



GREEN'S  
FIRE-SIDE  
STORIES,

THE GEORGIAN MOTHER  
AND CHILD,  
OR COUSIN EDWARD'S  
STORY.

LONDON:

DARTON & CO.  
HOLBORN HILL.



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## THE GEORGIAN MOTHER AND CHILD.

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“MAMMA,” said little George Blanche, “is my cousin Edward come?”

“Not yet, my dear; but are you quite ready for him?”

“Yes, Mamma,” replied the little boy, “quite ready; I have said all my lessons without any mistake, and I have got a ticket for good behaviour,” holding up a card as he spoke.

As Mrs. Blanche looked into the happy face of her little son, she saw directly that he had been as he said good, for when little children are naughty, they are sure to look ugly.

“May little sister come in too, and hear cousin Edward’s travels?” asked the kind little brother.

“Mamma’s consent was soon obtained, and George and Isabel bounded into the room, as soon as they heard



their cousin's voice. The fire was blazing, the curtains were drawn, and the tea-urn was sending up a cloud of steam like an engine on the railroad ; and mamma seated herself to make tea, when Edward Whitworth entered. Mrs. Blanche immediately rose to welcome him, and to inquire after his health. She had not seen him for six years. George and Isabel also shook hands with him, and asked him how he did, in such a clear pleasant voice, that it sounded quite pretty.

“ My little Isabel is a stranger to you, Edward, she is only five years old, and George was quite a little child when you left.”

Edward thought them very nice little children, and asked them whether they would like to hear a tale after tea.

“ Thank you, cousin,” said George and Isabel, “ we should be so delighted to hear one, if it is not troubling you too much ; but wait if you please for dear papa, for he likes to hear stories.”

So the tea passed off as tea generally does ; all took sugar and cream in their tea except the little folks, who liked milk and water better ; but they enjoyed the biscuits which their mamma allowed them for a treat.

When the tea-things were removed, little George said, "how very happy people must be who live a long way off; don't you think so, cousin?"

"I hope they are, George, but I am sure they are not happier than we are; why should they be?"

George looked puzzled, but knowing that his mamma always expected him to give a reason for what he said, after a little thought, added, "I am always so very happy when I am going a great way, and so is Isabel, that we supposed people that lived so far off must be happier; well, we shall hear what Edward thinks about it."

"There is a beautiful country where fruits and flowers abound, and where the people are very handsome, and it has the advantage, George, of being a great way off."

"Are they not very happy?" inquired Isabel.

"I think they ought to be with so many good things; besides they have beautiful fowls, which were originally brought from India, a very large sort; they have ducks, and geese and bees in great abundance. These people have also very swift and beautiful horses, and the traveller may frequently see beautiful little children



seated under the palm-trees, watching the birds, and ornamenting themselves with wreaths of flowers."

"How very pretty," said Isabel.

"What is the name of this beautiful country?" asked George, "or is it only a fairy tale?"

"No; indeed!" said cousin Edward, "it is a true country, the name of it is Georgia, it is in Asia, that portion of the world where our first parents were placed when God created them in innocence. This quarter of the globe is the most interesting part of the world, for here God's people, the Jews, lived, and were so powerful and happy, while they obeyed God's commands. The Georgians and Circassians are close to each other, for their countries join. And before I begin my story, I will tell you something about these people, which will enable you both, my little cousins, to understand it better. When the Circassian girls are little babies, their mothers bind a strap round their waists, in order that they may be small, as they consider small waists a mark of beauty. They are very fond, Isabel, also of small feet, so they put the feet into the smallest slippers they can wear, to prevent their growing large. When a Circassian prince has a

son or daughter born, he does not have them educated by bishops and learned men, as our sovereigns do, but the poor little babies are immediately given in charge to a nobleman, who is seldom rich, and the parents do not desire to see their sons until they can bear arms, nor do they notice the daughters until after marriage. If the nobleman is unable to find a husband of equal rank for the princess, he loses his head. Now George, said cousin Edward, how should you like to be a Circassian nobleman?"

"Not at all, cousin."

"And yet, George, they live a long way off!"

"But what else do these curious people do?" asked Isabel.

