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**Aid against the Turks**

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## AID AGAINST THE TURKS

A.D. 1544.

BY THE

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Three hundred and thirty years ago the Turk was a power of greater strength, and far more formidable than at present; and a ruler who threatened to enter Christian Europe with 200,000 troops and to send 400 vessels into the Mediterranean was an ally to be courted by any prince who cared not for the scandal that would arise from his joining himself to the enemy of Christendom. Such a prince was found in Francis, King of France, who, eldest son of the church as he was, did not shrink from calling Solyman to his assistance, in his quarrel with the Emperor Charles V.

In 1541 Solyman's forces entered Hungary, and took Buda and Pesth with great slaughter, the story reading like a special correspondent's letter of these days from Bulgaria: for we are told that, the Christians having been defeated outside the walls the commander of the Turkish flotilla "entering now without resistance ran thorow the towne with such barbarous crueltie and thirst for christian blood that he spared neither man, woman nor child, except some few such as either for their beautie or strength of bodie were reserved for the Turks beastly lust, or slavish labour." This was at the end of July, and in August, Solyman himself having arrived "caused the prisoners in number about 800 to be brought out: who, bound in long ropes were in derision led all alongst the armie, ranged in order of battell, and afterward by his commandment slaine by his young souldiors." (*Knolles*, p. 709.) See also (*State Papers*, viii p. 614, *Howard to the King*.)

Early in July Ferdinand had written to Henry VIII asking for help, and in August Henry sent a reply such as he hoped would be agreeable, but as to assistance it does not appear that any was sent, for Sir Thomas Seymour, a year later Sept. 1542, having demanded from Ferdinand the surrender of two English traitors was told by him that "he havynge nede of ayde agenst the Turke, did reqyre your Magestes ayde and that your Heynes wolde geve hym no asestance." (*State Papers*, ix, p. 142.) Whatever Henry may have then thought, his ambassadors did not fail to report to him the strong feeling abroad, for, after the taking by treachery of Murano in Friuli at the instigation of the French party in Italy and its offer either to Francis or Solyman, Sir Wm. Paget writes in 1542 from Paris, "All that be of Italy seme men almost redy to wepe, and think Italy half destroyed consydering the gret power the Turque now prepareth, and the frendship he fyndeth here in Christendom." (*State Papers*, viii, p. 656.) The Turk, however, did not move that year after all, and at the commencement of 1543 Henry made a treaty with the Emperor against the French King, in which, whatever may have been the real moving causes, such as the desire on Henry's part to secure the payment of certain pensions, the French King's alliance with the Turk was put prominently forward, and he was required to renounce his un-holy alliance with the great Turk, and upon his refusal that was made a cause of hostilities; Wriothesley in his chronicle under the date of Aug. 3, 1543 says "proclamation was made in London for open warre betwene the Emperour and the Kinge against the French Kinge as mortall enemye to them and all christen Princes, he having ayde of the great Turke."

This caused great joy abroad, Hawel writing from Venice, "It is openly published in thes partes that your Majeste will convert his powar agenst France, not without the rejoysing of all men loving truly the Commonwelth of Christendom, for it is incredible how odious and execrable the French Kinges name is in al places for his practises lige and anitye with the Turke." (*State Papers*, ix, p. 337.)

In the summer the Turks again entered Hungary and took Strigonia and Alba Regale with great destruction, and while the Doge and Council of Venice, who as a matter of their own policy of peace and trade advantage had joined with France and Turkey, were writing to their ambassador at Constantinople, bidding him congratulate the Turks on their successes, and sending them news, Hawel was writing to Henry "The King of the Romans (Ferdinand) is in the felde with about 40,000 men. It is certainly lamentable to see him habandonid in this occasion of all germanye agenst the common enemye, wich arguith small prudence and lesse charite. It is evident that all the hope and stay of Cristendom consisteth this day in the only Virtu and powr of your Majeste and Hemperour after God." (*State Papers*, ix, 506.)

Henry, when he had declared war against France in 1543, had had a very large subsidy granted him payable over three years; and stirred up at last in 1544 he requested a general contribution from all parishes for aid and defence against the Turk. The return of the sums collected in the various parishes in answer to this appeal is in the Record office; the money is said to be gathered of the devotion of the people for the aid and defence of Christian princes against the Turk, and the returns are authenticated by the names of the several churchwardens, and in Bristol of the clergy also, the particulars for each deanery being avouched by the sheriff and the chancellor of the diocese. It is clear that the feeling of the people at large was aroused, and that the clergy as a body advocated it, however much there might be some who from dislike of the changes in religion were inclined to wish success to the French King and the Pope as against Henry and the Emperor, for there are very few parishes indeed that made no return, only thirteen in all, while the total amount collected in Gloucester and Bristol was £59 4s. 6½d., which, however small it seems, yet when the increase of prices and proportion of population are considered, is equal to about £7000 now, and this voluntarily collected at a time when an extraordinary heavy subsidy was being paid, and in a season

of scarcity. Holinshed no doubt expresses the general feeling when he speaks of Francis' alliance with the Turk as a matter too bad to be spoken about. Those were not days when the favour of the people could bear a minister into high office, but Henry felt that it would not do for him to shew no sympathy with the Christians suffering under the cruel vengeance of the victorious Turks; it was no time for non-intervention; while he would have risked possibly his throne had he shown any sympathy or offered alliance with Solyman.

We are living three centuries later, but I do not think English opinion has become indifferent in this matter. With regard to the details of the collection, Tewkesbury stands the highest at 19/- Cirencester 12/- sundry others 10/- and running down as low as 8d. As an instance of change I may mention that Clifton sent nothing.

For Gloucester the Amounts are:—

	<i>s</i>	<i>d</i>	
St. Michael's	8	2	
St. Nicholas	10	0	
St. John's	6	1½	
St. Mary of Crypt	6	8	
Trinity	6	0	(now part of St. Nicholas)
St. Mary (de lode)	9	8	
All Saints	--	11	(now part of St. Mary de lode)
St. Aldate's		nil	
Grasland	4	0	
St. Catherine's		nil	
St. Owen's	3	4	(now part of St. Catherine)

Equivalent, in all, population and prices considered, to a collection of about £300 now.