

THE TURK AT WORK.

By C. SUTCLIFFE.



WHY court failure by attempting to describe the indescribable, that stronghold at whose gates civilisation has for centuries hammered in vain; that medley of wealth the most lavish and poverty the most abject that the world knows? Why attempt to say anything of Stamboul save that it is Stamboul, and then stand apart while the tourist lays his pen in rest and tilts at the great supine giant at his will?

For an account of Stamboul, the city, go elsewhere, and be content to hear what may be seen, in a scramble through the place of those who live and work within it.

You cross the bridge. The true Turk is not to be seen till you are on its farther side. He shows good taste, for Pera and Galata are vile. Arrived there, you step smartly aside in order to avoid the human missile which is rushing upon you. It is a brigade of firemen, picturesque ruffians, whose long muscular brown limbs enable them to get over the ground more quickly far than would any English fire-engine if introduced into steep step-streets that here form the by-ways. Each man is armed with an axe and a long hooked stick. With the one they will hack down the neighbour of the wooden building which is burning merrily away; with the other they will draw into safety the carpets and cushions which form the chief of its fittings.

The firemen, who are known as *tulumbadji*, are attired according to the rules of

strict propriety, as represented in this illustration. Their knickerbockers of white cambric are drawn below their knees, their full shirts are pulled up to their throats, and their sleeves down to the wrist, little vests of crimson cloth are stretched over their chests and shoulders, and a many-coloured sash is wound several times round their waists. As the fun grows fast and furious, however, all these appendages, unnecessary to a *tulumbadji*, will be flung aside, and he will attack the flames in such a condition that, should a heat-wave pass over him, he need have little fear of charred rags clinging to his limbs.

Yanghen var! Yanghen var! Those who passed first were only the outrunners it seems—the advanced guard—of a curious construction having the appearance of a palanquin gone wrong. This is carried by means of long poles on the shoulders of another set of firemen, who, as it is a big fire, shout out



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[Abdullah Frères, Constantinople.

TULUMBADJI, OR FIREMEN.

Allah! Allah! as they hasten past.

Allah! Allah! Then if the lover of the picturesque be fortunate, and it is a conflagration by night that he is witnessing, he will see a long white arm thrust forth from the block of dusky buildings towards which the crowd has made its way. The arm grows longer and longer till it touches the murky curtain above. This it strikes and thrusts aside, leaving in its place a delicate veil of pink which by degrees spreads over the whole of that quarter of the city.

The *tulumbadji* had until quite recently certain privileges of which they have now, to their great indignation, been deprived.

One of these was that until they, Lords of the Raging Flame, appeared on the scene no one might make any attempt to put the fire out. Till their chief had sanctioned the act, moreover, no water might be drawn from the public wells and fountains.

Sometimes in their zeal the *tulumbadji* will use their long curved staves to draw out articles from buildings which stand in no danger. Then the other block will be allowed to blaze away in peace for a time while a hand-to-hand fight goes on between the owners of this pilfered treasure and the firemen, who do not see the point of working in the interests of others only.

It is said that the whole of Constantinople, the mosques excepted, is burnt down every twenty years. The wonder is that it is not burnt down every two. The Osmanli's idea of ensuring the safety of his home is to build it of wood from roof to foundation; to let it bake in the suns of a summer such as is his for eight months in the year; to set a pan of charcoal in the middle of his floor; to place the pile of pillows which he calls his bed practically on the top of it; to put a few *okes* of fresh fuel within easy reach of his hand; to light his pipe, go comfortably to sleep and await what Kismet will send him.

In the romantic days of yore the Sultan for the time being was always supposed to be present at any great conflagration. So soon as it was seen that a whole quarter must be enveloped in flame, messages were sent to the palace to give information. One of the women of the harem was then hastily dressed in scarlet robes kept for the purpose; scarlet slippers were put on her feet, and a long scarlet veil flung over the whole. She would open the door of any apartment where her lord might be, and, standing still and silent in the doorway, would by her presence there indicate the nature of the disaster.

