THE PATH TO CRIMEA, 1854:
ARTICLES BY A PIONEER WAR CORRESPONDENT

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LETTER FROM PARIS.

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Paris,
February 8, 1854

My correspondence has fallen into such a state of disorder since I crossed the Great Water, that, like the barber who shaved with one of Pindar's razors,[1] I have some difficulty in recognizing where I left off. I shall have to follow his illustrious example and *cut* my friends and patrons, by way of marking the place; giving them a general gossiping letter, and so terminate for the present my brief experience in the great cities of London and Paris.

First, however, let me in one word commend to travelers for comfort, speed and everything else, that constitutes agreeable travelling, an English railway. By one of the best probably, in the United Kingdom were my fellow voyageurs and self, transferred on the evening of our arrival in Liverpool from the bustle and bother of its Custom House to our destination at London. I wish I could say as much for the comfort and dispatch of an English Custom House as I have said for their railways. At the hour of departure of the special train, we took our places in one of the departments of its warm and well cushioned carriages and soon with the aid of a little boiling water were whirled away under arches, over rivers, over plain and valley, through the tunnels or which English and French railways are famous — through the night and through the darkness, until lights began to flit about as like shooting stars we came to a dead halt in the heart of the wonderful city of London. An incident occurred in our journey which opened to us a new orb of character which we must now be prepared to encounter in all its phases — sensible, stupid, surly and savage — It was — the English.

There was but one stranger in the car which my companions had chosen, and we were five; our friend, as he shortly proved to be, occupying the sixth and last seat. In our party were a Frenchman, a German and three Americans. Soon after the train was in motion, one of our party, (probably an American) wishing to breathe the air of freedom in an English railroad car, opened the window of the side on which he was sitting; the action meeting the approve of his next companion on the side, and the next. But the stranger sitting *vis* a *vis*, riding with his back to the locomotive, and consequently quite out of the "drarft," complained in a most ill-natured tone; and out of civility, though somewhat annoyed by the gentleman's manner, the window was closed. Now the object, ostensible and avowed of my companion, in taking a car together, was that such of the party as plead guilty to the "soft impeachment" of a tenderness for tobacco, might sigh away their secret in delicious exhalations from their favorite brands. It was therefore with no little uneasiness that they awaited the termination of a little side performance in which one of their number (the German) was engaged. He had drawn his cigar case from his pocket, opened it, and was making ready to light the match. It proved to be the torch of war. He had passed around the case to his friends, and now,

[1] John Wolcot (1738-1819) — (Nom de plume: Peter Pindar) Author of humorous poem *The Razor-Seller*, whose instruments were inadequate for their declared purpose.

simultaneously with the ignition of the brimstone, he handed the perfumed *bonne bouche*, with a respectful bow, to the stranger, hoping, at the same time, that he would have no objection to a good cigar. "*I do, sir, decided hobjections to cigars 'ere*," was the reply, without relaxing from his position in the corner. "There's a law against it!" The match went out in our friend's hand, and one after another, like friends that are not wanted, the cigars dropped quietly away. The smoke of a dozen Habanas, then, could not have been *denser* or more oppressive than the silence which ensued. For a while the clank of the machinery and the rumble of the cars alone broke the stillness of the flight. During this while the Englishman went to sleep!

To sleep, but not to dream! A few moments after, he might have fancied himself in the middle of fourteen fourth of July's! He awoke to a perfect storm of vocal discord — to the most distracting illustration of music run mad, that has ever been heard, perhaps since Colin drew his fiddle bow. Yankee songs and Yankee stories, negro corn field melodies and barn-yard imitations. The din was terrific. Never, I will venture to say, had such an uproar arisen on an English train! Every essayist in sounds would always ask with most ludicrous gravity before beginning a performance, "*if there could possibly be any law against this*" — following the interrogation with a specimen of his powers. The storm was at its height when the train stopped at a station, and just as the besiegers had concocted a new plan of attack, beginning with the roasting of an onion in the car, the besieged arose, gathered up his cloak and umbrella and left the car. He had been sufficiently roasted, and was no doubt heartily glad to get out of the odious presence of his Yankee companions. He was served right, we all agreed when he had gone, for a more ill-natured, unmannerly fellow it had never been my bad fortune to meet in travelling. It was not his "objection" with which we found fault; *that* we should have regarded had it been civilly stated. However, the lesson was not without its advantage to our party. We were now in a country where the smoke of a cigar cannot, as in our own land, be puffed indiscriminately into the faces of society, at almost all times and places, without exciting disgust for the smoker as a gentleman and as a representative abroad; besides perhaps, raising a question of law, as well as decency with the clouds of *objectionable* smoke.

We reached London in a mist, we rode up to Fenton's Hotel[2] in a mist, and arose the next morning to go out in a mist. There was a mist al! that day, and a mist all that night. Indeed, I can think of nothing that would be more sadly missed from the Great Metropolis, than a London mist. The abominable nuisance (against which there can be no City Reform successfully aimed) justifies the pun. And yet, these mists — they are fairly golden, with their glory — are caused 'tis said by the marshes and low lands in the neighborhood of London. London fogs are only equaled by Liverpool smoke, and against the latter nuisance it seemed to me a remedy might be provided, by compelling manufacturers, and other consumers of the wretched fuel generally used in Liverpool called coal, to apply the modern invention in their furnaces, and consume their smoke. Speaking of coal; while I was in London the article was selling at forty English shillings per ton. The scarcity was such and material used so bad, that there was far more truth than satire in the joke of carrying "coals to Newcastle."

[2] Fenton's Hotel — Located in St. James's Street, London (1800-1886)

It was directed that my London experience should be short and disagreeable. Illness, that handmaid of the Fates who hold and spin and cut the thread of human destiny, quite as successfully in one quarter of this terrestrial ball, as in another — illness confined me to my room for several days, and the time I had allotted for my stay in London expired before I had even "done" the metropolis from the top of an omnibus as I had proposed to do. Its sights, therefore, have been held in reserve until my homeward bound visit in the spring. It is not the intention however, let it be charitably understood, to visit upon the reader the result of any sight-seeing among London curiosities. I would as soon think of rewriting the Arabian Nights, for their entertainment.

On a day in which the sun surprised and illumined the streets of London, the society of an American resident was gratefully accepted for a stroll through the busy thoroughfares and a promenade in Hyde Park. The well cleaned streets, smooth and solid almost as the very walls of the houses which arose on either side, and the admirable police regulations, preserving the freedom of the sidewalks and crossings to pedestrians, were in especial contrast to what I had seen in New York a day or two before leaving. Here [was] no filth in the gutters, no stands or stalls on the narrow walk, no lines of carriages obstructing the view, or blocking the passage for the pedestrians at the crossing. We passed onward, beyond the limits of the "city" and amid rows of aristocratic houses, entered Hyde Park. A *park*, did my friend say! An unbounded field — the open country! I had been thinking of our American parks — the Boston Common, for instance. But here was a Common, here a Park, beside which our Boston "breathing place" would appear as insignificant as that classic region of your city yclept[3] the Plaza, if held in comparison with the Common. Though it was mid-winter, and there had been snow a week before, patches of which still gleamed white among the shrubbery, hundreds of children and their attendant nurses were out in the broad walks enjoying the sun and air. No wonder the English are a healthy people, and that fresh complexions and sparkling eyes beamed around me. With such lungs as these open spaces of her parks, London should be able to breathe freely and healthfully despite the vapors and fogs which exclude the sunlight three hundred and sixty-four days in the year.

Before leaving London, which I did a day or two after our walk in Hyde Park, the tidings of a gold discovery among the mountains of Wales had wrought considerable interest in the minds of dealers in mining stocks. The discovery was aided materially by the success of a new gold crusher, called Berdan's Machine.[4] I did not have an opportunity to visit the crusher. Its inventor has already made a fortune. The amount invested in mining stock in London, at the present time, is very great. Our California mines are not meddled with to any extent now, on account of the humbug and deception which have been practiced by the London Gold Mining Companies. Stock in the Grass Valley[5] mines stands well, however. The copper mines on Lake Superior were engaging the attention of the dealers in stocks, quite

[3] yclept — named, called (archaic)

[4] Hiram Berdan (1824-1893) — US mechanical engineer and inventor; developed the first commercial gold amalgamation machine to separate gold from ore.

[5] Grass Valley — Gold Country city in Nevada County, California

extensively. There are two or three Americans in London who will make their fortunes in these stocks, our California friend A. H. Sibley,[6] among the number.

It was not "the season" in London while I was there. Parliament was not in session. So as soon as a fine day brought healing on its wings, my baggage was conveyed to the Folkestone Depot, and taking a Hansom cab, of which you can have a tolerably fair idea from the profile of a cocked "revolver," I joined the baggage, and with it was soon labelled, ticketed and *en route* for Paris, by way of Folkestone.

Our party, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan of your city, were of the number, had chosen this route in preference to the Dover and Calais line, became of the surety we had of being landed on the shores of France from the steamer, and not from small boats. We left London in the evening, and arriving at Folkestone about 9 o'clock, passed the night at a very good hotel. The passage of the Channel the next morning between 10 and 12 was accomplished with the usual amount of sickness to all on board, whose stomachs revolted at the tossing and heaving of the sea. The steamers though small and exposed on deck, are staunch and swift. We arrived at the ancient and anglicized city of Boulogne without accident.

We were now in la belle France — sunny, smiling, hospitable France; the land of martial deeds and stern events, whose nature is as fickle and wayward and whose mood is as varied and capricious as woman's will. A few moments' detention at the Custom House for the examination of our baggage was got over with, in good humor and very bad French on our part, and we were permitted to pass to our hotel. From a good dinner at this establishment we proceeded to the station and took our places in the afternoon train for Paris. A ride of seven hours over very even rails, in a comfortable car, and drawn at the most rapid rate of locomotion placed us in "dear, delightful Paris" in the best possible spirits before 12 o'clock There was a slight detention of baggage at the station, after which, to the music of an incessant cracking of the whip, we were rattled over the stones and set down from our carriage at the door of the famous Meurice's[7] in the Rue de Rivoli, not a stone's toss from the garden of the Tuileries.

Paris appeared the next morning to our wondering eyes, not the "golden city of our dreams." A thin mist was falling, and the air was chill and uncomfortable as we strolled out, after breakfast, crossed the Rue de Rivoli, and entered the Place de la Concorde, *alias* the Place Louis XV, *alias* the Place de la Revolution. Water was jetting upward, and water was pouring downward, and water was overflowing in translucent sheets from half [of the] fonts and basins in the Place de la Concorde. But all the water that ever flowed would not wash away the stains of blood from this memorable spot, or efface the recollection of its terrible scenes from the memory of man. Paris appeared to be in a state of brick and mortar revolution. Streets were being opened through solid blocks of masonry, and avenues widened; the dilapidated repaired and the crooked made straight. There was something more than mere ornament and everyday convenience in the works which we saw going on around us. The next day the fact was made more convincing, as I strolled through the Rue de Rivoli, along

[6] Alexander Hamilton Sibley (1817-1878) — Born Detroit; Canadian mine owner and operator

[7] Hotel Meurice — Luxury hotel founded 1815 by Charles Augustin Meurice (1738-1820); 1835, relocated to Rue de Rivoli

the walls of the Tuileries, and brought up against the heavy, barred window of a new stone barracks, the *Caserne Imperiale*, which stands advanced half across the street, in the rear of the Hotel de Ville. I turned and looked down the street in which I had been walking, and from the window of the *Caserne* had a point-blank range as far down as the Place de la Concorde. Turning an angle of the *Caserne*, at its opposite end, a new and significant order of preparation disclosed itself. That high road of revolution and barricades, the Rue de St. Antoine, famous in Parisian history for the scene of slaughter and resistance which it has witnessed, was now blocked up with peaceful piles of stone and mortar, from the buildings that were being torn down to straighten and widen the street. The masons were piercing solid walls, some of which were new, with all the modern improvements in style and finish, and tearing away whole blocks of buildings; and for what? To beautify and benefit the street? Not altogether! In the distance, at the end of Rue St Antoine, stands the famous column of July, erected in the Place de la Bastille. In the rear of the spot where I was standing, the Hotel de Ville, and on my right, a few rods up the street, a church. It was from the Place de la Bastille, the headquarters of the insurgents in two revolutions that the *blouses*[8] marched, erecting barricades as they passed, until they occupied the church and menaced the Hotel de Ville. Here was one of the most sanguinary strifes of the last revolution. In this Rue St. Antoine it was, that the dreadful slaughter occurred in carrying the barricades, the recollection of which must be still fresh in the mind of the reader. There must now be a passage for cannon balls. The street must be put in condition to be purified of revolution by iron pills when occasion requires. Down this long avenue to the battered sides of the July column must be the sweep of the artillery frowning from the ground floor windows of the *Caserne Imperiale*. The barracks stand half across the street, as in the Rue de Rivoli on the farther end.

In these reflections I was confirmed during a conversation with an intelligent American gentleman, resident of Paris. He tells me that the Emperor carries this species of street improvement into all parts of Paris, regardless of private feelings or interest.

But this was Paris in its most disagreeable aspect. A walk through the Boulevards and a ride through the Champs Elysees; a turn in the gardens of the Tuileries and the Louvre, and a peep between two and three o'clock into the Bourse, revealed sufficiently the fact that Paris was contented, lively, progressive and full of business. The French, and I may say the Parisians, are well suited with the last King which Jupiter has sent them. A better governed city than Paris at the present time I verily believe does not exist. Paris is quiet, and it is the intention of Louis Napoleon to keep it so.

And so, I shall leave it this afternoon. I have met with a number of Americans well known to your citizens, during the three days which I have passed here. Among them is Lieut. Bartlett[9] of our Navy, who is superintending the making of the Fresnel lamps for the lighthouses on your coast. They will all be done and shipped by April. The light intended for the Farrallon[10]

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[8] *blouse* — Upper garment identifying the workers (proletariat) in the 1848 Revolution

[9] Washington Allon Bartlett (c1816-1865) — Navy officer; first US alcalde (mayor) of Yerba Buena (later, San Francisco); member of Pacific Coast Survey

[10] Farallon Islands — A lighthouse, designed to use the Fresnel lens, was erected in 1855 to guide ship traffic to San Francisco.

station is a mammoth and splendid work of art. It is one of the largest that has been constructed, and its light is intended to show at a range of fifty miles.

