AFTER THE TURK, WHO?

Light on the Titanic Game Going On in the East.

NEW ISSUE IN THE BALKANS.

Rivalry of Pan-Slavic and Pan-Germanic Ambitions.

The Kaiser's Dream of an Empire Stretching Across Europe—Struggle of the Sultan Against His Foes—Surprising Account of Him Given at Constantinople—He Is Described as a Refined, Kindly, Conscientious and Overworked Gentleman—Explanation of Turkish Corruption and Atrocities in Armenia and Elsewhere—Charges Against Missionaries of Making Trouble—Russia's Position at Present—King Edward VII. May Come to the Front.

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 23.—Let us wander a little as newcomers among the streets and bazaars, the mosques and the cafés, of this extraordinary city. It is only by getting into touch with the actual Moslem life of the day that any Westerner will speedily come to realize how ignorant he is of the real Turk—of his character, his habit of mind, his point of view.

You step from a modern *train de luxe* into the only railway station of a metropolis of more than a million inhabitants. Two trains a day amply meet the demand for communication with the Western world.

You are detained for the careful examination of your passport and baggage. A commissionnaire-interpreter takes charge of you to conduct you to your hotel.

The porter who has carried your bag from the train to the carriage raises an infernal row over the amount of the tip which your guide has given him. Your driver attempts to start off before the argument is finished. The porter in a maniacal fury springs upon the Jehu, seizes the reins, throws his weight upon one of the lines, the horses jump to one side, and over goes the cab.

You are lucky in landing just in time on your feet, and you find yourself in the midst of a small riot. You begin to wish you had slipped your pistol into your pocket instead of leaving it in your bag, until you notice the bored expression on the face of your guide.

So you affect a nonchalance you do not feel, while somebody wearing a sword hustles away the belligerent porter and twenty pairs of hands set the carriage on its wheels again. Then you drive off, and your conductor merely observes:

"Those fellows are never satisfied."

But driving to your hotel in Constantinople for the first time is a novel experience. You start with a rush, and as you leave the station yard you are startled to see that your driver has headed straight for an unguarded chasm in the road which probably the electric light men have left open. It is too late to interfere, so you clutch the sides of the carriage, prepared for another spill.

Nothing of the sort; down you plump with a terrific jounce, and then up you go in the air several inches above your seat. Wonderful springs and powers of endurance have these Constantinople cabs. For you find that all your drives in the Crescent City are a series of such shocks; New York in the worst days of the Tweed régime was a well-paved city compared with the capital of the Ottoman Empire to-day.

Leaving the station in Stamboul one speedily reaches the Galata bridge, one of the two ramshackle structures connecting the old city with Pera, the more modern European quarter across the Golden Horn. Here again one is amazed at the utter dilapidation of one of the most primitive and necessary of public conveniences. A lot of loose planks flung down upon stringers, stretched across pontoons, seems to comprise the rickety span of about one hundred yards across which we drive as fast as the crowd will permit after paying the extortionate toll of 10 cents for the privilege.

A street scene in Constantinople is always brilliant, if only by reason of the bright red fez or tarbouche with which the swarming population is becapped. But in the very first hour of idle wondering, one's attention is compelled more by the four-footed than by the human inhabitants of the town.

You have noticed during your first drive that it is only by continued shouting that the driver has made way among the crowds of pedestrians who throng the rough, dirty roadway in far greater numbers than the comparatively well-kept sidewalks. When you are on foot yourself you literally stumble across the explanation of the custom before you have walked a dozen yards.

The explanation promptly gets upon its feet with angry and astonished protest, and you are lucky if you do not feel its teeth through the leg of your trousers. This is the pariah dog, the most favored, the best governed, and I am inclined to add the most numerous class of inhabitants of Constantinople.

His privileges are traditional and inviolable. He sprawls singly or in groups upon all the dry spots of the sidewalks—the busiest streets by preference—and sleeps all day. Ordinary human beings step carefully over him, never by chance infringing even on the tip of his tail, or they pick their way as best they can among the muck of the street.

At night he barks or howls lustily every quarter of an hour when the watchmen rap out the time upon the pavement with their resonant sticks.

He is not a handsome beast. Usually about the color of an Irish terrier, somewhat larger in size, and with a head suggesting distant ancestry in the hyena, his appearance inspires neither confidence nor respect. Yet he is entitled to both.

