

quarter of the noble dome is completely uncovered and gone, large pieces of the remaining framework are hanging down, the rest is as rotten as the wood in an old barn, and the rain on that night pattered down on the spot where Our Saviour was laid. I stood for a quarter of an hour in a large puddle with an umbrella up, within six feet of the grave which Joseph of Arimathea selected because it had been undefiled by the presence of man. What a mockery was the accumulated defilement before my eyes,—food, excrement, imprecations, blasphemy, dirt and desolation, redolent and resonant around! The next morning rose dark and lowering, but without rain. We were told the Holy Fire would descend from heaven about one; but as I was perfectly certain it would not descend till the Greek Consul was present, I calmed the anxiety of the ladies, and we waited quietly till the cawasses appeared, which they did at half-past one. If getting into church the night before was a difficulty, to-day it was next to an impossibility, and, as the way was cloven for us by sheer force, we thought of the previous evening, when it was comparatively easy work to tread on a carpet of sleeping heads. At last we reached our places. The scene before us was much the same as before, except that the crowd reached to the roof in every direction, and all were standing. Every gallery, every crevice, even the balconies at the top of the lantern were crowded with human heads. Our old friend the colonel was there, whacking about him with his instrument of torture, and every whack sounding like an explosion. The illuminations, of course, were not there, and the dirt, ruin, and desolation came out stronger by comparison. Though there was as yet no artificial light, every arm held, not one single candle, as on the evening before, but thirty-three long candles and one small one, unlit, all bound up into a faggot about as thick as your fist. The number  $33\frac{1}{2}$  corresponds to the age of our Saviour at the period of His death. As time drew on, the noise and enthusiasm became tenfold that of yesterday; men seemed to go out of their minds with excitement. The refrain would be taken up by the Armenians, 'Jesus Christ shed His blood for us, for us, for us.' The Greeks and the Copts would continue it in the same words, the staves would get louder and louder—each would dwell on the last 'for us,' as if it meant for us alone, when one of an opposing sect would shriek out, 'That's a lie; it was not for you;' then a fight and a general scrimmage of all who were near the combatants, till the whack, whack, whack of the colonel brought half-a-dozen broken heads and sobered minds to reason. Half-a-dozen of these fights occurred during three-quarters of an hour preceding the ceremonial. They are almost always accompanied by assassination, and to-day was no exception to the rule, for a man was stabbed and died, but we luckily did not see the homicide which was added to the show, among the many defilements of the place. At last, at half-past two the bell sounded and the pageant began. Compared to the one of yesterday it was insignificant indeed. To-day seemed to be regarded as a matter of serious business, and not a matter of show. Again, yesterday's pageant could not have moved in a crowd, where men were standing in numbers on other men's heads, and the intense excitement of the populace would have forbidden any long display. Preceded by his clergy, the Greek Patriarch came forth in gorgeous apparel of white, followed by the Armenian Bishop, in the absence of the Armenian Patriarch. While the deep voices of the clergy sang the special hymn of prayer and praise, he moved slowly three times round the Holy Sepulchre, and then, followed by the Armenian Bishop, and by him alone, he opened and entered the sacred door and passed within. As the door closed on them the excitement of the populace was beyond all belief—shrieks, arms tossed on high, hair and dresses torn, were the external proofs of a tempest that raged within. It was exactly seven minutes that this frenzy lasted before it was gratified by the sight of the heaven-sent flame. The theory is that the Armenian Patriarch stays in the antechapel, where is the stone on which sat the angel at the door of the sepulchre, and that the Greek Patriarch goes into the sepulchre itself, which is only large enough to hold three or four persons, and after prayer receives the flame direct from heaven, which ought then to be carried to the altar in the Greek Holy of Holies, and afterwards communicated to the faithful. I accordingly expected