

MARTYRS TO CIRCUMSTANCE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649644018

Martyrs to Circumstance by Mrs. Yelverton

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

MRS. YELVERTON

**MARTYRS TO
CIRCUMSTANCE**

MARTYRS TO CIRCUMSTANCE.

MARTYRS
TO
CIRCUMSTANCE.

BY THE
HONOURABLE MRS. YELVERTON.



LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1861.

[The Right of Translation is reserved.]

250. c. 84.

MARTYRS TO CIRCUMSTANCE.

CHAPTER I.

MY husband was serving with his regiment in the Crimea. I, like many other wives, resolved to endure the miseries of a Stamboul residence, in consideration of the painful satisfaction thus afforded me of being near the scene of action, in case of accident or sickness.

Another powerful reason was, that I should obtain my letters from him a few days earlier than when in Malta; a reason which only those who have lived for months

2 MARTYRS TO CIRCUMSTANCE.

in hope and fear of the next mail's arrival, can appreciate.

With many soft words and much hard coin, I succeeded in getting myself lodged under the protection of the Sisters of the Propaganda, in a room resembling a bird-cage, lined with glass, and which was hung out or projected from the main building, called the *Maison Mère*. To convey any notion of this place to an European reader is almost impossible. It was a large, dismal, mysterious, tumble-down, and dirty structure; rambling in and out of three or four of the filthiest lanes of Galata. There was not a cheerful or bright spot in the whole establishment, except the roof, which could not be deprived, like the rest of the building, of sun and air. The rooms were large and gloomy; the windows doubly guarded by the Turkish harem grating and monastic iron stanchions. There was a perfect maze of narrow, dark passages, running in every direction not only to, but

round, these apartments; intersecting each other, as though short cuts from one room to another had been the design of the architect, or more probably, of the inhabitants.

Somewhere in the midst of this was a church, which must have been excavated out of the rooms and passages; as there was no external evidence of its existence that I could ever discover; and the bell hung outside the *Pharmacie* window.

The *Pharmacie* was a bonâ fide druggist's shop, where medicines, pills, and plasters were compounded for the use of the hospital. Three or four passages led to a range of kitchens, whence issued a perpetual odour of *bouillon* and jam for the convalescents in the hospital; to work-rooms, with eternal sheet-making; to store-rooms, where the walls were lined with chocolate (without which a Frenchman is not supposed to recover from sickness) and other dry condiments; to wash rooms, &c., and the hospital. Such was the *Maison*

Mère. The only entrance which one might venture to call such was almost blocked up and eclipsed by a large building opposite, whose overhanging roof and projecting windows came nearly in contact with the crumbling, ornamental, stone-work of the great gateway. Massive wooden doors studded with nails, and opening down the middle, were usually kept fast with iron bars; and a hole, resembling the entrance to a large dog-kennel, was the ordinary mode of ingress. Inside lay a large Stamboul dog, which, for his ugliness and his guardianship of the gate, I christened Cerberus. Beyond was a small court-yard and the lodge of the portress, a little dark room. The portress was a miniature Cyclops, having one furious eye, which appeared anxious to occupy the centre of her face. Between her and Cerberus constant war existed, and a mutual exchange of growls and snarls was kept up. I never could count the number of languages she spoke, but con-

cluded that she had the gift of tongues, and the facility for scolding in any.

There were several other narrow doors, less dangerous to enter, and more humble, which hid themselves round corners or up narrow dark passages, and were undefended.

What I have described in a page, took me months to discover; for although I was admitted and sheltered in the cage, I was not considered as an inmate of the rest of the building, over which a conventual mystery brooded. But the narrow lobbies excited my curiosity from the first; and though feeling that I committed a breach of etiquette in wandering into latitudes where I had obviously no business, having nothing else to do I made frequent explorations into the ghostly regions; and whether it was the effect of a guilty conscience or not, I often fancied I heard piteous moans through the walls of rooms, the entrance to which I could not even surmise. Be