

# A LEADER OF FASHION

BY THOMAS HARDY

[*Adelphi*]

NEVER has she known  
The way a robin will skip and come,  
With an eye half bold, half timorsome,  
To the table's edge for a breakfast crumb:

Nor has she seen  
A streak of roseate gently drawn  
Across the east, that means the dawn,  
When, up and out, she foots it on:

Nor has she heard  
The rustle of the sparrow's tread  
To roost in roof-holes near her head  
When dusk bids her, too, seek her bed:

Nor has she watched  
Amid a stormy eve's turmoil  
The pipkin slowly come to boil,  
In readiness for one at toil:

Nor has she hearkened  
Through the long nighttime, lone and numb,  
For sounds of sent-for help to come  
Ere the swift-sinking life succumb:

Nor has she ever  
Held the loved-lost one on her arm,  
Attired with care his straightened form,  
As if he were alive and warm:

Yea, never has she  
Known, seen, heard, felt, such things as these,  
Haps of so many in their degrees  
Throughout their count of calvaries!

## LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

### THE STAGE IN TURKEY.

WE have heard not a little latterly about the political and international affairs of Turkey, but nothing or almost nothing about its literature and art. Is it too distressful a country — is it indeed too insecurely a country at all — to have poets and painters? Who are the Thomas Hardys and the Epsteins of Mustapha Kemal's dominions? And is there a theatre in Turkey — at least a Little Theatre?

This last question is answered by a Constantinople correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, who bears testimony to the stirrings of a nascent dramatic art in that city and beyond. What should be of chief interest to English observers is the fact that until within the last two years the main obstacle to the development of a theatrical art in Turkey was the veto on actresses' parts being taken by Turkish women. To appear on the stage, a woman would have had to discard her veil, and only recently has that been socially possible. Yet it seems never to have occurred to the Turks that boys might take women's parts as effectively as they did on the Elizabethan stage in England. If it had, the Turkish drama might have been enriched by a series of rôles, such as those of Rosalind and Viola, created with boy actors in mind.

What actually happened was that a generation or two ago the Turkish-speaking Armenians of Constantinople formed the idea of organizing public theatrical representations in Turkish, since Armenian women were under no such restriction. Unsatisfactory as this

must have been to one-hundred-per-cent Turks, it was the basis for a gradual adjustment of the popular mind to the idea of a national drama, and it was not long before more and more natives took to the art of acting. The last step was taken when, two years ago, a Turkish woman, Mme. Bediar Hanum, appeared before the footlights. This lady is the wife of the director of the Dar-ul-Bedai, a national conservatoire and dramatic company. The occasion for her appearance was a tour of the company to Smyrna, where, owing to the events of the war, Armenians were not allowed. 'The company,' says this correspondent, 'met with no protests, though it went on to Trebizond and Samsun, which are considered to be conservative and backward areas. Everywhere the advantage of naturalness, not only in pronunciation but even in representation, due to having true Turkish actresses, has been recognized and acclaimed, and there will be no going back from it now.'

There are now eight Turkish actresses in the Dar-ul-Bedai, and the innovation may be said to have established itself. What the theatrical life of the country needs chiefly is funds and dramatic authors. It is easy to see why native writers have not hitherto felt particularly drawn to the stage, why Armenian actors — culturally as well as linguistically alien — have not been a great stimulus to potential Turkish playwrights. Until very recently the stock-in-trade of the stage in Constantinople has been adaptations, chiefly from the