His self-organized system of government, his strict enforcement of recognized rights and privileges both individual and commercial, suggest, perhaps, the only solution of the human problem in the Sultan's Balkan provinces. But alas, the value of the cardinal virtue expressed by the phrase "Mind your own business," while fully appreciated by the dogs of Constantinople, is apparently impossible of application to certain sections of the Sultan's human subjects.

Judge if I am speaking in irony. The dogs of Constantinople have divided the town into many score dog communities, each with sharply defined boundaries, and averaging in area three or four New York blocks. Each community is governed by a chief and two or three or more sub-chiefs, the leadership being settled by the only arbitrament which appeals to canine intelligence.

The privileges of the district are carefully apportioned among the dog inhabitants. The right to call at the butcher shops for scraps is enjoyed by the chiefs alone. Then come private house rights, refuse bins, &c., all carefully apportioned, so that no dog need starve, although it goes without saying that every dog is always hungry.

The marvel is that they survive in such numbers, and it is literally true that the fairly good health of the city is largely due to them.

The cardinal principle of dog law is the inviolability of communal boundaries. Any dog who ventures beyond the precincts within which he is born and bred is instantly set upon by every member of the invaded tribe, and lucky he is if he escapes with his life.

It is easy for men to make friends with these ownerless animals. They are most grateful for a trifling favor and they never forget. A gentleman in the diplomatic service who usually goes for a short walk before bedtime always carries with him a bit of bread for a certain dog in an adjoining district.

This animal always awaits his benefactor on the nearest boundary line of his district, walks with him solemnly to the opposite limit, awaits his return and goes back with him across the precinct; but never has the man been able to induce the dog to cross the frontier of his own community by so much as a yard. And such has been dog government in Constantinople since time immemorial.

Some significance there surely is in the existence of this peculiar institution in the capital city of the "cruel" Turk. I have a favorite test of one phase of the character of a people which I try to apply in each new country or community I visit.

In an occasional quiet street, I interview, or attempt to do so, an itinerant domestic cat. I get the truth from such a witness almost invariably. If Grimalkin always flies at my approach, I draw an obvious conclusion regarding his or her human colleagues.

I may say here, parenthetically, that the average London cat is the most confiding and friendly beast on earth, while the Constantinople cat puts an almost equal trust in human nature as she knows it. In France, sad to chronicle, I never have succeeded in approaching within many yards of a cat, if the cat knew it and a way of escape was open. Having still some vestiges of patriotism, I refrain from naming New York's place in the category.

One cannot mix even for a few days in the teeming life of Constantinople without realizing that religion is the greatest factor in Levant existence. His religion is far more to a Turk than a belief, a mere faith; it is absolutely an axiom. Hence it is that conversions of Moslems to the Christian or any other religion are far more rare than cases of insanity.

I note for the moment only the more obvious effects of religious precept and tradition. Mahomet inculcated in his followers more thoroughly than has any other religious teacher the doctrine that cleanliness is next to godliness. Five times daily, before prayers or before entering a mosque, a good Moslem washes his face and hands; once daily his ablutions must include other portions of the body. So one sees row upon row of Turks scrubbing vigorously in front of the scores of water taps outside each mosque.

He is utterly unable to understand the absurd Western custom which prescribes the uncovering of the head on entering a church or private dwelling, but which permits the introduction of the muck of the streets upon one's footgear. He reverses the process, and a Turkish gentleman smilingly hinted to me that he had never been able to obtain any explanation of the good taste or superior significance of the Christian custom.

Moreover, the Turk is neater with respect to the condition of his foot covering than any European community. I was surprised to see not merely occasional bootblacks at street corners in about New York proportion, but for every boot stand in an American city there is a battalion in Constantinople. I gained the impression on my first stroll that half of the population gained its livelihood by cleaning the boots of the other half.

But our ramble in the streets, the bazars, the mosques and the cafés has got no farther than the street, and there is danger that the serious purpose of this letter be lost sight of. The bazar, with its 7,000 shops, dared we enter it, would hopelessly distract us.

We should learn there that the Greek and the Armenian are sharper business men than the Turk. We should discover, also, if we entered into general commerce that the Turk, while fairly good at a bargain, is a man of his word in business. However tricky and corrupt he may be in politics, I found only one opinion regarding his commercial integrity, and it was one which some more western peoples might well envy. It is necessary to make careful distinction between the Turk and his Greek and Armenian colleagues in this respect, but I will not press the distinction farther.

