

CONSTANTINOPLE

BY ALFONS PAQUET

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In the garden of the old Serail, where the people of Stamboul watch the blue waters of the Bosphorus from the dusty grass plots, some twenty soldiers in odd fur caps are engaged in rifle drill. Idlers crowd around to watch them. After the drill is over they gather in a circle around their young officer, who vigorously keeps time with both arms while they sing a chorus in deep bass and clear treble voices. The effect is solemn and impressive, like a distant echo from beyond the Dnieper. French officers walking by with their ladies on their arms pause and say: 'They are to send them to Brazil — rather an extraordinary place for such people, is it not?'

Turkish families are basking in the sun on the At-Maiden. The men seem to have surrendered themselves to a life of apathetic, useless idleness. Russians are sitting on the benches, by the side of children and black-robed women. A costly fountain in the midst of the lawn, given by the Germans in the days of their prosperity, serves as a perching-place for a few dozen loafers. Their faces, seen above the black polished marble balustrade, look as if they were gazing at us from a gondola. In front of the great obelisk idle soldiers stand with listless faces. They know nothing of the meaning of this gigantic and mysterious sundial, with its sharply chiseled hieroglyphics, so distinct, so legible, so perfect to-day that it seems as if everyone should know how to read them. For to these soldiers even the green bronze serpent column in the square, which a Greek Emperor brought here a half-

score centuries ago from Delphi, means no more than a broken bottle that some savage forest tribe has stuck upon the pole in its village for a fetish.

The crowd loses itself in the little Stamboul shops, whose windows display shallow basins of cheese, curds, and other delicacies made of milk, and in the coffee houses, where fifty men or more will sit crowded together a whole afternoon, waiting until a crier announces the lucky numbers in the lottery drawings.

Turkish soldiers are on guard in front of the entrance of Santa Sophia. Strangers who wish to enter must show their permits. Greeks are not admitted. They have so often boasted that they will raise the Cross again over this mosque, they are not tolerated inside its portals.

In a quiet quarter of the city, on the bank of the Golden Horn, stands the Greek Vatican. This palace is hardly to be distinguished from the simple blue-tinted houses of the neighborhood. It contains many little offices like students' dormitories, long cloister-like corridors and reception halls and commons-rooms, on whose walls hang oil portraits and enlarged photographs of gray-bearded ecclesiastics in tall caps and monastic robes. The whole place expresses apostolic simplicity and poverty. In the library are the records of the Greek people from the beginning of Turkish rule. There repose the solemnly sealed treaties which the Sultan has observed for centuries, and the acts of the martyrs of the National Church.

The chapel in the forecourt of the Patriarchs' Palace is a tiny building, unimposing enough from the outside. But once inside its golden walls, its holy pictures and reliquiæ preserve a remnant of the imposing pomp of rich Imperial Byzantium. Built into the wall above the entrance is the two-headed eagle over the crossed keys.

The Œcumenical Patriarch shows himself to the faithful at morning service. He wears eyeglasses; a heavy golden crown seems to rest heavily on his delicate gray head, and a brocaded mantle hangs over his shoulders. Acolytes hold ancient candelabra with flaring lights above the scriptures, as the ritual prescribes. Shafts of sunlight enter through the round, tinted window-panes in the golden wall. Coats of arms with golden eagles, gold and ivory candlesticks the height of a man, and the colored lights playing about the heads and shoulders of the priests and the worshipers, lend an exotic richness to the ceremony. Greek chants intoned in the even monotonous rhythm of ancient music fill the air. Submerged Byzantium seems still to lift a tiny summit out of the ocean of the past. One feels as if a dead man were moving in his grave.

When the worshipers leave the church they pass between rows of beggars. The fence in front of the forecourt garden is hung with newspapers, posters, and pictures of the day. Among the last are pictures of King Alexander with a pretty young woman in an automobile, and a naïve lithograph of the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Venizelos in a Paris railway station, with a cluster of angels and protecting guardian-saints hovering above the intended victim. One big sheet has pictures of the old heroes of the Greek War of Liberation, from Ypsilanti down, surrounding a large photograph of that Cretan statesman, wearing his professor's spectacles, in the centre.

