



Simply Charlotte Mason presents

Stories of the Nations

Volume 1

From The Ottomans to Garibaldi
(1550—1850)

Enjoy this feast of stories from world history.

The stories of the nations are stories of people who were living on the earth during the days of our grandfathers, and their fathers, and their fathers' fathers before them. Some of the stories are long and some are short, but all of them are stories of real people—their lives and their acts and how they affected all those around them. Of course I cannot tell about every person who lived on the earth, but I hope this little history will help you feel that you know some of them.

That is all I have to say here. One cannot say everything in an introduction. And none of you, when you are invited to a good dinner, care much to be told what is on the table. You would rather find out for yourselves. So with these few words I throw open the doors of the dining hall, and let you in to the feast of good things which has been prepared for you.

*Consisting of original and revised material from
The Child's Story of the Nations (1901), by Charles Morris,
and additional material by Sonya Shafer and Lorene Lambert*

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Charlotte Mason
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Volume 1: From The Ottomans to Garibaldi

Consisting of original and revised material from *The Child's Story of the Nations* by Charles Morris, originally published in 1901, and additional material contributed by Lorene Lambert and Sonya Shafer.

Stories of the Nations, Volume 1: From The Ottomans to Garibaldi
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A Few Words with My Young Friends

No one can know what history means, or what the progress of the world has been, unless he knows a great deal about the recent centuries. We call them Early Modern and Modern Times. They have been centuries of invention. Years ago men did the most of their work with their hands; now they do the most of it with machines. They have been centuries of science. Years ago men knew very little about the great forces and forms of the universe; now they know a great deal about electricity and light and heat and a hundred other things. They have been centuries of progress in human liberty. The slaves of hundreds of years ago are free today, and the people of the nations have far more liberty than they had in the past ages.

The recent centuries have been crowded with marvels, full of great events and wonderful discoveries. They have had their triumphs of war and their greater triumphs of peace; their great warriors and their greater statesmen; their great doers and their greater thinkers. Man's hands have been busy, but his brain has been busier, and the triumphs of the recent centuries are the triumphs of the mind.

I hope the readers of this little book understand what I have just said. If any part of it is not clear to them they must read on to the end to learn what it all means.

The stories of the nations are stories of people who were living on the earth during the days of our grandfathers, and their fathers, and their fathers' fathers before them. Some of the stories

are long and some are short, but all of them are stories of real people—their lives and their acts and how they affected all those around them. Of course I cannot tell about every person who lived on the earth, but I hope this little history will help you feel that you know some of them.

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Chapter 1

A Bird's-Eye View

Come along, boys and girls, all of you. Bring your field glasses and cameras, for there is much to be seen and many pictures which you will like to take. And don't forget your lunch boxes, lest you should grow hungry on the way.

It is a strange journey we are going to take. Our route lies not through space, but through time. Not over land and water, but backward over the years. We are going to set out on a journey over the Old World. Do all of my readers know where the Old World is? Of course there is only one world, which takes in the whole earth. But after America was discovered, men got in the way of calling it the New World. Then the other continents, which they had known so long, were called the Old World. In that way our one world was split up into two. This was not correct, but it was an easy way of saying what could not be said so easily any other way; so it is still in use.

The Old World is so big and has so many countries that I think one had better go over it by balloon, and look down on it as a bird does when flying through the clouds.

Jump in the basket, then; cut loose the ropes; hold on tight, everybody! Up we go, miles above the earth as it was 500 years ago. Away we dart with the speed of the winds, looking down on the broad lands which lie spread out like a map beneath us. Over Europe and Asia and Africa we swiftly glide, for these are the

continents of the Old World. Then we pass out to sea and float over the great island of Australia, which is as large as a continent.

But how little we see of the land beneath us. Clouds spread thickly over it and blot out nearly the whole of Australia and great regions of Africa and Asia. A dense cloud of ignorance rests upon them and hides them from view, for we are sailing in the year 1550, when very little was known about those continents.

As you look down you will see that Europe is the only part of the Old World which is free from clouds and can be seen from end to end. We had better float slowly over that continent and take a bird's-eye view of what is going on there.

We see below us a continent of many countries—little and big, high and low. Everywhere there are great throngs of people; but, mercy on us! how poorly they live and how hard they work. Kings and nobles hold all the power, and most of the people live and work like slaves.

Let us sail down the years, and see what they have to show us. War! war! fighting everywhere! All Europe in turmoil! Soldiers marching, drums beating, guns thundering, houses burning, people dying, while over it all waves a blood-red flag, on which is the one word “Glory.” But the glory it means is that won on the battlefield; that which evil spirits revel in and which good men detest.

