

the tone of equality which the Hamworth attorney had adopted; he did not like to acknowledge that his affairs were in any degree dependent on a man of whom he thought so badly as he did of Mr. Dockwraith; he did not like to be told that Round and Crook were rogues—Round and Crook whom he had known all his life; but least of all did he like the feeling of suspicion with which, in spite of himself, this man had imbued him, or the fear that his victim might at last escape him. Excellent, therefore, as had been the evidence which Bridget Bolster had declared herself ready to give in his favor, Mr. Mason was not a contented man when he sat down to his solitary beef-steak in Soho Square.

THE REIGN OF SULTAN ABDUL-MEDJID.

IN the summer of 1838, during the great feast of Bairam, out of the crumbling walls of proud Stambul, a countless multitude of men, women, and children poured forth, toward the Valley of Sweet Waters, bent on gayly celebrating their release from the tedious fast of Ramadan. I made one of a party of friends—for who could withstand the universal hilarity?—and glided up the tortuous channel of the willow-banked stream. Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Europeans swelled the numbers of the immense throng. Bankers deserted their counting-houses; tradesmen closed their stalls. Silence reigned in the streets of the metropolis; not even the voice of the water-carrier could be heard. The labyrinth of the bazars, so puzzling to travelers, was threaded only by equally discontented dogs and policemen. Every itinerant merchant hastened to the favorite place of resort to vend his wares and refreshments; jugglers and gipsy women pandered to the taste of the vulgar by indecent pantomime and gross plays upon words. Ox-carts with gilded yokes and tricked out in tawdry ornaments, lumbering Cinderella coaches, nondescript equipages, and boats of every description and pattern, at every moment, arrived in one unbroken procession, and rapidly deposited on the vast green meadow the beauty, fashion, and aristocracy of Constantinople.

About noon a regiment of lancers hurriedly defiled through the crowd, looking at a distance like an enormous scarlet centiped eating its way through a writhing mass of life. The noisy clamors of the multitude and the cries of peddlers were immediately hushed, while suppressed whispers announced the approach of the *Him-Kyar*, or "Blood Drinker." A carriage, drawn by four splendid bays and followed by an imposing cortège, now swept rapidly up the avenue formed by the lancers, and proceeded to a large *marquise* pitched on a knoll commanding the whole plain. Three persons alighted, whom the by-standers pointed out as Mahmoud and his two sons: the elder, the subject of this article; the other, Abdul-Aziz, the now-reigning monarch. Surly household troops prevented a near

approach to the tent, and none of us could boast a good view of the royal party; but later in the day all who returned by water were amply gratified.

Toward sunset the vast multitude with one accord began to move homeward; the banks were lined with vehicles and pedestrians, while the narrow river itself seemed alive with *caïques*, so close together that there was not room enough for the oars, and poles were used to push them along. Many of these light canoes ran aground, others became interlocked, collisions were numerous, but the happy passengers viewed these disasters in the light of pleasant episodes; while the boatmen, renowned for giving vent to the vilest Billingsgate upon the most trivial provocation, and proverbially chary of the slightest scratch on the well-polished sides of their boats, displayed an amiability of temper truly refreshing to witness. A long island divides the stream, but the gay fleet, instead of debouching into the wider channel, were compelled, by an officer stationed in a guard-boat, to take the narrower one, which did not appear broader than an ordinary canal. Curiosity was at its height to interpret this despotic order; for of course the navigation grew still more intricate, and laughable accidents occurred at every step. Boats by the hundreds became wedged in side by side, between the banks, like potted herrings, and vain was many an effort to propel them. Passengers danced to the sound of the *rebec* and *tambourine*; shouts of laughter resounded on every side; veiled coquettes, green-turbaned priests and beaver-covered infidels, lay cheek by jowl most amiably. A sharp turn in the channel increased the uproar to the most joyous degree, when, to the surprise of every one, the royal family, sheltered by the unmistakable imperial crimson umbrella, appeared at an open balcony which projected over the water's edge.

