Detailed descriptions of Asiatic Turkey will be found under the separate articles Arabia, Armenia, Asia Minor, Kurdistan, Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Syria. Of these natural divisions Asia Minor or Anatolia is by far the most important for extent, population, and natural resources. It constitutes an elevated and fertile plateau enclosed by irregular mountain ranges, which in the Taurus and

on the south and east rise to from 7000 to 10,000 feet, culminating in the volcanic Erjish-Dagh, or Argæus, nearly 12,000 feet high. The plateau, which has a mean altitude of some 3000 feet, is depressed in the centre, where the Tuz-gol (Tatta Palus) and several other lacustrine basins have at present no outflow, but which appear to have formerly drained through the Sakaria (Sangarius) northwards to the Euxine. In the same di­rection, and in curiously parallel curves, flow the more easterly Kizil-Irmak (Halys) and Yeshil-Irmak (Iris), which carry off most of the surface waters of the plateau. The western rivers—Granicus, Xanthus (Scamander), Hermus, Simois, Meander—although re­nowned in song and history, are comparatively insignificant coast­streams, rushing from the escarpment of the plateau down to their fjord-like estuaries in the Ægean. None of the rivers are navigable to any distance from their mouths, and in the absence of good means of communication the very rich resources of the plateau in minerals and agricultural produce have hitherto been little deve­loped. Owing to the different elevations and varied aspects of the land towards the Euxine, Ægean, and Mediterranean, the climate is extremely diversified, presenting all the transitions from intense summer heat along most of the seaboard to severe winters on the lofty tablelands of the interior, which are exposed to biting winds from the Russian steppes. Anatolia has an endless variety of natural products, from the hardy boxwood of Lazistan (Trebizond vilayet) to the sub-tropical figs and grapes of the western coast­lands. On the plateau thrives the famous breed of Angora goats, whose soft, silky fleece (mohair) forms a staple export.

Of far less economic importance are the Armenian uplands, form­ing a rugged plateau of limited extent, above which rise many lofty peaks, culminating in the tower-crested Ararat (16,916 feet), the converging point of three empires. The long and terribly severe winters, intolerably hot short summers, and generally poor soil of Armenia present a marked contrast to the far more temperate climate, rich upland valleys, and densely wooded slopes of the more southern Kurdistan highlands. But these advantages are counter­balanced by the generally inaccessible nature of the country, the want of good highways, and especially the lawless character of its inhabitants, who have undergone little social change since the days of their wild Karduchi forefathers. In the heart of this savage region lies the magnificent basin of Lake Van, which, like Tuz-gol and the more easterly Urmiya, has no present outflow, but formerly, no doubt, discharged to the Tigris valley.

In the Van district lie the sources of most of the head streams of the Tigris *(q.v.)* and Euphrates *q.v.*), which have created the vast and fertile alluvial plains of Mesopotamia. This latter region, the seat of the ancient Accadian and Assyrian and the more recent Moslem cultures, forms a continuous plain from the escarpments of the Kurdistan highlands to the Persian Gulf, broken only in the north by the Sinjar Hills, and capable of yielding magnificent crops wherever water is available. But under Osmanli rule the splendid system of irrigation works, dating from the dawn of his­tory, has fallen into decay : the lower Euphrates now overflows its banks and converts much of the region above and below Kurnah, at the confluence of the two great arteries, into malarious marshlands. Hence the populous cities and innumerable villages formerly dotted over the Babylonian plains have been succeeded by the scattered hamlets of the Montefik and other amphibious Arab tribes.

This lowland region is separated by the more elevated Syrian desert or steppe from the much smaller and less productive pro­vinces of Syria and Palestine. Here the main physical features are at once simple and yet striking. The narrow, hilly region dis­posed north and south between the Mediterranean and the desert, and stretching for over 400 miles between Anatolia and the Sinai Peninsula, culminates towards the centre in the parallel Libanus and Antilibanus (10,000 to 11,000 feet), enclosing between them the fertile depression of the Beká' (Cœle-Syria). The stupendous ruins of Baalbek, standing at the highest point of this depression in 30o N. lat., mark the parting line between the northern and southern watersheds of the region. Northwards flows the El-'Asi (Orontes), southwards the Lítáni (Leontes), both through the Beká' in moderately sloping beds to the Mediterranean. For further particulars, see the articles Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine. In the Lebanon the Christian Maronite communities enjoy a mea­sure of self-government under the guarantee of France, while their pagan neighbours and hereditary foes, the Druses, are gradually withdrawing to the hilly Hauran district beyond Jordan.

Turkey’s Arabian possessions comprise, besides El-Hasa on the Persian Gulf, the low-lying, hot, and insalubrious Tehama and the south-western highlands (vilayets of Hejaz and Yemen) stretching continuously along the east side of the Red Sea, and including the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina. These are held by military occupation, probably at a loss to the imperial exchequer, and cer­tainly against the wishes of the inhabitants. But these drawbacks are supposed to be more than compensated by the political prestige derived from the possession of the Holy Land of Islam.

