Of the son, who succeeded Manuel a few years later, John VI, Finlay says that he "succeeded in preserving uninterrupted peace till his death in 1448. During his inglorious reign of twenty-three years he never forgot that he was a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. . . . It is said that the emperor, Manuel II, had feared that the enterprising character which his son, John VI, displayed when a young man would bring ruin on the empire. The old man observed that the eastern Roman empire required an overseer, not a sovereign. John VI proved precisely the temporizing manager that circumstances required; and his pliancy averted, during his lifetime, the calamities which were ready to overwhelm the Greek empire."—*Finlay's History of Greece, Vol. III, page 496.* John VI died on the 3rd day of October, 1448 (*Mijatovich's "Constantine"*).

When such a spirit as this was manifested in Constantinople, it is evident that little more was required to actually loose the agencies that were waiting to bring about its utter destruction. And when the last emperor ascended the ill-fated throne, the empire formally put itself under the foot of the Sultan. Constantine, the brother of John VI, was in Sparta when the throne became vacant, and inasmuch as Constantine had recently taken part in hostilities against the Sultan, Murad II, it was thought doubtful that Murad would consent to acknowledge him as emperor, and some were in favour of crowning Demetrius, a younger brother. So before Constantine could be formally proclaimed emperor, Murad was approached to know if he would consent to Con-

stantine's wearing the crown. It was not until Murad gave his consent that the imperial insignia were sent to Constantinople in Sparta, and the ceremony of coronation was performed there, the 6th of January, 1449.

"The arguments of the Prince Demetrius' partisans were based not so much on personal as on public grounds—the political interest of the State. At last a compromise was made: an embassy was to be sent at once to the Sultan to ask him, Would he acknowledge Despot Constantine as emperor or not? This course was perhaps the only one to prevent civil war, or eventually an attack on the part of the Turks, but it shows more than anything else the growing weakness of the empire, and the failing sense of dignity."—*Constantine, Last Emperor of the Greeks, by Chedomil Mijatovich, page 84.*

Clearly, the independence of the eastern empire was now gone; its king was in the fullest sense but a nominee of the Sultan, and when Mohammed, on his accession to the sultanate in 1451, determined at once to proceed with the long-deferred acquisition of Constantinople, the result was hardly in doubt a moment.

The Limits of Ottoman Power.

Calculating an hour, a day, a month, and a year on the prophetic scale, the year will amount to three hundred and sixty days, the month to thirty, and to this must be added one day and the twenty-fourth part of a day, making in the aggregate three hundred and ninety-one days and one-twenty-fourth. reckoning as usual a prophetic day as the equivalent of a chronological year, we have three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. If we add this period to January, 1449, when the eastern Roman empire formally acknowledged itself and its king as subject to the will

of the Sultan, and the four angels were unmistakably placed in command of the situation, it will carry us to the early part of 1840. And where does the expiration of the period bring us? Into the midst of the negotiations going on between the Great Powers of Europe as

announced on July 27, 1839, that they would themselves take matters in hand. It was not, however, until July 15, 1840, nearly a year later, that England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia were able to come together in the famous "Quadruple Alliance," and con-



Mehemet Ali.

to how the Turkish Empire could be preserved from its insurrectionary vassal, Mehemet Ali, of Egypt, who had defeated the land forces of the Sultan, stolen his navy, and generally seemed likely to take possession of the whole empire. To save Turkey from this end, or from throwing herself into the arms of Russia, four of the Great Powers, England, Austria, France, and Prussia,

clude a convention for the protection of Turkey. That convention opened with these words: "His Highness, the Sultan, having addressed himself to their majesties, the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and Bohemia, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of all the Russias, to ask their support and assistance in the

difficulties in which he finds himself placed by reason of the hostile proceedings of Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt—difficulties which threaten with danger the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the independence of the Sultan's throne, etc., etc."

It was only the intervention of the four Powers mentioned that saved the Turkish Empire at this time from extinction. Thus the prophetic period finds a close and striking application. In 1449 the emperor Constantine was obliged to acknowledge himself the vassal of the Sultan, subject to his will; the allotted time for the loosing of the four angels passed away, and with its close the independence of the Turkish Empire in turn vanishes; and shows the Sultan placing himself abjectly in the hands of the Powers of Europe, acknowledging that he holds his throne only by their good offices.

With the year 1840, then, which marks in the most formal and explicit way the end of the Turkish independ-

ence, as an event of history, the second woe ceases. Freeman's description of Turkish rule shows how well it deserved to be reckoned as a "woe":—

"The rule of the Turk, by whatever diplomatic euphemisms it may be called, means the bondage and degradation of all who come beneath his rule. Such bondage and degradation is not an incidental evil which may be reformed, it is the essence of the whole system, the groundwork on which the Ottoman power is built. The power which Othman began, which Mahomet the Conqueror firmly established, which Suleiman the Lawgiver raised to its highest pitch of power and splendour, is beyond all powers that the world ever saw, the embodiment of wrong. In the most glorious regions of the world the rule of the Turk has been the abomination of desolation, and nothing else."—*Ottoman Power in Europe, p. 134.*

Only the seventh trumpet yet remains to sound, and its sounding will not be long delayed: "The second woe is past, and behold, the third woe cometh quickly." Rev. xi. 14.

Mohammedanism and the Papacy.



SIDE by side with Mohammedanism, through its Saracen and Turkish phases, runs the story of the papacy.

It was near the middle of the sixth century that the papacy was set up with supreme power over the church by the decree of the emperor Justinian, and in the early part of the following century Mohammedanism proclaimed itself the true faith. Both exercised enormous power for more than a thousand years, and when the time came for their decline both diminished together. It was in the year 1798 that the papacy fulfilled its allotted period of supremacy, the 1,260 years of Dan. vii. 25 and of Rev. xiii. 5, and it was forty-two years later that the Mohammedan power also lost its independence and placed itself in the hands of the Great Powers. When the curtain falls at last on these two systems of error they are still side by side. It is under the fifth of the seven last plagues that the visitation of divine wrath falls upon the seat of the beast and fills the papal kingdom with darkness, and it is under the next vial, the sixth, that the water of the river Euphrates is dried up.

A Check on the Papacy.

It would be an interesting and not altogether unprofitable speculation to

try to consider what the course of human history would have been but for the rise of Mohammedanism. It is probable that but for that development the career of the papacy would have been far more tyrannical than it has been, perhaps even beyond endurance. For Mohammedanism has been a continual check upon the papacy, and when we see what the papal rule has accomplished in those countries that have been entirely subject to its authority, we recognize the imperative necessity for some sufficiently powerful check upon its despotic and persecuting spirit.

The words of Revelation ix. 4 show that the Saracen woe was aimed principally at those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, and we have already noted the circumstance that Abubeker charged his soldiers to strike particularly at such as belonged to the synagogue of Satan and might be distinguished by their shaven crowns, the members of the Romish priesthood. In his Preliminary Discourse to the translation of the Koran, Sales remarks concerning the Arabs that they "seem to have been raised up on purpose by God, to be a scourge to the Christian church for not living answerably to that most holy religion which they had received."—*Page 36.* This view is expressed by many writers on the subject.

The Seal of God.

The seal of God had previously been mentioned in the book of Revelation. It occurs in a prophetic outline consisting of seven seals which were successively opened in order to reveal the future that lay before the church of Christ. The opening of the seven seals is recorded in chapters six and seven, and the first verse of chapter eight. Under the first four seals the church is represented by horsemen, each riding upon a steed of a different colour. The first was a white horse, and its rider had a bow in his hand and a crown on his head as he went forth conquering and to conquer. Rev. vi. 2. This represented the purity and triumph of the apostolic church. But the second seal indicated a departure from the early purity by the symbol of a red horse. Verse 4. A great sword figures prominently under this seal, symbolizing the strife that filled the church in its early decline. The third horse was black, and a pair of balances become the appropriate mark of a church swallowed up with the love of gain and trying in every way to make merchandise of the Gospel. Verses 5, 6. The history of the church bears clear and painful testimony that this was indeed the course of ecclesiastical development. To the apostolic fervour succeeded the competition for church dignities; the love of the brethren disappeared in bitter contests over theological definitions; and as spirituality died out of the church the general ambition came to be the acquisition of wealth and position until the greed of the bishops and of the religious orders became an intolerable scandal. Under the fourth seal a pale horse appeared, and death sat upon him, while Hades followed. Verse 8. Power was given to the grim

leader to slay the fourth part of the earth with sword and famine and wild beasts. This seal pictured the uttermost departure of the church from its bright beginning. Under the leadership of the persecuting papacy the church became one of the deadliest agencies of destruction and slaughter the world has ever seen. Not only were millions put to death with every conceivable form of diabolical cruelty because they refused to subject their consciences to blasphemous papal dogmas; wars of religion devastated the fairest lands of Europe, while inhuman conquerors with the papal benediction carried the same ferocity to the New World. Under the fifth seal we hear the blood of innumerable martyrs crying to God for vengeance on their persecutors. Verses 9-11. The sixth seal opens with startling signs that herald the return of Christ and, at length, the wrath of the Lamb against those who have misruled and scattered His flock. Verses 12-17. Under the seventh seal there is silence in heaven for a little while (Rev. viii. 1) because the great white throne is set up on earth for the execution of judgment on the wicked (Rev. xx. 7-15), and the Father Himself, with every angel in heaven, is present at that awful scene.

The Seal in the Forehead.

In the course of the sixth seal there is brought to view the setting of a seal upon the foreheads of God's servants. Chap. vii. 1-8. Apparently the seal has not been always borne by the members of the church, but now the four angels, to whom it is given to hurt the earth and the sea, are about to begin their work of world-wide destruction (verse 1), and it becomes urgently necessary that the seal be restored to the true

church of Christ for their protection. Accordingly, the angels commissioned to destroy are bidden to hold the winds of strife for a little while, and another angel appears on the scene having the seal of the living God, which is applied to a hundred and forty-four thousand of the saints. Verses 2-4. Thus before the blow of judgment falls God's people again bear His seal.

The scenes unveiled by the loosing of the second and subsequent seals plainly indicate that the church, as a whole, must have early ceased to bear the distinguishing seal of the living God; it was doubtless lost when the first declension came about and the white horse was succeeded by the red; and the passage already noted in Rev. ix. 4 indicates that the rise of the papacy is responsible for the disappearance of the seal from the church. The apostate empire-church against which the locust-scorpions are given a charge is specified as consisting of those that have not the seal of God in their foreheads. This being so, it is only to be expected that when the time comes under the sixth seal to restore the original seal of God to the foreheads of His servants, the attempt to do so will meet with fresh antagonism from the papacy. And that this is what takes place the book of Revelation shows.

If the Saracens were designed to be a scourge and a check to the apostate Christian church, much more would the Turkish Empire that followed have this effect. For whereas the Saracens were permitted only to hurt, the Turk was instructed to kill. Cardinal Newman describes the bitter hostility of the Turks to his church:—

"No race casts so broad and dark a shadow on the page of ecclesiastical history, and leaves so painful an im-

pression on the mind of the reader, as the Turkish. The fierce Goths and Vandals, and then again the Lombards, were converted to Catholicism. The Franks yielded to the voice of St. Remigius, and Clovis, their leader, became the eldest son of the church. The Anglo-Saxons gave up their idols at the preaching of St. Augustine and his companions. The German tribes acknowledged Christ amid their forests, though they martyred St. Boniface and other English and Irish missionaries who came to them. The Magays in Hungary were led to faith through loyalty to their temporal monarch, their royal missionary, St. Stephen. The heathen Danes reappear as the chivalrous Normans, the haughty but true sons and vassals of St. Peter. The Saracens even, who gave birth to an imposture, withered away at the end of 300 or 400 years, and had not the power, though they had the will, to persevere in their enmity to the Cross. The Tartars had both the will and the power, but they were far off from Christendom, or they came down in ephemeral outbreaks, which were rather those of freebooters than of persecutors, or they directed their fury as often against the enemies of the church as against her children. But the unhappy race of whom I am speaking, from the first moment they appear in the history of Christendom, are *its unmitigated, its obstinate, its consistent foes.*"—*Historical Sketches, Vol. II, pages 104, 105.*

And it is a fact that Mohammedanism took its most aggressive and deadly form in those very centuries when the papacy was especially bent on sweeping all opposition from its path. The most powerful sultan in all the long line of Turkish rulers was Solyman the Magnificent, and he reigned just at the time when Luther and other Protestant reformers were raising to a white heat the wrath of the papacy by diffusing throughout Europe the pure principles of the Gospel. Describing the period of the Reformation Wylie says:—

"It was the age of great monarchies. Master of Spain and of many other realms in both the eastern and the western world, and now also possessor



Luther Nailing His Protest against Indulgences on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, A.D. 1517.

of the imperial diadem, was the taciturn, ambitious, plodding, and politic Charles V. Francis I, the most polished, chivalrous, warlike knight of his time, ruled France. The self-willed, strong-minded, and cold-hearted Henry VIII

was exercising kingly power in Saxony, and by his virtues earning a lasting fame for himself, and laying the foundation of lasting power for his house. The elegant, self-indulgent, and sceptical Leo X was master of the ceremonies at

Rome. Asia owned the sceptre of Solyman the Magnificent. Often were his hordes seen hovering, like a cloud charged with lightning, on the frontier of Christendom. When a crisis arose in the affairs of the Reformation, and the kingdoms obedient to the Roman See had united their swords to strike, and with blows so decisive that they should not need to strike a second time, the Turk, obeying One Whom he knew not, would straightway present himself on the eastern limits of Europe, and in so menacing an attitude that the swords unsheathed against the poor Protestants had to be turned in another quarter. The Turk was the lightning rod that drew off the tempest. Thus did Christ cover His little flock with the shield of the Moslem!"—*Wylie's History of Protestantism, vol. 1, page 473.*

Sultan versus Pope.