We go to the mosques, and while we find renewed proof of the almost incomprehensible conviction which makes religion the greatest factor in Moslem life, the wonderful temples themselves absorb our attention more than the devout worshippers whose heads are bowed toward Mecca.

Stand for a moment amid the vastness of St. Sophia, whose domes during 1,300 years have sheltered almost fifty generations of worshippers. Even in these days of contempt for past achievements it ranks as the greatest temple ever built by human hands.

There is nothing overwhelming in its exterior aspect, as in the grandeur of St. Peter's at Rome, its rival in size, but within its walls many will find the Moslem temple more impressive than the cathedral style of architecture—the absence of seats, the kaleidoscope of acre upon acre of Turkish rugs soft under your slippered feet, the circle of stupendous columns, the dim distance of the outer walls, the atmosphere as of the open sky as the slow-converging roof meets far, far above you.

But I did not come to Constantinople to describe St. Sophia. Nor shall I even refer to the beauties of the Golden Horn, and Sweet Waters, the Riverside Drive of Constantinople; to the sportive porpoise whose antics add the necessary touch of comedy to the tragic waters of the Bosphorus; to the exaggerated weirdness of the howling dervishes of Scutari, or to Prinkipo, the loveliest gem among the beautiful islands of the world, where the American Minister makes his home during the spring and early summer.

I have been speaking until now as a mere tourist, in whom it would be presumptuous and absurd to do more than record his superficial observations. It is an advantage if one can get a glimpse of the scenery, a breath of the atmosphere amid which one of the great dramas of the race is being enacted.

As I proceed to deal with the play itself and with the actors therein, let me say at once that I become the mouthpiece of others. Or, to adopt a more fitting simile, my task is that of an impartial juryman who must sift and weigh a mass of almost hopelessly conflicting evidence.

I shall make no attempt to discuss the so-called Eastern question in its history and its merits. It will suffice for busy men to consider the present situation, the tendency of events and the probable effect of their development upon the history of the Levant, of Europe, and the world at large.

The familiar question is, Shall Ottoman rule be driven out of Europe?

The real and greater issue is the rapidly developing rivalry between Pan-Slavic and Pan-Germanic ambitions.

Russia's desire sooner or later to acquire Constantinople has long been a recognized factor in what is known as the "European situation." Germany's far-reaching aspirations, or rather those of her Emperor, have only recently come within the ken of practical politics.

It is the dream of the Kaiser, according to the interpretation given to his policy by some of the ablest diplomatists, that his empire shall stretch in a great belt across Europe, from Amsterdam and the Baltic to Salonika. A Napoleonic ambition, truly, and one not to be confessed even to his most trusted lieutenants during the life of the Austrian Emperor!

If it exists, then Germany's support of the Sultan during the Armenian troubles and Turkish reliance upon the Kaiser's aid in the present crisis are abundantly explained. Again, if it exists, Russia may well strive to execute her purpose in European Turkey and the Balkans as soon as her interests and plans in the Far East will permit. The life of the aged sovereign at Vienna is a frail contingency upon which to rely.

On the other hand, there are those who contend that Russia would be satisfied with a mere outlet from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, which the possession of Constantinople and the Dardanelles would supply and that she would be almost indifferent to the presence of a great rival Power in the Gulf of Salonica. At all events it is the firm belief of every Embassy in Constantinople to-day that Russia regards the development of her plans in Manchuria and the Far East as of more pressing necessity than her ambitions in the Levant. This is coupled with confidence that Russia is genuinely striving to postpone, perhaps not for long, serious hostilities in the Balkans.

Her task has been no easy one. A few weeks ago, a general war in the Balkans seemed all but inevitable. Russian handling of the situation, especially in Sofia, has been a masterly piece of work.

It may still fail, but the danger is diminishing daily and at most it will disappear only temporarily. This indeed, as will readily be understood, is also according to Russian desire.

The world gives little consideration to the fate of the Turk in the Titanic game which is being played. He is an "anachronism in Europe," his expulsion is regarded as a foregone conclusion, and the common belief is that his toleration, during the past generation at least, has been a reproach to modern civilization. His condemnation and that of his sovereign is pronounced daily in the press and in the pulpit of the Western world.

He has never had an advocate at the bar of Christian public opinion. The Turkish side of any question is never presented. It has almost come to be assumed that such a thing has no existence.

