NARRATIVE

OF

A TOUR THROUGH

ARMENIA, KURDISTAN, PERSIA,

AND

MESOPOTAMIA.

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONDITION OF MOHAMMEDANISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN THOSE COUNTRIES.

BY THE REV. HORATIO SOUTHGATE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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NARRATIVE OF A TOUR THROUGH ARMENIA, KURDISTAN, PERSIA AND MESOPOTAMIA

by **Rev. Horatio Southgate**

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Chapters X-XV of travel notes (pp.195-275) contains important information regarding the Armenian population of Western Armenia (particularly in the Lake Van basin).

CHAPTER X

JOURNEY TO MOUSH. DESCRIPTION OF MOUSH. MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS-YOUNG KURD-THE EUPHRATES-FISH-PLAIN OF MOUSH-BRIDGES-MOUSH-POSITION-INTERIOR-POPULATION-MEDRESSEH-CURIOSITY EXCITED-ARMENIANS-MIRACULOUS BOOK-MONASTERY-ARMENIAN CATHOLICS-KURDS-APPEARANCE-MANNERS-DRESS-TRADE-PRODUOTIONS-THE PASHA-VISIT OF THE RUSSIANS.

We left Arous on Monday morning and continued to advance Southerly over the uneven surface of the plain, with the range of the Nimrod mountains on our left and those of the Thousand Lakes visible over our right shoulders. At two and a half hours from the village we crossed the KizzilTchai, or Red River, a small stream running to the Euphrates. On its bank we met with a party of Kurds, gaily dressed, who were on their way to attend a marriage-festival at Kheunneus. An hour farther on our course we stopped for our morning repast in a green dell, where we found water.

We had hardly seated ourselves before we heard some one hailing us from above, and a horseman immediately descended, followed by a single attendant. The former was a young Kurd in the full dress of his people. He wore a red tunic, reaching to his waist, and white shalvars, the great nether garment of the East. His sugarloaf cap was bound with a turban of the gayest colours, and in its folds the long tresses of his auburn hair were twisted. He wore in his girdle a brace of pistols and a dagger, and, hanging from it about his person, were a ramrod, a small powder-horn for priming, a cartridgecase, and numerous little trinkets for the care and repair of his arms. In his right hand was a spear, with a wooden shaft about ten feet long. One end was pointed with iron, that it might be stuck in the ground, and the other was ornamented with a large black ball of light feathers, from the middle of which projected the head of the spear about five inches in length and of a rhombic form. At his back hung a small round shield or targe, intended to be used in single combat with the sword. It was studded with small

pieces of brass resembling coin, and was decorated with silken tassels of various colours hanging from the circumference, and a larger one suspended from the centre. Thrusting his spear into the ground, he dismounted, and sitting down by us without ceremony, drew out his bread and cheese, and offered to join meals with us. We accepted the proposal and were at once good friends with him. We soon learned from him that, though his beard was not yet grown, he was the Bey of a village on the plain of Moush, which we were to pass. We therefore agreed to unite our forces for the way. Before we started two Turks arrived and joined themselves to our party.

As we advanced, the country became more mountainous, the ranges generally running East and West. We passed within sight of several villages perched among the hills. As we rode along, our young Kurd amused himself with brandishing his spear and rushing down upon some one of the party, as if to run him through, then looking round and laughing at his own adroitness, he would point on the steel how deep he could make it penetrate.

The path became more rocky and difficult until we reached the brow of a hill. Here a beautiful plain, covered with trees, suddenly opened upon us far below. Through the midst of it was winding the broad stream of the Euphrates, or as it is known in these regions, the *MouradTchai*. The river comes down rapidly from a valley to the N. E. and, making a detour in the plain, receives a stream called the Tchabour, from the West, and flows off through an opening in the hills, at first imperceptible, in a direction West of South. Its breadth before the junction is more than a hundred feet, and that of the Tchabour about fifty. We descended to the plain and forded the latter near its mouth, where it was only four feet in depth. We judged that at this point we had accomplished, from Arous, a distance of about twenty miles.

We then kept along the western bank of the Euphrates, through a pleasant valley, but a little broader than the bed of the river. The banks of the stream are low, resembling in some places the borders of a canal. Its surface was sometimes ruffled by the rapidity of its course, and sometimes calm and apparently as motionless as a lake. We travelled through the valley nearly two hours, when we came out upon the plain of Moush, which was before concealed from view by a solitary conical hill standing in the mouth of the valley. This hill has the ruins of a fortress on its summit. The villagers call it *Sultan Mahmoud Kalesi*, the fortress of Sultan Mahmoud. Around this mount the river makes a broad bend to the East, and winding through the plain, turns to the south and west, crosses the plain where it receives the waters of the Kara Sou, passes through an opening in the range of mountains which form the southern border of the plain, and goes off to the South-West. At one of the windings where the river enters the plain, we came to an Armenian village and there spent the night. On the opposite side was visible another larger village, called Ated. The course of the stream through the plain of Moush and the different localities are presented in the sketch.

As the sun went down our muleteer spread his cloak and performed his prayers twice in succession, to make up for the loss of his afternoon devotions-a mode of reparation sanctioned and recommended by the Koran. The river here is fordable in some places and abounds in fish, one species of which I judged by the description to be the sturgeon. The villagers take very few of them, not knowing, as they said, the art of doing it. They were equally ignorant of their names. The people of Arous were more expert, and had devised a mode of fishing which was new to me. They knead into dough the powder of the black kernels of a poisonous plant•, and then throw bits of it into the water. The fish devour it and soon rise to the surface dead. We found them none the less savoury for this singular mode of catching them.

The next morning we pursued our course over a low rising ground running into the plain, the river lying on our left and the plain expanding as we advanced. The soil along the banks was of a rich black mould and under partial cultivation. We stopped at a village, and with many expostulations and promises obtained a breakfast. After two hours' march we came to the southern brow of the ground over which we had been travelling. The entire plain here opened upon us, extending far to the East and West. What we had first come upon was only a branch of it. Just below us appeared an ancient bridge over which our path lay. This noble structure was 500 feet in length, and had formerly been sustained by fourteen arches. Six only were still entire, the bases of the others being all that remained of them. Of those which were perfect some were in the curved or Roman style and the others in the pointed or Saracenic. The entire structure had been of hewn stone, with pointed buttresses of the same on the upper side, to break the force of the water. The intervals where the arches had fallen were supplied with timber rudely covered with mud and stones, presenting modern barbarism in singular contrast with ancient magnificence.

After crossing the bridge, our way lay directly over the plain towards the town of Moush. In less than two hours we passed the Kara Sou, or Black Water. Here are the ruins of a second bridge, of a structure similar to the former. Eight arches remain; the rest was entirely gone. Our manner of crossing the river, was an apt illustration of the pertinacity with which the Turks make use of the remnants of antiquity without attempting to supply their decay. We passed over the fragment of the bridge which remained standing, and then, descending, with great hazard to our necks, by the broken extremity, forded the rest of the river, here about forty feet wide. Geographers generally place this river beyond Moush, but we found that we had yet an hour to travel before we reached the town. We passed through the village of the young Kurdish Bey, who had left us the night before, promising to be on the look-out for us, and to give us a breakfast this morning. Seeing no appearance of a welcome as we rode by his door, and having provided against the consequences of forgetfulness on his part, by securing our breakfast beforehand, we went on quite independent of his hospitality. As we

•Probably the *NuxVemica*, which Chardin mentions used for the same purpose in Persia. Voyages, tome troisième, p. 44.

approached the city, cultivation increased, and, in entering the town, we passed through numerous vegetable gardens and vineyards.

The appearance of Moush, when approached from the north, is peculiarly romantic. It stands upon the sides of an eminence, within a deep recess of the mountains, almost entirely encircled and hid from sight by their projecting arms and a slight elevation in front of the opening. The heights above were tall and bare, excepting where patches of snow were still lying undissolved by the summer's sun. The red sides of the bills within and without the bay of the mountains, were covered with vines, and the eminence on which the town itself stands is crowned with a ruined fortress.

But the pleasant emotions excited by the distant view vanish on entering the place. The streets are filthy, irregular, and uneven, with rivulets of dirty water running through them. There are no covered bazars, and the few stalls which bear the name are ill-furnished and mean, without regularity or display. A brawling stream runs down from the mountains, through a deep gorge on the East side of the town, and goes to the Kara Sou. The houses are of the same description with those of Erzroum, The number of poor, insane, and diseased persons is astonishing. Boys and girls are seen running with a single rag, and often entirely naked, through the streets. The Christians appeared to be the most thriving part of the population, but all complained of poverty.

The population of the place is nearly 5000. There are 600 Mussulman families, 250 Armenian, and 50 Armenian Catholic. The Mussulmans do not call themselves Osmanlees, but Turks, and their language approaches nearer to that of Tebriz than of Constantinople. They have five mosques, ten medressehs, and three schools. One of the mosques was formerly a Christian Church, and bears over the door the date of its conversion to Islamism, 979 of the Hijreh. The principal mosque, though small, has a good external appearance, and is the finest building in the town. I was permitted to enter without scruple. Several worshippers were engaged at their devotions, though it was not the hour for prayers.

An old Mussulman, in answer to my inquiries, assured me that books in Kurdish were to be found in the medressehs, and I visited the principal one in quest of them. I did not then know that the Kurdish was an unwritten language, and hoped to add something to my stock of information by the search. None, of course, were to be found. The *muderiss*, or professor, informed me that all their text-books were in Arabic, from which be translated into Turkish and Kurdish, a part of the students being Kurds. There is no professional scribe nor seller of books in the town, and the chief medresseh has only two professors. Many of the Turks wear the Kurdish dress. I lodged, during my stay, in the house of one of the most respectable among them, and my room was constantly thronged with Mussulman visitors.

Our coming excited a great stir in the town. Our dresses being after the fashion of the capital, every one knew us to be from Stamboul. Crowds collected as we passed through the streets and gazed after us until we were out of sight. Various conjectures

were started to account for our visit. Some imagined that we were officers of the Sultan in search of recruits; others thought that our visit had some political design; and others that it was likely to affect the trade of the place. Either character was an unpropitious one, and I hastened to dispel the suspicions by going freely into the bazars, sitting with the sellers in their stalls, and conversing with any whom I met.

The Armenians have five churches and fourteen priests. One of the churches called the Church of the KeukVedavend, or Church of the Forty Steps, is said to be thirteen hundred years old. It stands on an elevated site overlooking the valley of the small strain which runs by the town. The approach to it is by a flight of forty steps, from which it receives its name. We found there four priests, and a school of twenty-five boys, who were reading their lessons upon the flat gravestones in front of the church. We asked for relics, whereupon one of the priests conducted us to a small upper room, and taking a bundle from a niche in the wall, began to open. One by one, twenty-five silk handkerchiefs were unfolded, when a large volume appeared. This the priest took and reverently kissing, opened. It was the New Testament, beautifully written on parchment in Armenian characters. We inquired its origin and were told it was a mystery. When the Church was built, the book had been found there and had been carefully preserved from that time to the present. It had, they said, the power of working miracles, and many instances were known of the sick having been restored to health by laying it upon them. My Mussulman guide was appealed to for the truth of the assertion, and, to my surprise, acknowledged that Mussulmans even, had tested its healing efficacy. As the priest was about to return the book to its place, an old man bowed with infirmities pressed eagerly forward, and seizing it in his hands, kissed it and rubbed his aged head upon it. May the day speedily arrive when all the poor and despised Christians of the East shall have this blessed book in their possesion, and draw from it those spiritual truths which heal and purify the soul.

Six hours south-west from Moush, among the mountains, is the monastery of Tchangeuree, a famous place of pilgrimage to the Armenians. It is the same with that which St. Martin speaks of as existing in this region, under the name of *The Monastery of S. Garabied, Or St. John the Baptist*. It is at present the seat of a Bishop, and the brotherhood number one priest and eight monks.

The Armenian Catholics, or Papal Armenians, throughout this region, are called Franks, from their connection, doubtless, with a foreign Church. They have in Moush a priest, but the Church in which they formerly worshipped has been destroyed through the influence of the Armenians. Three of the villages on the plain of Moush are also peopled by them, in one of which they have three priests, in another two, and in another one.

No Kurds are resident in the town, but great numbers of them are found in the streets. They come chiefly from the region of Diarbekir as summer approaches, and spend the warm season in the mountains around Moush, gaining a poor subsistence from their flocks, and a scanty para by bringing yoghourt and wood to the town for sale.

Their women are poorly clad, and their small children, for the most part, are quite naked. The men appear in the streets armed with a sword and the small round shield which they constantly wear about them, and followed by their women and girls bearing burdens. Nothing can present a more wretched picture than these females. They are poorly dressed and filthy.

