

Constantinople, Athens Seeing Light of Modernism

TURKEY'S FIRST CITY ENJOYS REPUBLICANISM

Rev. Francis Carr Stifler Tells of St. Sophia, Seraglio, Harem and Jazz Dance of Today

This is the fourteenth and final article of the series by Rev. Francis Carr Stifler, pastor of Wilmette Baptist church describing what he saw on his recent tour of the Holy Land and other famous Old World places. Mr. Stifler closes with a word picture which he titles "Constantinople, Athens and Home."

By Rev. Francis Carr Stifler

CONSTANTINOPLE is the magnificent old capital of the Eastern World. As one approaches he cannot imagine a more strategic situation for a great city—nor can he deny that he has looked upon a more imposing one. Before we landed we were transferred to a little pleasure craft which took us up the Bosphorus to the mouth of the Black Sea.

The Bosphorus reminds me of the Hudson River, only instead of having New York on one side and New Jersey on the other, there was Asia on one side and Europe on the other. The banks of the European side were lined with the palaces of former monarchs. Some of them are now public schools. As we were returning and darkness had almost overtaken us, suddenly our engines stopped. The nervous members of our party were instant in their anxious inquiries as to the cause. Were we going to sink to the bottom or drift to danger? Nothing of the sort. Something far more interesting. The President was passing us.

How Turkey does adore its President Mustapha Kemal Pasha. He was eating dinner on his palatial yacht as he passed, but at our signal he came out on deck to salute us and we and all the other Turks went momentarily wild.

Just Like New York Night Club

One of the reasons for Kemal's popularity we had a chance to study through that Saturday evening, while the boat lay at the dock. Across the broad street that faced the dock was a two story building. Below were shops of various sorts and above was a dance hall. Now remember this is a Mohammedan land. But remember too, that Republican Turkey five years ago gave woman her full freedom. She dare not longer wear her black weeds and her veil. She is now a European. Men too must wear the Western dress and eschew the fez. And so they danced, old folks and young. The orchestra bought its music in New York. The thrum thrum of the jazz went on—not till midnight but all night, while the Anglican fathers and their non-conformist bed-fellows tried in vain to sleep.

Of the places we visited in Constantinople none of course meant quite so much to us as St. Sophia. Built as a Christian Church by Justinian in the sixth century, it has served since the fifteenth as a Mohammedan Mosque. The clear story is supported by great pillars some of which came from the Temple of Diana at Ephesus and some from the great temple we had seen at Baalbek. It was curious to see how all the prayer rugs over that spacious floor were placed just a little on the

slant since Justinian had not been careful to erect his church so that the worshipper faced the East.

Where the Monarchs Ruled

At the Museum we saw the famous Siloam tablet, taken from the tunnel that Hezekiah built in Jerusalem to conduct the water from the Virgin's Fount outside the walls to the Pool of Siloam inside the city, thus forcing his besieger, Sennacherib, to retire.

In the afternoon we visited the Seraglio, the one-time palace of the Sultans. Only four months before our visit this mystic spot had been open to the public. It is located on a beautiful point of ground overlooking the Sea of Marmora, the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. Here the monarchs both ruled and lived. They ruled by the strategy of fear. We saw the cabinet room where there was a screened balcony for the Sultan. The Cabinet could

The pictures: (top to bottom)—The Acropolis as seen from the Temple of Jupiter, Athens.—Inside the Parthenon, Athens.—The Theater of Bacchus, Athens.—The Mosque of St. Sophia, Constantinople.—(right)—The obelisk in the Hippodrome, Constantinople.



and jail. I cannot take time to even mention the various palace drawing rooms with their different exposures to match the changing seasons. But I must speak of "The Treasury." This is an extensive building in which is displayed the personal wealth of the Sultans. Possibly nowhere in the world is there such an amazing accumulation of jewels and gold. There we saw a throne as big as a huge divan of solid gold, robes heavily overlaid with gold and swords cased in bejeweled gold sheaths.

Gold, Gold, Nothing But Gold

There was every conceivable article of daily use, canes, watches, fly-swatters, fans, cigarette cases, pens, coffee cups and a score of other articles, all in gold and gems. In still another room was another throne. It was overlaid in heavy silk with gold figures woven in it and under the canopy hung an emerald as large as a man's fist. One room twenty feet high was lined to the ceiling with the chinaware of a hundred wives. In cases in the center

(Continued on Page 64)

never meet without the uncertainty of his presence. We saw also the Entertainment Chamber where Ambassadors from abroad were met. It had but one door. Beside this door was a faucet that was always running when a conference was on so that the ear at the keyhole could hear nothing but the water.

We visited the harem and the Eunuch's dormitories, baths, mosque