



AN ANGLO-TURKISH GENTLEMAN FARMER.

MUCH as you may hate the unsatisfactory Turkish Question, with its complicated intrigues, its unreasonable sympathies and antipathies, its fierce arguments which tend to no conclusion, you cannot get away from

it. The best way is to give up struggling, and go in for it heart and soul. Buy a map of the Seat of War, procure a number of minikin pins,

and provide them with little card flags—black for Rfssia, white for Turkey—stick them in the places occupied by the combatants, advancing and retiring them every morning, newspaper in hand, as fluctuations take place. Only, wait till the telegraphic battles are confirmed before shifting your pins, or one map will hardly last out the war, you will have to rectify the errors so continually. At the same time read books which treat of those countries upon which all the interest is at present centred—books with as little bias as possible.

I have just been reading a book on Turkey,* the evidence of which is worth a good deal more than that of most travellers, I think, partly because the writer did not visit the country for any political or literary purpose, but to carry out an idea of his own, but principally because in the carrying out of that idea he was necessarily thrown in with all classes in a manner which can never happen to a mere traveller, who is received everywhere as such. The most primitive people are well aware when a chief's among them taking notes, and are prepared to pose accordingly.

Colonel James Baker went to Salonica, the Thessalonica of early Church history, to farm, and as a buyer and seller, and an employer of labour, must have had excellent opportunities of acquiring a correct idea of the true state of the country, and the relations of Mahomedans and Christians to each other. For at the outset he protests against the loose and misleading custom of speaking of Turks and Bulgarians as if they were necessarily of opposing creeds. There are Mahomedan villages and Christian villages throughout the whole of Bulgaria, but the followers of the Cross and of the Crescent are precisely of the same breed. If anybody wishes to emigrate to Turkey, buy land, and farm, he will find certain directions which will be useful to him at the end of the work, but one would like more details as to how Colonel Baker started his agricultural operations; not that many men would be inclined to follow his example

and invest their capital in Turkish soil just at present. It would be a curious addition to future Eastern Question complications, if the interests of a colony of English-Turkish landowners farming their own property had to be considered.

The traveller and intending emigrant started in 1874, with no other attendant but John, a Cheshire boy who learned Turkish very rapidly, and who *never grumbled*. Why are there no servant shows? Here would be a chance of winning the first prize. The first thing which astonished him on landing at Constantinople was the carrying power of a hamal or porter. Having a considerable quantity of very heavy luggage, including a large case of ammunition, he was doubtful whether the porters present would suffice to carry it all up the steep streets; but *one* of them took the lot of it on his back, and as he walked off took up a leather bag in his hand, as if to prove that it would take a great many last straws yet to break the hamal's back.

The Pera hotels are very dear, and abounding in bad odours. It is a far better plan for a visitor, at all events in the summer, to lodge at Therapia, where there is a superior and much more reasonable hotel, and go backwards and forwards to Constantinople by the steamer, which takes you for fourpence.

Colonel James Baker's plan was to go to Burgas on the Black Sea coast, pass along the south side of the Balkan Mountains, cross them at their western extremity to the Danubian plain, and proceed thence to Salonica. There are two descriptions of passports, the *teskerré* and the *booyutoo*, the latter being esteemed as the superior document; but it is seldom asked for or looked at. The traveller provided himself with both, but never had occasion to use the *booyutoo* except once, when the flourishing of it in the face of an obstinate custom-house officer subdued him at once, and prevented a long detention and the consequent loss of passage in a steamer.

There is a very curious phenomenon connected with the Bosphorus: a rapid surface-current runs from the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmora, and there is an under-current in the reverse direction so much stronger, that if a weighted bucket is sunk from a small boat deep enough to reach it, it will tow the vessel along against the upper stream.

The Greeks on the Black Sea coast were the most dirty people that the traveller sojourned amongst, though none were very clean, and he gives the decided pre-eminence in dirt to Sisopolis, at the entrance of the Bay of Burgas, recommending no one to visit that town without a very large stout umbrella, to be used in the narrow streets as a protection against sewage; if the handle were hollow, and filled with eau de Cologne, he thinks that would be an improvement. The people live well, consuming a great deal of mutton; and as every family does its own butchering, slaughtering and preparing the sheep before the door, and leaving

* "Turkey in Europe." By Colonel James Baker.

the refuse in the street, this prosperity adds considerably to the general effect.

