

Selections.

THE HOWLING DERVISHES.

One sees many disgusting exhibitions in the East, but not one that is more so than the ceremony performed by the Howling Dervishes. To be sure it is your own fault if you do see it—they themselves—unlike the Turning Dervishes at Pera and elsewhere, who most willingly admit foreigners to their chapel—hold the presence of the 'unclean' like sin—and it is only through the interest of some great individual, and determined perseverance in making your applications, that you are admitted within the hallowed precincts of their convent.

Many and unsuccessful were our own attempts for a sight of the mystery, until at last succeeded in procuring the gracious notice of the Arch-priest at Broussa to our excellent recommendations by letter, and personally from two gentlemen of influence, whose acquaintance we had made. To these insignia, we ventured to add our own earnest assurances that we would behave with all due reverence, and preserve a face of becoming length whilst present.

At the door, three youths who had been stationed there by the Imaun to wait upon us, and prevent the crowd from impeding our view, stooped to take off our slippers.—This done, we were ushered upstairs to a small room beside the chapel, through whose latticed windows we were to gaze upon the mystery. The walls of the chapel present a ferocious sort of decoration, reminding one of the chambers of the Inquisition. Like the Mosques, and other holy places, they are ornamented with written sentences from the Koran. But there is with these dervishes a difference which chills you—the suspended battle axes, chains, skewers, pincers, spikes, which are used to torture themselves when the religious phrensy becomes too intolerable for the expression of voice or motion.

The youths who formed our escort placed us in the best possible position to view the scene, and, then arranging themselves on each side, kept back the crowd. Many and bitter were the muttered implications upon the glances which arose from those beaten off as they tried hard to force within our charmed circle. Our small apartment filled fast, until, the heat becoming oppressive, our dragoman observed that, if the air was not admitted he was sure we could not stay.—Upon this, the youths immediately stopped all further entrance of spectators, and opened a small lattice, through which passed a gentle breeze, imparting a delicious coolness to that part of the room where we were stationed.

A low monotonous chant rose to the lattice; we looked, and saw a train of dervishes slowly entering the chapel, headed by their high-priest. The dervishes prostrated themselves upon the earth, their foreheads in the dust, the priest, stretching forth his open palms to heaven, repeated a long low prayer. A tiger-skin was then spread before the Mirrah, and upon this the priest stationed himself. A rich green scarf was offered, with which he begirt himself with much ceremony. Then commenced a low howling wail, echoed by the whole fraternity, who sat rocking their bodies two and two, till their foreheads almost touched the floor.

By degrees the phrensy increased—the eyes of the performers began to shine with a terribly unnatural lustre, foam gathered upon the lips, as an epilepsy, the countenance writhed in the most frightful distortions, a perspiration, so profuse that it rolled down the cheeks in huge drops, rose upon the pale and sickly brow, the 'Allah-hou' each moment was cried with a redoubled fury until, with the violence of the shouts, the voice gave way, and the words became mere frantic roarings, as from a cavern of wild beasts.

Suddenly, a sound more distinct and more terrible than the rest arose from the heaving and surging masses 'Lah il'lah el il'Allah!' cried a voice whose tones were like nothing earthly—and the others present caught up and echoed that fearful cry. The next moment there was a demoniac shriek, and the man who had at first shouted, rolled over upon the floor in deathlike convulsion.—Those next him, with another frightful 'Allah-hou,' turned to his relief. They stretched him up—they clasped his hands—they yibbed and tried to bend his limbs, but they lay inanimate and rigid as a corpse.

With lightning rapidity the infection of this paroxysm spread: the 'Lah il'lah el il'Allahs' became more terrifically still, the devotees tossed their arms in the air with the fury of maniacs. An instant more, and another dervish leaped from the floor, as if shot through the heart, and fell in convulsions.

This brought the phrensy to a climax. The Imaun encouraged the dervishes by voice, by howl and by gesture. A young man detached himself from the crowd, and stepped forward. He looked at that looked

much like a pair of tongs, with which he pinched his cheeks with all his might, but the dervish made no sign of pain. A little child, a sweet little girl, of about seven years of age, entered the chapel, and calmly laid herself down upon a crimson rug. Assisted by two attendants, who from the first had stationed themselves one on each side of the Mirrah, the priest stopped upon her tender frame, and stood some moments, she must have suffered much, but when he dismounted, she rose and walked away with an air of extreme satisfaction.

Now commenced another and equally painful portion of the service. The Imaun regulated the time of the chant, by ever and anon clapping his hands to increase its speed, or commanding by gestures that it must be slower. Wait succeeding to wait, howl to howl, Allah-hou to Allah-hou, till at last the strongest men, unable to bear the violence of the exertion, fell to the ground in convulsions, or sobbed, with anguish like infants. On the whole, a more revolting scene than the howling dervishes could be readily conceived; and dreadful is the distortion of the spirit which can deem such torments, as acceptable in the eyes of God.

A few days afterwards, it was my fortune to make a more intimate acquaintance with one of these dervishes—which are peculiar to themselves—the one they have named *gellinjik*, the other *yellanjik*. Under the head *gellinjik*, they describe almost any possible illness of the body. The *yellanjik* is the more simple and more easy disease of the two, it signifies only toothache and its concomitant pains in the face. So difficult is the *gellinjik* to cure, that the happy ability has long been vested in a single family, through whom the power passes with each generation—but the *yellanjik* can be cured by those emirs or dervishes who are descended from Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed.

The charm consists in this. It is the fair sex who are usually afflicted, with face-ache in Turkey—and at any rate, these quacks have a particular love for those who are called the 'weaker vessels' of humanity, the lady is affected with nervous pains in the cheek. Faith is imperative, and there is one particular emir upon whom her choice falls. He is sent for, his feet are folded beneath him upon the divan, and his green turban readjusted. The veiled beauty is led by a slave into his august presence, and seated upon a low cushion before him. The emir utters a short prayer, lays his thumb upon his nose, breathes softly upon the forehead, gently rubs the cheek and treatment is complete.