Switzerland is a very cold part of the earth to visit in mid-winter — "I believe." My route hence lies through its heart, however, if a thing so cold may be said to have a heart. When arrived amid its glaciers, if not previously buried by its avalanches, I may find time and occasion to renew my correspondence in the order and style which I long ago promised, but have not yet found it perfectly convenient to fulfil.

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LETTER FROM MALTA

Malta,
March 29th, 1854.

On the 25th of this month the steamer from Naples, in which I was passenger, entered the harbor of Malta.

I purpose to furnish from this point, where I shall connect my further movements abroad with the march of the allied armies into Turkey, and from subsequent places along the route, a few letters upon the opening scenes of the approaching War. These will be prepared and dispatched to the *Alta California* with as much regularity and frequency as circumstances will permit. I do not expect, and therefore will not promise for them, much certainty on these points, nor indeed on any other, except that of fidelity to my purpose. I shall certainly endeavor to send back from the interesting periods of my journey, connected though brief, transcripts of events by the way, and I hope they may always be fresh to you. They may or may not possess interest to readers in California, as our friends may happen to feel on the subject of the War in the East.

I mean all this to be governed by the preposition *if* understood. If there should be a war in the East, we certainly have a very fair prospect of something exciting to grow out of the present position of France and England toward Russia. We have heard the threat, and we witness the menace. The blow will surely descend unless Russia consent to abandon an object which she has kept steadily in view for upwards of one hundred and sixty years. I do not think that the plans of England and France will be raised on a mere concession or temporary succumbing to circumstances on the part of Russia. More than the honor of that nation will have to be consulted, more than the pride of Nicholas conciliated, to bring about the peace of Europe that forms the pretext for war with the Western Powers. I do not really see how war is to be averted.

We will not argue this point, however. Surrounded as I am by the pomp and circumstance, it is not improbable that I grow tinctured with the stern faith of the soldier, and look forward to a use for all that I see about me so well prepared. Here all is settled — all grave, earnest and severe in anticipation. The soldier has nothing to do with doubts; war with him when ordered to war is, of course, a dead certainty. You would think so too were you to live in Malta a day. Never were "noise and confusion" so significant.

I must go back a little and get even with my story. It will not interest your readers nor the world at large to know how their humble servant made a journey so anciently described as the days of St. Paul. How I escaped the perils of Scylla and Charybdis,[11] on the voyage from Naples; how we sailed between the toe of boot-shaped Italy and saw Messina without kissing the aforesaid toe or touching any part of Papist ground; and how, after two days [?] well-nigh spent, we saw the blue *Flor del Mondo*[12] of the Maltese, and then we "knew the island was called Melita."[13] We entered the harbor of Malta in a French steam packet, on the third

[11] Scylla and Charybdis — In Greek mythology, sea monsters situated on opposite sides of the Strait of Messina
[12] Flor del Mondo — Flower of the World
[13] Melita — Latin name for modern Malta

morning of our voyage. The weather, which had been persistently bad during the night, cleared up, and the sun appearing to dispel the fog, the harbor lay about us, open like a hand, with the town of Valletta[14] rising above the battlement in the center and its fortifications, with those on either side, glittering with guns and troops. The harbor of Malta is, indeed, shaped like a hand, and is called, from its shape, *Mano de Dio*[15] by the Maltese, who are fond of superlative distinctions. The town of Valletta is very prettily situated at the end of a peninsula stretching down the middle of the bay. The whole place presents a light and pleasing appearance as you enter it from the sea. The houses, walls and fortifications are all built of the beautiful yellow stone, not unlike that of which the Calton Hall,[16] of Monterey, in our State, is composed. The peninsula divides the bay into Great Harbor and Quarantine Port. The entrances to them are defended by the forts St. Elmo, Ricasoli and the Castle St. Angelo. The whole effect of the place and its defenses is extremely agreeable at first sight, and I am happy to add that a stay of three days has not brought a reverse of this feeing.

You are detained by no passenger laws, subject to no Custom House bother on landing. You go ashore in a small boat and are packed off to your hotel, through clean streets, with such occasional evidences of order and regulation as the sight of a policeman, clad and equipped as the London fashion affords. For the first time in a month perhaps, if you have travelled through Italy in haste, as I did, you may loosen your mother tongue and deliver your orders in well-rounded English sentences. This is a great luxury, depend upon it, if your French is faulty, or like mine limited to a dozen or two interrogatories; or if your Italian has been conned without a master. The Maltese generally understand our language and a large proportion of them speak it sufficiently well to be always intelligible. The native dialect is a mixture of Italian and Arabic, which none but English residents of Malta pretend to understand when it is addressed to Europeans. This dialect is intelligible to the people of the opposite coast of Africa.

I took up my quarters at the Hotel Imperial, preferring this from the number of stopping places open to travelers, in order to have the benefit of an acquaintance with one human being at least in the multitude about me. This gentleman is an American, and I am led to believe about the only one beside myself at present in Malta. We expected to have difficulty in procuring lodgings in the crowded state of the town, but by distancing our crowd of passengers in getting to land we were successful, and an hour after our disembarkation we were snugly quartered, and I sallied forth to "see the town."

Thronging every street, filing every cafe, and glancing in and out of nearly every shop along my walk, the whole place was alive and noisy with troops. The gay uniform of the British soldier, contrasting with the yellow lines of houses and limestone surface of the streets, produce a lively effect. Bodies of troops on duty were to be seen passing from point to point with measured movement, and occasionally a trumpet call or the roll of the drum could be heard from the outskirts of the town, where some regiment was on parade. The English officers off duty, were sauntering leisurely arm-in-arm through the streets, in fatigue attire,

[14] Valletta — Capital city of Malta
[15] Mano de Dio — Hand of God
[16] Colton Hall — Government building (late 1840's) named after Walter Colton, first alcalde of Monterey

or gathered in groups at the corners and in the coffee houses, discussing some new arrival of regiments, or speculating upon the probable time when the First Division would go into the field. There is a large number of officers' wives and friends in Malta, passing the few days that intervene between the final parting, (final, indeed, it may be to many,) and the carriages of these filled the principal street. Malta, probably, has not witnessed such a busy day since the beginning of the present century as at present. Of course, all trades and professions in the place are just now in a high state of prosperity.

On the 5th of March, the first detachment of the troops for Turkey arrived at Malta. The first division of the English army destined for this service is now nearly complete, quartered or encamped within an area of three miles at this place. First came the renowned Coldstream Guards, and since their arrival the Grenadier and Scots Fusilier Guards, the 3d. 4th, 9th, 28th, 33d, 41st, 44th, 47th, 49th, 50th, 62d, 68th, 77th, 93d, (Highlanders) and two battalions of the Rifle Brigade, with a corps of Sappers and Miners have successively arrived.

This force, amounting to about 11,000 men, is quartered, some in the garrisons of the regiments stationed at Malta, some in government warehouses, and others in public buildings, of which there are plenty here. Those men recently arrived have encamped just outside the city walls. The health of the troops after their sea voyage is generally good, and a great deal of enthusiasm, interest and emulation exists among them, both in the common cause and between rival regiments. I never saw so fine a body of men of equal number under military discipline as these English soldiers. They seem really too good for the material of war — too valuable as men and citizens to be used as the waste flesh of the ration in war's deadly havoc. They will be terrible fellows to deal back destruction, however. In addition to the regiments enumerated above there is stationed here permanently a large force of Malta Fencibles,[17] several companies of which have signified their desire to go to the war.

On the 23d inst. a large French man-of-war steamer the *Cristophe Colombe*, having the transport *Mistrel* in tow, entered this port. The *Mistrel* had on board a large detachment of troops, and about 50 horses, forming the first portion of the French expedition for the East. Their arrival created much interest in the town, and on the following day their officers, among whom was Gen. Canrobert,[18] well known for his African campaign, were invited onshore to witness the parade of the flower of the British army, the Coldstream, Grenadier and 93d Highlander Regiments. There was a great deal of spirit in the ceremonies that followed. The review is described as having been a beautiful spectacle, and the entertainments that followed must have been as interesting as they were novel. When the parade was dismissed, the allied troops were to be seen about the streets, officers and men, hugging and caressing each other, and exchanging congratulations and compliments as profusely and with as much apparent cordiality as though the "ancient feud" had never existed. And perhaps everything was forgotten. Perhaps Waterloo was lost in wine; perhaps time and circumstance, mutual interest and necessity, have triumphed over the recollections of the past, and even the alarm and preparation which existed in England on the accession of the present ruler of the French to the imperial throne were all false and mistaken; perhaps

[17] Fencible — Member of local militia, eligible for call-up only on home soil
[18] Francois Certain de Canrobert (1809-1895) — French marshal

these rival nations are now in their feeling the best of friends. There is one thing neither can lose or forget with the other, and that is, its nationality, and until you can blend the two they must remain natural foes — as they are. Still, it is interesting to witness these exhibitions, and amusing to read the English newspapers on the subject. The French journals are more discreet — they are silent.

There have been two or three arrivals of French transport vessels since the *Cristophe Colombe* with the Chasseurs de Vincennes. They sailed on the day after their arrival for Constantinople to cut out the work, in connection with English engineers already there, and who have surveyed the ground for the English camp. The Chasseurs, with the Board of French Engineers, numbered about 827, and they have been followed to the scene of preparation in the East by those detachments which have touched in here since the 24th. These have come and gone in the *Afracan*, (screw steamer) on the same day (24th,) Le *Pluton*, steam sloop, *Marocan*, both on the 27th, and one last night whose name I have not learned. So, you see the French are moving, and they go at once about the business on which they are ordered. The Commander in Chief of the French army for the East, Marshal St. Arnaud, is expected here hourly. Gen. Fergusson[19] (Eng) in command here has detailed the 68th regiment as a guard of honor. Touching the *entente cordiale* of the French by their British brethren in arms, I have the following from the local weekly paper of this place:—

> "INSPIRING SCENE. — This morning when the *Kangaroo* anchored near the French transport, there immediately rose from among the troops loud and continued cheers, in token of the cordiality existing.
>
> Three times there resounded through the welkin — "*Vive l'Angleterre!*" "*Vive la France*" were spontaneously uttered from honest manly breasts.
>
> After a while, God save the Queen was shouted at the pitch of the voice of 900 men on board the *Kangaroo*, and three times three were shouted in reply. In an interval of a minute or two, as many French troops intoned the Marseillaise, and three honest hurrahs replied."

As I look from my window here, I see numbers of the new arrivals. (French,) *fraternizing* with their English allies in the Cafe opposite. Vive la War, "cigars and cognac."

I suppose you have all the news regarding the present aspect of the "Eastern Question,"[20] about which all this stir has been raised in the quiet, out of the way island of Malta. You should have it through the English press which in reality prints the news for us! I will not, therefore, waste these pleasant morning hours in making up second-hand dispatches.

[19] Sir James Fergusson (1787-1865) — British army officer; served in Napoleonic Wars and later diverse locations

[20] Eastern Question — Strategic competition (over more than century) of the Great European Powers in the face of the weakening role of the Ottoman Empire

The Russian Palace at Pera,[21] near Constantinople, has been confiscated, and will be appropriated to the use of the Generals and Staff of the allied army. It is understood that the English troops proceed to Constantinople, to be encamped a short distance from the city, and there to await the word to move forward in defense of the Principalities. The ground selected for the camp, I understand from some American officers just arrived from there, is miserable quagmire, and under a summer sun, will sow the seeds of disease broadcast among the troops. But perhaps the English expect to move out of it before the middle of May. I hope so!

There has been no departure of English troops for Constantinople as yet. The 2d battalion of the Rifle Brigade, with the Sappers and Miners, will be the first from this place. They are already embarked and will leave on the arrival of General Sir G. Brown,[22] who is to command the First Division of the English army in the East, I am told. Lord Raglan[23] is to be Chief in command, I suppose you know. Gen. Brown [is] expected to-day. There are two or three regiments [also] hourly expected here.

I will not transgress upon the space provided for this letter by further war intelligence, and in another number will endeavor to make amends for its lack of general information. I have one item with which to close. The U. S. corvette *Levant* is here, having arrived from the quarter whence she takes her name, three days ago. She reports a severe winter at Constantinople, where she was lying She goes to-morrow to La Spezia, Capt. Turner in command. The U. S. ship *Cumberland* is believed to be at Naples, *en route* for Constantinople. These vessels, with the *St. Louis* sloop-of war, comprise Uncle Sam's "force" in the Mediterranean. [Foolish] fellow to keep a navy at all, when a portion of the British Navy, so small as not to have a Fleet [Captain] (lying in the Bosphorus,) have more than twice the number of men of our whole naval establishment!

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[21] Pera — Original Greek name for the district of Galata (modern Karaköy), on the European shore of the Bosphorus
[22] George Brown (1790-1865) — born Scotland; British army officer, served in Peninsular and Crimean Wars
[23] FitzRoy Somerset (1788-1855) — Lord Raglan; senior military officer; died in Crimea

II. MALTA

Malta,
April 2d, 1854.

"*The brewers should to Malta go*" are the familiar words of an old verse of punning celebrity, and, in all gravity, I should say to Malta the brewers have come. They have come from England and from France, in a very potent half-and-half admixture — English porter and French beer, if you please. They have come, and now we are beginning to witness their departure. They are going, and, if we may be allowed to carry out the allusion, when they next brew, the vats will not be drawn off until they have Russia in the East. This may be a poor pun, but, like Sheridan's rhyme to Sylvester,[24] it's true, and will prove, I think, fair prophecy.

