THE TURKISH GENTRY AT HOME.

Review of a new Book "The Crescent; with Pictures of Harem Life: or the Turks in 1854." *By Gordon O. L. Gordon Trenery, Esq. London:" By the Editor of Chambers's Journal.*

IF travellers contradict each other flatly in matters of fact—in matters depending on the testimony of their own eyes and ears—it is no wonder they should take opposite sides in the question either of individual or national character. But here is something that puzzles us. If we were told that the Turks, like other people, had redeeming qualities, we could understand; but when an author gravely assures us that they have no positively bad qualities to redeem, we do not know what to make of it. Mr. Trenery is that author. With him, the sole drawback in the character of a Turkish gentleman is the want of what he calls spirituality; while a Turkish Lady would be perfection itself, were it not that her higher nature is obscured by a little ignorance. His book describes the life of the harem—the Turkish gentry literally at home; and if his pictures *are* coloured with rose-tints and gold, they are at least novel and amusing in no common degree.*

The Turkish gentleman, being a person of exquisite taste, has of course a dwelling-house constructed on strictly æsthetical principles. The one into which we are first introduced is the property of a certain Mustapha Effendi, a quiet gentlemanly Osmanli; it is on the edge of the Bosphorus, and is built in 'the pure, but exceedingly picturesque style of Turkish architecture.' On one side, the walls rise out of a lake hollowed in white marble, the material with which, likewise, the surrounding courts are paved; and in the midst of these is a fountain, with its thousand jets, and its multitudes of gold-fishes. The buildings are environed with orange-trees, palms, limes, and terraces of all sorts of gorgeous flowers. The morning-room is lighted by windows that open upon a terrace of flowers, interspersed with marble walks. In the centre of the terrace is a lofty ledge of artificial rocks, with a stream cascading over them, and falling from basin to basin to the number of twelve, the waters widening as they fall till they expand into a large sheet. 'Through the spray formed in the descent, the sunbeams shone; thus creating a perpetual rainbow, within whose fairy circle, you sat on a marble bench, surrounded by a carefully arranged group of shrubs and blossoms—all bathed, like yourself, in softened sunshine and prismatic colours.' The drapery of the room, covering the walls as well as the furniture, is of rich white satin damask; and the roof is of pale blue, ribbed with gold, and studded with gold stars. The saloon is a much longer room. 'hung with orange velvet, worked and fringed with gold; cushions of purple silk *crêpe*, brocaded with gold; tables covered with cloths woven throughout of gold and silver tissue; carpets of orange ground, through which run wreaths of pink, and green, and purple flowers; sofa, cushions and pillows of white satin; walls of plate-glass and gold carving.'

This is the reception of the visitors: 'Our caique drew up in the shadow of a row of plane trees, where a path from Mustapha Effendi's house descended to the water. A slave saw our approach, and immediately ran indoors. A moment more, and Yasumi Hanoum, Mustapha's young wife, came running down the terrace to the caique. My sister rose, and stepped on to the landing-place. Yasumi took her hand, and kissed the hem of her dress; the two being the greatest marks of affection which an Eastern lady can exhibit.

"Shekier Al'lah!—God be praised! you are come!" said she, in those soft melodious tones which make the voice of an Osmanli woman seem almost music. "You are very kind to come here to see me. I love you very much! and hope you will be able to love the simple Osmanli. May I love you?"

"How glad I shall be, if you will! I hope you will love me dearly," said my sister, smiling affectionately upon her.

"And you will love me, too?"

"I shall only love you too much;" and she threw her arms around Yasumi's neck fondly, then raised her hand to her lips.

"You are very good. You shall have all my heart. Now, come; my husband will be impatient, if we do not haste."'

Here is the portrait of this young wife: 'Yasumi—Jasmine—Hanoum was a beautiful Circassian, of scarcely seventeen years. Her complexion was unsullied as the daylight; with a lovely pink on each cheek: and her skin was soft, as the interior of a violet's leaf. Her nose was long, straight, and nobly formed. Her features were exceeding lovely; but the best of all was the expression of the soul's glory that shone through them so exaltingly. Her head was formed after the most magnificent Caucasian type, which few need be told is the same as—rather, it is the parent of—the English; and is the very highest organization presented by the head of the human race. The forehead was wide and lofty; its flowing line was of genius and of grace, and expressed a regal dignity that stamped her one of nature's queens. Her hair was thick, dark, and glossy; but, after the fashion of Osmanli women greatly disfigured by being cut short and square just below the ears.'

