

this its effects would be disastrous. To an Arab lady who never goes out otherwise than closely veiled, it would be a far greater trial to walk through the streets with face exposed, than to the European to cover herself.

Much has been said about the hardships of the woman's being locked in during her husband's absence from the house. This is not infrequent and does appear somewhat prison-like; but it is often done solely as a protection. I knew one woman who preferred to be thus locked in, but arranged with her husband that on the days of my visits the key should not be turned on her. And the doors of Arab houses are always so constructed that, even when locked, they can be opened from inside on an emergency though they cannot be reclosed without the key.

When I came to this country some twelve years ago, the thing that most struck me in visiting Arab houses was the cheerfulness and even gaiety of the women. I had a preconceived picture in my mind of poor creatures sitting within prison walls, pining to get out, and in utter misery.

Nothing of the kind! What did I find? Laughter, chatter, the distraction of periodic visits to saints' tombs, or that centre of social intercourse—the bath. Old women, the scandal-mongers of the neighborhood, go round to retail their news. (And it will be allowed that even in England there are many who take a deeper interest in the doings of