But there are no pictures of Constantine. It would be dangerous to display them at Constantinople.

On the heights of Pera stands the great white building formerly occupied by the German Embassy. The silent palace is surrounded by a fence of iron lances. The window shutters are closed; and the arms of Sweden are affixed to the iron grating at the entrance. I have memories of this building: of a conversation with a wise, elderly man sitting at a writing-desk. The solid structure stands like a fortress on the border of the continent. Its white façade is visible from far beyond the Bosphorus, on the Asiatic mainland.

In the garden of a neighboring refreshment place I sit under a scanty trellis and take a cup of coffee. There is a beautiful view from this point over the Bosphorus, as there used to be from the great windows of the Embassy next door. I fall into conversation with an American sailor who belongs to the crew of a destroyer anchored below us. The young man tells me of his life in Constantinople, and of his little war-vessel, that cruises every Saturday to some port in the Black Sea. At the time of the panic it went to Odessa and brought back refugees. Women and children were quartered on deck, even under the guns. A machine gun was posted on the bridge to repel attack. The sailor is a lively little fellow, whose home is New York City, but whose parents are Southerners. Though he is torpedo-mate, he does not live on board, but has lodgings in the city. He expects to marry a French girl living in Constantinople, and to return with his wife to New York; he has an appointment in the aviation corps. In 1917 he was in the North Sea hunting submarines. They had a lively fight with U-55 and towed her into Liverpool. He was wounded and spent some time in a hospital in Paris. 'That was my

part in the war,' he said. 'We are on good terms with everybody now. When we lie in port with English vessels they use our shore-boats and we use theirs.' The man was formerly a mechanic. He now feels like a person living on a private income, and regards the contingencies of a military career most philosophically. 'I have not really worked for six years, and I am satisfied with this job.' So we sit there under the thin trellis next to the great white silent Embassy, and drink our coffee with the calm composure that we have learned from the Turk. . . .

I wander through the upper quarter of Stamboul between silent wooden houses, along deserted streets not even enlivened by playing children. I am in search of a house that I never succeed in finding; perhaps it fell victim to one of the great conflagrations. But during my wanderings I chance upon a partly concealed courtyard, in which there is an old stone structure. It is the entrance to the *Yere Batan* Cistern. This cistern is as large as a church. Its great vaulted roof is supported by ancient Corinthian columns and covers a subterranean lake. A couple of larking soldiers in a tiny boat are paddling about below, in the dim electric light.

Next I find myself in a bazaar — a labyrinth of dark-blue, half-lighted, vaulted passageways and halls where the oblique rays of the sun make little patches of yellow illumination here and there. In the midst of booths filled with wares and trumpery of a thousand colors, I drink a cup of tea in the company of two old Persian merchants, who are sitting on a sofa in a secluded corner and playing tricktrack.

Then I continue my aimless wandering. I come on a peculiar low stone building without windows, on one side of a great square in front of the Mosque of Sultan Bajazet. Through a doorway I catch a glimpse of a bit of lawn, a

fountain, and a passage. Young men in white turbans are lounging between the pillars talking with a Russian student, who, like myself, is an uninvited guest. They show us their cells and little vaulted classrooms.

A visitor who surrenders himself to the spirit of this city loses his sense of time. The pale antiquities of the museums — those ripe fruits of the early centuries — seem to him no more than coeval with the proud pomp of these lofty mosques, and these tiny locked cemeteries that border the city streets. The parades, army orders, and administrative measures that foreigners in Pera have tried to force on this country have left Stamboul untouched. It has merely retired into itself. It is the last city in Europe into which the West has tried to infuse the spirit of the West.

Yet even its glowing colors begin to fade; its motley beauty and obese dignity — though almost imperceptibly as yet — begin to show the slow but sure effects of the blockade. We no longer see the broad blue robes, the flower-embroidered sashes, the gold-worked turbans of former days, although the shops are filled with bright-patterned cottons from Manchester. The army of officials that once administered a great empire from this city is waiting in idleness for salaries that are never paid. Secretly and silently the ancestral treasures of the old Turkish nobility are dribbling across to Pera and disappearing in foreign coffers.

