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TURKEY, THE WAR, AND CLIMATIC INFLUENCES IN ASIA MINOR

By SIR EDWIN PEARS

THE Chairman (Sir MORTIMER DURAND) presided at a meeting of the Society on March 17, 1915, and in asking Sir Edwin Pears to deliver his lecture, he said Sir Edwin spoke from forty-two years' experience of Turkey, and needed no introduction.

In the course of his lecture, Sir EDWIN PEARS said :

When I was invited by the Council of the Central Asian Society to read a paper before you having reference to the war now in progress, I felt my incompetence for the task. I am not a soldier ; but, in the course of my long residence in Turkey and during my many years' researches into the history of the Greek and subsequently of the Turkish Empire, I arrived at certain conclusions as to the manner in which geographical conditions had affected the history of Constantinople, and of the countries over which it ruled, which I thought were worth the consideration of men who, in thinking of the war now going on in Turkey, were not merely content with the newspaper history of our times. I should prefer to call what I have to say, "Remarks on Certain Factors which have affected the History of Asia Minor and still influence its Political Conditions."

A rough idea of its geography may be found by representing the country as an inverted dish, containing a high tableland varying from 2,500 to 10,000 feet high, and with edges sloping down to the shores of the Levant, the Black Sea, and the \AA gean. The eastern portion of Asia Minor is the highest, and it is there, where a series of mountain ranges and gorges exist, that one finds the battlefield, now and during long centuries, between the Armenian and other races. Principally, in our time, the struggle is between the Armenians, the Kurds, and the Turks. When the history of the remarkable Nestorian church comes to be fully written, we shall obtain much more information about the struggles in this part of Asia Minor than we possess.

A valuable book appeared in the spring of last year by the Rev. Dr. Wigram entitled, "The Cradle of Mankind," which gives from personal experience an account of the present struggles between the Kurds, the Armenians, the Nestorians, and the Turks. The photographs and sketches reproduced in this book enable the reader to form a vivid

idea of the character of the country, and enable him to understand how isolated communities could readily be locked up and almost forgotten. Such communities still exist in remarkable isolation.

The Armenians, I fancy, have always been a healthy and prolific race. Their struggles show them to have been vigorous and courageous, and their recent history shows them, to say the least, to be in intelligence not inferior to any race in Turkey. Their courage shows best, however, in mountainous districts. Their defence of Zeitoun, in what in the Middle Ages was called Little Armenia, against the troops of Abdul Hamid, who was reputed to have determined to annihilate the community of the rock fortress, compares well with the bravest deeds of the Montenegrins. Happily their extermination was prevented by the intervention of nearly all the ambassadors in Constantinople, urged thereto by the Press of France and especially of England. But for my present purpose I want to point to them as an illustration of a vigorous people who by the character of their early homes were largely isolated and yet succeeded in holding their own in spite of dispersals of their people and of massacres when they abandoned their mountain isolation. Those who were killed on the plains to which they had descended were soon replaced by their kinsmen from the mountains. Recalling the elevation of Eastern Armenia—Erzeroum at 6,200 feet above sea level—you will realize that the cold in winter is intense. But the climate is healthy, and has produced a sturdy race in that portion of Asia Minor.

The physical conformation of the western portion has also had its effect upon the population. Asia Minor, north of the Levant, has the great range of the Taurus. At its western extremity a range runs northwards with high peaks, some of them snow-covered in July, and with deep, rugged, almost impassable, valleys. These must at all times have afforded shelter to fugitive populations. Everyone of course recalls that the British population were driven to Wales and other portions of the west of England, but our mountain districts can hardly be compared with those of the Taurus. The southern range has been for centuries an almost impassable barrier from Cilicia to the Plain of Konia, except through the Cilician Gates; but in that range, as well as in the one running northward from it, there are abundance of places well supplied with water, where small communities could live and be safe from attack. Such communities would usually be cut off more or less completely from their fellow-men.