Bent on enjoying the fun, the Sultan had capriciously diverted the picturesque armada into this narrow passage, and there he sat not twenty feet distant from the sturdiest republican among us. It was with intense interest I gazed on the group. Mahmoud was in the prime of life; his portly frame, dark piercing eye, jet-black beard, and noble presence strongly marked the destroyer of the Janizaries. What a romance that man's career had been! Concealed, by the devotion of a slave, in the hot chambers of an oven, he escaped the fate of Selim to ascend the throne of Constantine, from whence he dictated new laws, and crushed a turbulent body of disaffected subjects. By his side stood Abdul-Medjid, a slight, melancholy, aristocratic-looking youth; pale, beardless, and handsome; destined soon—alas! too soon for the welfare of Turkey—to sway the sceptre of the Califs. Abdul-Aziz, a chubby boy with a round, fat face and ruddy complexion, was leaning over the balustrade, merrily laughing at the confusion, and pointing out to his father every mirth-exciting object. Could a more interesting group be selected! Three successive Osmanli chieftains in

one living picture; the one a Peter the Great; the other a Sardanapalus; the third probably a Boabdil, doomed to hear accursed bells chiming from tapering minaret, and Christian anthems chanted under crescent-tipped domes. Twenty-three years have now elapsed, but this royal group remains as indelibly stamped upon my memory as if the scene had occurred but yesterday.

In the palmy days of muscle-worship every Sultan was bound by a time-honored custom to transmit to posterity some evidence of his physical powers. The national bow was accordingly adopted as the standard, and upon an unusually long shot a handsome marble column was erected to mark the spot where the arrow alighted. On a fine piece of table-land, overlooking the Arsenal, numbers of these monuments bear witness in large characters to the skill of every toxophilite successor of Osman; but so funereal in appearance that the uninformed traveler would more likely imagine himself in a neglected cemetery than in a royal archery-ground. While rambling in this neighborhood in the autumn of the same year, it was my luck to come across the stalwart monarch gayly contending with the heir-apparent in this hereditary exercise of the bow. The attendants put up no target, for accuracy in aim was not the test; it was a mere trial of strength, measured by the flight of the shaft. A strong wind was blowing up the dust in thick clouds, and I noticed how carefully the royal archer pointed his arrows in the direction of the atmospheric current; indeed I am inclined to the suspicion that the marvelous shots of the Amuraths and Mustaphas of the Ottoman dynasty were more indebted to flattering gales than to any extraordinary development of muscle. The young prince, although he made a great show of doing his best, either lacked the ability, or proved too polished a courtier to win the gage from his sire, for all his arrows fell far short, much to the delight of the victor.

Of the early life and education of the young prince little is known. The seraglio has no great fame as a school for virtue; nor have its literary tendencies ever been in danger of eulogy. Real study he never experienced; but female slaves, astrologers, and bigoted priests directed his leisure, and succeeded in keeping him through life an overgrown boy. Somehow he acquired a tolerable smattering of the French language; and in his library I have seen a complete edition of Voltaire's works—a perusal of which must have tended not only to undermine the little faith he professed in the Koran, but also any leanings toward the religious creeds of his neighbors. In manly accomplishments no one could be more deficient: he never could sit a horse gracefully; but his worst detractors confess to his amiability and to his fondness for music; while his taste in wine, women, and architecture remains undisputed.

A few months more witnessed great changes. Mahmoud, after introducing many praiseworthy reforms, had turned his attention toward checking the enormous abuse of power wielded by

Turkish feudatory chieftains; but in the protracted struggle waged with his powerful vassal, the Pasha of Egypt, he lost heart at repeated reverses, drowned his disappointment in the interdicted beverages of the Giaour, and suddenly died of a debauch, leaving every thing in the greatest disorder.

To purify the Augean stables of corruption, to curb the fanatic impulses of a disaffected priesthood, to cut the Gordian knot of European intrigue and resuscitate a decaying empire, required talents of a very high order; and when Abdul-Medjid ascended the throne, July 2, 1839, he was the observed of the civilized world. The late Sultan, at the dawn of his reign, bade fair to revive an effete nationality, to be hailed by his subjects as the regenerator of Turkey—its very palladium. A few years rolled on, and the aspirations of the would-be-founder of a great empire were bounded by the walls of his kitchen and harem. By constant dissipation and sensuality, prematurely old at thirty-eight, he died, the 25th June, 1861, heartily detested by his subjects, the scoff and jeer of Europe, leaving behind a well-stocked seraglio, an empty treasury, a bankrupt empire, which now exists simply by the mercenary sufferance of powerful creditors and by the perplexed nature of European politics.