The allied fleets have once more entered the Black Sea, and the English army is beginning to move forward toward the seat of war from Malta. The first expedition of troops for the Dardanelles direct left this island on Thursday last, 31st ult. They are the Rifles, the Sappers and Miners, and medical officers of the staff. They left in the fine steamer transport *Golden Fleece*, and their destination is Gallipoli. Gallipoli is situated on the European side of the Dardanelles, at the inner entrance of the Sea of Marmora, and is the point selected by the French Government for the disembarkation of its troops. The Rifle Battalion is commanded by Lt. Col. Lawrence, and the Sappers by Lt. Col. Victor. Gen. Sir George Brown, who arrived by the *Hector* on the 30th, has command of the division. The departure of the first expedition for the East has been looked forward to with great interest by the army in Malta. Some say it decides the question which has been so long pending— War or Peace. Of course, the most hostile construction is put upon the movement, though I do not hear that orders have been received as yet for any part of the British contingent army here to take the field. The Rifles, it was said before their departure, would land at Constantinople, where, we are informed, a camp has been surveyed for the entire force. They have gone to Gallipoli, however. They will have a much healthier spot for encampment than Constantinople, though not so conveniently situated for transportation by sea to the scene of Russian aggression. They may contemplate a junction with the French division already landed at Gallipoli, who are under orders, it is said, to occupy Adrianople.[25] This is a most advantageous spot, it would seem, for the allied armies in reserve.

Since my first letter from this place there have been four or five arrivals of French and English transports. On board one of the French steamers was a large detachment of troops from Algiers. These men have been drafted for the Eastern service under somewhat novel circumstances l am informed. Most of them are state criminals who have been expiating their offences in the army at Algiers. They are now sent to Turkey to win their freedom or meet their death against her invaders. Many of them were on shore, and it was with considerable difficulty that they could be distinguished in their French-Algerian costume, with their faces all bronzed and hardened by the sun, from our common visitors, the Greeks and Turks. These, together with their brethren in arms who have arrived since, have left for Gallipoli.

[24] Sheridan's rhyme to Sylvester — Reference not identified
[25] Adrianople — (Old name) City of Edirne

The English troops recently arrived have been chiefly parts of regiments. There are, however, three or four full regiments on their way hither. l am told to-day that one of the infantry regiments here has orders to hold itself in readiness for embarkation. They will follow the Rifles it is thought. The remainder of the division will not long remain after the departure of the first regiment of infantry.

As I have already intimated, nothing can be known in private circles, and, I more than half suspect, among official persons here, regarding the future plans of the allied powers. Of course, all is secrecy among the general officers, and the usual recourse is had to speculation and opinion, which soon become magnified into report, concerning the course to be pursued with the armies. A rumor has been in brisk circulation for several days that the English and French troops will only act on the defensive, against Russia, in case Constantinople should be threatened. That they will constitute a reserve to be used in the event of disabling reverses to the Turkish army. This seems too improbable to entertain for a moment. England and France will surely not engage in such preposterous folly.

We expect that about the middle of May, the troops of the allied army will be on the ground. We also expect, and the Sultan certainly expects, we are inclined to think, that they will be fully prepared to march against that common foe, of whom Europe has heard so much of late; the season will be then sufficiently advanced, and the arrangements which have been actively making all winter will be complete. We then expect one of the fiercest and most sanguinary struggles that has ever engaged the arms of the three most powerful nations of the globe. We can anticipate no farther. The impenetrable veil of Fate with the "dunnest[26] smoke" of battle shrouds and conceals the Future. This war once begun, who can say where it will end, with such elements of revolution and strife as now lie silent in Europe awaiting the first peal of battle.

It is a pleasant Sunday afternoon and I stroll out through the crowded *Strada Reale*, the principal street of Valletta, and enter the *Piazza St. Giorgio*, the chief square, in which are situated the Club and Reading rooms. This spot forms the grand center and exchange of foreign and domestic news or local gossip, for business men and idlers, villains and soldiers, "Turk and Christian." Here, at all hours of the day, you may see a crowd of English and Maltese loungers, interspersed with French men and an occasional German; and here, besides the scarlet uniforms which abound, you may see the costumes of all the countries on the Mediterranean and Grecian Archipelago. On one side of the square stands the palace of the Governor, as it is now called, the largest building on the island. I have not paid the interior collection of antiquities a visit. I have not yet finished the outlines of Malta.

The most curious and interesting feature of costume, in the mingled and diversified mass about me, is the female out-door apparel of the native Maltese. It is of black silk or muslin, consisting of an outer skirt and mantilla, effectually surrounding the whole person in black. The mantilla is gathered and secured in folds at one side by a short semicircular band, and is drawn about the head, neck and shoulders without heed to the folds or place where the band may come. The skirt is full, and long enough to hide the ugly feet of the wearer. It is worn

[26] Dunnest — darkest, dullest

over the indoor dress, I am told. This street costume, of perfectly plain black, fastened as I have described, is the unvarying attire of the native females, of all classes in Malta. The effect is very striking, peculiarly so in their churches, where I have seen a hundred kneeling figures draped in this pall-like apparel, with even their faces hidden from view, as you enter the silent scene of worship. As for the men of Malta, natives, natural descendants doubtless of many of the noble Knights, their costume is rags. With all their industry and frugality, they cannot keep their feet from the bare, rocky ground, nor their stomachs from crying starvation. A very large portion of these people leave the island annually, to seek their bread in other countries. The women employ themselves in the manufacture of laces. Some of the most beautiful specimens that are anywhere to be seen, are the work of their hands. The Maltese females are not unprepossessing in personal appearance. Their eyes are by far the most beautiful feature. Their manners are very gentle, though they are deplorably ignorant and indifferent to educational advantages when offered to them.

Leaving Valletta by the *Porta Reale*,[27] the finest of the three entrances through its massive walls, I take the arm of my fellow lodger, who is the only American besides myself sojourning in Malta, and we stroll through the fashionable garden of the place. This occupies the center of a great square or lawn a few minutes' walk from the city walls. It is a long and pleasant promenade, arranged with considerable taste, and kept in good order, as all the public streets and walks in Malta seem to be. The space on either side of the garden is occupied every afternoon by troops, called out by regiments, to exercise. The view from either wall or "curtain," as the ramparts are called, bounding this open area, is delightful at this hour of sunset. Below us the harbor, and beyond the magnificent Mediterranean: on the right, as far as the eye can see, are farms and country houses, with the venerable *Citta Vecchia*[28] in the background, looming up massively against the sunset sky. It is here that visitors are shown the cave where St. Paul is said to have lived three months. Malta, you know, is the memorable spot of the Apostle's shipwreck on his journey from Syria to Rome.

I must call in these rambling observations, and in the few moments that are left me close and mail my letter. The bag, l am informed, will close this evening. This dispatch, all dull and worthless as it is, I have counted may reach you by the New York mail of the 20th April.

Addio.

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[27] Porta Reale — Royal Gate
[28] Citta Vecchia — Old City

III. MALTA

Malta,
April 3, 1854.

It may not be out of place nor contrary to the wish and expectation of the reader, to furnish in these letters from Malta some observations on the place. I do not mean to be historical or otherwise prosy on so small a subject, but at home we know but very little of these obscure and out of the way places, and there is really so much of interest, even romance, connected with the fate of despotic dependencies, that I can safely promise novel if not agreeable results to come from reflections on the affairs of this Island. When more of its history is known and its present situation better understood, perhaps the reader will not think the above use of the term despotic unwarranted.

As in all countries capable of self-protection and placed by nature within reach of conquering powers, the early inhabitants of this little Island, believed to be a Phoenician colony, were soon subjugated by their powerful neighbors, the Greeks, from whose hands it passed successively through those of the Carthaginians, Goths, Emperors of Constantinople, and Arabs, into the possession of Count Roger,[29] son of the famous Tancrede de Hauteville,[30] who with his brother William expelled the Arabs from Sicily and Naples in 1090, and from his son on his decease, was ceded by Constance, only daughter of Roger II, to the domination of the Emperors of Germany. From a house of Austria, the Island next passed under the French dominion, and was held until the time of the famous "Sicilian Vespers" massacre, 1282, when an expedition was fitted out by the Aragonese, and Malta was captured by the arms of the Kings of Aragon and Castile. Its fortunes were now subjected even to a worse series of changes by the succession of masters whose property it became in being given as a fief by the Aragonese monarchs. It was redeemed out of this bondage by the Maltese themselves, on promise that it should henceforth and forever remain inalienable from the crown of the Kingdom of Sicily, and its inhabitants enjoy equal rights and privileges with the most favored Sicilians.

In 1516, however, the entire Kingdom passed into the hands of Charles V of Germany, the heir of all the Spanish dominions, and notwithstanding his confirmation of the declaration of his predecessors, concerning the perpetual junction of Malta with Sicily, this Emperor resolved for political reasons to cede the Island to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem,[31] at that time occupying Viterbo in the Papal States. In 1530 Malta was taken possession of by the Knights of St. John, and here commenced the military-religious exploits of the renowned Knights of Malta.[32] They remained in full possession of the island, together with its small adjunct, Gozo, defending it with incredible bravery, and always with success against the Turks, repelling one attempt on the part of Sicily to regain her authority, and by their

[29] Roger de Hauteville (c1040-1101) — Norman nobleman; son of Tancrede de Hauteville; first Count of Sicily; conquered Malta in 1091

[30] Tancrede de Hauteville (980-1041) — Founder of a large Norman family, subsequently prominent in Southern Italy

[31] Knights Hospitaller — (Order of St. John of Jerusalem) Medieval Catholic military order

[32] Knights of Malta — (Sovereign Military Order of Malta) Catholic lay religious order, continuation of the Knights Hospitaller

encouragement of the wealth and increase of the Maltese, increasing their population nearly one-half, like truly pious Knights as they were, until the time of Napoleon, when the fatal Saturnalia[33] which overrun and laid waste Europe, besieged and conquered Malta. It is an unworthy end of a romantic chapter in history, that the Knights of Malta were overcome by treachery in their Order, and that they fell not by the sword. They finished their career by a disgraceful capitulation to the French, after a series of exploits against more harassing and enduring foes, through two hundred and fifty years, and creating a renown which will live forever. The history of Malta since the dispersion of the Knights is familiar to all readers. The French held it under a rigorous and oppressive system of Government until it was captured from them in 1800 by its present masters, the English. The Order was broken up, but a considerable number of the Knights fled to the Imperial Protectorate, the Emperor of Russia, and were kindly received by him — nay, more, encouraged to reorganize their Society. In their behalf foreign nobles were invited to aid in reinstating the power of the Knights of Malta, but they never recovered after their expulsion from this island. Their banner, however, was unfolded above the walls of St. Petersburg, where, it is said, it has waved to this day. England, of course, has no more right to these islands, properly the possession of the Sicilian crown, than France, nor so much, perhaps, since she captured them from the invaders of the soil, and the true conquerors of the country. It would be a singular circumstance if she were reminded of this by witnessing the banner of the Knights of Malta borne foremost among the foes whom her army, now lying here, await the order to march against. A curious and significant circumstance!

Of the government of Malta, I can say but little, feeling the same disinclination to study it, which perhaps the reader would have to follow me through any number of manuscript pages on this portion of my subject. There are two or three features possessing interest from their suggestive character, which it would not be well to pass by. Notwithstanding the "concessions" — much talked of by British residents here — from the Crown to the native Maltese, there is a spirit of dissatisfaction dominant among them, springing from I know not what, unless it be religious differences, and different notions which the Maltese may have about the proprietorship of the island. Certain it is that this spirit cannot be reconciled or conciliated, and hence we find stationed here a body of troops nearly three thousand strong, and all the defenses of the island admirably kept up. And hence it is, perhaps, that we find among the "liberal " systems of British laws, a prohibition, or what amounts to a prohibition of the liberty of the press. It is true, that rigid censorship has been done away with, but there still exist penalties and provisions of a nature totally incompatible with the liberty of the press. The concessions from the crown of which I speak are the additional rights of representation among the Maltese.

The Government is now composed, in its council, of eighteen persons, holding offices with the local government and not holding offices. The ten official members nominated by the Crown are the Governor, the senior officer in command of H. M. land forces, the Chief Secretary to Government, the Crown Advocate, Collector of Customs, Superintendent of Quarantine, Auditor of Accounts, Collector of Land Revenue, Government Cashier, and the Comptroller of Contracts: the eight unofficial members are elected by the people, and are

[33] Saturnalia — (metaphorical) excesses

eligible every five years. The desire of the people appears to be for a National Parliament, or "Consiglio Popolare," elected by themselves. I am not aware that this feeling of discontent with England exists among the lower classes, although I do know that they have miserably sunk under the rule of England; and notwithstanding the outlay of nearly one hundred thousand pounds sterling per annum in their midst, they are the poorest and worst provided for people out of Ireland. The island is so densely inhabited that every inch of the poor soil, apart from the various roads, is sowed with the seed of the husbandman, and this does not furnish bread probably for half the population, which numbers altogether over one hundred thousand. They evince the most masterly indifference to education, and pay little regard to morals, and adhere strongly to the Catholic faith; three pretty conclusive signs, I should think, of their disaffection for the English. If France, the champion of the Catholic religion in every country and clime, wishes to pick up a morsel by the way, to hold as a souvenir of her army's victorious return from their present expedition to the Levant, nowhere would she find a more willing captive, I apprehend, than Malta. And yet the black-cloaked, sinister-visaged broad brims of the Church of Rome have every license here consistent with common sense and morality. I do not intend these reflections to bear upon England, under whose sovereignty the Maltese have enjoyed at least tranquility, with the severity in which they seem to be written. I am perfectly aware that there must be some foreign protecting power, strong in maritime resources, to sustain a stable government on this island. The choice lies between England and France, and it can matter but little which of these two nations holds possession. It is true, the English are exacting and oppressive in their duties, and the people are kept barefoot and starving because of the high duty on breadstuffs alone; but their condition would be but little better under France. There would not be the need, perhaps, of this expensive military establishment on the spot, because there would not be the danger of church intrigue, dissension, and revolution, or the attempt of Roman Catholic powers to alienate the affections of the inhabitants. This would be one important reduction in the cost of keeping up a government here, certainly. At present, the salary of the Governor of this rock is as much as that of the President of the United States. Would imperial France salary her officers so highly, we wonder?

I had almost forgotten that this query, together with the preceding observations, are intended for a people ten thousand miles distant from the spot in which they are made, and that they can only be expressed among Californians. The thought recalls me instantly to the immediate subjects which this letter holds in view.

