

Of the position of woman in Serbia she writes that it is fully independent. True the man generally walks ahead, expecting the woman to walk behind, and she eats after the men have been served, but their many charming proverbs show what influence they do exercise, and the position they really hold.

"A house is not built on earth but on a woman," and "Blessed are the hands that knead the bread" are specimens, and though they relate chiefly to the domestic virtues, these sentiments are commendable.

Friendship and love are no empty works with them and are pregnant with real meaning.

In his endurance of pain or suffering the Serb is a stoic. An American Red Cross doctor said of them in 1912:—"You have not seen bravery till you've seen a Serb die or seen these people suffer. I'll take off an arm or a leg, without an anæsthetic mind you, and will the fellow budge? Not an eyelid. He may say 'Rerkulete' (Oh! dear), but that's all, and very seldom that much. And die! They'll die without a sound—unless it's to thank you before they go. Where this race of soldiers sprang from I know not, but no mistake they're God's own men."

The beautiful Queen of Roumania commanded Mrs. Will Gordon to lunch, so that she had an unique opportunity of studying this lovely and talented lady.

"Her private apartments provided a true estimate of her inventive genius, the delicate skill in colour schemes and the high artistic feelings which she possesses in an extraordinary degree.

A somewhat original interest is a collection of Byzantine Crosses taken from ancient graves, and now placed in the parks; and in the Silver Room, whose walls and roof are of carved oak, overlaid with dull burnished silver, are two Byzantine fonts. The floor of this room is of blue unglazed tiles shading into cool greens, with tiger and polar bear skins strewn about. There is a delightful portrait of the Queen Dowager, ("Carmen Sylva,") with her beautiful snow-white hair, which she picturesquely describes as "the foam that covers the sea after tempest." Mrs. Gordon had the honour of being present at one of her musical evenings and of hearing her read one of her own poems. Her Majesty presented her with an autograph photograph on which was written one of her own beautiful *pensées*:

"Each one of us has so much to give that we never meet in vain, and so much to receive that we part with thanks."

The fascinating chapter which describes these two royal ladies closes with some beautiful *pensées* from "one of the sweetest singers and most accomplished Queens of her day."

"There is but one happiness—Duty.

"There is but one consolation—Work.

"There is but one reward—The beautiful."

An incidental quotation from a darkie preacher "down South" on the creation of the world is worth recording.

"First de good Lord created light—and den He took a rest.

"Den de good Lord created de hebbens and de waters—and den He took a rest.

"And den de good Lord created de beasts and de fishes—den He took a rest.

"And den de good Lord created man—and den he took a rest.

"Den de Lord created woman—and neither God nor man hab had any rest since."

A very interesting chapter is that of gypsy lore and music. The gypsy is one of the most distinctive and interesting features of the Balkan countryside. "The well-known saying, 'There is not room to swing a cat in,' is a current superstition of the Roumanian Tsigan, for when a cat wanders or will not settle, the peasant is advised to swing it three times round the room.

Wherever they are, however disguised by change of station or affluence, they can never be mistaken for any other race and they would never wish it, for the true gypsy, despite the outcast people may think him, is proud of his blood and his mysterious ancient ancestry.

The women of Scodra (Albania) have a certain independence in their homes; no man may strike a woman, unless he be her husband, and he only if she has refused to do his bidding after thrice asking her. The Catholic widows are the most decorative-looking persons in Albania, for they mourn for their lords in brilliant scarlet with wide sleeves and bibs of fine muslin."

Certainly this is a volume that counts.

H. H.

A HOLIDAY.

BURTON BRADSTOCK.

Beneath the ancient stately tower
Hard by the tinkling silver stream,
Air laden with magnolia flower,
This is a spot in which to dream.

The murmur of the distant sea,
The lowing of the gentle kine,
Lull all the senses blissfully,
Bid them in Nature's arms recline.

Amid the little homes of thatch,
For a brief summer holiday,
Respite from turmoil did I snatch,
And tender mem'ries brought away.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Men in the spirit of caution go on looking, so that they never leap—go on looking till looking becomes irresolution, and irresolution cowardice, and cowardice passes into apathy, and apathy becomes tinged with cynicism. And in the end they are found to have avoided the perils of enthusiasm and precipitancy only to contemplate a fruitless life. There is at least as much danger of not doing right as there is of doing wrong. Perhaps, if precipitancy slays its thousands, irresolution slays its ten thousands.

THE BISHOP OF OXFORD.

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