

A CITY OF TRAGEDIES.

Mysterious Disappearance of Noted Persons in the Turkish Capital. Constantinople is the place par excellence for mysterious tragedies, and incredible as it may appear at the close of this matter-of-fact nineteenth century, great men of European reputation are put out of the world almost every day without attracting any unusual attention, says the New York Recorder. The last victim has been Ali Saib Pasha, minister of war, who the day before his death had a long interview with the sultan, partaking of several cups of coffee at the palace. A few hours later he was found a corpse at his own house. Some say that it was a case of suicide, but the latter is a crime which is absolutely repulsive to every true believer in the prophet. Others again say that he died of heart disease, while the majority allege that his death was due either to a cup of coffee or a bowstring. He is but one of a number of prominent statesmen who have thus come to an untimely end. To this day no one knows what has become of Midhat Pasha, at one time prime minister, and famed throughout Europe as the most enlightened of oriental statesmen. The last heard of him was that he had died in exile at Mecca. An equal mystery surrounds the present condition both of the ex-khedive Ismail of Egypt and the ex-sultan Murad. The death of both has frequently been rumored throughout the city, while if they are alive their fate is but little better, for they are close prisoners in the palaces which have been allotted to them. Grave doubts exist as to whether Murad has ever been seriously insane, and it is popularly believed that he was merely declared demented and incapable of governing because the shiek ul Islam, together with the softas, was convinced that he was about to inaugurate all kinds of western reforms. The present sultan's tenure of the throne depends entirely on the mental condition of his predecessor. For, if the shiek ul Islam were to declare to-morrow that Murad had recovered his senses, Abdul Hamid's prestige and authority, both spiritual and temporal, would be at an end. Under the circumstances it is scarcely surprising that the sultan should look forward with feelings of relief to the eventual death of Murad's death.

THE LABOR OF ACTING.

Great Results Obtained Only by the Most Exact Discipline. On first visiting a French theater an American will be struck by its smallness, says a writer in the Atlantic's contributor's club. True, the edifice holds a good many people, but somehow the architectural conformation enables the eager audience to cluster about the stage, tier above tier, at no great distance therefrom. Then can one note how important is the finish of the actor, the nuances coming into play admirably; not a shade of expression, not a single modulation in quality of tone failing to deliver its message. Is it strange that in France the art of acting should attain a polish unknown elsewhere?

When Sergeant Talford's play of Tom was in rehearsal the production was entrusted to the skillful hands of Macready, at once the ablest actor and most exacting manager on the British stage. He insisted upon having the "curtain scenes," or picturesque groupings at the close of an act, carefully chalked, the position of each character accurately designated, and the last few effective movements clearly indicated by chalk lines drawn upon the flooring of the stage. So patiently and so painstakingly was the piece rehearsed that the leading lady, Miss Ellen Tree (afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean), was found, before the performance, to have contracted a serious disease of the knee-joint, caused by frequently falling upon her knees during rehearsals under the tutelage of the martinet manager.

Young and undisciplined actors, accustomed to rely upon the "beautiful spontaneities" of an artistic nature, were wont to regard Mr. Macready with something akin to terror, and to stigmatize as artificial his relentless accuracy and precision in details. There is undoubtedly something perilously fascinating about the effortless productiveness which we are accustomed to regard as genius, and which, as it vouchsafes no hint of toil, is seemingly the gift of heaven, but I fear the more we examine the matter, the more we shall be inclined to accept the homely assurance of Wirt that "there is no excellence without great labor."

EDUCATION NEEDED.

Pressing Need of the Immediate Presence of the Schoolmaster. Here is an actual conversation which occurred in a Philadelphia restaurant between an American and an Englishman, both of full age, and one a voter, says the Standard: American—How long have you been in this country? Englishman—About two years and a half. American—How far from London did you live? Englishman—Right in London; that is, they call it London. Old London was surrounded by a wall, and was no bigger than Philadelphia. The wall was built by the Romans when they occupied that part of England. American—Is that so? How long ago was that? Englishman—Oh, about eight hundred years or so, in the time of William the Conqueror. American—I didn't know the Romans ever lived in England. Was that wall all around the city? Englishman—Yes, with several gates in it, which were shut at night. American—What was that about? Wasn't there a king named George III, who tried to conquer America and didn't succeed? That was the time of the revolution. They had trouble, the English and Americans, up to 1812 or 1814. Englishman—Yes, I believe there was something of that kind. American—Isn't London on a river? Englishman—Yes, on the Thames. Some people pronounce it the way it is spelled, but it is wrong.