They go bending beneath their loads, and their faces, always unveiled, wear the deepest impress of misery. The countenances of the men were the most ferocious and brutal that I have ever seen. They were mostly of a middle stature, with stout and broad frames. Their faces were thin and dark, the nose hooked, and the eye black and merciless. I have never beheld so fiend-like an expression of countenance as they assumed when we appeared among them. They seemed to regard us as having come with some evil intent, instead of a friendly and benevolent purpose.

Several of a more gentle stock came to see me. I was much struck with the strong resemblance of features which prevailed among them-the long, regularly formed, and rather unexpressive face, the dull eye, the yellow, gipsy complexion. Their features and their speech were soft and mild, and nothing indicative of energy appeared. One, a son of a Pasha, came twice, sat long, smoked, and said nothing. Another, a merchant from Diarbekir, complained of the movements of the Sultan against his people and could not be persuaded that he designed their good.

The common dress of the Kurds of better rank whom I saw at Moush, consisted of the red tunic, the large white shalvars and the tall cap of felt, bound with party-coloured shawls.

The trade of Moush is with Bitlis, Erzroum, and Diarbekir; the latter place being distant four days by a road over the mountains, which, I was told by several who had travelled it, could be passed without much hazard, and ten days by the circuitous but safer route through Palou and Kharpout. Five hundred caravan horses are owned in the town, but are employed chiefly in trade originating elsewhere. The place has no manufactures of importance. Its staple is tobacco, which has some celebrity in the immediate region, but is, in truth, of inferior quality. Fruits are quite abundant, though not of a superior kind. Such are pears, apples, peaches, and cherries of different sorts. Grapes are the principal fruit, and some wine is made by the Christians. There is but one bath in the town, which is dark, filthy, and so thronged with vermin that we found ourselves in a much worse condition when we issued from it than when we entered. There is only a single khan, which is also small and mean. Winter continues five months and the summer is hot. During the two days which I spent there, the heat was so intense at mid-day that I could not venture abroad. Fuel for the winter is brought from the mountains, and the bodies of small trees stripped of their bark, which are used for rafters, are a considerable article of traffic between the town and the villages, each one selling at the time of my visit at the value of a dollar. I found current in the city the coin stamped by the Pasha of Bagdad, of which the smallest piece was half the value of a para, or about half a mill.

The *Sanjak*, or province, of Moush includes 600 villages, of which 75 or 80 belong to the same district with the town. The whole number of Kurdish families in the province is said to be 5000. The province itself is ruled by a Pasha of the second rank, who holds his place under the Pasha of Erzroum. The office, however, has been hereditary in the same family, and that a Kurdish one, for two centuries. The present incumbent, Emin Pasha, was spending the warm season in the mountains, and I therefore, lost the opportunity of seeing him. He has, for his summer and winter residences, two palaces situated without the town, both guarded by well-made walls with small bastions.

During the season of the Russian invasion, a detachment of the army came hither and sat down before the town. A party of the officers entered and surveyed the city without resistance. The inhabitants, however, suffered no injury or ill-treatment. Every thing that was needed was amply paid for, and the people seemed to have retained a grateful recollection of their invaders.

CHAPTER XI.

JOURNEY FROM MOUSH TO BITLIS.
DEPARTURE—PLAIN OF MOUSH—MARNIK—ARMENIAN PEASANTRY—VILLAGES—HOUSES—PEOPLE—CHURCHES—ROBBERS—RIDE TO BITLIS—KHANS —APPROACH TO THE TOWN.

We left Moush on the morning of the 29th of June, and turning from the southerly direction which we had hitherto pursued, moved eastward along the base of the lofty range which bounds the plain on this side. For the first three miles the declivities on our right were covered with rich vineyards, while the soil on the heights above them appeared barren and dry. Three hours distant from the city their character changed, and the summits and sides appeared clothed with the verdure of unbroken forests.

Our way lay the whole day over the plain, which was itself the greatest wonder of the scene. Although we started far from its western extremity we did not reach its eastern border till the next day. Its length cannot be less than forty miles, and the whole distance is an almost perfect level. It supports not much less than a hundred villages, most of which are Armenian and within a day's ride from Moush. In this respect the town is one of the most advantageous positions for a missionary station that can any where be found, especially when we consider that there are besides, numerous villages scattered in other directions among the mountains. Those of the plain, harbour during the winter, a large number of Kurds, who come down and live upon the Armenians. Some of them are large, thriving and unusually clean. One, called Hass Keui, through which we passed at a distance of about nine miles from Moush, has three churches, and was one of the most neat and flourishing villages I remember to have seen in Turkey.

Although the population of the plain is large, it appeared capable of sustaining a much larger one. Extensive tracts lay uncultivated. The soil appeared fertile, and the less productive portions might furnish pasturage to even more numerous herds than we saw scattered in every direction over its surface. Four hours from Moush we forded the Kara Sou, here, as before, a muddy stream about four feet deep. It runs through no valley but has worn its devious way through the easy soil of the plain, and, from the unstable character of its banks, is constantly changing its channel.

We alighted at 3 p.m. at Marnik, an inconsiderable Armenian village. The *Kiahya*, or village-chief, was abroad tending his flocks, and his *Kizir*, or deputy, showed little disposition to help us to a lodging-place. We undertook therefore to search for ourselves, and walking among the houses, soon lighted upon a vacant one belonging to the Kiahya himself. We immediately took possession, and before the owner arrived had it swept and furnished, a process which consumed but little time, as it consisted of only one apartment, and the furniture with which we provided it was no more than a few handfuls of fresh grass with our cloaks thrown over it. The Kiahya could not turn us out of our lodgings, but seemed determined that we should not be comfortable in them. In vain we assured him that it was our custom to pay for all we had. These poor, oppressed villagers are never so incredulous as when one talks of being kind to them. No one would do any thing for us until the compensation was actually in his hands. There was no water in the village and we were compelled to hire a man to bring some from the river. Fire to prepare our coffee and a dish of yoghourt with bread for our supper, were obtained only after as much negotiation and delay as if the demand were going to exhaust all the resources of the village. When, however, our coffee was ready, the Kiahya and half the population evinced no reluctance to partake of it.

This is the last Armenian village before reaching Bitlis, all the rest being Kurdish. It may not be amiss, therefore, to say something here of the general character of the Armenian peasantry along this route. Their villages may be described in nearly the same words which Xenophon used respecting them 2200 years ago. "Their houses were under ground. In them were goats, sheep, cows and fowls with their young;" and, if it had not been summer, I might have added as he does, "All the cattle were maintained within doors with fodder." The houses, however, are not properly subterranean, in the common sense of the term. They are generally made by excavating the earth and raising a wall of loose stones to the required height. - Trunks of trees are then laid across for rafters and covered with branches. Then the earth is piled on until the whole is covered and the fabric attains a semi-globular shape. Sometimes the whole is built upon the surface, but, in both cases, the external appearance is that of a bare mound of earth. As the traveller approaches one of these villages, he discerns nothing at first but an apparent unevenness in the ground. Soon the rounded tops become distinguished. These in summer are covered with cakes of manure formed by the hand and drying for the winter fire, a feature which gives the whole at a distance the appearance of a magnificent collection of dung-heaps.

The houses have generally two apartments, one for the family and another more interior for the cattle. These are almost entirely without furniture and are not remarkable for cleanliness. Sometimes there is a rude fire-place, or a hole in the ground which answers the same purpose, the smoke being of too little importance to have special provision made for its egress, excepting a small aperture through the centre of the roof, where, at the same time, a few rays of light seize the opportunity to struggle in. On the plain of Moush many of the houses have a pole on the top, which supports the nest of a stork.

The villagers are mostly herdsmen. They have the buffalo, but of a species unknown in America, the cow, horse, ass and goat. They subject the cow to burdens. A man's property is estimated by his herds. The produce, yoghourt, cheese and milk, furnish the chief articles of food. The villagers are poorly clad, timid and servile in demeanour, and their faces are unintelligent and spiritless. They do not appear the same race with the same people in Constantinople, or even in the cities of the interior. In some of the villages which suffer most from the Kurds they wear the aspect of deep misery, and one often wonders at the degradation which can endure such a position without an effort to change it. They are extremely ignorant and unclean in their persons and their houses. The women are especially ugly and filthy, and their domestic condition is as evil as can well be imagined. They are servilely treated, brutish, idealess, of peevish, complaining tempers and doing no service without a murmur. They have in many of the villages the care of the herds besides their domestic labours. Both men and women are generally unwilling to give lodging or food, or do it in so slow and sullen a manner as to render their hospitality hardly endurable. There are some exceptions to this picture, especially in the large villages. In some I have been cheered by the sight of domestic industry, cleanliness and thrift; in some I have been cordially received. But such exceptions are rare.

In all the villages the church is the most prominent building, and the only one erected above ground in a regular manner. Generally they are small and simple edifices constructed of square stone with a sloping roof. They are often venerably old and mantled with wild weeds growing from the chinks. They stand amidst moss-clad grave-stones, the last and only mammals of those who once worshipped within their walls.

As we were partaking of our hard-earned meal at Marnik, the Kiahya came in, and standing silently before us, drew a sigh so long and deep as to attract our attention and induce us to ask the cause. He looked timidly around him and then informed us that one of the villagers, having gone into the mountains in the morning, had been found by the Kurds and basely murdered. This information tended in no degree to allay the apprehension which the uncertain character of the country through which we were travelling had excited. An incident also had happened during the day which rendered us more than usually sensitive to evil reports. Several hours from Moush and in a desolate place, we were stopped by a party of these fierce mountaineers. When they first

discovered us they were scouring the plain in another direction, but, as soon as they caught sight of our party, they changed their course and made directly for us. The movement threw our muleteer into great terror. He suddenly ordered us to draw up into a body and to move forward slowly, while he hastened to meet the advancing horsemen. A warm parley ensued. The party eyed us keenly as we approached. My spirits sank very perceptibly when I encountered the same ferocious looks that I had seen in Moush. The conversation between the muleteer and the horsemen became more earnest, but, being in Kurdish, we could understand nothing, excepting, by their looks and gestures, that it related to us. The poor muleteer, who had served us most faithfully from the first, looked as if he were upon the rack. He succeeded, however, by what arguments I know not, in effecting his object, for, after some delay, we were suffered to proceed in safety. The Kiahya's story revived the recollection of the adventure, and, as if this were not enough, I began to feel some self-reproach for having undertaken the journey, John too became gloomy, called himself a fool for having exposed his life for the paltry consideration of monthly wages, and wished himself in Constantinople. All this induced a fit of loneliness, and for the first time since my journey began, I lay down upon my grass-couch with a heavy heart.

How healing is sleep! How repulsive of care are the bright beams of the morning! John rose a new man and I found in the protection of the night something still to be grateful for. My cheerfulness was a little dampened by another contest with the Kiahya for yoghourt and eggs, and by the unpleasant duty of reprimanding John for repaying the incivility of one of the villagers with a blow. We started, however, in tolerably good humour. In a quarter of an hour we again forded the Kara Sou and, six miles farther on, came to its source, a little pond of clear and excellent water issuing from a circular hole in the centre, which our muleteer affirmed to be unfathomable. The plain terminates at this extremity in a low rising ground, where we passed a large Kurdish village called Noshem, pleasantly situated in the midst of trees. Here resides the Ayan of all the Kurdish villages in the vicinity, of which we had already passed several. No habitations appeared beyond. Our way was over uneven ground, winding gradually round to the South and descending at length into a deep valley, on the opposite side of which the mountains rose in tall and bald peaks, preserving still the general direction of East and "West. We kept along the edge of this valley, until we met a caravan drawn up in a convenient spot, where we dismounted and were soon seated with the drivers at a joint-stock dinner, our coffee being accepted in return for bread and cheese.

In the course of the day we passed four old and deserted khans of an ancient and solid architecture. The principal one was built of hewn stone with round towers or abutments at the angles and sides. It was in the Saracenic style and had doubtless been erected many ages back, for Time had now decorated its walls with green tresses waving from every gaping chink. A stone fountain, which still furnished refreshing water, stood before it, and a merry cascade played near by. We penetrated deeper and deeper among the mountains as we advanced, and in one place passed through a narrow

passage cut twenty feet deep in the rock. Nothing was visible but the barren and desolate peaks which rose in gloomy majesty around us, when the sight of verdure suddenly burst upon us. As we descended yet deeper into the ravine, trees and gardens appeared, and we entered, before we were aware of it, the beautiful city of Bitlis.

