

**THE INDEPENDENT NOVEL
SERIES. A PHANTOM
FROM THE EAST**

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PIERRE LOTI & J. E. GORDON

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THE
INDEPENDENT NOVEL
SERIES

A PHANTOM FROM THE EAST



**THE
INDEPENDENT NOVEL SERIES**

THE SHIFTING OF THE FIRE
A PHANTOM FROM THE EAST
JEAN DE KERDREN.

PIERRE LOTI

A PHANTOM

FROM

THE EAST

76

TRANSLATED BY J. E. GORDON

30-

London
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE

—
M D C C C X C I I



*A Phantom
From the East.*



CHAPTER I.

SEPTEMBER 188—

MIDNIGHT, after one of those cool evenings in September, in which there is already a whisper of Autumn. Silence everywhere. In my home, where all is laid asleep, I alone am waking, my mind agitated with anxiety and expectation. Two hours ago I withdrew into my own apartments, saying that I was going to bed, like a wise man, in preparation for my early

start on the morrow. But sleep does not come. Shut into my own rooms, wandering aimlessly from one to another, I give myself up to indefinable dreams, as on the eve of the memorable departures of my sailor life on long and distant cruises; and deep down in my inner self, there passes before me, in slow and sinister review, the memories of days done with, of things for ever over, of the faces of the dead.

This time, however, I am only going away for a month, and no further than Constantinople, but the journey will be a sad one. . . .

It must be that there was played yonder some never-to-be-forgotten act of the dark fairy-tale, which has been my life, that I am so disquieted at the thought of returning thither; for

everything which comes from there, a Tartar word passing through my mind, an Oriental weapon, a piece of Turkish stuff, a perfume, to plunge me at once into a reverie, as of a banished man, in which Stamboul reappears before me. And it is by no mere artistic caprice either that my apartment here is like that of some Emir of bygone times, and resembles an Eastern dwelling, which, by witchcraft, has been transported into the midst of my dear hereditary home, with its serrated arches, its old-world embroideries of gold, and its white-washed walls. A spell, from which I shall never free myself, was thrown over me by Islam at the time when I lived on the shores of the Bosphorus, and in a thousand ways I am under that spell in things in-