After considering the *tulumbadji*, one might watch the march past of a band of stalwart Albanians, arrogant and lordly in mind as they are in gait. Each bears an arsenal in his belt consisting of knives, sabres and yataghans, the vacant spaces being filled up with pistols of sorts. Across his shoulders is slung the gun which will still hang there when in the spring he tramps up and down his field of maize or tobacco, scratching the ground with the implement it pleases him to call a plough. These domineering mountaineers are here for the most part to barter the skins and furs they have brought with them for such necessities of life as gun-

powder and firearms, and will presently leave the city for their own crag-perched homes. Some however remain here permanently and—for courage and fidelity are among their finest characteristics—they make excellent watchmen. In this realm, where the nursery-maid is unknown, the Albanian also sometimes plays her part, and not the least diverting of the sights of this city, is that of a great bloodthirsty-looking giant issuing from the doorway of some house of a well-to-do Englishman with a tiny, gray-eyed, golden-haired little daughter of the West in his arms. He will carry her down the road with unconcealed pride, ostentatiously lifting her veil as he passes some representative of his own race, that it may be seen how far he is honoured and trusted by his employers. Should some street urchin or *hamal* approach, he will, with a dash of his native ferocity, order him into the gutter that the pavement may be left free for the passing of this white princess. As caretakers they are invaluable, and solve a difficulty which without them would be insolvable, that is how to ensure the safety of the town house when the owner is up the Bosphorus, or the country house when the owner is back in the city. To tell a *zaptieh* or soldier to keep an eye on it would be to find the building deprived of its last shutter on his return. He would turn in vain from his Circassian servant to his Turk, from his Armenian to his Jew, to his Levantine, his Maltese, or his Greek. Fortitude or perseverance, or some quality, even if not honesty, would in each case be wanting, but with an Albanian he is quite safe. Even if a blood feud in his native village called the mountaineer away in haste, it is possible—not probable, but still possible—that he might recommend a brother to tramp about the doorstep till his patron's return. And with an Albanian armed from toe to tooth on the watch, it would be a fearless and a subtle house-breaker who could make his way in.

I knew only one Albanian watchman who broke his trust, and his offence might be considered justifiable, for his feelings had been mortally, albeit unconsciously, wounded by his patron. The latter presented him, in honour of some fête, with a new suit of clothes gorgeous in embroideries and crimson cloth, also with ample petticoats of white linen and innumerable tags, bosses and fringes of gold or its equivalent. The delighted Albanian fenced himself in with his armoury as usual, then proceeded to strut through the town, parading his bravery at each café affected by those of his nationality. Next

day what a fall was there! The patron indicated, by the signs which were his usual means of communication with his vassal, that the new clothes were not to be held on view every day, but only on special occasions. This offended the mountaineer much. Not only would his comrades think scorn of him when he appeared once more in the cast garments of yesterday, concluding probably that he had been deprived of them from reasons of personal unworthiness, but he foresaw that in order that his lord's whim might be indulged he, Hassan of Kara Drin,

hirsute honours are here accorded, for he it was who had the privilege of tending the poll and chin of Mahomet.

The barber is a man of men in this land where the head is as a rule worn closely shaven. A tuft is usually left on the crown carefully concealed beneath the fez. By this attendant spirits will raise the true believer to paradise when the Archangel Izrafil shall sound his trumpet on the day of the resurrection. The barber is the one individual whom the Turk allows to see him with head uncovered. It would be equally a disgrace



From a photo by]

BARBERS AT WORK.

[Abdullah Freres, Constantinople.

would on occasion be compelled to doff and don his apparel twice in twenty-four hours. The thought to an Albanian, conservative on that as on other points, was not to be endured. Consequently in the dark of the night, with the prized covering about his body, he fled back to his mountain fastnesses, and Stamboul knew him and his magnificence no more.

Turn now to the barber, whose patron is Abraham. That patriarch it was who, according to Moslem tradition, was first troubled with gray hair and first used scissors to trim his beard. To one Seliman, also,

to his own person and an insult to his fellows to appear thus in public.

