

a mad gallop in fair weather after the hounds. The confinement is not severe, but the torture is insupportable, for the hope of deliverance is never quenched. Elizabeth never announces a definite purpose concerning her royal prisoner, probably never has one. For nineteen years both captive and captor are made miserable by plots and counterplots; and whether Mary in prison or Mary at large is the more dangerous to the security of Protestant England is a question so hard to decide that Elizabeth never fairly attempts to determine it.

At length a plot is uncovered more deadly than any that has preceded. Half a score of assassins band themselves together to attempt Elizabeth's life, and to put Catholic Mary on the vacant throne. The blessing of the pope is pronounced upon the enterprise. The Catholic powers of Europe stand ready to welcome its consummation. Mary gives it her cordial approbation. "The hour of deliverance," she writes, exultingly, "is at hand." But plots breed counterplots. In all the diplomatic service of Europe there is no so ingenious spy as Walsingham, Elizabeth's Prime Minister. Every letter of Mary's is opened and copied by his agents before sent to its destination. The conspiracy is allowed to ripen. Then, when all is ready for consummation, the leaders are ar-

rested, the plot is brought to the light of day.

Mary, with all her faults, never knew fear; no craven heart was hers. The more dangerous was she because so brave. She battles for her life with a heroism well worthy a nobler nature—battles to the last, though there be no hope. She receives the sentence of death with the calmness of true courage, not of despair. With all her treachery, never recreant to her faith—never but once, when her infatuated love of Bothwell swerved her from it for a few short weeks—she clings to her crucifix till the very hour of death. Almost her last words are words of courage to her friends. "Weep not," she says; "I have promised for you." Her very last are a psalm from her prayer-book—"In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust." And then she lays her head upon the block as peacefully as ever she laid it upon her pillow. No "grizzled, wrinkled old woman," but in the full bloom of ripened womanhood—forty-five, no more—Mary Stuart pays on the scaffold at Fotheringay the penalty of her treachery at Edinburgh.

The spirit of the stern old Puritans is satisfied, and the prophecy of the Good Book receives a new and pregnant illustration—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

THE LIFE OF AN EASTERN WOMAN.*

EVER since the days when the witty and racy letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu lifted a corner of the curtain which shrouds the harem from profane and masculine eyes there has been a strong desire on the part of the reading public to penetrate deeper into its mysteries. Numerous as have been the contributions intended for the gratification of this curiosity, until very recently little real information on the subject has been imparted, those who professed to give the information having themselves only obtained glimpses of its inmates, and never having enjoyed opportunities of studying that shrouded life in its privacy and daily round of cares and duties. The Eastern woman has been as little understood as the life she habitually leads, and old errors in regard to her and to it have been perpetuated, which a more thorough insight would have corrected or removed.

Two of the most striking books on this theme have been contributed through the English press within a short period—Miss Emmeline Lott's *Harem Life*, and this last contribution from the personal experiences

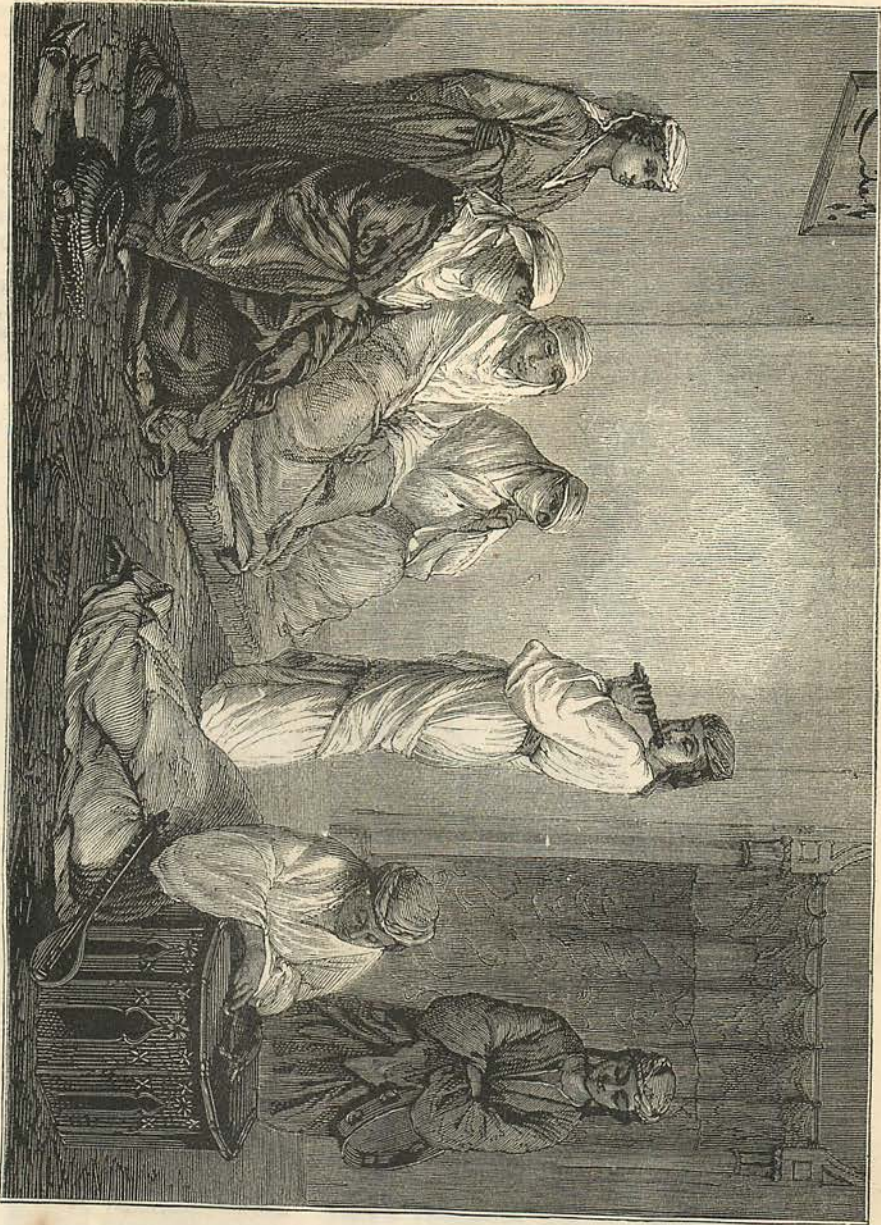
and romantic history of an Eastern woman, the wife of Kibrizli-Mehemet Pasha, late Grand Vizier of Turkey. The recollections of this Turkish lady, under the title of *Thirty Years in the Harem*, give a more perfect insight into that life, and to the domestic system of the Orient, than any previous contribution ever has done, and bear the stamp of truthfulness upon them. It is indeed a strange, eventful history which she recounts, one having all the romantic interest of fiction, and tinged with the glowing colors of that clime

"Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine."

Her revelations are characterized by a candor which conceals nothing, and in many instances she states facts in relation to herself which no Western woman would venture to proclaim, under the very different system of morals and manners which trains her up to fulfill the functions of wife and mother. Miss Lott's book (which made quite a sensation at the period of its publication) is of a totally different character, and calculated to convey erroneous impressions of the Eastern woman and of Eastern domestic life, for it is written in bad temper and in a hostile spirit by an under-bred and evidently disappoint-

* *Thirty Years in the Harem; or, the Autobiography of Melek-Hanum, Wife of H. H. Kibrizli-Mehemet Pasha.* New York: Harper and Brothers.

INTERIOR OF A HAREM.



ed woman, who occupied an almost menial position in the harem of the Egyptian viceroy, and who wreaks her feminine spite on its inmates by caricaturing them and every thing connected with them.

In fact, her book is a spiteful piece of scolding, and conveys false impressions instead of true ones, being characterized by gross exaggeration, and displaying the incapacity of the writer to convey her ideas even in her own tongue, or to forget her insular and truly British prejudices even among the

new and strange surroundings into the midst of which she had drifted, as nursery governess to the son and heir of the viceroy. Her book was a very disappointing one, the promise of its title and preface not being carried out by its contents. It smacks of the servants' hall and of the great lady's maid, and never rises above that plane, content to dwell on trivialities forever in the shape of her own petty personal discomforts and annoyances, to the utter neglect of what alone would be interesting to the outsider,

viz., the details of the daily life and habits of thought of these caged birds, who do not sing, but who yet must contribute all that there is of music to the life of the Eastern man, who loves his own home and passes much of his time within its walls.

This want the revelations of Kibrizli Pasha's wife supply, and her confessions vie with those of Rousseau in the thorough unveiling of all her actions and thoughts, and the transparent simplicity of their narration. An exile in England from the persecution of her husband, the pasha, she has evidently enlisted the aid of some able pen to tell the story for which she furnished the materials, for the style denotes a writer of no mean ability, and adds much to the inter-

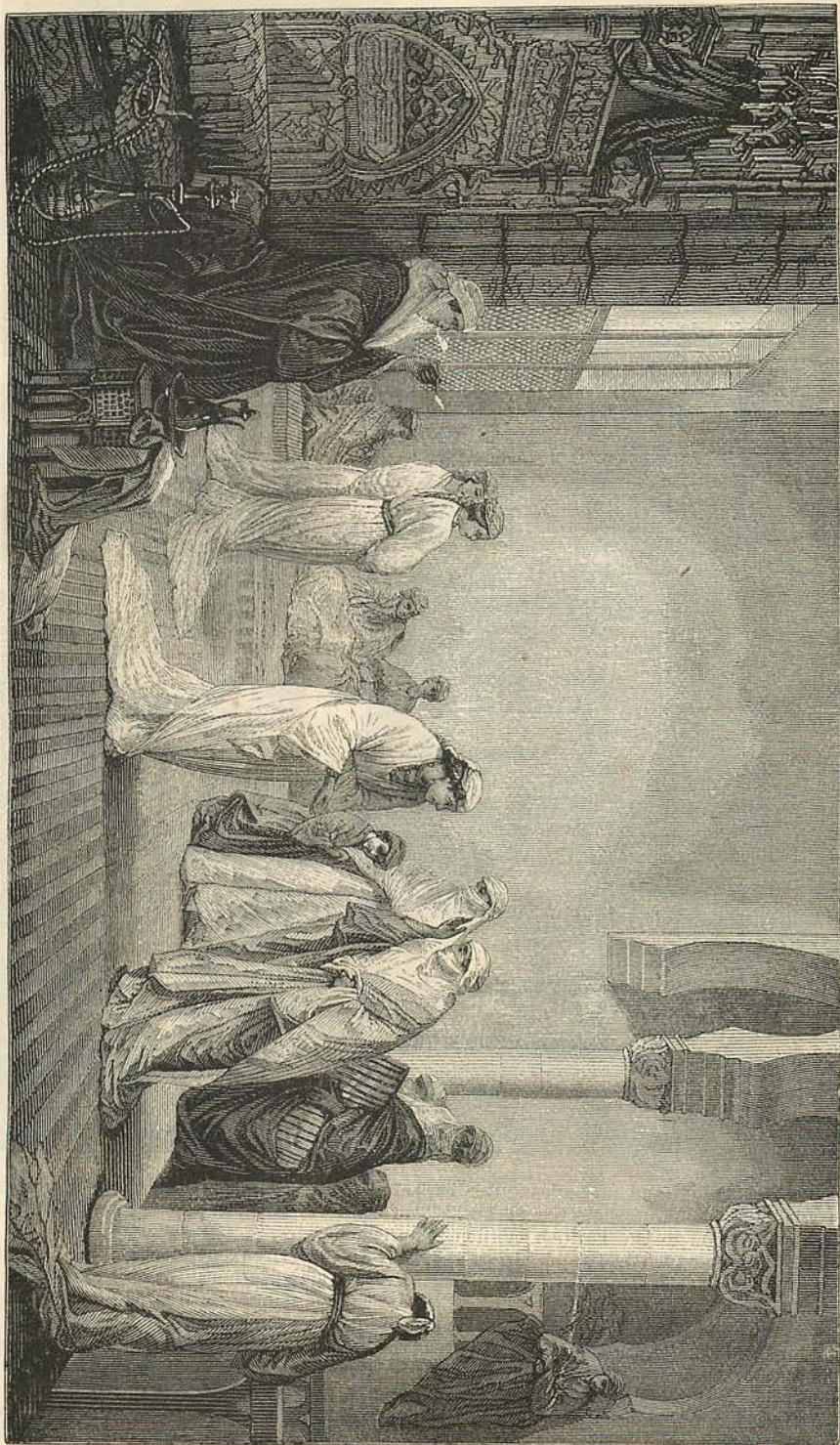
est of the narrative, and to the reflections upon Eastern habits and forms of thought which it embodies.