Away we go again down the years. The wars are over, the dead are buried, the burned homes are built again, peace is on the land. But peace has not brought liberty, hard work does not yield plenty and comfort, life is hard to live in Europe except for the nobles and kings, and for years the people suffer still.

Of all the countries beneath us England is the busiest. From all her ports ships are sailing, setting out for the uttermost parts of the earth, deep laden with goods for distant lands. And others are coming in laden with the richest products of the world. Over all the island factories are rising and wheels are whirling. From our high outlook the country beneath us looks like a great ant-hill, with the ants hastening to and fro, all of them actively at work.

England is the busiest, but the other nations are busy. We see the red flames of battle die out in France and the white banners of peace waving over her cities. Her people are active, in peace as in war, and plenty is coming back again. And as we sweep on over Europe we see men at work everywhere, and the whole continent growing rich and prosperous.

But ah! the trumpet sounds again, and from afar comes the long roll of the drum. The demon of war is here with his red banner once more. There are still kings who love glory; there are nations moved by ambition; there are peoples weary of being slaves. So from time to time through the years the torch of war is kindled and waved over bloody battlefields.

I shall not tell you here about these wars. We are now taking a bird's-eye view, looking down on Europe as we glide rapidly through the years. We shall come down to the earth in after chapters and take a closer look at the people and their kings. An artist, you know, draws his picture first in a few strong lines, and then fills in between the lines. Here we are drawing the outlines for our picture of the nations; we shall fill it in later.

All I need say here is that there were wars due to ambition and land hunger. The people, too, fought for liberty and union. And as we sweep on down the centuries we will find that they did not fight in vain.

Now let us put our balloon before the wind and sail off elsewhere over the earth. Europe is not the world, though some of the people of that proud continent seem to think it is. It is not even all the Old World, for there are Asia and Africa and the islands of the seas. So off we go again to see if the clouds have fled and revealed hidden lands.

Yes, the clouds are rising. Year by year we see them grow thinner and fade out. Let us look down on Africa. See those bold travelers who are making their way inland, from the north and the south, from the east and the west. Many of them suffer, some of

them are slain, but the most of them come back to tell the world about what the clouds so long concealed.

While the years go by we look down on some of these daring men as they cross the continent from sea to sea. They tell the world of rich soils, crowded countries, strange wonders of nature. The cloud is fading out. We see the fruitful plains of Africa spreading far and wide, while the nations of Europe are sending ships and soldiers to claim those fruitful realms as their own. It sounds like a story we have read before, that of the Europeans who came to America and took it from the red-skinned natives. Now the nations of Europe are beginning to take Africa from the blacks. And some heartless men are taking the blacks from Africa, cruelly capturing them in chains and removing them to far away lands to sell them as slaves. Sadly, this hateful practice continues for many years.

Fresh blow the southwest winds. Let us put our air-ship before them and sail away to distant Asia. Ah! here, too, the English are before us. They hold the great peninsula of India in the south. Through this crowded land they make their way with sword and gun, conquering kings and chiefs, putting down rebellion, spreading their power on all sides, until they are lords of a nation that counts its people by hundreds of millions.

As we float farther north the clouds spread below us and hide the great inner country from our eyes. Now and then we see a traveler making his way in and coming back with a strange story of adventure and discovery. And later on armies begin to take the place of travelers.

We are almost out of time as we turn our eyes to the far east, to the great nation of China. Long it has kept to itself and had little to do with the other nations. Off the coast of China lies a group of islands over which the clouds have long been dense. This is the empire of Japan, whose doors for centuries have been closed against the people of Europe. But as we look, the cloud quickly lifts and floats away, and Japan spreads far and clear beneath us.

It has opened its doors at last, and travelers and merchants are swarming in.

We have not covered all the wide world yet, but our journey is getting long and it is time to head back. The story of the nations from 1550 to 1850 is a remarkable one. Civilization has marched on like a mighty army. Barbarism and savagery have fallen back before it. Railroads have been built; the telegraph has run over broad lands and under mighty seas. The book, the school, and the church have followed the warship and the army. The change in the past has been wonderful, and you will read all about it in the following pages.

Chapter 2

How the Ottomans Disappeared

by Lorene Lambert

I wonder how many of my readers have ever sat upon an Ottoman. If you have, you know that it is a soft, round, tufted stool, comfortable for resting your feet, especially a father's feet after a long day spent hard at work. I fancy you may wonder how it got such a funny name. Well, when the furniture maker began making this new kind of footstool, he called it an "ottoman" because its shape reminded him of the round hats worn by officials of the Ottoman Empire.

