MR. COX IN CONSTANTINOPLE.

A Visit to the Old Seraglio—Almost Mobbed at the Portal of St. Sophia—The Old Greek Hippodrome—The Museum of Ancient Costumes—Among the Howling Dervishes.

CONSTANTINOPLE, Sept. 4.—There is a day's experience not yet recorded. So full and varied were the incidents that it is confusing. We began at 9 and kept it up till 5. We desired to see the old Seraglio Point within itself. It juts into the stream and forms the entrance of the Bosporus, dividing the Sea of Marmora from the Golden Horn. When we were here before the harem was there. We visited it then, went inside the palace where the Sultanas lived, and rambled in the luxuriant grounds which yet rumbled in the surgings and gushings of the fountains about it. The interior was then disappointing. The divan and drapery of the gorgeous East were not there. Tables, chairs, and poor French prints were the only decorations; but the halls and fountains we remember well, and they were characteristic and Eastern. The marble halls were bright, and the honeycomb fountains within murmured a lullaby to the Sea of Marmora without. But the place then had the odor of blood even upon its white pavements. There were more sighs lingering about the mysterious opening upon the Bosporus than the sweet air could hold. The Adrianople Railroad now runs through the old palace ground, round the point, to the depot on the Golden Horn. The abode of the Sultan, which was regarded as a sacred spot in 1851, and into which we passed unsandaled, has given place to the goblin of steam, whose shrieks are more mellifluous to the ear than those of the wives who were sacked into the stream at this once convenient point of perpetual divorcement.

AT SERAGLIO POINT.

The day of our visit happened to be the anniversary of the Sultan's coronation, and thus we were allowed, without hindrance from the chief of the public grounds on the point, to go about without the customary firman. A fairy kiosk stands high on the point. There the Sultan sometimes stops, and, from the further side, reviews the troops, when war begins, and drops upon them his blessing! This kiosk rises above the gardens of the Theodosian column. It is shut in by a whitewashed wall. This beautiful antique column has been almost enclosed since we were here by trees. Thirty years in the life of a tree or a man makes much change. The beauty of the column is hardly seen for the foliage. On its iron fence the dirty linen of the officials hangs out to dry. This column is sometimes conjectured to be the column of Symeon the Stylite, but it is only conjecture. It is Corinthian and beautiful. It held the statue of Theodosius, once, and was built in his honor, because the Goths came here then to offer submission to the Roman power. These Northmen asked to be permitted to colonize Thrace and Asia Minor. If they had been accepted as the colonists in these now barren lands, what would have been the state of mankind! Where, if their genius had been given to Asia and not to Europe, would have been the great Teutonic nation and the relation of the races?

From this point across to Scutari you perceive a yellow building. It is the Nightingale Hospital, of gentlest renown. It is now used in part for a barracks. Beyond it is the British cemetery, full of Crimean heroes, and with a fitting column, of which we shall have a nearer view to-morrow. All this, out of the Crimean war, since we were last here. These very rocks in the mist, which are near the Prince's Isles—little rocky isles—have themselves changed hands. They belong to Sir Henry Bulwer's heir; and he keeps them anchored safely, rocks as they are, by a Turkish guard. From this point you may see the windings of the Bosporus. It is these turns—which make its bays and currents—which are so awry that navigation is not always happy or safe, in a for, as our Captain told us. We perceive now the Russian steamer, just in from Egypt. It is running far up the stream, so as to make a safe curve into the Golden Horn.

THE OLD SERAGLIO.