The upper classes certainly practise a species of ablution. A guest, unrolling himself from the thickly populated quilt which has been given to him as a night-covering, sees a perforated brass basin on a sink in the verandah projecting over the street, and near the basin a coffee-pot, generally of very pretty design and workmanship. The lady of the house appears, and motions him to make a cup of his two hands, in which she pours a little water from the coffee-pot, and invites him to dash this over his face. Then he is presented with a piece of soap to rub his damp hands with, a little more water is poured over them, and all is done.

The Bulgarians are fond of dancing to the music of the bagpipe, men and women joining hands in a long line, which waves backwards and forwards in a slow, undulating manner. As the bagpipes were exactly similar to the Scotch, it occurred to the traveller that the fitness of things demanded a different performance; and on inquiring whether they had no quicker dances, two of the men stood up and, to his astonishment, went through evolutions almost entirely coinciding with the Highland reel, whoops and finger-snappings included. Wishing to test this curious similarity still further, and to know whether the Bulgarian musicians had any pieces corresponding to the Scottish laments, he got into conversation with a piper, and asked him what sort of tune he would play in misfortune—if he lost his betrothed, for example. He was distressed to find that he had unwittingly struck a painful chord, for the young man's eyes at once filled with tears, but he immediately complied, and retiring into a recess at the further end of the room, commenced a regular pibroch. Surely here is a nice little problem for students of ethnology to solve.

Colonel James Baker's impression is that all the misdeeds of Turkey are attributable to her rulers; of the ordinary Turks themselves he entertains a very high opinion, the only obstacle to their improvement being their habits of procrastination, and the little idea they have of the value of time. He engaged a dragoman named Pano, who had been educated by the American Mission, and had even made a trip to America and lived some while there; yet he had acquired no notion of punctuality. He was a skilful cook, according to his own profession, and at the end of the first day's journey following his engagement, his master's mouth watered at the promise of the dinner which was to be prepared for him. First he was to have soup, then boiled fowl, stuffed cucumbers, and a delicious Bulgarian pastry, made with honey, called melina. So he unpacked, and had a bath, all in a leisurely manner, to give Pano plenty of time, and then, as the meal was not ready, he took an hour's walk, on returning from which he heard a great cackling in the village, which proved to be caused by Pano's efforts to catch the fowl that was to form the *pièce de résistance*; and it was now eight o'clock in the evening. When the fowl was killed and plucked, it was discovered that the fire had not been lighted; however, at last things got into train,

and a savoury smell soon gave a fresh edge to the hunger of the traveller. At ten o'clock, he thought the soup at all events must be ready, and went to see after it. Pano was preparing some rice for boiling; he had only just thought of that as a capital addition, and was quite surprised that his master was not willing to wait another hour for it. After that day the said master always took the cooking department into his own hands.

Colonel James Baker was at Salonica when thirteen thousand Turks arrived from the Servian campaign. They were billeted for ten days all over the town, and there was not a single complaint or cause for complaint of their conduct from man, woman, or child; while the streets, although crowded with soldiers, were just as quiet as usual. And this is the evidence of a resident, holding property in the neighbourhood, not of a passing stranger.

John, the Cheshire lad, got on capitally when the first strangeness wore off, but he was a little puzzled by the absence of many things he had always been used to on commencing to rough it. On the first night of bivouac, for example, going to bed without a bed appeared to him an anomaly; and in the morning, when his master, having made his own toilet, and had a swim in the river, on the banks of which they had passed the night, woke him up and told him to wash himself, he asked with bewilderment, "Where shall I get the water, sir?" As there was a river flowing at his feet, and the sea was not above a hundred yards off, the question was very easy to answer. But when deprived of basin and towel, John expected at least a pump.

He was considerably offended by a Polish resident with whom his master stayed, and who was very useful to him. This Pole spoke a little English, not much, and one day he sent John with a verbal message, and was nervous after he had gone lest the lad should have misunderstood him and given it wrongly. When he returned, however, and proved to have done his mission quite correctly, the Pole patted him on the back, calling him "Good dog! good dog!"—a mode of address which hurt John's dignity. But it soon turned out that the Pole meant to say, "Good boy."

While travelling in the mountainous districts there was a perpetual alarm of brigands, but Colonel James Baker never fell in with them. It was always possible for a traveller who could afford it to engage an escort of *zaptiehs*, or *gens-d'armes*. He did not do this, but contented himself with taking one *zaptieh* from station to station, not so much for a protector as for a guide.