Once crowned—or, in Eastern parlance, having girded on his sword—his first act savored of a curious barbaric clemency. Instead of decapitating the court physicians, who were so unfortunate as not to restore his father to health, he generously commuted their sentence to banishment to remote islands of the Archipelago, gently hinting that a few months' quiet study would not come amiss to their professional attainments. After performing this filial act of retribution, he next made great preparations to receive an humble nucleus for his harem, in the shape of a dozen Circassian virgins—a gift from kind mamma, who had spent a whole week and pawned all her jewels in culling the fairest flowers of the slave-markets. A week later the new Sultan dismissed the court-jester into honorable exile, either because old age had rendered his jokes stale and his humor querulous, or, what is less uncharitable, Turkey, a trifle more enlightened, was ready to part with that vestige of barbarism.

A few Fridays after coming to the throne we find the young monarch evincing a courage unlooked for in a youth reared in the enervating atmosphere of the seraglio. While worshipping at the tomb of Mahmoud his devotions were disturbed by a sepulchral voice, which, issuing from the very bowels of the earth, admonished him to ignore all European innovations, and cling to the traditions of his ancestors. "I burn, I burn," groaned the pseudo-ghost of the royal sinner, "for having introduced infidel customs: take warning from my example." According to Oriental superstition the soul hovers near its late tenement, and consequently the attendants shuddered in great dismay. Abdul-Medjid, however, so far from being awed into unwholesome fanaticism, instantly ordered his guards to

surround the mausoleum, and, instead of consulting with some green-turbaned father-confessor, sent for a corps of sappers. In spite of the tremulous and most paternal protests of the dismayed oracle to leave its manes undisturbed, the pickaxe soon revealed a subterranean chamber, in which lay crouched a trembling priest. Sternly interrogated on the spot, the repentant ventriloquist revealed the names of his accomplices, who were all immediately arrested, and never heard of afterward.

Generous to a fault, Abdul-Medjid was prodigal in bestowing the most costly gifts. It would be a difficult task to enumerate the diamond rings, gold snuff-boxes, and well-lined purses which he lavished, right and left, on those who had afforded him any amusement. While the Duke of Brabant, heir to the Belgian throne, was a guest of the Sultan, he smoked with undisguised admiration the amber-mouthed and jeweled pipe-stems of the palace. On the morning of his departure, a eunuch in the royal livery laid at his feet a fagot of jasmine and cherry chibouques, each worth the revenue of a province. This circumstance caused an angry newspaper controversy, inasmuch as it was held by many to be contrary to Oriental etiquette for a guest to admire any thing belonging to his host; for courtesy, as well as fear of the evil-eye, would compel the latter to offer the article to his visitor. The partisans of the Duke contended, on the other hand, that a foreigner could not be acquainted with Turkish customs, and that the vases of enameled gold, sent in return for the pipe-stems, were suitable acknowledgments for the princely gift. Upon another occasion, during a private interview with the Sultan, the French ambassador, having, most probably, exhausted the subject of retaining the Zouaves in the Lebanon, and being too well-bred a courtier either to observe an awkward silence or to be caught making meteorological observations, very politely remarked that the native silk tapestry of the audience-chamber was superior to any specimen he had seen from the looms of Lyons. That same evening the gratified monarch stripped the apartment of those ornaments, and sent them to the Marquis by the hands of a special messenger.

The young Sultan inaugurated his reign by an act of clemency almost unprecedented in the annals of Ottoman history. Since the laws which define the primogeniture of the royal succession are vague and unnatural, a mistaken state policy permits every Mohammedan monarch not only to destroy his blood relations, but even the offspring of collateral branches of his family. Abdul-Medjid, however, did not stain the approach to the throne with the blood of his kindred, and nobly spared a brother who had been compromised in more than one conspiracy. But civilization is a plant of slow growth; and permission to raise issue was denied this brother. Even the Sultan's own sisters and daughters, who had intermarried with the aristocracy, were