Her life, without the outside adventures which have made it at once so stormy and so interesting, is doubtless that of many an Eastern woman whom Fate or Fortune has lifted from a lower sphere into the unwholesome atmosphere of a palace, and it is in the minute details of that inner harem life that the novelty and value of the book chiefly centre.

The lady whose experiences this volume records was of mixed blood, partly Greek, partly Armenian, and partly French—a nominal Christian in birth and early training, but evidently conforming in all things



THE STORY-TELLER IN THE HAREM.



RECEPTION AT A SOIRÉE.—[SEE PAGE 373.]



AT THE TABLE.—[SEE PAGE 374.]

to Turkish habits and prejudices after her marriage with one of the "Grand Turks," then an attaché to the Turkish mission at Paris, but subsequently Grand Vizier, and, after Reshid Pasha's death, real Prime Minister of Turkey.

The mode in which her mother obtained her husband was so characteristic of place and people that its reproduction in this connection will throw much light on both.

Although a Greek woman and a Catholic, the mother, who was a very handsome woman, was uneducated, and lived the se-

cluded life common to all Eastern women, of whatever faith, in places where the Turk preponderates.

"She had frequently seen from her lattice a young European of tall stature and graceful bearing, armed with a sword, pass through the street, to the admiration of all the ladies of the quarter. One evening, the window being accidentally open, he saw her, and stopped to survey her. Next day he appeared again before the window and threw her a note in French, in which he avowed his passion for her—it being evi-

dently a case of love at first sight. She caused him to explain himself through the servant of a Marseilles merchant, who informed her that she knew the author of the letter to be a French merchant named Charles Dejean, living at Constantinople. Satisfied with these particulars," says the authoress, "my mother replied in a note, which she sent him the next time he passed through the street, that she accepted his addresses, and that if he would demand her in marriage of my uncle, she was ready to marry him." All of which was done, and the lady who tells the story was the second daughter of the issue of this marriage. But she never saw her father, who, absent in Wallachia when she was born, died there of fever.

When fifteen years of age she went to her first party, and there encountering "a gentleman who had been in the suit of Lord Byron during his sojourn in Greece"—presumably an Englishman—after a short courtship was married to him by a Greek priest. Incompatibility of temper and disparity of age, however, made the match an unhappy one, and five years after they mutually agreed on being divorced. Leaving the children of this marriage with her relatives, our freed bird winged her flight to Constantinople, and thence to Europe. She went to Paris, and figured at the ball given by Fety Pasha, Turkish ambassador at that court, and soon after made the acquaintance of her future husband, Kibrizli-Mehemet Pasha, then a dashing young military attaché to the legation.

After a brief courtship, during which the attractions of the suitor were weighed against "the awful prospect of the seclusion of the harem," and two rejections, she consented, returned to Constantinople, whither he had been recalled, and was married to him with all the ceremonies of a Turkish marriage, having evidently adopted her husband's religion as well as his name, although she does not say so. Here commences the record of her harem life of thirty years, finally broken by her flight to England; and to that record we refer the reader curious to know more of that life of which she records the details with such minuteness, from the marriage ceremony down to its conclusion, throwing in occasional explanations of things and of usages, which make her narrative very instructive to the reader, if not always very edifying or in strict consonance with more refined tastes.

Among other things she gives a very circumstantial detail of the manner in which gentlemen, who are never permitted to see their future wives before the ceremony has made the matter irrevocable, contrive to have some choice in the selection, and some imperfect idea of the personal and mental attractions, of the woman, not of their own,

but of somebody else's, choice. Her narrative is very spirited and amusing, and her frankness often startling. Judging from her book, she must have been a very "strong-minded" woman, worthy of a seat at Sorosis, though by no means hostile to the opposite sex.