Travellers in Asia Minor are constantly struck with the existence of such isolated communities. Curiously enough, also, it has been the habit, certainly during the last three centuries, of the conquering race to transport whole communities from one place to another. Thus, at Bardazag, about sixty miles from Constantinople, there is a town containing perhaps 20,000 inhabitants, all of whom are Armenians. Thirty

years ago I returned from my first visit to Nicæa, the "city of the Creed," with the late Hamdi Bey, whom Oxford honoured some five or six years ago by conferring on him the degree of D.C.L. We rode along the beautiful shores of Lake Ascanius, and then struck into the mountain range which separates the lake from the Gulf of Ismid. Half-way across we reached an Armenian town of 3,000 inhabitants, and spent the night there. The leading members called upon us during the evening, but could give us no information as to where their ancestors had come from, except that it was somewhere in Armenia. The only other villages in its neighbourhood were either Greek or Turkish.

But I am not thinking of these isolated settlements, to which a parallel may be found in the Slav villages existing in Switzerland less than a century ago, but rather of communities which have become isolated by their geographical position. The isolation may be in mountain fastnesses, or even in underground dwellings, as in Cappadocia. I am looking forward with interest to the completion of the work of Mr. Dawkins, who has paid special attention to the Greek dialects spoken in Greek villages more or less isolated in Cappadocia. Such villages exist hidden away in the great mountain ranges or in underground villages. The Turkish conquerors, with their nomad habits, took possession of the plains, and the population whom they displaced either took refuge or were driven into the mountains. Round about Karamania, and in the districts bordered by the Taurus on the south, running east and west, and the extension of the range running north and south, with many high peaks, there are many Greek and other villages hidden away in the mountain valleys. I may mention two which I visited. Sillé is not many miles from Konia, and the mountain valley in which it is situated bears marks of its having long been inhabited. The hills are pierced with rock dwellings, but, with the exception of a handful of Turkish officials, all the inhabitants are Greek. I learnt from the priest that they got on well with the Turks, because the head of the largest order of Dervishes—the Mehlevi—at Konia, like his predecessors, had always been favourable to them. Every year, at the festival of the Church, the Chilibè of the Dervishes sent them a present of a barrel of oil and another of wine. A few days afterwards I had an interview with the Chilibè in Konia, who confirmed the statement of the priest, and gave the following explanation: "We are an ancient community which preceded Islam and even Christianity, and when the Seljuks came here they expelled the Christian inhabitants, who were allowed to take refuge in the hills. We objected to such expulsion, because we recognized that Christians, like ourselves, are the 'sons of God,' and my predecessors constantly sent them presents as an expression of sympathy. That expression has come into the dispatch of wine and oil, as you found."

At the distance of perhaps fifty miles farther south I visited the Valley of Ivriz, where the famous Hittite monuments exist, probably dating, according to the Hittite experts, about 900 B.C. You will remember the two great figures of the king and priest, together with the long Hittite inscription. About a mile and a half farther up the valley there is a curious duplicate of these sculptures, also hewn out of the naked rock; and there are the remains of what was possibly a Christian church, though it probably served at an earlier time as a pagan temple, dedicated to Sun-worship. The inhabitants of the valley have a type which recalls the Hittite sculptures, and, according to their neighbours some twenty miles away, professed neither Christianity nor Islam, but had certain rites which pointed to Sun-worship. Some twenty-five years ago, however, after the sculptures had been brought to the notice of Western Europeans and occasional visitors went to see them, the people attracted the attention of the Governor of Konia, who took the necessary means to inform them that they were Moslems, and compelled them to build a mosque. When we visited the place there was no attempt on the part of the women to cover their faces, and the mosque did not appear to be much used. The Jezidis, or Devil-worshippers, are another people whose existence as a community has been largely aided by the physical conditions of the country in which they live. A distinguished Roman Catholic archæologist agreed with me that it would not be impossible to find in Asia Minor the representatives of every great heresy which once had a vogue in the Christian Church. The preservation of all these isolated communities has been largely due to the physical formation of the country.

It is their existence which, among other causes, has contributed to the non-absorption by the Ottoman race of the various peoples over whom it rules. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the Turks have continued the practice mentioned of transporting communities from one part of the country to another. The latest illustration of this practice is specially unpleasant: the Turks during the last two years have driven out nearly every Greek, Bulgarian, and Armenian from Thrace. When it is remembered that this was done by a Government which five years ago promised religious equality to all races of the empire, one despairs of any moral progress in the country.

