

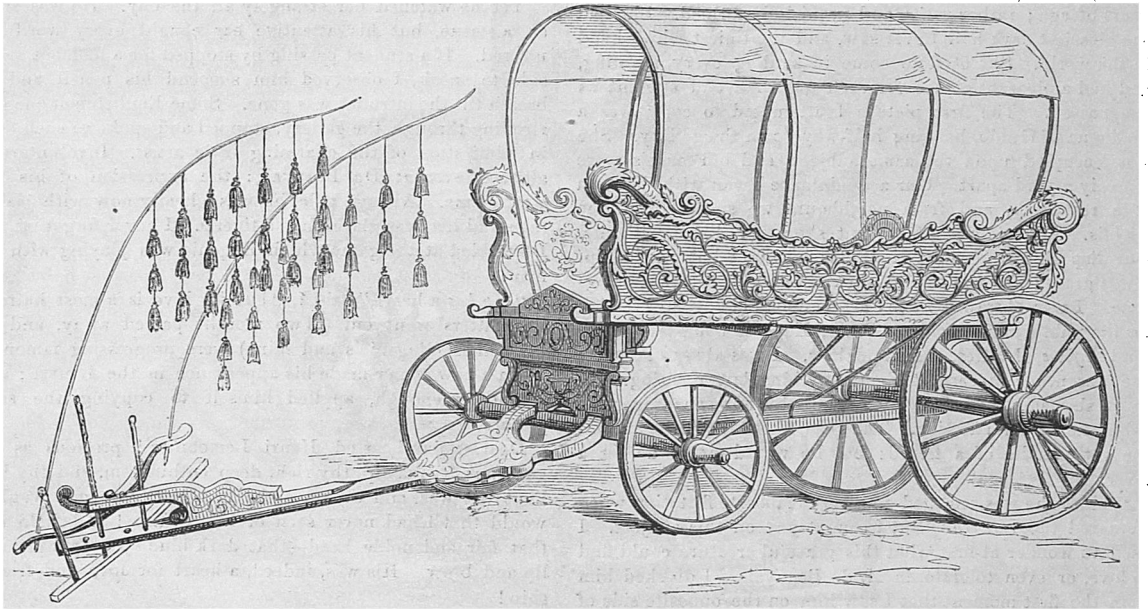
## THE ARABA, OR OMNIBUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

To Parisian genius and enterprise we owe the first omnibus. Seven and twenty years ago, a long-bodied coach or carriage, calculated to afford accommodation to twelve or fourteen persons, and called an Omnibus, plied in the streets of Paris. It derived its name from the last word of the inscription placed upon the side of the vehicle, namely, "*Enterprise Générale des Omnibus.*" In 1829 omnibus conveyances were first adopted in London; in September, 1839, they began to run in Amsterdam; in New York they are too well known to need description. The original omnibuses were vastly different from our modern vehicles bearing the same name; there was a heaviness about them not now to be tolerated; they were drawn by three horses abreast; fitted up, some of them at least, with a library of books for the entertainment of travellers, while the conductors wore velvet caps and uniform jackets. The omnibus conveyance is now popular all over America. The progress made in arts and manufactures has been equalled by that of locomotion, and while over the broad country, the metallic net-work of iron rails marks out the course of the steam-king, through city streets and out to pleasant suburbs plies the

taste and delicacy. These decorations are reproduced within the carriage, and are, if possible, more graceful than those without, for the Turk loves the beautiful as well or better than the useful. There are no benches or seats, the passengers being accommodated after the oriental fashion with mats, while the flooring of the carriage is covered with a rich carpet. The omnibus is entered by a ladder at the back.

The means which have been adopted for making the comfort of the passengers greater than it would otherwise be, are not at all complete, and in most instances, the deficiency of, or the clumsiness of the springs used, renders this mode of travelling very fatiguing. The streets of Constantinople are not the best in the world, and rumbling through them at a quick pace in a Turkish omnibus is not the most exhilarating or agreeable process. But the look of the carriages prepossesses one in their favour.

The pole of the team is attached to the first axle-tree and to the horizontal board which connects it with the second; it is richly ornamented with sculptured foliage, and tastefully painted after the style of the vehicle. The carriage is drawn



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omnibus, affording at once cheap and rapid travelling, though the latter must be received with a grain of caution.

Turkey has its omnibuses as well as the States. Strangely different, however, in every particular; unlike as turban and toga to straw hat and gaiters. Through the kindness of a correspondent we are enabled to present a sketch of a Turkish conveyance which they call Araba, and we call 'bus.

This description of vehicle is constructed to carry ten or twelve persons. It is intended for the conveyance of the inhabitants of Constantinople, and plies to the various quarters of the city and its environs. It is covered with an arched canopy, such as those which were formerly used by the priests of Rome, and are depicted on ancient medals of the time of Nero; to this canopy curtains can be attached so as completely to conceal those who are within the vehicle, and when thus arrayed the Araba is employed to convey the women of the harem to the mosques or into the country, shutting them in effectually from the vulgar gaze. The sides of the carriages are richly ornamented, covered with the most beautiful sculptures, light and elegant in their design, and coloured with

by a pair of oxen, and from the front of the pole which separates them arise two slender pieces of iron, each bearing twenty-one silken tassels, which add considerably to the picturesque effect of the whole. These omnibuses are among the most interesting objects of the Turkish capital. Wandering through the busy streets, among the turbaned heads, and dark visages, and full-robed figures, dreamily thinking of the glories of its past history, of Mahomet with his new faith, of the idolatry of the Kaaba, of the battles, triumphs, and defeats of these ancient people, of the mysterious harems and wondrous mosques, the traveller is surprised by the approach of one of these arabas, with its stately oxen, their horns all hung with ribbons like sacrificial bulls, the gilded and painted carriage, a very marvel to behold, and the varied-coloured costumes of the men and women within, as bright and variegated as a rainbow. An omnibus it may be, but it is so thoroughly Eastern, so much in keeping with the place and the people, that it seems to defy all modern notions, and might have conveyed the one-eyed *cadi*, or been hailed by *Sindbad the Sailor* in the "good old time."