By the mail which left this morning for Marseilles and England, I dispatched a hurried letter, made up of such fragments of intelligence and scraps of observation as occurred to me in the course of an evening "at home." There is no news that will interest any far away readers. During last night another French transport steamer arrived in port. She is bound for Gallipoli, and like the others, stops to procure coal and provisions for the remainder of the voyage. This morning the streets are full of French uniforms. At "Guard Mounting," on the *Piazza di St. Giorgio*, I observed a number intently watching the evolutions of the troops. They are mostly young men, their oldest officers mere boys in years compared with the English majors and generals. Their manner, as you see them in the streets, is peculiar, and in special contrast to the stiff and formal precision, or affected gait of some of the English officers off duty. They saunter carelessly along, with hands in pockets, and dress all awry, talking incessantly

among themselves, evidently keen observers, quite indifferent to their own appearance or the effect they produce on the minds of others. They are great admirers of the material of which the English troops are composed, it is said.

It is stated on good authority that another detachment of the army here will leave in the course of this week for the Levant. I have not heard the particular regiments named. They go to a point about a day's sail above the entrance to the Dardanelles, called Enos,[34] in the Gulf of that name. This new direction gives us new hopes that the allied powers are preparing to take an active and immediate part in the war. Enos is connected by a river[35] which is navigable for small vessels, with Adrianople, and the route to Adrianople by land is easy and direct. Adrianople is, after all, then, to be the grand headquarters for the allies. This movement towards Enos will bring the French and English nearer their work, if it be their intention to defend the Principalities.

I will write again, and for the last time from Malta, probably by the mail which leaves here for England on the 7th. There may, in the lapse of three or four days, accumulate sufficient news, or matter of interest to make budget-worthy my time and the patience of my readers. If not, then I shall have to turn my attention once more to an itineracy of Malta, or perhaps visit the true Calypso,[36] said to be not far distant from where I write, and enjoy that scene of which Homer has sung:—

> "Where, if a god should cast his sight,
> A god might gaze and wonder with delight."

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[34] Enos — Greek mythology has city founded by Aeneus; the modern name is Enez.

[35] River linking Enos to Adrianople — Hebrus (or Evros or Maritsa)

[36] Calypso — In Greek mythology, the nymph Calypso, daughter of Atlas, detained Odysseus on an island for seven years, in hopes of marrying him. Modern Maltese tradition associates the island in question with Gozo.

IV. MALTA

Malta,
April 5th, 1834.

The most marked change has occurred in the aspect of this little place since my last, on Monday, and all within the past twenty-four hours. About nine in the morning, yesterday, a steamer from the westward was signaled, and soon after it was announced at all the Club and Reading Rooms of Valletta that the mail steamer from Marseilles was entering the harbor. The great question of fight or no fight would now be settled, and there were many anxious faces, and, I will venture to say, fast throbbing hearts under the uniforms that besieged the Post Office. The mail was very soon distributed (commend me to an English post office for dispatch and prompt and obliging attentions), and the streets were soon after alive with the news. War was declared. It flew from mouth to mouth, and was caught up and communicated from the pretty lips of women in their shopping excursions. I was in one of the bazaars, fumbling over some Maltese laces, when a shopping party entered, and from their conversation I gleaned the first intelligence that war is really to be. "*I am so sorry,"* said one of them; "*it was only last night that Lieut. —— was saying that he expected to be ordered back in another month!"* I hastened to the Exchange, lest there should be a further betrayal of family secrets to make me feel ill at ease in the presence of the fair gossipers. I met a number of serious faces on the way, and passed several groups of officers discussing with earnestness the probable operations of the army.

An English officer of grade less than a Colonel knows but little more of the intended movements of a campaign than the merest camp follower, nor do they seem able to conjecture or *guess* — to use for the first time in an English atmosphere that thoroughly Yankee word— the consequences that would naturally follow certain causes. Thus, for instance, I overheard a young gentleman in shell jacket and "long sword dangling," inquire of a brother officer in all earnestness, if he thought the regiments would be ordered away from here soon!

We have the *Galignani*,[37] from Paris, to the 31st ult., by this mail, and, in its columns, I found full reports of Parliamentary proceedings, up to a late hour, together with the joint declarations of the allied Governments, to furnish their ally, Turkey, "prompt and efficient assistance." Then is there to be a direct movement made against her aggressor, for this I construe as the meaning of such a declaration. The armies are to be marched to the Danube, and the encroachments of the Russ then and there met, with such success as the God of Battles shall decide. That this is the true interpretation of the Royal and Imperial messages I am led to believe from the new direction and increased activity which affairs have taken here in Malta. Dispatches came yesterday to Lt. Gen. Fergusson, of a nature authorizing him to order several new and important movements. Three regiments, 24th, 44th and 30th, ("the dirty half hundred") are to embark immediately for the East. They proceed to Gallipoli. The 28th, 41st and 47th, will leave to-morrow, it is said, and within fourteen days all the troops

[37] Galignani — English newspaper, published in Paris (1814-1904) by the Galignani family

now on the island will be on their way to Turkey. The mammoth *Himalaya*,[38] on her arrival from Alexandria, is to be sent to the East with troops.

This precipitancy of action has caused a great fluttering in the camp. For the first time, perhaps, since the Eastern Question began to attract the sympathy and aid of the Western Powers, the real state of things became apparent to Englishmen. War in all its dreadful reality now stares them in the face There are many here holding commissions in the service of the crown who, I am satisfied, never enlisted for a war, though I am equally satisfied that, being merged in its chances, they will encounter its perils manfully. Pride alone will enable them to do that. I do not really think that the appearance of the young English officers justifies any exalted opinions of their constitutional fitness for war's stern encounters. The material of which the rank and file is composed must, however, be judged differently. You will nowhere find better soldiers.

This morning all is bustle in the streets. All is preparation, and everything is moving. For once the cafes are deserted; the listless, lounging gait of the soldier off duty is changed to the quick step of detailed squad; and the passing salute to his officer has less of the holiday air. There is earnestness in every face you meet. The ladies — officers' wives for the most part— are particularly numerous today in the streets and shops. Many of them, I am told, are to accompany their lords to the East, and will remain at Constantinople. Indeed, the wife of one officer— a real lord — has accompanied the Rifle Brigade to Gallipoli, and intends sharing the camp with her husband. Others will probably follow her example. There is a very large number of English ladies at present in Malta.

French troops continue to arrive and depart. Yesterday Gen. Espinasse,[39] who arrived in the *Osiris*, reviewed, by request, several regiments of the English troops. The Algerian soldiers, as the French detachments from Algeria are called, present a most novel appearance. They wear the loose flowing trousers of the country, where they have been sewing the yellow leggings, and scarlet fez or cap, and look like Arabs in complexion. I am told that ere this letter leaves the office where I shall deposit it, nearly every man of the troops now here will have left Malta. The 93d Highlanders are now embarking, and other regiments, whose numbers I have not given, are under orders to go on board. Every steamer available is detained for troops, and it is probable that all the English vessels not employed by the mails, that may arrive for the next week, will be taken into the transport service by the authorities here. They will forward nearly every regiment to Gallipoli, it is thought. The 2d division of the English army may be expected to stop here on or about the 13th. She will only touch for coals. Lord Raglan, who will take command of the British contingent of the allied forces, will go on with this division, from Paris. He will probably leave that city to-morrow or next day.

The Russians have crossed the Danube, is the latest news we have from the seat of war. This encourages the hope we have already entertained, that the first grand meeting may not be far distant. The allies will probably proceed direct from Gallipoli.

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[38] HMS Himalaya — When originally delivered to P&O in 1853, this steam screw vessel was the largest passenger ship in the world. She was sold to the British Government in 1854 for use as a troopship.

[39] Charles-Marie-Esprit Espinasse (1815-1859) — French military officer, active in Algeria and Crimea

I leave Malta, immediately after mailing this letter, this forenoon. The French Steamer *Osiris* shall have "the honor of my company" to Smyrna.[40] Thence it will be but an easy — short at all events — passage to Gallipoli. Five days on a crowded French steamer under a Mediterranean sun is not a pleasant perspective, in the landscape of my imagination, nor is it an agreeable reality for one to make up the mind to encounter. l am assured at the ticket office there will be plenty of room on the deck at night, and this is the nearest approximation to comfort that is held out.

There is not in all the mass of human beings drifting to one point, and that point the theater of action of the old world, but one American that I have yet seen. It is reported that two or three who were in Constantinople two months ago, have joined the Turkish army. One of them is the son of Bonfanti in N. Y., another is a Mr. Levis, of Boston. They hold respectively the rank of Colonel, and are in the staff of Omer Pasha[41] it is said.

Adieu to Malta, "its cursed streets of stairs," so anathematized by Lord Byron, its pleasant walks and crowded ways, goats' milk and black mantillas, and barefoot population — all a final adieu. We fly to Istanbul nor leave a sigh or regret behind. Last night the young crescent moon stood in the ascendant of our sinister; an unfavorable omen, but we hope to be delivered from the fatal spell when we shall behold the crescent gleam before us, the symbol of an oppressed nation, struggling to be free.

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[40] Smyrna — Modern city of Izmir

[41] Omer Pasha (1805-1871) — Ottoman military commander; born in Austrian territory to Serbian Orthodox parents

VII. SMYRNA

[Letters V and VI not found]

Harbor of Smyrna,
April 16, [1854].

When I open my portfolio again, it is to introduce the reader to a change of scene — for which he will thank me no doubt — though still under the date of my No. VI. To our mutual satisfaction, however, I may safely promise this to be my last from Smyrna. I shall end the drama with the day, here, under the flag of Austria; the moments of solitude and quiet in the steamer's cabin, where I have taken up my quarters, being too good to be lost.

I dispatched my No. VI at a very short notice, not an hour and a half since. I fear it will prove on being resurrected on your distant shores, to have been cut short and sent to its long account, fall of imperfections. The reflection, however, will not prevent my enjoyment of a night's repose, even at sea, after the incidents of the day on shore.

The Caravan Bridge.[42] Has the reader ever heard of this among the lions of Smyrna? It is where the camel trains, from the country, enter the city. A picturesque spot with its dark, gigantic cypress groves skirting the road, a Turkish cemetery on one side of the smooth, rapid, flowing river Meles, where you see the turbaned monuments — those that are not thrown down — standing silent and cold like the breathing forms around you whose lives and virtues are not yet told in sculptured marble. It is near the Turkish quarter, under the shadow of Mount Pagos, and one of the gayest places of resort in all Smyrna on Sunday. Thither I followed my dragoman,[43] indefatigable in his pursuit of diverting sights for my relief and amusement.

We were mounted, which means crossed over the backs of horses so exceedingly small that I was frequently obliged to disengage my feet from the stirrups to clear the shelving sides of the stony road. But we rode merrily, notwithstanding our appearance, and snapped our fingers at the disparaging opinions we could see forming in the eyes of the pretty Greek girls who thronged the streets. A few moments of brisk trotting brought us, however, in the presence of female observers whose opinions would neither be risked nor read in their eyes; the road through the Turkish quarter was lined on each side by the yashmak, hidden daughters of the harem. A low wall skirted the avenue we had entered, broken by an occasional residence, and near the houses in the gaps of the crumbling enclosure, sometimes standing on the wall, we passed group after group of these women. I shall not forget the strange scene, nor the incomparable effect produced, for many a day. The only imaginable likeness, perhaps, would be that of a solemn gathering of dead women in their shrouds. Above them wound the somber, melancholy cypress, and behind them, not far distant, glistened the tombs from which they might seem to have emerged. They exhibited neither curiosity nor displeasure as we walked our horses down the unearthly files, staring now right, now left, and half prepared to witness some ghostly change — a sudden vanishing,

[42] Caravan Bridge — Single arch structure over the River Meles, still in use; built circa 850 BC
[43] Dragoman — Interpreter, guide

perhaps, like the witches in Macbeth. The crowd in the street became more dense and varied as we neared the bridge. There was such a swarm of green, black, and white turbans, intermixed with the red fez and its blue tassel, with numerous many-colored handkerchief-head-bindings besides, that I was in great danger of losing my identity, perhaps my head, among the Turks, I thought. I began to question my guide on the meaning of this turn-out, but soon a meaning revealed itself.

Two lines of Turkish-police, in their costumes as varied as the early nature and character of the wearers — for not a few are reprieved banditti — with pistols swelling their sashes, and bristling on their persons front and rear, were stretched along from the bridge for a distance of nearly two hundred yards up the road. Beyond these were drawn up two companies of soldiers, and seated around them, some lying on the ground, were between one and two hundred sun-browned, wild and robber-looking characters, that would have made the heart of a Luigi Vampa[44] or a Joaquin[45] rejoice. A more savage-looking set of white men (though they were not all of the favored color) I certainly never saw. These were a tribe of mountaineers just arrived from their native districts, far inland, and they had come to enroll for the war. The military and police assembled were there to take them into Government keeping, and preserve order among the populace. To the mountaineers themselves these attentions were addressed in the form of a complimentary reception.

We took up our position, on the bridge, and presently the strange and wild, yet not harsh nor displeasing music of the Turkish band commenced, and the Turkish chiefs, preceded by some of their own foot soldiers, beating small and very unmusical tambourines, came down the road. Then followed the band, and then came the city soldiers, in dark blue uniforms and red fez. Next followed some curious emblems (perhaps a pasha's standard) and badges of warlike distinction, belonging to the country warriors; and lastly, in straggling procession, armed and equipped in every variety of wild fashion, it seemed, came the mountain soldiers themselves. They marched briskly between the lines of police, and were conducted in this way to the barracks. My guide assured me that it was fear of their becoming embroiled with the Greek population, and so breeding a revolution, that induced the Pacha or Governor of Smyrna to take these fellows at once under surveillance. They would go into the houses of the Greeks, whom they detest, insult the women, and so bring about trouble if they were left to themselves. It certainly seemed a just apprehension.

The rabble closed in behind the procession, and here I would fain have left them and crossed the bridge for a scamper in the country. But on turning our horses' heads in that direction, the guard stationed on the opposite side signified that we could not pass then. So, we were obliged to retrace our steps among the crowd. An incident occurred during our passage back, which, as it may furnish a moral and a guide for future sojourners in Smyrna, I shall insert here. It properly belongs to the events which I have — somewhat too minutely, perhaps — described.