Let us go up higher into the open court above the old Seraglio. It is most interesting ground, and has not been so much changed even by fifteen centuries of royal residence. It used to be three miles around, and had a wall on all sides. The most of the old palace was destroyed by fire a dozen years after we went through it. The harem portion was rifled at the fire; but the old ceremonial enclosure, called the Seraglio, remains with its public buildings. To that we venture, not without trepidation. Our first look is at the enormous sycamore tree, which would make a fit counterpart in size, if not in height, to the tall sycamore of the Wabash; but, unlike it, alas! it is hollow. If it were solid—as our Mariposa trees are not—it would give them quite a race for size and celebrity. It is at least forty feet in girth. It used to be occupied by the chief janizary! In this court is the Sublime Porte, the old one, for there is now a new one, not so redolent of ancient associations. It is a grand arch, with Arabic texts over it, and towers about it. This old Porte, by which the Turkish Government is known, does not look like a palatial entrance. It has rather a police look, and there are soldiers about it. It used to be kept by fifty porters, hence it was Sublime! As we could not go into the Mint, where the jewels are; as we had a clear recollection of our former visit to the armory where the keys of loyal cities, flags, and arms are kept; as the kitchens were of no moment now since the Sultan does not dine at this place, nor visit much at the new kiosk above, we gave our whole mind to listen to the recital of the horrors of the place which Dionysius did not exaggerate, but illustrated with faithful detail and gesture. Pointing through the Porte to a window within, he said: "That is the throne of the Sultan. He sat there. He could see, but none outside see him. Here Ambassadors were presented, who could only feel the presence. Here, too, he sat to observe the beheading of his unfaithful subjects. Here on this path, and right on this stone, was placed the platter with the bloody head!"

Sweet thought, reminding one of a Herodian picture which, I think, we have seen somewhere in one of the 1,000 galleries of Europe. Then, as Dionysius saw our open-mouthed wonder, ready to take in whole hecatombs of slaughter, he dilated on sanguinary Sultans till the air grew red hot. "Here where you sit"—how I leaped to my feet!—"on that very stone, the heads, when chopped off, were massed into aroma, after being dried three days upon yonder crosses above the gate!"

Just then a eunuch (for they still hover about, though the dear ladies are gone up the river on the Sultan's yacht) comes along, swinging his beads, and looking as black as ten devils and as ugly as sin. We get out of his way.

"Who is he?" I ask.

"He is the head jailer of the female prison that we saw yonder outside the gate."

Although they may not use the sack now, the prison is handy and useful. I lean against a fountain to rest. I am satisfied with headless cadavers. I try to read an inscription over the fountain, when I am startled to hear Dionysius explain in hoarse whispering to my wife: "Lady, you are sitting on the very stone on which were these bloody executions!"

She turned her head calmly. I saw she was pale. It was a rough stone, nicely arranged for a seat.

"That fountain," he says, "used to run red!"

"Blood?" say I.

"No—water! There the executioner washed his gory hands after he used the axe."

I turned pale also. I shall never forget these three sanguinary stones and that polluted fountain, not as long as a deadhead haunts a theatre or rides upon a railroad.

A CHURCH 1,300 YEARS OLD.

Going out of this court we pass the porphyry pillar, the old church of St. Irin, where, in Greek and with Greek crosses, the early Christians were celebrated. Some pumpkin vines innocently run about these tombs now; they know and fear, unconscious of the terrible scenes which this locality had once witnessed.

Now to St. Sophia, Church of Divine Wisdom, Justinian's monument to Constantine! Built, rebuilt again by the great Emperor, beginning in the fourth and completed in the sixth century! Marbles, granite, porphyry of every color and from every quarry in the empire from Athens to Africa, from Baalbec to Egypt! Fire and earthquake, and last, Moslem conquerors have not destroyed, but only added to its wondrous name. The story of its building, the number of its architects and workmen, the Emperor or angel who directed it, the immense cost, the traditions of the miracles which surround it kept watch and ward, the opulent altar, the immense cupola and the half-domes of ivory, amber, and cedar; the twenty-four planes from Noah's ark, its courts, nave, vestibules, narthexes, and galleries; its hundred columns inside and others within, above all its twelve porphyry pillars, the majesty of artistic proportion, boldness of design, and splendor of execution, not to speak of the imperial seats and grand offices and dignities to which it was dedicated, make it the most wonderful edifice in the world, St. Peter's only excepted. The spirit of the temple—ah! what is that? Seven different orders of priesthood, from the Imam to the Kasim, represent its genius now, where priests and deacons by the hundred served at its altar through the early centuries. Here once the most eloquent of divines, St. John Chrysostom, ministered and preached, and with silver tongue and golden lip made the Saviour and his Beatitudes most beautiful to the entranced Greek and enraptured Oriental; and here now minister muftis by the hundred, whose services we have seen on three occasions, and commentators upon the Koran interpret the Koranic law with a strictness worthy of a democratic canon applied to our constitutional charter.