No man, however poor, attempts to shave himself in the East, and the charge varies from what would be two farthings to sixpence of our money. As with the followers of other trades, the barber has his own special quarter of the town and all the most expert hail from Teriak-Tcharssky. Hither the offshoots of the profession who go to seek their fortune in other parts return when they have won that name and fame which gives them a right of choice in the matter of residence.

The barber's rites are performed in absolute silence. He summons his subject by a sign from the divan where he has waited his turn. He waits voiceless till the latter has seated himself on the chair. He swathes him in the regulation draperies without a word. Next he places his hand under the well-moulded chin, tilts back the curiously-formed oval-shaped head and proceeds with his business till his customer, no longer feeling the deft brown fingers basied about his poll, is aware that the task is done. Rising speechless as his attendant, the shaven one gives way to another, drops his coin into the brass bowl placed in readiness for it, and sinks in graceful indolence into his former place on the divan; there he will wait till night or hunger or some other necessity bid him go forth. These calls might prevail on him perhaps, but as for leaving his lair through being bored, or weary of inaction, or because duty

insisted he ought to get up and find something to do, no madman in Turkey, however mad he might be, would be mad enough for that!

This is a description of the barber when at home in his saloon, but there are other species.

One barber waits on you in your own private apartments; another barber is in attendance in the hall of the hotel where you put up for the night; a third accosts you

as you walk innocently along the street, demanding if you want to be shaved; a fourth places you with a row of his other puppets on a rush-bottomed chair in the public street. More wily yet than these, still another will steal up to your couch at dawn and with such skill and dexterity does he conduct his dangerous weapons about your chin and brow, gently turning your head from side to side, that you only realise that

he has been in your presence when waking an hour later you study your smooth visage in the glass and discover that the most tedious part of your toilet has been performed without your own intervention.

Supreme as is the barber without the gates so is the *café-dji* within them. On him depends the peace of the household; and what the cook-universal is in the West the Lord of the Sacred Cup is in the East. Morning, noon and night he is occupied in selecting his

berries, in roasting his berries, in reducing his berries to powder, in deluging them with boiling water, and finally in pouring the seething foaming liquid which results into the dainty *ibrik* of porcelain or of silver studded with coral prepared to receive it, that it may pass to his liege and give him joy. And so soon as the emptied cups in their filigree-holders appear, *café-dji* once more throws charcoal into his little furnace and recommences his fragrant round. Should



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[Abdullah Frères, Constantinople.

THE CAFÉ-DJI TASTING HIS COFFEE.

delay take place an indignant clapping of hands will tell that sixty minutes having elapsed since the last cup of coffee was imbibed, his thirsty employer is pining for another.

Our artist has not caught *cafédj* in his happiest moment. He does not always appear with a spotted handkerchief, *à la* Birmingham, girt about his portly waist, and as a rule he places his little charcoal stove on the pavement and squats down by it, his muscular brown arm never ceasing to keep the light-heeled berries in motion till they have assumed their required hue of the richest brown. In this condition their aromatic odour almost succeeds in exerting to the active sentiment of envy the unfortunate Turk who is strolling past, and whose finances only allow him to indulge in coffee six times a day instead of sixteen.

The *cafédj* is very willing to give you his receipt for making coffee. Happy you, if you can understand it and induce your cook at home to make you some of like flavour. He first impresses on you that you must select your berries one by one. This, which is pea-green in colour, and that, which is an unhealthy lemon, must be thrown aside as unfit. Next you must pound your chosen gems with-pestle and mortar, not grind them in a mill as do *ces autres*, and Selim flings five lithe brown fingers abroad over his shoulder in contempt of those who do not realise that the making of coffee is a fine art. When so minute that you can feel no grit and the dusky powder slips through your fingers as the dust from the highway, put it together with some sugar into the long-handled brass pot or *jesba* which has been warmed for its reception. You next fill it with boiling water "once cooked," as he explains, and let it stand for five seconds, then placing it again on the fire boil it up once more. Some rehearse the process several times, but Selim believes in the ceremony being once repeated only. He ends by telling you Arabian-night stories of coffee-cups in use in some of the great seraglios which are studded with gems so large and of so pure a water that their value is sometimes £100 a-piece.

