Democratic Matchman.

Bellefonte, Pa., January 26, 1912.

The Awakening of the Older Nations.

the growth of a reactionary plot.

Is There a Man of Mystery?

Hamid.

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. The transformation of Turkey from a mediaeval absolutism to a constitu- the late sultan. It is a portrait cuntional government was not wrought without human agencies. Who did it? At the time of the constitution and

the revolution there were stories of a romantic secret committee in Paris, diversions of the harem are all of his with a chief possessed of greater statesmanship and more dictatorial powers than any crowned head in Europe. The present Paris committee is disgruntled and in opposition, and it is rather generally admitted that there was considerable romancing about the original committee.

Admittedly the Young Turk movement was a bit of successful oppor- ! tunism. Its leaders were quick to are known, however, although all postake advantage of favorable events, which is certainly nothing to their discredit. The men were ready for their chance when it came.

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 Beeberstein, the German ambassador. One searches in vain for this omnisscient, omnipotent Young Turk of whom we read so much at the time of the passing of the old order. Instead, ward the men who look a part and he finds behind the forces at work here this shrewd old diplomat, the roes. ablest in Europe, who has within a This is the anomaly of present-day year recovered all the prestige that Turkey. The committee of Union and the German cause lost with the fall of Abdul Hamid.

In domestic affairs, as well as in It really runs parliament-an inconforeign relationships the hand of von gruity which makes constitutional Beeberstein may be traced by those government seem like a farce. Furthis wise old German is an extra- of power can enjoy this empty show, sent against them. He said they lack 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. One encounters various terms in the diplomatic circles to describe the nonentity of Mohammed V. Doubtless,

war, the supreme commander of the by one whose knowledge of Turkish Turkish armies, the "Saviour of Conaffairs has proved correct on other stantinople" and the man who has points that the jailers of Abdul Hamid frequently been said to be the real are men who have blood feuds with him-whose relatives the deposed dictator of the present regime in sultan has slain-and who would be Turkey.

Really, Gen. Shevket is practically glad of an excuse to square their accounts with him. Moreover, Salonica subordinate to one cf his own aids and associates. He is not in the inis the center of Young Turk sentiment, and the most difficult soil for and Progress, although a genuine Young Turk. It is perhaps an incon- is produced by the stigmata of the That the common people expect nevsiderate way of putting the case, but er to see Abdul in power again is I am credibly informed that he is shown by the way the press and the only a sort of puppet in the hands public deride and detest and make of stronger men. However, he looks sport of him. The meanest loafer in the part of a popular idol. Tall, the sidewalk cafes is free to curse the bearded, with small black eyes that memory of the prisoner at Salonica. A popular postcard in the shops repflash, he is a veritable Beau Brummel. He could readily be a cruel man and resents the prison beguilements of a dictator if he had the power, else I misread physiognomy. While we ningly created by the grouping of sevtalked he twirled his nose glasses by eral houris, and a vision of the mosques and palaces of the Bosphorthe handle, or rolled them on his fingers, or twiddled his nose-the right us within the tarboosh. The harmless side of which bears a large vaccinaformer glory permitted to Abdul tion mark. Frequently he tilted aside his green astrachan fez and scratched his iron-gray hair.

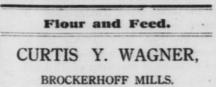
He is a charming gentleman to One searches in vain for substantiation for the early tales of the wondermeet, and he speaks with an apparent openness that would disarm an unful dictator in Paris, who, unknown sceptical interviewer. He told me in himself, rules Turkey through the all earnestness and apparent sincerity committee of Union and Progress. that there was absolutely nothing in There is no really great personality on that body. Not all of the members the rumored agreement between Roumania and Turkey, although I had sible members have been appraised. other more trustworthy information, which history has since confirmed, There is an Arabian Nights' flavor to the situation in Constantinople tothat the deal had been made. He speaks with the greatest optimism day. The real head of a department concerning the future of the new may be a man in the outer office. The regime. The financial revenues incabinet minister may be subject to creased by thirty-three million francs his secretary in the ante-room. The during the first year and, because of inner circle of the Young Turk combetter methods of collection, a still mittee is made up of men who, for the greater increase will probably be purpose, occupy places high and low. made during the present year. The Some of the members of this inner situation throughout the provinces, circle are in office, some are absolutehe said, has very much improved, the ly without official position. The comturbulent Albanians have been pacimittee has a penchant for putting forfied and disarmed. Parenthetically, I who will fill the role of popular hemay remark that one who saw the arms the government took in, says that they are only fit for a museum, and that the rifles and revolvers which can really do business are still Progress is supposed to have diswithin reach of the warlike Albanians. solved and passed out of existence. Shevket Pasha says he thinks the Albanians will be a valuable asset to Turkey when enrolled in the army, whose business it is to know the in- thermore, not all of the figureheads and he spoke most magnanimously wardness of current events here. Since who themselves understand their lack of their defeat by the Turkish army

tion of curious data, has observed that there are at least three different tones emitted by insects; a low one during flight, a higher one when the wings are held in such manner that they do not virbrate, and a yet higher tone when the insect is held so that none of its limbs can be moved. This last. ner circle of the committee of Union it is pointed out, is the "voice proper" of the insect. In some cases it

thorax.