CHAPTER XII
BITLIS

ARRIVAL—INTERVIEW WITH THE GOVERNOR—MR HOST—THE BANKER—SITUATION OF THE TOWN—BUILDINGS AND STREETS—TRADE—FRUITS—EVENING SCENE—VISIT TO THE ARMENIAN BISHOP—MOSQUE—ADVENTURE—MEDRESSEH—POPULATION—MANNERS—ARMENIANS—KURDS—CHARACTER OF THE MOUNTAIN KURDS—DEVIL-WORSHIPPER - GOVERNMENT-ANTIQUITIES– REGRETS-ARMENIAN HOSPITALITY.

The kindness of the British Consul at Erzroum had provided me with a letter to a wealthy Armenian of Bitlis, and, on entering the town, I made my way directly to one of the principal khans, with the hope of finding h im there. The crowd which pressed upon us as we dismounted, was so great, that we could not stir to the right hand nor to the left. I inquired for the merchant, and he soon appeared, but when he heard that the letter which I had brought was an introduction to his hospitality, he professed to know nothing of the friend from whom I came recommended. Finding the crowd increase and their curiosity becoming rather troublesome, I returned the letter to my pocket and asked to be conducted to the Bey of the city, who, I accidentally heard, was in one of the rooms of the khan. In a few minutes I was in his presence. He sat in one corner of the room, gaily dressed in the Kurdish costume. His whole apparel was white, and his peaked cap was bound with shawls of the liveliest colours. He was young, with a fine open face and a good form. He saluted me gracefully as I entered, and pointed to a seat near him. Pipes and coffee were brought, and he began by asking some common-place questions as to my country, name, &c. He was more curious, however, to know my real design in travelling and pressed the question with considerable importunity. I told him, in plain terms, that my object was to see different people and countries, and to observe manners, characters, and religions. He could not understand it — an Oriental never can understand the motive of one who travels either for information or pleasure. I have sometimes heard Turks speak of the locomotive propensity of the English as a species of insanity. The Bey was not satisfied, and asked what had brought me into so strange a place as Kurdistan. I replied that its very strangeness was my motive, that I wished to see what nobody else had seen. He was not contented and grew suspicious. Finding that nothing else would avail, I intimated that I was travelling with proper credentials, and directed John to exhibit the Firman of the Sultan. It was received by his secretary, who opened it and offered it to the Bey, pronouncing at the same time the single word,

"*Mahmoud*.'' The Bey, instead of receiving it with the customary demonstrations of respect, waved his hand contemptuously in token of refusal. I then drew forth the bouyouroultou of the Pasha of Erzroum, and handed it to the scribe. When the Bey heard what it was, he ordered it to be read, and, at the close, drawing himself up, made some remark in Kurdish to the crowd who had gathered about the entrance. The meaning, of course, I could not understand, but the tone and expression of face which accompanied it, showed that it was of a bold character. The bouyouroultou, however, had its desired effect. The Bey added in Turkish that I must be provided for, and looking round upon the crowd who thronged the entrance, added, “We must assign him to some one who is able to show him proper attention,” and then, as his eye fell on the Armenian to whom I had brought the letter, "M_____ , will you receive him as a guest?" My Armenian, laying his hand upon his heart, professed himself all zeal to comply with the wishes of the Bey, and, turning to me with an equivocal smile of welcome, requested me to follow him. I did so, with a secret feeling of vexation at being thus unceremoniously thrust upon his reluctant hospitality, but I endeavoured to console myself with the thought that I was an instrument of justice to punish him for his parsimony. When we had arrived at his house, he conducted me to a balcony looking out upon a garden and shaded with magnificent fruit-trees. Here carpets and cushions were spread for us, and we were invited to repose. The motive for forgetfulness being now removed, my host’s memory suddenly revived, and I delivered him the letter which I had brought for him. Though in Armenian, he could not read it himself, but, with the aid of his son, contrived to make out a lame interpretation, which gratified him so much that he afterwards showed the letter to all his friends.

In the evening, another Armenian, the banker of the Bey, came in to make our acquaintance. He welcomed us to Bitlis with the warmest cordiality, lavished upon us compliments in overwhelming profusion, made the most unbounded offer of his services, and concluded by insisting upon our being his guests on the morrow. I hardly knew to what to attribute this profuse kindness, but I was very grateful to meet with so warm a friend, and began to feel quite at home. The next morning he called again, but, alas, how changed! There was no welcome, no compliment, and the invitation for the day seemed entirely forgotten. The melancholy truth at last came out, that our new friend had come to us the evening before from the midst of his nightly potations, and it was under their influence that he had made all the fair speeches which the soberness of the morning had dissipated.

Bitlis cannot fail to interest and surprise a stranger at first sight. Its picturesque situation among the mountains, and the singular internal appearance which the peculiar construction of its buildings gives it, make it entirely unlike most other Eastern towns. The mountains form three deep valleys, which come down from the north, south-east and west, to a junction where the city stands, extending its arms up into each of them. Three little streams, following the same course, descend, unite, and flow off together in

one river emptying into the Tigris, which is said to be twenty-four hours distant. The streets of the town run in terraces along the steep sides of the valleys, and the passenger in looking up is often surprised to see houses and walls above his head. Most of the houses have gardens attached to them, which give to the city, from some points of view, the appearance of a paradise in the midst of bare and verdureless mountains. The mosques, houses, garden walls, and every other structure about the city, are built of a fine kind of sand-stone, with which the region abounds. It is cut into cubic blocks for building, and imparts to the city an air of remarkable regularity and solidity. In some houses the interior as well as the exterior walls are of this same stone. The streets of the city are ill-paved, though something better might be expected where so cheap and excellent materials for paving abound. The position of the town renders many of the streets steep and difficult. In riding through them I was sometimes compelled to dismount, in order to make an ascent. The bazars are extensive, covered, and well filled. They are built of stone, and the different parts of the interior show some management in the separate disposition of the various kinds of merchandize and trades.

The trade of the city is with Persia through Yan, with Erzroum, Diarbekir, Mossoul and Bagdad. The road to Mossoul is a dangerous one of eighty hours, or fifteen days. Jizireh is distant forty-eight hours, Diarbekir the same, Bagdad 220 and Busra 300. These are the estimates which I received from good authority in the place, but I cannot vouch for correctness in a matter where it is so difficult to procure authentic information. Raw cotton is brought from Persia, and cotton cloths are manufactured in the town. The other principal articles of trade are woollens, tobacco and gall-nuts. There are large dye-houses and as many tanneries in the place. Rakee is distilled only for the consumption of the city, which amounts to sixtyokkas, or about 150 pounds, daily.• Fish are brought in considerable quantity from the lake of Van and salted. Gum Arabic is a large article of trade, 15,000 okkas, intended chiefly for the European markets, being annually carried away. The city has seven khans, two of which are exclusively for merchants, and the trade employs 200 caravan horses owned in the place, besides a large number owned elsewhere. The streams which run through the valleys supply no less than thirty-two grist-mills, and are crossed by as many bridges of stone. I met in Persia with a gentleman who had once passed through Bitlis, as bearer of dispatches from the ambassador at Tehran to the Turkish camp at Diarbekir. He added to my notes on Bitlis, a fact in which, as an Englishman, he was probably more interested than myself. There are, he said, in the town, twenty-five butchers' stalls where beef is sold. If the statement is correct, it is a very remarkable one to be recorded of an Eastern city.

The gardens of the town abound in a great variety of excellent fruit, among which are the apple, pear, mulberry, cherries and grapes of different kinds, the quince, apricot, peach, different species of melons, the fig, pomegranate, filbert, walnut and several

• In the East, liquids as well as solids are sold by weight.

others of which I had never before heard even the names. The market was well supplied with early fruits and vegetables, among the latter of which the cucumber was very abundant. The inhabitants boast the salubrity of the climate and the remarkable longevity of the people. I was disposed to believe them, for, during my own stay, the days were not immoderately warm, and the nights, which I spent in the open air, were remarkably calm, serene and pure. The robust and healthful appearance of the men, and the comeliness and fresh hue of the children also attested the genial character of the climate.

I spent the day in visiting places and persons, and the night in quiet repose upon the balcony. As I was sitting there one evening, enjoying the gentle calm and stillness of the hour, I heard distant music and a song, which gradually approached the house, and at length ceased before the gate. Soon after, our old friend the banker appeared upon the balcony, followed by two or three companions and a train of musicians and singers. He seated himself familiarly by my side and ordered the music and song to commence, while our host hastened away to prepare an entertainment for his guests. Our banker was even more profuse in his compliments and offers of service than on the evening of our arrival. He particularly pressed upon me the use of his horses in my perambulations about the town. Thinking that a compliance would be the most effectual lesson for him, as well as conduce greatly to my own comfort, I accepted the offer on the spot, promising to send for them the next morning. When morning came, the banker had as before quite forgot the events of the evening, and appeared mortified upon being reminded of his promise. He permitted the horses to be taken away by the servant whom I sent for them, but was afterwards more cautious in his words.

I availed myself of this new facility to visit some of the more remote parts of the town, and, first of all, went to pay my respects to the Armenian bishop. The church where he resided was situated far up one of the valleys. There was nothing of peculiar interest about it, excepting that it had a bell, a privilege which I had supposed was granted only to the church of the Catholicos at Etchmiadzin. The Bishop himself did not know how to account for the distinction, excepting from the remoteness of the place and its position within the borders of Kurdistan. The circumstance, though a slight one, indicated an extraordinary degree of religious freedom. Mussulman bigotry has long since deprived the churches of the East of the poor privilege of using bells, and to the same cause is, doubtless, to be attributed the generally plain and unpretending exterior of the churches themselves. It was delightful to witness a portion of the oppressed and scattered Armenians enjoying here, within the ancient borders and among the noble mountains of their fatherland, something of the immunities of freeborn Christians.

We found the Bishop seated upon a carpet under the trees of a garden adjoining the church. He would have arisen, with the aid of his servants, to receive us as we approached, if we had not hurried forward to prevent him. “I am old" said the venerable man, slowly passing his trembling hand over his silvery beard. The Armenians say that he is a hundred and twenty years of age. He spoke, in feeble tones, of some of the

events of his long life, while we sat by him on the carpet. He had formerly exercised the Episcopal office in Constantinople, but for the last twenty years had been resident in Bitlis. He gave me several items of information respecting his people, which will be found scattered about in other places, as occasions may call them out. While we were conversing, two or three of his presbyters came in, and, after making their obeisance, remained standing in reverent silence before him. This deep respect appeared to be both appropriate and impressive. I have often witnessed it elsewhere in Turkey. Though a peculiarity perhaps, no one, I think, will be disposed to account it one of the corruptions of the Eastern Churches.

After bidding adieu to the Bishop, I visited the principal mosque, situated near the centre of the city. The interior was dark and gloomy, and offered nothing of interest I had entered without any attempt at disguise, and as the servants who accompanied me were Christians, I supposed that I should myself be recognized as such. Just as I was retiring, however, the Imam came in, and stepping up to John, who stood near the door, demanded, in a furious tone, whether I were a Mussulman. John adroitly replied, by asking in return, whether they admitted any besides Mussulmans to the mosque. "No," was the prompt reply. "Why do you ask then," retorted John, "whether he is a Mussulman ? If he is one, your question is impertinent. If he is not one why have you admitted him?" The dexterity of the reply raised a laugh from the crowd at the door at the expense of the Imam, who, after pausing for a moment to comprehend the logic of it, apologized, by saying that a Giaour had entered the mosque two or three years before, and he was unwilling that such an event should happen again. While this altercation was going on, I was engaged within, and was not aware of what had transpired, until John afterwards explained it to me.

While I was surveying the mosque, an invitation was sent to me by one of the teachers to visit the medresseh, situated immediately in the rear. It was small, consisting, as usual, of a low range of buildings around a square court. The institution had five teachers. One was engaged in giving a lesson in penmanship to a class of young men. Another was lecturing, in a recess opening on the court, to a single pupil who sat almost in contact with him. The master was absorbed in his subject, and took no notice of us, while the pupil was evidently undergoing a severe conflict between respect for his teacher and curiosity concerning the strangers present. His eye would now fix with reverent attention upon the lecturer, and now wander stealthily away to observe what was passing in the court. There are thirty-two mosques and eight medressehs in Bitlis, of which those now described are the principal.

The population of the city is estimated at 2000 Mussulman and 1000 Armenian families. As the same estimate was given me by all of whom I inquired, I have no doubt that it is nearly correct. In general, however, my reports of population, although collected with great care, must be regarded only as approximations to the truth. The want of a regular census in the East renders perfect accuracy impossible. There are, also, in Bitlis fifty families of Jacobites, who have a church and two priests. These are

probably all the Christians of the Jacobite Church to be found in the northern regions of Kurdistan. The manners of the people of Bitlis are more free and gay than is common in Turkish towns. As I sat in my balcony I could often hear the sound of music and the voice of merriment breaking upon the stillness of the evening. This gaiety, however, is mingled with no extraordinary refinement of manner; on the contrary, one is often annoyed by an indelicacy extremely offensive. I was astonished, on awaking the first morning after my arrival, to find all the male part of the family assembled on the balcony to see me dress, and my confusion was not a little increased on perceiving that the female portion had stationed themselves, for the same purpose, behind the lattice which separated the balcony from the inner apartments of the house. When I ventured to remark upon these and other such like novelties, the universal apology was, "What else can you expect? This is Kurdistan."