I now come, however, to what is perhaps the most important of the physical causes which have affected the history of Asia Minor and Syria. Readers of the Old Testament have often been puzzled at the numbers of the people of Palestine and its neighbourhood, and of the armies that were assembled. In a controversy which some of the oldest among us remember, Bishop Colenso, whose books on Algebra and Arithmetic were our textbooks at school, attacked the statements as to numbers in a volume which would probably now attract little atten-

tion. An attempt was made to drive him out of the Church, whereupon Bishop Wilberforce is said to have remarked: "Colenso is familiar with Genesis and Numbers, but does not believe in Exodus."

In my studies on the history of Constantinople and the Greek Empire I was struck with the accounts given by various contemporaries of the numerous hordes said to have been sent from Arabia within a century after Mahomet's death. For example, at the Siege of Constantinople in 717, no less than 380,000 men sat down before the city during five successive years and failed to take it. But at that time Moslem armies of Arabs, no doubt reinforced by new converts from Syria and the north coast of Africa, were fighting their way to the Atlantic, across into Spain, until they met their fate in 732 at the great Battle of Tours, where Charles Martel—Charles the Hammer—smashed their army, and prevented, as Gibbon observes, the possible establishment of a school of Moslem theology at Oxford. About six years ago I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Elsworth Huntington, who had been a member of the United States Commission in South Central Asia, whose scientific work is doubtless well known to many members of this Society. Those not acquainted with it have probably read Sven Hedin's book, which gives details of his discoveries, not only of Buddhist civilization, but of great climatic changes in the district which allowed manuscripts and many other remains of civilization to continue in existence up to the present time. The scientific work of the Americans in taking the various sea levels on the Caspian and elsewhere suggested to Mr. Huntington the idea of examining whether and how far similar causes had been in operation in Palestine. It was already known that the Dead Sea showed indications of a change of level in the Valley of the Jordan. I urged upon him that he should also direct his attention to the depopulation of Arabia. In his "Transformation of Palestine," a book which probably many have read, he necessarily gives his first attention to Palestine itself. His book is scientific, illuminating, and of great value, as well as being eminently readable. His researches cover a much wider field than that of Palestine, and lead to the conclusion that at various epochs within the historic period there have been alternate seasons of drought and moisture, and that the changes thus brought about had great influence on the political situation of every country between Egypt and Persia. So far as I know, a Russian explorer is the only writer to whom the idea of alternate climatic changes had suggested itself. Mr. Huntington read a paper on "Olympia" before the Royal Geographical Society, in which he explained his theory, in presence of some of our greatest experts of Greek history, most of whom regarded the theory with a proper amount of scientific scepticism. Leaving aside, however, the application of such theory to Greece, under the circumstances dealt with, candid readers will admit that for Syria and

Arabia he has made out a strong case. Many of his illustrations relate to the period before our era. With them I need not deal. But many later illustrations are given. The Mongols, for example, under Yenghis Khan, who on his death in 1227 had established his rule from the Sea of Japan to the Dnieper, appeared in overwhelming numbers from the north, drove the Arabs beyond Bagdad, and threatened to conquer all Asia Minor and Syria. No entirely satisfactory explanation of the causes which set these great masses of men in motion has been given. They were not apparently due to the ambition of military leaders; they were not the results of dynastic struggles. They appear like spontaneous movements of men set in motion by a common impulse. While not forgetting in the case of Moslem advance the influence of religious enthusiasm, few of the invaders had accepted Islam. Moreover, such influence is insufficient to account for movements which were overwhelming by reason of the numbers of the assailants. At a subsequent period—namely, the end of the fourteenth century—Tamarlane, or Timour the Tartar, made a raid under somewhat similar circumstances into Asia Minor.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of the changes of climate is to be found in the existence and subsequent disappearance of roads between Egypt and the Persian Gulf. Let it be noted that during the last 3,000 years a constant political question has been the capture of trade between the East and the West. Such a question is still before us. Roughly speaking, the great traffic between Europe and India was conveyed for 2,000 years along roads. One of these ancient highways wound its way on the seashore from Egypt to Philistia and Judæa and passed eastwards, following the depression now traversed by the Haifa-Damascus Railway, and then struck southward to Joaf. Such road is now absolutely deserted. The most ancient, however, went northward to Petra, which is in the Ghor, thence to Gerassa or Jerash, passing, on the eastward side of the Jordan, through towns, many of which are uninhabited or uninhabitable. Petra, whose grandiose ruins show it to have been a flourishing town, is uninhabited. Philadelphia, Gerassa, Basra, and other places on the route, are occupied by a population not one-tenth, and in some cases not one-hundredth, as great as in the past. Gerassa, since 1883, has been occupied by a handful of Circassians. Its ruins show that it was once a flourishing and well-populated city. One of its theatres, 300 feet in diameter, would seat easily six times the population of the present town, estimated at from 1,200 to 1,500 persons. Its wealth may be judged by its ruins, a colonnaded street with almost 600 limestone columns and carved capitals, with cross streets similarly ornamented. In the time of Christ other parts of the same country were equally prosperous. Great slabs of sculpture from Mishatta, now in Berlin, may serve as another illustration. The ruins also