Dr. Wylie gives some interesting illustrations of this providential protection. After the Diet of Worms Luther and the infant cause of the Reformation were in great danger. The reformer himself was under the excommunication of the pope and the ban of the emperor. It seemed inevitable that the Protestant church should be crushed under the weight of these two formidable adversaries. Yet at once

"The political sky became overcast, and dark clouds rolled by in every quarter. First Solyman, 'whom thirteen battles had rendered the terror of Germany,' made a sudden irruption into Europe. He gained many towns and castles, and took Belgrade, the bulwark of Hungary, situated at the confluence of the Danube and the Save. The States of the Empire, stricken with fear, hastily assembled at Nuremberg to consort measures for the defence of Christendom, and for the arrest of the victorious march of its terrible invader. This was work enough for the princes. The execution of the emperor's edict against Luther, with which they had been charged, must lie over till they

had found means of compelling Solyman and his hordes to return to their own land. Their swords were about to be unsheathed above Luther's head when, lo, some hundred thousand Turkish scimitars were unsheathed above their heads."—*Id., page 476.*

The cause of Protestantism in Hungary and Transylvania found similar protection against the papacy by means of the Turk. While Hungary was occupied by Turkish armies, Protestant teachers carried on their work, the Hungarian New Testament of Sylvester was circulated throughout the land, and under the reign of Islam, "the Gospel had greater quietness in Hungary, and flourished more than perhaps would have been the case had the kingdom been governed solely by the house of Austria."—*Id., vol. 3, p. 226.* A few years later the Protestant teachers of Transylvania were banished from the country by a Romanizing regent.

"The sequel was not a little remarkable. Scarcely had the ministers quitted the soil of Transylvania, when the Turks crossed its frontier. . . . Again the Protestants found the sceptre of the Turks lighter than the rod of the Papists. . . . In all the Transylvanian towns under the Moslem the Protestant faith continued to spread."—*Id., pp. 227, 228.*

Answered Prayers.

These circumstances help us to understand the significance of Rev. ix. 13. The voice which John heard giving command that the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates should be loosed, proceeded from the horns of the golden altar. It was at that golden altar that the prayers of the saints were ministered before God and mixed with the fragrant incense of the righteousness of Christ. Chap. v. 8; viii. 3-5. It is in answer to the fervent prayers of God's persecuted people, com-

bined with the intercession of Christ, that the four angels are loosed on the eve of the Reformation, and thus the Turkish power comes into action as a counterweight to the persecuting spirit and relentless cruelty of the papacy. Says Cardinal Newman:—

"It must be confessed that, at the very time the Turks were making progress, the Christian world was in a more melancholy state than it has ever been either before or since. The sins of nations were accumulating that heavy judgment which fell upon them in the Ottoman conquests and the Reformation. [To a Romanist, of course, the Protestant is as evil as the Turk.] There were great scandals among bishops and priests, as well as heresy and insubordination. As to the Pontiffs who filled the Holy See during that period, I will say no more than this, that it did not please the good providence of God to raise up for His church such heroic men as St. Leo of the fifth, and St. Gregory of the eleventh century. For a time the Popes removed from Italy to France; then, when they returned to Rome, there was a schism in the papacy for nearly forty years, during which time the populations of Europe were perplexed to find the real successor of St. Peter, or even took the pretended Pope for the true one."—*Historical Sketches, Vol. II, pp. 142, 143.*

God's Instruments.

Mohammedanism is in itself a fallen religion, and its principles in many respects are sinful; yet God has made use of it as He has often done in the case of ungodly nations to work out His own designs. When Israel of old rebelled obstinately against Jehovah, He committed their punishment into the hands of Assyria and Babylon, yet when the axe lifted up itself against Him that smote with it, He brought down the pride of the stout hearts of Assyria and Babylon, and they in turn felt the divine anger. So God has used Mohammedanism to

punish and keep within bounds the apostate church, yet when the vials of His wrath are finally poured out upon the impenitent world Mohammedanism and Rome drink the cup of vengeance together.

Has the Papacy Changed?

There still remains, however, the interesting question, now that the Turkish Empire has run its allotted course, and is steadily wasting away, shall we see the papacy, encouraged by the removal of the old check, begin again to dream its early dreams of unhindered and undivided supremacy, and seek as in the early days to extend its authority over eastern Europe as well as over the west? For an answer to this question we must turn to the page of prophecy and seek carefully, praying for divine guidance, to read the future in its light.

The story of the sixth trumpet gives little ground for hoping that the apostate church which has been afflicted by it will learn the lessons of history and mend her ways. We read: "The rest of mankind, which were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." Rev. ix. 20, 21. On the contrary, it appears clearly from the Revelation that at the very time when God is restoring His seal to the foreheads of His people as their protection against the final disasters, the papacy vigorously revives its warfare against that seal, and offers instead to all peoples a mark of its own, to be borne either on the forehead or in the hand. Rev. xiii. 16. The papacy, as it has

been known in the past, will not be strong enough in and of itself to carry out this attempt in the old arrogant, persecuting fashion, but there comes to its aid in the last days another apocalyptic beast, and by the plottings and deceptions of this symbolic beast the people of the earth are persuaded to construct an image to the original beast. Rev. xiii. 14. They probably see no harm in such a proceeding, or if they do, suppose themselves able to control what they make, but when the image is once formed, the author of the deception has power to breathe life into it. Verse 15. The image is animated with the spirit and power of the original beast, or papacy, and so there springs into fierce existence a living duplicate of the papacy, and this duplicate at once begins to repeat the bloody history of its original by requiring that all men worship it under the penalty of death. Verse 15. As the sign of their allegiance all are required to receive the mark of the beast, and no one is permitted to buy or sell unless he bears the mark. Verse 16. Here, then, comes about a direct conflict between the seal of God and the mark of the beast. These two compete for a place in the foreheads of mankind. That this issue becomes a world-wide one appears plainly from Rev. xiv. 9, where an angel is seen, symbolic of earthly messengers, declaring to every nation and tongue and tribe and people that if any man worship the beast or his image, and receive his mark on his forehead or upon his hand, the same must drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. Thus the true nature of the solemn issue is set before all mankind. They must receive the seal of God or be destroyed when the winds of strife are

loosed (Rev. vii. 1; xiv. 10, 11); on the other hand, if they do not receive the mark of the beast they shall not be permitted to buy or sell.

A Restored Papacy.

Thus we see that by means of the reinforcements it receives, the papacy, just before the end, becomes to all appearance supremely powerful, so that it can threaten those who rebel against its authority with the deprivation of the necessaries of life, and cut them off from all commercial intercourse with their fellows. In these facts we surely find the answer to our question. Whether due in a measure or not to the removal of the old check represented by the presence of the Ottoman Empire in the east of Europe, the papacy does seem to regain all the authority it ever possessed, and to use that authority in the same despotic spirit that it has always manifested. And under the symbol of "Babylon the Great," the Revelation shows us this restored papacy glorifying herself in a song of self-exalting triumph: "I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Rev. xviii. 7.

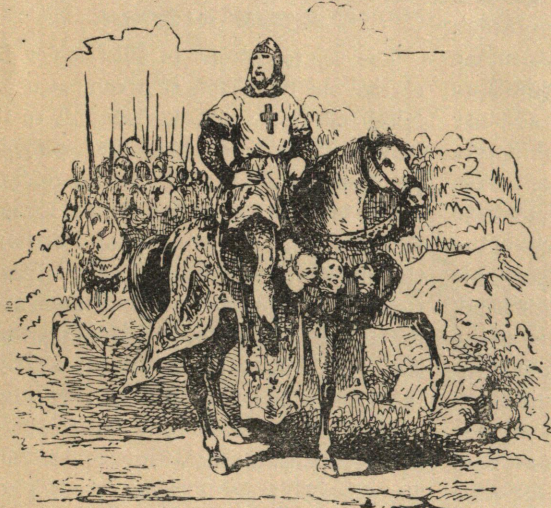
Reinforced and Enlarged.

The reinforcement of the papacy is carried out by means of a campaign of falsehood (Rev. xiii. 12-14), and so it may well be that those who play a prominent part in the making of an image to the beast do not recognize the real character of their work. Possibly the duplicate will not be called "the papacy," but by some name more acceptable to many of its worshippers. The fact, however, stands out clearly that a movement which is papal by affinity covers, under one form of organization or another, the whole world. The papal Church of Rome constituted in its prime an empire-church; the re-

vived, reinforced, enlarged papacy will constitute a world-church. And it may avoid confusion if we apply this term of "world-church" to the final development of the papacy as outlined in the prophecies.

Evidently the world-church is for a little while to become a great power in human affairs, and it seems difficult to conceive of such a restoration in the papal fortunes and at the same time suppose that, as the Turkish Empire gradually passes away and the question of the disposition of the Holy Land comes to the front, the papacy will forget the mighty effort she once put forth through the crusades to secure for Christendom the possession of the Holy places. That ancient ambition may have slumbered long, but with the approach of the time when Palestine is likely to pass from its present owners, the old instincts are bound to awaken and assert themselves once more. Indeed, Rome is already busy in the Near East.

Says Mr. Alex. Powell, F.R.G.S., in "Everybody's Magazine," October, 1909:



Crusaders.

"In every city and village and hamlet in the Balkans will you find these missionaries of empire, sombre Jesuits, lean-featured Trappists, cowed and sandalled Franciscans, preaching, praying, proselytizing. Keen-sighted and wary, consummate diplomatists every one, already their influence in the Balkan peninsula has become enormous."

Romish Hopes.

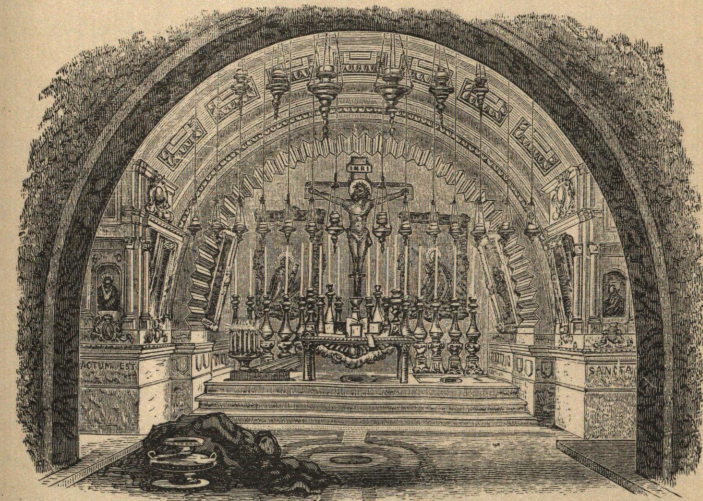
In its issue of November 29, 1912, the "Catholic Times" discussed the consequences to the Church of Rome of the war in the East, and said:—

"The success of the allied Balkan States must eventually tell to the advantage of the Catholic Church. . . . The extension of the power of the victors will necessitate the concession in the new territories they will occupy of at least as large a measure of religious freedom as the Catholics now enjoy in European Turkey. Moreover, the prospect of reunion with Rome must decidedly improve. . . . The reunion movement was, it will be remembered, actively encouraged by Pope Leo XIII, and to promote this desirable object a special Congregation or Commission was established in Rome in 1895."

The Church of Rome has never hesitated in the past to seek power for herself through intrigues with kings and emperors. In crafty scheming, although professedly a spiritual power, she has been unsurpassed by statesmen and politicians. And she will not be slow to seek her own advantage in the turmoil and confusion of affairs in the Near East. There is a possible prize to be won in ending the long schism between East and West, in subjecting the Orthodox Eastern Church once more under

the papal sceptre. So strengthened the papacy would be mightily exalted in the eyes of the other churches of Europe that allow themselves to entertain the thought of a possible future reunion with her. And when a revived and reinforced papacy shall succeed, as the book of Revelation indicates that it will, in intoxicating the kings of the earth anew with the wine of her fornication,

and making them the instruments of her far-reaching designs, she will hardly forget the traditions of her past. It would be a supreme accomplishment to secure for the world-church the possession and control of those sacred shrines in the land of Palestine for which her warriors fought, and toward which her pilgrims have bent their steps so many hundred years.



Shrine of the Crucifixion Chapel on Supposed Site of Calvary.

King of the North.

IN the eleventh chapter of Daniel we have the record of a very remarkable prophecy communicated through the angel Gabriel as an interpretation of the vision related by Daniel in the eighth chapter of his book. This interpretation begins with the prophet's own day and passes down the stream of history until all earthly sovereignty has ended, and the saints who have fallen asleep in Christ awake to everlasting life and glory. Dan. xii. 2, 3.

North and South.