MORBED BY ZEALOTS.

The other night at 10 my wife and myself started for this temple of fame. She had not seen it upon our former visit, though we all made a desperate effort. Our firman from the Government of 1851 was complete. A Turkish soldier then accompanied us with a dragoman. There were four in our own party—a cousin of my wife, then a golden-haired Ohio girl, now a Chicago matron, whom we met with her husband lounging in the Isle of Wight, and my wife's brother, of genial memory, now no more. We were fortified by two British officers, then stationed at Corfu, which was ruled by an English Lord High Commissioner. Well do I recall them. One, as I have read, was killed in the Crimean war, Col. Fordyce; and the other, Capt. O'Reilly, an Irishman, who made the life of our voyage most merry back to the isles where the Hesperides were fabled to be situated, and who furnished us golden fruit from its gardens. What has become of him? Has he given his life as well as sword to England in her wars in India and Africa? *Quæstio mutatis!*—all how changed! and we here! I shall never forget the solid and gleeful company, made up of German and French, as well as Irish, English, and American visitors, as we marched and exulted that bright morning in July at the prospect of seeing this cathedral of the Divine Wisdom, so hallowed by time, history, and vicissitudes! It was also, as now, in the Ramadan season. We stood at the door, presented our passes, and each nationality had its kavass, or dragoman. Word came out for us to leave. Our guides persisted. We held our places. A second word came. We must go off. It was accompanied by a remark that we were condemned infidel Giaours, dogs of Christians, and some other tender epithets. Our guides persisted. Had they not the Turkish well and their government behind them? They counted foolishly. They should not have urged. We were not then fully advised of the power of the mosque above all other powers. Still we held our ground until some four or five hundred Moslems collected about us. With angry frowns and suspicious movements, much as a mob, they talked about us. Then, and which appeared—hideous object!—a black slave, a Nubian of most unpleasant aspect and grating voice. He held a rattan, and laid it cleverly over the shoulders of our dragoman. The soldier retreated. Our English officers, including the fiery Irishman and O'Reilly, worked out the crowd. My wife, brother, and cousin receded. I hardly knew how, but I was left solitary and alone, and covered my retreat with a Vesuvius stick which I had used on the volcano against insurgent lazzaroni, and still carried for protection against the dogs of this city, then more numerous than now.

The meaning of the performance, as we learned, was our ill-starred attempt, in Ramadan time, when Turks are fasting and mortified, and while prayers were going on, to enter this sanctuary of Islam. This cooled our ardor for adventure.

However, next morning at daybreak, while the devout Turks were asleep after the excesses of the mortal fasting, some of us ascended to the gallery by a back stairway and through a long, dark passage, with the aid of a paid moslem servitor, and there looked down and around upon the splendid temple. But it was a surreptitious and anxious gaze or peep from behind the porphyry and granite columns. How we sped in those two minutes from post to pillar, looking at the big letters of gold upon green canvas, twenty feet long to the left, and admiring that "God is the light of the heavens and the earth!" How we wondered at the wonderful six-winged seraphims, Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, and Azrael, the companions of Mahomet, once colossal images of the Greek Church, whose faces are now purposely obscured! How quickly flew through our vision the 107 columns, each one a grand larceny, with its fancy capitals, and now swam in the mystical light that came through the stained glass, which was lifted from our grand arches! Such were the hasty, but entrancing, glances or our recollection of them now, as the scene recurs to our memory.

In this my wife did not partake, so that when, the other night, we approached the dark rear gate in the same place we had met a little apprehension. It was soon relieved by a whispered and slippery Moslem, bearing a lighted taper, and under Dionysius guidance we reached the upper gallery, where the old time came back with its rush of associations.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE MOSQUE.