around the Sea of Galilee, as of Moab, exist by hundreds, and are deserted because the country is unproductive.

In reply to the question, "Why have these countries become less fertile and seen their population diminish?" Mr. Huntington produces evidence to show that all the region of North Arabia and its neighbourhood have been subject to long seasons of drought, alternating with comparatively moist periods. We are now apparently in a long dry period, and the country is less productive of food for man and beast than it once was. Misgovernment under Turkish rule is not a negligible factor; but it plays a comparatively insignificant part in presence of physical causes. Nature has largely written the story of the fluctuation of climate in this part of the world, and notably in the geological depressions, called the Ghor, of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, as far as the Gulf of Akaba. Various members of the Palestine Exploration Fund have at different times given their attention to this subject, amongst them, notably, Lord Kitchener. The Dead Sea, as you are aware, is 1,200 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. Mr. Huntington contends that its level has fluctuated greatly, and fluctuates somewhat, though very slowly, to-day. Such fluctuations are recorded in a series of old strands. Dr. Masterman, of Jerusalem, who has paid much attention to the Dead Sea, concludes that the old strands or beaches may mark old sea-levels well within historic times. Evidence shows that its level was higher during such times than now. The Book of Joshua—probably edited in its present form in the fifth or sixth century B.C.—gives the position of the northern end. M. Claremont Ganneau, one of the most competent of Biblical critics, concludes that in the time of Joshua the level was 300 feet higher than now, though Professor Huntington claims no more than 70 feet. A Russian pilgrim in 1106 stated that "the sea fled in terror at the approach of Christ to receive baptism," the basis of his story being that he recognized at once that the sea once stood at a higher level. Jericho, with its three thousand years of history, once stood on the borders of the Dead Sea, and is now between 500 and 600 feet above its level. The situation of the ruined cities around the Sea of Galilee, no longer on its shores, tell the same story and explain why Palestine has become a thirsty land.

Returning to the existence of roads across Syria to the Persian Gulf within the period of later Biblical history, there were at least five well-known roads from Egypt to Bagdad or Basra. I have already mentioned the two which went to Gerassa. King Solomon, whose reign centres round the year 1000 B.C., endeavoured to divert the trade between East and West through Palestine. The period was one of moisture, and he largely succeeded in his efforts. Solomon's reign indeed marks the culmination of Israel's prosperity. The two roads already mentioned, however, became impracticable after a few

centuries for want of water. In the time of Christ only the two most northerly ones were used. The most northerly one, which passed through Palmyra, is the most interesting for my purpose. It was the "Tadmor of the Wilderness" of the Bible. It was situated 120 miles from Damascus, in an oasis of the Syrian Desert. Three centuries before Christ the route through it to the Persian Gulf had already become a favourite one, and had attracted the attention of the Roman authorities. All will remember its famous Arab Queen, Zenobia, by whom Syria, Arabia, and Egypt were brought under her rule. In 272 the Queen, with her people, resisted Rome, and the Emperor Aurelian defeated her. The period of drought had already set in, and the city not only never recovered its prosperity, but became so far forgotten that when one of the British colonists at our factory in Aleppo visited and identified the ruins about 1650, its rediscovery was considered as an important historical event. Its superb ruins, which I regret to say I only know from photographs and descriptions, bear witness to its former wealth and civilization. Its depopulation and destruction were really completed by a period of prolonged and intense aridity in the seventh century, a century which is marked by many raids of Arabian tribes upon their neighbours on every side.

In the midst of this turmoil and of this period of drought came the message of Mahomet. The Arabs had been prosperous, but were then greatly divided in religious as in other matters. Tribe now fought with tribe for the water and pasture of their own lands. Mahomet furnished them with a common impulse, and instead of Arab devouring Arab, they turned their attention to foreign countries.