Prominent in the earlier portion of this outline are the kings of the north and of the south, who are thus named because they respectively rule the countries to the north and south of Palestine. The dominion of Alexander the Great is mentioned (verse 3), also its final division, between the four kings Seleucus, Cassander, Lysimachus, and Ptolemy, which was effected at the battle of Ipsus, 301 B.C. Verse 4. Of these Seleucus took that part of Alexander's empire which included the land of Syria, and Ptolemy took the southern portion which was Egypt. The dynasties founded by Seleucus and Ptolemy continued respectively throughout the next two or three centuries to be the kings of the north and of the south,

until they were both swallowed up with their dominions by the growing empire of Rome. It was at the battle of Actium, A.D. 31, between Octavius Augustus on the one hand, and Mark Antony and Cleopatra of Egypt on the other, that Rome entered into possession of the last division of Alexander's empire, and immediately after this Octavius became the first Roman emperor. Thenceforth there was no king of the north or king of the south, for there was but one monarch reigning over both the north and the south. Accordingly, with the twenty-fifth verse of Dan. xi., which refers to the battle of Actium, the king of the north and the king of the south cease for a long period to be mentioned in the prophecy. One great figure occupies the central place—Rome.

Papal Rome.

But although the prophecy first deals with imperial Rome, it becomes manifest, as we read on, that imperial Rome is succeeded by papal Rome. Verses 30, 31. This crafty and persecuting power makes long and strenuous war against the people of God (verses 33-35) and even against God Himself: "He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods." Verse 36, R.V. We need be in

no doubt whatever as to what is singled out by these words, seeing that we possess an absolutely identical description, probably taken from this very passage, in Paul's prediction of the papacy: "He that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." 2 Thess. ii. 4. R.V. Some would like to think that these words of Paul do not refer to the papacy, but to some manifestation of blatant atheism which will appear in the last days. This cannot be, however, for Paul goes on to tell the Thessalonians that the power of which he spoke was already working in the church in his own time, "only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way." Verse 7.

An Old Rivalry Renewed.

We continue to read on in Daniel xi., and find that when the time of the end is reached the king of the south will contend with, or push at, the power which has for so long occupied the central position in the prophecy. Verse 40. But lo, when the king of the south reappears in the prophecy, there is a king of the north also, and at once begins anew the old struggle.

Now, throughout the duration of the power of imperial Rome there was neither a king of the north nor a king of the south, for one king was paramount. And almost as soon as the Roman Empire was broken up, another power, the Mohammedan, entered into possession, not only of the land of Palestine, but also of the land of Syria to the north and of the land of Egypt in the south, and it was not until Turkey lost her sovereignty in 1840 that there could arise a king of the north as

opposed to the king of the south. From the seventh century to the nineteenth there was but one king reigning supreme over both north and south. When, through the intervention of the "Quadruple Alliance," peace was made between Mehemet Ali and the Sultan, it was agreed that the Pashalik of Egypt should run perpetually in the family of the former, although the Pasha of Egypt must acknowledge the ancient suzerainty of the Sultan. In 1882, however, England took possession of Egypt, and thus there appeared on the scene once more a veritable, independent king of the south as in the old days before the Roman conquest; for although England has acknowledged a certain right to Egypt on the part of the Sultan, she has definitely announced that this would never be permitted to interfere with her own rule in that country. England is answerable to none but herself for the use she makes of her occupation of Egypt.

The Present King of the North.

The question then arises; Who is the king of the north? There is no question that, at the present moment, Turkey is in possession of Syria, and unless Turkey is displaced by some other power or combination of powers, the Sultan will continue to be the king of the north. Some expositors apply the statements of Dan. xi. 40-45 to the Turk, and hold that Turkey, as the king of the north, is the power that will finally plant the tabernacles of its palace in the glorious holy mountain; that having been driven out of Europe, the Turkish government will set up its throne finally at Jerusalem, and there come to its end. Others, however, look for Turkey to be dispossessed of Syria by some power or powers that will be in virtual alliance

with the restored papacy, and that will not only defeat the king of the south, but dominate also the other powers and territories referred to in Dan. xi. 41-45. Those who take this view believe that the interpretation found in Daniel xi., following closely throughout the vision of Daniel viii., deals mainly in its closing stages with the papacy, and that Dan. xi. 45, describing the end of that power in the words, "Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him," corresponds exactly to Dan. viii. 25: "He shall be broken without hand." If this latter view is correct, as Turkey continues gradually to recede before the advance of the powers that are hungering for its possessions, they will press closely upon its heels to compete for its territory, and out of the struggle there will emerge supreme a confederation of powers of which the restored papacy will be the soul.

The Holy Land.

In the early part of the eleventh chapter of Daniel the kings of the north and south were engaged in a continual struggle for the possession of Palestine, and again, when we come to the conclusion of the chapter, and the old titles, king of the north and king of the south are revived, we find the Holy Land once more coming prominently into view. The king of the north enters into the glorious land. Verse 41. "And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." Verse 45.

If the king of the north here spoken of is Turkey, this verse informs us that the Ottoman power will make its final stand at Jerusalem. If the king of the north is not Turkey, but some ally of the papacy or some federation of

powers swayed by its will, then the headquarters of that movement will be set up at Jerusalem. Whichever it may be, that event will mark the near approach of the end. For there "he" shall come to his end. The future development of events will enable us to read this closing portion of the prophecy with greater certainty, but as to what follows upon the setting up of the palace of the king of the north in Jerusalem and his dissolution there, there is no uncertainty whatever. That event on earth is the visible sign of a most momentous move in heaven: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people." Dan. xii. 1, 2. Thus, allowing that the prophetic king of the north points at last to the world-church, and that the setting up of its throne at Jerusalem marks the culmination of its ambition, we have this striking situation: at the very time when antichrist on the earth sets up his throne in Jerusalem below and looks to rule the world, the true Christ sets up His throne in the Jerusalem which is above, and takes to Himself His great power and reigns: the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. Rev. xi. 15.

Standing Up of Michael.

For the standing up of Michael, who is none other than Jesus Christ Himself, means His assumption of sovereignty prior to His return to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Rev. xix. 16. Then there descends upon the deceived populations of the earth, who have looked for a golden age, when once the kingdom was set up in Jerusalem, a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. Dan. xii. 1. This is the time of the

pouring out of the seven last plagues. Rev. xvi. But the Lord will watch over His own, whose names are enrolled in the book of life, and every one of them will be delivered. Dan. xii. 1. Soon He appears in glory to raise the dead and to give everlasting rewards to those who have been loyal to their divine Leader in the face of persecution: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Verse 3.

This then is the great climax that marks the termination of the Eastern Question. To-day we see far advanced

the movements among the nations that are to usher in the day of the Lord. Sooner or later the land of Palestine will become the centre of interest. Mighty kingdoms will be overthrown in the struggle. Out of the confusion will emerge a king of the north who will set up his throne at Jerusalem, and that event will mark to the student of prophecy, no matter how brilliant the apparent prospects, the approaching close of all earthly empire, the time of trouble that will engulf all peoples, and the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in which the saints will receive their everlasting reward.

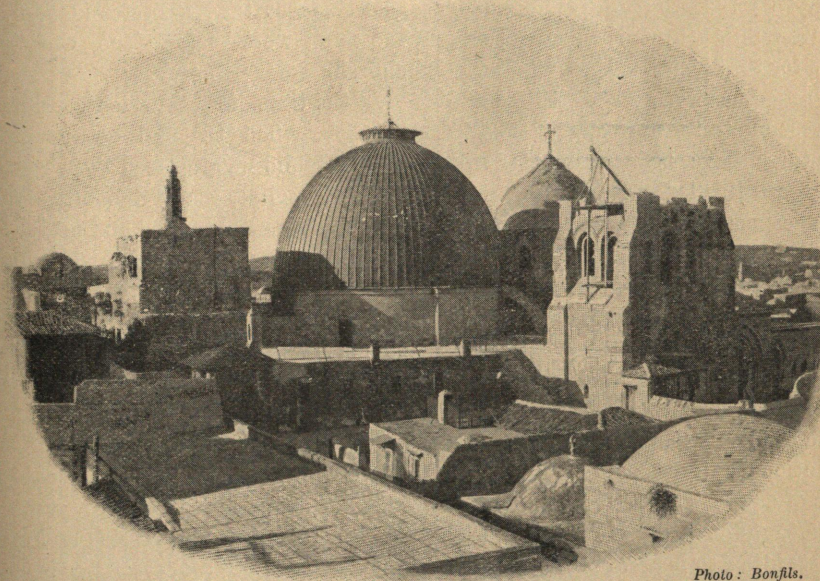


Photo: Bonfils.

The Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem.

Hope for the Moslem.

TO the Christian observer it has been evident for many years past that the revolutions and changes which have entered so largely into recent history have had the effect under an overruling Providence of opening doors for the Gospel. A generation ago much of the world was still almost inaccessible to the missionary. But the Scriptures have been translated into nearly all the languages of the earth, and missionary agencies have been multiplied in a remarkable way, so that to-day the conviction has grown up in the minds of missionary leaders that the evangelization of the whole world in the space of a few years has become practicable. Along with this awakening in the evangelistic sphere, we have seen revolutionary forces at work in the lands of darkness, overthrowing ancient barriers, and creating a readiness, even an eagerness, to hear what the missionary has to say. Wherever we look to-day the doors are open wide, and as never before it is possible for the church of Christ to carry out its great commission, and go into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature.

The Gospel to the Mohammedan World.

If there is one task yet facing the church that has presented a more hope-

less appearance than any other, it was the duty of making the Gospel known in its fullness to the Moslem world. Mrs. Creighton, in her book on the history of missions, published in 1912, suggested that this was the greatest and perhaps the last work before the Christian church.

At the time of the Turkish revolution in 1908, when the old despotism of Abdul Hamid was replaced by a constitutional regime, many difficulties that had hitherto embarrassed and prevented missionary effort in the Turkish Empire disappeared. Such a wave of fraternal sentiment flowed over the country that men of different race and faith embraced one another in the streets of Constantinople, and an era of complete religious liberty seemed to have begun. But the old, intolerant spirit of Mohammedanism was not so easily exorcized. In the years that followed oppression and massacre demonstrated that, Old or Young, the Turk had not changed; that some more radical alteration must be effected before real freedom in religious matters could expect to make way against the ancient bigotry. Those who were best acquainted with the Moslem spirit were unable to look with optimism toward the future of the Young Turk movement for this reason. Sir Edwin Pears, an authority on Turkey, wrote:—



SCENE NEAR CAIRO.

"The Turkish reformer has to deal with a solid mass of prejudice, based on ignorance and tradition, of blind, unreasoning hatred of the very name of Christian; traditions which speak of the utter extermination of enemies, which teach that all Moslems have the divine right of dominancy; bigotry which will refuse to examine the objections to a divinely-revealed faith, and which therefore makes the mass not only impervious to argument, but unwilling to listen to it. Pride of race, spiritual conceit, and the obstinacy of ignorance are the obstacles which the new teaching will have to encounter in its endeavour to teach the lesson of religious liberty and equality to lower class Moslems."—*Pear's Turkey and Its People, page 295.*

A Hard Lesson.

Some calamity which would have power to break the pride of race in the heart of the Turk would seem to be necessary for his rescue from the spiritual conceit by which he is enslaved. And surely this painful lesson has now begun. For over a century Turkey has been suffering defeat and spoliaticn at the hands of the Powers of Europe, but these were mighty antagonists, colossal foes, before whose strength it was no dishonour to fall. Now, however, the once subject races of the Turkish Empire, the upstart principalities of the Serb, the Bulgar, and the Greek, have smitten the empire into the dust, and wrung from its nerveless grasp the city where its most venerated caliphs are sleeping. This is humiliation indeed, to submit to which will need all the ingrained fatalism of the Turk. Henceforth he is a beaten fugitive, driven from the lands he ruled for centuries, powerless to defend himself from the Christian dogs he had treated with contemptuous hate, whose blood he held it no sin for a true believer to shed. Surely now the Moslem will admit a

doubt whether the favour of heaven is exclusively reserved for the follower of Mahomet, and along with that doubt will appear a new opening for the herald of the cross. The "Missionary Review of the World" for January, 1913, wrote of the situation thus:—

"The Turk has for many years been a barrier and a menace to Christianity. Oppression, bribery, persecution, massacre have characterized the Ottoman dealing with Christians, so that the prayer of missionaries has been that God would 'turn and overturn' the evil rule of the Sultan's government. This prayer has been abundantly answered in the uprising of the Young Turks, and now in the victories of the Balkan armies. We cannot doubt that God has in view great and blessed changes that will come out of this terrible bloodshed. The Ottoman Empire is suffering for the misdeeds of centuries, and out of the trouble and turmoil the hand of God is surely working out beneficent results.

"In spite of the promises of religious freedom given by the reform government it has been as difficult as ever to obtain permission to establish Christian institutions; open-air Protestant meetings were stopped in Caesarea, the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut has been denied permission to take over purchased property for church or school use; permission was also refused to build a hospital in Konia, and other mission stations make similar complaints.

Signs of Promise.

"In spite of Government opposition, however, the people of Turkey have been welcoming more than ever the opportunities offered by Christian missions. There are more Moslems in the college at Beirut, although attendance at Bible classes and chapel worship is strictly enforced. Turks and Kurds are attending mission schools in large numbers; many hundreds of Bibles and Testaments are being sold to Moslems—in the city of Konia (Ancient Iconium) alone 1,500 were sold to Moslems in the last twelve months. The influence of

Protestant schools and colleges is being more widely recognized, and after the present war is over we believe that they will be more than ever patronized by all sects. . . . The faith of Moslems in their prophet and in the Koran is being shaken; will the faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, take its place? Imams and Mullahs are calling down curses in vain on those who disregard tradition and sacred law; will reverence for the law of God as revealed in the Bible take the place of that which is discarded? The day of opportunity is dawning. Will the Christian church be ready to take advantage of it?"