African Territories.

Since the abandonment of eastern or Egyptian Soudan in 1884, consequent on the revolt of the Mahdi, and the occupation of Tunis by the French in 1881, Turkey in Africa has been reduced to the two territories of Egypt and Tripolitana with Barca and Fezzan, jointly occupying the north-east comer of the continent. Of these Tripolitana alone is directly administered, constituting the pashalik or vilayet of Tripoli. Egypt, whose southern frontier was temporarily fixed in January 1887 at the station of Akashe above Wady Haifa, near the second cataract in Lower Nubia (22° N. lat.), has formed a practically independent principality under the dynasty of Mehemet Ali since 1841, subject only to an annual tribute of £695,000 to the Porte. The areas and populations of Turkey in Africa were estimated as follows in 1887:—

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Area in  Sq. Miles. | Population. |
| Tripoli, with Barca and Fezzan, a vilayet | 485,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Egypt, tributary principality | 374,000 | 6,800,000 |
| Total Turkey in Africa | 862,000 | 7,800,000 |

The Empire.

Turkey is essentially a theocratic absolute monarchy, being sub­ject in principle to the direct personal control of the sultan, who is himself at once a temporal autocrat and the recognized caliph, that is, “successor” of the Prophet, and consequently the spiritual head of the. Moslem world (see Mohammedanism). But, although the attempt made in 1876 to introduce representative institutions proved abortive, this theoretical absolutism is nevertheless tem­pered not only by traditional usage, local privilege, the juridical and spiritual precepts of the Koran and its *'ulemá* interpreters, and the privy council, but also by the growing force of public opinion and the direct or indirect pressure of the European powers. The 'ulemá@@1 form a powerful corporation, whose head, the *sheikhu 'l∙ Islám,* ranks as a state functionary scarcely second to the grand vizier, or prime minister. Owing to their intensely conservative and fanatical spirit, the 'ulemá have always been determined oppo­nents of progress, and are at present one of the greatest obstacles to reform in a political system where the spiritual and temporal functions are inextricably interwoven. Besides these expounders of Koranic doctrine, the sovereign is to some extent bound also by the *Multeka,* a legal code based on the traditional sayings of Mohammed and the recorded decisions of his successors, having the force of precedents.

The grand vizier (*sadr-azam*), who is nominated by the sultan, presides ex-officio over the privy council *(mejliss-i-khass),* which, besides the sheikhu 'l-Islám, comprises the ministers of home and foreign affairs, war, finance, marine, trade, public works, justice, public instruction, and worship, with the president of the council of state and the grand master of artillery. For administrative purposes the immediate possessions of the sultan are divided into vilayets (provinces), which are again subdivided into sanjaks or mutessariks (arrondissements), these into kazas (cantons), and the kazas into nahiés (parishes or communes). A vali or governor­general, nominated by the sultan, stands at the head of the vilayet, and on him are directly dependent the pashas, effendis, beys, and other administrators of the minor divisions. All these officials unite in their own persons the judicial and executive functions, and all alike are as a rule thoroughly corrupt, venal in the dispen­sation of justice, oppressors of the subject, embezzlers of the public revenues, altogether absorbed in amassing wealth during their mostly brief and precarious tenure of office.@@2 Foreigners settled in the country are specially protected from exactions by the so-called “capitulations,” in virtue of which they are exempt from the juris­diction of the local courts and amenable for trial to tribunals pre-

@@@1 See Sunnites, vol. xxii. p. 660.

@@@2 Major-General F. T. Haig, who travelled through the heart of Yemen in the winter of 1886-87, thus speaks of the administration in that almost exclu­sively Moslem province : “ The fiscal system of the Turks, if it were really carried into effect, would be by no means bad ; but like every other depart­ment of the government it is ruined by the utter corruption that prevails in every branch of the administration from top to bottom. No more eloquent expounders of the evils and hopelessness of their whole system are to be found than the Turks themselves, as I found from conversation with two or three of their own officials” (*Proc.* *R. Geog. Soc.,* August 1887, p. 487). Mr G. P. Devey also, consul at Erzeroum, reports that in a part of that province the sheep-tax for 1885 was collected three times over : “ On the first occasion the real number had been underestimated, and the collector therefore came again, and, finding that such was the case, made the villagers pay the whole sum of 14,000 piastres (9000 had been levied on the previous occasion), instead of the difference, on the ground that they had cheated the Government in not declaring their whole stock. A third time a collector visited the caza, and, when the villagers could produce no receipt that the tax had been paid (for none had been given), a third time the full sum was taken” *(Cons. Rep.,* July 1887, p. 3).