his enemy, the sultan invested Constantinople, but he was compelled to relinquish the siege in order to subdue a revolt headed by his brother, which had broken out in Asia. Murád again annexed all the Turkish principali­ties which had been restored by Tímúr, except those of Kizil Ahmedli and Karaman, which did not finally become incorporated with the empire till the time of Muhammed II. The Turks were now called upon to face the most formidable Christian enemy they had yet encountered, namely Hunyady, the illegitimate son of Sigismund, king of Hungary. This famous general, after having inflicted several severe though not very important defeats upon his adversaries, invaded European Turkey with a large army of Hungarians, Poles, Servians, Bosnians, Walachians, and Frankish crusaders, the last-named being under the command of Cardinal Julian. The Ottoman army was utterly routed, Sophia taken, and the chain of the Balkans forced ; and Murád was compelled to sign a treaty for ten years, by which he resigned all claims to Servia and gave over Walachia to Hungary. Weary of the cares of state·, and thinking that peace was, for a time at least, secured, Murád abdicated in favour of his young son Muhammed and sought a quiet retreat in the town of Magnesia. But he was not allowed to enjoy repose for long : the Chris­tian princes, incited by Cardinal Julian and in direct violation of the treaty, assembled their forces, and, under Hunyady as commander-in-chief, without declaring war, entered the Turkish dominions and took many of the Ottoman strongholds in Bulgaria. When the news reached Murád he resumed the imperial power, put himself at the head of his troops, and advanced to meet the invaders, who had just captured Varna. Outside that town a great battle was fought, in which a copy of the violated treaty, raised high upon a lance, formed one of the standards of the Ottomans. The conflict, which was long and bloody, resulted in the total overthrow of the Christians, the Polish king, Ladislaus, and Cardinal Julian being among the slain, 1444 (848). Murád again abdicated and sought the retirement of Magnesia ; but once again he had to take up the reins of government. This time the janissaries and sipáhís, accustomed to the firm rule of the victor of Varna, had refused obedience to the young Muhammed. The sultan remained at the head of the state until his death, which occurred in 1451 (855).

Muhammed II., who now ascended the throne for the third time, determined to accomplish the long-cherished design of his house, and make Constantinople the capital of the 'Osmánli empire. He easily found a pretext for declaring war against Constantine Palæologus and in the spring of 1453 (857) led an immense army to beleaguer the city. His troops covered the ground before the land­ward walls between the Sea of Marmora and the Golden Horn ; but he found that even his monster cannon could do but little against the massive fortifications. At length he resolved to assail the city from its weakest side, that facing the Golden Horn. But the Greeks, having foreseen the likelihood of an attack from this quarter, had thrown a great chain across the entrance to the harbour, thereby blocking the passage against the hostile ships. The Ottomans, however, constructed a road of planks, five miles long, across the piece of ground between the Bosphorus, where their own fleet lay, and the upper part of the Golden Horn. Along this road they hauled a number of their galleys, with sails set to receive the aid of the favouring wind, and launched them safely in the harbour, whence they cannonaded with more effect the weaker defences of the city. This compelled the Greek emperor to withdraw a portion of his little garrison from the point where the more serious attack was being made, to repair the destruc­tion wrought in this new quarter. At dawn on May 29 th the Ottomans advanced to storm the city. The Christians offered a desperate resistance, but in vain. The emperor died fighting in the forefront of the battle, and at noon Muhammed rode in triumph into his new capital and went straight to the cathedral of St Sophia ; there, before the high altar, where the preceding night Constantine had received the Holy Sacrament, he prostrated himself in the Moslem act of worship. The capture of Constantinople is not the only exploit to which Muhammed owes his sur­name of Fátih, or the Conqueror : he also reduced Servia and Bosnia, overthrew and annexed the Greek empire of Trebizond and the Turkish principality of Karaman, acquired the suzerainty of the Crimea, and won many of the islands of the Greek Archipelago from the Venetians and Genoese. But before Belgrade, which he had besieged as the first step to an attack upon the northern kingdoms, he suffered a serious defeat, being driven wounded from the field by Hunyady and John Capistran, with the loss of 300 cannon and 25,000 men. Rhodes, whither an Ottoman force was despatched, was the scene of another failure : here the Knights of St John gallantly and suc­cessfully withstood their Muhammedan foes, and compelled them to retire from the island. In Albania a long and, for a time, successful resistance was offered to the Turkish arms by the famous George Castriot, the Iskender Beg of the Turks. This chieftain had been in his youth in the service of Murád II., and was by him appointed governor of his native Albania, whereupon he revolted and tried to restore the independence of his country. Among the favourite designs of Muhammed were the subjugation of Italy and the establishment of the Mussulman dominion in the capital of Western Christendom. A Turkish army crossed the Adriatic and stormed the city of Otranto ; but its further progress was stopped, and for ever, by the death of the Conqueror, which occurred a few months later, in 1481 (886). The Muhammedan soldiers besieged in Otranto, being unsupported from Turkey, were, after a long and brave defence, forced to surrender.

Báyezíd II. was hardly seated on the throne before he was called upon to face a formidable revolt raised by his younger brother Jem. This youthful pretender, who was both talented and high-spirited, was, after a number of adventures, finally compelled to fly the country. He sought the protection of the Knights of St John at Rhodes, who, however, retained him a prisoner, and made an arrangement with Báyezíd whereby they received from that monarch a yearly sum of 45,000 ducats as the price of the compulsory detention of his brother. After thirteen years of captivity the unfortunate prince was murdered by Pope Alexander VI. (Borgia), who, it is said, received 300,000 ducats from the sultan as the reward of his crime. Though frequently compelled to engage in defensive wars, Báyezíd was of a peace-loving and unambitious disposition, and a few towns in the Morea were all the additions made to the empire while he was on the throne. It was during his reign, however, that the Ottoman fleet began to be formidable to Christendom, the desperate battle off Sapienza, won by Kemál Re’ís against the Venetians, being the first of the Turkish naval victories over the Mediterranean powers. Báyezíd, whose pacific habits had alienated the sympathies of the janissaries, was in 1512 (918) forced by these dreaded guards to abdicate in favour of Selim, the youngest of his three sons. This prince had already been in open revolt against his father ; but his determined and warlike char­acter had won for him the esteem of the Turkish praetorians. Báyezíd’s health, which had long been failing, gave way under this blow ; and the old sultan died three days after his deposition, at a little village on the way to Demitoka, whither he was going to end his life in retirement.

Selim I. was personally the greatest of the Ottoman