I have nowhere found the Armenians more respected and influential than in Bitlis, and consequently have seldom found them more intelligent and truly respectable. They have eight churches and four priests. Each of the churches is, in truth, a monastic establishment, and the number of monks is very considerable. The churches which I visited were all so dark that I could distinctly see nothing which they contained. Two or three of them were large, with vaulted roofs supported by stone columns, and walls covered with paintings. Connected with one of them was the only Armenian school in the city, containing two hundred pupils.

There are no Kurds permanent residents in the place, although many come from the mountains and find a home there in the winter. They also appear in streets in summer, but I saw less of them than in Moush. As I was sitting with my host one afternoon in a little bower in the garden, formed by an overarching vine, an old Kurd from the mountains entered. He was bent with age and infirmities, but wore the common armour of the mountaineer, and his fierce little eye seemed never at rest. He was the owner of large herds and flocks in the mountains. The account of his possessions given me by my host, almost equalled the inventory of Job after his affliction. He had come to conclude a contract with the Armenian for the partial sale of a mare, of which the latter was to receive a certain proportion of the foals. When the terms were settled, the Kurd took the hand of the Armenian, and solemnly swore by Allah faithfully to perform his part of the contract. This mode of concluding bargains illustrates many passages and allusions of Scripture.

The character of the mountain Kurds, according to all the information which I could gather concerning them, was agreeable with my own impressions. Their life is simple and pastoral. In the towns they profess themselves Mussulmans, but in the mountains they live without religion. Feuds and quarrels are frequent among them, and often end in bloodshed. Mutual confidence is almost unknown, and they always wear their arms for fear of each other. It is from them alone that the danger of travelling in these parts arises. Yet they are not a brave people, nor have they any of the high and manly

qualities I have observed in other Kurds. Their robberies are dastardly affairs. They seldom attack armed travellers, except in very superior numbers. They assault, more commonly, peaceful caravans, or defenceless villages. All the villages from Erzroum to Bitlis, and from Van to Salmas are more or less exposed to them. They are generally looked upon by the inhabitants of the cities with great aversion.

Another strange character whom I met at Bitlis, was a Yezidee, or devil-worshipper, of Mesopotamia. He was a ferrier, and being in the employ of my host, occasionally made me a visit, and sometimes ate with me. I endeavoured to glean something from him respecting his religion, but, although he received my inquiries with good-humour, he could be induced to make no confessions. I observed nothing singular in his habits, besides a practice of holding his little cup of wine with both hands. I did not, at the time, suppose it to be anything more than an awkward habit of his own, but I afterwards found, in Mesopotamia, that the same was a universal practice of the Yezidees. Their great reverence for everything Christian is well known, and this custom may have arisen from a superstitious fear of spilling upon the ground a liquid used in a Christian sacrament.

The Bey of Bitlis is himself a Kurd, and a brother of the Pasha of Moush, within whose province the city falls. The manner in which he received me shows with how free a spirit he holds his authority. He seemed, indeed, more like an independent chieftain, ruling in his own hereditary right, than a governor deriving his power from another. The same spirit prevails among the people. The name of the Sultan seldom reaches their ears. Retired within their own mountains, they think of no other country or ruler but the city they live in and the Bey who governs it. This indeed, to some degree, is Eastern feeling everywhere. The Turk has no name for patriotism. His local attachments seldom reach beyond his own village or town. One of the greatest evils of the late Sultan's reform was the ruthless manner in which these attachments were violated, and peaceful villagers were hurried away to recruit regiments in distant parts of the Empire.

Bitlis offers some interesting proofs of its own antiquity. Fragments of stone with remains of sculpture upon them, are seen in the walls of houses and gardens. One which I saw bore the figures of two lions rampant. The stranger is shown an ancient and deserted medresseh in the old style of Mussulman architecture, the work, evidently, of the same ages in which the khans before spoken of, were built. But the most imposing remains are the ruins of an extensive castle near the centre of the town. It is built on the craggy sides of a rock which forms the angle between two of the valleys, and the passenger, as he walks through the street, is surprised to see its walls towering above him to the height of several hundred feet. Some inscriptions in Arabic are found in the interior, which was occupied only by a few poor families, who had taken refuge there. The inscriptions add another proof to the style of the remains within and without the city, that it has anciently been a strong hold of some Saracenic ruler.

So pleasant were thehours which I spent in Bitlis, that I sincerely regretted the approach of that of my departure. I was loath to launch out from this quiet haven upon a way which threatened greater dangers than we had yet encountered, and there were hours when I thought that I could hardly expect to find any sphere, in which I could spend my life with higher hopes of usefulness than among this interesting people. But the greater part of my work was still before me, and my motto must still be, Onward. The pain of departure was, however, considerably alleviated by the manifest desire of my host for its arrival. He had not ceased to complain of my presence as an intrusion, and went so far, on one occasion, as to inquire of me, whether it was the custom in Frank countries to thrust guests upon a private man uninvited. I described to him our comfortable hotels. He sighed aregret that there were no such establishments in Bitlis. I, from my heart, sighed too. He seemed determined that we should profit little by his hospitality. Ourfare would have disgraced the meanest village. No article but rakeewas offered us in abundance — a circumstance from which John inferred that rakee must be cheap in Bitlis. I was even indebted for my pleasant resting-place upon the balcony, to his determination not to receive me into his house. The hours which I passedthere were, however, none the less delightful on this account. In calm repose, during the heats of noon-tide, and in the hushed stillness of the evening, I found many a moment for quiet and pleasing meditation. The soft airs of the night made my slumbers light and sweet, and I was awaked in the morning by the early matins of numerous birds singing in the branches above me.

The evening before my departure I was invited to spend at the house of one of the principal Armenians of the place. I went at sunset and found several guests already arrived. They were seated in two rows of opposite sides of the room, and the master sat below them all. They all rose as I entered, while the host conducted me to a seat in the recess of the window at the head of the apartment. When all were again seated, sherbet, followed by rakee and sweet-meats, was sent round — a ceremony which was often repeated before dinner. This important meal was at length announced. Two waiters of great size were placed upon stools around which the guests seated themselves in two companies. Dinner was served up in Oriental style. One dish rapidly succeeded another until it became a task to taste of those which followed. Rakee was served, at the same time, in small glasses, but with a frequency which threatened to endanger the sobriety of the company. I thought it my duty, at the hazard of seeming to slight the hospitality of my entertainer, to set an example of abstinence. The master did not sit at meat, but stood by, attending to the wants of his guests and giving directions to his servants. The compliments with which I was greeted were as Oriental as the scene about me. My coming was a gift from God; it was the appearance of a rose in a garden where it had never before been seen. John, who was present, was complimented as a Constantinopolitan by a health to Sultan Mahmoud, whose virtues were extolled with a formality and vehemence which seemed not a little suspicious. After dinner, the company resumed their seats, and an hour was filled up with music

and song from a Kurdish musician. The scene, although orderly, was of a lighter kind than I would have chosen to be in, if I had foreknown its character. But I went away hoping that some good might have been done, by giving them, perhaps, the first idea they had ever received of temperance in the use of strong drinks. The party broke up at an early hour. The host accompanied me into the street and, on parting, seized and kissed my hand.

CHAPTER XIII
FROM BITLIS TO VASTAN

DEPARTURE-MUSICIANS MULETEER-PILGRIMS-FRIENDS-PEAK OF NIMROD-FOREIGNERS IN BITLIS-ROBBERS-FIRST VIEW OF THE LAKE OF VAN-VILLAGES-WATER-ILLNESS-ELMALEU-NIGHT OF THE 4TH OF JULY-DIFFICULT PATH-POUGAH-KURDISH VILLAGES-PILFERING-WANDERING KURDS-A DANCE-DIFFICULT PASSAGE OF A MOUNTAIN-COUNTRY ALONG THE SOUTHERN SHORE OF THE LAKE-ADVENTURE- AGRICULTURE-CASCADE VIRTUE OF COLD WATER-AKHTAMAR.

We left Bitlis on the morning of the 4th of July. Just before we started, several musicians in the service of the Bey, came with their instruments, and regaled us with music while we ate our breakfast. We thought it at first an honour done us by the Bey himself, but it proved to be a voluntary act of the players for the sake of a present. I had thought it the safest course to put myself under a Kurd, and my host, who showed a wonderful alacrity to serve me when I began to speak of departing, readily undertook to provide one for me. The bargain was struck, and the man promised to be at my lodgings early in the morning, but did not appear till the forenoon was half-spent. He was dressed in the Kurdish fashion, with the felt cap and striped pantaloons, the latter differing from the European garment of the same name only in being somewhat more capacious. I was surprised when I first saw such a mark of civilization among the mountains of Kurdistan, but I soon found that it was quite a common habiliment.

Our landlord was very profuse in his well-wishes when the moment of parting came. He refused all compensation, and I distributed the sum which I intended for him among his children and domestics. Another musician, a strolling player, met us at the door as we mounted, and marched before us through the streets blowing harsh discord, nor could we prevail upon him to desist, until we answered him with silver sounds. The streets were thronged with multitudes, both of men and women, who had come together, not to witness our departure, but to greet the arrival of a band of pilgrims from Mecca, whose approach had just been announced. A Western crowd, on such an occasion, would be all on foot and in motion, but here all were seated by the road-side quietly talking and smoking. In most parts of Turkey, native Christians would sedulously keep aloof from all participation in the festivity of such an occasion, and it is just at such

times that Musulmans are least disposed to see them present. But here there were quite as many Christians as Mussulmans, a circumstance which added another proof to the many which I saw, of the great intimacy existing between the two classes in Bitlis. I espied among them several of the friends that we had made in the city. They rose as we passed, and exchanged with us those Eastern greetings than which nothing can be more expressive, when uttered sincerely. As departing friends, we cried out to them, "To God we commend you." They replied, "God give you prosperity." Even the little boys wished us "a safe road." These expressions of good-will affected me at the moment, and seemed a happy augury for our journey through a more difficult country than we had yet traversed. Before we had passed the last of the throng, we descried the expected company approaching. First came the young Bey, dressed in his gayest costume, and mounted on a noble steed, which he managed perfectly. I remember still his martial bearing, and his open cheerful face. A long train of attendants followed. He drew up as we passed, and we seized the opportunity to apologize for not having waited upon him at his castle, which stands upon one of the hills out of the town, by informing him that we had once called there in his absence. He expressed the hope of seeing us again and we rode on. Next came the pilgrims, mounted and looking cold and proud. The worst effect of the Mecca pilgrimage is to create self-righteousness. In general, those who have performed it are the most bigoted and contemptuous of all Mussulmans. John saluted the company very respectfully as they passed, but they looked so well satisfied with themselves, that I thought it would be a waste of honour to imitate his example. A great crowd followed them, and, when these had passed, we were left to pursue our way alone.

For about five miles, our road was the same with that by which we approached the city. We then struck off N. E. and pursued our way over an uneven country. On our right were the mountains, bounding the opposite side of the valley before-mentioned, and on our left the gigantic peak called NemroutDagh, or, The Mountain of Nimrod, the same which gives its name to the range so called. It stood in a singular position, like a tower in the corner of a wall, just where the line of mountains turns rectangularly, going off, in one direction, to form the Northern boundary of the plain of Moush, and, in the other, towards the Western border of the Lake of Van. My guide informed me that on the summit of this peak is a fountain of unknown depth, which is said to communicate with the little lake in which the Kara Sou rises. It may be the same source which St. Martin, on the authority of ancient Armenian writers, mentions as existing in this region.

At Bitlis, when inquiring what European travellers had ever visited the city, we were told that a German had been there several years before, and had copied all the ancient inscriptions which he could find in the town. I conjectured this to be the unfortunate Schultz, of whom I afterwards heard more particularly at Van, but I have no positive information of his having visited Bitlis. I have since learned that two or three English travellers have passed through the city, but, besides the German just

mentioned, the old inhabitants of whom I made inquiry, knew of no foreigner who had been in the country excepting a Russian, who was murdered while approaching the town, and when only a few hours distant. We passed the spot where the event was said to have happened, just after turning off from the Moush road.

