

was spent at his house, than at the Hotel of the Embassy in Büyükdere.

"Nothing can be finer than a sunset on the Bosphorus—its calm, placid, lakelike surface, scarce ever ruffled by a breath of wind, reflects, as from a mirror, the rich mellow tints which, at this period of the day, an oriental sky generally presents—hundreds of light caïques, gaudily painted and bedecked with streamers, shoot across each other's path—and, turning towards the city, a thousand domes and minarets glisten brightly in the golden rays of sunset.

"It was my frequent custom to enjoy this scene from the terraced roof of Mourad Effendi's mansion, where, amidst the party of friends whom the old gentleman drew around him with the view of contributing to my amusement, I drank my sherbet and smoked my chibouque with as much becoming gravity as any Turk of them all. On several such occasions the sound of a mandolin from the roof of the adjoining house drew my attention, not only from the masterly style in which the instrument itself was touched, but from the occasional accompaniment of a sweet female voice which mingled with its chords. All that I could gather from the reserved answers of my Mahomedan friends was that the owner of the house was a Mehmet Bey, who had filled some situation under Government, from which he had the unusual good fortune to retire, with his head on his shoulders, and a pretty large proportion of his gains remaining in his purse. Of his family—they said—they knew very little; such gossip they left for the ladies of their harems: but Mourad Effendi himself, on further questioning, gave me a little more information.

"Mehmet Bey, it seems, had caused great scandal to his friends and acquaintances of the faithful, about eighteen years before, by suddenly setting at liberty all the inmates of his harem: a step understood to result from the determination of a Christian slave—whom he had lately purchased, and to whom he was devotedly attached—to reign sole mistress of his household. After a lapse of fourteen years, passed—as well as could be judged—in uninterrupted domestic happiness, the lady died, leaving an only child, a daughter, who was cherished by Mehmet as the apple of his eye. This girl Mourad had often seen in the women's apartments of his house, but when I ventured an enquiry as to her personal appearance, the only reply of the impassive Turk was '*Taib! Taib!*' 'Very Good!'

"I resolved in my own mind that the minstrel of the neighbouring house top was the daughter of Mehmet Bey, and my curiosity being roused, less perhaps by what I had learned, than by the

fact of having learned so little, I determined, if possible, to have a glimpse of the concealed songstress. On the following evening, therefore, when I knew that Mourad Effendi had gone with a friend to Pera, I took my usual station on the terrace, but though my eyes rested as usual on the busy scene around, my attention was rivetted on the adjoining mansion. My patient watch was at length rewarded by hearing the sound of the mandolin as before, to which I listened in silence, till the last echo had died away;—then, after a hurried glance around, and finding no one in sight, I ventured cautiously to ascend by the inequalities of the partition wall, till I could overlook it altogether.

"Reclining on a pile of cushions, the mandolin thrown aside, and she herself engaged in earnest meditation, lay the fair creature, to see whom I had placed myself in a situation of such peril—nor did I regret that I had done so. She was a lovely girl of sixteen or seventeen, whose face and figure were cast in nature's fairest mould—whose delicate features were illumined by the radiance of the soul within. But I see you smiling at this commencement of a lover's rhapsody, and will spare you the rest. Look to the Sultana in the opposite box, and I will venture to say, laying aside all the prejudices of a lover and a husband, that love at first sight will not seem to you so very ridiculous in my case. Entranced as I was, I neglected the caution I had hitherto maintained; at the slight noise I made, she looked up, and as her large lustrous eyes met mine fixed on her with an ardent gaze, she started from the divan, and stood before me motionless, a beautiful statue of surprise. I endeavoured in my best Turkish, to re-assure her; told her I had been attracted by her music to the daring deed of thus breaking on her solitude, and besought her mercy on my rashness.

"The first tones of my voice seemed to break the spell that bound her, and she hastily wound her veil round her head, eclipsing the charms that had so dazzled me; but my speech gave her confidence and she made no further effort to flee. Nay! my earnest entreaties won her consent to my listening at the same hour each evening to the music of her lute and voice, and taking my leave with this promise, I scrambled down again, well content with the result of my first interview.

"On the earliest opportunity I ventured to renew my trespass, nor was it long before Fatima, my fair acquaintance, learned to anticipate, with some degree of pleasure, our stolen interviews. The very fact that our meetings were undisturbed, showed that she had kept her father uninformed of them, and that some small spark