A young slave belonging to the house where for a while we were invited to sojourn was afflicted with *yellanjik*. Immediately, on his desire being made known a messenger was despatched for an emir whom she named, and who was rather eminent in the cures he effected. The family, except one aged relative upon whom the slave attended, were staying at their country residence. Funes-Hanum was led into the presence of the emir. He might once have been a handsome man, but now his countenance had taken that sickly and distorted expression which often follows their dreadful ceremonies, and with his thick, bristling moustaches and his long matted beard, it gave him by no means a prepossessing appearance.

I was that morning amusing myself with an electrical apparatus—and after he had operated upon Funes, he passed me as I stood in the piazza making experiments, which piazza was the nearest way to the garden from her room. He surveyed the jars for a few moments with intense curiosity, and then departing to a short distance, slowly drew forth a small brass riddle, and murmured: 'Buckshish! Buckshish!'

'Buckshish! Buckshish for what?' I asked.

He made a gesture, intimating that to give aims to his order was the usual thing.

'No, I cannot think of giving you Buckshish.—You are young and strong, you can work at your trade.'

'I do work—hard work.'

'For whom?'

'Allah.'

'But your work is profitless to both Him and yourself. I shall not encourage it. It is spoken!' pursued I with the usual Ottoman expression of decision.

I was in the midst of an interesting experiment, and I turned to my apparatus.—The dervish quietly seated himself upon the ground, doubled up his feet beneath him, and presented his brass dish; and there he sat motionless as an image carved in marble. Thus things went on for the next half hour. But I was determined not to be wearied into giving him buckshish, and his imperturbable staring had become unpleasant.

'Just bid him go about his business,' said I to the dragoman.

He did so—but the dervish intimated that he should not retire without the money.

'If you do not go voluntarily, I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of compelling you,' said I.

The dervish merely gave a complacent chuckle, which said that he defied me to get rid of him.

'Very good,' replied I. 'Now mind, if I do what you will not like, it is not my fault.'

I had a large coil-machine on the table before me, which, as those acquainted with such apparatus know, tortures the nerves beyond the power of the strongest man to endure voluntarily more than a few seconds, I laid hold on his dish with the conductor, and by the way of a sample, gave him a moderate dose from a smaller battery. He laughed derisively, saying: 'Allah el il'Allah!'

'Then here goes,' pursued I, putting the magnet into the coil, while the attendants crowded round to see the effect. It was instantaneous. He rolled over upon the ground with a yell-like 'Allah-hou!' The arms quivered in their sockets, the dish, which now he would fain have let go if he could, and about in his convulsed hands like a rocket—the countenance was distorted with pain and rage. In a few moments, feeling satisfied that he had enough, I released him from the coil. He rose, and nearly upset the dragoman in his flight, leaped down the steps into the garden. There, being at what he considered a safe distance, turned, and a more liberal allowance of curses never fell to the lot of any man than those which he bestowed on me. He prayed, his face livid and, finally, he wound up with a fervent prayer that my wife might prove anything but faithful or fruitful, or that, if the latter position failed, my issue might be to add the bitterest curse that ever fell to the lot of a father. Since then I have often had a hearty smile at the discomfiture of the *yellanjik* doctor.

MOSES AND AARON.

'Try to realize that going forth of Aaron from the midst of the congregation. He who had so often done sacrifice for their sin, going forth now to offer up his own spirit. He who had stood, among them, between the dead and the living, and had seen the eyes of all that great multitude turned to him, that by his intercession their breath might yet be drawn a moment more, going forth now to meet the Angel of Death face to face, and deliver himself into his hands. Try if you cannot walk, in thought, with those two brothers, and the son, as they passed the outmost tents of Israel, and turned, while yet the dew lay round about the camp, towards the slopes of Mount Hor; talking together for the last time, as step by step they felt the steep rising of the rocks, and hour after hour, beneath the ascending sun, the horizon grew broader as they climbed, and all the folded hills of Idumea, one by one subdued, showed amidst their hollows in the haze of noon, the windings of that long desert journey, now at last to close. But who shall enter into the thoughts of the High Priest, as his eye followed those paths of ancient pilgrimage; and through the silence of the arid and endless hills, stretching even to the dim peak of Sinai, the whole history of those forty years was unfolded before him; and the mystery of his own ministries revealed to him; and that other Holy of Holies, of which the mountain peaks were the altars, and the mountain clouds the veil, the firmament of his Father's dwelling, opened to him still more brightly and infinitely as he drew nearer his death; until at last, on the shaggy summit,—from him on whom sin was to be laid no more—from him on whose heart the names of sinful nations were to press their graven fire no longer—the brother and the son took breakfast and ephod, and left him to his rest.'

'There is indeed a secretness in this calm faith and deep restraint of sorrow, into which it is difficult for us to enter; but the death of Moses himself is more easily to be conceived, and had in it circumstances still more touching, as far as regards the influence of the external scene. For forty years Moses had not been alone. The care and burden of all the people, the weight of their woe, and guilt, and death, had been upon him continually. The multitude had been laid upon him as if he had conceived them; their tears had been his meat night and day, until he had felt as if God had withdrawn His favour from him, and he had prayed that he might be slain, and not see his wretchedness. And now, at last, the command came, 'Get thee up into this mountain.' The weary hands that had been so long stayed up against the enemies of Israel, might lean again upon the shepherd's staff, and fold themselves for the shepherd's prayer—for the shepherd's slumber. Not strange to his feet, though forty years unknown, the roughness of the bare moun-