You might be smiling a little, thinking of men walking about in tall, round hats shaped like footstools. But for many years Europeans did not smile when they thought of the Ottomans. They trembled in fear, for the Ottomans were a great and warlike people, who came sweeping out of Asia like a great tidal wave to conquer all of their neighbors.

And now I must ask you to look at a map of our world. First find the large continent of Asia, then look to the westernmost part and you will find what is today the country of Turkey. It is bound on the north by the Black Sea, on the west by the Aegean Sea, and on the south by the Mediterranean. The famous River Euphrates curls along its eastern edge before it wanders down into Mesopotamia. Men have lived there for thousands of years: Hittites, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and, of course, Turks.

These Turks had been mostly Christian, but gradually, as the religion of Islam grew and spread, they became a Muslim people and began speaking their own language, Turkish. Soon they controlled all of Anatolia, for that is what Turkey used to be called, and like a cat that is waking from a long nap, began to stretch their claws outward beyond their boundaries. In 1453, they captured the ancient city of Constantinople, and it became the center of a new empire, the Ottoman Empire, and so it would remain for hundreds of years. Throughout the world, people recognized that a new empire was now established, for they began calling the city “Istanbul,” which means “to the river,” rather than Constantinople, after the Christian emperor Constantine.

The Ottomans continued to expand their empire in other directions too. They conquered Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, and took control of the holy city of Jerusalem. The Ottoman navy ruled the Red Sea and large portions of the Indian Ocean, securing for the Turks a rich trade in spices and slaves. The Ottomans even marched into cold Russia to their northeast. And this is why the Europeans did not smile when they thought of the Ottomans, for the Ottomans were beginning to cast their hungry glances toward Europe too.

In 1520 a new sultan arose in Istanbul, a great king known forever after as Suleyman the Magnificent. “Why was he magnificent?” you may ask. Let me describe him to you, and you may decide if he deserves such a title.

Suleyman was the son of a man who had also been Sultan, a man named Selim the Grim. There seems to have been little love between father and son, for Selim sent his son far away into the most rural provinces for long stretches of years, and rarely asked after his well-being. Young Suleyman was an able prince, though, and became well-liked among the army officers and the members of the court.

He became so well liked, in fact, that soon the Sultan Selim began to fear his son’s popularity. So one day he sent his son a

vicious gift: a colorful silken shirt. The shirt was beautiful to look at, but its silk fibers were filled with poison. To wear it meant certain death. Was not that a curious gift for a father to send to his son?

Happily for the prince, his mother was suspicious of this sudden gift. She was a great-granddaughter of Genghis Khan, whom you may have read about, and she well knew how kings and rulers would try to deceive and destroy each other—even those in their own family. So she directed a nearby slave to don the garment. In just a few minutes, the unfortunate slave collapsed, gasping his last breath. Suleyman's life was saved.

Soon after this, Selim the Grim died, and Suleyman was crowned Sultan of the Ottomans. At once he began to earn his “magnificent” name. He struck out into Europe, conquering the nation of Hungary and the Greek island of Rhodes. He attacked the great European city of Vienna, an attack that failed only because biting-cold winter weather came early that year and drove him back.

He was a fierce warrior, personally leading his armies, and the nations of Europe trembled before him. This is what he wrote about himself: “Slave of God, master of the world, I am Suleyman, and my name is read in all the prayers in all the cities of Islam. I am the Shah of Baghdad and Iraq, Caesar of all the lands of Rome, and the Sultan of Egypt. I seized the Hungarian crown and gave it to the least of my slaves.”

Did my readers notice all the titles of kingship that he gave to himself? I fancy when you read that, you will understand why all of Europe and Asia considered Suleyman the most powerful ruler in the world and called him “the Magnificent.”

But a person can carry many different titles. Among the Ottomans, Suleyman was known as a great lawgiver. They called him Suleyman the Just, because he set himself the task of creating a set of laws to govern the life of the Ottoman empire. Now, the overarching law of the Ottomans was the “Shari’ah,” which is the

law of the Muslim religion, Islam, and which no Sultan had the power to change. But a Sultan could issue laws concerning things that the Shari'ah did not cover. And in these things, Suleyman sought to make the Ottoman Empire a truly just place. He made sure that all the trade routes through Ottoman lands were kept open and safe, and that the caravans which moved along them were taxed fairly. He knew that Christians within his Muslim lands were often taxed heavily, and he removed this burden from them.