It is a common practice at a state banquet to beg distinguished guests to carry away with them the little cup from which they have drunk as a memento of their host's hospitality. Being aware of this an eminent Englishman, after dining at the Khedival palace in Cairo, pocketed his *zarf* in obedience, as he believed, to the instructions

of one of the officials, murmured as usual in the, to him, unknown tongue. His embarrassment was great when, as he rose from the table, some attendants approached him with trays on which was displayed an assortment of dainty little jewelled vessels. Would effendi, they petitioned, deign to choose one of these and restore to them in its place the cup in his pocket, which was one belonging to a service used by Mehemet Ali, and was encrusted by some of the finest diamonds in his Highness's possession? "I felt as if they had accused me of running off with the spoons," concluded the Englishman genially as he illustrated his anecdote by displaying the little goblet which he had been unable to avoid accepting as a substitute for the pilfered treasure.

Yeman or Mocha coffee is that preferred by the Turks, but the supply is so limited it can rarely be procured in the bazaars. That of the great public factory, an establishment unique of its kind, comes for the most part from Ceylon, Brazil or the West Indies. The wealthy pashas have their berries brought direct by caravan from the plantations in Arabia. Thamiss Khana, the institution in question, was founded in 1555 by some Arabian merchants. It is now a Government monopoly, and the retail trade is almost entirely supplied by it. There was great prejudice against the excessive use of the berry at one time, and Murad IV ordered all the coffee-houses in the city to be destroyed. This and other Sultans also waged war on the taverns on account of the plots which were hatched there. Such was notably the case in 1622 when the janizaries carried off the young Sultan of the day as a prisoner to the Seven Towers. In consequence of this the coffee-house at Orta Djamesy, where they had conspired, was razed to the ground and for more than a century its site was pointed out as accursed.

Leaving the sultry vicinity of the *cafédj*es, one makes one's way to the cool domain of the *caidji*. The latter is undoubtedly the beau of the Bosphorus. Even if he gain a precarious livelihood by waiting in his hired boat for chance passengers, he is fresh-looking, daintily-dressed and scrupulously clean. If, however, he belong to the household of his Imperial Majesty, or of one of the princely representatives of the Foreign Powers, he is a thing of beauty indeed. Folds of creamy *birunjik*, a material made of a combination of filmy silk and delicate wool, fall from his knotted throat to his slender ankle in a line only broken, when he

stands at ease, by the brown patch which represents his muscular hand. A crimson fez with its tassels of blue silk is on his head and across his broad shoulders is a



From a photo by] [Abdullah Frères, Constantinople.
THE CAIDJI.

sleeveless vest of velvet, brilliantly coloured and gorgeously embroidered in gold. When he takes up his long slender oars the garment will be stowed away in the locker on which the "cox," in attire yet more splendid, has disposed himself.

The Guild of the Caidjees is one of the most esteemed on the Bosphorus, and Noah, as "builder of the great covered caïque," is their patron. In each locker will be found a framed inscription of some of the ninety-nine attributes of the deity, in this also they believe they are following the precedent of the most ancient of mariners. Turkey has attained that degree of civilisation which induces her to levy a tax on bachelors, and an unmarried caidji pays a monthly fee of sixteen piastres for right to ply his boat, while a man of wives need only contribute eight to the imperial exchequer.

The Sultan's state caïque is 78 feet in length and is rowed by twenty-four men seated two abreast. Its dominant colours are green and gold on white, a golden palm branch rises from the prow, where also is seen the glittering falcon, emblem of the

house of Osman. Crimson cushions fringed with gold, on which the imperial form reclines, are laid in the bottom of the boat, and over the whole is stretched a canopy supported by gilded poles, each of which is surmounted by the crescent. In the gorgeous days of yore the Sultan was constantly to be seen passing up and down the Bosphorus in this glorified barque, with others of the second order of magnificence preceding and following him and smaller craft innumerable in attendance. The boats which carried meaner mortals on their errands of business or pleasure, hurried away to right and left at its approach that the imperial flotilla might spread unimpeded over the whole surface of the water.

