

On this hill are many traces of ancient monuments, possibly those of the kings of Cappadocia themselves. But neither the houses nor streets of Amasia have any beauty to attract one's notice. The houses are built of white clay, almost in the same fashion as those in Spain ; even the roofs are made of this material, being flat without any gable. They use a fragment of some ancient pillar for a roller, and when any part of the roof is damaged by rain or wind, they pull this roller backwards and forwards until the roof is once more solid and smooth. In summer time the inhabitants sleep on these roofs in the open air. In these districts rain does not fall either often or heavily ; but when it does come down, the clothes of the people walking in the streets are terribly soiled by the mud which drips everywhere from the roofs. On a house top near our lodgings I saw a young Sanjak-bey eating his supper on a couch after the fashion of the ancients.

On our arrival at Amasia we were taken to call on Achmet Pasha (the chief Vizier) and the other pashas—for the Sultan himself was not then in the town—and commenced our negotiations with them touching the business entrusted to us by King Ferdinand. The Pashas, on their part, apparently wishing to avoid any semblance of being prejudiced with regard to these questions, did not offer any strong opposition to the views we expressed, and told us that the whole matter depended on the Sultan's pleasure. On his arrival we were admitted to an audience ; but the manner and spirit in which he listened to our address, our arguments, and our message, was by no means favourable.

The Sultan was seated on a very low ottoman, not more than a foot from the ground, which was covered with a quantity of costly rugs and cushions of exquisite workmanship ; near him lay his bow and arrows. His

air, as I said, was by no means gracious, and his face wore a stern, though dignified, expression.

On entering we were separately conducted into the royal presence by the chamberlains, who grasped our arms. This has been the Turkish fashion of admitting people to the Sovereign ever since a Croat,¹ in order to avenge the death of his master, Marcus, Despot of Servia, asked Amurath for an audience, and took advantage of it to slay him. After having gone through a pretence of kissing his hand, we were conducted backwards to the wall opposite his seat, care being taken that we should never turn our backs on him. The Sultan then listened to what I had to say; but the language I held was not at all to his taste, for the demands of his Majesty breathed a spirit of independence and dignity, which was by no means acceptable to one who deemed that his wish was law; and so he made no answer beyond saying in a tetchy way, 'Giesel, giesel,' i.e. well, well. After this we were dismissed to our quarters.

The Sultan's hall was crowded with people, among whom were several officers of high rank. Besides these there were all the troopers of the Imperial guard,²

¹ There are different versions of this story, see Von Hammer, book v. and Gibbon, chap. lxiv. Creasy says that Amurath was killed by a Servian noble, Milosch Kabilovitsch. Being mortally wounded, Amurath died in the act of sentencing Lazarus, Despot or Cral of Servia, to death.

² The permanent corps of paid cavalry in the Turkish army was divided into four squadrons, organised like those which the Caliph Omar instituted for the guard of the Sacred Standard. The whole corps at first consisted of only 2,400 horsemen, but under Solyman the Great (Busbecq's Sultan), the number was raised to 4,000. They marched on the right and left of the Sultan, they camped round his tent at night, and were his bodyguard in battle. One of these regiments of Royal Horseguards was called the Turkish Spahis, a term applied to cavalry soldiers generally, but also specially denoting these select horseguards. Another regiment was called the Silihdars, meaning 'the vassal cavalry.' A third was called the Ouloufedgis, meaning 'the paid horsemen,' and the fourth

Spahis, Ghourebas, Ouloufedgis, and a large force of Janissaries ; but there was not in all that great assembly a single man who owed his position to aught save his valour and his merit. No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks ; the deference to be paid to a man is measured by the position he holds in the public service. There is no fighting for precedence ; a man's place is marked^{*} out by the duties he discharges. In making his appointments the Sultan pays no regard to any pretensions on the score of wealth or rank, nor does he take into consideration recommendations or popularity ; he considers each case on its own merits, and examines carefully into the character, ability, and disposition of the man whose promotion is in question. It is by merit that men rise in the service, a system which ensures that posts should only be assigned to the competent. Each man in Turkey carries in his own hand his ancestry and his position in life, which he may make or mar as he will. Those who receive the highest offices from the Sultan are for the most part the sons of shepherds or herdsmen, and so far from being ashamed of their parentage, they actually glory in it, and consider it a matter of boasting that they owe nothing to the accident of birth ; for they do not believe that high qualities are either natural or hereditary, nor do they think that they can be handed down from father to son, but that they are partly the gift of God, and partly the result of good training, great industry, and unwearied zeal ; arguing that high qualities do not descend from a father to his son or heir, any more than a talent for music, mathematics, or the like ; and that the mind does not derive its origin from the father, so that the