In another room, still more gorgeous than the rest, the master of the house appears, sitting on a sofa, and almost hid in its cushions. On each side of him is one of his womankind, refilling his pipe, and presenting coffee to him. In a corner of the room is a young Greek singing to the accompaniment of her mandolin, while two dancing-girls keep time with their graceful movements and their castanets. 'The Selictar-Aga had gone in before us to announce our arrival, and also that we were on the way to the apartment in which our host sat. As we pushed aside the drapery from the door, he rose to a sitting posture, and fixed his eyes straight upon the carpet before him. Yasumi walked on, still leading my sister by the hand. When we had advanced about one-third of the length of the room towards him, he looked up with a sweet smile, which smile did not relax until Yasumi reached the cushion; then falling on one knee, she said:

"I bring you our friends again, my lord. Bid them welcome from their beautiful Frangistan!"

"Sel'lah Al'lah!—praise be to God!" said Mustapha. "Bourum—you are welcome—quite welcome. Tihat l'alicin itt'ar gouxum—look graciously, and sit, my eyes!" said he to my sister.'

The host is very hospitable in offering a pipe to his lady-visitor, but confesses his ignorance of the manners of Frangistan. The strangers are frankly permited to introduce two of their friends, Mrs. E—— and her husband; and soon dinner is announced by a young Circassian, who comes tripping in, and falls on her knees before Mustapha.

'"Mashal'lah! I am told that your ways in Frangistan are peculiar," said Mustapha rising. "How you act on such an occasion in England, I know not; but in Roum—Turkey—all we do is to walk into the room one after another, the men taking precedence, as it is good and seemly to do."

"Will madam allow me?" said Mrs. E——'s husband to my sister, at the same time present-her his arm with a bend as stiff and formal as his own cravat.

"Al'lah ukbur!—God is great?" cried Mustapha; "what am I to do?"

"Be my escort, Effendi," said Mrs E———, resting her arm on his rich pelisse.

"Then I will take Yasumi," I said; "with a proviso, that her husband shall not be jealous," I whispered aside.

"That, I am sure, he will not be!" said Yasumi, with sparkling eyes. "He has a soul purer than the light, and more loving than the daffodil for its own shadow. I love him, for he is good."

"And times are changing, even in Turkey, Hanoum."'

Changing, indeed! 'Upon three silver trays, each placed on a stand eighteen inches high, the meal was to be served. Cushions of the most delicate pink and sky-blue satin, embroidered with gold and silver, and coloured silks, were strewed around them. Beside every cushion lay two napkins of the finest white muslin, exquisitely wrought with silks, and golden birds, and flowers. A row of slaves, reaching from the furthest tray to the door, passed the dishes from hand to hand, up to the last one, who presented it to Yasumi, meekly kneeling on the carpet.

We all were led to a cushion, each by one of the attending slaves. The napkins were carefully spread upon our knees; warm rose-water was poured from a golden ewer over the hands of all. Then the repast commenced, every one helping himself from the dish in the centre, by taking from any part of it that was most pleasing to his eye.

The Osmanlis are very fond of variety in their food. The number of courses at a private dinner is generally fifteen, yet it does not last so long as the like meal in England. Seldom does any one take from the same dish twice. The slaves remove them as fast as they are done with, and put the next course upon the table.' During the evening, the time is filled up at intervals, as elsewhere, with conversation. 'The sipping of coffee proceeded, the dances were kept up in full spirit, the music continued, and the massaljis still kept us laughing by their tales. Then the hour for repose came on, and all the household was hushed in sleep. Our beds were formed in the Osmanli fashion of cushions of orange-coloured silk, embroidered with gold, and filled with the softest down. Over us was lightly drawn a sheet of blue silk gauze, brilliantly marked by crimson stripes, and a coverlet of pale violet silk, worked with azure and golden flowers. Everything was made of the richest materials; and the beautiful silk gauze, airy as the rainbow, spiritual as an Italian summer-cloud, claimed our especial admiration of its truly Oriental luxury and magnificence.'