In the same issue of the "Missionary Review" Dr. S. M. Zwemer, of Cairo, writes of the immense importance to the Moslem world of the possession of Constantinople:—

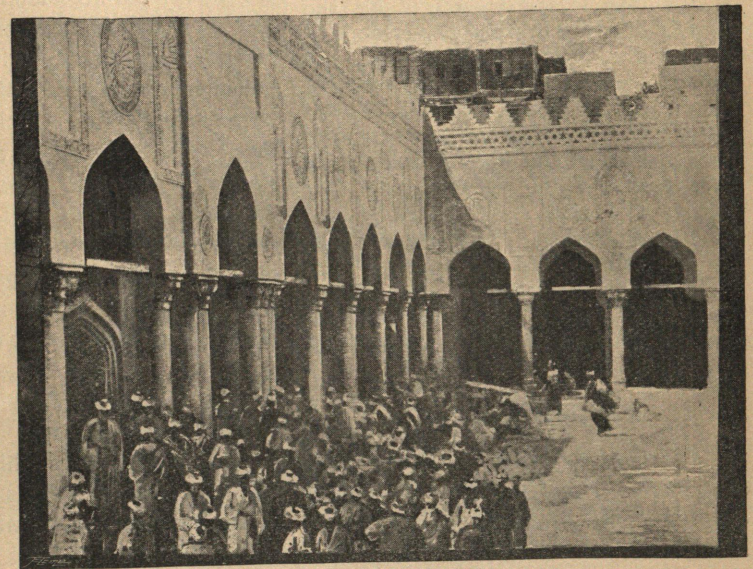
"The position of Turkey and of the Ottoman Empire is unique among other Moslem countries. For centuries it has stood out as the one great temporal power of Islam with laws and usages built upon the book and the traditions of the prophet. Here is the residence of the caliph, the *Imam-el-Muslimin*,

the supreme pontiff of the church state called Islam. Even at the present day Constantinople and its politics are the cynosure of Islam from Morocco to the Philippine Islands. The fall of Constantinople would be interpreted by Moslems everywhere as the direst disaster. This

accounts for the enthusiastic and almost fanatic response in every part of Moslem India to the appeals to help the Sultan during the war in Tripoli and in the Balkan States.

"Constantinople is the capital of the Ottoman Empire. To it all the states of Turkey look for political direction, and representatives from every tribe and race in the empire are found on its streets. 'As a base for missionary operations not only upon Turkey, but upon adjacent countries as well,' says Dr. Barton, 'it is unexcelled. A publishing house at Constantinople is calculated by its very location to reach millions who might otherwise refuse to read what is printed. In Arabia an Arabic Bible, at first rejected because it is an infidel's book, is later accepted, because it bears upon its title-page the authoritative permission of his Imperial Majesty. As a strategic centre for Christian work calculated directly and indirectly to reach the 200,000,000 who bear the name of the prophet of Arabia, there is no place that can compare with Constantinople, resting upon two continents, and swaying the most mighty religious empire on earth.'"

The Rev. C. T. Riggs, of Constantino-



El Hazart: Great Moslem University at Cairo.

ple, writing on the results of the Balkan war in the same "Review," lays emphasis on the blow it has struck at Turkish pride:—

"Ottoman domination in Europe is at an end. Turkey may retain Constantinople and perhaps the north shore of the Marmora; but her European possessions are gone. It may not be easy for an outsider to realize what a blow this is to Turkish pride. For five and a half centuries, from the day that Murad I crossed the Hellespont and laid the foundations of European dominion by taking Adrianople and shattering the Servian Empire, the Osmanli has been a force to reckon with in Europe. Now the gradual disintegration of the empire has snatched away from him his last hold on Europe, save for the Imperial city itself. The Turks themselves realize this, and are crushed by the thought."

"The Ottoman Empire has for five hundred years stood as the bulwark of Islam, the pride of the Moslem world. In these last days, since the passing of Morocco and Persia out of the category of independent states into the hands of France, Russia, and England, Turkey has been the one Moslem power left. Her Sultan is the Caliph of all the faithful. So that this disastrous month's war, while not a religious war, has struck a heavy blow at the pride of Islam. In fact, the Ameer of Afghanistan is reported to be seriously contemplating proclaiming himself the Caliph because of what he regards as the forfeiting of all right to that title by the Sultan of Turkey. Without a doubt the disastrous outcome of these two wars will also seriously diminish Ottoman influence in Arabia, and indeed damage the prestige of Turkey all through the Moslem world."

A Great Opportunity.

Thus the mountains of difficulty in the way of the evangelization of the Moslem world are being levelled. The time has come when the Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the

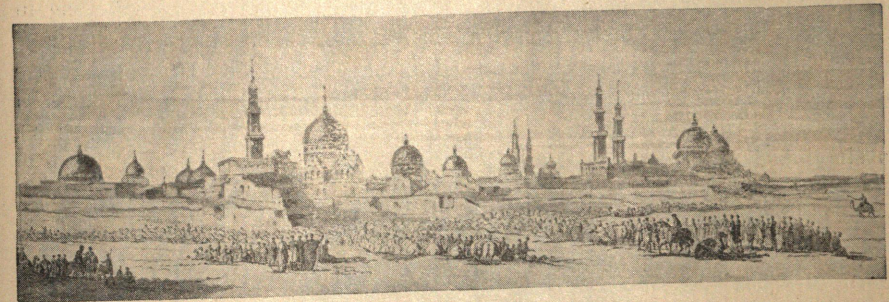
world for a witness prior to the end (Matt. xxiv. 14), and no earthly power can long oppose itself to the spread of the glad tidings. The hour is at hand for the Mohammedan to hear the truth concerning the Son of God and the sacrifice made for man's salvation. And when the Word of God is so opened to the Moslem that he shall hear the pure Gospel of the kingdom, and not the perversions of the papal apostasy, the inspired Word will come to him with peculiar force. He will see in the prophecies that the Word of God has foretold the rise of Mohammedanism and its fall, that its course has been overruled for the carrying out of the divine plan, and that when the king of the north shall set up his throne at Jerusalem, so long the dominion of the Turk, Michael is to stand up for the deliverance of those whose names are written in God's book of life.

Thus, in the arsenal of the Scriptures, that storehouse from which the Christian may draw adequate supplies for every good work (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17), God has provided beforehand a powerful weapon wherewith to smite the Moslem delusion in the fullness of time, and win therefrom all those who love the truth and choose light rather than darkness, that they too may come to know the seal of the living God for themselves and bear it in their foreheads. And it may be in God's good providence that from among the one-time followers of Mahomet will arise some of the apostles who shall fill every darkened corner of this earth with the glory of the Gospel of the kingdom, who shall "make straight in the desert a highway for our God." For the religious zeal that burns in the Moslem bosom, converted to the cause of Christ, may put to shame the lesser enthusiasm of some who have

been familiar all their lives with the story of redeeming love. One writer has remarked that religion, which is so often like a strange plant in the cold soil of Europe, is "like a blood passion in the people of Moses and Mohammed."

But above and beyond any individual zeal that the converted Moslem may add to the resources of the church, we may confidently expect that God, whose preparations for the triumph of the Gospel will be found complete in every

respect, will not fail to add to the testimony of the Christian missionary and the witness of the prophecies the supreme gift of the outpouring of His Holy Spirit. Upon the thirsting nations, so long cursed with spiritual drought and barrenness, will descend the refreshing and reviving showers of the latter rain. This blessed result is one of the final developments for which we may look out of the events now set in motion in the East.



Mohammedan Burial Place at Cairo.

Prepare War.

ANOTHER Old Testament prophet has left for our instruction a picture of the last days. Joel lived in a time of trouble and calamity. Through him a message of reproof and hope was borne to sinful and afflicted Israel, and before his message ends he is carried down in vision to the close of time and given a message for those who shall pass through the far worse perils of the last days. Prominent among these the prophet foresees world-wide preparations for armed strife which he describes in these words: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, gather yourselves together round about: thither cause Thy

mighty ones to come down, O Lord." Joel iii. 9-11.

If there is one cry now ringing in men's ears, year in and year out, it is this one of which Joel speaks: "Prepare war." Mr. Asquith said at the Mansion House on April 28, 1911:—



Earl Roberts, of Kandahar.

"The Western world has been doing lip service to the gospel of peace for the best part of two thousand years, and yet there has never been an era in human history in which the inventiveness and resources of mankind have been more lavishly employed on war and in the preparation of war."

Take our own country for instance. We have the most powerful navy in the world, and one that

has hitherto sufficed to protect our shores from hostile invasion. At tremendous cost this navy is always being made larger and stronger, yet at the same time the cry is continually raised for greater naval preparations. Battleships which were regarded with pride a few years ago are



Boy Scouts in Training.

now insignificant. The latest warships have a displacement of 27,000 tons and are driven by turbine engines developing 60,000 horse power. The speech made by Mr. Winston Churchill at the Mansion House in November, 1912, well illustrates the spirit that controls our naval preparations:—

"The year has witnessed important naval developments. The fleet has been reorganized upon a complete and symmetrical plan. An entirely new squadron of very powerful ships has been placed in full commission. We have recruited the largest number of sailors and stokers in any year of modern times. Nearly three times as many men have been recruited in each month upon the average of the present year, and such was the case in the year which preceded it. . . . We had not proposed last year to create the sixth battle squadron until 1915, but by various administrative arrangements which have been very carefully studied it will be possible to bring that squadron into existence next year [1913]. When I say bring it into existence, I mean bring it into existence fully manned, on mobilization with active service ratings."

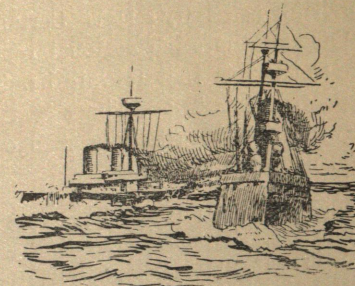
We have a large and costly army, supposed in years past to be amply suf-

ficient for our needs, but to-day there is a movement in existence which demands that its proportions be quadrupled. Indeed, nothing less will suffice than the enrolment in the national forces of every able-bodied man. Our children are being educated into these military ideals. The boys have been turned from their old sports to familiarize themselves with scouting and other forms of military training, and even the girls are doing the same thing. Lord Roberts has for several years been at the head of a powerful agitation to introduce into England the methods by which the huge conscript armies of the Continent are maintained. He has gone about the country with something of the earnestness and enthusiasm of a prophet, and his message in season and out of season has been; "Prepare war."

In one famous appeal, which was discussed in every newspaper in the country, the veteran general said:—

"My ultimate counsel to the nation and the message to my countrymen at this solemn hour is: 'Arm and prepare to quit yourselves like men, for the time of your ordeal is at hand.'

As a European Power, as a Continental Power, we do not exist—for war. Our army as a belligerent factor in European politics is almost a negligible quantity. The empire is at all times practically defenceless beyond its first line. Such an empire invites war. Its assumed security amid the armaments



of Europe, and now of Asia, is insolent and provocative.

"I have commanded your armies in peace and in war. I say to you, the young men of this city and of this nation, that your enfranchisement is not complete until you have become soldiers as well as citizens, prepared to attest your manhood on the battlefield as well as at the election booths."

still a long way to go before the value of military training is justly recognized, our present progress is a welcome sign that we are taking to new standards of national *moral*. The belief in universal and compulsory training has indeed grown so rapidly that politicians in our opinion overrate the opposition by which a definite measure of that nature would now be faced."

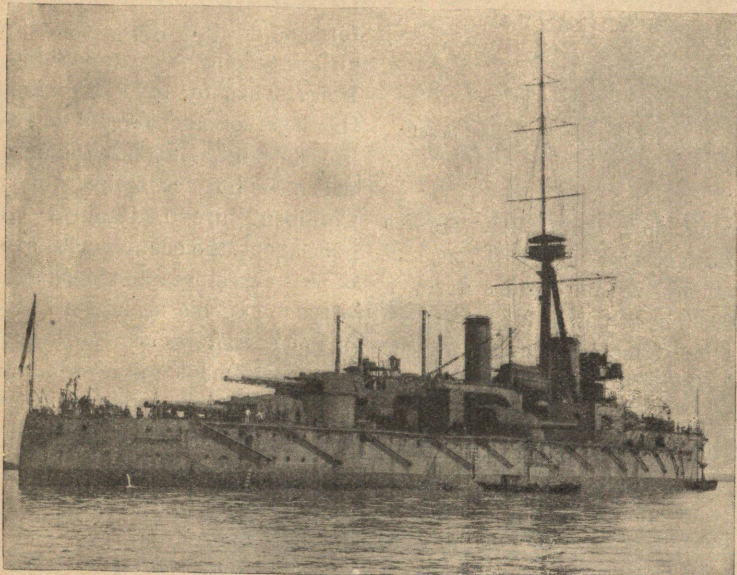


Photo: Stephen Cribb, Southsea.
H.M. Super-Dreadnought, "Colossus."

