

EXTRACTS

FROM HAMILTON'S RESEARCHES IN ASIA MINOR.

TURKISH MANNERS AND MODES OF BUSINESS.

We reached the *konak* of the Agha of Harmanjik about eleven A.M.; and after going through the usual ceremony of pipes and coffee, and having our *firmahu* read out from beginning to end by the Cadi in the Agha's reception-room, we learnt that there were no horses in the village, and were compelled to wait until they should return from the mountains, whither they were gone in search of wood.

During this delay, I remained in the Agha's *salamlık* watching the progress of public business, highly interested with the appearance of bold independence and the diffident manner of all around me, as well as with the perfect silence in which the whole was conducted. But what struck me most was the grace and dignity of the peasants who came in to pay taxes, or procure a *teskeray*, or make some small present to the Agha, who was at the same time their landlord, or, as was the case with some, merely to kiss his hand. This ceremony was performed in a peculiar and impressive manner: the inferior takes the right hand of his master between both his own, bowing low at the same time, after which he slowly strokes his beard with both his hands, whilst the superior merely touches his own with the hand that has been embraced. One man particularly attracted my attention: he was a fine athletic figure, and advanced towards the Agha's secretary with great dignity as he presented his petition, accompanied with a gift rolled up in paper, containing sugar, coffee, pepper, or some such trifle; then retreating backwards until he reached the centre of the room, he quietly assumed a most dignified attitude, with his right foot a little advanced, whilst both his hands rested upon his broad red sash. Although I understood not a word of the speech which he then delivered, I felt that no Young or Kemble, with their most studied arts, ever came near the natural dignity and carriage of this illiterate peasant. In broad contrast with this man's appearance was that of a feeble old man, the picture of misery, in rags and tatters, who was sitting on the floor beside him. When he afterwards arose to make his salutation to the chief, the proud Agha himself half rose from his seat to receive his welcome, and to spare him the trouble and fatigue of stooping: It was a touching instance of respect paid to old age; and the whole scene was well calculated to impress upon a stranger a favourable idea (as far at least as externals went) of the manners and feelings of the Turks. I was also much struck with the ease and publicity with which their business was trans-

acted, and their courteous bearing towards each other: but I must confess that, when I afterwards became better acquainted with their motives, and with their corrupt system of government, I learnt to look with more suspicion upon their outward manners, and to judge less favourably of their actions and intentions.

TURKISH KINDNESS.

We were much struck, on all the roads in Asia Minor, at the great number of fountains which we met with. They are invaluable to the traveller over the parched and dried-up plains, and are often the result of the pure benevolence and genuine native hospitality of the Turkish peasant. In some places, where there is no spring or supply of water to form a running stream, the charitable inhabitant of a neighbouring village places a large vessel of water in a rude hut, built either of stone or boughs, to shade it from the sun: this jar or vessel is filled daily, or as often as necessity requires, and the water is sometimes brought from a distance of many miles.

TURKISH VOCALISTS.

I was kept awake last night by the lugubrious howling and screaming of a party of Turks who had established themselves on a neighbouring rock, where, regardless of the hour or the repose of the inhabitants, they continued their wild singing without break or interruption for several hours. The performance consisted, as well as I could distinguish it, of a monotonous chant, kept up for a considerable time by one person in a very low note, while the others occasionally joined in the chorus. The solo part was apparently made up of verses sung with a kind of air, but of which the three or four concluding notes always seemed wanting; which produced an incomplete and unsatisfactory effect. During this part of the performance, the chorus chimed in with a sort of half-minute gun, consisting of a single note, begun very loud, and gradually dying away, sustained for some time without brake or shake. The same note was always renewed, and apparently at very regular intervals. The whole produced a most unpleasant effect, not unlike the baying of dogs to the moon.

USE OF CHAIRS IN ASIA MINOR.

This was bazaar or market day; and as we rode through the town on our way to Niksar, we saw exposed for sale many decently manufactured four-legged chairs. I had never seen them used in the houses, and it was long before I ascertained the purpose to which they were applied by the peasants. Corn is threshed in Asia Minor, as in some other parts of the East, by dragging a heavy board stuck full of sharp flints over the