not allowed to be blessed with children. Preventive measures were compulsory, and on more than one occasion, when parental affection sought to evade their employment, the infant was strangled at birth by a eunuch who waited in the lying-in chamber for that purpose. I knew an Austrian midwife who, being engaged by one of the princesses to attend her confinement, thus became an unwilling witness to a royal infanticide. According to her pathetic account—and she never could allude to the incident without tears—the unhappy mother, having observed strict secrecy with regard to her condition, had buoyed herself up with the hope that, as no allusion had ever been made to it, the existence of the child, once born, would be winked at. But a person of her rank is always surrounded by spies; and when the distorted features of the Nubian darkened the chamber she uttered a piercing shriek, well knowing that neither her passionate entreaties nor the prayers of the father would stay the cruel hand of the executioner. All Europe shuddered at this act, for Eastern civilization gave promise of rising superior to such inhuman relics of barbarism; and Turkish Regeneration, which before that time had been a favorite theme in sanguine diplomatic circles, now seemed as remote as ever.

Domestic ties are hardly known in Eastern royal families. The Salic law is so rigorously enforced that, strictly speaking, a Sultan can not marry, lest such a ceremony should give undue political importance to any ambitious female. A historical reason is also assigned for this exemption from matrimonial ties. Up to the time of Bajazet normal alliances were contracted with noble ladies, but when that monarch had the misfortune to fall into the hands of Tamerlane, his captivity became doubly galling from the spectacle of his wives performing menial services for the conqueror. To avoid a repetition of such a humiliation, since that event no Sultan has ever recognized a queen, a consort, or even a wife. Certain Circassian slaves are styled the First, Second, or Third Ladies of the Harem. The fortunate mother of the first son takes precedence, while the others rank according to the degree of favoritism with which they inspire their liege lord. The Validé Sultana, or mother of the reigning monarch, may more properly be considered the first lady in the empire, and exerts a greater political influence than any inmate of the harem. She is also styled the Mother of the People, and, as such, is the only Turkish female who enjoys the prerogative of appearing in public without a veil—a privilege, however, which is purely theoretical, the custom being now obsolete.

In spite of numerous praiseworthy reforms, time soon discovered that Abdul-Medjid was neither a hero nor a genius, but a weak, kind-hearted, selfish, and sensual Sybarite; totally unfit for the dry details of business, and careless of the interests of an empire so long as his own pleasures were gratified. Even his more amiable qualities proved disastrous; for being too ten-

der-hearted to sign a death-warrant, great criminals escaped justice. Banditti infested the highways, even large caravans of pilgrims were attacked and plundered by wild nomadic tribes, until the evil became so crying that the ministers at last resorted to secret executions without consulting their master. To give another instance of his effeminate whims: a common street dog is said to have conceived so warm an attachment to the Grand Seigneur that the latter could not stir from his palace without finding it either under his carriage or following close to the heels of his horse. This devotion becoming a nuisance, thrice was the cur banished over into Asia, and as often found its way back on the ferry-boats to resume its faithful attendance. Touched by this canine constancy, the Sultan at length ordered a flourishing colony of fleas to be thinned out of its hide, and settled on it a daily ration of three of the whitest loaves of bread from his own table. From being a half-starved waiter on Providence for predestinated bones, the dog, like a tropical weed, grew in rotundity by daily layers of fat, until he seemed fairly ready to burst into some rank blossom. He was ever found basking and lolling in the palace-gate, and became pampered into such a corpulency of importance as well as of body that not a Frank could pass within hailing distance without his exhibiting frantic demonstrations of disapprobation. On more than one occasion has the writer been obliged to go through the entire bayonet manual with his umbrella to save himself from the fangs of this royal pet. Indeed such an intolerable nuisance has it become to all Europeans that it may prove the basis of fresh diplomatic ruptures, and we may yet see a Redcliffe or a Bulwer demanding his passport on account of some humiliating encounter with this Cerberus.

Haunted with the presentiment that so long as an unfinished palace, in process of completion, was on his hands, so long would Azrael, the black-winged angel of death, pass him by, the royal spendthrift squandered untold treasure on building and rebuilding palaces and summer-houses "full of barbaric carving, paint, and gilding." At enormous expense he dismantled an important gun-factory, converting it into a perfect gem of a theatre, which he opened to a privileged few, perhaps twice a year. Little did he think that every flowery arabesque, each bewildering tracery of alabaster bath or latticed kiosk, was cursed with the tears of a blighted people; while the fairy castles breathed on his window panes by the biting frosts of winter might have taught him the lesson. Days, not passed in prolonged revels, were devoted to this architectural mania, or consumed in poring over catalogues of Parisian upholsterers. A shade of color was often submitted to the taste of his Cabinet, and the most solemn acts of vaticination performed by the Sheikh-ul-Islam—a sort of Turkish Archbishop of Canterbury—were limited to foretelling the propitious dates for removing from one palace to another.

