

**THE EASTERN
QUESTION SOLVED: A
VISION OF THE FUTURE**

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The Eastern Question Solved: A Vision of the Future by Budge

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BUDGE

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EASTERN QUESTION SOLVED.

A VISION OF THE FUTURE.

BY

“BUDGE.”

“PEACE ! GOOD WILL !”



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THE
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A VISION OF THE FUTURE.

CONSTANTINOPLE! Could it be possible, or was I the victim of some extraordinary hallucination? No, it was not a dream. Bathed in the silvery, hazy light of early morning, there it rose, before me, and on my right hand, and on my left, the triple city—the European, the Asiatic, and the Osmanli! Galata and its old Genoese tower, crowned by Pera's grand mansions; Scutari, white in the distance; and, close

at hand, Stamboul, with sombre groves of trees and bright dwellings of every colour rising from the battlemented walls, themselves laving their feet in the tranquilly rippling azure sea below. Above the houses and the trees the grey-blue domes swelled in the transparent sky, and countless white minarets shot forth, slender and graceful on every side, to steal the first gleams of the rising sun. It was a sight which has driven painters, poets, and writers to seek a comparison in imagination's most fertile dreams of Paradise, and then made them sigh in despair at the poor picture they succeeded in producing, when compared with the marvellous reality. Fair, wondrously fair, without; but within? If stones and timber were endowed with the power of speech, the great city could well borrow a simile from another locality, and cry out in the words of the Veiled Prophet:—

Here—

Judge if hell, with all its power to damn,
Can add one curse to the foul thing I am!

Not that other capitals have a particular claim to

virtue and morality ; but as Constantinople stands peerless in her outward beauty, so may she also be singled out as unique in her inward corruption, inasmuch as it proceeds from the head and fountain, whence a better example is usually expected—from the Osmanli Government.

But I was not in the city as yet ; I was standing on the deck of a vessel which, from her speed, I should have called a steamer, had I perceived any signs of steam or smoke, or seen the familiar funnel. What could it mean ? The strange part of it was that I had no recollection of ever having come on board such a vessel, or of having started for Constantinople at all. As I was racking my brain for an explanation, two passengers came up to within a few paces of me, and began to talk in a tongue which sounded like French, although it was not that language. It contained a great number of words borrowed apparently from different tongues. I could almost understand it, but not quite.

My curiosity was aroused. Going up to them, I asked in the best French I could command, if

they would kindly explain what was the motive power that sped the vessel on which we were.

My interlocutors looked at one another and smiled; then one of them replied in the purest English: "Electricity, Sir!—But," he added, "you will excuse me if I inquire what part of the world you come from, that you ask such a question?"

I replied that I had last come from England, that is, as far as I could make out.

He shook his head and said: "We English were amongst the very first to employ electricity as a motive power."

He was very courteous, but he evidently thought me mad, and I was almost inclined to think the same myself. Gradually I came to the conclusion, that it was better to submit quietly to the unseen power, that had placed me in the strange position in which I found myself, whether that power hailed from Bedlam, or emerged from the mysterious regions of Dream-land.

Presently we swept silently past the famous

Seraglio point, and the Golden Horn opened out before us its matchless kaleidoscope of floating, gliding and darting colour, whilst reflecting in its sapphire depths the quivering images of the amphitheatre of verdure, buildings, domes and minarets which framed it on either side. And now for the first time I noticed something new—not in one object alone, but in many. On the first hill of Stamboul stood a magnificent edifice, which I had never seen before. On the summit of this, on that of the commanding white tower of the Seraskiarat, and opposite, in European Constantinople, over Galata's dark grey tower, there waved aloft in the breeze a pure white flag with a bright red star in its centre. I turned towards Mr. Hart, my new English friend.

“How comes that flag there in place of the Turkish ensign?” I asked.

“That is the International flag,” was his answer, “and if you look through this glass, you will see, round the star, the motto which guides all those who range themselves under its humane sway—‘Peace, good will!’ As for the