

The Awakening of the Older Nations.

Personalities Behind the Transformed Ottoman Empire—The Young Turk Organization Really a Masonic Movement—The Sultan as a Tool.

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS. Constantinople.—At the back of every movement must be men.

At the time of the constitution and the revolution there were stories of a romantic secret committee in Paris, with a chief possessed of greater statesmanship and more dictatorial powers than any crowned head in Europe.

Admittedly the Young Turk movement was a bit of successful opportunism. Its leaders were quick to take advantage of favorable events, which is certainly nothing to their discredit.

A German on Top. But now, after the lapse of many months, who is the top man in Turkey? Amid all the personalities here, which one towers above all others?

It is none other than Baron von Bieberstein, the German ambassador. One searches in vain for this omniscient, omnipotent Young Turk of whom we read so much at the time of the passing of the old order.

In domestic affairs, as well as in foreign relationships the hand of von Bieberstein may be traced by those whose business it is to know the inwardness of current events here. Since this wise old German is an extra-Turkish personality, perhaps it is not fair to consider him in looking for the most influential figure in the present regime.

A Glimpse of the Sultan. It is easier to say who this man is not than who he is. First of all, it is not the sultan. He may be eliminated at the outset. A high diplomat who has had to converse with the present sultan says that the ordeal is like talking to a wooden man.

With Abdul Hamid, this was an ordeal in his carriage in a coat of mail. Apparently his brother is glad to have this weekly outing, for the poorest hamal that totters over the Galata bridge beneath his monstrous load, sees more of life than does his Royal Highness.

These soldiers are part of the modern army; on the whole, well armed and fairly well set up. Along with them one sees the archaic, red-helmeted fire brigade, with the long leather guards at the back of their helmets. The lancers, who are the sultan's bodyguard, are plainly Mongolian, and fine fellows they appear.

Another charge brought against the committee of Union and Progress is that its membership is largely Jewish. Here one must try to master a strange condition, possible only in this romantic east, where the improbable and the incongruous are matters of every day.

The Prisoner of Salonica. Nor is Abdul Hamid any longer a possible factor in Turkish affairs. Wild rumors fly around occasionally of his escape from his imprisonment, in the garb of a woman servant, and of his being at the bottom of revolutionary plots.

Now he is guarded by the most trusted representatives of the committee of union and progress. I am told

by one whose knowledge of Turkish affairs has proved correct on other points that the jailers of Abdul Hamid are men who have blood feuds with him—whose relatives the deposed sultan has slain—and who would be glad of an excuse to square their accounts with him.

That the common people expect never to see Abdul in power again is shown by the way the press and the public deride and detest and make sport of him. The meanest loafer in the sidewalk cafes is free to curse the memory of the prisoner at Salonica.

Is There a Man of Mystery? One searches in vain for substantiation for the early tales of the wonderful dictator in Paris, who, unknown himself, rules Turkey through the committee of Union and Progress.

There is no really great personality on that body. Not all of the members are known, however, although all possible members have been appraised.

There is an Arabian Nights' flavor to the situation in Constantinople today. The real head of a department may be a man in the outer office. The cabinet minister may be subject to his secretary in the ante-room.

This is the anomaly of present-day Turkey. The committee of Union and Progress is supposed to have dissolved and passed out of existence. It really runs parliament—an incongruity which makes constitutional government seem like a farce.

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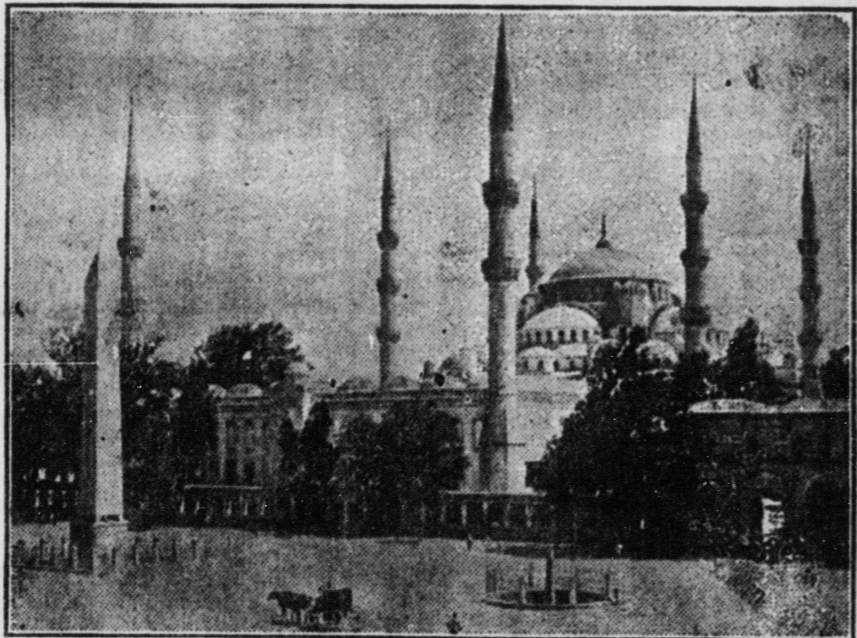
war, the supreme commander of the Turkish armies, the "Saviour of Constantinople" and the man who has frequently been said to be the real dictator of the present regime in Turkey.

Really, Gen. Shevket is practically subordinate to one of his own aids and associates. He is not in the inner circle of the committee of Union and Progress, although a genuine Young Turk. It is perhaps an inconsiderate way of putting the case, but I am credibly informed that he is only a sort of puppet in the hands of stronger men.

He is a charming gentleman to meet, and he speaks with an apparent openness that would disarm an unscrupulous interviewer. He told me in all earnestness and apparent sincerity that there was absolutely nothing in the rumored agreement between Rumania and Turkey, although I had other more trustworthy information, which history has since confirmed.

He speaks with the greatest optimism concerning the future of the new regime. The financial revenues increased by thirty-three million francs during the first year and, because of better methods of collection, a still greater increase will probably be made during the present year.

He said that they are only fit for a museum, and that the rifles and revolvers which can really do business are still within reach of the warlike Albanians.



The Sultan on a Visit to the Mosque.

ed good leaders and organization, and were overwhelmed by the mass of government troops. He looks forward to 150,000 troops from Albania now available.

Moslem Versus Christian. When we got to talking about the possibility of further trouble between the Moslems and the Christians, he naively asserted that it was the Moslems who were in danger from the Christians, which would explain why Christians rather than the Moslems, are being disarmed.

He said that what is being done in Albania in the way of establishing a suitable government with law and order, is being carried out also among the Druses. There is a reasonable percentage of Christians now in the army, according to the new order, and he says it is unthinkable that there should ever again be strife between Islam and Christianity.

The Government's Many Critics. So much for one cabinet minister's view. That he and many like him, in office and out, are real patriots cannot be denied.

The foreigner is displeased, as he chronically is with any government carried on by those whom he likes to call his inferiors.

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