He saw that the laws were different in different parts of his empire, which was not fair. So he set about to revise the laws and make sure they were the same everywhere. He wrote the whole set of laws in one book, and then sent copies of it throughout all his kingdom. Suleyman became so famous as a lawgiver, that even today his picture is included in a collection of portraits of great lawmakers throughout history, a collection that hangs in the United States House of Representatives.

Suleyman was also renowned as a poet, and many of his poems are still quoted by Turks to this day. He also purposed to make Istanbul the greatest city in the world. Under his leadership, the Ottomans built many magnificent bridges, mosques, and palaces that still adorn the city. He employed hundreds of skilled artists and careful craftsmen, who filled the palaces with beautiful works of art. He opened new trade routes into Europe, as well, and soon every great house in Europe was covering its floors with Turkish carpets.

When Suleyman died, in 1566, he left the Ottoman Empire as the most powerful kingdom in the world—immensely wealthy, well ordered, and at peace. The Empire sat upon the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and ruled over large portions of all three of these continents.

But it did not stay that way, and it is interesting to see why.

Strong rulers are often followed by weak ones. The Sultans who came after Suleyman were not men of the same mettle. Prior to the time of Suleyman, it had been the practice of the Ottoman

Turks for the sons of the Sultan to spend many years in training for government. They participated in military campaigns and ruled over far-flung provinces, until they had proved themselves worthy to be kings. You will recall that Suleyman's own father, Selim the Grim, had sent him far away to govern various borderlands of the empire.

Suleyman followed these practices with his older son, Mustapha, teaching him carefully. But Mustapha betrayed Suleyman, and this great grief caused Suleyman to change his methods. He abandoned his younger son, Selim, leaving him isolated in the harems of the palace and giving him no guidance or training in how to rule. When Selim came to the throne after his father's death, he was a weak and foolish man, concerned only with his own pleasures and caring nothing for the needs of his people.

This poor practice became the example that all the sultans' sons followed thereafter. They were prisoners, kept in small rooms within the palace and never allowed to leave. Many of them went mad. Those who did not, lived lives of luxury and ease, but they did not know anything about ruling the empire or governing the people. They left all the decisions to officials of the court, who were often evil and corrupt.

The Ottoman army began to lose its battles. The navy no longer ruled the ocean. The officials began to charge such heavy taxes on the trade routes that the other nations avoided them, finding other ways to travel, and the empire began to lose its wealth. Nations rise or fall depending on the quality of their kings. A wise king would have worked to solve these problems, but the empire no longer had any wise kings. And so, without the leadership of strong Sultans, the Ottoman Empire slowly crumbled away.

Chapter 3

Queen Elizabeth and the Little Ships

Being a king or a queen can certainly seem like a job anyone would wish for. Indeed, who would not want to live in a beautiful castle, wear fine clothes, hold fancy banquets, and give orders to bowing servants? But being a king or a queen is not a simple task. Kings and queens have much to care about. If he is to be a good ruler, a king must consider what his people need and do all he can to help them and protect them.

Besides the responsibility to care for the people, a queen must also keep an eye on her court. Most kingly and queenly courts in the world contain some people who are discontent. They want to rule the kingdom, and they will try to get their way by trickery and deceit. Oh, yes, kings and queens have much to care about.

Such was the case with Queen Elizabeth, even before she became a queen. In fact, she didn't think she would ever be queen because there were two other people impatiently in line for the throne of England ahead of her—her half-brother, Edward, and her half-sister, Mary. Plus some of the her father's court counselors laid devious plots to try to bring other cousins and family members to the throne instead.

But one by one those plots were revealed and the guilty plotters were brought to justice. Edward and Mary had their turns on the throne and died, leaving no sons or daughters to rule after

them. And after many long years of waiting, Elizabeth became the queen of England.

I am sure you understand that not all kings and queens are good and noble characters who love their subjects unselfishly. But Elizabeth loved her people and they loved her. She devoted herself to caring for her English subjects and she chose her government counselors wisely, something that Suleyman the Just's son would have done well to learn from.

Right away Elizabeth had to care for a prickly problem in her kingdom. This problem had been growing for many years, like an ugly weed in a garden, and King Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father, and Queen Mary, Elizabeth's half-sister, had helped that weed grow. The weed was caused by ill feelings between the Catholics and the Protestants. The two religious groups could not treat each other civilly.

When King Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father, was ruling, he was Protestant in his religious beliefs and he treated the Catholics quite badly, seizing their lands and money and having some put to death. When Queen Mary came to power, she was Catholic, so everything turned completely around and upside down. She treated the Protestants quite badly, putting many of them to death. In fact, she earned a nickname because of all the religious executions she ordered. The people called her Bloody Mary.

