

More surprising and sudden than the transformations by Aladdin's lamp in the "Arabian Nights" have been, not the fictitious, but the real and stupendous changes which God's Spirit and God's providence have wrought in Western Asia. Instead of universal espionage, freedom; instead of despotism, constitutions and parliaments; instead of a press that was gagged and throttled, a free press; instead of a grinding system of passports and permits, free emigration and immigration all over Persia and Arabia and Turkey; instead of banishment, amnesty; and instead of despotism ruling in the capitals against the rights of the people and crushing them down, Abd ul Hamid a prisoner at Salonica and parliaments sitting in Teheran and in Constantinople. The great army of spies, numbering forty thousand and said to cost two million pounds a year, has been abolished, and the peoples of Turkey and Persia, blindfolded, gagged and manacled for centuries, were almost delirious with new-found liberty. The Damascus Railway has reached Medina, and electric lights are burning over the prophet's tomb.

Turkey, Persia and Arabia, the three great Moslem lands of the nearer East, have experienced greater industrial, intellectual, social and religious changes within the past four years than befell them in the last four centuries. Nevertheless, some wise statesmen and most thoughtful missionaries are agreed that nothing has ended in Turkey or in Persia; but something has begun in those lands which every eye is strained to understand. It is not necessary to speak of these changes in detail, to indicate how in many respects there has been a decided reaction, or to forecast the future, but the leaders of the Moslem world themselves realize that these changes have been so extraordinary that they indicate a new era for all Western Asia and North Africa.