ANGORA, CITY OF DISENCHANTMENT. III

BY PAUL BERTHELET

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[Since this article was written, Ismet Pasha’s Cabinet has been overthrown, and his opponents have taken over the Government, apparently without affecting the status of Mustapha Kemal Pasha.]

MARSHAL ISMET PASHA, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, denied that an organized opposition existed in his country. ‘There may be discontented people,’ he told me, ‘but there is no such thing as an opposition.’

I met personally some of these ‘discontented people’ at a little house near Buyuk-Esset, some distance from Angora. This house had nothing to distinguish it from its neighbors. It was low, gray, ugly, with narrow, grated windows. Immediately upon entering, I found what I expected—a dark passage which should properly have led to an uninteresting reception-hall, furnished with the universal broken-legged divans.

Imagine my surprise, therefore, upon reaching the end of the corridor to find that the door opened on a large courtyard filled with trees and surrounded with rambler roses. In the centre was a fountain, where a tiny jet of water played with a scarcely audible plash in a red-marble basin, which overflowed directly into the thirsty soil. The sun was already high in the cloudless heavens, and beat relentlessly upon the little fountain and the flagstones surrounding it. But a border of mulberry trees cast a broad ribbon of shade around the edge of the courtyard, and covered the ground with fragrant fruit that looked like big white pearls.

A family of storks had elected to make its home on the roof of the building, and its members kept fluttering back and forth between their nest and the fountain. The flapping of their wings was the only sound that broke the silence. Indeed, the courtyard seemed to me a perfect retreat for a man seeking seclusion where he might indulge in melancholy reveries.

But the men I found there, whose names would make a muster-roll of the history of New Turkey, were wasting no time in vain meditation. They had neither the taste nor the leisure for that indulgence. Their spokesman—and he was practically the only one who said anything—was a robust young giant, brimful of enthusiasm. Every gesture he made and every word he spoke breathed energy and vigor. He looked me straight in the eye; his warm, sonorous voice, accustomed to command, shot out the syllables like bullets.

I saw instantly that here was a man who knew what he wanted and what he was risking to get it. He plunged into the subject at hand without wasting breath on preliminaries:—

‘The new Government is an autocracy, or, considered as a survival, something still worse—an aggravation of the Sultanate. It is an insult to call
it by the lying term "republic." If this Government had any ambition to be a democracy, as our Constitution professes, it should prove this by its acts.

'Behind a screen of misleading proclamations and false words the present Government is a two-headed autocracy. Its two heads, Mustapha Kemal and Ismet Pasha, symbolizing respectively force and intellect, are covered by the same kalpak. Influenced by Ismet Pasha, a sick man whose fever-dreams and pathological nervous restlessness have become more than disquieting, the Ghazi has thrown his sabre into the scales of Government, and by this brutal gesture has shattered the scalepan that contained the liberties of Turkey.

'The press is muzzled. Freedom of speech and freedom of assembly no longer exist. Independent opinion is suppressed, religion is persecuted. We are forbidden to talk, to write, to believe, to think. The army is no longer the servant of the nation, but of a clique. The greedy scum that fills the public offices is intent solely on filling its pockets; it has elevated baksheesh to a State institution.

'The National Assembly is just what Mustapha Kemal wished to make it. Its sole function is to give an appearance of legality to the decrees of the dictators.

'Most of the deputies were not elected by the people, but were appointed by Mustapha Kemal and Ismet Pasha, who are thus assured of a permanent majority. None the less, there is a minority. The men in control did not dare to reject offhand the election returns that sent to Parliament certain leaders of the opposition. The task of this minority, which grows stronger daily, is difficult. Deputies who protest against the commands issued to the Assembly by our dictators run the risk of expulsion from that body, imprisonment, and exile. Or else, in order to avoid scandal, they are advised, when an important bill is on the programme, to take a few days' vacation at Constantinople.

'We are forbidden under penalty of death to propose any modification of the present form of government or in the status of the Caliphate. Now, the Turkish people have never been permitted to express their will on these two questions. A little group of men decided those two matters for the nation, in the way that served best their own personal interests.

