

II. TURKEY

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“ALL these years your Christian nations have been calling us barbarians and cruel; but wherein does Christianity show itself to be less savage and more peace loving at heart than we, when you go against each other with such terrible and bitter slaughter one of the other?”

The questioner is a Moslem girl, a recent student in one of our American schools, where she had listened to the teachings of the Prince of Peace, and where she had been told of His mighty influence upon the lives of men and nations.

And this afternoon over the tea-cups on our veranda she is putting with searching eyes this question, to us who stand for His Faith, and in her voice there is the note of scorn and incredulity, contempt for Christianity's charity, incredulity of Christianity's sincerity, for through her eyes and through her lips Islam is speaking, the Moslems of Turkey are questioning.

The seeds of this sympathy with Germany were sown far back in the days of Abdul Hamid and during the period of the most terrible of the Armenian massacres. The world will not soon forget William the Second's visit to Constantinople in 1908 and his announcement that the Sultan was “merely pacifying his rebellious subjects.” Nor has Turkey forgotten the Kaiser's friendship at that time, extended as it was in the face of protests and horror from the rest of civilisation, protests not sincere enough to put anything valuable at stake, horror not virtuous enough to make any sacrifice to stem the tide of slaughter.

It is reported to-day that in many mosques the mollahs pray for “Hadji Mohammed Guillian” and the success of his arms. One wonders if his own claim as “Defender of the Faith” are included in those prayers of the imams.

The interests of German commerce, and especially the Bagdad Railway, are underneath all this outward show,

and have led the German Emperor into many other little courtesies towards his Ottoman friends which are now bearing fruit.

Add to this Turkey's long unsettled account with Russia, and the fact that England has made no special moves of late to win prestige at the Sublime Porte, at least since the affair at Crete, while the appearance of the French fleet at Mitylene in 1901 is not forgotten, and you have a combination of reasons for placing Turkey on the side of Germany in so far as her political sympathies are concerned.

But Turkey's sympathy is more a protective measure than an ardent inborn national sentiment. She feels that she has less to fear from Germany than from any of the others. Germany's ambitions southward through the Balkans do not cause as much apprehension at Constantinople as Russia's, while England's policy in Egypt and the nursing of French influence in Syria are known to all the world. Nor does Italy's sympathy with the Allies help their cause in Turkish circles.

Cold disdain is the general feeling towards Europe. At these so-called Christian nations, which for so long a time have held Turkey in contempt as semi-barbarous, Turkey now points the finger of scorn and says, "wherein do you so far surpass us in civilisation, in boasted humanitarianism, in progress towards peace and concord?" As a leading Turkish daily stated editorially:—

"They would not look at the evils in their own countries, or elsewhere, but interfered at the slightest incident in our borders; every day they would perform vivisection on our quivering flesh and cut off great pieces of it. And we, with a forcibly controlled spirit of rebellion in our hearts and with clenched but powerless fists, silent and depressed, would murmur as the fire burned within: Oh that they might fall out with one another! Oh that they would eat each other up!"

And out of this paralysis of concord among the nations, Turkey saw her chance and threw off the hated capitulations as a bondage too long endured by her national honour.

These unsettled conditions on the continent have also given rise to a strong War Party under the leadership of the Minister of War. In bitter opposition to this party is a Peace Party under the leading of the Crown Prince,

who sees in war the utter ruin of the nation's future and in peace the only hope of continued existence. The dreams of the War Party take in the Islands, Salonica, Macedonia, Albania, and possibly Bosnia, as parts of the Empire once more.

But the War Party has founded its air castles on false hopes. Supreme among these sand foundations was the expectation of Germany's sudden and overwhelming success. For weeks the Turkish press could see nothing else; this success was to be dazzling in its splendour. The Allies crushed, Germany supreme, Turkey Germany's ally.

One important element in this grand scheme was a belief, expressed boldly and repeatedly in the Moslem press, which took its cue from the prejudiced prophets of Berlin, that should the land of the Caliphate join forces against the Allies, Egypt would at once be in revolt and England's empire in India aflame with a Moslem uprising. The seizure of the battleships by Britain was used to the fullest to draw in Islamic sympathy. One of the deputies writing in the *Tasfiri Efkiar*, said :—

"The blow which England is striking at the Ottoman world, and also at the world of Islam, will raise great currents like the currents of the oceans. No Englishman should doubt but that these currents will one day result in drowning the Englishmen on their island. All the Moslem world greets the news of England's act with emotion and sadness. Eternally, Turkey and Islam will execrate this act. This ship was attached to the heart of the whole Islamic world, and we are powerless to express the anger and indignation aroused by this act, and this wrath will never cease."

Another daily wrote editorially, "The seizure of the dreadnought will certainly produce a very painful impression not alone in Ottoman circles but in the whole Moslem world."

The following official statement from the British embassy in Constantinople reveals the nature of the articles circulating freely in the Moslem press as to the condition in Egypt, while an even stronger statement was posted as to the lies which were being credited here as regards the condition in India :—

"The news given in the local press, according to which Egyptian troops had been disarmed and Egyptian officers placed under sur-

veillance, is in every particular contrary to the truth. Nothing has occurred that would give the slightest ground for such a rumour. The fact that several Egyptian officers have requested authorisation to join the British troops now fighting in France, and that an influential committee of officers is proceeding spontaneously to collect subscriptions to provide for the expenses of treatment of wounded British soldiers, shows the loyal feelings of these officers. All reports of the outbreak of discontent or disturbance in Egypt are inspired from a German source, and are by that very fact misleading."