Tones of Insects.

An investigator, given to the collee



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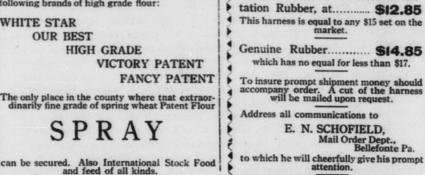
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many of these are exaggerated, like the stories of his devotion to the flowing bowl. The sultan sees no foreigners, but anybody may see him at the Selamlik-the weekly function when he goes to the mosque to pray.

With Abdul Hamid, this was an ordeal to be dreaded, and he sat cowering 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. He likes the pomp of the lines of soldiers who line the highway for the short distance from the palace to the mosque.

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. The sultan, himself, stares at the crowds as the crowds stare at him, or as a countryman gazes at the circus. He wears a fez, and but one decoration on his breast. His face is weak, with puffs under the eyes. His beard is grey and rather close cropped. He looks for all the world like the type of genial old New England ne'er-do-well, whom one may see sunning himself outside the house, or sitting on a cracker box in the corner store, while his wife runs the family affairs.

The day I saw the sultan an American girl in the carriage next mine was aiming a camera at him. He was attracted by the fresh young figure, and obligingly turned his face toward her and smiled-and then kept on smiling and craning his neck toward her like a gay old flirt. It was not very dignified or royal, but it was decidedly revealing, especially when one remembers that this man is "King of kings," "Commander of the Faithful," and "The Shadow of God on Earth.' Incidentally, he is a political cipher.

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. This is the last of the contingencies that the present government has to face. The best advised say that, while Abdul is morose and sleepless, he none the less ts too fond of life to take any chances with this committee. His supreme passion is to be permitted to die a natural death. For a generation he has been haunted by the nightmare of a violent death.

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

The Sultan on a Visit to the Mosque.

in the new order. A Masonic and Jewish Body.

Everybody in Constantinople seems to know that the committee which overthrew Abdul Hamid and brought in the new day for the empire is really a Masonic organization. It differs from the masonry of the west in that it is non-religious-the name of the Deity is not mentioned in its documents. It is affiliated with the Italian masons and not with the British or American. This fact has incurred the special hostility of orthodox Mohammedans, who dislike the Masonic order even more than they detest Christianity. This fact may be borne in mind in any study of present conditions, for it is likelier to be a factor in the developments than some more apparent causes.

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. This particular story harks back more than 200 years, when the son of a Salonica rabbi announced himself as the Messiah and got a considerable following. His cause was so portentous that he was arrested and taken before the sultan, where, in his extremity, he renounced his claims and accepted Islam.

So great was the confidence of his followers in this Messiah, that they too obeyed his lead and became Moslems. During the ensuing centuries they have remained a distinct community, with their own mosque. They never intermarry with other Moslems, and the genuineness and depth of their fidelity to Islam is a subject of scepticism among the faithful. Certainly this Moslem-Jewish community has furnished some of the most aggressive men in the empire, and far more than its proportion of the leaders of the Young Turk movement. The Military "Dictator.".

I have interviewed many of the leaders of the Turkish government, and shall have occasion to quote some of them. Here it must suffice to give as representative the one most pictures-

que figure in the government-Mahmoud Shevket Pasha, the minister of

and they are one element of weakness 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 first business of Turkey is the development of her army for the sake of law and order throughout the country, as well as in the dealings with other nations. He stressed the idea of a strong Turkish army, ready for any emergency, but he looks forward to no immediate armed eventualities with any other country.

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. There are many disaffected persons in Turkey and for various reasons, some of them obvious.

The foreigner is displeased, as he chronically is with any government carried on by those whom he likes to call his inferiors. There are various portentous elements of disintegration at work in the empire. I question whether it will ever be possible to have a homogeneous nation here. The new order of things has brought in a new restlessness among all classes of people, and Turkey, be it ever remembered, is a hodge-podge of nationalities. On one occasion I counted at least fifteen distinct and different peoples that go to make up this strange government. The Turkish ship of state was never so difficult to navigate as just now.

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