^{*}was called the Ghourebas, meaning 'the foreign horse.' See Creasy, *History of the Ottoman Turks*, chap. ii.

son should necessarily be like the father in character, but emanates from heaven, and is thence infused into the human body. Among the Turks, therefore, honours, high posts, and judgeships are the rewards of great ability and good service. If a man be dishonest, or lazy, or careless, he remains at the bottom of the ladder, an object of contempt ; for such qualities there are no honours in Turkey !

This is the reason that they are successful in their undertakings, that they lord it over others, and are daily extending the bounds of their empire. These are not our ideas, with us there is no opening left for merit ; birth is the standard for everything ; the prestige of birth is the sole key to advancement in the public service. But on this head I shall perhaps have more to say to you in another place, and you must consider what I have said as strictly private.

For the nonce, take your stand by my side, and look at the sea of turbaned heads, each wrapped in twisted folds of the whitest silk ; look at those marvellously handsome dresses of every kind and every colour ; time would fail me to tell how all around is glittering with gold, with silver, with purple, with silk, and with velvet ; words cannot convey an adequate idea of that strange and wondrous sight : it was the most beautiful spectacle I ever saw.

With all this luxury great simplicity and economy are combined ; every man's dress, whatever his position may be, is of the same pattern ; no fringes or useless points are sewn on, as is the case with us, appendages which cost a great deal of money, and are worn out in three days. In Turkey the tailor's bill for a silk or velvet dress, even though it be richly embroidered, as most of them are, is only a ducat. They were quite as much surprised at our manner of dressing as we were

at theirs. They use long robes reaching down to the ankles, which have a stately effect and add to the wearer's height, while our dress is so short and scanty that it leaves exposed to view more than is comely of the human shape; besides, somehow or other, our fashion of dress seems to take from the wearer's height, and make him look shorter than he really is.¹

I was greatly struck with the silence and order that prevailed in this great crowd. There were no cries, no hum of voices, the usual accompaniments of a motley gathering, neither was there any jostling; without the slightest disturbance each man took his proper place according to his rank. The Agas, as they call their chiefs, were seated, to wit, generals, colonels (*bimbaschi*), and captains (*soubaschi*). Men of a lower position stood. The most interesting sight in this assembly was a body of several thousand Janissaries, who were drawn up in a long line apart from the rest; their array was so steady and motionless that, being at a little distance, it was some time before I could make up my mind as to whether they were human beings or statues; at last I received a hint to salute them, and saw all their heads bending at the same moment to return my bow. On leaving the assembly we had a fresh treat in the sight of the household cavalry returning to their quarters; the men were mounted on splendid horses, excellently groomed, and gorgeously accoutred. And so we left the royal presence, taking with us but little hope of a successful issue to our embassy.

By May 10 the Persian Ambassador had arrived, bringing with him a number of handsome presents, carpets from famous looms, Babylonian tents, the inner

¹ Evelyn, who no doubt took the hint from Busbecq, induced Charles II. to adopt the Eastern dress. *Diary*, p. 324.

sides of which were covered with coloured tapestries, trappings and housings of exquisite workmanship, jewelled scimitars from Damascus, and shields most tastefully designed ; but the chief present of all was a copy of the Koran, a gift highly prized among the Turks ; it is a book containing the laws and rites enacted by Mahomet, which they suppose to be inspired.

Terms of peace were immediately granted to the Persian Ambassador with the intention of putting greater pressure on us, who seemed likely to be the more troublesome of the two ; and in order to convince us of the reality of the peace, honours were showered on the representative of the Shah. In all cases, as I have already remarked, the Turks run to extremes, whether it be in honouring a friend, or in pouring contempt and insult on a foe. Ali Pasha, the second Vizier, gave the Persian suite a dinner in his gardens, which were some way from our quarters, with the river between, but still we could command a view of the place where they dined, for, as I told you before, the city is so situated on the hill sides that there is hardly a spot in it from which you cannot see and be seen. Ali Pasha, I must tell you, is by birth a Dalmatian, he is a thorough gentleman, and has (what you will be surprised to hear of in a Turk) a kind and feeling heart.