While surveying it I was suddenly startled at seeing two horses, fully equipped, feeding in a little hollow close by the side of our path. I was, at the moment, lagging a little behind the party. My guide, who seemed singularly affected by the sight, suddenly motioned to me to ride up. We had advanced only a few paces when we espied the masters of the horses, sitting close under the bank, and so well concealed that we did not discover them until we were within a few feet of them. Our guide offered them no salutation, and seemed endeavouring to appear as if he did not notice them. He rode by without turning his head, and we followed his example. But the hasty glance which I caught, sufficed to satisfy me respecting their character. They had the ferocious aspect of the mountain Kurds, and were too much and too well armed for honest travellers. They eyed us sharply until we had passed. There were three of them while we were four, for our Kurd had thought it best to take with him a stout Turk to act as guide in certain parts of the route, with which he was not acquainted. To this superiority of number we doubtless owed our safety, for we went on our way unmolested.

Farther on we passed the ruins of an extensive Khan, among which were remains of baths and other buildings which showed the whole to have been formerly on a magnificent scale.

Just three hours and a half after mounting our horses in Bilis, and two hours after leaving the road to Moush, John, who was riding a few paces in advance, announced that the lake was in full view. Overjoyed at the sight of blue water, he cried out, as he first caught sight of it, Stamboul! Stamboul! It was in truth as glorious a prospect as could greet the eyes. It opened full upon us in an instant. On the right of it was a barrier of tall rocky mountains rising in successive peaks, crowned with snow. Here and there, from their base, a promontory was running its long nose far out into the water. On the left of the lake, the land sloped gently upward, broken into hills, which were the continuance of the Nimrod range and which ended in the majestic form of Subhan, clothed far down its side with a robe of pure white. Between these two sides lay the lake, stretching off from us to the East. Its calm surface was reflecting the deep azure of the sky. Its gentle repose mingled in most impressive harmony with the awful grandeur of the mountains, and the hush of stillness reigned over all like the presence of a spirit.

We were standing on the brow of a steep declivity, between the foot of which and the lake, was a slope covered with fruit-trees, like a garden. This slope was about two-thirds of a mile broad and two or three miles long, forming the South-Western bend of the lake. Near its Eastern extremity stood a village called Ourtab, and at its Western end another called Tadvan. The latter has a little inlet which serves as an harbour and is

commanded by a semi-globular mound with ruins, like those of a castle, upon it. We wound our way down the declivity and reached Ourtab in half an hour.

Looking from this point, the general direction of the Southern shore of the lake is South of East, and the Western shore a little East of North East. We stopped two hours at the village and then struck down to the lake, which we reached in a quarter of an hour. As we stood by its edge I noticed that the water for a hundred yards from the shore, was of a milky whiteness. A light wind had arisen and the ripples were breaking with a low murmur on the sand. A row of birds, in size and appearance like gulls, were looking gravely into the water. I dismounted to taste of it. It must have changed its quality since olden times, or the ancient writers, both Armenian and Greek, have greatly erred in pronouncing it salt. It is brackish but not very disagreeable to the taste. I have often quenched my thirst with worse.

Close by where we came to the lake, was a field of red clover in full luxuriance of growth. Here my Kurd insisted upon stopping to say his prayers, but, as he had not said them at noon, the most meritorious hour of the five, as it was not now a canonical hour, and as I never knew him to say them afterwards, during the whole journey, I am inclined to believe, what John suggested at the moment, that his sudden devotion was excited by the thought that the time necessary for it would afford his horses a fine opportunity to regale themselves on clover. The delay was probably more beneficial to them than to me. I had felt, before leaving the village, considerable indisposition, which had now increased to a fever. While we stopped, my position on my horse became so irksome that I dismounted and flung myself upon the grass. It was fresh and moist and doubtless added to my disorder, for I journeyed on, the rest of the afternoon, with great difficulty. Our course skirted the lake and lay over rugged hill sides which descended to its brink. Most of the ground was covered with dwarf oaks, but here and there we passed through open groves of fruit trees apparently growing without culture amidst the wilder vegetation.

We reached, a little past six, the Armenian village of Elmaleu, nestling amidst a grove of fruit trees at the head of a little cove, itself completely sheltered by the surrounding rocks and trees. The scene was so retired and quiet that it seemed the very home of peace. The women were uncovered, as they generally are in the villages, and were spinning cotton before their doors. They appeared more neat and thrifty than I had been accustomed to see. But, what was best and strangest of all, they were kind to me. I wished to spend the night in the open air, but they dissuaded me from it by saying that the vicinity of the lake rendered it damp. The lodgings provided for me by the Kiahya, were in a subterranean guests' apartment at the end of a dark passage some forty feet in length. There was no aperture in the room for the light or air, and it was crowded with cattle. I wrapped my cloak about me and laid upon the ground. Even there I could not save myself from the incursions of vermin, which got beneath my clothes and tormented me almost to madness. The heat and stench of the stable were well nigh insupportable.

What with all these, my fever increased and effectually prevented me from forgetting my troubles in sleep. I lay all night tossing from side to side, struggling to command myself to repose, and praying that I might be spared from sickness in the midst of a barbarous and friendless land. Towards morning my fever subsided, I gained a little sleep and rose sufficiently refreshed to pursue my journey. Such was the day and night of a Fourth of July in Kurdistan.

The next was my birthday. We rode for three hours over the rough and mountainous region which borders the lake, sometimes making our way over the rugged summits of head-lands which jutted into it, and sometimes creeping along their face almost perpendicularly above the water. In such a position we met a caravan of fifty horses, coming from Van and laden with cotton. We succeeded in passing them, only by drawing up our little party into a niche in the rock, which fortunately offered at the moment. At the end of three hours we struck inward over the mountains, to get round the head of a promontory which was too bold and high to admit a passage near the lake, and at length reached the Kurdish village of Pougah.

These villages of the Kurds are altogether more neat and respectable than those of the Christians. Instead of being built, like the latter, half subterraneous, they are entirely above ground and are constructed with more regularity. The people who inhabit them are distinct from the wild Kurds of the mountains. They follow the quiet pursuits of husbandry, remaining in their villages, excepting in the hot months, when many of them choose a cooler position and spend the summer in tents. Others are always stationary in the villages. Most of those between Bitlis and Van have come over the mountains from the South and formed all their villages within twelve years, changing, as they told me, a nomadic for a settled life. The Armenians fear them, but I could not learn that they have anything to complain of against them more than Christians in other parts can bring against the Mussulmans. They assume a tone of authority towards the Armenians and treat them with the freedom of superiors. The latter regard them as intruders among them and heartily wish them beyond the mountains. Notwithstanding their former character, they appear superior, in every respect, both to the Armenians and Turks of this region. They are chiefly husbandmen and apparently industrious and good ones. They are far more cleanly in their houses and persons and generally better dressed. Their faces are open, cheerful and intelligent. Their women go unveiled, but are modest and often beautiful. Their children are well formed, active and bright. As a people they are the best looking peasantry that I found in the East. I never saw a mosque in their villages, but they profess themselves good Mussulmans and have an Imam who conducts the prayers in his own house. They are on the whole more strict in their devotions than the Turks, but they have hardly any intelligent idea of the religion which they profess.

The Kurds of Pougah received us well and set before us an excellent breakfast. They took us, from our dress, to be Turkish officers, but we did not judge it best to give

them any information with regard to ourselves. One of them, however, came forward and offered us a fine little boy for the service of the Sultan.

My fever had returned soon after leaving Elmaleu, but subsided a little when I had gained a shelter from the sun. It left me, however, so weak that I found myself obliged to seek refreshment by sleep before starting again. I, therefore, directed John to sit upon the watch while I took a nap, and stretching myself upon my cloak, covered my face with my handkerchief to screen it from the light, and lay still, endeavouring to compose myself to sleep.

Before many minutes had passed, I overheard John communicating to our Kurdish guide the same order I had given to him, and soon after heard from him certain nasal sounds which afforded indubitable evidence that he was not in a condition to be very vigilant. The guide himself soon grew weary of his watch, and, at length, but insensibly, doubtless, followed John's example. Our Turk was away tending the horses. While all this was passing, a crowd of the villagers sat round us in silent observation. Presently I observed that the conversation which they had been carrying on with us in Turkish suddenly changed to Kurdish, and soon after I felt a hand in my pocket twitching at something within. I immediately threw off the handkerchief from my face, deliberately sat up and looked round to detect the offender. He was a Turk who had overtaken us on the road, and made us very flattering offers of service. I did not at first like his appearance, for he had a malicious and sinister look. I had made several attempts to part company with him, but if we rode fast he was better mounted and would ride faster, and if we slackened our pace, he reduced his in equal proportion. He appeared a little confused at being caught, but soon recovered himself. Some of the villagers had stolen away. Others were still sitting by and doubtless were accessory to the act, for, with all their good qualities, the village Kurds have an incurable love of pilfering. I immediately called up John and, rebuking him for his negligence, told him I was ready to mount. I did not endeavour to conceal from the villagers that I was offended by what had been done, but, having remunerated the family who had entertained me, rode away without bidding them adieu.

I was still too feeble to ride far, and my guide promised to stop at the village of Geullu, one and a half hours distant, a large village, as be informed me, inhabited by Armenians. Our road lay over a rich plain, embosomed in the mountains, many acres of whichwere covered with grain. Here we described a line of black tents inhabited by wandering Kurds, a kind distinct from those of the villages and leading a sort of gipsy life. They were amusing themselves with dancing when we first observed them, but, as soon as they saw us, they broke from their ranks and ran towards us, dancing as they came. One, who appeared to be the chief among them, seized John's horse and demanded a present. John assented, on condition of a dance from the whole company. Forthwith they begun, young and old, men with gray hairs and little children, women with infants at their breasts and maidens, all moving to the music of the tambourine.

When the dance had ceased, they rushed forward for their expected presents. One of the girls seized my bridle with one hand, while, with the other, she dexterously attempted to pick my pockets, uttering all the time the only word of Turkish she seemed to know -Bakshish. Others performed the same service for the rest of the party, chuckling all the time with the greatest good nature imaginable. Notwithstanding this troublesome propensity, I could not but admire their open faces full of mirth. From old to young they appeared a comely race. Some of the girls, especially, slightly formed and with nut-brown complexions glowing with health and exercise, would have been accounted beautiful in more civilized lands than the bills of Kurdistan.

Geullu was in sight when we left this party, but my guide deceived me by telling me that it was another village and that our lodging-place was a little in advance. Almost before I was aware we had reached the extremity of the plain and had begun to ascend. There was no village in sight but the one in our rear, and nothing before us but a rough and steep mountain-side. I began to suspect that all was not right, but the Kurd persisted in advancing and I was too exhausted to resist. We could ascend only by keeping a zig-zag course. The path was composed of loose rocks which rolled incessantly from beneath our feet, and so steep that I was able to retain my saddle only by clinging to my horse's mane.

Such passages, however, are not remarkable in Eastern travelling, and the present one might have passed without notice, if it had not been for the suffering which it cost me. I had become so weak that I was unable to hold up my head, and the effort of riding was so painful that I was several times on the point of suffering myself to fall from my horse. The heat of the sun seemed to be penetrating me and drying up my blood. I thought I could feel every ray enter my flesh like burning iron. My brain was heated and the pulsations in my temples were painfully distinct. I looked up to the sun and its aspect seemed so merciless that my heart sank within me. Then I thought that God made it and that it was by his order that it consumed me. I remembered that I was in Christ's work, that he had told his disciples they must expect to suffer, and the thought that I was suffering for his sake, stole so sweetly into my spirit as to overmaster all my pain and make me rejoice in it. We reached the top of the hill, descended and crossed over many others, until, four long hours after passing Geullu, we reached the village of Narnigas. John helped me to dismount and laid in upon the grass, whilst he prepared a couch of straw for me in a stable.

The whole of this region which lies along the southern border of the lake, may be described in a word. Nearly parallel to the lake and about six miles distant, is a continuous range of mountains extremely rugged in appearance. They looked at the distance from which I viewed them, like bare rocks whose edges and peaks were sharp and pointed, as if cut into the angular and pyramidal forms which they bore. Snow rested on their highest summits. Between this range and the lake is an assemblage of lower mountains, covered with oak bushes and interspersed with plains of great

richness, from which beautiful slopes run up among the hills. Beyond the range, as the inhabitants informed me, the country is more level and inhabited by Kurds of the most ferocious character. Between the range and the lake are numerous villages of Armenians and Kurds. The former, I was told, have many convents in the mountains. We passed within sight of two or three of them in our ride from Geullu to Narnigas. The latter village was small and mean, inhabited by a mixed population of the two races who possess the land.