Now, however, the pageant is rarely to be witnessed, and the state caïque of the present Sultan is little better known than the old imperial galley of Selim III, which is preserved in the same condition as when last entered by that potentate. So too with the grand caïques of the Embassies. Since the advent of the steam-launch, they are for the most part left to rot in their bathhouses, and it is to be feared when they have finally been pronounced unseaworthy they will never be replaced.

These boatmen, comely and powerful, and formed on the model of the athletes of ancient Greece, often stand high in the imperial favour. Instances might be quoted of those who first came within their lord's line of vision while handling their mighty oars, being later promoted to the posts of Ministers of State or Governors of Provinces. One caidji, the ill-famed Achmet Fevzy, was thus advanced by Sultan Mahmoud, step by step, till he became Admiral-in-Chief of the Turkish fleet. In July 1839 the traitor was despatched on board the flag-ship *Mahmoudya* to put down the Egyptian rebellion. Instead he delivered the whole fleet into the hands of Mehemet Ali, receiving from the latter an enormous reward in golden lire at the moment, but later, one he more fully merited in the form of a cup of poisoned coffee.

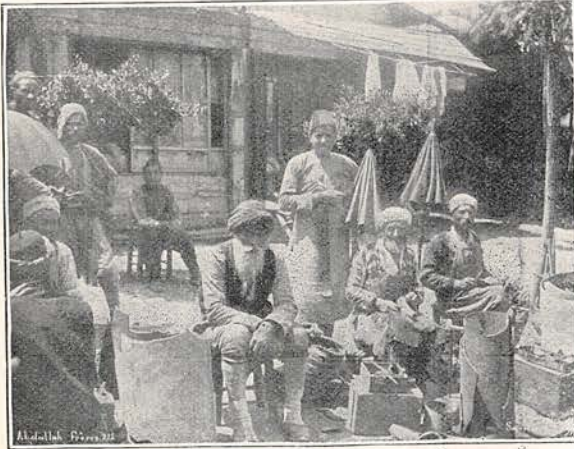
Another guild held in high esteem is that of the workers in leather. This is divided into four classes: shoemakers, saddlers, curriers and tanners. The first-named are so far honoured as to be exempt from military service, and their patron was Abou Horeira, the friend of Mahomet, while the Caliph Omar, himself a currier of renown, held his ægis over the tanners.

As with his brother artisans, the worker

in leather performs his task in the open air, and though he rarely exchanges look or word with his comrade, he likes to labour in company. When arrived on the scene of action he unfurls a huge umbrella and fixes its pointed staff in the ground, the cobbles which pave the streets keeping it well in its place. Then he sets beneath his roof tree his square solid stool with its seat

upon us all; let us protect ourselves as far as in us lies," say they.

There is little bargaining on these occasions. The true Turk is too stately to care to bargain in the Western sense, though he is often driven to it by the importunities of the traveller. The customer, if a native, points out the object desired and extends an open palm with certain coins upon it. The maker of the amulet shakes his head and smokes on regardless of the stranger's presence. Another coin is produced, but once more the bearded countenance sways to and fro, and the desired amulet is put for a moment out of sight. The customer raises his hands and drops them in token he has nothing more to offer, then Ibrahim produces a second article, which he is willing to part with at the price, or reluctantly, presses the other into the buyer's hand with a bismillah. At times he addresses his customer, of whose name and domicile he is alike ignorant, as follows: "Thou shalt have it. The amulet is sacred. Never will Ibrahim seek to deprive thee of that which has found favour in thine eyes. To-morrow or after many days



From a photo by]

[Abdullah Frères, Constantinople.