Fabulous were the sums lavished on his pleas-

ures; no two European kingdoms could support them. The treasury was emptied; the finances anticipated. Oppressed tenants deserted the crown appanages, and the revenues of whole provinces were lavished on some exacting favorite. Every lady of his harem enjoyed the credit of the pettiest tradesman, and the debts, incurred from frivolous purchases in the bazars, accumulated so fast, that finally the Minister of War, selected by the Sultan in a fit of financial desperation to supervise the expenses of his household, inserted polyglot advertisements in every newspaper of the capital, ignoring the credit system altogether, and very ungallantly protesting the notes of these shopping beauties. The alarm of the tradesmen and the indignation of their fair customers can be better imagined than described. The uproar in the palace became so great that the most hen-pecked husband in Europe was only too glad to effect an ignominious compromise.

The chamberlains, innumerable stewards, and other officials of the palace received mere nominal salaries, barely sufficient to keep them in shoe-leather, and yet they invariably managed to retire from public service on independent fortunes, by speculating on the supplies and remnants of this enormous establishment. Rarely does an Eastern monarch wear the same suit of clothes twice, and never does he use any article of apparel which has once passed through the plebeian hands of a laundress: these become the perquisites of the numerous non-salaried hangers on, who swarm about the court and live by fraudulent gleanings.

With a civil list of \$2,500,000 per annum, the debts of the Sultan accumulated at a far greater yearly average. Such vast expenditures crippled the resources of the nation and palsied its energies. The whole country groaned under a system of oppressive taxation, nay, even deliberate extortion. Worthless Government paper inundated the capital; yet the salaries of even officials, and every soldier's stipend, were several months in arrears. The most necessary articles of life rose to California prices. Bankers, to whom the Government owed millions of *piastres*, pined in prison for insignificant debts, while the poor suffered cruelly, and beggars swarmed like vermin. Business of every description stagnated, and opulent firms, names historical in the Levant, suspended payment. Still, by a strange fatality, on went the Sultan building and rebuilding, tearing down and restoring, now consulting his architect, now giving fresh orders to his upholsterers, heedless of the most insane expenditure, and blind to its consequences.

Murmurs ripened into discontent, which soon burst into a gigantic conspiracy, having for its object the downfall of the Sultan and his Cabinet, and the elevation to the throne of the now-reigning monarch. This plot was formed by the fusion of two antagonistic parties: the Liberal, which was utterly disheartened by the sordid selfishness of this modern Sardanapalus, and de-

pressed at the hopeless bankruptcy of a once-powerful empire; the other body was represented by unrelenting bigots, who hated European innovation, and gnashed their teeth at a ruler who submitted to be the mere puppet of insolent foreign ambassadors. Thousands of fierce Circassian refugees, armed to the teeth and chafing at the Russian yoke, breathed vows of vengeance against that Commander of the Faithful who had so supinely neglected to render assistance to his co-religionists during their extremity. Sixty thousand mutinous soldiery, cooped up in the barracks of Constantinople, and clamorous for seven months' arrears, were impatient to play the Pretorian guards and sell the purple to the highest bidder. Bravely progressed the bloody plot: some of the most upright and highest dignitaries, even members of the Ministry, took the oath of the conspirators. Through the connivance of priests, at the approach of a great festival large quantities of gunpowder lay concealed in the vaults of one of the principal mosques, and even a Guy Fawkes had drawn the lot to apply the match and blow up an imbecile monarch with his minions. Every detail of the conspiracy seemed perfect; yet at the eleventh hour an avaricious accomplice sold his information to the Government. Modern history lays down this axiom that, when pecuniary considerations are involved, a patriotic Turk is an impossibility. Mustapha may be willing to undergo any hardship, and even cheerfully jeopardize his life for his country provided no appeal is made to his purse; while that stern old bigot, Aali, who swears by the spotless green turban which marks his lineal descent from the Prophet, will turn from the finest precept of the Koran to cheat a customer. Justly observes Lamartine, "Turkey is perishing for want of Turks."