Publicly to defend the Sultan in any of his disagreements with other Powers has been to bring instant attack upon the motives of the defender, be he German Kaiser or ordinary observer. In fact, the world insists upon believing that nothing good can come out of Yildiz Kiosk.

And yet the representative of a great Power at the close of a long conversation has just said to me that it would be nothing less than a calamity for Turkey if the Sultan should presently be gathered to his fathers. I have no doubt that every Ambassador in Constantinople would indorse in all sincerity a sentiment which I am afraid will be received with some surprise by Christendom generally.

Again it becomes necessary, in order to appreciate the Turkish, or rather the Sultan's point of view, to speak of customs and traditions and atmosphere.

Let it be remembered that the Turkish Government is an absolute despotism; that the present Sultan came to the throne as the result of a successful palace plot against the life of his predecessor. His personal knowledge of the world outside his own dominions is limited to that gained on a single brief visit to Paris with his uncle thirty-five years ago.

From the day of his accession he has been surrounded by schemers and spies. A sovereign must be somewhat more than human if he can make himself really independent of his entourage; he has a faculty not possessed by one man in a thousand if he is able always to distinguish loyalty from sycophancy.

The Sultan has none of the opportunities of enlightened civilization for recruiting his assistants from among honest men. There is not even a free press to bring to his attention abuses which may be notorious to all but himself.

The personality of Abdul Hamid has been made the subject of more slander than has been heaped upon any other individual of the present day. Much of it is ridiculous and absurd and yet apparently no story that can be invented is too incredible for acceptance.

Several gentlemen who know the Sultan with sufficient intimacy to have gained a considerable knowledge of him as a man have spoken to me of him with complete frankness. Without exception, they describe him as a refined, kindly, remarkably well-informed but harassed and overworked gentleman.

That he is extremely suspicious in all matters appertaining to his royal functions is scarcely more than his duty. It is but natural also that having constantly in mind the fate of his uncle, he should perhaps exaggerate the danger to himself of a similar calamity.

The sincere tribute which all agree in paying is that the Sultan is a conscientious ruler who earnestly strives by every means in his power to defend and promote the interests of his religion and race. He is an ardent and sincere Musulman, and the personal purity of his life bears witness to the genuineness of his religious convictions.

If this be true, how is it that the Turkish empire becomes the scene of horrors which shock Western humanity and that government under the Sultan is the most corrupt of modern times? The two things seem incapable of reconciliation and yet the explanation is not far to seek. It may almost be suggested in a sentence.

The Sultan attempts to direct all the affairs of his great empire, domestic and foreign, without delegating any real power to his subordinates.

Imagine for a moment what this means. Make an inadequate comparison in the affairs of New York.

Suppose no policeman, fireman or other city employee could be engaged or dismissed except by the personal act of the Mayor; suppose every payment of wages should be made only by the Mayor's hand; suppose every case in a police or other court should go to the Mayor for his personal revision of the evidence before judgment could be pronounced; suppose the Mayor personally received all taxes, paid all bills, made all contracts, created by edict all city ordinances. The chaos and demoralization which would result are what would prevail throughout Turkey to-day but for the peculiar system of corruption which takes the place of anarchy.

Reports upon the affairs of his wide domain are placed before the Sultan in vast array every day. It would be a task physically impossible, not for one man, but for ten men, to read them, much less to give them careful consideration.

There is no harder worked man in Europe than the overburdened ruler in Yildiz Kiosk, who conscientiously sweeps back from his door each day the rising tide of his sovereign duties. It is largely the knowledge, no doubt, of the hopelessness of his self-imposed task which has made him a nervous victim of chronic insomnia. It is his frequent habit, as his Ministers and entourage know to their cost, to rise up in the middle of the night and plunge into affairs of state which demand attention.

It is of course inevitable in such circumstances that those who suffer or who lose chances of profit by the blocking of gubernatorial functions will resort to devious and indirect means for getting their own special grist through the mill. The mere chance whether a paper lies near the top instead of at the bottom of a pile makes a vital difference to the fortunes of some individual or community. Hence the obvious beginning of corruption.

But the system which prevails in Turkey has a broader recognition and basis than this would indicate. Let no one imagine that the Sultan himself is deceived by the arts practised upon him. He fully understands and tacitly approves the system of which he is the victim.

Public offices of all sorts are regularly bartered and sold. Every contract made with the Government pays its high commission to the palace officials. Every warrant against the imperial treasury is discounted by a well-known process. Every importer bribes the custom house officials, and every taxpayer of any means "squares" the collector.