When my couch was prepared, John assisted me to it, and helped me to lie down, for I was now incapable of any effort. Though in a stable, only a few feet removed from a herd of cattle, and lying on a bed of straw spread upon the bare ground, the sense of repose was a more perfect luxury than, in better times, the couch of a king could have afforded. It was destined, however, to be soon interrupted. About sunset, a party of Kurds came to the door and demanded admittance. I saw at once that they were of the wild mountain stock, and the Armenians of the village said they were strangers. John told them that they might find some other stable, but that the one we occupied was our own for the night, and we wished for no company. He told them, moreover, that he knew very well their custom was to spend the night in the open air, and that they were not asking admittance for the sake of a shelter. They persisted, however, in their demand, and the strife grew warm. At length they asked that one of their number should be admitted, but this, of course, only strengthened our suspicion of some evil design. When this demand also was refused, they became furious, and pressed forward to enter. John, who possessed great muscular strength, and was, when occasion demanded, as bold as a lion, sprang at once to his feet and, seizing the foremost of them, hurled him with great violence out of the door, and shut it upon them. He then fastened it as well as he could and, planting himself before it, threatened to offer effectual resistance to the first man who should attempt to enter. They returned the threats with abundant interest, but no one ventured to carry them into effect. After loading us with all manner of abuse, they departed and left us to our repose.

We had come down to the lake an hour before reaching Narnigas, but had immediately left it again, and on quitting the village, the following morning, we still pursued our way at a considerable distance from it. The hills now presented a new appearance. They were more verdant and of a more regular form than before. Our course led us through a fertile valley, well cultivated, and watered by a little stream with a mill upon it. After four hours' travelling, we turned out of the valley into an extensive plain which conducted us once more to the shore of the lake. The Kurdish husbandmen were at work. In one place they were cutting grass with a sickle. I never before or afterwards, in the East, saw grass cut for fodder excepting in the Northern parts of European Turkey, nor did I ever, in any other instance, see an agricultural implement in form like the sickle. The food commonly given to cattle in Turkey is barley- straw, and the most common provender is barley. This is the most extensive product of agriculture

in the Empire. Wheat is next. Oats and rye I have seldom seen, and corn is abundant only in European Turkey, where the meal is made into bread equal to the brown loaves of New England. The grain that was growing on the border of the lake of Van was now ripe and nearly six feet high. In another part of the plain a party were ploughing, and singing right merrily at their work. An Eastern peasant singing at his work! This too was strange. I never heard it elsewhere, in those lands, than among the Kurds.

On the Southern side of this plain, away from the lake, was a singular natural curiosity. From the top of a high mountain-peak, a little stream descended in full view, and by a declivity so steep that from top to bottom the stream appeared a line of foam, looking in the distance like a silver thread stretched up and down the mountain side. We had travelled about sixteen miles when we reached a Kurdish village, where I found a tree, and reposed under it for several hours. I had been riding in incessant pain all the morning, and my strength was now so entirely exhausted, that when I was called to mount again, I was unable to rise. I wished to spend the night in the village, but the Kurd declared it to be a dangerous place, and that nothing would induce him to remain. John, too, was out of patience, and insolently asked me if I was going to die. After expostulating with them for some time, I happened to recollect what I had read in the memoir of Henry Martyn, of the relief which he received in a similar situation from the application of cold water. I determined to try its virtue, and ordered John to pour a jar of it on the back of my head. The effect was instantaneous. The blood ceased to throb in my temples; my strength returned; I rose and mounted my horse.

Our way now lay close along the shore. We were refreshed by a gentle breeze from the lake, and by the sight of its blue surface with its little isles. One of them, a few miles from the shore, was Akhtamar, renowned in Armenian history as the seat of a Catholicos of that Church. Though it lay without the precincts of my work, I should certainly have made a visit thither, had not the state of my health warned me to hasten forward to Van. I was told that I could find a boat at some of the villages which would convey me to the island, although the intercourse of the people with the shore is infrequent. The island appeared of a round form, and barren and rocky. It has a monastery upon it, but I could not, with certainty, distinguish it from the shore. I learned at Van that it was on an extensive scale, but the Armenians themselves knew little of the affairs of the island.

CHAPTER XIV
FROM VASTAN TO VAN

VASTAN-KURDISH BEY-MOHAMMEDAN PIETY-RIVERS-SHANIKOUM-ILLUSTRATION OF SCRIPTURE-VIEW OF THE LAKE-ERDREMID-INTRODUCTION TO THE PASHA OF VAN-CHAIRS-HOMAGE-LODGINGS.

The ride from the last village to Vastan, was only about ten miles. Vastan itself is a name of great antiquity, but the place has departed. It stood at the south- east corner of the lake, in an enchanting position, on a plain like that at the south-west extremity. There are now but five or six houses in the vicinity of the lake, but I was told that there were more in the gardens at the inner extremity of the plain, and that there are some slight traces of the ancient city remaining. The gardens themselves were in full view. They are the residence of several Kurdish Beys, or, as the Turks of this region and of Persia pronounce it, Begs. The residence of the ruler of the place, is on the top of a conical hill, overlooking the plain, and wears the air of a castle. Besides the few houses near the lake, were an old mosque and medresseh, the first I had seen since leaving Bitlis. One of the houses was the residence of a Bey, of whom we asked shelter for the night. We were received into a comfortable building, adjoining the house, and evidently intended for the reception of guests. It had in the middle a platform or stage, with a balustrade around it, where we could repose without danger of being trodden upon by our horses in the night. As the sun had not yet gone down, we preferred to sit for a while before the door, where carpets were spread for us. The Bey did not make his appearance for some time after our arrival, but I observed him eyeing us from a small window in the wall of his house. He sent us, however, a present of cherries and a bouquet of roses, in token of hospitality, and at last came himself. His sons, who had gathered round us, rose as he approached, and his appearance was so venerable that I almost involuntarily did the same. He was slightly bowed with age, but his figure was still tall and commanding. His beard, long since whitened by the frost of Time, descended to his breast. His face wore a grave, but kindly, aspect, and his whole appearance bespoke the simplicity of patriarchal times. He laid his hand upon his heart and bade us welcome. We pressed him to a seat upon the carpet, while his sons stood respectfully before him. The eldest was about forty years and the youngest just entered into manhood. So, I thought, the patriarch Jacob may have often sat at even-tide before the door of his tent, surrounded by his manly sons. The old Bey knew no language besides his own, but one of the young men was able to serve as interpreter.

When the sun had set, we retired to our apartment, and the Bey came in and ate and spent the evening with us. I have often met with Mussulmans who seemed to possess a deep religious feeling, and with whom I could exercise something of religious communion. I have sometimes had my own mind quickened and benefitted by the reverence with which they spoke of the Deity, and have sometimes mingled in harmonious converse with them on holy things. I have heard them insist with much

earnestness on the duty of prayer, when they appeared to have some spiritual sense of its nature and importance. I have sometimes found them entertaining elevated views of moral duty, and looking with contempt on the pleasures of the world. These are, indeed, rare characters, but I should do injustice to my own conviction, if I did not confess that I have found them. In these instances I have uniformly been struck with a strong resemblance to patriarchal piety. That reverence for God, that spirit of simple trust and resignation to his will, that disposition to observe the operations of his hand in the works of nature, and that kindly and beneficent feeling towards all which are the prominent characteristics of the faith of prophets and holy men of old, are also the peculiar traits of Islamism, whenever it assumes any thing of a spiritual character.And why should it not be so? It is essentially a transcript of the religion of the Old Testament, corrupted no more than that was corrupted when Mohammedanism arose. I would not appear as the panegyrist of the religion, nor would I deny to it what I sincerely believe to be its due. On the contrary, I exalt the religion of the Bible when I show that even its corruptions may sometimes have a beneficent tendency.

These thoughts are suggested by my recollections of the Kurdish patriarch. When we sat down to eat, he implored a blessing with great solemnity, and rendered his thanks when we arose. Before he left us, he spread his carpet and offered his evening devotions with apparent meekness and humility, and I could not but feel how impressive are some of the Oriental forms of worship, when I saw his aged head bowed to the earth in religious homage. I have not scrupled to adopt the same form when necessitated to perform the same duty in the presence of Mussulmans, avoiding, of course, their various and oft-repeated prostrations. The very posture help to create a feeling of lowliness and humility, and has been, I think, wisely adopted, or rather preserved as an ancient Oriental usage, among the Mesopotamian Christians.

We saw nothing of our venerable host the next morning, but sent him our *selam* before we left. Our way continued along the water's brink and soon turned the south-western extremity, and changed its direction from an easterly to a nearly north-westerly course. We passed at this point the most considerable stream that we found running into the lake. Its length, we were told, does not exceed five or six miles, and its width where we crossed it was about twenty feet. We had before passed several shallow rivulets, but nothing worthy of notice. Still the lake, embosomed as it is in mountains, must receive annually large supplies from tributary streams. Yet it has no outlet, and is never known to rise above a certain height. I was compelled to stop at an Armenian village called Shanikoum, and finding there a retired garden, I determined to spend the day. We entered it without permission, for none of the inhabitants would receive us into their houses or show us any civility. No one, however, disturbed our repose in the garden, and I enjoyed, for the first time since leaving Bitlis, a few hours of retirement.

We left with the declining sun, and rode two and a half hours over an uninteresting country. Excepting a few fields of grain standing in sheaves, all was a stony and barren soil. As we passed one of the fields, a little girl took up a sheaf, and came and placed it before our horses. This was to indicate that it was an offering, and we were expected to

recognize the courtesy by a small present. This is a very prevalent custom in Turkey. Lambs are often presented in the same way. Another custom is, for the traveller to invoke a blessing upon the grain while it is still growing in the field. The same is, doubtless, alluded to in Psalm CXXIX., where those who hate Zion are likened to the useless grass upon the house-tops, to which they who go by do not say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you.

The view from this point was very fine, and the whole scene was remarkably impressive. We were directly opposite the point at which we first approached the lake, and the whole breadth of its motionless surface stretched before us until lost in the misty distance. Beyond it the sun was going down. To the N.W. was the majestic form of Subhan. "And there," said the Turk as we turned a point, "is Van." It appeared across a bay, upon a plain extending from the same range of mountains before noticed, which come down near the lake behind Vastan and sweeping round, still preserving their parallel direction, run off to the north and form the great boundary between Turkey and Persia. The town appeared like a mass of parched earth, with vineyards in front and a high rock towering behind it. For announcing this addition to the scene, the Turk demanded a bakshish.

As it was too late to reach the city before night, and I wished on my first entrance, to present myself before the Pasha, we stopped at Erdremid, an Armenian village containing 100 families. It was built upon the steep side of a hill and the houses were well constructed of stone and above ground. Below it were gardens covering at least a hundred acres. These are inhabited by Mussulmans, and contain, the villagers told me, a thousand houses. The place is probably the site of an ancient city as there are still to be seen there some remains and inscriptions similar to those which I shall hereafter describe in Van. We found in it a comfortable resting-place and an excellent supper, both of them almost as great rarities as arrow-headed inscriptions.

We commenced our journey the next morning with unwonted alacrity. The distance to the city was short, but, as we were obliged to go round the bead of the bay, we were nearly two hours in reaching it. Our way was over a uniform plain, but the city sat so low that we could discern nothing besides the minarets. Some one, coming from the town, informed us that the Pasha was in his summer palace in the gardens. We therefore stopped outside the walls, while I sent forward the Turk with the firman and letter from Erzroum. He soon returned with three attendants, who announced themselves as sent by the Pasha to escort me to the palace. As my fever was again upon me, I sent one of them to make my selam to the Pasha, with a request that he would appoint me lodgings and permit me to retire to them without ceremony. He was unsuccessful. The Pasha was ready to receive me-the Pasha was most anxious to see me-the Pasha would not detain me long, and I could not avoid appearing. One of the escort, a Kurdish Effendi, who will again appear in our narrative, observing my dejection, remarked that I was receiving my honour rather indifferently. But I had not enough of physical energy left to appear otherwise; and the conduct of the Pasha,

though Eastern politeness, seemed to me so unreasonable that I determined to show him my apology was no feint, and to look just as I felt.

We passed the great gate of the palace and through its outer court to another lying upon a garden. I stopped just without it to divest myself of my boots and assume a pair of Turkish slippers, and then entered. On the opposite side of the court was a pavilion built in stone, open on three sides and connected, by the other, with the palace. There sat the Pasha. As he was still some forty feet distant, he had a good opportunity to observe me as I approached, and measure the etiquette with which he should receive me. My dress, worn and stained with travel, and myself broken with illness and looking as forlorn and dejected as one of his own rayahs, I could not have presented a very formidable appearance. However, he received me civilly and with much more of respect than my outward man would indicate that I was entitled to.

The pavilion in which the Pasha sat was built of stone, and supported on three sides by columns. Ample curtains were suspended from above, which could be raised or lowered at pleasure. One fountain played in the middle of the pavilion, and another in the court without. The Pasha was a middle-aged man with a fine Osmanlee face.