THE SCOTTISH LANGUAGE.

Its Words Are Easily Pronounced When You Know the Way. The Scotch trilling of the r, the deepening of the sound of the vowels, and several other things will not be well attained by us on this side the Atlantic, and yet a sufficient familiarity with Scotch pronunciation and idioms to enable one to sing an easy Scotch song or relate a Scotch anecdote, is a qualification to which many a one would like to aspire. We must first get right, writes William Wye Smith, in the Chautauquan, with the a and the o. If the reader will carefully practice the sound, he will find that the long sound of o in English is a compound sound. It begins with o and ends with oo. The long o in Scotch is a simple sound. It does not end in oo. There is no movement of the mouth during the sounding of it. There is some advantage in having the English sound; it widens the scope of our pronunciation. An average Scotchman cannot make (to our ears, and usually not to his own) any distinction between the sound of clock and cloak. He learns the English; but seldom after he is grown up.

Then the long a. Here, again, the English is a compound sound; it begins with a and ends with ee. The Scotch is a simple sound; without the ee, no moving of the vocal organs without pronouncing it. Having mastered these two sounds, the reader has made a good point in trying to pronounce Scotch. The elisions require care. In a, ba, fa, etc., the vowel is pronounced exactly as if the consonant were not dropped, all ball, etc. The ringing sound at the end of words ending in ag is not much heard in Scotch. Feeling becomes fecin'; only the i sounds to us like ee. Try to keep the accent on the first syllable, and say feeleen. Such would be the Scotch sound. In relating a Scotch anecdote people sometimes write and speak the word minister as meenister. In this case it is the wrong i that is changed into ee. Preserve the accent on the first syllable and say men-ee-ster. You have still the last syllable wrong. You call it stur. The er there and almost everywhere in Scotch has the pure sound on the short e as found in merry.

One word about gutterals. "These have all been discarded from the English language," so everybody says. I am a Scotchman, and I beg to dissent. You say "poo!" and when you pronounce it don't you say "poo?" You add the guttural sound. Now try the beautiful Scotch word "poo," the "poo" of the sea. It is a perfect rhyme for poo. All words ending in gh or ich, light or light are gutterals. Anyone learning German will soon acquire the sound. These, with a little attention to the French sound of the u, in a large class of words, such as guid, bluid, cutt, schule, etc., will do much to take off the awkwardness of having to read a page of Burns or Scott or venturing on a little Scottish song.

THE MINISTER'S WIFE.

What Is Expected of the Woman Who Marries a Preacher. To be a minister's wife does not necessarily mean to be a model of female perfection, but if the picture of the successful one, depicted by a minister's widow in the New York Recorder, is accepted, the right who weds a parson assumes a difficult responsibility. This is what she must be: First of all, a sympathetic woman, and her tear wells must be near the surface, that she may weep readily with the bereaved sinner, the godly Pharisee and for the erring world when called upon to do so. She must be something of a theologian in order that she may lend a timely suggestion to her husband when he requests it. She must be able to offer a prayer worthy of emulation and to be president of the church aid society. While she sews for foreign missions and makes stocking supporters and earmuffs for the cannibals, she must guard well the suits and trappings of the parsonage inmates lest the eagle eye of some self-imposed deputy discovers evidences of her neglect. She must cultivate a feeling of gratitude to the church vigilance committee, who walk in occasionally to count up the broken crockery and inspect the wall paper previous to a donation. She must be somewhat of a cook, in order that she may send broth and blanc mange to the afflicted, and somewhat of an authority on disease, to prescribe paregoric and liniment to the needy. Of her the world expects so much and gives so little in return. Her individuality is entirely swallowed up by those whom she serves. She is not even responsible for the proverbial minister's son, who "goes to the bad," she is accountable for neither virtues nor vices in the family, but in the battlefield of her own existence she stands an uncrowned hero—greater than he who has conquered a city.



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