It is Ramadan again and on the 24th day. It is the night of Predestination, the night for special Bunahimnon by 6,000 lamps. Oh, for Edgar Poe, Bunyan, and Jerrold with their electricities! But the Moslem lamps did very well without their aid. Perhaps the semi-gloom added to the wierd scene. When we entered, the service from the upper and better platforms, where the priests stood kneel, was going on. Prostrations were made by the immense congregation, formed in lines upon the matting, all shoeless, or rather with shoes upon troughs of wood, in front of the lines. These lines front toward the holy house of the Kaaba at Mecca, and therefore the lines of the faithful are north and south, and the Greek altar, but to the southeast. This looks odd and breaks the harmony, but it does not change the lyrical cadences of the service, as with one a cord, at a given signal, these devout people, in various costumes and of various tribes, but in unison, bow with forehead to the floor three times, and to Mecca always. Then a Quaker quiet comes—the hush as if for the Great Day. Then again resting a minute thus, another chant or wail ascends from the priestly seats, and the crowd kneels and stands in silence till a further chant rings out from the priestly orators and done. It was the very quintessence of awfulness, and could not fail to impress the Oriental soul. It was not for us to make light of this ceremony, though we saw some English visitors laughing at it as if it were a farce.

A second visit along with the families of our Minister and Consul, whom we felt qualified to induct into this gallery and ceremony, did not weaken this impression. Nor was it strengthened on our visit yesterday to the floor and body of the temple. Without aid of firman or soldier, and without fear, we found ourselves within the temple. We put on slippers, according to the custom, and glided awkwardly over the matting, to see the altar, the lace-like carved marble capitals, the many colored marble columns, and the gilded dome. We desired a nearer view. Whether because my slippers were more like Chinese shoes and would not stay on my tiny feet, or whether because my sense of noting was not keen, I have turned to my wife's journal. Here is her description:

> As we enter the vestibule the guide calls attention to a side column with a hole in it, shaped much like an eye. Here those diseased in that organ dip their fingers, and then with them wet with the healing water, are supposed to find a cure. Our two visits have been made at night. Now, by day the mosque looks quite differently. No matting covers the floor of the body, and we were given the usual slippers for entrance. We found them rather large and inclined to use, on the point of slipping along, without lifting the toe from the floor, as we imagined it S. S. happened to sneeze, and, as one does often by habit, exceptorate after it, though with no occasion, and immediately our Turk was enraged. He quickly proved to us our impropriety, and, taking his handkerchief, commenced vigorously wiping out the supposed spot or stain of desecration. We looked at each other, and smiled disturbedly and sadly. It was a Greek smile which a Spartan might have envied. The matting was not laid straight across, but on the slant, that the devout might, in kneeling, turn toward Mecca. It was raised in rows, and low wooden trestles were placed between each to hold the shoes. I suppose—possibly outer garments—thus preserving in the interior the sanctity of the place. After all, were it for this sacred reverence in taking off shoes and using slippers, I do not see how these mosques would be fitter certainly, more in worship and prayer, for as these Turks bring in on their persons such a filthy lot of race it would be unendurable. Then, as there are no chairs or benches, the floors are used for sitting, kneeling, and bowing, and to them the people touch their foreheads.

The mosque is vast and airy, the marble columns of Ephesus are seen to better advantage, and those of porphyry are almost as distinct and beautiful. At one-fourth the height of one of the columns is a break, like the cut of a sabre, were it of a material that a sword could cleave.

"This is the history," says our guide: "Mohammed II., the conqueror, rode into this church on horseback over the dead bodies of the slain Greeks, packed like sardines in pickle barrels! Some of the victims of the Turks, and it was he who struck this column with his cimeter, and afterward reaching across to the wall, he left the impress of his hand—similar hands."

