

Youths' Department.

THE CHILDREN OF TURKEY.

Miss Clara D. Lawrence.



HE Moslem children are taught to despise, yes, even to hate, their little Christian neighbors, and to call them dogs, and so they grow up proud and cruel.

The little Moslem boy has a pretty easy time, for he rules his mother, grandmother, sisters and aunts, and so gets his own way from the cradle onward. In the case of his sister it is quite different. She is born to serve and her will and wishes are of little account.

In Turkey babies, during the first months of their lives, are bound up like little mummies so they cannot move a muscle, but they do not seem to mind this so much as you might think, and they are much easier to handle in this condition.

As the little boy grows older he can go to school, to market and to mosque; he has a horse to ride, very likely, and can explore town and country at his pleasure, but the little girl must remain at home and get glimpses of the outside world only through the latticed windows of the harem. If she goes to mosque, it is only to the women's apartment, which is heavily screened off, so they can neither see nor be seen. She is married at an early age, having no choice in the matter, and she can never appear in the presence of men with uncovered face.

While Moslems do not worship idols their manner of worshiping God is quite different from that of Christians.

Five times a day the call to prayer goes forth from the tall minarets of the mosques, and wherever "the faithful" may chance to be at the time they are expected to prostrate themselves and go through the prescribed form of prayer. The call is given only by means of the human voice, for Moslems do not like bells, and the early morning or late evening calls are pleasant to hear in the stillness of those hours.

Our Friday is the Moslem Sunday, amounting to little more than a weekly holiday, an occasion for visits and picnics; a day when their Christian subjects prefer to remain indoors.

During one lunar month of the year they cannot eat, drink, or smoke between sunrise and sunset. Women smoke as well as men, and when this fast, called Ramadan, occurs in summer it is specially hard. As it draws near time for the sun's departure you will see them with cigarettes rolled up ready for smoking, and food prepared ready for eating as soon as the sunset-gun shall announce that they are free to do so.

An hour or two before sunrise great drums are beaten all through the city that they may awake, eat, drink and smoke before the lord of day makes his appearance. Thus their sleeping is curtailed as well as their eating, and do you wonder that they become morose and irritable before the month is over? They watch early for the new moon which is the signal for the close as it was for the beginning of Ramadan. Then follow three days of feasting and revelry, a regular Fourth of July kind of celebration with no end of noise and hilarity; after which life returns to its old routine.

In Turkey neither children nor grown-ups make much use of chairs. At home, at school, in mosque or church they sit cross-legged on cushions or rugs upon the floor and shoes are always removed before entering a room, being made so that they can be slipped off and on easily.

Children are governed largely through fear, but threats amounting almost to curses lose their force through frequent repetition, and the child learns to deceive from being deceived and to distrust both threats and promises that are seldom executed.

The "evil eye" is much dreaded and many devices are used to avert its influence. Blue beads are thought to be peculiarly efficacious, and every baby has at least one blue bead fastened to its clothing. A bunch of garlic hung over the door is another means of protection. If a child is praised for its beauty or brightness it must be spit upon simultaneously or some calamity might follow.

Very many babies and little children die because parents are ignorant how to care for them properly. In many places there are no good doctors and the remedies used are often worse than the disease. Cutting "to let out the bad blood" is very common and often results in blood-poisoning.