

In the Twilight of the Turkish Empire

The Amazing Experiences of a Captured British Officer

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In Collaboration with CAPTAIN FRANCIS YATES BROWN

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II--The Amazing Secret History of an Armistice--

ESCAPED COLONEL WHO NEGOTIATED WITH MINISTERS

Constantinople, even at its quietest, has ever been a city of eucodors and disputes. There the way to a change of government, a treaty, a concession or a commercial contract is through winding corridors, carpeted rooms and out-of-the-way cafes, with many a half-brothered promise, whispered behind a screen and the handing over of bakshish.

For the hire of their boat, put to sea with them. A strong wind raged across the Sea of Marmora, so that he was fourteen hours at sea, living during this time on bread and raisins. Even then he and the Greeks had to row almost all the way to Constantinople.

It was curious, indeed, during those critical weeks—when there existed three separate conspiracies to overthrow the Turkish Government, and a quarter of a million brigands in the interior were eager for any chance of loot and rapine—that several Englishmen got in close touch with the desperate situation and influenced it in favor of the Entente.

General Townsend (the defender of Kyzil-Armara), from his prison on Prinkipo Island, was intriguing for the formation of a pro-Entente ministry. Colonel "Z," escaped and technically in hiding, was contributing to the downfall of Talaat Pasha's Government and keeping his finger shadowed his more notorious plot.

Just previous to these events—on September 23—the Turkish Cabinet had met to consider the Bulgarian defection, and the Grand Vizier, who arrived from Germany by the last Balkan express to pass through Suda, had offered his resignation. At the time nobody could form an

idea of escaping from the country, because the Turkish Government believed he would be useful to them in arranging an armistice. What followed I learned, after I had rejoined the British, from Capt. Yeats-Brown, who remained free in the Turkish capital until the armistice was signed, and from Colonel "Z" himself whom I met in London just before I left for America.

discussed the best means of approaching England for an armistice. By now the colonel was going about Constantinople quite openly, although Captain Yeats-Brown and the other escaped officers had to remain more or less in hiding. Meanwhile General Townsend, who was still a prisoner, had also sent a memorandum to the new government. A Turkish armistice commission was formed, and the general was asked by the Grand Vizier to accompany the delegates who were about to leave Turkey; which he did. It was arranged that Colonel "Z" would follow in a few days' time.

Col. "Z" and Mlle. "X." The best and most productive work of this kind has done by Lieut-Col. "Z" (only his modesty prevents me from publishing his name). Last week I told how, while hiding in Constantinople, I learned from Captain Yeats-Brown (who was disguised as a girl) that the colonel was at large. The story of his escape and what followed is as fantastic as any tale from the Arabian Nights.

Col. "Z" had been brought to the Turkish Ministry of War, to be court-martialed, for an attempted escape. One day, having been accepted owing to lack of evidence, he was allowed into the city for a walk. He persuaded his escort to take him to a tea shop, where he got into conversation with a certain Mlle. "X." This lady, young, beautiful and healthy, was his admirer and good friend of the British, and she offered to help the prisoner in any way possible.

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Constantinople, looking across the Golden Horn to the old city of STAMBOUL.



TURKISH TROOPS on the way to the front

In Turkey anything can be done by means of graft, so that a few judicious bribes to the guards led to further meetings between the colonel and Mlle. "X." Colonel "Z" mentioned that he wanted to escape, and the lady agreed to assist him. A little later he was sent to the prison camp at Broussa. Mlle. "X," with her maid, followed him. She stayed at a small hotel, on the pretense of taking the sulphur baths, for which Broussa was famous.

Plans for Escape. For the rest, we wandered about the hot streets in disguise, and met our helpers in little cafes and restaurants. During our spare time we did whatever we could in the way of spreading anti-German and pro-Allied propaganda. Rubbing shoulders with Turkish policemen and German soldiers became a commonplace happening, but being always on the lookout for officers and guards who might have recognized us was an anxious business indeed.

Clashes in Turkish Government. As we noted it from day to day, the clash of personality among the political bosses of Turkey was immensely interesting. Since his accession to the throne in July the new Sultan (who was modelling himself after Sultan Mahmoud the Reformer, even to the extent of copying his dress, with the help of a British tailor living in Constantinople) had shown signs of leaning towards the Allies. He was trying to form a party and to gain influence. He took every chance of mixing with the populace, visited the districts devastated by the great fires that ravaged Constantinople in 1918, and was never tired of distributing bakshishes. His reputation had grown among the people, and he was popular, no doubt. But was he strong enough to be independent of the Committee of Union and Progress? That was the trouble.

and the man who killed so many of the Christians of Syria, with eyes cruelly stamped on his features like the brand of Cain, and Enver Pasha (the notorious minister of war) with his glittering uniforms, his poses, and his peacock wife, had become men of straw. Allied's great advance in Syria had knocked the stuffing out of them.

alternative ministry, so Talaat Pasha again took up the reins of power. The Sultan and the Minister of the Interior received their copies of Colonel "Z's" memorandum on October 23. During the intervening days it had become more and more plain that Germany was doomed to disaster.

The Colonel Leaves Turkey. After Colonel "Z's" dinner party of the sixteenth events moved rapidly towards an armistice. The Valt of Smyrna created a sensation on the eighteenth by stating plainly in a Turkish newspaper that peace negotiations were in progress and that the Germans would have to give. The same afternoon Colonel "Z" again met him at the Tokallian Hotel and

Next day Colonel "Z" who had been handed civilian passports by the Minister of the Interior, travelled from Constantinople to Smyrna. Finally he left Turkey, as a special adviser, in the company of the new Minister of Marine. The party set off in a trawler and were picked up by H. M. S. "Liverpool." They were taken to Mudros, and there the Sultan's plea for a separate armistice was granted.

Rowing on the Sea of Marmora. Colonel "Z" read the letter and decided to escape without further delay. At sunset another British officer attracted the guard's attention by pretending to run away and while this was happening the colonel, again disguised as an Arab, dropped from the wall in the opposite direction.

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Advertisement titled 'TODAY IN HISTORY' featuring a caricature of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and the text 'Archduke Francis Ferdinand was assassinated'.