In short, the object of the conspirators was frustrated; but the feeble monarch, in lieu of taking resolute measures to crush his enemies, pusillanimously treated with their leaders, promised reform, or, what was equivalent, economy, sent his vizier on a wild-goose provincial tour of justice, and actually compromised so far as to dismiss the army of masons employed on his vast architectural designs. Alas! this last concession proved the feather which broke the camel's back. The line and plummet once resigned, the royal architect never fully recovered the shock. Habits of indolence degenerated into intemperance, and goblet after goblet of Champagne became a daily necessity. For two long years not a mallet-blow resounded on these unfinished works; but the ruling passion lay smouldering, ready at any moment to break out into flame. A month before his death, when too feeble to mount his horse, he grasped at the idle plea that some employment was necessary for the starving peasantry, and issued orders to recommence the royal works.

To illustrate this unscrupulous policy of Turkish cabinet ministers, and to offer some excuse for the insane prodigality of the Sultan during a great financial crisis, I will relate a

circumstance which transpired shortly after the Crimean war, and for which I am indebted to an eye-witness. While engrossed in his architectural mania, a rumor reached the ear of Abdul-Medjid that a small loaf of bread, formerly worth a cent, had doubled in value, causing great distress among the poor. Wishing to satisfy himself of the truth of this report, and not trusting the word of his courtiers, one Friday, while proceeding in great state to a royal mosque, he suddenly halted before a public oven, and demanded from the baker the price of his bread. Great consternation fell upon all the pashas, and one can well imagine how copious a perspiration oozed out of the pores of the vizier's skin; his power, his life, hung by a thread. But Oriental cunning proved equal even to this emergency. The unobserved attendants in the back-ground held up a coin corresponding to our cent, and with menacing gestures intimated to the trembling baker what reply he was to make. The price of cereals appears to be the only political barometer in the East; and the Sultan, putting spurs to his horse, went to his devotions in high spirits, and no doubt enlarged the budget for his building expenses, on the strength of this information.

By a quibbling train of association of ideas, an allusion to cereals naturally suggests the subject of corns. The Sultan was somewhat of a dandy, and, apart from an elegant figure, had a small foot, of which he was justly proud. There is always a disposition on the part of mortals to improve upon Nature, by either squeezing or expanding her; and he too yielded to the same weakness, and enjoined it upon his boot-maker to give him as tight and accurate a fit as possible. Unfortunately the royal toe had to contend with a vulgar corn of very vicious disposition, which interfered sadly with the skill of the artist, and which was the El Dorado of all the chiropodists of the day, who expected nothing short of the rank of Pasha of Three Tails for ridding the Sultan of this nuisance. Hardly a year elapsed but some Jew arrived at the metropolis, flourishing scores of signatures certifying that imperial, royal, and aristocratic corns had surrendered at discretion to his skill. It was no use; the Sultan, either timorous of the operation or true to his religious principles, could never be persuaded to part with the predestinated excrescence. With pious resignation he rejected even the free-agency of broad soles, and left the cure to Allah; and, as it might have been expected, no miracle was wrought in his behalf. Driving down the principal street of Pera one afternoon, the agony of one of his boot-maker's best fits forced him to alight from his carriage and limp into a confectioner's. The crowd and royal pages collected in front of the shop attracted me to the spot, and the attendants hurrying in every direction gave me the impression that his Majesty had been suddenly taken seriously ill. The appearance of several panting shoemakers, with bags bursting with their handicraft, soon cleared up the mystery;

and a few minutes after the royal martyr drove off with a countenance flushed with a very mortal sense of relief. Tell me not of slaves seated in the triumphal chariot of a Roman hero whispering moral lessons in the ear of the conqueror; a tight pair of sandals or a couple of fashionable buskins would have proved far more impressive monitors.