[44] Luigi Vampi — Fictional character in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, by Alexandre Dumas (father)
[45] Joaquin — Unidentified reference

We were making very slow progress among the naked skins and unswerving shoulders that wedged us in, when I called to my *valet de place* to turn down the first side street he reached. The rabble, too, like all crowds, with nothing else to divert them, began to jostle, and the practical jokers to worry each other, growing more and more boisterous every step that we advanced. I knew enough of the nature of mobs to feel pretty sure that the current of joke and ridicule would soon turn upon ourselves, strangers as we were, and mounted, a fair mark in this wild sea of turbans.

Presently they began upon my guide, and as I hastened to reach his side, my bridle was seized, and a fellow standing at my back brought his pipe stick, (I supposed it was,) down smartly upon my horse. The next blow reached my shoulders. I was not long in seizing the young barbarian, but he slipped from my hands quite as quickly. Luckily the crowd did not offer molestation or interference. They gave way right and left as I followed the fellow, and chased him through into the enclosure. But I was on horseback, and he easily made his escape over the opposite wall. My dragoman joined me, and at my order offered the crowd that hung at our heels, two, three and five hundred piastres for the capture of the Turk. They all seemed anxious for the sum, but because he was a Turk none would volunteer. I ascertained that the fellow's name was *Meydi*, (or pronounced in this wise,) and determined to make an example of him, and improve his opinion of Christians, I set out for the nearest guard house. I was met a few steps onward by the Turkish Guard of the U. S. Consul here. He had witnessed the occurrence at a distance, and I bade him relate the circumstance to Mr. Griffin,[46] our Acting Consul at this time, but at the same time I promised myself redress by other means. We returned to the hotel, notified the guard stationed near there, and set off to finish our ride in another part of the city. We visited Windmill Point, the eastern extremity of the town, and had a delightful gallop along the banks of the *Hermes?*, and when the rays of the sinking sun were flashing on the distant villages of Bournabat[47] and Budjah,[48] we struck across to the road that enters the city by the Camel's (or caravan) Bridge, the scene of our morning's adventure. Here we quietly procured a Greek guide to show us the house where the young Turk, who had practiced his religion on the Giaour,[49] dwelt. On our way to the spot, passing a guard house at which a group of officers were assembled, I thought best to turn the fellow's punishment over to them, and having stated the case, a soldier was furnished, though the officer shrugged his shoulders at the prospect of my finding the offender. I was to take care of that, and very soon we had the satisfaction of marching the young Moslem before the officer in command of the post.

I really believe it was the wish of the Turkish commander to allow the vagabond to escape the whipping which he received. I was promised that the Government would do terrible things to avenge the insult But, this I did not desire. A few sharp strokes of my riding-whip across Meydi's shoulders was a sufficient corrective, and these he received in the yard behind the barracks, at the hands of the officer. He was not hurt, his voluminous galligaskins[50] entirely protecting the part where the blows fell. I released him then, merely

[46] (probably) Griffin Stith, American merchant from Baltimore, acting consul, resident in Smyrna
[47] Bournabat — Metropolitan district of Izmir province (modern name is Bornova)
[48] Budjah — Suburb of Izmir
[49] Giaour — Highly offensive term, used historically in the Ottoman Empire to describe a non-Muslim (infidel)
[50] Galligaskins — Loose trousers, breeches, leggings

warning him, through my guide, in the presence of the crowd, that it was a Christian custom to punish offences of this kind, even in a Mohammedan country. The officers did not like the speech evidently, and still less were they pleased, when, on asking my nativity, I gave in answer, American. But we had "acquitted," as the French say, our first Moslem debt, and mounting our horses, returned to our hotel.

And here ends my short experience in Smyrna. By this time, I had grown heartily wearied of the place, as the reader may suppose, delayed three days beyond the time I had fixed for departure. The weather had been stormy and snow had fallen the day before. I awaited the arrival of the Austrian steamer to take me to Constantinople, with impatience. It was therefore with the greatest satisfaction I learned on reaching my hotel, that the expected vessel was in the harbor, with steam up, and that passengers must be on board at 6 o'clock this night.

And six o'clock has come and gone, and eight and nine have been struck on the steamer's bell, and still we lie here. The transfer and change are agreeable, however, and with the whole saloon to myself (for the few first-class passengers we have are retired,) I feel no inclination to complain.

It is necessary in quitting Smyrna for any other part of Turkey to procure what is called a *Tuscare*, or Turkish passport. This Is done through your Consul. I found our acting Consul here, Mr. Griffin, very courteous and obliging. The Consul proper is at Constantinople.

In furtherance of the object stated in my last — viz. the information of travelers bound to this region — I will add that the price of my passage to Constantinople in the first saloon has been £4. The English sovereign is received at 126 piastres; our dollar is worth 23 piastres. Hotel living in Smyrna is furnished at the rate of two *collonates*[51] or Spanish dollars (worth 30 piastres), per day, sleeping room and meals, service "left to the *generosity* of the guest," as the card in the *salle a manger* reads. There is no city in the world, I imagine, where currency of every description, even to an American note, finds such ready and unobstructed circulation as in Smyrna. Everything in the shape of coin passes here. It is certainly the first and only place I have ever seen where such general acceptance is given to all kinds of money. There are sharp-set Americans here, keen for trade. They monopolize the money business. The merchants are generally, I consider, as unscrupulous in trade as their wives and daughters are bright-eyed and pretty.

But, farewell Smyrna! It is the jarring of our light steamer that causes these agitated lines — not grief at parting. We are in motion. A moonlight sea opens before us, and the night is beautiful. Farewell Smyrna! — pretty place, but Turkish!

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[51] Collonate — (perhaps) unit of currency used in Greece

VIII. PLAINS OF TROY

Noon,
off the Plains of Troy,
April 17, 1854.

I could not resist the temptation of affixing the above date, and a dedicatory preface to the page I began to-day.[52] The dedicatory preface, however, I shall cut. Your readers need not give themselves anxiety on that point. l am sure, though, that had they been fellow passengers with me today instead of navigators, as they must be, through my dull channels of prose, at some remote period from this evening, they would feel equally enthusiastic on the subject of dates, names and dedications.

It was nearly midnight when we left the harbor of Smyrna. I went on deck after closing my budget of the day's adventures, and found sufficient there to interest me for many solitary moments. We had taken on board a considerable detachment of the mountain troops, I saw during the day, and they were stretched upon the deck in various attitudes of heavy slumber, their several styles of wild costume, mingled colors, glittering arms and swarthy faces upturned in the moonlight, producing an effect quite picturesque. Over all a deep stillness reigned, disturbed only by the creaking of the wheel, and the slight jarring of the vessel. The ocean was sunk to an almost waveless repose. The bright moonlight slept upon its surface, undisturbed by a ripple. On our right and left arose the land, which, too, seamed hushed in the deepest stillness. Not a murmur broke about its ocean base, not a sound was borne on the breath of the night air from its grassy slopes. In earth, air and ocean the very spirit of repose seemed slumbering. And so, I watched our stately vessel tread lightly on her course, until I, too, became infected with the heavy stillness and sank to rest.

Morning dawned over the still untroubled deep. I was awakened by a tapping on the deck above me, which was afterwards renewed in different parts of the vessel as often, it so happened, as I dropped into a doze. It was too bright a morning to pass in bed after being once fully awake. Besides, the berths of our Austrian steamer are not beds of poppies, or of down either. The mattresses are of hair, and I have never slept on rougher material, nor harder beds. The berths are spacious and clean, however, and the rooms well ventilated and with excellent arrangements for one's toilet, and these are great comforts. The deck was fairly inundated with sunshine, the morning air soft as the breath of spring could make it, and transparent as the glitter of the dew drop on the flower. My friends, the mountain Turks, were up and merry as larks. One of them touched the chords of a light guitar-like instrument and accompanied the silvery tinkle with the untrained tones of his voice, in what sounded like a wild chant. By for the greater number were seated in the spots where they had passed the night, gravely smoking their long stem chibouques. Ever and anon, one would quietly knock the tobacco from the bowl on the deck and proceed to refill. It was this tapping — and it sounded very strangely in my "morning dreams" — that had disturbed me.

About 7 o'clock we were abreast of an old Turkish town built on the slope of a hill facing the ocean, but apparently deserted by every living thing. There was a ridiculous fort in front of

[52] Significance of Troy — Kemble was born in the city of this name in New York State.

the town, with two or three minarets pointing their sharp fingers to the blue sky. Beyond us, just coming into sight, the isle of Tenedos appeared. The Asiatic snow was beautifully diversified, to the sight at least, by fertile spots among well-wooded hills, though in general there seemed a scarcity of timber. The rise from the sea was very gradual in most places, though bold headlands and bluffs stood out above the blue wave at every mile. In the background a mountainous country reared its sterile peaks. With a strong glass I could see groups of camels feeding on the uplands, and some scattering herds of buffalo on the plain.

At 9 o'clock we were off Tenedos. This is an island famous in the classic history of the region surrounding. It was here that the Greek fleet mustered during the Trojan war. It is a barren spot, and the town seems a miserable and dirty place. We only stopped a few moments. There is a fortress advanced to the water's edge, on which I counted sixty guns. *Above it* is a height from which the fortress could be taken in sixty minutes.

We obeyed the breakfast summons — some half dozen cheerful, merry-faced Frenchmen and contented Englishmen. The active stewards served us a tolerable repast, persisting nevertheless in the abominable French style of bringing it on, with nuts, raisins, oranges, candies, and finally coffee to conclude. Our steamer is one of the Lloyd's Austriaco, Trieste Line, and in most respects her accommodations for passengers seem good enough. She has not a powerful engine, and her construction is not adapted to speed. Her bow and stem rise in an extraordinary fashion, and her wheels are small, and the buckets few and far between. Still she is a comfortable boat. Among the peculiarities of the Line, is a regulation by which every dissatisfied passenger may express his disapproval of the treatment received on board, so as to make it known to the Directors. This is done by a *Libro Lagnanza*, or record of grievances, and sometimes congratulations when testimonials of respect are paid. I saw some curious specimens in turning over its pages today. One man complains of being obliged to retire before some Turkish women who were admitted to the gentleman's saloon once on a time! Modest young gentleman, that! As though a Giaour dog would ever get so much to boast of as an inquisitive look, or that, setting aside their Mohammedan scruples, the poor creatures could gratify their sight through those hideous veils, if they tried.

At noon — and here I recur to my date — we were off the Plain of Troy. I saw the site of Ancient Troy, now Bunasbashi,[53] and far in the background, relieved against a sky of unparalleled cerulean, Mount Ida[54] lifted her ancient head, clad in its sunny capote.[55] There was an open level country, sloping at one point to the sea, fifteen miles in extent. An amphitheater of hills encircles the ancient Scamander,[56] and a river flows downward through the plains to the sea. While I was looking through my glass, one of the turbaned warriors desired to be shown what I saw. I directed his sight to the barren spot, but I suspect,

[53] Bunasbashi — Reference not identified
[54] Mount Ida lies roughly 20 miles southeast of the ruins of Troy.
[55] Capote — Long coat or cloak with a hood
[56] Scamander — In Greek mythology, a river god who fought on the side of the Trojans; also, the river of that name

from the look of disappointment he gave, that he had never heard of the Iliad.[57] In half an hour we were off the entrance to the Dardanelles.

Rounding Cape Janissary, once the Sigean promontory, you enter the straits dividing Europe from the continent of Asia. A broad, majestic channel, the shores on either side agreeably diversified by hill and dale, mosque and minaret, cottage and tower. On the Asiatic side the shores are lowest, and more wooded as you enter. You are at once between the New Castles of Europe and Asia, after passing the Cape. These are forts of modern construction, and they constitute the first defenses of the straits, which are here about four miles in width. In their rear are large towns, looking very filthy and destitute. Camels are dotting the broad plain lying back of the Castle of Asia.

The scenery of the Hellespont is not striking, in many places, indeed, it is quite tame. The white towers occasionally gleaming among green groves by the water's edge have a pretty effect. The broad bosom of the straits is covered with vessels, principally Turkish or Greek, small trading luggers.[58] Under the European shore we saw two frigates, above whose decks waved the star and crescent in their blood-red field. We are approaching the Dardanelles, or Old Castles, on the two opposite shores. Here the channel is compressed between jutting headlands on both sides. Two strong batteries command the straits, and as we draw in among the shipping we observe a town on the Asiatic side, populous and large. Two or three British transport steamers are lying off the place. They have landed troops, and one is evidently preparing to go to sea again. Conspicuous on land, at the water's edge, stands a large stone building. Over the main entrance waves the ensign of England, and above a wing, floating saucily and alone, another banner of victory streams to the freshening breeze. "Our flag is there!"

We remained at the Dardanelles until about 3½ P.M., and then, receiving on board some small stores, among which I noticed some fair-looking oysters, we swept by towers, batteries, ships, and behind all the unfailing minarets, pointing alike to the God of the Mohammedan and Christian. The mosques are less conspicuous objects along our journey, thus far. And now we approach an illustrious spot. The Straits again widen, and alter their course to the north: we enter a broad expanse of bay and channel, and hail before us the famed Abydos.[59] Here is the Hellespont flowing beneath our keel — Leander's Hellespont, Lord Byron's Hellespont, but, greater than these, Alexander's, Xerxes's, Suleiman's Crossing! Between these bluffs, beyond this low stony point, which seems to stretch out to greet us, the Ottoman first crossed into Europe, and here set up the standard which, once feared, once execrated, England and France now rally to support. A fort guards this point, and covers a tongue of land extending from a long peninsula, running parallel with the Straits, out for several hundred yards into the channel. The supposed site of Abydos is here. Across the bay, a fort marks the spot said to be ancient Sestos. The early spring verdure alone redeemed the

[57] Iliad — Epic Greek poem, set during the Trojan War (circa 1200 BC); attributed to Homer
[58] Lugger — Small ship with a sail on each of its 2 or 3 masts
[59] Abydos — Modern name of city is Çanakkale

appearance of this classic ground, and saved it from the distinction on these pages of the most barren place I ever beheld.