But this article is not intended as an elaborate review or criticism of this curious book (which we advise all interested in the subject to read), but as a text to give the writer's own experiences of many years in the East as to the actual status and daily life of the Eastern woman of the higher class.

Most of the popular ideas of the domestic life of the East are derived from the descriptions of poets, who have drawn upon their imaginations for their facts, and substituted romance for reality. Thus both Moore and Byron must be held responsible for many rose-colored pictures of the lives and loves of their Lalla Rookhs and Zuleikas, which have been taken as the types of woman's life in the harem, whereas such specimens are not to be found in those sternly guarded inclosures.

Moreover, the remarkable ignorance of Oriental manners and habits displayed by both these very clever poets, one of whom had had glimpses of the East, is equally worthy of note. Thus Byron, in his *Bride of Abydos*, makes Zuleika the constant associate and companion of Selim, her supposed brother, but who was known to be her cousin by her father, Giaffir. Even had he been her brother, by Turkish usage, after very early boyhood, his entry into the harem, except to see his mother, would have been a grave offense, and visited with a stern punishment. This is but one out of many instances which could be cited to show in what very ignorant instructors in Eastern habits the poor public has implicitly believed.

The life of an Eastern woman now, as it ever has been since Turkey was a nation, differs as widely from that of her Western sister as day from night, light from darkness. It might even be said that in her ideas, as in her life, she is directly antipodal, and that to ascertain what she considers right or wrong you have but to reverse the principles and the practices of the civilized woman.

The chief and most obvious differences in her style and system of living—those which lie on the surface, such as her isolation from the rest of male mankind than her husband, the hiding her face in public, and her non-participation in any festivals or entertainments where men may be—every body has heard of and understands. But even these things are exaggerated in popular estimation, and the general tenor of her life and influence over that strange society entirely

misapprehended. For she does exercise an influence in the East, as elsewhere, over her sterner and ruder mate, which is possibly all the more potent because so secretly exerted.

Monckton Milnes, in his *Palm Leaves*, has idealized the seclusion of woman in the harem in some very beautiful poetry, in which he paints her as devoting her life, thoughts, aspirations, and energies to one alone, her choice on earth, her future companion in heaven. Now this conception is a truly poetic one, but unhappily the stern logic of facts contradicts it. For, in the first place, the Eastern woman can make no choice of her mate: she can never see him in advance of her nuptials except by peeping through her lattice at him as he rides by, or squats on her father's divan, smoking, in the men's apartment, into which she may never enter.

When she is told by her parents that her husband has been chosen for her, she can not demur, but must take him literally "for better or worse," and, with Mrs. Malaprop, hope that if "there be little love at first, it may please Heaven to decrease it on further acquaintance."

The destined husband also never sees his bride in anticipation of the ceremony, and beholds her unveiled face and hears her voice for the first time on the nuptial night. His parents have arranged the matter for him, as hers have for the bride. Should he be an orphan, then some aunt or other female relative has inspected and reported on the young lady, and he takes her on such report, plus the dowry she is to bring him by previous arrangement. For these two features of French marriages, supposed to be of Parisian invention—viz., the arrangement of the marriage by the parents, and the "dot" brought by the bride—are borrowed from our friends the Turks; and other people nearer home than France have not scorned to imitate the lesson in the best society.

It is but fair to say that our Turk, risking what seems so blind a venture, has providently protected himself by a facility of obtaining a divorce from the "object," not "of his affections," but his contract, which might be envied even by the residents of our Western States, whose liberality in that respect has become proverbial.

But of this it were premature to speak before marrying the couple, and sketching an outline of the manner in which they "have lived and loved together," as far as the envious veil which shrouds the harem will permit a man and "an infidel" to paint it.

Of the marriage ceremonies, which in the case of the higher classes (of whom this paper treats exclusively) are very elaborate and curious, it is not proposed to speak, since Lane and others give full details on

these points. We will suppose all these ceremonies disposed of, and the bride safely deposited in her new home as its mistress. What has she to do there? Preside over her husband's table; welcome his friends and make them comfortable when they visit or dine with him; superintend the arrangement, and see to the perfect order in which the household is kept; wait for his return home after his day's business or pleasure, and entertain him and his friends in her drawing-room—in fact, perform for him the part which our marriage ceremony contemplates, and our social fictions declare to be end and aim of wedlock? Not at all. They manage these matters differently in the East, and no such theory ever enters into the mind of man or woman there before or after matrimony. The man marries because it is not considered respectable to live single, and because he wants children. The woman marries because she wants the independence that state and the possession of her own establishment give her, and because, since the time of Sarah, Napoleon's idea of the duty of woman has been the Eastern idea also.

So man and woman enter into that holy state with none of the ideas and feelings with which we do, and expecting little, are not so often disappointed. The man expects his wife to occupy her own separate apartments, distinct from his—the harem—where she and her female attendants, superintended by a eunuch as a guard, pass all their time—eat and sleep, work or play. His own apartments, where he transacts his business or amuses himself and receives his friends, are in the other wing of the house, a door, of which he keeps the key, giving access from one to the other. The wife never is supposed to pass into the men's apartments, never is allowed to see even his nearest male relations, nor any adult male save her husband—except her own son—much less his "gentleman acquaintance." Fancy the feelings of female America, debarred not only from the glorious privilege of "flirtation" in girlhood, but from all male society after marriage, and then, gentle reader, reflect what submissive creatures your Eastern sisters must be!