It was now Elizabeth's responsibility to care about this thorny problem. I wonder what you would have done if you had been in her place. She could not command the people to stop feeling the way they did, for you know it is impossible to tell someone how to feel. But she could put a stop to the terrible executions. And so she did. In Queen Elizabeth's kingdom, the English people needn't fear for their lives simply because of their religious beliefs. That was how Elizabeth cut down that weed.

But Elizabeth had another care that weighed on her mind. England had many wonderful products and goods that they wanted to trade with other countries. However, their trading was being

terribly restricted by Spain. Spanish ships, like so many bullies on neighborhood streets, claimed that no one else could sail on the Mediterranean Sea or across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. They claimed those waters as their territory and nobody else's.

One of Queen Elizabeth's ship captains decided to stand up to those bullies. He was the daring Francis Drake, and he determined to take his chances on the Atlantic Ocean. If he met any Spanish ship, he would fight it. If he won, he would capture the ship and seize all the goods and money they had on board. But if the Spanish won, they would capture the English ship and seize anything of value on it. Do you not think they were acting like pirates? Indeed they were, but no one called it so.

Francis Drake was quite successful at capturing and looting all the Spanish ships that happened to come his way. So much so, that finally he grew tired waiting to spot one; he wanted to sail right into the middle of Spanish territory and see what he might find. Queen Elizabeth gave her hearty approval to this venture, and Drake sailed across the Atlantic to South America and through the Strait of Magellan until he popped out the other side of that continent into the Pacific Ocean.

This area had been Spanish territory for so long that other countries had not dared to approach it for years, much like little boys tend to avoid the streets with the bullies. But in Drake sailed to catch the Spanish ships, one by one, completely by surprise. He filled his own ship with so much booty from Spain that he soon needed to return home. However, he could not go back through the Strait of Magellan. The angry Spaniards were waiting to catch him there. So Drake sailed on across the Pacific Ocean, around Asia, and around Africa to get back to England. He sailed all the way around the world! And it took him three years to do it!

Spain, as you can imagine, was not at all pleased with Francis Drake's accomplishment. They declared war against England and started preparing their ships for battle. Now, most of Spain's fleet of ships were large vessels that looked like castles floating on the

water. Each ship was several stories high and could hold 1000 men. This fleet was considered the largest and strongest armada in the world. The proud King of Spain called it his “Invincible Armada.” However, size alone does not win the day. England’s ships were much smaller, but they were faster.

Francis Drake, who had been appointed one of the captains of the little English fleet, once again grew impatient waiting for Spain to come his way, so once again he went looking for a Spanish ship. This time he found several sitting in the harbor near Cadiz. Fearlessly he swept through the lot of them, burning and destroying everything in his path. Then to add insult to injury, he came upon a loaded Spanish merchant ship on his way home, so he seized the cargo and carried it off to England, just as he had done so many times before.

Furious now, Spain rebuilt the ships that had been destroyed and set out for England’s shores. England’s little ships sailed out to meet them. The Spanish fleet was huge, but the English could strike quickly then turn around and go another way before the larger vessels could move their great hulking frames about.

Spain was used to fighting battles up close at sea. They wanted to pull up alongside the enemy’s ship, grab hold of it, and pull it tight, then board the vessel for hand-to-hand fighting on the decks. But the Englishmen would never get close enough for that tactic to work. They would fire their cannons from long-range. Then, like so many little birds swooping and pecking at a stray cat, the English ships would dart in among the large Spanish ships, inflict their damage, and fly off again.

Late one night when all was dark and still, the English took eight of their oldest ships, unloaded anything of value, and filled them with gunpowder, bullets, and stones. Then quietly they pulled those old ships in among the Spanish armada, set them ablaze, and quickly sailed away. The Spanish sailors had a rude awakening from sleep, you may be sure, as the English ships exploded. Bullets and stones were flying everywhere. Spanish ships caught

on fire. The sailors panicked. Some tried to make for the open sea, but collided with other ships in the dark, and both ended up with gaping holes in their sides for their troubles.

Finally in a great last battle, the little English ships darted in and out and caused such damage to the Spanish floating castles that they decided to sail for home. They could not get through the English Channel, for of course the English fleet was standing guard and would not permit them to come back so close to England's shores. So they had to sail out to the open sea, hoping to circle around England and get back to Spain that way. But a horrible storm destroyed even more of their ships. And when they at last limped into their home port, they discovered that their armada had been cut in half and only one-third of their brave soldiers remained.

In England the people were rejoicing, because the "Invincible Armada" was not invincible when it met Queen Elizabeth's little ships.