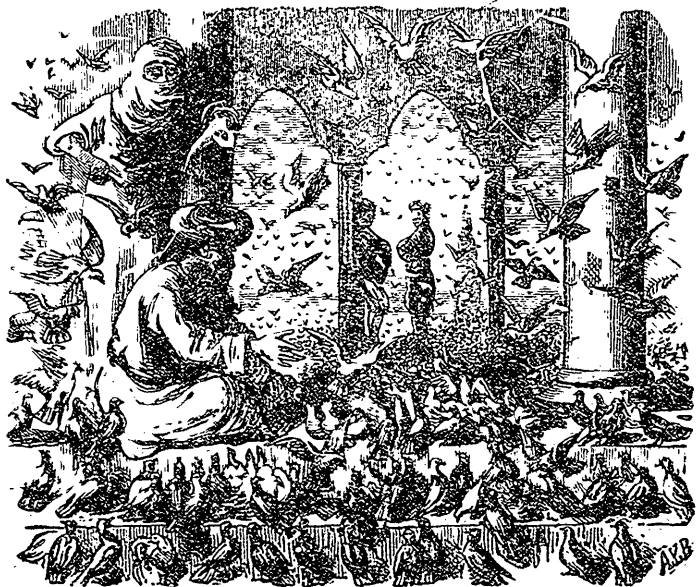


This building is substantially the same as that built by the Emperor Justinian in the sixth century. When Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1453, the cathedral was converted into a mosque; but some of the mosaics still tell of the Christian faith. The building was, at its opening, one of great splendour. Ten thousand workmen had been engaged in its construction. Its adornment in gold and silver and precious stones was most extravagant. One writer estimates its cost at £13,000,000. Having removed our shoes and put on slippers, we entered, and found ourselves in a large and lofty building, in the form of a Greek cross. Above us rose the dome, to the height



MOSQUE OF THE PIGEONS.

of 175 feet. All around, except where the altar once stood, runs a high, wide gallery. This, and other parts of the building, are supported by magnificent stone pillars; for the most part borrowed from ancient temples. There are 170 columns of marble, granite, and porphyry; some from the Temple of the Sun at Baalbec; some from the Temple of Diana at Ephesus; some from Heliopolis; others from Athens and the Cyclades. Thousands of cords are let down from the roof, supporting