It is the simple truth that if the taxes of Turkey were honestly collected and honestly expended, the country instead of being impoverished would have a rich and overflowing treasury. The burdens upon the people might be substantially reduced and genuine prosperity might become possible.

Why, then, does the Sultan submit to wholesale robbery? His policy seems capable of but one interpretation. It is the price he pays for security.

Experience has brought his faith in human nature to a very low ebb. He no longer believes, if indeed he ever did do so, in disinterested loyalty. He has a cynical confidence in the purchasable faithfulness of self-interest, and he trusts no other motive.

This service he buys, and the price he pays for it is well-nigh ruinous to himself and to Turkey. But what will not a man give for some sense of security for his life?

It is interesting to quote the current practical working of the system. The market price of a salary warrant upon the Turkish treasury varies between 40 and 55 per cent. of its face value. Just now the quotation is 45 per cent.

The holder sells his warrant to a broker at that price. Thence there is a regular channel of communication with intermediate rake-offs of 5 and 10 per cent. until the proper go-between disposes of it at 75 per cent. to the Treasurer.

That official credits himself with the full amount, for, of course, he and not the Government profits by the 25 per cent. discount. It will be readily understood that the market price of a billet as Treasurer is considerably higher than that of the Governorship of a province.

At the custom house it suffices on the average in a case where dutiable goods should pay, say $200, to give the examiner a tip of $5 and to pay duty to the extent of $20. A sheep farmer who owns 1,000 sheep returns his flock for purposes of taxation at 100 and pays backsheesh to the assessor.

The wonder is, under such a system, that any money at all reaches its legitimate purposes and that the Government can be carried on even on the primitive existing lines. A single instance will illustrate the point that it is impossible to do business with the Turkish Government except in conformity with the rules of its peculiar system.

A foreigner wished to secure the adoption of an important military invention by the Turkish Army. He secured an agent who knew the ropes. The channel through which the Sultan himself was reached was one of his favorite personal attendants.

The Sultan was interested, promised to have special tests made and to give an audience to the inventor. The matter was overlooked for a day or two. The attendant forthwith assumed an aspect of deep melancholy whenever he was in his master's presence. The weary monarch, well accustomed to such methods, at last inquired:

"Well, what is the matter; what do you want?"

"Your Majesty has forgotten the——device," and the matter was advanced another stage.

Within a month, the necessary tests were made, reports entered, the Sultan's assent obtained and the contract awarded. The inventor had been obliged to divide no less than 55 per cent. of his proceeds in commissions to the "palace crowd."

Even then there was a hitch. One of the secretaries through whose hands the papers passed had been overlooked, or rather he had not been definitely informed of his share in the division. He was duly notified, however.

He expressed his entire satisfaction, but remarked that he must get the papers back at once, because he feared that he had made a slight mistake in one of them. So he had, and it became necessary to obtain the Sultan's assent to a fresh set of documents.

It would hardly be fair to put such transactions in the same moral category with similar corruption in the administration, say, of an American municipality. The Turkish people are of course the real victims of this system, but in a despotism like Turkey the public revenues are virtually the property of the sovereign, and if he consents tacitly to be robbed, the practice, however reprehensible, can scarcely be described as illegal.

I do not believe that any foreigner is competent to judge whether the Sultan's elaborate precautions against treachery are justified or if his fears exaggerate the danger of conspiracy against the throne. The absence of some of the ordinary facilities of civilization in Turkey is due solely to the Sultan's suspicions.

Post office and telegraph exist scarcely more than in name. Some years ago the Sultan allowed some one to establish a local post office service in Constantinople, with delivery and collection of letters. It was a success from the start, until one day a spy suggested to the Sultan that he had provided facilities for his enemies secretly to communicate with one another. The system was promptly abolished, and it has never been restored.

Most tempting offers have been made to induce the Sultan to allow the introduction of the telephone in Constantinople. They have invariably failed, for the same reason.

The last time such an offer was made it met with unexpected opposition from administration officials. The head of the telephone syndicate argued his cause temptingly with a Cabinet Minister. The reply was that not only was it hopeless to approach the Sultan, but that the Cabinet would unanimously oppose the innovation. The astonished foreigner asked why.

"Because it is bad enough to be summoned to the palace by special messenger at 5 o'clock in the morning. If the members of the Government had telephones in their houses they would not be their own masters a single hour in the twenty-four," was the frank but very conclusive explanation.