He had put on, for the occasion, a cloak in the same style with that worn by the late Sultan, when abroad, with a gold-laced collar, and a golden clasp. He had also set a chair for me. I suppose he had never seen any other, and the sight of it made me ashamed of my own habits. What an idea of Western customs, I thought, must that tall, straight-backed, narrow-seated body-bearer give to an Oriental! I felt, too, how much less I was at my ease than the Pasha was, when I found myself perched upon it, and compelled, by its unyielding perpendicularity, to sit up straight. My reader will not understand the true nature of the position, without being informed, that the chair was one of those articles of Malta manufacture, made expressly for the Eastern market, and only, one would imagine, for a people who were not able to discriminate the proper qualities of such conveniences. Its back was as vertical as can be found in the most venerable remnant of Saxon antiquity, its seat of twisted flag, yielding to the weight of the occupant, and sinking so low that the legs swung over the front as upon a fulcrum, the feet, the while, seeking in vain to reach the floor, and the nether extremities tingling from lack of circulation. How much more natural and comfortable, I thought within myself, is the Eastern mode of sitting. The sofa, our most luxurious article, is only an approximation to a Turkish divan.

The Pasha asked many questions on America, and my object in visiting his country, to all which I answered discreetly. He then sent for John, who made a low obeisance as he entered, and, at the Pasha's bidding, knelt at the foot of his carpet. His examination ended, the Kurd was called. He went a degree farther in his respects than John, for he approached, knelt, kissed the border of the carpet, and then rising to his feet, stood with his hands folded before him. Upon being questioned, he had the assurance to say that he had been deputed by the Bey of Bitlis, in whose service he professed to be, to convey us into the presence of the Pasha. The whole story was a

fabrication, and his conduct had been an incessant torment to me from the moment of our leaving Bitlis. The Pasha, however, believed him and, according to custom, ordered a present of fifty piastres to be made to him by his treasurer. The Pasha offered me a room in the palace, which looked out on the pavilion and court, and at noon sent me a rich breakfast from his own table. Finding myself, however, exposed to constant observation, and feeling the need of retirement and repose, I begged the Pasha to assign to me a place of residence in the midst of the gardens. He readily complied with my request, and, as it was Saturday, I retired to my new lodgings before night.

CHAPTER XV
VAN

HISTORY OF VAN-SITUATION-ANCIENT REMAINS-PARTIAL DESTRUCTION BY TAMERLANE-GARDENS-ANCIENT INSCRIPTION-MY HOST-REPAST-ETIQUETTE OF THE TABLE-EASTERN AND WESTERN HABITS COMPARED-SUNDAY-THE CHURCH-GOVERNMENT OF VAN-MILITARY-SCHULTZ-THE CITY-TRADE-INHABITANTS-CHARACTER OF THE ARMENIANS-THE STATE OF MOHAMMEDANISM IN THESE REGIONS.

Although my object in these pages is not to gratify a merely literary or scientific curiosity, I shall be pardoned if I dwell with some minuteness upon a city so little known and yet so venerable for its antiquity as Van. The ancient historians of Armenia pretend that it was built by Semiramis, queen of Assyria, who, after her conquest of the country, chose this for her summer residence, and expended upon it her royal treasures. It afterwards fell into decay, and was restored by a king who flourished shortly before Alexander, and who gave to it his own name, the same which it now bears. Having again fallen, either beneath the shocks of war or the ravages of time, it was repaired by another king of Armenia about A. C. 150. A body of captive Jews were established there by the Armenian king Tigranes, and became very numerous. They were rooted out by the Persians, after their capture of the city, about A. D. 350. None of the race are now remaining. Its citadel was then accounted the strongest post in Armenia.

Doubtless it occupied the site of the present one, upon the apparently impregnable rock which overlooks the town. The city subsequently passed through several changes of domination, and in A. D. 1392 was taken by Tamerlane. It afterwards suffered another capture, and was finally taken by the Turks, A. D. 1533.• The history of its changes since that date, as the head of a pashalik, which has been now half-independent of the sway of the Sultan, and now in open rebellion, would fill an interesting page in the modern history of the East; but we must turn to the present.

The reader may, perhaps, imagine a plain extending from the mountains before described to the shore of the lake. Out of that plain, farther from the mountains than from the lake, but at a goodly distance from both, rises a calcareous rock to the height

•St. Martin, I. 137 et seq.

of several hundred feet, and about a mile in length•. It is entirely isolated, and presents so strong a contrast with the perfect level of the plain, that one is ready, at first sight, to pronounce it artificial. So indeed Schultz reported it to be; but upon careful examination, I could find nothing to justify the opinion. The direction of the rock is nearly East and West. The Southern side is a bare, solid, perpendicular face, while the Northern slopes gradually down to the plain. At the foot of the rock, on the Southern side, lies VAN. The wall of the city, which is double, composed of earth, and in an excellent condition, is in the form of a semicircle, of which the rock itself is the base. What plainly proves that the latter is not artificial is, that no joints can be discovered, and it has all the indentures and irregularities of a natural surface. The Northern or sloping side is covered with earth and vegetation. Art, however, has worked upon its surface and penetrated its bowels. Nearly in the centre of the vertical face, is a large and close inscription in the arrow-headed character. As it was too far up to be deciphered from the town, Schultz caused himself to be let down from above, and copied the whole. The citadel which crowns the summit, has a wall running along the Northern slope and meeting the wall of the town at its extremities. The garrison consisted of an old Turk, who refused us admittance, until he received a written order from the Pasha. The interior was in a neglected and desolate condition. Most of the buildings were in ruins, among others the mosque-an almost invariable accompaniment of Turkish fortresses. The ordnance consisted of a few old cannon, mounted on broken carriages.

At the Eastern end of the citadel are ranges of subterranean, or rather *subrupean*, apartments. The first is entered by a large door-way in the vertical face of the rock, which here forms, by a retreating angle, a broad platform on the very brink of the precipice. The rock about the door is smoothed so as to resemble the front of a house. The apartment is about forty feet long, from twenty to thirty wide, and of a corresponding height. It had no opening for light besides the door, and was partly filled with rubbish and stones. At its inner extremity was another opening leading to a second apartment, and beyond this, I was told, was still a third of the same character. On the other side of the angle made by the platform, was a second range of rooms, succeeding each other in like manner, but on a very small scale. They appeared to be intended either for store-houses or as receptacles for the dead. A late Pasha, whose tyrannical actsare still narrated by the inhabitants, used to send his victims hither for private execution. This at least was the story of our guide, and it received some corroboration from the great number of human bones which we found scattered about.

One day as I was wandering in the garden of an Agha of the city, on whom I had called to gather some information respecting the state of the medressehs, and whose gardens lay at the foot of the rock, near its Western extremity, I observed some distinct traces of a flight of stairs, which had led from the town up the face of the rock, out of which they were cut. They were evidently intended to conduct to apartments above. The doors of the apartments themselves were visible, looking out of the solid surface of the

•I measured the length only by the eye. Schultz reports it to be three miles. Abrégé de Géographie, par Balbi, p. 646.

rock, and inaccessible, also, excepting by ropes, either from above or below. In their vicinity whole apartments have evidently been destroyed, since what were once their interior faces now appear without. The ruin seems to have been the work of man, and is doubtless the same which Tamerlane is said to have effected, after taking the city. History records that he found here certain structures of great solidity, which he determined to destroy. Bands of his soldiers, practised in the work of extermination, laboured for months under his direction, but the task exceeded their power, and they were compelled to leave it partially accomplished.

The remains which now exist are to be regarded, therefore, as a portion only, and perhaps a small portion, of more extensive works. The whole are attributed to Semiramis. Hither, we may imagine, this powerful and voluptuous queen retired, amidst the heats of summer, to rooms decorated with all the magnificence of royalty. Now she has passed away, and the palaces which, in her life-time, were only the play-things of her power, and the favoured scenes of her pleasures, are become, though deserted and dark, the most durable memorials of her greatness. In those ancient times the plain around was covered with beautiful gardens, watered by running streams, and adorned with pavilions. Of these, also, something remains. The plain to the South East of the city, for miles in extent, is still covered with gardens, in which the richest portion of the population reside. The fruits are nearly the same as are found at Bitlis. Willows overshade the water courses, and the tall, slender, cream-coloured poplar mingles with the darker foliage of the fruit-trees.

On a rock to the east of the town is another inscription. The face of the rock is sculptured in the form of a door-way, about twenty feet in height and proportionally broad. The whole is covered close with characters in a state of perfect preservation. My attention was drawn to it by the people who reported it to be an inscription in some Frank language, but the characters, though as strange to me as to them, were the same as those above the town. I had come to the spot without my pencil, so that I was unable to make a copy of any part of the inscription, and more important duties would not permit me to revisit the place. The characters, however, were of a uniform shape, bearing a general resemblance to those of the inscriptions found among the ruins of Persepolis and Babylon. They consist entirely of one form, which is that of a wedge, and the only variety seems to be in the different position of the characters, some being placed vertically and others horizontal.

The lodgings assigned to me by the Pasha were in the house of a wealthy Armenian. A servant had been sent forward to apprise him of my coming. He received me at the outer gate with an unconstrained a welcome as if he had invited me thither himself. A room was already prepared for me in the most elevated part of the house, overlooking, on three sides, the forest of gardens beneath, and commanding a distant view of the city and the lake. The grounds belonging to the house, though but a speck in the midst of the gardens, themselves covered many acres and were cultivated by no less than thirty-six labourers. My host was still a young man, but had passed through

some interesting vicissitudes of fortune. His father had been the banker of the tyrannical Pasha before-mentioned, who had put him to death with the design of seizing his riches. The son, however, anticipating the event, had gathered his father's wealth and fled to a place of security, where he remained until his enemy was removed or dead. The catastrophe, he said, had been a warning to him to avoid public stations. He had, therefore, returned and purchased an estate among the gardens, where he could spend his life in retirement and quiet.

Near the house was a kiöshk, or summer pavilion, where my host sometimes entertained a party of friends. On one occasion I was invited to be present. The pavilion was empowered among trees and opened, upon one side, on a square tank or reservoir, like those often seen in the courts of Persian houses. The floor was covered with carpets and cushions where the guests, twelve in number, could repose at their ease. Around the reservoir musicians were seated, who played while we ate. Some of the instruments were new to me. One in particular attracted my attention. It was in form like the body of a piano, though so small that it could be lifted with ease by the player. Its construction and notes also resembled those of the piano, but its cords were struck by two pieces of wood or cork attached to sticks held in the hands of the performer.

Two large sofas were placed for the party. When we had seated ourselves, a narrow cloth, sufficiently long to extend around the table, was spread in our laps and a napkin richly embroidered was thrown over the left shoulder of each guest. Previously, however, servants came in with napkins on their shoulders, a ewer containing water in one hand and a basin in the other. The ewer is generally metallic, and somewhat resembling in form an old-fashioned teapot. The nose, however, is so small that only a slender stream of water is emitted, which is poured upon the hands of the guest by the servant kneeling before him, while the basin receives it below. To avoid the offence which the sight of the foul water might give the guest, the basin has a metallic cover perforated with holes, through which the water passes and is concealed beneath. From the centre of this cover rises a cylindrical post three or four inches high, on which the soap is laid. The guest, having performed his ablution, takes the napkin from the servant's shoulder, wipes his hands, replaces it, and the servant passes to the next. By this process fingers are made as fit to be thrust into a dish as knives and forks can be.

Generally a kind of soup is first served, into which each guest, the most respectable taking the lead, dips his spoon. Pieces of bread are placed in profusion around the sofa. There is no clashing of knives and forks, no changing of plates. Each dish is placed in the centre of the table, and they follow one another in rapid succession. Each one takes a portion from the side nearest him, so that the numerous fingers thrust in together do not interfere with each other. The guest has hardly time to fill his mouth before the dish is snatched away and another takes its place. Each dish is distinct in its kind. There is no intermingling of different articles. If there are vegetables, they follow separately and alone. A Turkish sofra is almost always furnished with pickles, which are esteemed a great provocative of appetite. Sherbets, though common, are not so often

found as at a Persian board. The variety of dishes is very great, and their number is proportioned to the rank and ability of the host. I have seen nearly twenty follow each other in the course of half an hour. Mutton is the meat most commonly eaten by the Turks. I have been served with a dinner in which there were brought forward about twelve dishes, each different from the other, but nearly all of them preparations of mutton. The last dish is the pilav. When this appears, the guest may understand that whatever remains of appetite he possesses must be satisfied upon that.