"Many other things, stranger than those I have told you; when a husband dies, what do you suppose the widow does?"

"Grieve, to be sure," replied George, "and wear black, and a very ugly cap. I know they do, because Mrs. Murray has just lost her husband, and I went with mamma last week to call upon her."

"Ah, my little cousin," said Edward Whitworth, laughing, "that is English mourning, not Circassian."



When a Circassian wife loses her husband, she beats her face and breast until the blood issues, and this is to show her respect and affection for him."

"And what does the husband do if he loses his wife," said George, laughing, "I never heard such queer ways in my life."

"They strike their faces with a whip, to produce black spots, which they exhibit for a considerable time, as expressive of their grief, instead of the deep hat-band which an English gentleman wears in memory of his wife."

George now laughed out, and his mamma observed that she did not wonder at his being amused at such strange accounts.

"Should you like to be one of those happy people who live so far away, George," said cousin Edward.

"Ah, now, I see you are laughing at me."

"I should not like to be one of them," said little Isabel.

"What do they eat, cousin Edward?"

"Their food is very simple, consisting only of a little meat, some bread made of millet, and a fermented beer made of the same grain. The poor little girls

are fed very sparingly, that they may grow up slender. On the wedding-day, the parents make their daughter a present, but reserve the greater part of what they intend to give, until she has a son or daughter, on which occasion she pays them a visit and receives the remainder."

"Have they any churches?" inquired the children.

"Yes," replied cousin Edward, "and they build them on the summit of the hills and mountains, and use bells as we do, to draw the congregation together; but they seldom enter them, being contented to look upon the outside. Some of the priests are very venerable in their appearance; they allow their beards to grow. The priests of the higher order wear scarlet, and caps of the same colour."

"Thank you, cousin Edward," said George and Isabel, "now we shall understand your story."

"Before I begin I must tell you, that Georgian and Circassian parents sell their children whenever they are in want."

"How very shocking," said little George, "now I am sure I should not like to be one of them."

"Little Sana," began cousin Edward, "was a very



beautiful child, and being the only one, was treated with much more kindness than Georgian parents usually show towards their children, for they were tolerably rich. So little Sana might be seen riding on his beautiful swift little horse, through the lovely country; sometimes he would sit under the palm-trees, and eat his dinner, and watch his docile little steed, who obeyed every word and motion of his master. But this little animal was not Sana's only favourite, for he had chickens, geese, ducks, and beautiful Indian fowls, which were so tame as to eat out of his hand; all these shared his love. He could not count them, but he remembered them by the plumage; for his father could not count a hundred, so it is not to be wondered that the little boy could not. At other times, he would assist his father with his bees, for they are exceedingly fond of mead, which they make from honey, so that most families keep a great number of these useful industrious little creatures. Thus little Sana's early life passed among fruits and flowers. At length his father became poor and very ill; at first they thought they might have offended one of their deities, so they fasted, and little Sana fasted too, in hopes that his dear father

would be better. But in spite of all, his father grew worse and worse. One morning, a little boy was seen rapidly walking towards the summit of a mountain, where the tinkling of a small bell announced that religious rites were solemnized; he grew sadder as he approached the sacred edifice, and an expression of deep anxiety was visible on his interesting face. He possessed all the beauty for which his country is so remarkable, he was only eight years old, his eyes were of a fine hazel, and his soft light hair waved over his open brow; this little boy was Sana. As he approached the church his terror increased, he entered timidly, and approached, though at a considerable distance, the image of Saint Grobas: here he stopped, and fearing the power of the idol, placed his offering and made his requests. Having done this, he hastened from the place with even more rapidity than he had entered it. He never paused to admire the beauty of the landscape, and enjoy the balmy softness of the air; his heart, poor little fellow, was very sad, for his kind father was very ill, and he believed he must die if Saint Grobas did not exercise his power in their behalf: and Saint Grobas was so terrific, that poor Sana doubted whether he would



exert it. And if his dear father should die, what a sad state his mother and himself would be in ; but the good little boy tried not to think of himself, but only of his father, who had always loved him so very dearly."

"Poor little Sana, how much we pity him," said George and Isabel, "what a kind little boy he was."