It is under internal conditions such as are suggested by the foregoing inadequate observations that the Turkish Empire is striving to maintain itself against the conflicting ambitions and jealousies of the great Powers. The Sultan's task both within and without his own dominions has been to make rival aspirations and rival enmities cancel each other.

His skill in accomplishing this has been the marvel of diplomacy for nearly thirty years. His problem of internal administration, it is only the simple truth to admit, has been more difficult than that of any other ruler.

No portion of his empire is free from the most difficult racial and religious conflicts. Moslems and Christians, Greeks and Slavs, Armenians and Kurds, Jews and Arabs, are thrown into a propinquity which in some cases makes peaceful existence impossible. Those foreign observers who know Turkey best are all willing to admit that the most civilized and well intentioned of governments in face of such a problem would have been unable to avoid serious local outbreaks.

The wonder is not that there have been occasional atrocities, but that massacres have not been more frequent. The policy of the Turk seems to be when he is no longer able to control a racial or religious feud, and some blood letting becomes inevitable, to let the explosion take place and to content himself with making sure that his own supremacy is not endangered.

When one takes into consideration the Turkish point of view and also the ignorance, fanaticism and narrow-mindedness of all the warring elements of the population, one wonders what other policy is to be expected. It is not worth while discussing again at this late day the last Armenian massacres, but it is significant to know that foreign sentiment in Constantinople includes very little sympathy with the victims.

The commonest libel against the Turk is that he is religiously intolerant. On the contrary he is utterly indifferent to any amount of propagandism by the representatives of other faiths.

His attitude, for instance, toward American missionary effort in Armenia is one of amused contempt. He is simply unable to understand the motives for a great expenditure of time and money in order to change a Christian of one sort into a Christian of another sort. A Moslem receives a suggestion that he should substitute another prophet for Mahomet, not with any resentment, but in the same spirit that a great financier would treat a proposal from a gentle alchemist who has a process for transmuting steel rails into gold.

He is no theologian, and religion is with him largely a matter of heredity. He cannot understand a voluntary abandonment of the religious faith of one's childhood—not even when the change involves embracing Moslemism. Hence a Christian convert to Mahomet is always regarded with suspicion and not until the third generation are his children regarded as true Moslems.

It follows that there is no Moslem propaganda, and that the futility of Christian missionary work among the Faithful is recognized and such effort has been virtually abandoned. Medical charities and purely educational work among the Turkish population are accomplishing valuable results. There is no institution in existence deserving of higher indorsement than Roberts College, which excludes religious teaching from its curriculum.

Severe criticism unfortunately is to be heard among the non-missionary foreign residents of Turkey of the educational policy of American missionaries in both Armenia and Macedonia. This point is not to be avoided, sharply controversial although it undoubtedly is.

It has been urged upon my attention in two aspects. First, with regard to Armenia, it is said that considerable social and political discontent is caused by educating young men and women beyond their stations in life; beyond the requirements of available spheres of existence. The creation of tastes and ambitions impossible of gratification produces inevitable unhappiness, and some of the effects which are mentioned, especially among Armenian young women, would be appalling to the American supporters of this class of effort.

It is provincialism of the narrowest sort and not broadmindedness which refuses to recognize that while unlimited education in a land of unlimited opportunities like America is always a boon, yet in a country like Turkey it may easily become a grave evil. There is a growing section of public opinion in England which opposes the advanced education of the masses even in that enlightened democracy on the ground that it is rapidly destroying the servant and laboring classes. If there is excuse for such an argument in England, it becomes far more forcible in a land where unskilled labor is almost the only means of livelihood.

A Turkish official holding an important post in the administration of Macedonia in discussing the situation in that unhappy province the other day ascribed the present crisis almost exclusively to the effects of missionary educational effort. If the Christian minority were strong enough to control the country in the event of its gaining autonomy then one would applaud the spirit of rebellion against a long record of oppression. But unhappily the feud between the Bulgarian Christians in Macedonia and the Greek Christians there is as bitter as their resentment against the Turks, and the latter argue with some reason that their policy of rigid subjugation of all factions is the only safeguard against a civil war of annihilation.

The situation in Macedonia itself has been fully described in communications to THE SUN during the past few weeks. It became apparent early in the winter that a crisis could not be averted and the question both for Turkey and the Powers was whether the trouble might be localized.