You think so, do you? Well, then, you err; for unless the scandalous stories of gossips be untrue, these gentle creatures of the harem, thus "cabined, cribbed, confined," wield a sterner despotism over their liege lords than most Western women do, and patient Griseldas are said to be rare among them.

Custom, which is stronger than law in those countries, has given the woman certain rights and privileges, which she is not slow to assert and exercise. Her jealousy of her husband, who by the religion and law of Islam may have three legal wives besides herself, is ever awake, and reserving the

right to take back her dower if divorced by her husband, she feels an independence of him, and asserts her own individuality in a very decided manner. Where a gentleman has, or may legally have, many wives at the same time, even by legal fiction man and wife can not be considered as "one," and they make no pretension to it. A bedeviled Blue-beard, a hen-pecked Turk, would seem a strange contradiction; yet it is said to be the common lot of the race whose men sport what looks like the petticoat, and whose women wear what much resembles the breeches.

For although the wife may not enter the apartment where the men enjoy their solitary pleasures or pastimes, and may not "flirt" or even associate with her husband's friends, she yet is absolute mistress of her own domain, the harem, and when he enters there he is by no means the monarch of all he surveys. On the contrary, the wife, from the very isolation of the harem, and the certainty of no intrusion, when she commences a curtain-lecture has the poor man at a disadvantage, and improves the situation.

The man, who on his own side of the house is despotic, and all of whose servitors reply to him in the established formula, "To hear is to obey," shakes in his slippers at the shrill voice of his last and favorite wife as he enters "the abode of bliss" at her summons, when undigested sweetmeats or sherbets have soured at once her stomach and her temper.

Generally speaking, the Turk does not, as is usually supposed, avail himself liberally of his privilege of plural wives. In the first place, it is too expensive, for each must have her separate apartments and separate slaves. In the second place, the difficulty of keeping the peace among or with them, when there are many under the same roof, is a prohibition. Hence, with the exception of very high Turks, our supposed Blue-beard generally contents himself with one wife at a time, replacing her by a successor, through the very facile process of divorce, when the "incompatibility" becomes unendurable. True, the harem is filled with women, but they are only the slaves of the lady thereof, and hence strangers frequently make the mistake, as many of them are richly dressed, if favorites of the mistress.

"But then," some fair reader may pityingly exclaim, "the poor creatures are shut up from morning to night, and never allowed to go out except under guard of dirty black men!" Never was there a greater mistake. These ladies enjoy a much greater degree of liberty than is generally supposed. They visit each other a great deal, and enjoy all the pleasures of gossip and scandal which their freer sisters can do. As they never read, and never work, and have no household duties to occupy their leisure, talk, and

eating and drinking, and unlimited smoking, are their only resources for killing time. At home they vary these amusements by calling in the aid of the singing and dancing girls, as they do not consider it dignified to practice or possess these accomplishments themselves. The singing and dancing women are professionals, and generally of very unequivocal character—in fact, are almost universally a disreputable class. Then, too, on Fridays the ladies go to the bath, and spend the day there chatting and gossiping with each other. This is their club, and they enjoy it thoroughly once a week.

Shopping, too, is another of their pastimes. In the bazars you meet them in great numbers, either on foot or perched on small donkeys, muffled up and covered with large silk cloaks, with only a bright pair of wicked-looking eyes visible, and guarded by an old woman or sable eunuch. They are quite as eager and as animated in shopping as any Western woman can be. The richer ladies have also goods brought to their houses by female traders, who make a very profitable trade out of their fanciful customers, who are entirely regardless of expense in gratifying any whim or caprice that seizes them.

The expenses of a man's harem in Turkey far surpass all those for the rest of his household. It is his most expensive luxury.

The best trait of these lazy, idle, and uneducated women is their devotion to their offspring. They are good mothers, and their love and devotion are reciprocated by their children. The strongest sentiment the Turk has is his reverence for his mother. However elevated his position, he always stands up in her presence until invited to sit down, a compliment he pays to none besides. It is related of the famous Ibrahim Pasha, of Egypt, that on one occasion, having offended his mother, the old lady intentionally omitted asking him to sit down, and compelled him to stand up for an hour—a severe punishment for an Oriental. Yet he at the time was absolute arbiter of life and death throughout Egypt, and still a slave to the whim of an old woman, because she was his mother. Women who can command reverence and obedience as unqualified as this surely must deserve it.

The practice of purchasing Georgian and Circassian women for the harems is still kept up, Constantinople being the great mart or central dépôt of these willing victims.

They prefer the gilded slavery of the harems, where they soon become despots, to the life of hardship and privation which would be their lot at home. On all the steamers coming from Constantinople you may meet some sensual-looking Turkish or Egyptian magnate in charge of a bevy of veiled females, whom he is bringing back to replenish his stock of wives or slaves. They are carefully secluded in private cabins, and

when permitted to breathe fresh air on deck, resemble walking bundles of black silk, so carefully are they enveloped, neither face nor figure to be seen.

The surprise of foreign visitors to these caged birds is very great when they are contemptuously condoled with on the little care their husbands take of them, and the indifference they must feel toward them, in permitting their unveiled faces to be seen by every eye. The Eastern woman is proud of the precautions her husband takes to insure her fidelity, conceiving it to be a mark of his interest in her. At the same time they conceive themselves perfectly at liberty to baffle that vigilance if they can, and intrigue is a passion with them, although the punishment, if detected, is sure and sudden death. The secrecy of the harem, into which even the officers of justice may not enter, insures impunity to the sternest tragedies perpetrated behind its impenetrable veil. It is a sanctuary, too, for the master of the house for other purposes, since in that retreat he may safely deposit his valuables, secure nowhere else. Hence, very often much of a man's wealth may be found in the possession and on the persons of his women, in the shape of precious stones, which even the ingenuity of the Turkish tax-gatherer, either as governor or other functionary, can not reach.