Once the Sultan was afflicted with the toothache, and after days of torture managed to screw his courage up to the pulling point. But to the dismay of the Chamberlain, in all Stambul not a barber or dentist, for love of money or reputation, was found willing to undertake the operation. American dentists may smile at the pusillanimity of their Oriental brethren, but let them remember that any accident in the extraction of a royal tooth, whether fracture, delay, or any additional pain, might consign the bold operator to the *bastinado*, or to the tender mercies of the bow-string. At last an obscure Jew, who had never looked higher than the jaws of his Hebrew customers, was induced to risk his neck and heels in the dental encounter. Thrice prostrating himself, he entreated the Sultan to show his slave the offending molar. Quick as thought the forceps were applied, and immediately the Jew fell down with a piercing shriek at the feet of his master in a well-assumed fit of epileptic convulsions. Up jumped the patient from his throne, forgetting in his terror his toothache, his dignity, and the pain of the extraction, and ordered his pages to bring cordials and water for the unfortunate dentist. The wily Jew, perceiving that a hydropathic treatment was imminent, and that this buffoonery had produced the desired effect of distracting the royal attention, now convalesced with great promptness, triumphantly exhibiting the tooth to the astonished monarch and his courtiers. It is hardly necessary to add that not only was the integrity of the soles of his feet respected, but Israel went forth from the palace, even unto his kindred, with shekels of gold and shekels of silver.

The son of Mahmoud, though a Mussulman, was far more tolerant than the rulers of many Christian states. He contributed largely out of his embarrassed finances to the victims of his co-religionists in India, when Spain and Naples, when Russia, and even Protestant Prussia, sent nothing for their relief. Political refugees, presuming on his generosity, flocked to Constantinople, and lived on his alms. Kossuth obtained a protection from Abdul-Medjid which was denied him by Christian monarchs. What could be more magnanimous than playing the generous host at the risk of forming implacable enemies? Yet contrast this magnanimity with the treachery of the Saxon court, which, acting in the light of police-constables, delivers into Austrian hands the Hungarian patriot, Count Teleki. When 40,000 Tartars were driven from the Crimea by the relentless Russians for the crime of selling provisions to the allied force before Sebastopol; when the rigors of winter, pestilence, and ex-

posure decimated their ranks; when cruel pangs of hunger obliterated every semblance of humanity, and parents and children fought like demons over the most loathsome offal, and disputed the possession of putrid carrion with scavenger birds and beasts, no pity filled the heart of the most Christian Alexander. But although this banished tribe of Tartars were considered sectaries, and were cordially hated by the Turks as idolaters, the Sultan was too humane to view with indifference their dreadful sufferings. At a great expense, and the penalty of a fearful epidemic at the capital, he chartered vessels to give them a free passage to fertile lands which were assigned to them. He erected houses and vacated government buildings for their accommodation, and acted to admiration the part of a Christian benefactor. A few more such noble actions would obliterate the remembrance of all his follies.

The nervous Sultan was excessively afraid of disease, never approaching the bedside of the sick in his own family, and more than one infant prince died without the last caress of its father. The graduating class of the Imperial University of Medicine, becoming dissatisfied at a recent change in their military appointments, determined to petition the Sultan in person for a repeal of the obnoxious measures. With boyish impetuosity they proceeded in a body, and dividing in two parties, lay in wait at the land and water gates of the palace. The blustering clamors of these malcontents penetrated into the innermost recesses of the bath, where the great man lay ruminating under a thick coat of lather. As soon as he found out that this uproar arose from men just let loose from contagious wards of the hospitals, impregnated with typhoids, choleras, and diarrheas dire, in great rage he turned out his guards and had them all arrested and thrown into prison, where they lingered some time on a highly antiphlogistic diet. When the *Wabash*, by special invitation, lay in the Golden Horn, the Sultan, who was deeply interested in remodeling his navy, visited that splendid specimen of an American frigate. He was received in great state by the Captain and our legation, and roamed all over the great ship, examining every detail with great interest, and putting numerous questions by means of an interpreter. Unfortunately, in the course of the visit, he stumbled on the "sick-bay," with its usual quota of hammocked invalids. The sight so upset the royal nerves, that, beating a precipitate retreat to his barge, he barely allowed himself time to express his thanks to the officers, and was almost out of sight before the gunners were ready to give him a parting salute.