While we were yet full of Abydos, and Xerxes's bridge, and wrapped in silent contemplation of the solitude and desert spot that spoke in such a wondrous language, that most unclassical of sounds and disenchanting of themes, the summons to dine, was urged along the deck. Whatever may have been the occupation of my fellow passengers at the moment, they certainly set an excellent example, and I was not slow to avail myself of it, and followed to the saloon. A comfortable dinner was discussed, the oysters brought on board at Dardanelles were pronounced fine, (we have equally as "fine" ones in San Francisco) and the company repaired to the sunset deck to watch the approach to Gallipoli. Three or four Turkish frigates, of very ancient naval model, were slowly working up the Straits. The waters about us were white with sails. Two British steam frigates were descried in the distance, at the entrance of the sea of Marmora, coming down, and as the sun was sinking behind the long unbroken ridge of peninsula, which is here only a mile or two in width, we entered the port of Gallipoli.

Usually the French and Austrian steamers on the way to and from the Bosphorus, tarry a day or a night at this place. Owing to the backwardness of our trip, our stay was limited to half an hour, and only the officers in charge of the mails went on shore. We took on board, however, a half dozen passengers, whose arrival created quite a sensation, even among the placid, pipe-smoking Turks of our quarterdeck. They were Moslem women, their faces most defiantly protected, and their feet encased in the yellow slipper and over-shoe, with the same exquisite taste and propriety. They came on board under the guardianship of one of those unfortunate beings whose offices, as well as his qualifications for it, would be held in such contempt in all Christian countries. There was quite "a scene" at parting from the town, which, perhaps, was their homes and all to them. A profusion of tears and lamentations burst from beneath those ghostly visors and chin bandages. Poor creatures, theirs was a lonely, perhaps a sad lot, separated from scenes dear to them, and in an hour transferred to a spot so entirely strange and uncongenial as the deck of a Frank steamer, with the object of their aversion all around them. They made their camp on deck, to the annoyance, it seemed, of their uncourtly countrymen, who yielded the same to them with a very bad grace. Gallipoli is a place of considerable importance in the Turkish empire. At this time, however, it derives all its interest and bustle from being the point at which most of the allied troops are disembarking. The town is full of soldiers, and we could see the encampments of regiments in different directions, back of the houses. The English force is encamped some distance out of Gallipoli, and amounted to about ten thousand. The number of French soldiers on the ground was much larger, and they were arriving every day. On the beach opposite us, two or three regiments had just landed, and were making camp for the night. The scene in the harbor was even more warlike than on shore. A line of enormous frigates was formed from the eastern extremity of the anchorage to a point abreast of the last houses on the west, making a complete defense of the town. Gallipoli occupies the side of a low range of table land, the center of a curve, and is built out upon a spit of land a short distance from the bluffs. An old ruin, apparently a castle, juts out into the water. The position of the place, on the neck of the peninsula, and at the entrance of the Sea of Marmora, has given it some maritime advantages doubtless, front and rear. It is far from being an attractive spot, to all appearance, to reside in. There were five French screw frigates, three-deckers, and two French sloops-of-

war, besides three English and two French transport steamers in the harbor; and there were two Turkish frigates, also three-deckers, forming part of this invincible line of defense.

The sun went down behind all this array of warlike preparation and defense, and as we still looked back from the deck of our gliding vessel, we caught the sound of drums from the shore; muskets rattled among the shipping, and the flags in the harbor descended together — cross, crescent and tricolor. Night set her banners in the sky, and a cold wind swept from off the broad expanse of water surrounding us. The shores widened and lessened as we pushed onward, and when we had lost them in the distance and gloom, and there was no more to see, we left our watch on deck for the comfortable saloon. We were abroad on the sea of Marmora.

The morning light streams up the Bosphorus. At early dawn my roommate, all eager to catch the sun's first gleam on the gilded mosques and minarets — those fairytale wonders of our youth — arose in great confusion, overturning everything in the scanty apace between berth and door, and jamming his joints into all the corners and against all the hard things, in his haste to get dressed and go on deck. A few moments after he returned, shivering with cold, and crept into bed. At 7 o'clock, however, the sun had dispelled the night vapors, and was pouring a flood of golden light down the majestic channel opening before us. We were drawing in under a bold shore that forms the southern extremity of the peninsula upon which the city stands. On our right the shores of Asia barren and irregular, advanced to meet us, along the Sea of Marmora; and farther down, above the coast range of hills nearly abreast, arose the white peaks of Mount Olympus,[60] flashing in the strong light. The shore near us, from which we were only a cable's length, was destitute of trees — a table-land, without any of the marks of populous industry which we might expect from its vicinage to a great city. No fences, and but few houses, relieved the eye. An occasional grove of cypress surrounded some old mansion. As we approached the entrance to the straits these signs multiplied: a few light sail gleamed around us, and in front we could descry other vessels, with oar boats suspended, it seemed, above the silvery surface of the bay. Now the shores along our right have advanced boldly, as though to cut off our progress, and the broad table-land along which we are steaming is more thickly set with the emerald-like groves and the yellow bowers. A long row of fairy-like edifices stands near the water, as we swing around a point of land. We look ahead, and among the variety of new features that attract the light, we see just over a low, flat bar, tall objects which at first, we take to be trees in the distance. They stand in a misty light slender and erect, alone; but soon beneath them other forms begin to creep into view. Irregular jagged outlines, but which, here and there, beneath these spires, swell into dome-like appearances, and are "round and fair." Nigh and more nigh as we draw on toward this unfolding prospect, the scenes around it grow animated and interesting. The shores are lined with houses, and the water, blue, and tranquil, reflects an hundred sail. We double the spot of low land, and lo, in all its pride of pomp and magnificence, the City of the Bosphorus stands before us! rising and falling along the undulating shores, and thickly studded with huge bubble-like mosques and lean minarets. In the foreground, a tall manufacturer's chimney sends forth a cloud of black smoke that mars the scene and lends a work-a-day practical effect entirely out of harmony. The atmosphere over the city, too, is made foul by

[60] Mount Olympus — Highest mountain in Greece; apparently misidentified

smoke, so that we look in vain for the glitter and brilliancy anticipated. But there is a lightness, a quaintness and a charm that is quite irresistible. And as we enter the straits, and the whole plan of the city bursts upon us, we are quite delighted. Directly before us, like a gigantic, bubbling fountain, we behold the Mosque of St. Sophia, crowning the summit of the hill near the Sultan's Palace. Its four royal, gilt-crested minarets spring light and airy by its four sides. Seraglio Point, with its white palaces gleaming among the tall cypress trees, comes out to meet us as we cut our way among a fleet of swift-gliding caiques,[61] through the sunny sparkling water of the Golden Horn. *Another* Golden Gate opens wide to receive me! Our steamer rounds the Point and steers in among the shipping. The towers of Istanbul glimmer through masts and dingy pipes on our left — on our right Pera rises, street on street, a perfect hill of houses, though jumbled up in most inextricable seeming confusion. Behind us, up the Golden Horn, we see the two bridges spanning its lively surface. Our voyage is ended, our anchor is down, and we are safely moored off the City of the Osmanleys.[62]

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[61] Caique — A light skiff, possibly flat-bottomed
[62] Osmanleys — (presumably) Ottomans

IX. CONSTANTINOPLE

Constantinople,
April 29, 1854.

The week past has accumulated such an amount of news around the wheels of my narration that it will be necessary to come to a halt to clear the way. This I do with a bright morning sun revealing all the splendors of the Bosphorus, and the muezzins' cry in my ears calling, from the tower before my window, the faithful to prayers. Leaving all these novelties untouched by my pen, I turn to the news in which the pen of an "own correspondent" is very much wanted.

My dispatch is dated from the seat of war. Your readers will doubtless start at the intimation that the war has been carried to the gates of Constantinople. But true it is that here, in the very heart of the city, the battles which are to enslave Turkey or leave her free and independent, are now being fought. The miserable skirmishes on the Danube are as child's play compared with the deeper and more deadly engagements of diplomacy here in the capital — the mere wreath of smoke from the bowl: it is here that the Sultan's tobacco is being puffed away; here is the mouth piece of this long chibouque[63] of war.

Besides, we have soldiers here, in red coats, with such valiant titles as Coldstreams,[64] Grenadiers,[65] Fighting Fifties[66] and other names, whereby we are assured that "*Britons never, never, never shall be slaves!*"[67] But the sanguinary color of their coats has nothing to do with the war, nor will the Coldstreams ever stream with hot blood, I can very plainly see, and Britons never will be slaves — to Turkey. I will make the matter plain to the reader.

By the mail in which I expect to send this, the Atlantic world will be surprised to learn the contemplated withdrawal of the French Minister from Constantinople. The day of the mail's departure from here is also the period fixed by M. de Hilliers[68] for his diplomatic relations with the Porte to cease, unless His Sublime Highness consents to his, the French Minister's demand. This demand is for the interdiction of the decree ordering the Greeks out of the country, in so far as it relates to members of the Roman Catholic Church. In their favor M. de Hilliers demands that distinction shall be made and they be allowed with their families to remain.

Before this, the decrees of the Porte[69] ordering all Greek subjects to depart from Turkey before the 15th of April has been read, and doubtless consumed the usual amount of newspaper attention and comment in the East. That comment, it is needless to say, in

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[63] Chibouque — Long-stemmed Turkish clay pipe for smoking tobacco
[64] Coldstream Guards — Oldest regiment in the British Army in continuous active service; originated in Scottish Borders
[65] Grenadier Guards — Infantry regiment of the British Army
[66] Fighting Fifties — Perhaps a reference to the size of a battle unit
[67] Words from the patriotic song *Rule Britannia*, set to music in 1740
[68] M. de Hilliers — French Minister at Constantinople
[69] Supreme Porte — Central government of the Ottoman Empire

England will be as favorable to the policy of the Porte as every step of the Sultan in the present war has been — as favorable, indeed, as though it had been advised by the Ministers of the Crown at the Court of St. James instead of at the Palace of the British Minister in Pera. In France, however, the tone of the journals is expected to be different, and for good reasons. Here on the spot, and among the people most interested in the decree, in lieu of a press to comment, we have coffee houses, open streets, and petitions to ministers of neutral powers to make known public sentiment on the subject. And, let me assure you, that through these channels opinion flows, if not with the force of rhetoric, with the force of truth — truth, barefooted and staring.

The Greek population of Turkey is in the enormous proportion of eleven thirteenths, as I gather from the most reliable authority. Of this number, about 180,000 are subjects of His Hellenic Majesty, the remainder are *rajahs*, or subjects of the Porte. A similar proportion are Catholics, but it is in this proportion in whose behalf the Minister of France insists that the distinction shall be made. The English Minister very justly opposes this partition; he was the adviser of the decree ordering the Greeks to leave the country, and maintains with the Sultan, and with every sensible man, not French and crazy on the subject of *protection* to the Roman Catholic Church, that no distinction can be made between Greeks and Catholics among the subjects of His Hellenic Majesty in Turkey. It is grossly wrong to ask it. But we shall see!

The Greeks and Armenians of this country are not only in the numerical ascendancy, but in industry, wealth and business-habits they are the soul and support of what remains of its prosperity. The foremost of these, as may be expected, are those who have not thrown off their allegiance to their own country. These are the principal merchants and money dealers here. The Greeks have all the trade, and you will hardly believe that of the scanty profits of these poor exiles, England, the grand, the opulent, the powerful, is even jealous! Yet it is so, or her conduct, her ministers, and her authors most woefully misrepresent her. I wish I had time, in this letter, to quote from the most recent publications I have seen on this subject.

1 do not believe, however, that the British Minister, in ordering the removal of the Greeks, entertained any other motives than those apparent in the action. Lord d'Redcliffe[70] has been for a long time the most warm and influential friend the Greeks have had in this quarter, and it has been through his exertions mainly that England has been led to extend that sympathy and show of kindness towards that nation, which have earned for her the name of the Greeks' best friend and ally. The present insurrection, so much against the will and advice of Lord d'Redcliffe, proves the faithlessness and foolhardiness of this most despicable of modem people. But wrong as they have been, it was a weak revenge, unworthy of Lord d'Redcliffe, to urge, as he did, the expulsion of the Hellenic subjects from Turkey, with barely a week's notice. The Sultan extended the time to fifteen days; but this was not enough. The principal merchants of Smyrna joined in a long petition to our minister, Mr. Spence,[71] praying him to intercede and procure a prolongation of time, and most ably showing the injustice of the decree. Mr. Spence had, a day or two previously, on being notified by the Minister of Foreign

[70] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe (1786-1880) — Longtime British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire
[71] Carroll Spence (1818-1896) — US ambassador (Minister Resident) to the Ottoman Empire

Affairs, Reşid Pasha,[72] at the issuance of the decree, sent in a mild and very just protest against the cruel haste in which the Greeks were ordered to leave. I saw the protest, and can vouch for its temperate, yet forcible, appeal in their favor. Of course, he could do no more; in the opinion of the British Minister, he had already done too much. It was sadly interesting to see with what faith the Greeks leaned upon the power of the United States to succor them in their extremity. It will be a very severe blow to large numbers of this unfortunate people, who are established in little occupations here, struggling to earn a livelihood— compelled to sell everything to procure a passage out of the country.

But all this may have ceased to be news; or it may have no interest, even as much, to most of my readers. The present attitude of the question, however, cannot fail to be both new and important— important certainly, as affecting the great business of all, the Eastern Question. The world is aware, or such nations as know anything about the present relations of France and England with Turkey, that the war with Russia is almost wholly in their hands. I shall not attempt to strictly define the meaning of this expression; perhaps I could not with any better success than I once heard one of the brothers Christy expound the enigma of a horse dying on "the man's hands." It is a little curious that being in their hands they can still hold up their palms unstained, while Turkish blood is flowing by the regiments-full along the line of the invader. But France and England have "had the honor'' (they will have the profits, too,) of taking this war, so far as words and principles, and all but fighting men are concerned, from off the Sultan's hands. The English and French representatives here are regarded as the Council of State, the controlling power out of the Sultan's own harem, though they *did* fail to obtain from Abdul Majid[73] the convention of such terms towards his Christian subjects as would have covered the whole object for which Russia alleges she is fighting. But their power is almost absolute, and now that a schism has come, and that power is to be dissolved, temporarily at least, we may well ask what is to be the result. Surely, matters are in a critical state— a very dangerous state indeed. With the Greek provinces all in revolt, (I hear the revolution is extending every day,) an army of two hundred thousand victorious Russians occupying the most favorable position for an advance into the heart of the country that could have been assigned, even by the most generous country of the controlling and now combatting powers, the allied armies not thrown forward a mile from the shores where they have landed, a daily growing disaffection among the English soldiers for the people whose cause they have come so far and fared so badly to support, and no money nor loans to be had by the Sultan adequate to the expenses of the war — if this state of things may not be called critical, and when added to by the breaking up of the administration over the whole, be pronounced dangerous for Turkey, then I have not yet learned the equivalent of the two terms. Among the Ambassadors of the foreign powers here, the rupture is regarded with the deepest regret. In vain have the neutrals attempted to bring about a reconciliation. The bitterness existing between the French and English representatives renders it impossible.

