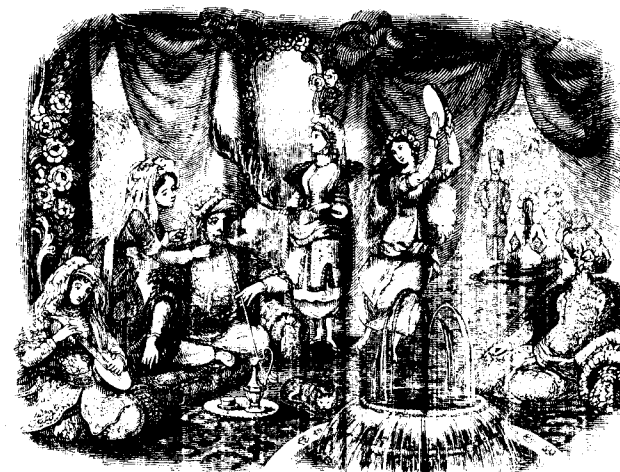




TRAVELS
IN
CIRCASSIA,
KRIM TARTARY, &c.

INCLUDING
A STEAM VOYAGE DOWN THE DANUBE, FROM VIENNA TO
CONSTANTINOPLE AND ROUND THE BLACK SEA,
IN 1836.

By EDMUND SPENCER, Esq.
Author of "Sketches of Germany and the Germans," &c.



A TURKISH FAMILY PICTURE.

Second Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1838.

q 1-68
10074

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

HOWEVER much self-love may impress me in favour of my own work, the high importance of our relations in the East, the increasing attention with which they are regarded, and the paucity of information we possess relative to that country, which formed the principal subject of my observations, will not permit me to indulge my vanity with the idea, that the success of these volumes has been owing to any literary merits of mine, even though I were to call to my aid the critical suffrages with which my work has been almost universally favoured.

Perhaps, strictly speaking, an author is under little obligation to his reviewers, even though their verdict should be unanimous in his behalf; for they would, with as little hesitation, condemn him to oblivion: still the service rendered by their approbation is too important for him to feel otherwise than grateful. In expressing my thanks to the periodical press of my country for the

zealous, able, and generous manner with which it has seconded my advocacy of the Circassian cause, and also for the indulgence which it has, with scarcely an exception, accorded to my work, I do it with the sincerity of one fully sensible of the value of the benefit.

In what way, however, my gratitude can be called forth by the observations of a certain *quarterly oracle*, I confess I am unable to divine; for I find I am charged, in no very gentlemanly terms, with inventing the greater part of my journey through the interior of Circassia. However, I am not the first traveller to whom that sceptical reviewer has ascribed such a felicitous measure of superhuman invention. Poor Caillié, who visited Timbuctoo in 1827, was pronounced to be similarly endowed, till subsequent travellers indisputably established the veracity of his statements.

A reviewer ought undoubtedly to be allowed great latitude in his animadversions; but he should pause—ay, pause long, before he dares to incur the responsibility of branding an author with falsehood, directly or indirectly, when he is unable to substantiate the charge by any evidence contained in the work under review. So far from this being the case in the present instance, the reviewer himself acknowledges the opinions expressed in the volumes in question to be perfectly correct, the delineation of character equally so; at least, says

the critic, they “correspond with every account we have hitherto had of the countries of which the author treats.”

In this respect, I have been less mercifully treated by one of my own countrymen, than by the hireling scribes of Russia on the continent; who, however zealously they might fulfil the behest of their employers by *knouting* my work, never, in a single instance, questioned its authenticity; the fact of my visit to the interior of Circassia being perfectly well known to the Russian government, through the medium of its horde of spies at Trebizond and Constantinople, who take care to be accurately informed of whatever passes in Circassia. I could certainly supply some interesting information as to the origin of my visit to Circassia, were I at liberty to divulge it; but in so doing, I should not only compromise the welfare and safety of those who aided me in my enterprise, and retard the independence of Circassia by revealing the names of her powerful friends, but, at the same time, the disclosure would, in all probability, be attended with serious political consequences.