But in spite of these timorous precautions, and the favorite omen of unfinished buildings, at last that dread angel Azrael swooped down upon the gilded palace of the effete debauchee. To me it was most painful to see the prematurely old sensualist, supporting himself on a stick and feebly dragging one foot after the other; now gently assisted into his carriage by at-

tentive servants, now lifted into his saddle, when he swayed to and fro like any other weak child of mortality. Clinging to life with the tenacity of despair, he would never acknowledge himself an invalid until he could no longer walk without assistance, and then in great alarm sent for all his court physicians. Consumption no more respected the monarch than the meanest of his vassals; but, in health, this lesson is lost on pleasure-seeking humanity. Toward the close the dying man became more calm and resigned, frequently alluding to his approaching dissolution, and taking great comfort in listening to the melancholy strains of his fine band. A short time before the last agony he sent for Abdul-Aziz and held a long and solemn interview, in which he commended the young princes and other members of the imperial family to the protection of this brother, and recommended the reforming policy of their common father, which he himself had not the energy to expand. A few hours after the parting between the two brothers, salvos of artillery from the ship and shore batteries announced a new sovereign; while criers, on horseback and on foot, hurried through the crowded streets of the bazars, proclaiming, "His Majesty Sultan Abdul-Medjid Khan—whose memory is revered—having passed to another and better world, His glorious, mighty, magnificent, and merciful Majesty Abdul-Aziz Khan has been raised to the throne in his stead."

STILL UNKNOWN.

LONG since the stuff of youthful dreams
Was raveled out; no threads remain
To twist and tangle in my mind,
And tempt me with its hues again.

I slept a long, lethargic sleep,
Which drugged and made my soul forget
The slow, dull years which bore me on
To pay with them an unknown debt.

The time of sleep must have an end—
It ends with me: I sleep no more;
Prometheus-like, transfixed, yet free,
Whether the vultures swoop or soar,

I make the hollow air resound
With my persistent, searching cry;
Explain ye Powers who hold me fast,
Yet can not quell, or I defy.

Resolve the riddle ye propound;
Give me the balance, or make good
The countenance I gave the world,
As if its plan I understood.

This ghost, the Soul, why does it stay?
Where does it go? And I demand
To know what pulse of this machine,
Raised from the dust, I can command?

The ties that cheat us, false or true,
The tasks that glimmer through each day,
With names like Honor, Duty, Fame,
Change, or recede, or stand at bay,

The dogs of Fate to worry me.
Still, there is something left to say:
"What does it matter—let them go;"
"What does it matter—let them stay."

I will confess another truth:
Within the prison round me built,
Wearing the mask of circumstance,
I play a drama—whose the guilt?

Despite the laws of time and fate,
Despite indifference, doubt, or pain,
The Sensual triumphs; I obey
An exiled king, and in his train,

And in his court, I am bedecked
A courtier; deep I drain his wine,
And hot among the rioters
I hob-and-nob with "*Thine and Mine*."

What then is my ignoble grief?
I am a woman, and my dower
Of Beauty spent; is all this wail
Of *Why* and *Wherefore* vanished power?

MR. AND MRS. MEYER.

THEY are playing *Le Désir*! Tum, tun,
tum, tum ti-tum!" waving an imaginary
bâton with a white glove in the air, to perfect
time with the hummed words and the band in
the hall. "Tum, tum, tum!" and the owner
of the white glove put out his hand to the lady
beside him.

"Can you resist those strains?" She let
him draw her arm within his own, and went in.

"Tum, tum, tum!" and down the elastic
floor they joined the waltzers. And the soft
lace floated out its mazy clouds, and the soft
hair fluttered its pennon of curls, and the soft
hand lay like a little bird in the larger hand.

"Tum, tum, tum!—one more turn!" and
away to "the flute, violin, bassoon," unwinding
those Beethoven links of sound, with twinkling
feet and airy motion.

"One more turn!" and the countless skirts
of tulle and tarleton and lace had settled into
stillness, drifting away like mountain mist over
the arm of the *fenteuil* and the chalked dance-
space of the floor.

"Pretty creature! isn't she?"

"Leeds thinks so;" and two gentlemen moved
off through the rooms.

Another gentleman—a quiet, well-bred, com-
monplace-looking person—hearing this collo-
quy, glanced up from his *tête-à-tête* with a sort
of Flora M'Ivor girl, and regarded the "pretty
creature" and her companion with some earnest-
ness. The companion, Mr. Leeds, is fanning