It may have occurred to some of you to ask what all this has to do with the present condition of Turkey. I will endeavour to explain. I repeat that the trade between East and West has always been an important political factor. The country now called Turkey has always been largely indebted to such traffic. The Romans, before the time of Christ, had recognized the importance of this traffic, and therefore, when the ancient roads disappeared, set themselves to making others in places where there was less liability of complete failure of water. The great Justinian, whom all lawyers know as the codifier of Roman law—meaning thereby the law of the New Rome—was still more famous in his time and for long afterwards as the builder, especially of bridges and roads. After the lapse of upwards of thirteen centuries the outlines of his roads are still traceable and some of his bridges are still used. I may mention, notably, one which is near the Lake of Sabanja. At a distance it resembles Waterloo Bridge, being probably about the same length, and its roadway is on a level—that is, not rising to the centre. At one end is a *tête du pont*, facing the roadway on the bridge at right angles, and as well adapted for use as when Justinian erected it. Possibly the fact that for a long period

the river has ceased to flow beneath it has had something to do with its preservation. Texier states that there was an inscription on it which he attributed to Justinian; but as when I visited it it was raining very heavily, I have to take the inscription on trust. The successors of Justinian down to the twelfth century paid great attention to roads and bridges, and Constantinople in consequence prospered, for the capital had succeeded largely in diverting the traffic between the Persian Gulf to Europe through to the Bosphorus. The inroads of the Turks and other nomadic people made communication between the towns difficult, greatly impoverished the country, and led to the non-use of the roads, which for all practical purposes disappeared. Let it be said to the credit of the now discredited Young Turkish Party that it largely occupied itself with various useful schemes for the construction of roads. But everyone now recognizes that in addition to ordinary carriage roads railways are necessary. It would be useless here to attempt to mention the various projects, mostly due to English engineers, for constructing a great Trunk Railway, either from a Syrian port or from Constantinople itself, to the Persian Gulf. In 1874 and 1875 the Turkish Government built a railway from Haidar Pasha, opposite Constantinople, to Ismidt. This was then taken over from the Government for its working by an Englishman and an Austrian. One of the clauses of the Concession was that an extension should be granted, the idea already being to make such line the commencement of one to Bagdad. This was to serve the purpose of the great roads made by the emperors, but of course brought up to date. The Germans, however, interfered to prevent the extension being granted, and after the first visit of the present Kaiser to Turkey the Turks evicted the two concessionaires of the Haidar Pasha-Ismidt Railway and gave it over to the Germans. An action was brought before a mixed Commission, and £132,000 were awarded as compensation. Germany had thus got the head of the line. Her influence was greatly increased on the occasion of the second visit of the Kaiser, which was in 1898, and the famous Bagdad Railway Concession was granted in 1902. The railway is now built from Constantinople to the Taurus. The crossing of the range is difficult on account of the friable nature of the rocks, but the necessary works are nearly completed. Once in Cilicia, the railway joins up with the short one from Mersina to Adana, of which for twelve years I was Chairman. From Adana to the foot of the Amanus range the construction is easy, and is in part accomplished. The piercing of that range will be a more difficult task. Thence it is proposed to take it on to Aleppo, from whence it will proceed to Jerablus, a site of great archaeological interest, where Mr. Hogarth, equally keen as an archæologist and observer as he is lucid as a writer, has already made a series of interesting excavations. Let it be said to the credit

of the Kaiser that when he learned that there was danger of these excavations being interfered with, he immediately promised, and I believe actually sent orders, that the plan should be changed in such a way as to prevent interference with the examination of the mounds on which Mr. Hogarth was engaged. Thence across towards Bagdad is easy enough.

The question of what political arrangements should be made in reference to the terminus of the railway on the Persian Gulf is one which it would be premature to examine. Let me mention as an interesting fact that Mr. David Forbes went in his motor-car from Aleppo to Bagdad. He found that his car need not want a better road to travel on than the desert itself, and expressed his opinion very confidently to me that if a sum that would not exceed £1,000 were spent in improving the roads leading down to and up from the rivers to the desert again, motor-cars might run regularly from Aleppo to Bagdad in four days.