Such appeals have not been without effect. The public mind has, to a large extent, been educated into a state in which it regards conscription, or compulsory military service under some less objectionable name, as an unwelcome but possibly necessary resort. Certainly there is not the same national repugnance to the idea that prevailed only a few years ago. The "Times" lately bore willing witness to this change of sentiment in the words:—

"Unconsciously and slowly, but surely nevertheless, the democracy of these islands is reaching a new standpoint in matters of defence. Though we have

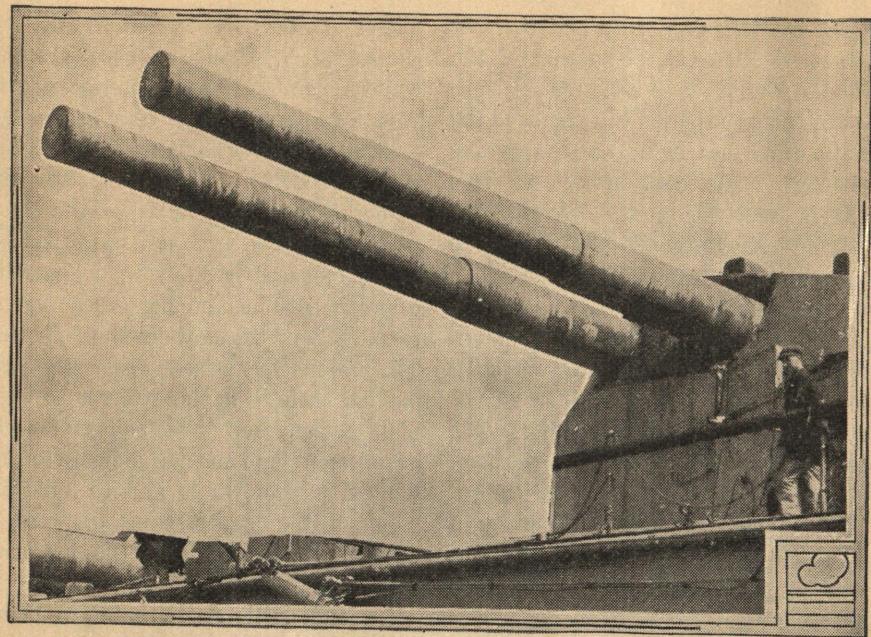
The whole problem of a satisfactory naval provision has undergone a striking change within recent years. Our position of supremacy seemed unassailable when, to make it more so, we built a naval monster, far more powerful than anything previously constructed, and proudly named it the "Dreadnought." Never was a name worse chosen, for the "Dreadnought" era has been one of continual panic and increasing apprehension. Germany has followed our example. She had the most powerful army in the world, but notwithstanding this fact, the alarmist cry, "prepare war," has made itself heard in that

country. "Between 1872 and the last census in 1910 the population of the German Empire rose fifty-five per cent, and in the same period the peace footing of the army rose by nearly seventy-five per cent. The cost of the nation's defences rose within the same period—army and navy—by 420 per cent." So to-day the two leading Powers of Europe, neighbours by location and first cousins by blood, live in a fever of unrest and mutual suspicion lest one shall steal a march upon the other in the preparation for a future conflict. The same frenzy has spread everywhere. Europe is divided into opposed camps, each anxiously weighing its strength and resources against that of the other. Germany plans by a stupendous effort to extricate herself from all possible danger on her frontiers by a capital expenditure of fifty millions, and the addition of a hundred thousand men to her army.

But she gains no increased security by the sacrifice. France at once decides to convert her two years of military service into three, and to lay out some £23,000,000, which steps make her almost equal to Germany in fighting strength, while Russia also takes alarm and promptly raises three new army corps, which menace Germany with an additional 150,000 men on her eastern frontier. Thus the war-game is played. The nations like reckless gamblers are staking their all in the attempt to outplay one another. The policy of each government is to raise armaments to the highest possible limit, and to build as many of the largest ships of war as can be squeezed out of the national revenues.

Not only do the fleets that move upon the waters form an occasion of strenuous rivalry. It is necessary nowadays to have vessels that can operate beneath

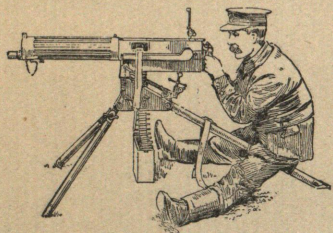




Two of the 13.5 Inch Guns of H.M.S. "Orion."

Photo: S. Cribb, Southsea.

the surface. In future the naval commander must think not merely of the foes that are visible; he must also be on his guard against those that are invisible, lurking in the depths for a chance to strike a deadly blow at his vessels where they are most vulnerable. Nor does even this exhaust the possible horrors of naval warfare. The admiral of a fleet must be also prepared for enemies that may appear in the clouds and thence rain down upon him a deadly shower of explosives. The latest warships carry armour along their sides



Maxim Gun.

to protect them from the broadsides of the foe, and below the waterline to guard against torpedoes and submarines; while now their decks must be armour-plated to shield the vessel by day and night against attacks from above.

Along with these developments there is a constant increase in the size and range of the guns carried. A few years ago the largest guns had a muzzle diameter of 11 inches, which was supposed to be the maximum. This, however, was increased to 12 inches, then to 13 and 13.5 inches. Now we have 14-inch guns, and already there is serious talk of 15- and 16-inch guns. By means of a new arrangement, which places the large guns along the central length of the vessel, it is possible to turn the whole gun fire to either side, thus doubling the destructive efficacy of the broadside which was previously divided equally between the port and starboard

quarters. In 1908 the broadside fire of a British "Dreadnought" hurled 6,800 lb. of shot and shell at the foe, while the German broadside of that period amounted to 6,080 lb. In 1911 the weight of the British broadside was 14,000 lb., while the German had gone up to 9,810 lb. Early in 1913 England had twenty-two such ships, with a total broadside of 191,100 lb., while Germany had thirteen, with a total broadside of 96,612 lb. Every such improvement and new invention, instead of putting an end to the rivalry, simply intensifies it. The nations are extravagantly draining their resources to equip themselves more and more perfectly for warfare, yet their relative fighting power remains the same. Unless some check is applied to the process, the great nations will in time sink their whole resources in the endeavour to surpass their neighbours in preparedness for war. And that this will be the actual outcome of the competition is indicated by the language of the prophet: "Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears." If these words are to be understood figuratively, they are finding their fulfilment at the present time, when the nations are investing so large a proportion of their wealth in the unproductive enterprises of militarism, Men who ought to be driving the plough and wielding the sickle are to-day found on the drill-grounds of Europe, and money that is sorely needed for the amelioration of social evils, for the construction and increase of public facilities, is being sunk in military and naval expenditure. The recent war in the Near East has, however, shown that there may possibly be before us a literal fulfilment of the language of the prophecy. Bulgaria and some of her allies have taken for their war with Turkey

every man of an age capable of bearing arms, and have left the operations of agriculture and industry to be performed by women and children.

Speaking of the numbers engaged in the recent struggle, the "Observer" remarked in October, 1912:—

"Bulgaria and Servia, with populations less than those of Lancashire and Yorkshire, have alone mobilized a host of over 600,000 men, as many as Napoleon numbered in the Grand Army assembled for his greatest effort at the height of his power. Little Greece and miniature Montenegro send forward between them numbers equal to Lord Haldane's expeditionary force."



And the "Westminster Gazette" is similarly impressed:—

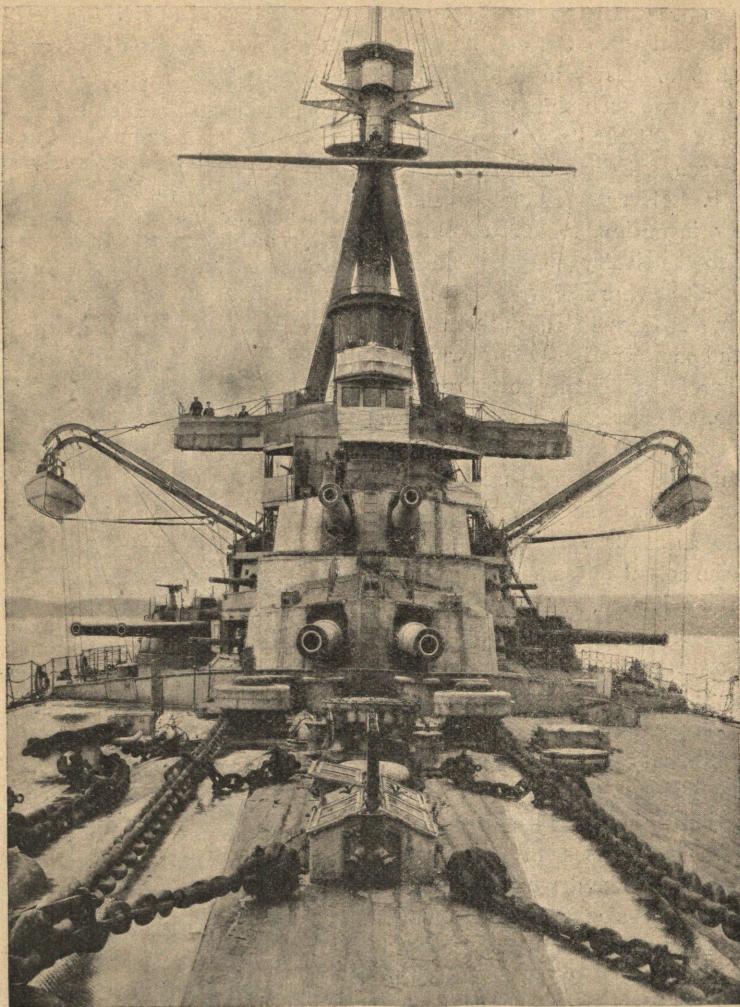
"The fact that these little states, with an aggregate population all told not exceeding ten millions, should be able to put into the field these enormous, highly-equipped armies does bring home to us, as nothing else could, the inordinate and horrible scale on which modern warfare is waged. If—comes the involuntary thought—Bulgaria and Servia can do this, what should we see if Austria and Russia or Germany and France were set in motion against each other?"

On the side of the Turks there was the same extravagant offering of precious lives. Mr. G. Ashmead Bartlett wrote to the "Telegraph" from Constantinople:—

"Throughout the whole of European Turkey and Anatolia the men have been called to the front. Every village, town, and hamlet has sent its tale of men. This war is an insatiable maw, which

greater than the amount of money consumed by the war.

"Stamboul resembles to-day some city which has been swept by a terrible pestilence. The shops and booths are



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"Minas Geraes," Brazilian Battleship.

gathers to its cruel feast whole provinces at a time. The normal life of the nation must now be carried on by the old men, beardless youths, whose tarn is likely to come very soon, and by women. The loss in wealth which this represents to a community is far

almost deserted, or else the remaining articles are being disposed of to the purchasers by boys in their teens, assisted by elderly women. The streets are no longer blocked by carts, carriages, pack-animals, countless pedestrians, and horsemen. Almost the en-

tire male population has been swept northwards by the tide of war, leaving their homes, their families, and their countless petty trades."

If this spirit shall pervade the military developments of the future, the time may easily come when the steel industries will not be able to keep pace with the demand, and we shall actually see the implements once used in the culture of the fields converted into weapons for the slaughter of fellow-creatures.

It is not only the mighty men, the great war lords of the world, who take part in this preparation. The call is to be heard by the weak, says the prophet, and they will respond: "I am strong." We have seen giant peoples like Japan and China wake up from the sleep of ages and get ready to play their part in the closing act of the drama, and we have also seen the weak nations buckling on their armour and entering the arena. In the war between Turkey and the Balkan allies, the latter were known popularly as the "Little Nations." Only a few years ago it would have seemed incredible that these should have achieved such success against the forces of Turkey. But, says one writer:—

"It is twenty-five years since Ferdinand accepted the throne of Bulgaria, and during that comparatively brief period this nation of peasants has become a strong people. They have raised an army which, in the completeness and efficiency of its organization, reminds us of the Japanese army, and they have produced a generalissimo with the strategical genius of a Moltke. And all so quietly and with so little bluster that a month ago the expert military writer in one of our chief papers spoke of Turkey marching through the Bulgarian forces like a steel knife cutting through cheese."—*W. Pierce, in Christian World.*

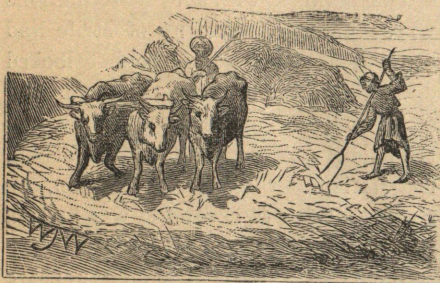
The prophet foresaw a mighty struggle in which all the nations, great and

small, strong and weak, would be keen to play their part. The United States of America which, by its fortunate position, might seem to be far removed from the strife and competition of the Old World, feels that it, too, must prepare war; so the Panama Canal has to be fortified and the navy enlarged. The great Dominions that compose the British Empire are adopting conscription, and subscribing their millions for the imperial fleet. Look where we will in the world to-day we see the nations preparing war by land and sea and sky. Those of them that have no possible quarrel to take up on their own account are being linked with the greater nations whose history is made up of strife and conquest. And as the prophet looked down the ages and heard the ringing of steel, and the thunder of artillery, and the shouting of the captains, and beheld the nations in angry commotion, he noted that the whirlwind of war had its vortex into which the peoples were being drawn. One central point appears in the strife and gives unity to the chaos: "Let the men of war draw near." "Let them come up." "Assemble yourselves and come, all ye heathen." "Gather yourselves together round about." What is this centre that the prophet sees, this place of assembly to which the armed hosts are gathering? "Let the heathen be awakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat."

The Gathering Place.