So it will be seen that the harem has its advantages in certain ways, both for the men and women.

As to what we regard as the pleasures of home and society, they are neither known nor prized in those regions. They live an animal existence, and enjoy life in that sense only. An educated and cultivated woman is a *rara avis* among them. Such a one was the princess of Saïd Pasha, former Viceroy of Egypt. She not only was a musician, but a poetess as well, and impressed all foreign ladies who saw her by the grace and elegance of her manners and speech. Yet even she spoke no foreign language, though she understood English imperfectly. But, as was truly said by Tennyson,

"As the husband is, the wife is."

Of what use would education and culture be to men who themselves neither possess nor prize either? With a few exceptions, the great mass of Turkish men are wholly uneducated, many high functionaries not knowing even how to read or write. Their signature is always stamped on a public document by the seal ring worn for that purpose. It is the rarest thing in the world to see an Eastern man reading a book. I never saw one reading a newspaper, although they have a few printed at Constantinople and Cairo, under government auspices, supported by enforced subscriptions from the pay of officials, who never see or care to see them.

While very young the Eastern women may be charming, but they become prematurely old at an age when Western women are in their prime. Early development (they are marriageable at ten years of age), and the indolent life they lead, stuffing themselves with unwholesome food, tend to produce this effect, together with the enervating effects of climate and early maternity.

Such is a true picture of the life of an Eastern woman, who is the pampered and petted plaything, not the companion, counselor, and friend, of her husband, and whose code of morality is so lax as to justify the restraints placed upon her, unless, indeed, it may be argued that the effect is produced by that very cause, and the system which seeks to prevent produces the universal laxity of morals, which no one can deny.

Of the profusion and luxury displayed in these gilded cages it is unnecessary to speak: they can not be exaggerated, and the financial distress in Turkey, both public and private, is doubtless due in great measure to this cause.

But while the Eastern man remains what he ever has been, and still is, this cherished institution of the East will continue to flourish. The harem and Islam are twins, which, like the Siamese, may not be put asunder.

It has been already stated that their amusements consist of visiting, the bath, shopping, stuffing sweetmeats, and smoking, with large dishes of gossip daily served up by friends or favorite slaves. Occasionally, but very rarely, the Turkish lady gives what may be termed a *soirée*, the male sex, of course, being absent; and all who recall that most monotonous and melancholy interval after dinner in civilized houses, while the gentlemen are sitting over their wine, and the ladies in the drawing-room are yawning in each other's faces, may fancy that these are dreary affairs. Of course the writer of this article, being of the prohibited sex, was never permitted to attend one of these Eastern "hen-parties," and must therefore borrow his description of them from a French authority, M. De Jerusalem, who, in the *Tour du Monde*, gives a lively and graphic sketch of such a *soirée*, evidently derived from some fair Turkish friend.

A *soirée* in the harem is a rare event, night reunions being contrary to the Mussulman habits. No man attends them. The *soirées* of the *khalva* (so called from the name of a certain hard cake, friable and honeyed, that they serve to the invited guests) take place in the wealthiest harems, on the occasion of a birth, of a marriage, of an elevation in dignity of the sultan husband, or of a reconciliation of two hanoums, cohabitants, parents, or friends.

Some days before the entertainment *djariéhs* (maid-servants) carry verbal invitations to the designated ladies. Some of these invitations are given by the mistress of the house in her visits, others through the agency of the *effendis*. Observe that the Mussulmans are not alone invited: Christian ladies, Franks (Western or native), whose male relatives have business or friendly relations with the master of the house, can also come to these soirées.

About an hour after sunset the harems begin to arrive on foot, preceded in the dark streets (Stamboul is never lit at night) by negroes, or simply by a servant carrying a lantern or two or three candles. The *djariéhs* of the house, smiling and affable, meet the guests in the vestibule, address them with graceful *ténémas** (courtesies), the usual words of welcome, and conduct them into the lower hall, which serves as a dressing-room. There they divest themselves of the *férédjés* and *yashmaes*, of their *tchèles* and *papouchs* (double walking shoes).

From the dressing-room the *djariéhs* conduct the guests to the first story, showing them the right staircase, and, if they are of high rank, supporting them by the elbows and armpits.

In the seraglios and the wealthy harems, after having traversed several galleries, corridors, and spaces of all shapes and sizes, the whole absolutely bare, one arrives at the room where the feast is held; it is the largest and the most magnificent. A circumferent divan, high mattresses, cushions stuffed with wool, a long fringe of silk mingled with gold, occupy three sides of this saloon, or, if it is overlarge, two divans, shaped like a horseshoe, face the two ends, while the space between them is unfurnished on two sides, except by some *tchités*, or square mattresses, ottomans, stools, and strips of carpet, or else by chairs, fauteuils, and sofas, if the French fashion has penetrated the house.