A reply to this statement which came out in a Moslem paper is of interest. This reply includes a denial of other statements from British sources:—

"The English, to prove that the Egyptians are their faithful subjects, send by means of the cables, which are controlled by them, a communication saying that the Egyptians have subscribed £3,000 for the families of the soldiers of their oppressors, and that besides the Egyptian Prince Mehmed Ali Pasha, President of the Red Crescent, has sent a sum of a thousand pounds for the benefit of the Red Cross. The latter fact is very possible, for the Moslems are humane people, and give on every occasion without considering the question of nationality. But as far as concerns the sending of money by Egyptians for the English army, there must be a little omission that would explain that from the salaries of the Egyptian employes of English societies and governmental offices, a sum has been held back to be applied to this purpose."

It might be added that this was the method widely used at Constantinople and throughout the Empire in raising the money for the Turkish ships which England took over.

These earlier accounts of "up-risings" have subsided to "unrest," and now there is a slowly dawning consciousness that Islam is no longer one. Those who are wise are gaining the conviction that should the Caliphate itself proclaim a "holy war" against the Allies on the side of Germany, not one company of Moslem soldiers from India would desert the flag of the Empire of Britain to join hands with Turkey against their King and Emperor.

But this idea of the oneness of Islam will die hard. Only last week a Constantinople tri-weekly came out with a long article, from which I cull the following:—

"What Serbia has been doing in Bosnia, Russia and England have done in India, Persia, the Caucasus, and Egypt. Is it right for us to sit by any longer with folded arms and see our brothers massacred? We think not. Nay, not only must we not permit this but we are persuaded that the hour has at last struck when Islam must regain its rights and return to its former splendour.

"As for England, she has proudly claimed the title of mistress

of the sea ; she is about to lose this title, which she won mainly by diplomatic success. Thanks to the tireless energy of their excellencies Enver Pasha and Djemal Pasha, our army and navy will know their duty, and will in case of need enforce our legitimate demands. We do not forget that our minister of war has told us that we have a stain to wash out. We are to-day in a position to do so."

We talk of "the gallant assault of the Coldstream Guards," of the heroic stand of the "Kaiser's Own," of the nation's "honour" or "Germany's fight for self-preservation." Kings and Kaisers and Czars send their people "to the churches to fall upon your knees before God and pray for the brave host gone forth to battle." "Providence" has decreed the war ; it is "God" that has "thrust the sword" into the hand of prince and peasant. As one writer aptly put it, "Piety oozes from every word as the war lords call their people to arms."

But the Turk reads and smiles, smiles in contempt. For he has seen with his own eyes the big-mouthed guns on the great ships which have entered his waters "to maintain the peace." and he knows that those guns were built to destroy the lives of men. He knows that for a generation our "Christian nations" have devoted untold sums of money, tireless energy, and the best brains to the invention and production of implements, the sole purpose of which was to curse, torture and destroy the human race, and the greater the capacity for destruction of life and property the more highly were they valued by their possessors. He knows how demoniacally successful these instruments of death are.

We talk of "courage," of "honour," but the Moslem sees the pictures and reads the glowing accounts of "bodies piled six feet high, an unrecognisable mass of flesh and blood and wreckage." The mines explode, the submarines are busy, the wire entanglements charged with electricity are all at work, blotting out lives by the thousands. The faces of strong, splendid young men greet us each week in leading European papers under the title, "Dead on the Field of Honour," but we cannot explain it all to Islam, for it sees only this—Christians at each other's throats seeking each other's life blood.

He reads the charges and counter-charges of atrocities, of broken treaties and treachery.

Why wonder that the Moslems of Turkey ask the question the young girl asked my wife, "Wherein is Christianity less savage and more peace-loving than we?"

This is no time to equivocate, to hesitate, to falter. Sincerity, Faith, Love—these we need, these He has promised to give to those who will take Him at His word and follow where He leads. Out against the blackness of this world-horror, illumining the darkness with the light which broke through the gloom of darker days and put an end to the bloody conflicts of the Roman arena, there may yet shine the light which glowed at Pentecost and turned the thoughts of many to the Saviour of the World.

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Smyrna.

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III. ALGIERS

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A PRESS so closely censured makes it difficult to feel the pulse of Moslem thought during the present world crisis. One hesitates, therefore, to express any very definite opinions as to the attitude of Moslems as a whole towards the war.

As to their political attitude, it is significant that there has been no apparent tendency to take advantage of the difficulties of the government. Even in Morocco, where the work of pacification is far from being completed, the war has apparently not affected the situation materially. A native friend, who has just returned from a visit to the interior among tribes which one might expect to be very restive, says that while the war is the one topic of conversation, and there are those who argue in favour of the Germans or the Turks, he saw no indications of even the thought of an uprising. Mr. Smith, of Constantine, writes, "I have only heard of one district where there were rumours of restlessness among the native population."

Doubtless the rapidity and precision of the mobili-