The table at which the Pashas and the Ambassador were seated was protected by an awning. A hundred pages all dressed alike acted as waiters ; their method of bringing the dishes to table was as follows.

First they advanced toward the table where the guests were seated, following each other at equal distances. Their hands were empty, as otherwise they would not have been able to make their obeisance, which was performed by their putting them on their

thighs, and bending their heads to the earth. Their bows being made, the page who stood nearest the kitchen began taking the dishes and handing them on to the next, who delivered them to the page next him, and so down the row until they reached the page who stood nearest the table, from whose hands the chief butler received them and placed them on the board. After this fashion a hundred dishes or more streamed (if I may use the expression) on to the table without the slightest confusion. When the dinner was served the pages again did reverence to the guests, and then returned in the same order as they had come, the only difference being that those who had been last as they came were the first as they retired, and that those who were nearest the table now brought up the rear. All the other courses were brought on to the table after the same fashion, a circumstance showing how much regard the Turks pay to order even in trifles, while we neglect it in matters of extreme importance. Not far from the Ambassador's table his retinue was feasting with some Turks.

Peace having been concluded with the Persian, as I have already told you, it was impossible for us to obtain any decent terms from the Turk; all we could accomplish was to arrange a six months' truce to give time for a reply to reach Vienna, and for the answer to come back.

I had come to fill the position of ambassador in ordinary; but inasmuch as nothing had been as yet settled as to a peace, the Pashas determined that I should return to my master with Solyman's letter, and bring back an answer, if it pleased the King to send one. Accordingly I had another interview with the Sultan; two embroidered robes of ample size, and reaching down to the ankles, were thrown over my

shoulders (they were as much as I could carry). All my people were likewise presented with silk dresses of different colours, which they wore as they marched in my train.

With this procession I advanced as if I was going to act the part of Agamemnon¹ or some other monarch of ancient tragedy. Having received the Sultan's letter, which was sealed up in a wrapper of cloth of gold, I took my leave; the gentlemen among my attendants were also allowed to enter and make their bow to him. Then having paid my respects in the same way to the Pashas I left Amasia with my colleagues on June 2.

It is customary to give a breakfast in the Divan (as they call the place where the Pashas hold their court), to ambassadors on the eve of their departure, but this is only done when they represent friendly governments, and no peace had as yet been arranged with us.

You will probably wish me to give you my impressions of Solyman.

His years are just beginning to tell on him, but his majestic bearing and indeed his whole demeanour are such as beseem the lord of so vast an empire. He has always had the character of being a careful and temperate man; even in his early days, when, according to the Turkish rule, sin would have been venial, his life was blameless; for not even in youth did he either indulge in wine or commit those unnatural crimes which are common among the Turks; nor could those who were disposed to put the most unfavourable construction on his acts bring anything worse against him than his excessive devotion to his wife, and the precipitate way in which, by her influence, he was induced to put Mustapha to death; for it is

¹ See page 102 and note 1.

commonly believed that it was by her philtres and witchcraft that he was led to commit this act. As regards herself, it is a well-known fact that from the time he made her his lawful wife he has been perfectly faithful to her, although there was nothing in the laws to prevent his having mistresses as well. As an upholder of his religion and its rites he is most strict, being quite as anxious to extend his faith as to extend his empire. Considering his years (for he is now getting on for sixty) he enjoys good health, though it may be that his bad complexion arises from some lurking malady. There is a notion current that he has an incurable ulcer or cancer on his thigh. When he is anxious to impress an ambassador, who is leaving, with a favourable idea of the state of his health, he conceals the bad complexion of his face under a coat of rouge, his notion being that foreign powers will fear him more if they think that he is strong and well. I detected unmistakable signs of this practice of his; for I observed his face when he gave me a farewell audience, and found it was much altered from what it was when he received me on my arrival.

June was at its hottest when we began our journey; the heat was too much for me, and a fever was the consequence, accompanied by headache and catarrh. The attack, though mild and of an intermittent kind, was a lingering one, and I did not get rid of it till I reached Constantinople.

On the day of our departure the Persian Ambassador also left Amasia, setting out by the same road as ourselves; for, as I mentioned before, there is only one road by which the city can be entered or left, since the rugged character of the surrounding hills makes it difficult of access on every other side; the road shortly branches off in two directions, one leads eastward and