Where is this valley of Jehoshaphat? It lies on the east side of Jerusalem, between that city and the Mount of Olives. Too small in itself to accommodate the vast formations of modern strategy, it yet represents the focal point toward which the innumerable battalions converge. So once again in

the inspired Word we have the land of Palestine and the neighbourhood of Jerusalem pointed out as the ground where the last terrible tragedy of earthly history is worked out. Some great persistent purpose lies hidden here. The all-wise Disposer of events has so controlled the course of human affairs that they have always accomplished His own designs. And they will to the very last. The nations may seem in their own eyes to be striving after the achievement of their individual interests, combating the schemes of hated rivals, and securing their own long-cherished ambitions. Yet the prophecy penetrates



Ancient Threshing-Floor.

beneath the surface and enables us to see in the marshalling of the nations for the last great field, the controlling hand and overruling purpose of Jehovah. Joel tells us that in the valley of Jehoshaphat is the appointed place where the Lord will reckon with the nations for all the oppression and cruelty they have practised upon His people: "Behold, in those days and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land." Joel iii. 1, 2.

The Lord is slow to anger, and because His judgments linger long, transgressors will sometimes harden themselves and continue in an evil course. But, says the Lord: "To Me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time." Deut. xxxii. 35. The cries of the oppressed enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts. Jas. v. The Lord is a God of judgment. It is with a view to the execution of His righteous judgment on persecuting nations that God permits them to gather themselves to the fateful valley of Jehoshaphat. Human armies march in all their pomp and pride to that spot, but heavenly armies of avenging angels also make their way thither. The Lord causes His mighty ones with their flaming swords to come down at last and deal with a revolted world: "There will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." Verse 12.

This, then, is the true significance of the gathering of the nations. They are gathered there to accomplish their own dark designs, massed thick as the grain that waves in the harvest field, or as the grapes that are piled in the wine-press. Alas for the pride of mighty nations, for the dreams of earthly empire! The word goes forth from the great King whose authority the princes of the earth have set at naught: "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come get you down, for the press is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision [threshing, margin]: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." Verses 13, 14.

To-day we see the lavish expenditure on military and naval preparations; we hear the fervent appeals to patriotic enthusiasm; we see many of the nations forcing their young men into conscript

armies, and others of the nations gradually yielding to the influence of the warlike sentiment that is being assiduously and skilfully created; we may even see the danger to civilization lurking in this worship of Mars; but the prophet Joel shows us beyond all these things the true meaning of the drift of

slaughter or the oppression of their fellow-men. The deceived children of a blinded age may be enamoured of the ideals of military glory, but the children of light, when invited into the organizations formed for purposes of slaughter, will remember the judgment scene that is so soon to terminate the history of

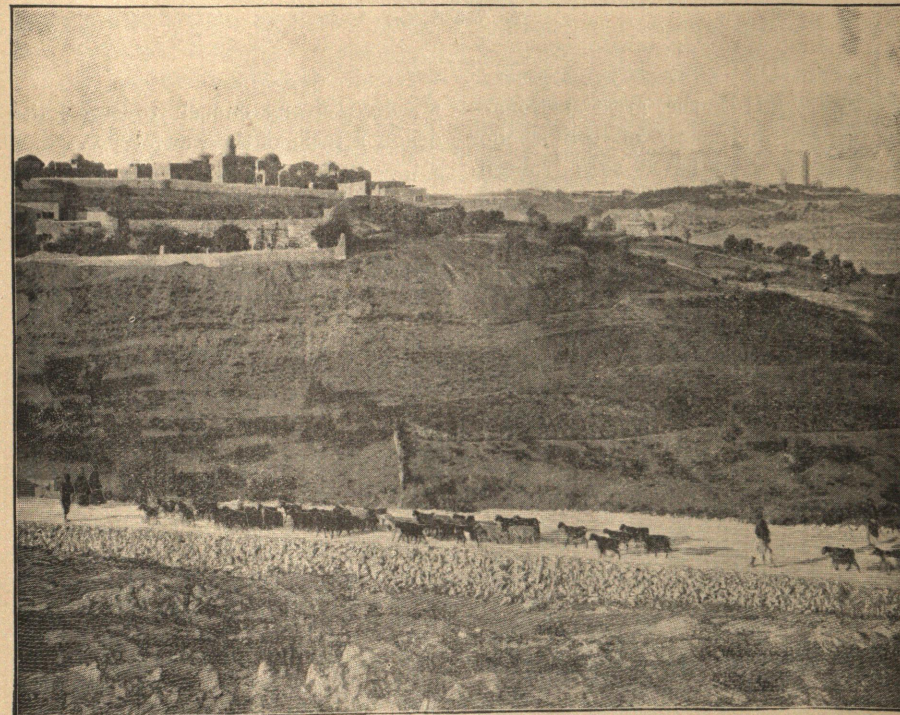


Photo: Bonfils.

Mount Zion and Mount of Olives with Valley of Jehoshaphat between, seen from the Bethlehem Road.

events. The frenzy of militarism which is possessing mankind is urging it, not merely on the downward way to national bankruptcy and suicidal strife, but along the fatal path to that valley of Jehoshaphat, where a holy Judge will at last demand from the nations an account of their stewardship. Woe to the rulers that can show nothing better than their military preparations to justify their authority, to the nations whose power has been built upon

misrule. They will take their stand as the subjects of the Prince of peace, citizens of the Jerusalem which is above, and will identify themselves with the principles of the government of heaven. To those who prefer reproach for Christ's sake before the approval of a sinful world, already walking in the shadows of the night of doom, the day of the Lord will mean the beginning of a better and an everlasting reign of righteousness.

Peace.

WHILE the great nations—and many of the smaller ones—have been concentrating their energies on the task of war preparation, they have managed to conceal from themselves the true character and inevitable end of such a policy by indulging in pleasing dreams of peace. Statesmen who have at heart the well-being of their people can see and deplore the militarist madness that has taken possession of the nations, but others will gravely argue that strenuous attention to the achievement of military supremacy is really the most effective way of working for peace. If you desire peace, they say, you must prepare for war. But surely this plea is in itself an admission that civilization has sadly failed to eliminate the ancient barbarism. It means that unless one nation is able to keep others in wholesome fear of its military prowess, it is liable at any moment to suffer wrong at their hands. How much better morally is civilization than savagery if it makes Might synonymous with Right?

In an interesting review of a volume of the "Cambridge Modern History," which dealt with the story of the last fifty years, the "Birmingham Post" expressed grave fears as to whether our modern civilization possessed a con-

stitution strong enough to resist the deadly attacks of the war fever.

"Apparently there is all-round progress in the arts of life, at least in Europe and America and those parts of the earth where men of European stock have taken root; there is more stability in governments, monarchical and republican; greater security for the individual citizen that the bread he earns may not be taken from him by force or fraud; but concurrently with these things, there is the paradoxical circumstance that it is only by the maintenance of millions of armed men—of armies and navies of a magnitude and destructive power such as the world has never before known—that governments stand and the private man goes his way in peace.

"Viewing the history of the world during the past fifty years through these pages, remembering the cataclysmic wars Europe has suffered, and the many more from which we have all but narrowly escaped, the dominant thought is that our civilization is jerry-built. If what has been will be again, well may men's hearts fail them for fear of the things that shall come upon the earth. The West is armed from head to foot; the races of the East are arming; in every portion of the globe the story is of military service and armaments for land and sea; humanity, as by a common instinct, is going full force onwards to universal war or insolvency."

The principles of the nations must be

vicious indeed if it be true that preparation for war is the best guarantee of peace. And even if this plea be—sad to say—a true one, it is obvious that the time must come when, for the poorer ones at least, the remedy will prove as bad as the disease. A nation cannot go on competing indefinitely with a wealthier neighbour. Under such conditions war and peace appear twin evils, and it is hard to say which is the less. Both threaten ruin. The recognition of this distressing fact was responsible for the summoning of the first Peace Conference at the Hague in 1899. In his original appeal for a united effort in the direction of peace, issued in August, 1898, Count Mouravieff, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote:—

"The maintenance of universal peace and a possible reduction of excessive armaments which weigh upon all nations

represent, in the present condition of affairs all over the world, the ideal towards which the efforts of all governments should be directed. This view fully corresponds with the humane and magnanimous intentions of His Majesty the Emperor, my august Master. Being convinced that this high aim agrees with the most essential interests and legitimate aspirations of all the Powers, the Imperial Government considers the present moment a very favourable one for seeking, through international discussion, the most effective means of assuring to all peoples the blessings of real lasting peace, and above all of limiting the progressive development of existing armaments. During the last twenty years aspirations towards general pacification have particularly asserted themselves in the consciences of civilized nations. The preservation of peace has been made the aim of international policy; for the sake of peace the Great Powers have formed powerful alliances, and for the purpose of establishing a better guar-



Palace where First Peace Congress met in 1899. The building with flight of steps in front.

antee of peace they have developed their military forces in an unprecedented degree, and continue to develop them without hesitating at any sacrifice. All these efforts, however, have not yet led to the beneficent results of the desired pacification. The ever increasing financial burdens strike at the root of public prosperity. The physical and intellectual forces of the people, labour and capital, are diverted for the greater part from their natural application and wasted unproductively. Hundreds of millions are spent in acquiring terrible engines of destruction which are regarded to-day as the latest inventions of science, but are destined to-morrow to be rendered obsolete by some new discovery. National culture, economic progress, and the production of wealth are either paralysed or diverted in a wrong direction. Therefore the more the armaments of each Power increase, the less they answer to the objects aimed at by the governments.

"Economic disturbances are caused in great measure by this system of excessive armaments, and the constant danger involved in these accumulations of war material renders the armed peace of to-day a crushing burden more and more difficult for the nations to bear. It consequently seems evident that if this situation be prolonged, it will inevitably lead to that very disaster which it is desired to avoid, and the horrors of which make every human mind shudder by anticipation. It is the supreme duty therefore at the present moment of all States to put some limit to their unceasing armaments, and to find means of averting the calamities which threaten the whole world. Deeply impressed by this feeling, His Majesty the Emperor has been pleased to command me to propose to all governments who have representatives at the Imperial Court, the meeting of a conference to discuss this grave problem."

This is indeed a remarkable utterance. Something like it might well have been spoken by the representatives of the Christian church and addressed

to the governments of earth as an appeal to consider their ways. But as such it would have probably failed to command adequate attention. It was spoken, however, by one of the most powerful rulers of the world and it called upon all the kings of the earth to stop in their mad career of ever-increasing preparation for war, and reflect to what bottomless pit of destruction they were hastening. The invitation was one that could not be ignored, and accordingly the governments came together to consider how a halt could be called in the rush for supremacy and how a return to saner conditions could perhaps be brought about.

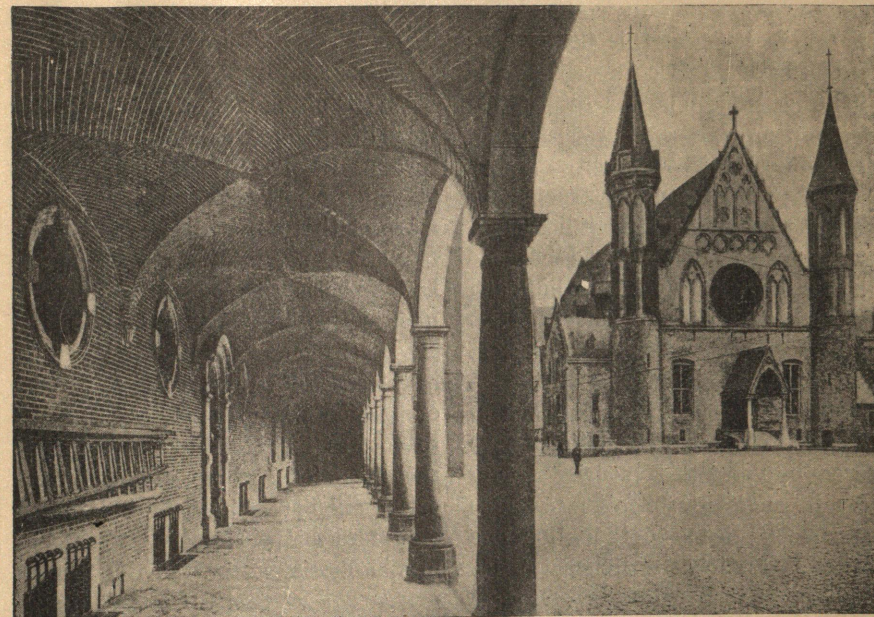
A Call to Repent.

It was a striking and dramatic moment in the history of mankind. A commanding figure had stood in the pathway along which the nations were marching and solemnly warned them whither it would lead. An opportunity for reflection and repentance was given. Would the governments profit by the opportunity, or would they, like hardened and impenitent sinners, reject the pleading voice and rush on to their doom? The answer is unmistakably written in the history of the years that have followed. To-day we read with a pathetic interest the first proposals of the Czar as we see how greatly the agencies of destruction have been multiplied since his appeal was issued, and by how many millions the war budgets of the world have been increased. How strangely the statement of the objects of the first Peace Conference reads in the light of subsequent history! Here are some of the original proposals:—

1. An understanding not to increase for a fixed period the present effective of the armed military and naval forces,

and at the same time not to increase the budgets appertaining thereto; and a preliminary examination of the means by which a reduction might even be

months Great Britain was at war in South Africa, and an era of rapid increase in armaments among the European Powers began. When Mr. Gos-



Hall in which Second Peace Conference was held in 1906. Building on left is part of Upper House of Legislation.

effected in future in the forces and budgets above mentioned.