"At length he got home and crept softly through the door leading to the principal room ; at the farthest end of this room there was a broad couch, or divan, upon which a man was lying apparently in a dying state. Sana, seated himself by his side, and tenderly inquired how he was ; the father endeavoured to answer his little son, but in vain ; he pressed his hand and immediately expired. 'Oh my dear, dear father !' said the disconsolate child, 'what shall I do ? No one will love me as you have done. Why did not Saint Grobas help us ?' and he threw himself upon his dead father and wept bitterly. When he raised his eyes he saw his mother beside him weeping, and scratching her face and breast, to prove her affection for her husband ; the blood was already flowing from her face, and the frightened child thought his mother was killed. When his fears were abated, he assisted her to collect all the

property of any value which they possessed, but alas! altogether they did not amount to half the some needful for the poor father's interment. Sana added his own little horse and beautiful fowls and ducks. There was still a great deal of money wanting. The priests were sent for, and the widow and her only child awaited their arrival in mute despair. The mother's eyes were fixed on the ground, and her arm fondly clasping Sana's waist, for they dreaded to be separated. At length the priests arrived. The little fellow half alarmed, and half inquisitive, looked from them to his mother; the whole of her property did not amount to more than fifty crowns, and the priests insisted upon the whole demand, one hundred crowns. The poor woman knew it was of no use to object, and said not a word. At length the inferior priest pointed to the child, and said, 'If he were sold the sum would be realised.' Sana's mother only pressed him closer in her arms, and he clung to his only friend more earnestly. All was in vain, there was no remedy; the widow believed that her husband's salvation depended upon his funeral rites being properly performed. To soften the grief of the mother, the superior priest told her that her son should rise to eminence



if she parted with him ; whereas, should she persist in keeping her child with her, her husband could not have the passport to the mansions of the blessed. The priests departed with the child, and returned, after a little time, to the dead man's couch ; they placed a letter on his breast, requiring Saint Peter to admit the soul of the deceased to the mansions of eternal glory, a situation he was entitled to by the generosity of his friends. Poor little Sana was permitted but one look at his father, and was then consigned to the care of strangers.

“ Poor little Sana, I fear,” said Isabel and George, “ that his mother did not love him so well as his father did.”

“ Yes, my dear little cousin she did, and I will tell you how she showed it. She begged the priest to sell her with her son, that they might not be separated ; but they said she had disfigured herself so much that she would fetch nothing in the market ; so they left her alone without money, and without husband and child. The poor child had grieved so much for his parents, that his mild-looking eyes began to look dim, and he lost his colour and became thin. This made the priest

very angry, for he feared he should not sell him to such advantage, so he immediately began his journey to Stamboul, where the Circassians and Georgians take their children to sell them, as the farmers in England take their poultry to market; and I have told you before, they are seldom treated kindly by their parents, so they beg to be taken to Turkey for slaves, because the Turks are always kind to children and young persons. Sana was too unhappy to notice much on his journey until he reached Stamboul, when feeling better, he began to look about him. Various sounds were heard, and the gilded palace of the Sultan appeared in view, its gates glittering, and the cypresses bending low over the Funereal Grove. At length the priest met with a purchaser to his mind, and the little boy found himself in a Turkish harem; he was tired, and they laid him upon cushions; hungry, and they fed him; sorrowful, and they comforted; even the master of the family did not disdain to inquire into the cause of his grief, and when informed, replied, 'The boy is right. My wives die, and I can replace them; my children perish, and others may be born to me; but who shall restore to me the mother who is passed away,



and who is seen no more.' Our little Sana saw many little Georgian children, some of whom had been sold by their own desire ; the little girls were very beautiful, and he remarked that the tips of their fingers and toes were dyed, and they wore large pink trousers, and an upper garment called an "anting," handsomely embroidered. One of these little slaves had been Sana's companion, so he felt comforted, and dreamed of his own beautiful country and much-loved parents.

"I am glad," said Isabel, "that Sana's master was so fond of him. Are you not, George?"

"Very glad," replied the little boy, "for I was afraid, that being a slave, they would beat him, and make him work very hard, and give him very little food, for a gentleman told papa the other day that little slaves were very badly used."