Such is a glimpse of the Osmanli gentleman at home. We come now more especially to the ladies. 'The Osmanli ladies do not sit cross-legged, as is often supposed. The legs are folded beneath them, after the fashion of a person kneeling, and then sitting down upon the heels. The toes of the feet are turned inwards, and touch each other. Never do you see an Osmanli with her legs dangling over the edge of the cushion. To expose these parts of the person whilst sitting is considered indelicate? The lady who calls forth this passing explanation now begins to ask the usual questions of an Osmanli woman on your first introduction to her at home. 'And the two-legged donkey,' adds our author, 'who presumes on her simplicity, by making any other than those courteous answers due from a gentleman to a lady, claiming his kindness and attention, will assuredly have his delinquency punished as it deserves. The Osmanli woman lives for nothing but love, and always finishes her salutations to a new friend, though she be but a slave freshly brought home to the house, by imploring her to love her.

"Look on me. Do you love me?" asked she.

"Not to love you would be to possess a very indifferent taste, or no taste at all."

"It is enough, and you are very kind to say it, light of my soul!" returned she. "Am I not pretty? What do you think of me?"

"You are lovelier than the daughters of Perisian; your beauty is more glorious than the noonday sky; your cheek is softer than the first flower of spring; your face is fairer than the snow-flake upon a mountain; your hands are like pearls; your eyes are like moons; your lips are like rubies, newly washed in the Boulak; your teeth are like diamonds from the valleys of Nishapore; your smile is softer than the light of the evening-star; and your presence is sweeter to the soul than a sunbeam breaking through a dark cloud! I have spoken, Cadeun." And I smiled a quiet smile in her innocent eyes, quite convinced that I had flattered strong enough to please even a Eastern lady.

"Iushal'lah!—I trust in God!—You are no Giaour!" exclaimed she; "else, where did you learn to speak so like a good Moslem?"

"Have you never heard how wise the Giaours are? That they leave no lore untouched?"

"Mashal'lah! And I like to hear them talk, too! Adjaib ust! It is wonderful! I am told that the books they write are more beautiful than music, and fill the soul with love, till it enters the seventh Paradise. Is that true, sir?"

"In spirit, it is very nearly so.

"You are good, and I like you!" and, with a sweet simplicity, she went through the usual and graceful salaam, as I made the temina in acknowledgment of the compliment.'

One curious effect of the seclusion in which a Turkish woman, whether married or unmarried, usually lives, is, that love-advances must always come from her. The man would not presume to notice her—and, besides, it would be vulgar to do so. Hence the language of flowers, of which the following specimen is given by our author:

"'Am I not pretty?" and she holds up a white lotus.

He holds up a flower of Paradise. "You are lovelier than the houries in Corkbam—Paradise."

"Do you love to look upon me?" asked by presenting a blush-rose.

"As the tiger-lily loves to gaze upon its own shadow."

"Can you love me?" and she shows a daffodil.

"As the daisy loves the sun!" and he turns towards her the flower in question.

"Would you die for my sake?" and she pulls a rosebud in two parts.

"I would submit my neck to the bowstring without a murmur;" and he pulls off the head of a yellow geranium, or a violet.

"You are good, and I love you!" and she shows him a jasmine.

He makes the temina with the rapidity of lightning.

"Will you be my husband?" She pulls a hair from her head, and winds it round the jasamine.

He picks out a rose, and holds it with the flower pointing downwards to the earth.

"I cannot live without you; but if you refuse to have me, I shall die."

She takes a sunflower, and holds it by the side of the jasmine.

"Meet me to-night, at twilight:" now a lily is quickly added; by the fountain:" a grape-tendril, or a moss-rose; "in the kiosk:" a peach, or any delicate fruit that is in season; "near the wall:" or if she holds up a single green leaf plucked from one of the flowers, she says, "the kiosk is on the banks of the Bosphorus;" or, if she gathers her flowers into a bunch, and points the tip of her finger to the centre, it means, "the kiosk is in the midst of the garden." If she removes her finger, and then points a second time, "surrounded by trees." Then a lavender-bud, "there is nothing to fear." But a white rose is, "be as careful as you can." And then she readjusts her yashmak, which is, "There will be a mark where you should climb."'