The mistress of the house remains seated at one of the *kioschés* (angles of the divans), the place of honor. The guests, introduced into the reception-room, advance without being announced toward the mistress, who invariably greets them with an amiable smile and words of welcome, exchanges with them courtesies and compliments, or gives her hand to the *kiz* to kiss, to all the other young hanoums, and to the common women who frequently present themselves without an invitation to assist at the soirée, and to whom they seldom close the doors. In Turkey equality is the rule, but it is not absolute. At the word of command from the hanoum mistress, the arrivals seat

themselves successively side by side, right and left, upon the divan, with legs crossed or with one knee raised. The second place of honor is reserved for the wealthiest or the most respected of the invited guests, or that one for whom they make the feast of reconciliation.

If the number of the invited guests is so large that all are unable to find a place upon the divans, the *kiz* and the hanoums of inferior rank are requested to seat themselves upon the *tchités* and carpets which ornament the side of the room unfurnished with a divan.

After the preliminary ceremony chibouques and sweetmeats, with coffee, are served to the guests, and an animated buzz of conversation immediately arises. The hostess gives a sign, and those of her slaves who possess musical talent seat themselves on the floor in the middle of the room, and begin to sing and play those monotonous and droning nasalities which the Turks consider music, amidst grunts of satisfaction from the audience. The dancing girls follow the singing ones; and the complaint of monotony or want of vivacity certainly can not be made with reference to their truly remarkable performances, which shock and disgust civilized women, although probably the wildest indecencies of these dances are not indulged in before female audiences. But modesty (as we understand it) is not the attribute of the Eastern woman, that plant requiring a culture and a training which these untaught children of nature never receive either at home or in the harem. And all the while, in the midst of the distracting din of music, singing, and dancing, the sipping of coffee and sherbet, and the stowing away of sweetmeats below the capacious girdles of the full-bodied Turkish women, go steadily on, beneath a bluish cloud of fragrant smoke, rising like incense from innumerable chibouques, whose amber mouth-pieces the lips of the fair ones are persistently pressing, until old King Frederick of Prussia, were he to rise among them, might deem himself in his old "tobacco parliament" again, though with very different companions from his bearded old Teutons. Card-playing and the game of checkers also vary the amusements of the evening. Gambling is a passion with all Orientals, and this diversion absorbs much of their attention. From the half-naked Arab donkey-boy to the pasha, every body gambles in the East, and the ladies will never allow the sterner sex any where a monopoly of vices any more than of virtues. Story-telling by amateurs is also another amusement of theirs, and it is curious what a relish of the old *Arabian Nights Entertainments* is perpetually being served up both by professional and private story-tellers, as though those wondrous tales had actually exhausted all Eastern invention, and

* *Ténéma*—a salutation which consists in bringing the open hand to the mouth, then upon the forehead, accompanying this movement by an inclination of the upper part of the body.

the many-colored life of the Orient as well. Supper is served in the Eastern style at a late hour, in the middle of the room, on an immense silver platter containing the famous *paté "khalva,"* which looks like a large plum-pudding, and smaller trays covered with fruits, preserves, and other dainties. Round the central platter is a row of tall wax-lights. Of course there is no Champagne or wine, water and sherbets being the substitutes. Every one then has hands washed and dried by officious domestics, and resuming their former seats on the divans, the guests smoke and sip coffee and chat again. As it grows late the children whom their mothers have brought, of all ages, coil up on the floor or on their mothers' knees, fast asleep, and their elders, replete with food and smoke and much talk, begin to be "niddin-noddin" likewise. But no one can go before one of the leaders of rank and fashion sets the example. When one of these makes the move, and others imitate her by rising, it is etiquette for the hostess to remain seated and resist their departure with great apparent earnestness. Then ensues a war of compliments and of hand-kissing and protestations on both sides, and a perfect babel of uproar and confusion accompanies the departing guests, to which the shrill cries of the awakened children and the attendant slaves in charge of them contribute not a little. At about four in the morning, the *soirée* being over, the *khanum*, or hostess, devoutly thanks Allah for her deliverance from her friends, as her civilized sister would do, and shuffles off wearily to bed, overcome with her hospitable exertions.

Such is a Turkish *soirée*, and such the indoor amusements of our caged birds. Their out-door ones are more varied, but we have not space to describe them here and now. They consist of their visits to friends, to the bath, to shop, and chiefly to the sweet waters of Turkey in Asia, near Constantinople, or to the gardens of Cairo or Alexandria. Here they see men, though they may not accost or converse with them, and are equally seen through the gossamer tissues which pretend to veil and conceal charms whose effect they only enhance. Many a stern tragedy is commenced in these smiling gardens by the Bosphorus, and many a tale of crime remains unknown and untold which had its origin in these gay resorts or near those babbling waters. For jealousy in the East is as watchful and sleepless as Argus, and as remorseless and pitiless as the grave. Short is the shrift and sure the punishment which awaits the frail Zuleika when once her lord has reason to suspect her, and the harem curtain which shuts her out from common view often serves as her shroud when she disappears suddenly and mysteriously from behind its folds, and is heard of never more. For no one has the right to

make such inquiries, and if they did, even the officials of the law and the ministers of justice must respect the mystery of the harem, nor carry their inquiries into it. Impunity for this class of crimes is therefore insured to the master of the harem, and he scruples not to avail himself of that license.

It is a popular fallacy, as a late author has truly observed, "that the elevation of woman is entirely due to Christianity, and that outside of that woman is but a toy and a brood-mare, without any social influence whatever." It is true that the benign influences and the practice as well as the teachings of Christ did much to elevate woman morally in the social scale, but the truth of history compels the acknowledgment that chivalry, which followed the Crusades and first elevated woman, was borrowed from the Saracens and the Moors of Spain. For in the Middle Ages, the corrupt age of Louis XIV., and in the equally infamous one of Charles II., woman had sunk morally and socially to a depth lower than that of the female savage; and as to her rights under the common law of England, she had none separate from her husband, and all her property, real and personal, was his.