"African slaves are so," said cousin Edward, "but in Turkey the slaves are treated like children. The Turks are so fond of children, that they are frequently adopting those of other people, and they call them children of the soul."

"What became of Sana's mother, when she was left alone, cousin Edward?"

“The poor woman grieved a great deal, and would frequently exclaim, ‘Oh that my poor child had been a girl, for then she would have been far better off.’ After a while she grew ill, and having no offerings to make to Saint Grobas, gave herself over to despair, and was nearly dead; her face was very pale, but had quite recovered from the bruises she had given herself after her husband’s death, and these sad priests carried her off with other women and children, because they wanted money. They were taken to Constantinople, and sold; and now the poor woman began to cease grieving for her son, hoping that he had found friends. She became a great favourite with her mistress, who liked to hear her talk of her husband and little boy, and one day told her, that if she could meet with Sana, she would purchase him, and he should be again with her, for the Turkish ladies were pleased to find she had so much affection for her child. One day, some ladies came from another harem to visit her mistress, and among the attendants was little Sana, when his mother, as she had been desired, brought in pipes (for the Turkish ladies smoke); they recognised each other immediately, and to the great joy of both,



Sana was added to the harem. For a little while, he was a sort of a little page; he would have to stand outside the door while the ladies were at prayers, but when he grew bigger, he would stand by the side of the master, and hand him his chibouque or pipe, which in Turkey is a most elegant thing; the mouth-piece is often composed of amber, and the other part of silver, sometimes twisted in most fantastic and beautiful shapes. Negro slaves there perform most laborious offices. Sana's mother always attended her lady to the bath, which is a very important affair; she was often two hours drying and plaiting her hair, and might be seen, like other slaves, carrying piles of napkins, wrappers, and shawls on her head. Twice a year, the master and mistress, and every superior member of the family, are bound to make the slave a present called the Barkshish; the value depends on the will of the owner."

"Supposing, cousin Edward," said little George, "the slaves do not like their master or mistress, are they at liberty to go away like servants in England?"

"Not exactly; but the Turks are very kind and just to them, therefore, if a slave declares in an open manner

that she does not like her situation, and repeats it three times, she may be sold to another master or mistress, even if the former one should lose money by her."

"Can you tell us any more about Sana's mother?" said Isabel.

"She did not live long after this."

"Poor woman, what did she die of, cousin?" asked both the children in a breath.

"Of the plague, a most shocking disorder, which carries off thousands. One morning the Georgian mother complained of being ill, and it appearing to be the plague, she was placed in a caique, and borne across the river to the Plague Hospital, which is called the Maiden's Tower. It is a very beautiful place, bright and joyous is all without, but how very sad was all within. Sana stood pale and sorrowful, longing to give his mother a last embrace, but this is not permitted. But he saw that her eyes were dim, and moved languidly, her lips were livid and quivered with agony, for she could scarcely speak, her brow was pale and her hands were crossed listlessly upon her breast. The caique or little boat, passed very swiftly along,



for the rowers consider the errand as contagious. The next day Sana's mother was dead; but the plague did not stop here, many were seized with it, and found a resting-place in the beautiful cemetery, where the acacia trees blossom and shed their withered flowers over the dead, a fit emblem."

"And now, what became of poor Sana, cousin Edward?" asked George.

"He lived for some years after his mother's death. At his own desire he was sold to a florist, and pleased his master so well that he gave him part of the profits of the business. You will be pleased to hear that Sana did not die of the plague, his master nursed him in sickness and placed his remains in the Armenian cemetery; and after his age and name had been duly recorded, his gravestone was ornamented with a knot of flowers, to designate his trade; for the Armenians always chisel upon the tomb the emblem of the profession or trade of the deceased."

As Edward Whitworth ceased speaking, Isabel and George rose and thanked him for the pretty story he had told them, and then asked their papa and mamma whether they might ask a few questions.

Mrs. Blanche said, if their cousin was not too tired already, they had her permission to do so.

Cousin Edward had been so much pleased with their pretty behaviour, that he very good-naturedly said, he would, with pleasure, answer any questions they might wish to ask.

Little George wanted to know why the Plague Hospital was called the Maiden Tower.