The mystery of the harem, however, is now fast disappearing, and with it, we trust, will disappear the unspirituality of the men, and the ignorance of the women. 'One Osmanli allows his wives to come to meals with him in the salem-lick [men's apartments]; or he, and his children also, go to the harem, and take them there. Another Osmanli permits them to live in the salem-liek, or harem, indiscriminately; only, they must remember to make their hastiest flight on the announcement of that spectre—a man. But other Osmanlis are learning to sneer at all this nonsence, and suffer their wives or their daughers—after the fashion of those worthy Turks of whom I have written—to appear in the salem-liek, and talk to any of mankind who may come there, whenever they will; only requiring that they shall never enter our presence without having their yashmaks strictly arranged, and being careful to see that some other person—a slave at least—is in the room.'

Some of the episodes encountered during Dr. Kane's search have wild interest. At one time it became neccessary to send a fatigue party with provisions, to assist the main party under Dr. Kane in an attempted passage across Smith's Sound. This party was under the command of Mr. Brooks, first officer of the expedition. He was accompanied by Mr. Wilson and other volunteers. During their travel they found the ice completely impenetrable, and a snow drift at last swept wildly over the floes, and in the midst of a heavy gale from the north the thermometer, to their dismay, sunk to fifty-seven degrees below zero. Human nature could not support the terrible cold. Four of the party, including Mr. Brooks and Mr. Wilson, were prostrated with frozen feet, and with great difficulty three of their companions, after encountering great suffering, reached the ship and announced the condition of their comrades. Their chances of being rescued seemed extremely small. They were in the midst of a wilderness of snow, incapable of motion, protected only by a canvass tent, and with no landmarks by which their position could be known. Even to drag these maimed men would have been, under ordinary circumstances, a work of difficulty; but to the slender party left at the ship, it seemed to be impossible. Dr. Kane, with the boldness and courage which justified the warm attachment felt towards him by all under his command, in less than one hour organized a rescuing party, leaving on board only those who were necessary to receive the sick, and started off in the teeth of a terrific gale, steering by compass, to rescue the sufferers. After nineteen hours' constant travel, during which two of the party fainted, and others required to be kept from sleep by force, they struck the trail of the lost party, and finally, staggering under their burdens, one by one reached the tent, which was almost hidden by the snow.

The scene, as Dr. Kane entered the tent, was affecting beyond description. The party burst out into tears. A blubber fire was immediately built, pemmican cooked, and the party ate for the first time after leaving the vessel. Ice was also melted, they having been to this time without drink. Worn out as they were, but four hours were allowed for the halt. The maimed of the frozen party were sowed up in buffalo robes, placed on sledges, and dragged along by their companions, Dr. Kane walking in advance, picking the track. Cold of the utmost severity again overtook them. Bonsall and Morton, and even the Esquimaux boy Hance, sunk upon the snow with sleep. It was only by force that they were aroused and made to proceed, as the cold seemed to have destroyed all conception of danger. A large bear met on their way, was fortunately scared off by Dr. Kane, by the simple waving of his hand. They reached the ship after a walk of sixty-two hours, still dragging their companions behind them, but insensible. Dr. Hayes, the intelligent surgeon of the ship, from whom we obtained the particulars of this fearful adventure, received the returning party. Two of the number died of their injuries, and two others underwent amputation, who are now restored to perfect health. The condition of those who dragged the sick was most lamentable. Their memory for a time was entirely gone, and the ship, in the midst of mutterring delirium, resembled an hospital. The surgeon and one remaining attendant were in sole charge of the ship. In this state of semi-madness the sick remained for two or three days; but afterwards they entirely recovered, and the party under Dr Kane started threeweeks afterwards, and resumed their labours in the field. Intrepidity like this has never been surpassed. It is spoken of with emotion, even now, by the stoutest hearts in the expedition.—*N. Y. Jour. Com.*

It is the intention of Government to augment the Medical Staff Corps by two companies or troops of 120 men each, the Land Transport Corps by eight companies of 100 men each, and the Army Works Corps by 500 men.

The consular corps at Odessa have sent a note to the allied admirals, expressing a hope that they will spare the city the horrors of a bombardment, as it shelters a vast number of foreign families, to whom the largest portion of the moveable and immoveable property belongs.