Anything may happen even now, but there seems to be a fair chance that the solution of the Balkan question may again be postponed, for a few months at least. This possibility is greatly exasperating the Macedonian committees, and we may fairly expect some desperate action on their part.

Their disappointment is due to Russia's unexpected inability to control the Bulgarian Government. Without general Bulgarian support the Macedonian revolutionary cause is hopeless. Turkey is amply able to crush any rising, while the avowed aim to carry on guerrilla warfare and to incite the Turks to commit outrages must fail of its purpose to provoke sympathetic interference from any part of Europe.

Russia really expects nothing from Turkey in the way of reforms. She has plans in the Far East which demand her attention before the settlement of the Balkan question.

Moreover, the pursuit of her ultimate designs in Turkey and the Balkans would involve a severe strain of her alliance with France, a bond which is already showing some signs of weakening. It is even possible that Russia is not without hope of reaching some understanding with England before the fate of the Ottoman Empire in Europe is finally decided.

The further development of pan-Germanic designs and the strong British feeling thereanent might conceivably bring an Anglo-Russian *entente* within the range of practical politics. There is undoubtedly a feeling of change and readjustment in the political atmosphere of Europe.

The Sultan clearly believes that the German Emperor is his best reliance and the coming arbiter of events. Certainly the Kaiser has shown more skill in dealing with Turkey than ever England or any other Power exhibited. German influence in Constantinople to-day is remarkably strong and is being exploited for all it is worth.

There is nothing more cold-blooded than a German political friendship. Sometimes this is recognized instantly and instinctively, as recent events familiar to SUN readers will certify, but the Sultan has yet to discover it.

In the matter of the Bagdad railway concession alone, the Sultan has given to Germany a gift of almost incalculable value. It is a pity that this great enterprise cannot be carried out as a purely commercial undertaking.

It is asserted in London and some other uninformed quarters that such a line can not be self-supporting and that it will never be built except for strategical and political purposes. The testimony of every one in this part of the world who has any knowledge of the country to be traversed is precisely the reverse of this. No spot on earth is more richly endowed with natural resources.

The Euphrates Valley is the ancient granary of the world. Its soil is richer than that of the American prairies. Only the most rudimentary planting and harvesting are necessary for the production of enormous crops.

An American physician who has recently explored extensively in the unmapped portions of the country tells me it is the common practice for peasants to burn great quantities of corn and wheat annually. They keep all they have use for and destroy the rest in order to escape taxation thereon.

There is abundant mineral wealth in many sections, including coal, iron, oil, copper, &c. Bad government and absence of transport have locked up what is really a treasure land for scores of generations. It is quite possible that political mismanagement will ruin what is really a commercial opportunity of the first magnitude, but the world should not be deceived by the sour-grapes attitude of the British Government toward this enterprise.

The decline of British prestige has been the most striking development in Constantinople during the past few years, as it has been in some other parts of the world. Yet Britain has been a truer friend of Turkey than ever Germany will be. It is possible that some pending developments may result in a revival of British influence here.

It is believed, with ample reason by Turkey, however, that Great Britain would not now fire a shot to keep Russia out of Constantinople. There is some confidence that Germany might do so. There is no basis whatever for the hope.

It is the Sultan's intention thoroughly to subjugate Macedonia, but to avoid as far as possible arousing European protests by atrocities. There is no doubt the atrocity cry will be raised. The Turk is a demon fighter and difficult to control, especially when engaged in a religious, or holy, war. He hopes to settle the Macedonian question much more thoroughly than Russia desires him to do.

The day is not very far distant when Russia will be ready to settle the Balkan question in her way. To do that it is necessary that there still shall be a Balkan question to settle. If the Sultan is as clever as he usually shows himself to be, he will make it difficult for Russia to find an excuse for future interference.

After all, however, the question of a casus belli does not matter much. The inexorable logic of the situation is that Russia must and will seek an outlet to the sea.

At the present moment it does not seem possible that she can gain her object except by a bloody duel with the Turk. Whether she would be satisfied with a mere gateway to the Mediterranean or whether her ambitions beyond would clash with those of other Powers is a larger aspect of the question to which present information furnishes no key.

Before any army starts or any sword is drawn, there remain to be made the decisive moves in the most dramatic and fascinating campaign of modern diplomacy. Skill more than might is likely to control the game.

Two of the competitors are well matched. Russian astuteness, patience and unscrupulousness are pitted against the brilliant genius of the German Emperor. The wonderful cleverness of the Sultan may circumvent them both.