I find the principal ground upon which the editor of the review in question rests his doubts, is the apparent impossibility of any man, however enterprising, completing so long a journey in so short a space of time. No doubt, such a tour must appear marvellous to a dyspeptic invalid,

who, perhaps, rarely travels beyond the precincts of his study ; but, in truth, there is nothing wonderful in the exploit, provided the traveller possesses the health, energy, courage, and activity necessary for such an undertaking, when we remember the facilities of steam navigation, now established on the Lower Danube and the Euxine. Indeed, the very circumstance of making such a tour in so short a time, and the still shorter time in which I arranged my notes for the press, ought to have been received as a sufficient excuse for any slight inadvertencies that might appear in a work so hastily written. This was the view taken by the intelligent editor of the *Athenæum*, when he says, " Our obligations are increased to the author, by the haste he has made to communicate the information he collected to the public."

In the next place, my censorious assailant gravely tells his readers, that he cannot place any confidence in a traveller, unless his pages are plentifully sprinkled with dates ; that is, I presume, in the journal form, similar to those publications that enlightened our venerable ancestors, in which the occurrences of every hour in each day were minutely recorded. If such be his opinion, I think the perusal of travels of this description should, if the reviewer is a Catholic, be considered a sufficient plea to exempt him from the penalties of purgatory. Being myself altogether of a different opinion, and desirous of giving

as much as possible a consecutive narrative, I adopted the style I thought most favourable to that object.

It also appears, that I unconsciously gave offence to this admirer of journals, by omitting to publish the names of every one of those persons to whom I was indebted for information and assistance during my travels, although I expressly stated in my Introduction, that an author who makes known the names of those persons living under absolute monarchies, to whom he may have been indebted for political information, &c., exposes them to irreparable injury—it may be, death itself. We may therefore be assured, that no consideration would have prevented the Russian authorities (now all powerful in Turkey) from extending their tender mercies to the captain of the little vessel he so pointedly alludes to, if they could have identified the individual who dared, in defiance of the blockade, convey gunpowder and salt to their enemies, the Circassians. Till I became aware of this transgression against the statutes of my self-constituted judge, I concluded, from the confident tone with which he reviewed my work, that he had himself visited the East, as I could not suppose he would dare to pronounce a verdict on the veracity of my statements, if he had never visited the countries of which it treated : whereas, this ignorance of the precautions necessary to be adopted towards despotism, renders it doubtful

whether he has ever crossed the British Channel, much less journeyed through a single land governed by an absolute monarch.

We now come to another point for discussion. The reviewer is altogether in error in supposing that the Russian blockade has annihilated the traffic in Circassian slaves. He ought to have known, that cupidity will brave even greater risks than that of encountering the ill-worked, sluggish ships of Russia in the Euxine; and every traveller who has visited Constantinople and Ispahan, knows that Circassian slaves are daily sold in the bazaars of those cities.

Then the anecdote relative to the Circassian language, which he accuses me of stealing from the author he quotes, is quite as current among the Turks and Persians as one of Joe Miller's stories is among ourselves. As to the Vocabulary of the Circassian and English words annexed to my work, which he says was first compiled by a Frenchman, and subsequently copied by me, so trivial a circumstance could not in any way affect the merits of my publication, even if I had appropriated his vocabulary; but the real fact is, that the author he alludes to, and with whom I passed many a pleasant hour at Odessa, is not, as he asserts, a Frenchman, whatever his ancestors may have been, but a native of one of the Greek islands; and so far from the Vocabulary being written according to the French rules of pronun-

ciation, it is composed agreeably to those of the Russian, which language possesses the only European characters that will, however imperfectly, express the sounds of the Circassian language. Hence the author alluded to copied it from a small Circassian phrase-book, printed by order of the Russian government for the use of the officers serving in the army of the Caucasus.

With regard to the circumstance of this said journal being the text-book from which, to use the elegant phraseology employed by the reviewer, "I cobbled" mine, I would ask, what information could be found in a work, the subject of which was a voyage performed round the Black Sea by order of the Russian government nearly twenty years ago, especially as the principal object of interest in these volumes is the present state of the war carried on between that power and the confederated princes of Circassia? Moreover, the author does not even pretend to have travelled into the interior of the country. How then could he give a description of the manners and customs of the Circassians?

I shall now bid farewell to my reviewer. But if I have, in a solitary instance, experienced less candour and impartiality than I thought I deserved from one of my own countrymen, after undergoing so much toil and braving so many perils, I have been amply compensated by the praises accorded to my work by some of the most