

ART. XVI.—*A Letter to RICHARD CLARKE, ESQ., Honorary Secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society, on the subject of a Turkish Tombstone found in a Garden adjoining the Middle Temple.*

[Read June 5th, 1852.]

MY DEAR SIR,

Some days since one of my friends told me that he had seen a stone, inscribed with Arabic characters, standing half-buried in a little garden immediately adjoining that of the Middle Temple. I at once hastened to the spot, thinking it might possibly be a trophy brought from the Holy Land by some one of the warriors whose “cross-legged” statues still decorate the ancient place of worship of the Templars. One glance, however, was sufficient to prove that my expectations were groundless; and the said stone turns out to be the monument of a pious Musulmán, who died at the close of the last century.

The following is a copy of the inscription thereon, with a translation.

زِيَارَتْدِن مِرَاد دَعَادِرُ
 بُو كُونُ بِنَا اَيْسِه يَارِين سَنَادِرُ
 الْمَرْحُومُ الْمَغْفُورُ
 الْحَاجُّ غُنَيْمُ طَاظَا
 رُوْحَتِه فَا تَحْتِه
 س ١٢٠٩ هـ

“The object of the visitation [of the tomb] is prayer.

If it be mine to-day, it is thine to-morrow.

The received-into-mercy, the pardoned,

Al Hájj Ghuním Tázá.

[Recite] a Fátihah¹ for his soul.²

Anno 1209 [A.D. 1794].”

¹ The Opening Chapter of the Kurán.

² رُوْدِنِه for رُوْدِنِه. The first duty of a visitor to a tomb is to recite the Fátihah, or to employ some person to recite previously a longer chapter, generally

It will be observed that the simple *Nún* is used instead of the *Sághir Nún* in the words *بنا* and *سنا* : I am not aware whether this be usual or not. The word *Tázá*, may perhaps be read *Tátá*, as there is some doubt whether the mark over the second consonant is a diacritical or a vowel point. The name is unusual, but there is no doubt that it belonged to a Muhammadan, for the epithets *Marhúm* and *Maghfúr* would not be applicable to any other than a true believer, besides which, "*Al-Hájj*" being prefixed, denotes that the deceased had performed the pilgrimage to Mekkah. The height of the stone is three feet six inches, the breadth eleven inches. It is in very good preservation, and the characters are neatly cut. When I first saw it, it was buried up to the third line.

There is nothing very curious in this monument *per se*, but the question is, how it ever found its way to London? for, from the style of the sculpture, it was unquestionably executed in the East. I have made every inquiry, but without success; the landlord of the garden informs me that he remembers it for forty years, and when I told him the date of the inscription, viz. A.D. 1794, he said that, as nearly as he could recollect, that was about the time when his father acquired the property. He however, knows nothing as to when, or how, or why the Musulmán's tombstone was set up on the banks of the Thames. The gardener of the Middle Temple, and those who live on the spot, state that it is the boundary stone of the lands of the Duchy of Lancaster; and this may possibly be true, since, over against the place where it now stands, there are two stones, let into the wall, defining the limits of the property of the Duchy and the parish of St. Clement Danes.

By whatever means this monument arrived at its present position, it is strange to find the tombstone of a Muhammadan *Hájj* standing within a hundred yards of the marble effigies of the bitterest enemies

the thirty-sixth, or even the whole *Kurán*; or sometimes the visitor recites the *Fátihah*, and, after hiring a person to perform a longer recitation, goes away before he commences.—See Lane's *Arabian Nights*, vol. 1. p. 71. These prayers for the departed are believed to increase his happiness in futurity or to diminish his misery.—Ib p. 249, and see Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. ii. p. 240. In describing the visitation of the tombs of saints, Mr. Lane, in another place, observes that these acts of devotion are generally performed for the sake of the saint; though merit is likewise believed to reflect upon the visitor who makes a recitation. The latter, at the close of the ceremony, adds, "O God, I have transferred the merit of what I have recited from the excellent *Kurán* to the person to whom this place is dedicated," or "to the soul of this *Wali*." Without such a declaration, or intention to the same effect, the merit of the recital belongs solely to the person who performs it.—*Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. pp. 304-5.

of his faith, who lie mouldering in "the Round" of the Temple Church.

I send, with this, a cast of the inscription, which perhaps may find a place in the Museum of the Society, and I have annexed a drawing of the entire stone.

Believe me to remain,

My dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

WILLIAM H. MORLEY.

15, Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn,
15th April, 1852.

P.S. Since writing the above, I have been informed by the learned Baron Hammer-Purgstall, that the form of the first two lines of the above epitaph is the most common on all Turkish tombstones, but that the sculptor has in the present instance omitted the particle *انجبت* between the words *مراد* and *دعادر*; this however, does not alter the sense. The learned Baron also tells me that he printed the text of this formula in his topographical work "Constantinopolis und der Bosphorus," where it will be found amongst the Oriental inscriptions, No. 45; and he adds the following neat translation into German.

"Gebeth erheischt Besuch allhier,
Denn heute mir und morgen dir."

W. H. M.