'Yet the Kemalists presume to talk of liberty. They assert that their Government is the most democratic in the world — a true government of the people and for the people. What a ridiculous farce!'
Fethi Bey's good sense prevented that absurdity.

'I don't deny that Mustapha Kemal has rendered our country great services. But men like Raouf Pasha, Ali Fuad Pasha, Adnan Bey, Bekir Sami Bey, Kiasim Kara Bekir Pasha, and still others, all of whom are now in the opposition, have done as much or even more for Turkey than the Dictator himself. They were the real initiators and the firmest supporters of the movement for national independence; yet to-day they are spied upon, isolated, and, did conditions allow, would be exiled, as England exiled them long ago to Malta. Why? Because they insist on warning the people of the mortal dangers which the folly of our present rulers calls down upon us — because they dare to expose the secret designs of our momentary masters.

'But even these masters hesitate to strike at men like these. They are men who have numerous friends. Mustapha Kemal hesitates. He is afraid — yes, afraid. He does n't dare go about unattended, as he formerly did, in the streets of Angora. His residence, at some distance from the town, is guarded by a cordon of sentinels and by blockhouses armed with machine-guns.

'So great is his fear of assassination that he has not visited Constantinople a single time since he has been in power. Notwithstanding that, he is burning with eagerness to take up his residence in one of the old imperial palaces, where preparations were actually made a few months ago to receive him. But he knows that it is only a step from the Yldiz Palace to Malta-Kiesk prison, and that the Bosporus is near. That alone keeps him at Angora.'

At a gesture from one of his friends the leader abruptly stopped, and with an embarrassed smile said apologetically: 'Pardon me, I have completely forgotten that breakfast is served! Let us go to the dining-room. I have more to say after dessert.'

I was conducted to a little darkened room where a frugal repast awaited us. My warrior host showed a touch of that tenderness we often find in rough-and-ready men when he held me back a moment near the fountain in order that we might not disturb the storks, who were eating some crumbs of bread that had been scattered for them on the flagstones.
THE MURDER OF KING ALEXANDER AND QUEEN DRAGA

BY H. W.

From Frankfurter Zeitung, November 13
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In the September number of Književna Republika the Serbian journalist Dragiša Vasić publishes a vivid history of the conspiracy through which the Obrenović dynasty was driven out of Serbia, describing in detail events on the night of the assassination in which King Alexander and Queen Draga lost their lives. Not only does his account represent the first really trustworthy story of the bloody events of 1903, showing the important part in the events of that dreadful June night played by Dragutin Dimitrijević, or ‘Apis’— who to-day is regarded by many as the chief organizer of the Serajevo affair; but it gives us an account based on word-of-mouth sources as well as mere documents, for part of what the author writes is derived from the stories of the conspirators themselves.

The night of the tenth of June 1903 was chosen for the assassination, but since half Belgrade — the highly suspicious police not least — either knew or suspected that something was in the wind, and since spies dogged the heels of all suspects, the conspirators’ chief concern was to meet without attracting attention. Long before midnight all their groups had gathered in various restaurants where everyone could see them. In order to put to sleep the suspicions of the spies, the young officers drank a great deal, singing lustily and laughing loudly, although the thought of what was to come forced its way through the cloud of noisy joviality. No one noticed that Lieutenant Milićin Lazarević of the Engineer Corps was wearing a cloak on that warm summer evening, or saw how, almost fiercely, he waved aside the waiter who wanted to help him take it off. His pockets were stuffed full of dynamite.

Toward one o’clock — for the benefit of the spies who still hung about — all the groups made their way toward the Officers’ Club, where they carried the comedy still further. Some fell into a heated discussion over Shakespeare, others feigned to be in advanced stages of intoxication. The music of the Serbian folk-songs rang out, and when an officer who was not in the secret expressed a wish to go to Queen Draga’s dance a couple of the conspirators danced for him with an easy unconcern and a humor that seemed a dreadful thing to those who knew the secret of the night.

When the outsiders had left the Club one by one, Dragutin Dimitrijević and Antonije Antić, going about from group to group among the leaders, whispered that everything was as it should be. The concert at the Court was over, the individuals who were selected to call out the troops were on their way to the barracks, and