Here a huge and bloody hand, with fingers wide spread, is there in outline, but it looks more like the thoughtless impress of the barbarous Turkish artist, on his undried plaster, than like a bloody sabre-wave, he tried to obliterate all signs of the former possessors, the Greek, by painting out every Greek cross and defacing every frame of the Greek archangels, and the mosaic outlines and forms of cross and angel remain beneath the gilded Moslem's superficial paint, and these were pointed out with zealous pride by our Greek guide!

"But you see those cannon over the door entry?" the guide asks.

"Yes; but they are stone, are they not?"

"They are very, very old!" he says, quite childish, but like others of this strange people. It is this. That there was a saying among the Greeks that this church and city would never be conquered by the Turks till those cannon of brass should be used to assault it. Very old!"

The faithful are assembling for prayers. It is a fine day, the 8th anniversary of the present Sultan's accession. A Turkish lady asks "Why do you linger? We are going to prayers."

Our guide answers: "He has paid for the entrance, and does not intend to be hurried."

Now, the women, in their white, having long skirts—we know not if they are boyish or virtuous—are playing horse in a novel manner, and in imitation of Mohammed II. the Conqueror, who rode into this church. They run at full force over the mosque, to our astonishment, but they are soon curbed, reined, and call upon their aides and leaders, who are Turks, to stop them. Last night we witnessed the same exercise, but the small children playing it, and it was very pretty, between them keeping up a faint cry, and the leaders laughing over each other, holler at the children, and, to our surprise, though temporarily devotional, stopping. It seems that children are a new order in attendance on a Mohammedan mosque! At night, the lamps being lighted, and the congregations, the service was forty minutes or half an hour; by night, in the light, it is a weird and startling scene.

Thus endeth the journal and our united impression of this wonderful building and the spirit which it sublimes. It is an immense minster and mosque, for it is both even yet. We leave it and go into the warm air, haunted, as we were years ago, by those six-winged monsters, who seem like Sphinxes in the desert of human doubt and experience, and horrified at the stories of carnage forever connected with this temple of peace, into which the proud Mosiem rode to defy and degrade its old Christian masters. Dionysius, who is not very gossipy, makes a curious comment on this double religion and quality by a story of some Russian ladies whom he gallanted a few weeks before the late Russian war. One of the ladies caught sight of her own cross half hidden by the Moslem gilding. Her eye pierced beneath the lacquer to find the forms of angel, saint, and Saviour familiar to the church of her childhood. Bursting into tears, she was about to drop upon her knees and pray to the God—not of Mohammed, but of Jesus—when arrested by a gesture from the frightened guide, who turned pale at the consequences that would follow, in the then state of the Turkish mind. "Is this not," she cried, "our church, ours? Oh! my God! ours?" and almost in a frenzy she was led from the church of the fathers of her religion.

Do you wonder that the Czars, who are the head of her religion, have yearned to take this city, where the traditions, history, and glories of their faith still repose, though suppressed by force and veiled by another faith?

Another mosque, that of Sulleiman the Magnificent, which we visited, had no Greek glamour or tradition. It was built by the Turks, and has a beauty, cleanliness, and freshness that reminds us of St. Isaacs in St. Petersburgh. But having seen one mosque, you have an idea of all. In this mosque are carpets and flags, representing Mecca and Medina.

There is a third mosque, called that of the Pigeons, into whose court we went. A few piastres for a handful of millet, and the pigeons flew down into the court in rushing multitudes from minaret and dome and every nook in the vast place. These birds are sacred to Mohammed, and receive hospitality, as do the dogs, from some divine lesson in the Koran.

On our way to the Bridge of Boats we passed another large plane or sycamore tree, hollow and tenanted. A hermit, with sore eyes, lives in it, but he is not very smart, I think. I asked him to write me his name on a card. He put his head out of his hole, and, to my discomfort, bawled for coin. He, the cross-legged sciatica, who, as in Jerusalem, sits at the gateways of the streets, and act as notary publics or stenographers.

ON CLASSIC GROUND.

