

day. The clergy of the Established Church have no such annoyance. It costs something to be a tolerated dissenter still :

The registrar appointed a quarter-past twelve as the time at which he would be present to certify the wedding of a young couple. The bridal party waited, however, three hours, and no registrar appeared, nor was anything known of his whereabouts at his office, to which two telegrams and a carriage were successively sent. The wedding, therefore, had to be postponed. Nor was this all. The minister who was to officiate had to come some distance for the purpose, and as a result of the waiting he was unable to conduct the services at his chapel.

No registrar is required at the parish churches.

THE GOSPEL AFLOAT.

BY REV. WILLIAM SCOTT.

CHAPTER VI.—AMONG THE TURKS.

It was early on a Friday morning when we dropped anchor in the Golden Horn—the harbour of Constantinople. As a harbour, it is beautiful and commodious. It is formed by the waters of the Bosphorus flowing in between two promontories separating Stamboul from Pera, Galata and Top-hanna. It is indebted to nature, not to man, for its magnificence. With the exception of the bridge across the Golden Horn, uniting Stamboul and Pera, there are few evidences of engineering enterprise.

First impressions in the East are the most favourable impressions. It is so here. The magnificence of the situation of Constantinople, and the fairy-like beauty of the scene beggar description. The white marble palace of the Seraglio (occupying within its enclosures the space of the ancient city of Byzantium), where the late sultan, Abdul Aziz, was confined after his deposition ; the towering minarets and swelling massive domes of the mosques, with their gilded, glittering crescents ; the picturesque disposition of colour—houses white, brown pink and yellow, with the dark, sombre cypress interjecting its gloomy shadows everywhere amid the scenes of light and brightness ; the continuous stream of pedestrians from sunrise to sunset, in every variety of costume, crossing the bridge that spans the Golden Horn ; the light, graceful caiques glancing over the smooth surface of the water with wondrous rapidity, constitute a picture of fairy lightness and grace impossible to describe.

Distance has something, however, to do with the enchantment of the scene. Closer acquaintance somewhat rudely dispels the roseate romance of first impressions. Narrow, tortuous streets, without any pretence of paving, or suggestion of a reference to sanitation, however elementary ; dogs—dirty, wolfish, half-starved curs—everywhere, a series of canine municipalities (for each district has its own pack, and

no invasion into another district is permitted), reduce the poetry of first impressions to the grim prose of bad smells and omnipresent dirt.

It was the Turkish Sunday. Three Sundays in a week represent an extreme form of Sabbatarianism. Friday is the Turkish Sabbath ; Saturday that of the Jews—a very large factor of the population of Constantinople ; then comes the Christian Sabbath—the first day of the week.

Like most passengers, we were not slow in getting ashore. Here, as elsewhere in the East, there is a plethora of cicerones. We take counsel with the trusted dragoman of the Cunard Company, who gloried in the name of "Far-away-Moses." We found him an intelligent guide enough ; but like all his fraternity, trust had to be reposed in him *cum grano*. We find that the Sultan goes in state to mosque at two o'clock. Unwilling to miss such a sight, we hurry on past Top-lianna, catch a glimpse of the Mosque of Kilidsch Ali Pasha, and the Cannon Foundry, and reach as near to the Sultan's palace as the crowd will permit. The road is lined on both sides with soldiers. Behind the soldiers on one side of the street are veiled women ; on the other side are the men, though not without a thin sprinkling of the opposite sex. We patiently await the imperial cavalcade. The double line of soldiers is broken and irregular till at a given signal the rugged lines assume a well-dressed martial front. The strange thing is that no hoarse voice of officer is heard ordering to position ; nothing but a hissing sound which passes, or rather flashes, down the lines, and instantly all is order, silence and expectation. Presently the imposing procession appears. First come a few mounted officers, followed by the Grand Vizier and other high officers of State, enjoying, for their brief official day, the capricious sunshine of their imperial master's favour. Then approaches the portly form of the Sultan himself, conspicuous by the plainness of his dress, wearing only the plain, undecorated fez. As he passes, he lazily lifts his hand in salute, which is answered by a military cheer ; but such a ghostly attempt as not to merit the name. There is no enthusiasm ; no fervid, hearty reception. The people, for the most part, maintain an unbroken silence, to be accounted for, perhaps, as much by the natural apathy of Eastern peoples, as by any definite want of loyalty to the powers that be. The procession having passed, we mingled in a motley crowd. A line of carriages bring up the rear of the procession, containing some of the fair Circassian occupants of the imperial harem. The carriages, which might pass muster for second-rate London cabs, are jealously surrounded, and their yasmaked occupants guarded by those hideous eunuch guards, who form by no means a wholesome detail of a picturesque scene. The Turkish women