[72] Mustafa Resid Pasha (1800-1858) — Ottoman statesman and diplomat
[73] Abdul Majid (1823-1861) — Sultan of the Ottoman Empire (1839-1861)

M. d'Hilliers[74] will retire, it is said, and I hear it suggested that his course will be sustained by his government. if so, there will be the end of the alliance forever.

I must pass on to other topics, which are the town-talk of our heterogeneous society in Pera. And first, let us take one glance at the war — *the war proper*.

Odessa has fallen. Not a very disastrous fall, perhaps, and to those who estimate the importance of an action in war by the number slain, it will appear quite a trifling affair. Five seamen killed and wounded comprise the total loss on the side of the English. The Russian loss is not known. The town was literally knocked to pieces, and all the works of defense for the harbor together with part of the wall was levelled with the sea. Five steam frigates were engaged in the bombardment, the remainder of the fleet lying off the place witnessing the sport.

We have received no important news from the Danube since the intelligence of the total destruction of the two Egyptian regiments by the Russians. No one knows. I doubt whether the Sultan himself is accurately informed, of the actual strength and disposition of the foe in the principalities. Strange as it may seem we have no authentic source of information here on the progress of the war. Foreign Ministers, even, are debarred the facilities of correct intelligence. There are no mails through the interior, no travelers coming in from the frontier; communication is almost entirely cut off. It is said to be exceedingly hazardous journeying through the country on account of the Bashi Bazouks, the irregular troops of the Ottoman Empire. From what I can gather of the performances of these gentry, I incline to the belief that they are indeed irregular troops. Such irregularities as they practice would in any Christian country, elevate the hangman's duties far beyond their deserts. Their scimitars are turned alike against friend and foe. They take you with the Sultan's firman[75] in your pocket, rob you of everything, and then cut off your head! Villages have been pillaged, and men and women, subjects of the Porte, put to the sword, with the most shocking barbarities, exceeding those of our most savage tribes of Indians. The Sultan has at length issued a proclamation denouncing their trade and threatening punishment. They are a greater terror to the inhabitants than the invading Cossacks.

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[74] Achille Baraguey d'Hilliers (1795-1878) — French army officer and politician; ambassador to Constantinople in 1853, recalled in 1854

[75] Firman — In the Ottoman Empire, any written permission, such as a passport for travel

X. CONSTANTINOPLE

Constantinople,
April 9th, 1854. (*)

(*) *The correct date is probably on or after April 29th - the date of Letter IX.*

Kalafat[76] has been taken, I know not how many times, according to the newspapers. Still Omar Pasha[77] smokes his pipe behind its stout walls. When I was in New York the news was almost positive that Kalafat would be stormed in a few days. I despaired reaching the scene of war in time to witness the grand event. That was nearly four months ago, but I see by the latest English prints that if it is not already actively besieged, I have only a few days more to wait. So moves this war; but it is a singular fact that our most reliable news from the frontier is received through English papers. It is diverting, though slightly annoying, to listen to the daily rumors current in this place. "All that we know is, nothing can be known." The Turks and common people have a most comfortable faith, nevertheless, in everything they hear. Every report from the Danube is of a battle and every battle a victory. "Wonderful!" they will say, "God is great!" and then disappear where they sit in a cloud of their own smoke.

From the Turkish provinces in Asia, where there has been some fighting, I have some late intelligence, and as it comes from a source that will invest it with peculiar interest, I transcribe a portion of the letter. And here I would suggest to those of our countrymen — I am told there are many — burning with the romantic thirst for foreign adventure and a chivalrous renown, to be won under the standard of the Crescent — read this letter, from an American officer serving as Colonel in the Turkish army at Kars.[78] The date of the dispatch is April 14.

> "Arrived here on Saturday last. My journey from Erzurum,[79] although long, was far from being unpleasant. But how disappointed l am now! Would that I could accurately convey my feelings to you. But let me describe the situation of matters here — perhaps you may then judge. The town is built at the foot of eminences which command it on all sides and which the Turks never dreamed of fortifying until G. [an English officer, General in the Turkish army] came here. The works are of the most paltry description, and to a determined enemy would offer no obstacle whatever. The troops number at the most 8,000 men; they are badly clad, badly officered and not paid at all. Should reinforcements not arrive before the opening of the spring campaign, everything is utterly lost. The foreign officers here are treated by their Generals more like dogs than gentlemen. * * * As to accommodations, you can have no idea how villainous they are. I have a large room in which I and my two servants sleep,

[76] Kalafat (Calafat) is a town on the lower Danube, in modern-day Romania.
[77] Omar Pasha defended Calafat in 1853. In 1854, it was Ahmed Rifaat Pasha who successfully resisted the Russian four-month siege.
[78] Kars — City and province in northeastern Turkey
[79] Erzurum — City and province in northeastern Turkey

and where l am obliged to have my meals cooked. It is entirely naked, a part only floored over, oiled paper in the three pigeonholes which serve as windows, and so cold that I can scarcely hold my pen. Add to this, that with everything to be done there is no work for me, everything is very dear and scarce, and no money to be had beyond our own scanty resources — you can judge of our situation. Every day I am shown more and more that the cause of the Turks is utterly hopeless, indeed they only deserve entire destruction. I blush to confess it, but I hope that the next mail may bring news of peace, otherwise we are lost, *hopelessly lost!* Should the Turks be beaten not a Christian will remain alive, for they now place so much confidence in them that in case of defeat all would be attributed to them, and they would be massacred to a man. You wanted a true statement of affairs in the army, and here it is. * * * I came here full of enthusiasm, and I have lost it entirely. Apathetic, indolent and false, these people are undeserving of our sympathies. The Government has no credit here: the other day I took an order to the forage master for forage for my horse — he refused to accept it. Gen. G. was refused bread by the baker, who said "*let the Government pay me 12,000,000 piastres which it owes before I bake any more bread!"* All the Rajahs here are in the Russian pay. * * * Since the foregoing pages I have been very sick, and am now scarcely able to sit up, though I have been on duty all the time. Our men are also sick and dying at the rate of 16 and 20 every day. Of 17,500 men in Kars and the villages around it, 1,500 are in the hospital with typhus fever."

"Everything shows that the army is doomed to destruction, and everything that I see proves that the Turks deserve to be destroyed. I only regret that I ever embarked my sympathy in their cause. l am charged with the reparation of a hexagonal fort; the whole could be done in two days with twenty good men. These fellows have been more than two months at it. To-day I went there and found not one of my men on the ground. It is plain I can be of no use here, and I shall sell my horses and return, for I cannot stay to die like a dog."

"P.S. News has just arrived that we are to be attacked in a fortnight. It comes from authentic sources. Of course, I shall not leave here now, though we shall be whipped like blazes. The Turks fight like devils behind walls, but we have no ammunition to hold out. We. have only about a hundred rounds for cannon and 300 for each man. * * * When our General asked for 100,000 men and 200 cannon, and promised with them to re-conquer Georgia, and drive the Russians into the Caspian, the Divan[80] laughed at his 'extravagant demands.' "

The writer of the above left this place about the middle of March glowing with enthusiasm and military spirit. He had received the appointment of Bim Bashaw, or Commander of a Thousand, a rank corresponding with that of Colonel in our service, together with the title of Nezim Bey, Lord of a Zephyr. But these poetical distinctions were to be the sole equivalent for his service; there was no pay attached to the office, and he was obliged to procure his own outfit. Foreigners obtaining appointment in the Turkish service accept it with this understanding. Even their own officers are unpaid. The government has titles but no money

[80] Divan — High governmental body, or its chief official

to confer. Even in the distribution of rations the allowance per man is famishingly scanty. All these discouragements, however, have not been sufficient to deter two of our countrymen from entering the Turkish army, since the experience of the writer of the above and that of one or two companions have been made known. One of them is a wealthy young gentleman from New York City, an Engineer by profession. He was my *compagnon du voyage* from Malta**,** the same who marked my portmanteau as the baggage of an American on the night of leaving Valletta. His military aspirations are more modest than those of his predecessors. He seeks to be simply Captain of Turkish Artillery. I have learned today that the appointment has been granted him, and as he has expressed the desire to be placed where Turkey most needs a soldier, in all probability he will be sent to Schumla.[81] I endeavored to dissuade him from accepting a commission which would make his situation so unpleasant from its very limited scope of power and exercise of his own will, and showed him that it might even subject him to insults and blows from his superiors. But the novelty and romance of the position, and the fanciful title of *effendim*,[82] with the prospect of glory, were irresistible. He hoped to rise shortly to a *Bey*, promotion being rapid in the Turkish army, he said. We thought— there were two or three Americans present — he would learn the use of title with the fourth vowel prefixed, before that.[83]

But more weighty considerations than these appear to warn our Christian friends, of every nation, against an excess of enthusiasm for the Turks and their cause. I can hardly hope to be believed by the all-sympathetic thousands in England and America when I deprecate their feelings as ill-founded, their zeal in behalf of the Moslems as false. The British press has taught British subjects and ourselves that Turkey in these latter days is not the Turkey of our early history and geography; that since this generation of men were boys, the reforms which have been admitted in the land of Mohamedanism[84] and the Sultan have quite changed the character and aspect of the Turks. Let me assure the reader that nothing was ever more untrue. I do not accuse English writers of encouraging a domestic vanity and hope, open as they are to such an accusation. It is from these that we have derived our little knowledge of the Ottoman character and country, nevertheless; and, as an American, I have the right to complain. As they have sown the seeds of error, so shall they reap the evil fruits for their nation to share, as we shall see before the war is over. For ourselves, the sooner we set up opinions for our own faith and guidance, on this as well us on all European subjects, the more creditable and advantageous it will be. We have no books on Turkey, and an American cannot help experiencing regret, for his country's sake, on visiting these shores, that her own Irving[85] has not enriched her library and enlightened her sons by a complete history of the Mussulman[86] and the Turk. One question I would respectfully ask English authors and believers in reform: Has the fundamental law of Turkey changed in the hands of the present Sultan or his father — the law of the Koran? Let them reconcile "reform" in the character of the Mussulman with the civil and religious code which that book contains, if they can.

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[81] Schumla (modern name, Shumen) — City in eastern Bulgaria; 1854 headquarters of Omar Pasha
[82] Effendi — Title of nobility, meaning Lord or Master; a courtesy title, used in the Ottoman Empire
[83] Kemble is punning — "o" (the 4th vowel) + "bey" = "obey"
[84] Mohamedanism — Islam, the religion of the prophet Mohammed
[85] Washington Irving (1783-1859) — Prominent American author, historian and diplomat
[86] Mussulman — Muslim

1 shall reserve argument for a more appropriate place than the column of a newspaper correspondent ten thousand miles from home; but before going on to other topics which hasten this letter, I must add one word disclaiming any feeling against the hospitable, kind-hearted and simple dreamers over the narghile,[87] and devout believers in the Koran. Let them fall down five times a day before the Kebla[88] of their petitions, and worship the True God with all the rancorous hate for Christians that their religion instils. For their ignorance they shall have my pity, for their scorn a smile, and for their devotion my deepest admiration. I could wish in this respect we had more *Christians* like them.

From my window I look out upon the Bosphorus. Beautiful stream! dividing the city of the Constantines[89] from its broad domain in Asia, first conquest of the Turk. Yonder opens the silvery Propontis[90] with its green islands— emeralds set in pearl. The shores of Asia opposite are darkened by the irregular lines and shapeless aspect of Scutari, the ancient Chrysopolis, and where the foremost of Moslem invaders first menaced the Eastern Capital— where Haroun (our own familiar Haroun of the Forty Nights)[91] was seated in the Camp of the Faithful[92] — now repose an army ten thousand strong. But the *Allah Akbar*[93] is heard no longer from wheeling squadrons and serried ranks. Where the cypress gloom of the thick grove that rises in their rear, is lightened and strewn by the thicker evidences of decay and death, the children of the Moslem conqueror and his children's children sleep side by side. The Muezzin[94] calls to prayers, but the roll of drums drowns the izan,[95] and the Giaour[96] curse profanes the holy places where for centuries God's name has only been spoken with reverence and fear.

I visited the English camp a few days since, and recognized the faces I had met so often in the streets of Malta**.** About six thousand of the soldiers are in barracks, the remainder encamped along the shore. The barracks, it is said, are capable of containing 20,000 Turkish soldiers. "*However this may be*," observed an officer quartered with two others in one of the narrow rooms, "*they cannot comfortably hold six thousand English soldiers!"* The troops are very much discontented in their new home, and well may they be. The Commissary's department is said to be incapable of taking care of the large body of hungry men, owing to what defect I am unable to say, but their arrangements give the greatest dissatisfaction to all of the officers whom I have heard speak on the subject. From what I saw of the men's fare, in the camp, kettles over the mess fires, I should be inclined to think that there is mismanagement

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[87] Narghile — Apparatus for burning tobacco and inhaling its smoke, often shared by several users (the hookah of Hindustan)

[88] Keblah (Qibla) — Direction of Mecca, faced by a Muslim during prayer

[89] Constantinople (modern Istanbul) was dedicated in 330 A.D., and named after the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine the Great

[90] Propontis — Ancient name for the Sea of Marmora

[91] The Caliph Harun al-Rashid, personified in *One Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of Middle-Eastern folk tales popularized in 19th century English translations

[92] Camp of the Faithful — (Metaphor) Believers in Islam, as distinct from the Camp of the Infidels

[93] Allah Akbar — Arabic phrase signifying "God is greatest"

[94] Muezzin — Man who calls Moslems to prayer from the minaret of a mosque

[95] Izan — "The cry of the muezzin in the mosque, calling the followers of Mohammed to prayer"

[96] Giaour — Infidel; offensive term used in the Ottoman Empire; probably entered English usage by the 1813 poem of the same name written and published by Lord Byron.

somewhere. The greatest cause of discouragement, however, is the prospect of remaining idle so long, among a people between whom and themselves there is not, and never can be one spark of sympathy, good feeling or respect.