We get upon classic ground again at the famous Hippodrome. It was an old Greek circus, with seats and rims. It is now a square filled with objects of ancient renown, which could not well be ruined by January and year, or often by fire and time. Here the actors, riders, and charioteers of the immortal days assembled. The gates are gone, the porticoes demolished, the columns dust. The Venetians, who were Greek proconsuls, like the janizaries of the Turkish empire, here met and menaced the existence of society and order. From these sentinels and centurions came the final fall of a Greek empire. Its obelisk remains, as fresh as when it came from Heliopolis. The machines by which it was reared are cut in stone upon its pediment. Commander Gorringe has improved upon the feat, with modern, boundless wealth and resources, and has brought and put the gem of the race of the Hippodrome. The brass columns of the three serpents, heads off, is here greened by exposure. It has a mystical and sacred meaning and inscription which Lawlinson in his Herodotus has explained. The serpents are twined, as they should be, in right matter, and yet it stands 100 feet high, surviving fire and sword, priest and conqueror. The Emperor or god, whose effigy once adorned its top, is not even known. Other columns are around this spot, and marked by inscriptions in old Greek and Latin, which may possibly survive much that and more seeming durability. One antiquity has been so buried that time could not touch it with a single touch. It is an ancient cistern, and assaulting, it is under ground, and all that throw underground monuments, held up by Lord palaces. The upper story remains, into it we went. It has been filled with the rubbish of ages. It is a gloomy place, dimly lighted, and inhabited by artisans. We found their work in silver and gold, and boys playing about the tanks as if at play, reaching up the silver and gold thread, so much used in the fabrics of the Orient. "Why not," we asked of the foreman, "use machines?"

He caught at it at once. "Your English and American machines are too expensive. They get out of repair. We can't manage them, as we cannot repair them. We prefer the old method. It costs little for our labor."

It is the old story of labor versus machines, which have changed the empires of the earth, but not the condition of the laborer.

Then we visited the strangest exhibition I ever saw. It is the Museum of Ancient Costumes. As we went into the gallery where it is, 1,500 young Turks were rushing out of the Polytechnic School, where they are taught the science of war, and, with a rush and a hush, smiling and obedient. Treading our way through their noisy, unabashed gaze (or boys are boys, whether under Islam or but—we enter a waxwork exhibition, which Mme. Tussaud might envy. It represents the old Turks of different ranks and grades, from the Sultan down to the janizary, as well as the other officers of the old regime, when the janizary was paramount, and the Sultan had his eunuchs and dwarfs, headsman and vizier, surgeon and eunuch, and each had a habit as well as habitude peculiarly his own. Silk and satin and gold and jewels and astrakhan of yellow and purple and green and scarlet, sash and shawl and turban, drapery never yet seen together in a Frenchman's or Italian's or Belgian human power and wealth, or based extravagant its excesses and vanities.

THE DANCING DERVISHES.

Near our hotel are the dancing dervishes. I suppose there are about twenty-five. The dervishes and their music are noisy, and I believe they are Turks, but I do not know. The dancing act what, around and around on their toes. Their arms are extended and keep steady—prayer, dreamy. They seem their pose—the stare in their orbits, as they move around, with a sweet brother, with arms folded and in prayer, musing and musing, and the music beat, beat, beat, flow as though they would make a cheese, as the children used to say. They have a sweet chant. Their closed eyes and warm indicate that they see the invisible Allah we never they hear!

These dervs I know. For that, we went to Scutari, and, with a guide, found out the place. We slipped behind the curtain and went up into the gallery, looking down into a court. There was an altar and a group of variously dressed dervishes. Some were soldiers, some boys, some little girls in tinselled dresses, some were black and some white, some were Arabs, some were Turks, some handsome, some hideous, and all joined in the prayers and chants. A few knelt on sheepskin, while others formed a hollow square and began swaying and singing, while the rush-tum-tum of the tambourine and rush of the bagpipe gave out a pleasing concord of athrashing machine. When the agony was sufficient and the steam was on with a full head, the swaying and howling and barking, and snapping and jerking of head and body, and the frothing and hard breathing and general hysterics began. The howling was general, the frothing and hard breathing and general hysterics began. The howling was general, the frothing and hard breathing and general hysterics began. The howling was general,