2. To prohibit the use in the armies and fleets of any new kind of firearms whatever, and of new explosives, or any powders more powerful than those now in use either for rifles or cannon.

3. To restrict the use in military warfare of the formidable explosives already existing, and to prohibit the throwing of projectiles or explosives of any kind from balloons or by any similar means.

4. To prohibit the use in naval warfare of submarine torpedo boats, or plungers, or other similar engines of destruction; to give an undertaking not to construct vessels with rams in the future.

The proceedings of the first Peace Conference at The Hague terminated on July 29, 1899. In less than three

chen submitted his naval budget in the House of Commons in 1900, he said:—

"In the next six months succeeding the Conference more gigantic programmes, stretching forward for eight, sixteen, or twenty years, were conceived and elaborated by the governments represented in the Conference than had ever been put forward by these Powers before."

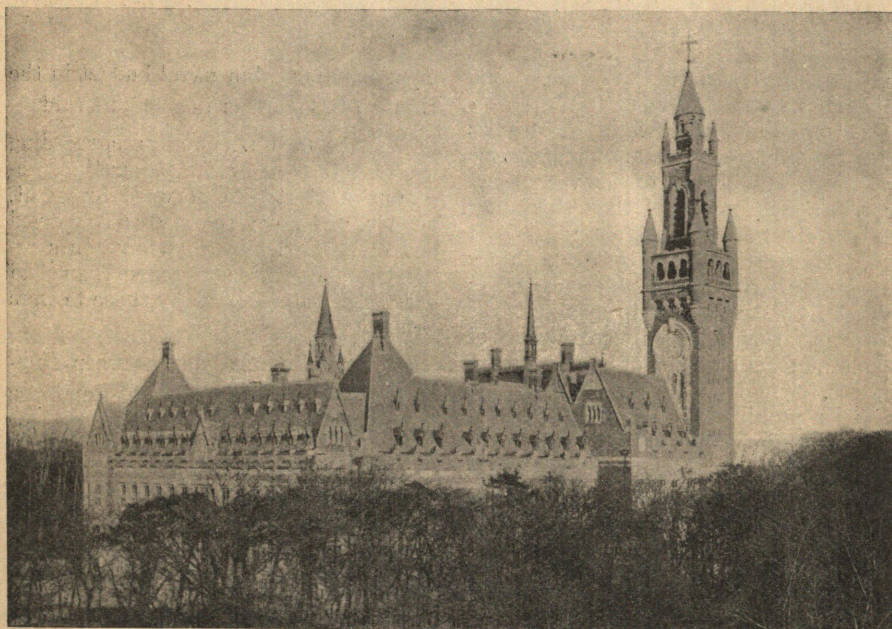
Shortly after the war between England and the South African Republics was closed Russia herself was plunged into a disastrous conflict with Japan in the Far East.

In 1907 the second Peace Conference was held at the Hague. It was really due to the initiative of President Roosevelt of the United States, but the Czar of Russia desired to have the honour of

convening the Congress, and it was accorded him. The Conference concerned itself mainly with the methods of carrying on warfare. Baroness Von Suttner who was present wrote: "War has made its home at this Conference; nine-tenths of its labours was devoted to the consideration of war, rather than how to insure peace." A Temple of Peace, toward which Mr. Carnegie gave \$1,500,000, has been constructed at the Hague as the permanent headquarters of the Peace Congress and the home of an international Court to which disputes among the nations can be referred. The next Peace Conference will meet there, it is expected, in 1915.

In addition to this Court of Arbitration, most of the great nations have entered into treaties pledging themselves to refer to arbitration disputes arising among them; in June, 1911, one hundred and thirty-three such treaties had been negotiated since the first

Hague Conference, but notwithstanding all the steps taken in this direction, there is no apparent lessening of the tension which marks the relations of the different groups of European Powers. The expenditure in armaments increases more rapidly than ever, and when one of the Powers desires to take some hostile action for her own advantage, as when Italy decided to snatch Tripoli from Turkey, no mention is made of the provision for referring international disputes to the Hague Tribunal. Thus while nearly six hundred unofficial societies, and others like the Interparliamentary Union, are working in the cause of peace, and the conscience of a nation, when appealed to, is obliged to confess the wickedness of war and the obligation resting upon a civilized or Christian people to take all possible steps for avoiding the crime, the feeling is still dominant that, although peace may be a beautiful ideal, preparation for



Palace of Peace.

war is a practical necessity. The governments are content to talk about peace, but their conduct speaks louder than their professions; they discourse of peace but plan for war.

As one result of the peace propaganda, however, the nations have to a considerable extent managed to delude themselves into the belief that there is, notwithstanding the advances of militarism, an era of brotherhood and amity before them. Some day counsels of peace are to prevail, and the peoples by common consent will cease from war; meanwhile it is well not to be precipitate in beginning a disarmament.

A Prophecy Fulfilling.

The Scriptures have clearly foretold this strange combination. They put before us the fact that there will be vast and world-wide preparations for war in the last days, but they do not omit to tell us that these same days will be marked by utterances of peace. The Apostle Paul referred to this characteristic of the closing times in his first epistle to the Thessalonians:—

"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall in no wise escape." Chap. v. 2, 3, R.V.

The Old Testament prophets, Micah and Isaiah, have dealt with this "peace and safety" talk very specifically. The former writes:—

"But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to

the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the peoples, and shall reprove strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Micah iv. 1-5, R.V.

This passage is quoted by many as a proof that peace will be one day established in the earth, but a careful reading will show that verses 2-5 contain, not the word of the Lord, but the predictions of "many people." Indeed, the whole of chapters iii. and iv. must be studied in order to get a right appreciation of the portion we have quoted.

Chapter iii. begins with a charge brought against the heads of Jacob and the rulers of the house of Israel. These ought to be men of judgment, yet they hate the good and love the evil (verse 2); they make a spoil of the people of the Lord. Verse 3. False prophets cause Israel to err. With their lips they speak of peace, but they bite with their teeth (verse 5) and "prepare war," the very expression made use of by Joel in his prophecy. Such are only hypocrites. God will put these false seers and diviners to shame. Verses 6, 7. He, however, has faithful messengers through whom He can speak, and these will deal honestly with His people, declaring unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin (verse 8), while those who cover up sin, who cry "peace" and "prepare

war," who build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity (verses 9, 10), even while they lean upon the Lord and say, "Is not the Lord in the midst of us? and no evil shall come upon us" (verse 11), are the very ones who bring God's judgment upon the people that listen to their falsehoods: "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." Verse 12.

A Hollow Peace.

This state of things which existed in Micah's day and was exposed through God's faithful prophet, forms a fitting foreground and introduction to the prophecy of the last days which immediately follows, and which we have already quoted. Again there will be a prophesying of peace, and again some will seek to build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. Thus the mountain of the Lord's house will apparently be exalted to the head of the other mountains (or governments), and nations will flow unto it. Chap. iv. 1. But while the peoples seem to join themselves to the Lord, they do so in form only. They invite one another to acknowledge the Lord, and predict that the word of the Lord shall go forth from Jerusalem, but there is no real turning away from idols to the service of the true God. All the nations, while professing to have joined themselves to Jehovah, still follow their own sinful course: "For all the peoples will walk in the name of his god." Verse 5. The prophecy does not say that the nations will actually beat their swords into ploughshares; it merely says that they will talk about doing this at some time in the future. The prophet is predicting just such a peace movement as we see

among the nations to-day. Notice, too, how the modern arbitration idea is foreshadowed: "He [the Lord] shall judge between great peoples, and shall decide concerning strong nations afar off." Verse 3, R.V., margin. It is not intended that the nations shall actually submit themselves to the Lord in all their ways; if they did there would be no disputes to arbitrate; the scheme is that He shall as an umpire compose the quarrels between the nations and decide the causes they submit to His arbitration. As the outcome of this plan the false prophets of the nations see a time coming when there shall be no more war. Notice they do not say that that time has already come, which they would be able to do if this prophecy bore reference to the eternal kingdom of righteousness which the Lord will one day set up; no, they are merely foreseeing the happy results of the course they propose to pursue in joining themselves, notwithstanding their unregenerate state, to the professing people of the Lord.

That the whole of Micah iv. 2-5 consists of the predictions of many nations and not of the Lord's own statements is demonstrated by the assertion that the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares. This the nations will never do. When Christ comes at His second advent He rides forth in battle against the kings of the earth and their armies. Rev. xix.

In other words, this prophecy simply sets before us a great religious world-movement in the last days, resulting in the development of the world-church, in which false prophets and an unfaithful church will delude the peoples into the idea that there is a time of peace and safety before them, to be effected through a scheme of federation in which the Lord, through His supposed earthly

representative or representatives, shall be acknowledged as supreme Arbitrator.

The head of the Church of Rome regards himself as peculiarly fitted to preside over such a court of international arbitration. On Easter Sunday, April 5, 1896, Cardinals Gibbons, Logue, and Vaughan issued an Appeal for Peace which began thus:—

"We, the undersigned cardinals, representatives of the Prince of peace and of the Catholic Church in our respective countries, invite all who hear our voice to co-operate in the formation of a public opinion which shall demand the establishment of a permanent Tribunal of Arbitration as a rational substitute among the English-speaking races for a resort to the bloody arbitrament of war.

"We are well aware that such a prospect is beset with practical difficulties. We believe that they will not prove to be insuperable, if the desire to overcome them be genuine and general. Such a court existed for centuries, when the nations of Christendom were united in one faith. And have we not seen nations appeal to that same court for its judgment in our own day?"

The True Situation.

Having sketched the great delusive movement of the last days, corresponding in its true character to the apostasy and falsehood that marked the events of the prophet's own time, as described in chap. iii., Micah goes on by inspiration to give the state of affairs from the Lord's point of view, which is an altogether different one.

"In that day," says the Lord, He will gather His own people who have been driven away and afflicted, and will make them a strong nation, and over this remnant (not over the many nations) He will rule in Mount Zion personally. Verses 6, 7. The true dominion, of which Christ is King, will come to the daughter of Jerusalem. Verse 8. It is

preceded by a time of persecution and distress for the faithful remnant whom God recognizes as His own. They are cast out of the cities and dwell in lonely places; their enemies will make them captive, and they shall go "even unto Babylon"; "there shalt thou be rescued; there shall the Lord redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." Verses 9, 10.

And what about those many nations that are promising themselves a "golden age"? "Many nations are assembled against thee, that say, Let her be defiled and let our eyes see its desire upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for He hath gathered them as sheaves to the threshing-floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make thine horns iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples: and thou shalt devote their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." Verses 11-13.

Here is an entire reversal of the plan of the "many nations." They promise themselves that they will enjoy the divine favour even though they walk every one in the name of his god, and look forward to the adjustment of all quarrels among themselves by a great umpire whom they have set up at Jerusalem. But even while they are saying, as in the expression used by Paul, "Peace and safety," the sudden destruction comes.

There is a striking correspondence between the picture drawn by Micah, so far as the nations who figure in it are concerned, and that which we have already contemplated in the prophecy of Joel. The latter speaks of all the nations as guilty of oppression against God's children, and as gathered together

apparently by their own consummate policies, but really by the over-ruling providence of Jehovah, for the great harvest in the valley of Jehoshaphat, there to receive the righteous judgment of the Lord Whom they have wronged in the persons of His saints. Micah has in view the same harvest: "He hath gathered them as the sheaves to the threshing-floor."

A Prophecy Duplicated.

This prophecy of Micah's is also given by Isaiah. Chap. ii. 1-5. The language is so nearly the same in both passages that it almost seems one prophet must have copied from the other. If this be the explanation of the similarity, it does not lessen the value of either passage. One prophet may certainly quote the writings of another, and there is in such a case a double seal set to the inspiration of the prediction so repeated. If we examine the second chapter of Isaiah we see there also the same inconsistency between what the people talk about and what they actually do. If there were a genuine movement on the part of the nations to join themselves to the house of Jacob, and walk together in the path of truth marked out by the Lord, Heaven would certainly approve the step. But what do we find? Immediately after the prophet has finished telling what the people say, he proceeds to condemn the federation between the professing people of the Lord and the nations: "Therefore Thou hast forsaken Thy people the house of Jacob because they be filled with customs from the East, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of strangers." Is. ii. 6. Evidently as the result of the federation, instead of the nations learning the ways of the God of

Jacob, the people of Jacob learn the sinful ways of the nations. The talk of disarmament is but empty speech. Even while the nations are telling how one day they will cease to lift up sword against one another, "their land is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots" (verse 7), and instead of worshipping the true God they are all guilty of worshipping the work of their own hands; "their land also is full of idols." Verse 8. The remainder of the chapter gives a vivid description of the terrors of the day of the Lord which will consume all iniquity, and forms a striking commentary on the language of the Apostle Paul, that even while the peoples are saying, "Peace and safety," the sudden destruction overtakes them. "Enter into the rock and hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Verses 10, 11.

Church Federation.

Already we see a vast movement toward federation among the churches, which is designed by its leaders to bring about the very state of affairs foreseen by Micah and Isaiah, a grand union between the combined churches and the world, so that a world-church can be organized. In December, 1912, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America had its quadrennial session, representing thirty-two denominations, and in an address to the Council, Dr. J. A. Macdonald, editor of the "Toronto Globe," thus voiced its aspirations and ideals:—

"The churches have it in their power to strike a new note in the politics of the world and to influence for all time

the changing world situation. We hear about changing China and the changing East. We hear about changing America and the changing West. What is happening is a changing world. Not New York alone, or Chicago, or San Francisco, or Winnipeg, or Vancouver is the melting-pot. In no one place and on no one continent is the clash of ideals and the conflict of civilizations. The line of battle is far flung. Everywhere it is hand to hand, foot to foot, blade to blade.