The Bagdad Railway will take the place of the great historic roads that since the time of Solomon have run across Syria. It is necessary for the development of the country, and indeed every mile of railway constructed in Asia Minor and Syria is pure gain for the people. But it does not appear to me that the Bagdad Railway will be of much use to Constantinople itself. Sea traffic being always very much cheaper than land traffic, merchandise for Western Europe, when coming from the East, is much more likely to be transhipped at Alexandretta, or even at Smyrna, than that it should be brought to Constantinople.

There can be no doubt, however, that Germany attaches great importance to her interest in the construction of the Bagdad Railway. It is her most important interest in Asia Minor. Whether it remains in German hands or is internationalized, it will be, when completed, of great commercial importance to all the lands through which it passes. Beyond that, however, I do not believe that it will satisfy the dreams of some of its supporters. If commercially and by peaceful penetration Asia Minor should become Germany's place in the sun, we should have little reason to complain. But if the idea is that in the ordinary operation commerce will once more find its way between Europe and Asia across the Asia Minor and Syrian peninsula, its supporters will be disappointed. With cargo steamers running at fifteen to twenty knots an hour—and we have already arrived at that—little more time will be expended in the voyage by the Red Sea and the Canal than would be taken by trains, and the difference in freight occasioned by manutention would make that by land so much heavier that the railway would have little chance in competition.

If I may now hark back to my starting-point, I suggest that it is the physical conformation of the country which renders the construction of the Bagdad line comparatively easy. From Constantinople to

Ismidt the level is practically the same. It continues so to Ada Bazar. The ascent of the railway begins through the gorges of the River Kara Sou, beautiful perhaps as any in the Tyrol or Switzerland, and continues to Eski Scheir, or, if you like, to Kara Afium Hissar. Then comes a long stretch of plain, of about 700 miles, as far as the Taurus. The passes there and of the Amanus range I have mentioned. Then, below the ridge of my inverted dish, there are few difficulties to encounter.

I have said nothing about the other slopes to the sea of my inverted dish. One general feature is common to them. They are all, for Turkey, well-peopled, and nearly always by non-Turks. On the Black Sea you have in the east the Lazes, and at Trebizond, Samsoun, Ineboli, many Armenians and Greeks. The coast of the Ægean is and always has been very largely Greek. Smyrna even yet competes in the number of its Greek population with Athens. The fertile valleys of the rivers flowing into the Ægean, with the remains of ancient cities, Ephesus, Halicarnassus, or Bodrun, and other places, will occur to you from your recollection of Magna Græcia. The slope running down to the Levant in Cilicia recalls to me the country round the head of the Adriatic, each being formed by the detritus washed down from the mountains.

A few words must be said of Constantinople. Sir William Ramsay, in an address which he has sent me within the last few days, states that "Constantinople, beyond all imperial cities, has made history through its own natural situation and advantages. London has been made by the English people. It is not London that has made the English people. The United States has made New York and Chicago, but Constantinople itself has made an Empire." The statement is true, with certain modifications, which Sir William would at once admit. The great highway between the East and the West which, as we have seen, once went by various routes from Egypt to the Persian Gulf and to India, had become by the time of Justinian, say 555, diverted through the Bosphorus. But new land routes had been opened from Central Asia to the Black Sea, and with the increased security which the Pax Romana gave, the traffic from South Russia and from the Danubian countries largely increased its wealth. The unrivalled position of Constantinople made its growth inevitable. Villehardouin, describing it in 1204, arrives at the conclusion that its population is "ten times that of our Lord's city of Paris." So long as the roads existed, and the sea was free of pirates, the prosperity of Constantinople continued. With the coming of the Turks and other nomads the roads became unsafe, commerce decreased, and the country fell into poverty and decay. But even then, in the period between 1204 and the capture of Constantinople in 1453, there was a large trade through the Bosphorus. Readers of Colonel Yule's edition of

"Marco Polo" will be astonished to see how far-reaching was that trade. Dering's "Histoire de Commerce," with other special treatises on the subject, give remarkable statements as to the volume of such trade, and my own opinion coincides therefore with that of Sir William Ramsay that the geographical position of Constantinople made the city.

Will that advantageous position endure? Only partly. The introduction of steamships injured Constantinople as a centre for collection and distribution. Such centres no longer possess the importance of even fifty years ago. The modern tramp-steamer goes round to the various ports in the Black Sea and the Marmora and collects for herself, thereby saving the expense of manutention, which is often heavier than that of transport.