Even to-day, all the peoples of the East intermingle in the thronging markets and bazaars: negroes and Circassians, Persians and Syrians. But the wealth of silks and rugs and fruits that the Orient used to pour into the city's lap is no longer here. There are sections of the old bazaars that look like empty cellars. Other sections are like exhibitions of European products. The high walls and portals of the caravansaries

tower above the streets like remnants of mediæval castles. Families who have lost their homes in the recent fires monopolize the courtyards. The stalls are filled with pitiful remnants of household goods snatched from destruction.

The old guild of porters—with their triangular cushions of wood and leather—still rules the docks and quays. Horses with turquoise-blue stones set in their harness still draw the trucks and drays. The round cans of the water-sellers, hung with bells and crescents until they look like shell-bearing trees or metal towers, still glitter amid the market crowds. Groups of veiled women make the rounds from shop to shop, their red-tinted finger-tips just visible below their wide sleeves. Fortune tellers still hover about the entrance to the mosques—witch-like old women whose silk gowns, originally violet, have become the color of the earth from dust and sun. They shake something that jingles in their hands, and with a quick gesture strew a medley of buttons, stones, fruit-pits, and coins upon their carpet. Their features have an almost puzzling blankness: leather-like faces, and copper-colored eyes with no lashes, which seem not to see the person who stands in front of them, but to drill through him with a sibylline glance.

Nothing is more delightful than to spend a sunny morning under the canvas canopy of the little Persian tea-house just removed from the market behind the Mosque of the Sultan Mother. Canary birds twitter in swinging cages. The yellow marble tables have no other ornament than little red lacquered trays with the tender green shoots of a dwarf leek. Hookahs are going: bubbles rise through the water, the white ashes in the crown-like tobacco-bowls glow and fade in regular rhythm, and the patrons blow thin clouds of smoke from their lips. Among the customers stands a man calling out prices,

selling to the best bidders flesh-colored hyacinths, fresh Cheiranthus, amber narcissi, and bunches of dark violets. The buyers thrust their purchases into tiny baskets covered with a moist white cloth.

During the afternoon one always sees Turks sitting passively in the little garden of the Suleiman Mosque, waiting for the white turban of the imam to appear in the gallery of the minaret. At length the latter calls the faithful to prayer, his voice scarcely audible above the tumult of the streets below. Thereupon these men deliberately rise and vanish for a moment beyond the magnificent colonnade that surrounds the mosque. The heavy mats that curtain the portals make a slight slapping noise as they finally disappear inside. Each man, slippers in hand, goes to his wonted place under the gray marble pillars of the chancel, or beneath the great dome suspended on its bold arches of white and colored marble and adorned with thousands of pendent lamps.

Their prayer begins with a quiet, reverent pose. Then they almost automatically raise the palms to the height of the ears and clasp both hands over their stomachs with a deep sigh as of relief. Thereupon they make a profound obeisance, prostrating the body until the forehead touches the floor again and again. After this the worshiper rises and seats himself. A reader, who is invisible, recites in a high, piercing, almost supernatural voice verses from the Koran, while the worshipers range themselves in ranks before the alcove—porters shoulder to shoulder with officers, white-bearded priests side by side with boys. This remarkable moment is the climax of the service. It lasts only a few minutes. Then each individual returns to his former place and squats down with his hands upon his knees, palms upward. Last of all, each worshiper stands rigidly erect for

a moment, as silent and motionless as a pillar, then raises his hands above his forehead, retires to the entrance, resumes his slippers, and goes outside, where the sun is bathing the square in warm, golden brilliance.

This service is a daily incident in a Mohammedan's life, which he observes as regularly as his meals. The simplicity and sincerity of the faith it reveals gives a Westerner his first understanding of the power of Islam. Let us remember that we could hardly think of the Orient without Islam. It is as if this religion had absorbed all the spiritual impulses and vitality that once belonged to the ancient civilizations of this quarter of the globe. Breathless Delphic adoration, combined with the mighty compulsion of a single faith!