“The tale is soon told. The tower was erected by a former Sultan, as a residence for his only daughter, of whom it was foretold, by the astrologers, that she would be destroyed by a serpent before her eighteenth year. Every precaution was taken to prevent such a catastrophe, but in vain, for an adder being concealed in a box of figs, fastened on the princess’s hand, and the attendants found her dead on the sofa.”

“What was her name?” asked Isabel.

“I am sorry I cannot tell you, my dear little cousin; but it might have been Fatima, or Mihrimah, for they are both Turkish names.”

“I want to know,” said Isabel, “what sort of emblem (I think you call it), a clergyman would have?”

“If Uncle Charles were a Turkish priest instead of



an English clergyman," asked George, "what would they put on his grave-stone?"

"A mitre, George. The diamond merchant is distinguished by a group of ornaments, the money changer by a pair of scales; the barber's tomb is known by his razor, and the tailor's by his shears, and when it is a business or profession that a woman as well as a man may have followed, the man's tomb is distinguished by a book being placed above the appropriate emblem. Sometimes, you know George, the Sultan sends the bow-string to his subjects, and in that case the sculptor carves on the stone a headless trunk, with the blood gushing out like a fountain from the severed throat. When their young children die, many parents have the stones at the foot of the grave hollowed out to contain water, which they daily fill during the warm weather, for the supply of the birds or any wandering animals."

"How very kind of them; should you not like papa, to see a Turkish cemetery?"

"Very much, my dear children, but as I am not likely to go to Turkey, I am much obliged to your cousin Edward for the description he has so kindly given us. I think," observed Mr. Blanche, "that

the custom of planting cypresses in the cemetery has a very solemn effect, though I think many Turkish hearts must ache if the trees take a downward direction."

"Why, papa?" asked George.

"Because," continued his father, "when they grow downwards, they consider it a certain proof that the soul of the deceased is not happy."

"Oh papa, how very sad; but it is very foolish to think so, is it not?"

"They have another very sad superstition."

"What is that?" inquired Mrs. Blanche.

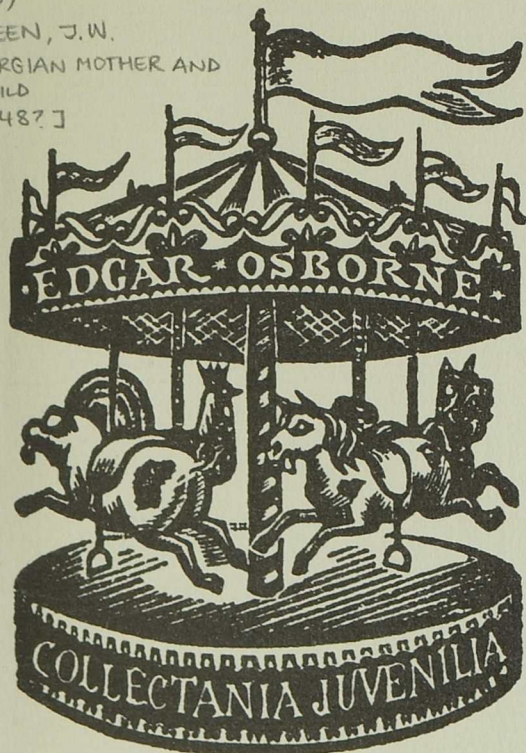
"At a particular season of the year, it is not an uncommon circumstance for a very large flight of birds to traverse this gloomy forest of cypresses, and set up such a hideous yelling and screaming, that the people believe that the souls of those buried there were unhappy, and that they were condemned to wander near the spot where they had passed their life, without the satisfaction of seeing those who had been dear to them."

"And now, my little son and daughter," said Mrs. Blanche, looking at her watch, "it is quite half an hour past your usual bed-time."



George and Isabel did not require to be told this a second time, but wishing their papa and mamma good night, and thanking their cousin Edward for his pretty story, they followed the servant up stairs, telling her what a delightful evening they had spent in the drawing-room, and what a beautiful story they had heard about the Georgians and Circassians and Turks.

(SB)  
GREEN, J.W.  
GEORGIAN MOTHER AND  
CHILD  
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