The etiquette of a Turkish repast is minute in the extreme. One can hardly imagine, without observing it, how much refinement there may be in eating with one's fingers. The radical difference between Oriental and Occidental manners is, that the first are formed upon nature, the second upon art. They may be equally refined, but the first have a rule which never changes, the second, one which is never fixed. That the Turk eats with his fingers, or sits upon the floor, does not prove him a barbarian, nor, on the other hand, are the forms of fashion always worthy of civilized men. Fashion, being arbitrary, may, at any moment, exhibit the indications of barbarous life. There is, in reason, no higher civilization in wearing ornaments in the ears or on the neck, than in the nose or about the ankle, nor is it an evidence of inferior intelligence to swathe the foot than to contract, unnaturally, a more sensitive and vital part. This, at least, is tobe said for Oriental etiquette, that it is never grotesque, and I know of no juster principle on which to base the forms of society, than that which lies at the foundation of Eastern manners, which is, to follow and improve upon nature, instead of abandoning it for arbitrary devices.

But I am digressing. I was about to say, that the etiquette of the table among the Turks is extremely punctilious. The guest uses only his right hand in eating, the left being reserved for other purposes. All wait until he who is superior dips his spoon, or his finger, into the dish. When one drinks, the rest exclaim, '*Afietlerola*', - ‘May it do you good,'-and he responds by-the usual sign of thanks. The guests never become boisterous, excepting among the Christians, whose meals are generally accompanied with wine or rakee. There is no lingering at the table after the meal is ended, but all return to their seats, and the process of ablution is carefully repeated, the mouth and mustaches being included in the operation. Coffee and pipes are then served and the guests retire early.

The hour of the principal repast is shortly after sunset. When our dinner at Van was ended, candles were brought, roses were thrown upon the water, and the music was continued until the guests were ready to depart. The spot won so much upon me, that I frequently afterwards retired thither alone, to repose during the heat of the day, and to listen to the music of the birds and the gurgling of the water, as it fell into the reservoir.

The next day after my arrival was Sunday, when, according to my custom, I remained in my lodgings and read the service of the Church, reflecting, with great comfort, that the same petitions which I was offering in a strange land, were ascending

from a thousand sanctuaries in the land of my fathers. It was at such moments that I felt, as I cannot describe, the glorious oneness of the Church. Wherever her children roam, they never pass beyond her heavenly influence. While they kneel in her penitential confessions, or rise in her ascriptions of praise, or send up her devout supplications, separation and distance are forgotten, they bow in imagination before her altars, and mingle, once more, in the worship of their brethren.

On Monday, I went to pay my respects to the Pasha, and was well received. The government of his province was formerly hereditary. Each successive ruler, however, was formally recognized by a royal firman, and owned subordination to the Pasha of Erzroum. This order of things was interrupted, as late, I believe, as 1831, when the Governor of the province threw off even the form of subjection, and appeared in open rebellion. Instead of maintaining himself in the citadel, to which he at first retreated, he went out to meet the troops sent against him by the Pasha of Erzroum, in the open field. He was defeated, his office taken from him, and the line of succession broken up. The rulers of the province now receive their appointment from the Sultan, and are entirely subject to his authority. The present incumbent is an Osmanlee of the new school, and, though a strict Mussulman, professes to be a friend of reform. He had lately received orders to introduce the new military system into his province. A thousand soldiers had already been enrolled, and the Pasha was daily expecting the arrival of a caravan, laden with military equipments for them. A body of the new recruits were on duty at the palace, and appeared as if awaiting some momentous change. They still wore the rude peasant-garb in which they had been caught, and, instead of European muskets, shouldered their own rough fire-locks, or, where these were wanting, good stout clube. The mock solemnity of their appearance, as they marched before the Pasha, in his visits to the city, was ludicrous in the extreme.

During my interview with the Pasha, he gave me considerable information respecting Schultz, who had visited the city several years before, and spent a month in his researches in Van and the vicinity. The Pasha described him as, in stature, the tallest man he had ever seen. He travelled through the country in lordly style, making magnificent presents wherever he went. He was accompanied by an interpreter, several servants, and no less than seven sumpter horses. In this manner he went into Kurdistan, where, doubtless, that upon which he depended for his security, proved his ruin. His display of wealth tempted the cupidity of a Kurdish Bey, who was entertaining him. His host dismissed him, when he was ready to depart, with a powerful guard, ostensibly as a mark of consideration and honour, but he gave the escort secret instructions to murder him on the road. On the second day of their march, the chief of the party invited him to turn aside, on pretence of visiting some ruin near at hand. As soon as they had reached a convenient place, the guard fell upon him unawares, and, before he could offer resistance, despatched him on the spot. The lesson was so instructive a one that I thought it worthy of being recorded.

Bull I could not but regret, in my own case, that I had not some presents with which to repay the courtesy of the Pasha of Van. He was unwearied in his attentions during my stay. Whenever I wished to go abroad, he sent me horses and gave me free permission to go where I pleased. In this way, although still in a weak state, I was able to visit every part of the town and to pursue my inquiries among all classes. The place has all the appearance of a Persian town, excepting its Turkish minarets. John remarked this on our first approach to the city. The houses are constructed of sun-dried bricks. The better sort are sometimes covered externally with plaster composed of earth and straw mixed together. Although the general appearance of the city is that of a great collection of mud-buildings, they are not individually unpleasant to the sight, when regularly and well made. The streets, however, like those of all Turkish towns, are narrow, ill-paved and filthy. The bazars also are very small and mean. There are but two khans in the place, one of which was occupied exclusively by Persian merchants, who reside here as at Bitlis. There is only one respectable bath, to which the Pasha did me the honour to invite me in company with himself.

The trade of the city is with Bitlis, Persia and Erzroum, but chiefly with the two latter. Cotton is the principal article brought from Persia, and cloths, which constitute the chief manufacture of the place, are the most common export. The distance to Erzroum is Seventy-two hours, or twelve caravan stages, and the route to that city by Arnes, ten hours distant, and Melezgherd, is, I was assured, quite safe. The city is the head of a district or county of seventy-five villages, besides being the chief place of the Pashalik. The cold season continues about five months, and is, in the estimation of the inhabitants, severe. All, however, united in extolling the salubrity and healthiness of the climate.

Tavernier, who travelled in the 17th century, reports that the majority of the inhabitants were Armenians. According to the best information which I could obtain, the same is not now true. There are between four and five thousand Mussulman families, who are chiefly, if not altogether, Turkish, and two thousand families of Armenians. A fourth part of the latter reside within the walls, and these are generally the poorest portion of the population. The city is the seat of a Bishop, who resides in a monastery two or three hours distant, and the Churches, though few in number, are served by forty priests. I could not learn that the Catholicos of Akhtamar exercises any authority over them, nor that he possesses any more than an ordinary episcopal jurisdiction. The Mussulmans have fifteen mosques and four medressehs, but all of an inferior order. They have also four schools of the ordinary kind, and the Armenians two.

I was very favourably impressed with the character both of the Mussulmans and the Armenians of Van. It appeared to me more like that of the same people in Constantinople, than I had seen since leaving Trebizond. On mentioning my impression to John, I found that he had been struck with the same resemblance; which he attributed to the fact that the intercourse of Van with the capital is much more intimate than that of any intermediate city. Large numbers of the people visit Constantinople in

quest of employment, and, as the laws of the Empire will not permit them to remove their families, they return after a few years to their native place. John assured me that servants from Van were the most esteemed among the Armenians of Constantinople. My intercourse with this people was of a most gratifying character. The more respectable among them I found unusually intelligent and consequently better able to appreciate justly any efforts for the improvement of their nation.

That part of Armenia which I traversed between Erzroum and Van presents, doubtless, a wider and more promising field for missionary labour among the Armenians, than is to be found elsewhere within the ancient borders of their empire. They have here been less disturbed by the changes of war and less oppressed by Mussulman bigotry. They have, in the cities, more of independence and equal privileges with the Mohammedans than I had before witnessed in any other part of the interior of Turkey, and, as a natural consequence, they are more intelligent and high-minded.

The picture which I have presented of the villagers is, indeed, not so favourable, but its shades are no darker than those in which the character of the Armenian peasantry throughout Asiatic Turkey must be drawn. And here let me say, once for all, that in describing them as in some respects inferior to the Mussulmans, I discard altogether the inference that Christianity, as it is now corrupted in the East, is less beneficent in its influence on character than the religion of Mohammed. The inferiority of the Christians, wherever it appears, is owing to civil not to religious causes. They are degraded by long ages of oppression. From a people more elevated than their masters now are, they have become slaves. Generous and manly feeling has been long since crushed by the iron hand of tyranny, and they have become churlish and inhospitable. Accustomed to seek every expedient to escape the incessant extortions of petty rulers, they have learned both to cringe and to deceive.

Their circumstances, not their religion, have made them what they are.

Wherever their condition is more free, their character rises in proportion. So it is among the Christians of Mesopotamia, and still more remarkably among the independent Nestorians, who inhabit the mountains of Kurdistan. Soit is among the Christians of European Turkey, who, though most blindly devoted to superstition, are generally cheerful, industrious and hospitable. In all these instances their civil condition is more easy, and the influence which it exerts upon their moral and intellectual character is obvious to the most casual observer. In recording, therefore, the degradation of the Christian peasantry of Turkey, I would not be understood as detracting aught from the beneficent tendencies of our holy religion, even in its lowest estate, but would rather show thereby how deeply malignant is the influence of that false faith whose features it is the main design of these pages to delineate.

Still, as an honest reporter, I cannot deny to Islamism whatever of good I have found in it, and, in this character, I must acknowledge that I have seldom seen it presenting a less repulsive aspect than in the interesting region which we have just surveyed. From Erzroum to Van, the Turks, in general, seem sincerely attached to their religion, although they hold it in a very imperfect form. They know, indeed, hardly more

of it than its outward and ceremonial performances, and some of these, I thought, in many instances, I knew better than themselves. They are the most punctual in their prayers of any Mussulmans that I have ever seen, but they often seemed ignorant of the most common precepts of the Koran and the Sunneh, respecting the proper exercise of devotion. Instead of the perfect abstraction which isrequired, I have frequently seen them stop in the midst of their prayers to give directions to servants, or to join the conversation which was going on around them, and then resume their devotions. This became, at length, so common, that I almost ceased to notice it. They were also in the habit of praying without having performed the prescribed ablutions, evidently unaware that there was no point of religious practice on which the Mussulman precepts are more rigid and imperative.

Irregularities of this kind made it apparent, that the whole extent of their acquaintance with Islamism, was confined to the creed, which every Mussulman invariably knows, and to a few imperfect rites. In this form, doubtless, it is handed down from father to son-a traditional knowledge, imbibed with the first impressions of childhood, and remaining unenlarged in riper years. The very few educated in the medressehs are, of course, better informed, but, after conversation with several of them, I could not discover any systematic acquaintance with the doctrines of the religion. The medressehs themselves are few, and only the lower studies are pursued in them.

The people have less of exclusiveness and prejudice against Christians than the Osmanlees. They are more free and unreserved in conversation, and their intercourse with the native Christians is remarkably intimate and cordial. I had never before heard Mussulmans speaking the language of rayahs, and, as yet, I had nowhere seen rayahs so much respected by their Mohammedan neighbours. If I may judge from my own reception, they are also more courteous towards Franks than Mussulmans generally are. This difference is, perhaps, owing in part to the fact, that their prejudices required, I have frequently seen them stop in the midst of their prayers to give directions to servants, or to join the conversation which was going on around them, and then resume their devotions. This became, at length, so common, that I almost ceased to notice it. They were also in the habit of praying without having performed the prescribed ablutions, evidently unaware that there was no point of religious practice on which the Mussulman precepts are more rigid and imperative.

I have only to add, that the Turks of these regions are, for the most part, in the lowest state of ignorance. With regard to the most common matters of information, their ideas are like those of a child. It is this, doubtless, which makes their religion a mere superstition, devoid of all spiritual conception. Their minds are not sufficiently elevated, nor their moral nature sufficiently enlarged, to receive any other than a low and gross thought. This, indeed, is true of the common classes of Turks every where. With such, Islamism appears to be nothing more than a purely superstitious observance of certain external rites, and, saving the formulary of the unity of the Godhead, hardly to be

distinguished from Paganism. It is the performing of certain washings in a certain way, the repeating of certain prayers, not one word of which is understood, with certain genuflections and prostrations, the abstaining from certain meats and drinks, and the refraining from food during certain hours of the day, at a certain season of the year. Nothing of all this is objectionable in itself, excepting the prayers in an unknown tongue. Some Mussulmans, I know, associate these practices with spiritual ideas. But the multitude rest in the practices themselves, without any thought beyond them. The merit is in doing these prescribed things in a prescribed manner. This is their religion, that which is to save them. They tremble for themselves when they neglect them, while, at the same time, they may, without remorse, be impure in their thoughts, deceitful, and vindictive. They are confident in proportion as they scrupulously perform them, while, in truth, their confidence is no more than a Pharisaic pride. It is Islamism appearing under this form, of which I speak when I say, that it is essentially heathenism.