I talked with a Turk who had studied in the West and had read Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*. He said: 'We still attend the mosques, because they are the common meeting-place of our people, and because simple folks hear there the sharp reproofs addressed by the discontented to the bonzes of Dalma-Bagtsche, those old statesmen and Excellencies who negotiate with Paris and London and tremble for their revenues. The present sentiment of discontent, rising to the point of rebellion, was as unknown in olden days as the poems, satires, and dialogues of our younger school of writers, who have deserted the theological themes of their fathers, and print pretty books and periodicals illustrated with pictures of handsome young Turkish women of the modern type, and inquiries into the nature of religion after the style of the new Moslem Academy.'

On the green slopes at the head of the Golden Horn lies Eyub. It is an isolated suburb — a village, a single street, an almost untouched remnant of old Turkey. The street consists of a few clean little shops. One displays nuts, grapes, raisins, cinnamon, and basins

filled with henna; another sells tiny ships and dolls made of brightly painted board; just beyond lies the open workshop of a stone-cutter, with unfinished plank-like tombstones lying about. These are covered with flour-white lime dust and adorned with the same turbans, scrolls, and spiral vine-like decorations that have ornamented the tombs of Mohammedans for centuries.

Carts, pedestrians, and shepherds crowd the narrow passages between the shops. From the open doorway of a tiny restaurant whose walls are adorned with posters, old tin plates, script proverbs, and glass portraits of the Sultans, a savory odor of roasting meat reaches us. Not far from the wharf, where the local steamer stops and a fleet of brightly painted canoes and rowboats lies at anchor, stands a new school for boys, with a tasteless miniature mosque.

But a half-ruined mausoleum — a charming structure of the Turkish renaissance, standing in a little garden that is a perfect tangle of shrubbery and blossoms — is the real beginning of this street, which leads directly to the arched entrance of that proud mosque which the conqueror of Constantinople erected to the memory of one of the standard-bearers of the Prophet. Beneath its portals letter-writers and traffickers of various kinds have set up their tables. In the middle of the broad paved forecourt stands a pretty kiosk-like fountain, with low steps, for religious ablutions. Under a silver-gray plane tree, whose foliage has not yet started, a tame stork and a flock of pearl-gray pigeons sedately promenade. Magnificent tombs surrounded by gilded gratings, their green and red walls bearing pious texts from the Koran and tender commemorative inscriptions, form the beginning of an extensive cemetery, whose crowded headstones are lost in a wilderness of cypresses, evergreens, yews, and dark spring flowers.

The inner court is a passageway between the pillars of the mosque and a wall covered with blue glazed tiles. It is shaded by century-old plane trees. The trunk of each is surrounded by low palisades. Along the blue-tiled wall are ranged several beggars before the entrance of each mortuary chapel. In the dimly lighted vaulted interiors one sees the sarcophagi surrounded by enormous candles and covered with silks and brocades.

In one of these chapels I came upon a group of silent, reverent women-visitors. The sacristan explained to them the holy character of the spot, and performed a mystic rite. He picked up a rattling chain consisting of pieces of wood the size of a walnut, like an immense rosary, and passed it several

times over the shoulders of the women and over the children whom they carried in their arms.

Outside stood several young Indian soldiers watching the proceedings. They were curious to see what was occurring, but did not venture to enter the little room. They wore turbans of bright-brown linen, and their reverent pose seemed not out of keeping with their military garb. The most imposing of these men wore a full black beard. They puzzled me, these Indians, with their correct and dignified demeanor and silent self-effacement. Perhaps their silence is due to the fact that they speak no tongue but that of their own country. Nevertheless they seem to love this city. One meets them unexpectedly, everywhere.

LABOR ETHICS

BY BRUNO BORCHARDT

[Some paragraphs of the following article have been summarized, without change of meaning, on account of its length.]

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PREACHING is always a thankless task. We do not persuade men by words, but by conduct, by deeds, by examples. It is doubly thankless to talk to the workingmen of labor ethics at a time when other classes are engaged in an orgy of unbounded selfishness and profiteering. It is an especially thankless task, moreover, to urge workers to labor harder and to produce more, just now when arbitrary private control is running riot in industry.

I recently heard a merchant describe how he had put through a business deal, at a profit of a few thousand marks, in connection with which he had been obliged to write more than six hundred letters before he finally got his goods shipped out of the country; and I made a note in my own mind that the worst complaints about red tape in our government offices fade into nothing compared with the red tape in private business. Soon afterward I heard an-