

without the gold spangles for their hair, which hung in long tresses below their waists. The girls, advancing, took the hand of Vankovitch's wife, and placed it on their heads as a sort of deferential salute. The Pole poured out a glass of raki for the fat woman, who, though a Mohammedan, was not adverse to alcohol. She smacked her lips loudly; the man with the bagpipes gave vent to his feelings in a more awful sound than before; the lutes struck up in different keys, and the ball began.

The two girls whirled round each other, first slowly, and then increased their pace till their long black tresses stood out at right angles from their bodies. The perspiration poured down their cheeks. The old lady, who was seated on a divan, now uncrossed her legs, beating her brass ankle-rings the one against the other, she added yet another noise to the din which prevailed. The girls snapped their castanets, and commenced wriggling their bodies around each other with such velocity that it was impossible to recognise the one from the other. All of a sudden, the music stopped. The panting dancers threw themselves down on the laps of the musicians.

'What do you think of the performance?' said Vankovitch to me, as he poured out another glass of raki for the dancers. 'It is real hard work, is it not?' Then, without waiting for an answer, he continued, 'The Mohammedans who read of European balls, and who have never been out of Turkey, cannot understand people taking any pleasure in dancing. "What is the good of it when I can hire someone else to dance for me?" is the remark.'

'They are not very wrong,' I here observed; 'that is, if they form an idea of European dances from their own. Our Lord Chamberlain would soon put a stop to these sort of performances in England.'

'The Lord Chamberlain, who is he?' inquired an Armenian who was present, and who spoke French.

'He is an official who looks after public morals.'

'And do you mean to say that he would object to this sort of dance?'

'Yes.'

'But this is nothing,' said Vankovitch. 'When there is a marriage festival in a harem, the women arrange their costumes so that one article of attire may fall off after another during the dance. The performers are finally left in very much the same garb as our first parents before the fall. We shall be spared this spectacle, for my wife