Let us not scoff, then, too hastily at the Turk and the Arab, who from time immemorial have given their women full control over the property given them as dower, or otherwise beyond the control of the husband—who restored to a divorced woman all the property she brought, and compelled the husband to provide for her subsistence, and, in fact, endowed her with all those separate rights and privileges which it is the boast of our later civilization to have given her within the last twenty years.

The "Prophet" himself made great use of women in propagating "the Faith." For he said, "Paradise is at the feet of the mothers;" and the names of Ayesha, Fatima, and Khadija are identified with Islamism. The name of one of Mohammed's daughters (Fatima) was given to the dynasty of one of the sects—for Islamism has its sects as well as Christianity. The reverence, too, for the mother in a household is only equaled in France. She is the absolute mistress; for, as the Arab says, "I can get another wife, I can have other children, but I can be born but once, and never find another mother." As has been justly said, "The history of Turkish or of Arab dominion could not be written without giving the histories of the sultanas and of the mothers of the sultans."

There is another matter in which we might well take lessons from the Turks—the matter of divorce. The very interesting book of Madame Kibrizli-Mehemet Pasha, to which we have referred, gives curious illustrations of this. We have only space to say that although the wife can not take the steps to initiate a divorce, she has many ways of

compelling her husband to do so, one of which, among the Arabs, is the declaration of the woman that she intends remarrying with a better man than her husband. They have also limited marriages (from whence the St. Simonian idea in France), called *kabin*, which are legally contracted before a magistrate for a given period, the man contracting to take care of the children, and to pay her at the expiration of the contract a sum of money agreed upon. These children are considered legitimate, as are all children born at the father's house. It is a curious illustration of human nature that these temporary arrangements usually result in permanent ones, the very liberty of withdrawal seeming to make the matrimonial yoke less heavy to bear.

As early as nine years of age the Eastern woman is marriageable, and by Turkish law, at that age, if married, she is competent to manage her property and dispose of *one-third* of her fortune—a wise restriction on one so young.

Moreover, the law allows her to abandon her husband's house for just cause, and will protect her in so doing. She can not, as with us, be compelled to labor for the support of her husband. On the contrary, he is compelled to support her, and it is a penal offense to insult or ill-treat her. On an accusation of infidelity her oath is accepted as equally good with his, and collateral proof must be obtained. Should he not furnish her with funds, she is authorized to borrow in his name, and even to sell his property. After marriage she has the absolute control of her own property, which he can not touch. For adultery, when proved by four witnesses, the punishment is death. But these cases are never brought into court—they are punished elsewhere, as has been already stated—and there is but one instance recorded in the Turkish annals where an indignant multitude stoned to death an adulteress on the public highway. The divorce courts in Turkey are by no means so busy as in more civilized countries, and it would not pay to give a judge a salary for that specialty. The man secretly avenges himself, or puts by the adulteress without clamor, and never figures in the newspapers or the courts.

Compare the condition of woman under this system and under ours, and will it not be evident that the Eastern sister has many compensations, and even many advantages, strange as it may seem? Yet even after the lapse of ages, and in despite of constant pilgrimages to the East annually made by tourists from Europe and America, it is scarcely strange that so dense an ignorance and so strong a prejudice exists in relation to a people of whom ninety-nine out of a hundred visitors see only the outer and more repulsive features. Among the Druses of Mount

Lebanon, when the husband can prove the wife unfaithful, he sends her home to her family with the proofs, with the *khandjar*, or dagger, he had received on wedding her, but *without the sheath*. The father and brothers sit in solemn judgment over her, and if convinced of her criminality, with that weapon the elder brother severs her head from her body, and sends her *tantoon*, or head veil, back to the husband, steeped in blood, and with a lock of her hair, as a mute witness of her punishment.

But space and the patience of readers compel the conclusion of this article before the half has been told. There is no better way to conclude it than in the words of a famous French writer, who justly says, in reference to this very topic and the popular errors relating to it:

“Religious laws and manners in vain seek to shroud in servitude and in mystery the women of a country; for nature, beauty, and love will restore them to their own proper place, expressly made for them, within the heart of man.”

SUB ROSA.

By ROSE TERRY.

Who knows the secret of the rose?
Deep in her silent heart it glows:
The sun alone, from upper air,
Discerns the heavenly mystery there.
Is there one human soul that knows
The sacred secret of the rose?

Not he who sad and daunted stands,
Afraid to reach his trembling hands,
Afraid to grasp the bliss that lies
Deep in those golden mysteries,
Lest men or angels shout in scorn
The legend of the rose's thorn.

Not he who wastes his listless hours,
Like idle moths, on any flowers:
High on the rose's front serene
Blazes the crown that marks the queen
No soul that dares that sign deny
Shall in her fragrant bosom lie.

Not he who knows no more delight
Than dwells within his fickle sight;
For blush and bloom may pass away
In compass of a summer's day;
But still the rose's heart is sweet,
Though all its outward glow be fleet.

But he who meets its keenest thorn
With gracious strength and tender scorn;
Who knows the royal heart that stands
Waiting the touch of royal hands;
Who trusts to love's eternity
When love's own blossoms fade and die;
Who waits with passion's patient strength
For passion's peace, that comes at length—
He only conquers, for he knows
The sacred secret of the rose.