

The imperial and imperious Sultanas of romance and legend no longer haunt these former abodes of pride and pomp and sybaritic luxury. But, instead, we catch glimpses, in closed carriages, on the Galata Bridge, and at the Sweet Waters of Europe and Asia, of veiled figures, whose tenuous yashmaks reveal rather than conceal the beauty of their wearers.

It is very amusing to observe the efforts made to seclude the Turkish ladies from observation. On the railway trains they are confined in closed apartments, at whose door the conductor knocks and waits till they get their veils adjusted, before he enters to collect the tickets. On the steamers they are penned within a canvas enclosure, and at the landings they scuttle like frightened pigeons across the gangway to a similar one on the wharf. My dragoman frequently warned me not even to look toward the women's apartments. I have seen a girl in Palestine veil herself as our horses approached. Even the missionaries' wives in Moslem villages find it best to conform to this usage, and in the mission churches a high partition separates the sexes.

The lives of the Turkish women, thus cut off from intelligent intercourse with mankind, become narrowed, their minds dwarfed and shrivelled. They beguile the tedium of the harem by smoking nargilehs, eating candy, listening to professional story-tellers or minstrels, in gossip and intrigue. Ladies who have had the entree to the privacy of a palace say that they sometimes possess much beauty, some intelligence, and an intimate acquaintance with the latest Paris fashions.

Standing on the bridge across the Golden Horn one will note the great variety of figures passing by—Turkish ladies in yellow silk,

whose gauzy and transparent yashmaks reveal rather than conceal their pale faces and brilliant eyes; Turks in military costume and scarlet fez; merchants in Frank dress; young officers in brilliant uniform; soldiers with great brass gorgets on their breasts; White-wimpled nuns, passing in pairs; ladies in European dress; Turks in fur-lined cloaks with huge green turbans, indicating that they have made the long pilgrimage to Mecca.

On a steamboat on the Bosphorus I made the acquaintance of a very intelligent Turkish gentleman, a physician, who gave a most interesting account of the attempt to establish constitutional government in Constantinople. A Parliament was convened at the very time that the treaty of Constantinople was signed. It consisted of two houses—an appointed Senate and an elected Lower House. When the cannon was fired at the opening of this Parliament the Turkish Commissioner, who was negotiating the treaty with the great powers, said: "There, gentlemen, is the beginning of a Constitutional Government in Turkey." But the Parliament soon began to ask inconvenient questions, and to use the expressive language of my Turkish friend, who felt the force of good strong English slang, "they were incontinently fired out and never allowed in again."

The palaces of the Bosphorus are of white plaster covered with stucco flowers, with latticed windows, and are surrounded by gardens, whose roses filled the air with their fragrance. The Sultan's palace is overlaid with ornaments in most debased rococo style. Around the harem garden was a jealous wall forty feet high.

Professor Grosvenor gives the best account we have anywhere