

and domes, majestic and unique, unrivalled still even in its irredeemable decay, standing out high against the sky, with the blue waters of the sea of Marmora circling the horizon.

About fifteen years since there had been among his correspondents a few of the idle fair in Turkish harems; some had been vexed with him, while others had remorsefully delighted in him, for having told, in one of the books of his earliest youth, the story of his adventures with one of their humbler sisters. They clandestinely sent him confidential pages in French, incorrect, but often quite adorable; and then, after the exchange of a few letters, they lapsed into silence and inscrutable mystery, dismayed at the thought of what they had dared, as though it were a deadly sin.

At last he tore the envelope stamped in that dear *beyond*—and the contents made him at first shrug his shoulders: No, really, this lady was certainly playing with him. Her language was too modern, her French too perfect and easy. It was all very well to quote the Koran, to sign herself Zaideh Hanum, to beg for an answer by return of post, *Poste-restante*, with as many precautions as a Red Indian on the warpath; she could only be a traveller visiting Constantinople, or the wife of some attaché—who could tell? or, perhaps, some Levantine educated in Paris.

And yet the letter had a charm which was irresistible, for André, almost in spite of himself, answered it at once. Indeed, he could not but show his thorough knowledge of the modern world