

The Defiant Turk.

A crisis seems imminent on the shores of the Bosphorus. It is evident from this morning's news that the Sultan has no intention whatever of executing in good faith the Armenian reforms which the Ambassadors of the Christian powers have demanded. Bahri Pasha, whose degradation Sir Philip Currie, the British Minister has insisted upon on account of his heartless treatment of the Armenians, has been decorated with a medal of honor by Abdul Hamid and promoted to the command of an important division of the Turkish army. The mobilization of the Redifs or Turkish reserves is going on, avowedly with the object of crushing out disorder in the provinces where the savage Kurds are slaughtering Armenians by scores daily. But it is manifest that these forces, once mobilized, can be used just as effectively against Europeans as against Kurdish brigands, and there is an increasing possibility that a sudden wave of Moslem fanaticism may dash the Sultan's Government in frantic hostilities against the bayonets and broadsides of Christendom.

For the Turk is first and always a fighter. Do not forget that. The descendants of Othman's warriors are to this day

as incapable of fear as they are devoid of mercy. In spite of administrative incompetence and corruption the rotting Turkish Empire can to-day place in the field an army of at least 300,000 men who are individually more than a match for the best soldiers of Christian Europe. Osman Pasha at Plevna and Suleiman Pasha at the Shipka Pass, in the last Russo-Turkish war, showed what these turbaned tigers could do when their blood was up and they were fairly pitted against the hated Giaour. In that series of conflicts the massive Russian armies outnumbered the Turks at almost every point. Yet in spite of the masterly strategy of Todleben and the reckless dash of that prince of dare-devils Skobelev, the honors of nearly every combat were with the desperate Turks.

What the followers of the Prophet have done once they can do again. The formerly powerful Turkish navy is now only a name and Great Britain's armor-clads can readily pass the Dardanelles and command Constantinople. But the city of Constantine is not the Turkish Empire, and if war actually breaks out the powers will find crushing the Turks no easy task. How long England and Russia, France and Germany, Austria and Italy could work in concert in such an undertaking is problematical. Still, if the projected naval demonstration fails to coerce the Sultan and his advisers, they are bound to attempt the partition and pacification of Turkey. It will be fortunate if the attempt does not bring on a general European war.