

as she passes by ; she is ever to remain an object of mystery ; and the most intimate acquaintance never inquires after the wife of his friend, or affects to know of her existence.* This very mystery, however, piques the often-baffled inquirer ; and between Europeans, who have become almost Egyptian, and Egyptians who have become almost European, one is able to obtain some information even on this delicate subject.

The Eastern woman seems as happy in her lot as her European sister, notwithstanding the plurality of wives in which her lord indulges, or ventures upon. In her "public opinion's law" there is no more disparagement in occupying the second place as a wife, than there is in Europe as a daughter. The manners of patriarchal ages remain in Egypt as unchanged as its monuments ; and the people of Cairo think as little of objecting to a man's marrying a second wife, as those of Memphis of questioning the legitimacy of Joseph. The Koran, following the example of the Jewish doctors, only allows four wives to each Mussulman, and even of this limited allowance they seldom avail themselves to its fullest extent. Some hareems contain two hundred females, including wives, mothers-in-law, concubines, and the various slaves belonging to each ; but these feminine barracks seem very different from what such establishments would be in Europe. In the hareem there is as much order and decorum as in an English quaker's home : it is guarded as the tiger guards his young ; but its inmates consider this as a compliment, and fancy themselves neglected if not closely watched. This cause for complaint seldom occurs, for the Egyptian has no blind confidence in the strength of woman's character, or woman's love. He holds to the aphorism of Mahomet in this matter, "If you set butter in the sun it will surely melt ;" and considers it safer, if not more glorious, to keep her out of the reach of temptation, than to run the chance of her overcoming it when exposed to its encounter.

Born and brought up in the hareem, women never seem to pine at its imprisonment : like cage-born birds, they sing among

* If alluded to at all by other lips than those of her proprietor, or written to, it is as "the guarded lady,"—"the concealed jewel."—LANE.