The inadequacy of British representation in the pending struggle is exasperating even to an impartial looker-on. Vigor and vitality and statesmanship have died out of British policy. But England's great interests in the East may yet find an adequate defender.

His name will not be found upon the roll of her politicians, yclept statesmen. It is that of his Majesty King Edward VII., a sovereign of whose activities and influence in the affairs of nations the world will not much longer remain in ignorance.

H. R. C.

CRIPPLES AT THE BRIDGE.

A Special Corner for Them Provided by the Police at Rush Hours.

The corner of the north roadway on the Brooklyn Bridge just where the trolley cars coming from Brooklyn swing around the loops has become known to Brooklynites as Cripple's Corner.

The policemen at the loops have a dead line beyond which no man can go at the rush hour. This dead line was established because it got to be the custom to go as much as 100 yards up the Bridge roadway in order to intercept the incoming trolley cars and get seats. The result of it was that before the cars got to this end at all, every seat was occupied.

In order to get past the dead line one has to be a cripple. A lame man, a one armed man, a hunchback, in fact a man with any visible infirmity, even if it happens to only a temporary one like a broken head or a bandaged eye, is allowed to pass the dead line and take place in Cripple's Corner. A policeman who remains in the corner to assist the cripples aboard cars holds up their cars as they come in and sees each one safely in his seat.

THE DREAD OF THE GALLOWS.

Experience of a Missouri Judge With Men Condemned to Death.

MACON, Mo., May 9.—Gordon G. Ramey, who is in jail in Lancaster, charged with the deliberate murder of his twenty-year-old wife, Norah, because of jealousy, said to his attorneys when they asked him whether he would rather hang or go to the penitentiary for life:

"Just as you people say; to me it's a stand-off."

The district Judge, N. M. Shelton, lives at Macon. It will be his duty to pass sentence upon Ramey. When the remark quoted reached Judge Shelton he said:

"That's what he says now, but wait. Men don't want to die—except in novels. There the hero can afford to be indifferent to danger because he knows that if the right sort of author has hold of him he will get through somehow and live happy ever after.

"But ordinary humankind wants to live as long as the blood of life and health flows. There are no two sides to the subject. While a spark of intelligence exists in saint or sinner life is the dearest thing there is. It is the law of nature's God.

"I don't know this young man, but I'll wager a lot he doesn't repeat that remark to me when the time comes. I've seen too many such cases.

"I was a member of the Missouri Senate in 1889. The capital buildings and penitentiary are at Jefferson City. A Baptist preacher, a Bald Knobber, named Simmons, had been sentenced to death for murder. He was regarded as courageous to the point of recklessness.

"At the last moment the Governor commuted the sentence to imprisonment for life. I saw the old man as he was dressed in the penitentiary. His face glowed with pleasure.

"Some one asked him how he felt. He responded with a quotation he had doubtless used many a time in the days before he went to the bad:

"'Glory to God! I feel just like I'd been born again!'

"Life had come back to him and it was overpoweringly sweet. He had nothing to look forward to but grim, incessant toil, under a hard master, through all the years to come. But he would live, and he was profoundly grateful therefore.

"When I was the representative of my county at Jefferson City I saw two other men right after their death sentences had been commuted to life imprisonment by Gov. Marmaduke. They had been convicted of an atrocious murder in Henry county.

"They came to the penitentiary with faces beaming like those of men going to the wedding altar. They shook hands with everybody they met, laughed, cried and acted deliriously happy.

"Recently I had the disagreeable duty of sentencing J. M. Robertson of Adair county to the gallows. Before his conviction he boldly proclaimed his preference for death to a term in the penitentiary.

"When the jury took him at his word and fixed his punishment at death, his nerve failed. He begged his lawyers to abandon the appeal and to implore the Governor for a commutation to life in the State penitentiary.

"The man is, apparently, a physical wreck, and it looks as if life would have little attraction for him, even if he gained his liberty. Yet with all the strength of his mind he wants to live.

"These are not peculiar instances. It is simply the longing of a normal mind. It is not cowardice to dread death on the gallows.

"Men who have reputations for marked bravery in personal encounters will become absolutely terror stricken at the thought of such an end. Those who flaunt their indifference to it will change when the shadow gets closer. God evidently intended that expiation at the law's hands should be a terror, and such I believe it will ever be. 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.'"