Mr. Brophy, the English Vice-Consul at Burgas, travelled for some time in company with the Colonel, and afforded him the opportunity of observing the working of a Turkish court of justice. Mr. Brophy had an English bailiff who thought himself insulted by a young Turk in a khan one day, and when he walked up to him to ask what he meant the Turk drew his sword. Mr. Brophy, who was in the room, went to his man's help, and between them they disarmed the man, but got some cuts in the operation. Mr. Brophy made a formal complaint against the young Turk for drawing

his sword and assaulting an unarmed man to the Caimakan of the district, but the offender was of good family, and had considerable influence, so that, though arrested, he was let loose again. Mr. Brophy persisted, and the case was brought before the Pasha.

Complainant, his friend, the Pasha, and the Cadi or judge had cigarettes and coffee together, and then talked the matter over. The young man was always getting into trouble, the Pasha said, but it was a pity to make too much of the affair. Suppose he apologised in open court; let Mr. Brophy return next day and say if that would content him.

So next day they returned, and the Vice-Consul said that he had thought the matter over, and was content to accept an apology. Whereupon the Pasha, who had evidently got well out of a delicate business, showed his delight and relief of mind by suddenly seizing a hair in Mr. Brophy's whiskers, and jerking it out. It made him wince, but was a great mark of friendship.

Then the offending Turk was brought up as a prisoner, and soundly wiggled by the Pasha: at the conclusion of the jobation he took Mr. Brophy's hand and kissed it, asking his pardon. And there was an end of it all.

When a monastery lies in a traveller's route, it is the custom to rest there and accept its hospitality. At one of these religious retreats all the monks carried long spoons with rough serrated backs, and directly the new-comers were comfortably settled they also were provided with similar implements. But what they were for could not be guessed until one was used in their presence, when they proved to be back-scratchers; and very useful articles for wanderers in Eastern lands too.

About the most troublesome people in European Turkey seem to be the Circassians, of whom there are some 200,000. They were finally driven out of their native country by the Russians in 1864, and were kindly received as emigrants by the Turkish Government; and very lawless, troublesome subjects they often prove. They are Mahomedans, but are not calculated to do much credit to any religion, as they are not only thieves, but are proud of the accomplishment. They have a queer sort of filial duty too, for if you tax a young Circassian with dishonesty, he modestly disclaims the compliment for himself, but says that his father, now, he is something like a robber! They are a remarkably handsome race, as is well known, both men and women, and think it no shame to sell their daughters. Thus most families are connected in some way with the harems of the great and powerful, and this gives them a back-stairs influence which often insures them impunity for actions which would bring ordinary men to grief. In short, they are a terror to

their neighbours, whether co-religionists or Christians. Colonel James Baker and Mr. Brophy called on the chief of a Circassian village, who shortly afterwards returned the visit. Mr. Brophy, to whose house he came, offered him midday tea, which was in fashion in the East long before it was taken up in England; and the visitor took a strong fancy to the teapot, which he at once asked for, and when Mr. Brophy declined to part with it he upbraided him with his want of hospitality, saying that if he had asked for anything in *his* house it would have been granted at once. The host did not see the force of this argument, and the subject dropped for the time; but presently, when Mr. Brophy was called out on business, the Circassian winked at Colonel Baker, and quietly put the teapot into his pocket. The Colonel declined to be made a confederate of, and when the owner of the teapot returned, he proclaimed the theft. The Circassian laughed, and treated the affair as a joke, but he never gave up the article, which however was only of Britannia metal.

One of the principal attractions which drew the traveller to the Balkan range was the hope of sport, and there seemed a good chance of this being realised when the party encamped for the night in a spot where the red-deer could be heard bellowing all around. Early in the morning he started with the native hunter he had engaged for the wildest part of the mountain, and when it was broad daylight saw herds of chamois. But being after larger game, he left them unmolested, and made his way to windward, in the direction in which he heard a stag at intervals. The hunter did not understand stalking, so he left him behind and went on alone. Presently, while carefully stalking the deer, he came upon fresh traces of a bear. But as he clambered up some loose rock, drawing his rifle after him, the ground slipped under him, his rifle somehow went off, and the bullet striking a stone close to his head, splashed his face with splinters of lead, wounding him in many places, and causing a fear for the sight of at least one eye. And though the injuries did not prove to be very severe, and a sojourn of a few days in a dark room eventually made his seeing powers all right, all idea of sport was of course out of the question for that time. The Mahomedans of the district have a superstition that it is unlucky to hunt the red-deer, and this accident, we may be sure, did not tend to remove it.

Upon the principal portion of the book, which treats of the early history of the Turks, Bulgarians, Albanians, and other races forming the population of "Turkey in Europe," it is impossible to touch with advantage in so small a space as this. For all that, the peace and war establishments of the country, the differences between the Greek and Bulgarian Churches, &c. &c., the reader must refer to the work itself.

L. HOUGH.