I shall trench upon the subject put to rest in a former part of this letter, I am aware, in calling up the sources of this mutual dislike. But it is as well to state at once, that whatever English newspapers may say of the alliance, the great body of the Turks are by no means grateful for the succor of their Christian allies. And why, forsooth, should they be? They foresee as clearly as we can —more clearly than the English press would have us see — the ultimate domination of one of the great powers of Europe over their unhappy country. Perhaps the common people believe it to be in the power of their own government to fight its battles, at any rate preserve it freedom and integrity unaided by any foreign nation. It is natural that they should think so, since they hear of nothing but victory and the slaughter of their enemies; and as one of the ancient rulers of the Byzantine capital remarked, "*I see no foe from my seven towers*." If the English troops expected friendship or gratitude they have been mistaken. Instead of open arms they have found closed doors; (though that they might have expected, for your true Turk never "entertains,") they have met with coldness and scorn. Of course, it will not be for any Christian, certainly not a subject of her British majesty, to repay this treatment with courtesy and forgiveness. Among the soldiers, retaliation may be more extreme. A camp is ever the dominion of the passions. Men with arms in their hands do not stop to consult reason or policy when inflamed by hatred or desire. One poor fellow has already paid the penalty of his licentious endeavors. A private of the Connaught Rangers was found murdered and brutally mutilated and disgraced a few mornings since. A pair of lustrous eyes, behind a latticed window, was a temptation too powerful to withstand. A keen yataghan[97] soon wiped out the offence of the Infidel dog! Others will surely follow, for other like attempts of gallantry will meet with similar punishment. Heaven is not more hopelessly closed against the Christian in the mind of the true believer than the doors of the harem. "*Whoso enters there let him leave hope behind!*" Of course, this state of things, neither gratifying to the vanity nor the lust of the spruce soldier, beloved of all the girls in Tipperary, will soon foment disturbance, unless the usual relief to a discontented camp — action, be speedily applied.

And now a few words, and they shall be short ones, upon the prospect of the campaign. I came here impressed with the hope that the declaration of war would be followed by the "active assistance" promised in that declaration, for Turkey. I find but little encouragement to believe that the Western allied armies will participate in the war sufficiently to make it interesting to lookers-on, until both the season and the Russians are well-advanced. The English officers, without a single exception that I have heard, unite in this opinion, and have, though with much reluctance, made up their minds for a prolonged stay in barracks at Scutari. Agreeable prospect! The French, now 30,000 strong at Gallipoli, will be moved on to Adrianople, it is thought, where they will remain. Indeed, it does not seem to be the determination of the allied Western forces to take the field until the Turkish army shall be driven before the invaders. These calculations may be erroneous, but they are founded on the best information accessible to any but the Chiefs of the Governments and armies here.

[97] Yataghan — Type of Ottoman knife, or short saber

Lord Raglan has at length arrived, and now, if it be the intention of the British contingent to go into active operations, we shall soon know it.

There is a large society of Italian and Hungarian refugees here. Among the latter is Gen. Klaptka.[98] A day or two since the English mail brought copies of the United States papers, and in a late *N. Y. Tribune*, a letter from that immortal humbug Kossuth[99] appears. He is still talking of the "solidarity of the peoples," in the same inflated strain as ever. He pretends to believe, nay, impudently asserts, that the action of the U. S. Senate in rejecting Mr. Saunders,[100] our late Consul at London, injured the cause of republican liberty in Europe! I have not the time nor patience to notice his trash, and only refer to it because of the mortification and disgust which it occasioned among the really patriotic Hungarians who are here, awaiting the opportunity to make manifest their *amor patria*[101] by deeds instead of words, and who hold "Governor" Kossuth and his doctrines in utter contempt.

This letter has been unmercifully protracted, and when I reflect that it must go half-way around the globe, and be sixty days old when it reaches you,[102] I tremble for the fleeting substance on which its value and reputation depend. Still it can be news, even when it shall have grown old and been forgotten by us. So, while the Moslem millions are prostrating themselves towards their Cooba[103] in the East, I bow to the Mecca of my prayers on the distant shores of the Pacific, and bid my messenger Heaven-speed on its way.

P. S. l have just learned that the difficulties between the Government and M. d'Hilliers have been smoothed over. The French Minister is reconciled to the decree in its original shape. There is still much bitterness between the two representatives of the Western Powers, and the excitement on the subject is still very great. It is thought it will lead to the recall of M. d'Hilliers. Persia has taken the field against Russia with 50,000 troops.

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[98] General George Klaptka — Hungarian revolutionist

[99] Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894) — Hungarian politician; talented orator; Governor-President of Hungary during 1848-49 revolution; widely honored in UK and US as a freedom fighter and promoter of democracy

[100] George Nicholas Sanders (1812-1873) — US Consul in London, recalled on the grounds of revolutionary and anarchist activities, such as assassinations; later, supporter of the Confederacy during the Civil War

[101] *amor patria* — (Latin) love of country, patriotism

[102] Mail delivery from Constantinople to San Francisco — The estimated elapsed time of sixty days is slightly lower than the lag time observed for prior letters.

[103] Cooba — The Kaaba ("Cube") is the most sacred site of Islam; the building is located in Mecca, Saudi Arabia

LETTER FROM NEW YORK

New York,
July 3, 1854.

I left Constantinople on the 10th of May. Returning by the isles of Greece, the Gulf of Corinth and the Adriatic to Italy, l traveled its length, and then traversed the breadth of France, halting only a day or two in Paris, and reaching London on the 16th inst., the day before the sailing of the *Europa*, in which I came passenger to New York.

1 wish I could dispatch the business of this letter in a paragraph as summarily as I have done my journey to America in the foregoing prelude. I could wish even that the unrecorded and perhaps never-to-be-recorded chief incidents of that journey formed the least disagreeable of the recollections left me of the month which succeeded my last letter, though I have transferred the reader many thousands of miles with that palace-moving facility which belonged of old to the Genii of lamps and rings; be it understood in their actual passage no miles were ever longer or more weary. If the doubtful reader, fresh from some literary excursion along the shores I had passed in such quick succession, would upbraid me for my want of zeal as a tourist, and challenge my record of incident in these two months of the return voyage, he shall have my defense when I publish my *volume of a Fortnight's Reflections on a Sick Bed*. It will cool the ardor of his fancies, I imagine, to learn that a man may be so sick in some abominable by-town in Greece as to be quite indifferent at the time, and for some time afterward, as to whether "*burning Sappho loved and sung*"[104] there, or not. Such is not exactly my case, but illness under circumstances so similar as to justify the allusion must account for and excuse any lack of enthusiasm in speaking of my journey from Constantinople to the shores of France.

Patient reader! Have I then a living and breathing embodiment of what I had almost begun to fear I was apostrophizing in an ideal form? I saw in Paris the positive contradiction of this despairing belief. Yes, there I saw my "reader" posing over the contents of an *Alta California*, the first evidence of that familiar friend's well-being that I had seen since leaving Paris in February last. O patient reader! We parted so long ago, and such have been the events that rolled between, that fain would I enquire when and how we *did* part. In friendship say you? And was it with the promise of another meeting not distant? And was I cheerful and were you satisfied? Ah! it most have been before the 10th of May!

And now I remember, there were mosques between us, and minarets and chaunting muezzins, and Turks at their devotions all about me. And there was the Bosphorus before; and beyond, the white tents of the allied army, and beyond that, (in a vision!) the "dark rolling Danube," and fields of battle, and bloodshed and glory, (of course!) all of which I said were to be drunk up by the greedy page of correspondence. We meet again, and I feel that the separation has been long; the silence, I am constrained to add — with a recollection of Greece — has been *painful*. But what a change is here! Turbans and Turks no longer; harems and mosques have disappeared, and the minarets dissolve into thin air, like the spars of the

[104] *The Isles of Greece*, 1st verse. Lord Byron

phantom ship before the pious incantations of Vanderdecken the Younger.[105] In their places, I behold the spires of Trinity Church and St. Paul's; Broadway pours its living tide along, and the roar of omnibuses that at this moment arises beneath my window, would drown the voices of ten thousand muezzins. Allah inshallah,[106] indeed! The change is too wonderful to be reached by ordinary powers of description. Between my last letter and today there rolls a turbulent sea of events! There is a week a lunacy — wild and vague wanderings through the deluged streets of Pera; wet feet and fever; desperate thoughts of going alone to the Danube, not being able to make up a party — these are among my last recollections of Constantinople**.** Then there is a French steamer standing on its head somewhere between the Dardanelles and "the Piraeus;"[107] a quarantine imprisonment at the latter place; my hopeless resignation to an asylum for life, but my escape by signing a certificate of sound health, in the lapse of my fever. Then comes the Acropolis upside down: an Austrian steamer going round and round in the Lepanto,[108] and a small boat rowing sidewise conveying me to shore at Petras.[109] At this place my fate has already been foreshadowed. I return by the way of Ancona[110] to Florence, a wiser and a sadder individual. At length I reach Paris and London, and in due time am restored to the kind care of expectant friends and inquirers in New York.

Before leaving Constantinople**,** I became convinced of the impracticability of my plans for visiting the Danube. I had never before seen the axiom of "great bodies" carried out with such a good knowledge of the retarding principle. I never knew at what count to place the threats, bombast and fustian of old England. With a high appreciation of her solidity in all material things, I was disposed to take for their written value the declarations of war, and the sworn determination to aid Turkey by active and material assistance. The movement of her troops I regarded as sound and practical evidence of her will and ability to act. I did not know, though I had the learned grave-digger in Hamlet's words for it, that an "act hath two branches." My fine intentions stated to you in my correspondence at Malta — nurtured all the way across the wintry Atlantic, and blossoming there in so many summer-hued prospects, all duly recorded for your benefit — were cruelly blasted before I had been a fortnight in Constantinople**.** The satisfaction I had promised myself of witnessing and recording the first encounter of the allied land forces with the Russian Bear is reserved for other pens; for those who have time and patience to attend in the slow progress of an *army in reserve*, and the constitution to endure such vile weather as out-lasted my stay in the city of the Caesars.[111] Nevertheless, I certainly should have visited Schumla, then the seat of Turkish military operations for the Danube, could I have made up a party or found a single companion at Pera to go with me. The place was then quietly occupied by Omer Pacha and his little army.

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[105] Philip Vanderdecken "the Younger" — Fictional character who searches for his father, a Dutch sea-captain doomed to sail forever in a Bewitched Phantom Ship (the *Flying Dutchman*)
[106] Inshallah — (Arabic) God willing
[107] Piraeus — Port city of Athens
[108] Lepanto — Greek port city on Gulf of Corinth
[109] Petras — (perhaps) Patras, port in western Greece
[110] Ancona — Italian port on Adriatic coast
[111] City of the Caesars — Constantinople, founded by the Roman emperor Constantine

So ends — with a few scattering "notes," (for future use) private memoranda, and a rude sketch or two of scenes in Byzantium, which I will send you — my expedition to "the war!" The disappointment I felt in being obliged to leave the distant theatre of action without so much as witnessing a shot fired in anger, was nothing to the deep-seated sound and gloom which pervades the foreign society of Pera at the course of the allied governments in this war. I will not pretend to an opinion for myself, even from a visit to the hostile field and camp, but I may state that, in the minds of English and French, soldiers and citizens alike, the war had better never have been begun than permitted to drag as it has done. Complaints of the dilatoriness of Government in sending supplies, troops and commanders, were only varied by complaints at any being sent at all, among the officers of both armies. And when the soldier lets his murmurs escape the ears of his comrade, at being ordered into the field for service, there must be strong provocation and cause indeed. "*Are these the miserable devils we have come so far to protect?*" I heard an English officer exclaim one day, in passing through the Bazaars; and, as he glanced around upon the indolent, cross-legged, and bearded Osmanleys — " *D— n me, but I would quite as soon fight Turk as Russian — the more merit in helping Christians!"* As I have hinted in former letters, this amiable spirit on the part of the allies is fully reciprocated by the Turks.

If the war, or the course of the war, is unpopular with the army, I believe it to be doubly so in England. Now that the enthusiasm of the alliance and promised martial deeds has cooled off, and the big words, and bluster, and pomp and show, have resulted in a few small doubtful triumphs by sea, laggard, costly and as yet perfectly ineffective operations by shore, and in an additional burden of taxation at home. The apologists for the slow progress of the war, for the delay and expense of the army in the field, can hardly hope to keep the country quiet much longer. When the increased Income Tax begins to bear heavily, as it must, and the poor record of deeds by war be held up to answer for the enlarged national expense, there will be a state of things bordering on bankruptcy in national pride, or *we* are not worthy to have beheld the mysterious *breeches* of the *prophet*.[112] The few conversations with Englishmen which I had before last leaving London assure me in this prediction.

The delay and backwardness of the allies has at last excited the wonder of even their apathetic *beneficiaries*, the Turks. Before I left the East dispatches had been received by the Duke of Cambridge,[113] from Omer Pacha, enjoining the necessity of active support at Schumla, and hinting in no very guarded terms the long-deferred hopes of the Turkish army in their allies. The English contingent however are not prepared to move from their barracks, and their subsequent departure to occupy a position near Schumla, has been made it seems with only a portion of their artillery. They were quite unprepared to operate with their allies, nor did they expect to be ready until July or August; their field artillery having been shipped in *sailing vessels*, it was not expected for two months.

But here I must end the chapter of my personal narrative, with all its complaints and opinions unsupported by either moral or political reasoning, though I leave the subject of the War in

[112] Breeches of the prophet — Reference not identified

[113] Prince George, Duke of Cambridge (1819-1904) — Member of British Royal Family; followed military career; commanded the First Division (Guards and Highland brigades) early in the Crimean War

Turkey with a promise to return to it again after days not many. It is just at "this present writing" entirely too warm to indulge in reflections of any kind, and as l am warned by the reflection from the shining face of St. Paul's clock to put up my pen, I draw the curtain between myself and Turkey, and would repose in a blissful unconsciousness of there being such a place on the wide earth.

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