In like manner, steamships have already begun to fetch their cargoes from Batoum and other Black Sea ports, and pass through both Straits without stopping, except to obtain or produce their police permits.

In former times merchandise from Bulgaria had to be sent to Constantinople and there reshipped. Now that Bulgaria has a port—a very wretched one—on the *Ægean*, her exports will avoid that city.

But all deductions made, and admitting that neither she nor her former competitor, Venice, is ever likely to rival their ancient glory, nothing can prevent Constantinople, with her wonderful geographical position, from being an important commercial city. It is, as Sir William Ramsay says, largely the position which made Constantinople, not the people of the empire over which it ruled.

Sir WILLIAM M. RAMSAY said he would mention one or two examples of the general principles that Sir Edwin Pears had stated. In reference to the Bagdad Railway route, and that motor-car journey from Aleppo to Bagdad of which they had heard, he would like to tell them that three years ago, at Pera, he happened to be talking to the Jewish gentleman who represented Bagdad in the Turkish Parliament. This Deputy said he was about to return to Bagdad, and when asked what route he would take he said: "I shall go via Bombay, as that is the easiest and most comfortable, and even the shortest, route I can take."

For the last thirty-five years—in fact, ever since he began to travel in Asia Minor—he had been greatly interested in the isolation of communities which seem to be the scattered fragments of various races. His wife and he had often noticed places in which the people had customs of their own, and they had taken note as far as they could of the influences which were most important in producing such isolation. Sir Edwin had mentioned geographical isolation rightly as the principal

cause, but there were other causes. He remembered once finding in a little village in a remote nook of the gorge of the Mæander a population of 400 or 500 people who were altogether out of communication with the rest of the world. They lived on a shelf of rock half-way down the side of the cañon, and they were evidently the remains of some ancient race. They were a small people, the men averaging from 5 feet to 5 feet 3 inches. They were extremely ugly, although good-natured looking, but extremely inhospitable, probably owing to their dread of strangers. They spoke Turkish. He was not long in the village, as they showed no inclination to value his company as highly as he valued it himself. There were a large number of such cases in different localities throughout Asia Minor. The people thus isolated were usually Mohammedans, but generally regarded as heretical, and despised accordingly. They were usually called Shiya, but sometimes there was nothing to indicate what was their special class or type of heresy. The separation produced by geographical situation forbids intermarriage; but sometimes the isolation is not geographical. One finds in a small plain three different villages within a mile of each other, but all of them absolutely isolated by custom and never intermarrying. They each have different social customs. They are all apparently Moslem, and all speak Turkish. Whether they have a private home language is uncertain, but in the central plateau only the Kurds are known to be bilingual.

Coming to the question of climatic changes, Sir William Ramsay said that there could be no doubt that the supply of water in Asia Minor was very much more abundant in the time of the Roman Empire, and there was a much larger population than at the present day. He had noticed, especially in the Plain of Iconium, many water-courses which flowed in ancient times, through which little or no water ran to-day, and there were many evidences of dried-up springs. Probably the chief reason for the great dryness of the soil was that there was no engineering skill applied to storing the water which did fall. Much was done in that way during the Roman period and earlier. There was a considerable amount of precipitation at certain periods of the year, but this fall often did more harm than good, owing to its suddenness and volume. It was not exactly want of water from which the country suffered, but the absence of means of storing up and subsequently using it. A great deal might be done by irrigation and storage to make Anatolia as rich and as well populated in the future as it was in the time of Roman rule. A possible reason had been suggested for the isolation of villages to which he had referred—viz., the want of a sufficient water-supply; the villagers could not allow their numbers to outgrow that supply, and therefore they rigidly kept to themselves. He personally doubted whether this cause had exercised much influence.

With reference to the Haidar Pasha-Konia Railway and the first concession to Germany, which dated from about 1888, he remembered that General Von der Goltz said to a friend at the time: "We should never have succeeded in getting possession of that railway but for the energetic support of the British Ambassador." At that time it was the idea of both political parties in this country to secure the help of the Germans against the Russians by throwing German influence athwart the line by which it was understood that Russia was seeking to approach Constantinople. He mentioned this as an example of the difficulty of foreseeing the effect of any law or any political device. That action which was entered upon deliberately by the British Empire in 1888 under the guidance of one of the best interpreters and understanders of Near Eastern matters—the late Sir William White—had come to be deeply regretted by his successors within the period of a very few years.