"The whole world is becoming one vast melting-pot, and into it the nations are going, crowding together into one crucible of international conflict as by the irresistible compulsion of some eternal destiny. This generation shall not pass until the things be fulfilled which had their impulses far back in the ages. And in this time of world-crisis it is given to the Christian churches, and especially to the churches of America, to say whether out of this Armageddon of the nations shall come confusion and wreckage and the great apostasy, or whether nations shall be born in a day and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Christ of love and peace."

The Great Centre.

It is worthy of note that these last day prophecies also centre in Jerusalem. The strong nations fix their hopes, and build their pleasing forecasts of the peaceful age to come, upon developments that are to take place at Jerusalem. It is evident that just before the day of the Lord breaks upon a dreaming world, Jerusalem has become the great centre towards which the eyes of all are turned. There is the central throne which unites the great federation of the nations; thence proceeds the leadership which is to guide all the peoples of the earth into the future of "peace and safety"; there all conflicting interests are to be reconciled; there will sit the great arbiter of mankind. And since

in the throne thus set up at Jerusalem the nations will suppose themselves to be giving honour to the God of Jacob, there will necessarily be a strongly religious character to the kingdom thus set up at Jerusalem. And seeing that the whole movement is a delusion, we can come to no other conclusion than that the throne of antichrist will be set up at Jerusalem, and that, under the idea that they are paying divine honours to the true Christ and assisting to set up His kingdom in the form of a world-church, the nations of the earth will acknowledge and enthrone a super-human impostor. Some such development as this we are warranted in expecting. The Saviour has given a warning intended to apply at the very time when His coming in glory would be at the doors: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the wilderness; go not forth: behold, He is in the inner chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man." Matt. xxiv. 23-27.

And Paul has also given warning against an overmastering imposture to be looked for in close proximity to the genuine advent of the true Christ, a time when mankind will have to meet "the working of Satan with all powers and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.

In this language of the apostle is revealed the only effective protection against the many and subtle forms of delusion that are to make the last days perilous in the extreme. Men and women must, if they are to be saved from those snares, receive the unadulterated love of the truth. False gospels are being preached on every hand. Human philosophy is talking of progress even while lamentations over deterioration and decadence are sounding in our ears like a dirge. The nations are fondly talking of peace even while they make increasing preparation for

war. The churches are confessing that they have to a large extent lost the power of godliness even while they are offering themselves as leaders into a new order of things. Happily the foundation of God still stands sure. The Gospel remains the power of God unto salvation to every one that sincerely believes, and the inspired word not merely shows us beforehand the various dangers that fill these last days, but makes us strong to resist and overcome them. As we learn to love its message we shall be fitted to endure the crisis before us.



JERUSALEM.

Armageddon.

MORE than once we have referred to the sixteenth chapter of Revelation, and we now return to that lurid picture of plague and pestilence in which the last dread scenes of earth's sinful career stand revealed. In our last chapter we noted some reasons for believing that a time of great religious enthusiasm will mark the federation of the nations into an unhallowed combination, of which the headquarters will be situated at Jerusalem, and that, under the influence of strong delusions, supported by signs and lying wonders, the nations will indulge themselves in the vain idea that they are thus setting up a lasting kingdom of peace. True to its past history this movement will confine itself to talking about peace. Arms and war preparations will be as much in evidence as ever. The real character of the forces that have then taken possession of the nations is indicated in the description of the sixth plague. "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs; for they are the spirits of devils, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. . . . And they gathered them together into the

place which is called in Hebrew Har-Mageddon." Verses 13-16.

Here again is brought to view that same gathering of which the Old Testament prophets so often speak. It is under the leadership of demons that the kings of the earth take this final step, but God's purpose advances through it all. He only permits men and fallen angels to go so far as their movements serve His own sovereign will. The kings of the earth little realize as they, prompted by Satanic agencies, lead their armies to the appointed place that the hour has come at last when the field of Armageddon—name of dread—is to witness the awful battle of the great day of God Almighty.

The public men and journals of the day have more than once caught a glimpse of the true nature of the forces leading mankind on its downward road. The Satanic influence seems to manifest itself so plainly at times that the worst appears possible. In a speech delivered on the 29th November, 1912, the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill said:—

"No one can measure the consequences of a general war. The original cause would soon be lost in the greater and more terrible issues which would be raised. No one can say that there is any Great Power which would not be involved in such a cataclysm. No one can say there is any institution in

Europe which would certainly be left standing at its close. All might be cast into the abyss, and in the destruction of a few weeks or months injury may be wrought to the fabric of our economic and social life which would plunge it back almost into the desolation and barbarism of the middle ages. And the only epitaph to write upon such a catastrophe would be that this whole generation of men went mad and tore themselves to pieces."

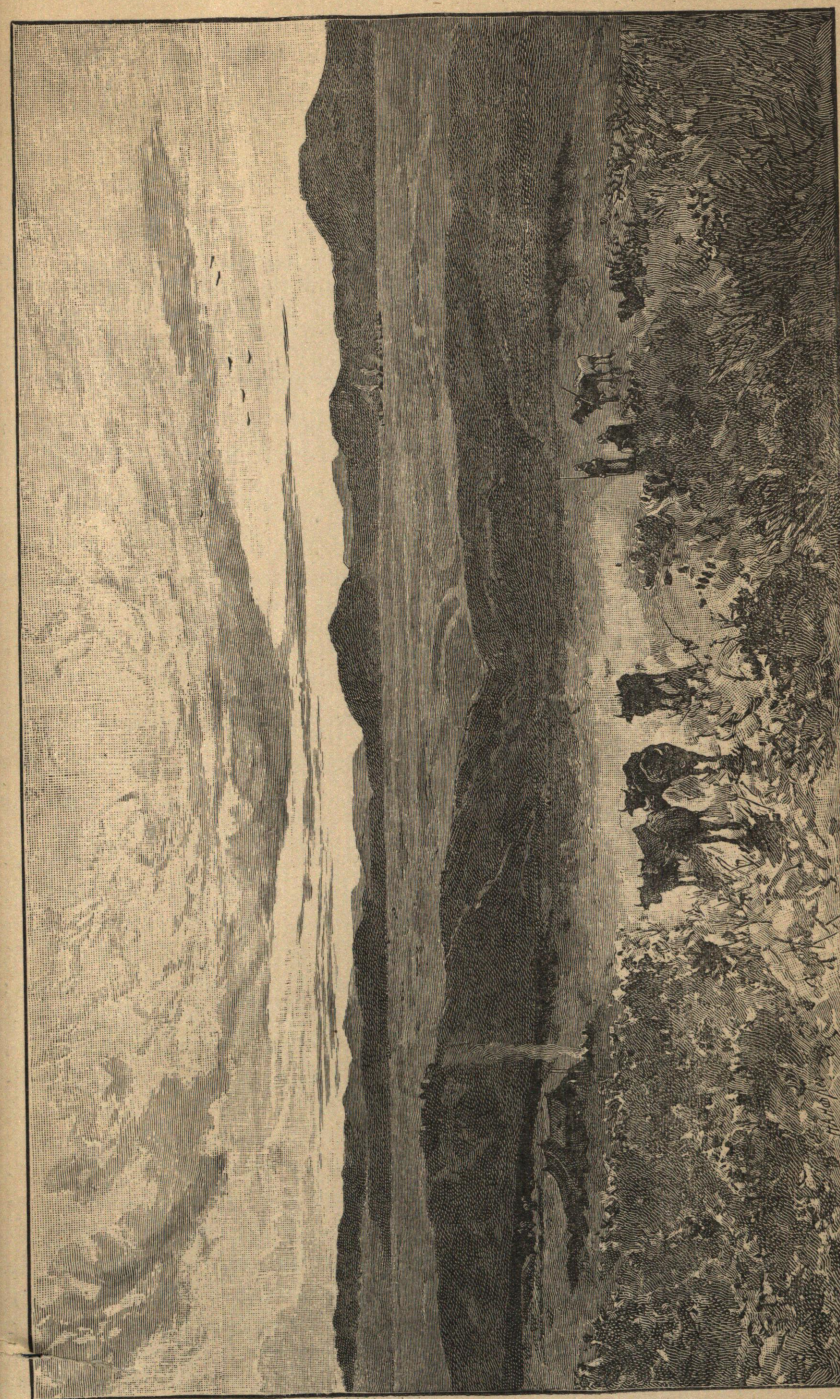
In September, 1911, at a time when relations between France and Germany and England were perilously strained, the "Star" wrote:—

"For weeks the three nations have been the prey of rumour and legend. The newspapers of Berlin, Paris, and London have filled the skies with clouds of contradictions. In the end nobody knows the truth, for the truth has been absolutely obscured by the assertions and counter-assertions which have bewildered the mind of the ordinary man for many days. Enough has been allowed to leak out to alarm and distress and torture us. The atmosphere necessary for war has been created. *If an army of fiends had been at work* they could not have done more to make the three nations gradually accustom their minds to conceive the inconceivable. A few weeks ago war was an unimaginable horror from which every sane German and Frenchman and Englishman shrank with indignant incredulity. To-day the most serene temperament finds itself being artfully cajoled into the contemplation of the hideous enormity. *Well indeed have the war devils done their work.*"

Where is Armageddon? It is the great plain of Esdraelon or Megiddo, extending from Mount Carmel on the west to Mount Gilboa, close by the river Jordan, on the east. The river Kishon flows throughout its length towards the west. The plain of Esdraelon is famous in history for the many battles that have been fought there.

It was there that Deborah and Barak overthrew the hosts of Sisera. Gideon gained there his famous victory over the Midianites. In that neighbourhood Saul fought his last battle with the Philistine foe. There Josiah was slain by the army of Pharaoh and was lamented by a sorrowing nation at Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo.

"From Jezreel you see the slaughter-place of the priests of Baal; you see Jehu's ride through Bethshan to the vineyard of Naboth at your feet; you see the enormous camp of Holofernes spreading from the hills above Jenin, out to Kuamon in the plain; you see the marches and counter-marches of Syrians, Egyptians, Jews in the Hasmonean days—the elephants and engines of Antiochus, the litters of Cleopatra and her ladies. The Romans come and plant their camps and stamp their mighty names for ever on the soil, Legio and Kastræ; Pompey, Mark Antony, Vespasian, and Titus pass at the head of their legions, and the men of Galilee sally forth upon them from the same nooks in the hills of Naphtali from which their forefathers broke upon the chariots of Canaan. After the Roman war comes the Roman peace. For a great interval of centuries Esdraelon is no more polluted by the black tents of the Bedouin; but a broad civilization grows between here and Arabia, and Jordan is bridged, and from the Greek cities of the Decapolis chariots and bands of soldiers, officials, and provincial wits on their way to Rome pass to the ports of Cæsarea and Ptolemais. In the fourth century Christian pilgrims arrive and cloisters are built from Bethshan to Carmel. Three centuries of this and then through their old channel the desert swarms sweep back, now united by a common faith, and with the vigour of a new civilization; you see before them the rout of the Greek army up the valley of Jezreel. The Arabs stay for nearly 500 years, obliterating the past, distorting the famous and familiar names. Then the ensigns of Christendom return. Crusading castles



THE GREAT PLAIN OF MEGIDDO.

arise. . . Cloisters are rebuilt and thriving villages, for justice and shelter given them, bring their tribute to the Abbey of Mount Tabor. Pilgrims throng from all lands and the holy memories are replanted—not always on their proper sites. Once more by Bethshan the Arabs break the line of the Christian advance and Saladin spreads his camp where Israel saw those of Midian and the Philistines; through a long hot summer the castles of the cross yield one by one until Belvoir holds out alone, flying the red cross for eighteen months over a Saracen country. Eventually, after two last forlorn hopes—one of Andrew of Hungary, who carried the cross to the top of Tabor, and one of St. Louis of France, who marched to Jordan and back—Esdraelon is closed to the arms of the west till in 1799 Napoleon with his monstrous ambition of an empire on the Euphrates breaks into it by Megiddo, and in three months again from the same fatal stage falls back upon the first great retreat of his career.”—*Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, G. A. Smith, D.D., pages 406-409.

Here the last and greatest battle of all is fought. Thither where the kings of the earth are gathered with their armies the Lord causes His mighty ones also to come down. “And I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He hath a name written, which no man knoweth but He Himself. And He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”

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“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet who wrought signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image: they twain were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: and the rest were killed with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, even with the sword that proceedeth out of His mouth, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

Thus ends the pride and glory of earthly empire. In our brief sketch we have seen evidence enough that the prophetic word is inspired by an all-wise God, and we may rely upon it that as the things foretold of the papacy and the Mohammedan power have been completely fulfilled, so also will these inspired descriptions of the closing scenes. As we look round us to-day and see the Turkish power being gradually stripped of its possessions; and forced back to its ancient quarters; as we see the intensity with which the nations are arming themselves and preparing war; as we note the apparent inconsistency with which at the same time they have so much to say about the blessings of peace and arbitration; and as we witness in the churches a decided movement towards federation among themselves and a great disposition to unite with the forces of the world for the achievement of a common end; and as we see too how international developments are drawing the thoughts and the ambitions of the Great Powers toward the countries in the immediate vicinity of Palestine, we may know from these signs of the times that we have actually entered upon the events that are to usher in the great day of the Lord.

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