TURKISH SHOEMAKERS.

of twisted reed, draws up his great roll of leather and his establishment is complete. His tools are few and remarkably clumsy, yet it is wonderful how swiftly and deftly he will turn a flat piece of leather into a pair of substantial *tchisma* or riding-boots. He is no wasteful worker, and the smallest fragments are carefully set aside as they furnish material for his calling of amulet manufacturer, which is no less profitable than that of shoemaker. He snips and trims these off-shoots till they have assumed some regular form—square, circular or triangular as the piece allowed. Next he fixes a metal crescent, the sacred cipher or circlet of glass, to the one side and to the reverse a square of parchment, on which is inscribed one of the attributes of the deity. He encloses the whole in a covering of linen or silk, and it is unlikely it will remain many hours in his possession before a customer comes past to eagerly press into his hand the paras or piastres which will make the coveted treasure the buyer's own. The demand for these amulets is unlimited. The *caidji* needs them for his boat, the ass-driver for his beast, the mother for her babe, the stately pasha for the new beauty in his harem. "Life is full of risks, and the evil eye is

thou shall bring me one piastre more." Then, without one passing thrill of distrust, he indicates that the matter is at an end and assumes an attitude in which he can, with deep solemn gaze, consider the blank wall opposite in peace.

The domain of the curriers is without the city, near the Seven Towers. The guild was in former times proud of the numbers it supplied to the corps of the janizaries. It was also the curriers' boast that they were without exception bachelors. Whether it was that no currier could feel inclinations towards matrimony, or, if feeling those inclinations, he ceased to be a currier, is not clear. The saddler requires for his trade many things with which his British confrère could dispense; among them are tassels, and fringes of gold and silver, strings of glass beads and pearls, pierced shells and strands of worsted, studs and bosses of metal, bows and rosettes of gaily-coloured silk. One thing however is never present in a saddler's shop in Turkey, that is pigskin. Of this the Moslem will have none. The hide of every other animal is purified in his eyes by the process of tanning, the pig alone is an exception. Therefore if an English *eyer* be required, it must be imported or manufactured

by a Greek or Armenian. The pack-saddle and the Tartar cushion are still in favour among the old Turks, but the form of that of the West is now very general. The leather seat is however covered with velvet or cloth and edged with fringe or lace, while over the whole is thrown a *shabraque* or saddle-cloth richly embroidered, and if it be intended for the steed bestridden by some wealthy pasha, it will be heavy with precious stones.

Mention has been made of the ninety-nine attributes of the deity. Each of these is represented by a bead on the chaplet which forms the Moslem rosary. "May thy name be exalted, O most high! O most just! O most merciful! O most beneficent!" murmurs the devout Moslem as the beads slip one by one through his fingers, and when he comes to the oblong bar which at regular intervals divides the little balls he rehearses his profession of faith. The untaught or the careless merely repeat the name Allah as they finger the beads. But from Imaum to Hamal no Turk moves without his rosary in his hand or in his pocket. During the stern month of Ramadhan, when no food may pass their lips between sunrise and sunset, and even

the cherished *narghileh* must be set aside, the Moslems spend a great part of the day in patiently telling their beads, while their sombre gaze is fixed on the slow-travelling sun, and their ear awaits the salute from the cannon which is fired so soon as the red globe drops below the horizon.

The *teshbighees*, or dealers in rosaries, are often men possessed of something substantial in the way of worldly goods. Their little booths are rich in carved screens and handsome tapestries, while the safe into which their wares are tossed at dusk often contains strings of costly pearls, of amber, onyx, agate, or of pierced diamonds and rubies. The common *teshbih* is made of box or sandalwood, of coral or of mother-of-pearl. For the poverty-stricken there are chaplets composed of horse's hoof, of bits of cork, of dried berries, date-stones, or peas and beans. Few things capable of being pierced come amiss. Here and there is a rosary which is rarely exposed for sale, but is shut off from the vulgar eye by a covering of pink cotton wool, for it is made of the pebbles collected in the Valley of Mina by one who has worshipped at the shrine of Mecca.



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SELLERS OF CHAPLETS AND ROSARIES.

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