Sir EDWIN PEARSON, in answer to questions, said he thought that Mr. Elsworth Huntington's theory as to the effect of deforestation upon the climate of Greece was carried somewhat too far. The discussion on the paper he communicated to the Royal Geographical Society showed the general impression to be that he had somewhat overstated his case. The building of the Bagdad Railway had not had the effect of bringing German colonists into Asia Minor. The very employes of the line were French and Italians, and it was evidently difficult to get Germans to fall in with colonization schemes. In reference to European Christian missions in Asia Minor, he repeated the opinion he had often uttered that, no matter by what denomination they were run, they were centres of light and civilization.

Colonel C. E. YATE, M.P., said he had been specially interested in the story of the Jewish Deputy who preferred to travel back to Bagdad from Constantinople by way of Bombay. He would like to support the view of the lecturer that the sea route must hold its own for through traffic. He remembered having a conversation many years ago with a famous Russian General, a Governor-General in Central Asia, who was trying to persuade him of the advantage of linking up the Russian and Indian railway systems. He replied: "It's no good building a railway unless it will pay; and where is the traffic to come from to make it pay?" The Russian General answered that it would certainly pay, and when asked to give details of the merchandise the line would take from India, he began by mentioning rice from Burma. He (Colonel Yate) pointed out that this would involve shipment from Rangoon to Calcutta, and then a journey right across India and Afghanistan, and another handling across the Caspian Sea before entering Southern Russia even. And so with other commodities. He showed that the raw produce of India did not require rapid transport, and the trade would inevitably take the cheapest and most

convenient route, even though the sea journey might be a little longer. The General's list of products India would take from Russia had to be similarly whittled down, and on examination nothing remained but asafœtida, and, as he told the General, one train a year would be sufficient to carry that. His Russian friend then said: "Well, after all, it's not really a question of making the railway pay; it's a question of promoting friendship between the Russian and British Governments." He replied: "Then, did you build the Merv-Kushk Railway for that purpose?" They both laughed, and the General said: "No; we built the Merv-Kushk Railway to defend our interests in Constantinople and China." That was many years ago; but he was still of opinion that a through railway would not carry much of India's heavy grain and such like traffic. As to passenger traffic, he knew something of the long journey by land, for in the old days, when serving with Sir Mortimer Durand in Persia, he had gone from Persia overland through Russia to England, and he was sure the passenger to India would prefer a good P. and O. steamer to the long and exhausting, hot, dusty, and rattling railway journey which the proposed through connection would provide. He entirely supported the view of the lecturer that for traffic with England no railway route from India could possibly hold its own against the sea journey.

The CHAIRMAN said he entirely agreed with the lecturer and Colonel Yate on the question of sea traffic holding its own against the through railway traffic. He had never been able to understand how, even in the old days, when they were limited to small sailing ships for sea traffic, those ancient trade routes across the desert were so profitable.

With reference to Sir Edwin Pears' allusion to missionaries in foreign countries, he would like to tell of his own experience. Views as to religious proselytism might differ. That was another question. But undoubtedly the mission-stations had been of great value in the way of which Sir Edwin had spoken, not only in Turkey, but in various parts of the world. He would only like to say one thing: It was extremely important that the societies concerned should take great care in selecting the men they sent out to the mission-field. Quality, and not quantity, was the essential thing. He had known one or two instances in which unsuitable men had done much harm. Happily, he knew many in which the workers had done much good. When he was in Teheran the American Presbyterian missionaries there gave him the greatest possible help in every way. They were judicious, devoted, quiet people, and they managed to ingratiate themselves with the Persians to a remarkable extent. One of them, not many years ago, when travelling in Khorasan, had been welcomed by the Mohammedan priests, and even invited to deliver an address to the people assembled

in a famous mosque. That was an extraordinary proof of what could be done by a judicious missionary. He told the story in America on one occasion to a large gathering of students, 5,000 or 6,000 of them brought together from all the Universities of the United States and Canada, some of whom were contemplating going out as missionaries. As he finished, the very man of whom he was speaking walked up on the platform and had a tremendous reception. So he would say to those interested in the missionary cause that they needed to choose carefully the men they sent out.

He concluded by conveying the thanks of the Society to Sir Edwin Pears for his instructive lecture.