



## Constantinople, city of kings

BY STELLA REINHARDT, '26

Speaking mathematically there are a million people in Constantinople. Like ancient Rome the city was founded upon seven hills by Constantine and called New Rome. It remained Byzantine until Mohammed the Conquerer marched in to hoist the Turkish flag in 1454 and it has remained in Turkish hands to the present day with a population that is a melange of Greek, Armenian Jew, Russian, Bulgarian and Turkish. Following the world war a revolution came about in Turkey at the end of which the country found itself a republic with a president instead of an empire with a sultan. Recent years have seen the departure of the fez and the veil, separation of the church and state; initiation of a Latin alphabet to replace the Arabic script, votes for women and the beginning of more wonderful changes yet to come.

Whether the approach to the city is by boat, train or by airplane the peculiar charm that is Constantinople's impresses the traveller. A charm that has nothing at all to do with reforms.

The warm sands of Floria on the sea of Marmora are inviting even to the end of October. The innumerable little coffee shops where one takes coffee and may rent a narghile with view; solitude and peace of mind thrown in, seem a part of the shore line so well do they fit in with the rocks, the decaying sea wall and the fishermen's nets and boats.

Constantinople has many moods and many memories. Stamboul, the old section where Constantine founded the new Rome is sad with a quietness of remembered triumphs. Its old mosques, falling houses; stone streets, sultans palaces are all blended in soft decay like a fading photograph in which one traces the

strongest lines. Stamboul's strongest lines . . . the mosques, gardens, the sea, the quiet and the misty soothing sky.

Pera, the European section has more noise, less tranquility, modern shops with Palmolive soap and His Master's voice phonographs (Life Buoy soap has not yet been introduced), talkies and all the other appurtenances of modern civilization. Pera has its forgotten streets too. Streets that mount suddenly with stone steps or ascend as abruptly with no steps at all . . . donkeys laden with cabbages, carrots and melons . . . merchants that sell hot bread and boot blacks that go from house to house. But above all Pera has the Grand Rue a short thoroughfare along which most of the modern shops are located. Below Pera is Galata, banking section. At the end of the Golden Horn is Eyub, city of the dead where solemn cypress trees stand straight among the fallen tombstones, a quiet, sad, solemn but beautiful place from which one commands a full view of the horn, Stamboul, Galata and Pera.

Across the Bosphorus is Scutari with gardens growing over decay . . . grape arbors between unpainted tumbling houses. Narrow streets and indolent people. But how different is Scutari from Pera. Pera is Europe and Scutari

On the opposite page is perhaps the most famous view of Constantinople, taken from Eyub, the thousand-year old cemetery and looking towards Constantinople. Below is a typical Turkish street, with its cobble stones, gardens behind walls, streets where no traffic save a heavily laden donkey can pass. Miss Reinhardt, who is a secretary in the American embassy at Constantinople, finds this cross-roads of the world city interesting and charming



is Asia even though it is only about twenty minutes by ferryboat across to the Asiatic side.

There are little villages all the way to the Black Sea (two hours boat ride) on each side of the Bosphorus. On the European side there are cafes with jazz and classic music . . . on the Asiatic side the quiet of trees and low hills. But over the water and both sides the moon pours the same soft beauty and the air is full of the same dreamy hush.

The Bosphorus is a fickle body of water whose currents change from day to day, whose colorings change hourly, which is as grey and forlorn in winter

as an untended grave in the melting snows of late winter . . . whose waters are as blue and lilted in summer as the full blown white sails that deck its surface. The Bosphorus is ever alive. It deepens one's melancholy and heightens one's joys.

The Golden Horn has no mood save peace and sadness. Its unchangeable beauty is intensified at close of day when the whole length is a placid lake of gold. It carries its greyness in winter with the grace of one long accustomed to sadness but not bitterness. It is somehow never depressing.

It challenges one to patience. The

Horn is dead . . . no coursing currents here . . . no leaping waves.

What is so rare as a day in October in Constantinople. It is then rather than in June that Allah lends an ear and I think that he must find it all peculiarly in tune for in spite of its modernity in spots . . . in spite of all the reforms . . . in spite of street cars, taxis and new apartment buildings there is a misty mellowness pervading all the crevices. Three Octobers the writer has seen in the King's city and each one has been more beautiful than the one before. In the mellowness of age there is beauty and in the mist there is sadness . . . it is a sad mist sent to soften decay, tumbling walls and broken stones.

There is a bond between all people who have lived here momentarily or extendedly . . . there is a light that comes across the face . . . a quiet smile tinged with nostalgia. And no one has expressed it better than the Spaniard who said . . . "Turkey . . . unchanging Turkey, so beautiful and sad."



## FORTUNEDITOR

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editor of *The Sooner Magazine*, contributes to various magazines, principally *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Asia*.

Six foot two, Mr Groseclose remarks facetiously that his chief problem in life is "getting shoes big enough and suits long enough."

His most interesting experience was the three weeks he spent in the jail at Tiflis, with men being shot in the courtyard daily, and expecting his turn to come next. The most impressive sight he has seen was the Taj Mahal by moonlight.

His most interesting occupation is keeping his babies in shoes. He has two children, both girls, Sarah Jane, two and a half years old, and Nancy Margaret, one year old. Mrs Groseclose was Miss Louise Williams of Washington, D. C. The Grosecloses were married June 25, 1927.

Interested in the Y. M. C. A. while in the university, Mr Groseclose has continued with it as his hobby. He is a member of the national Y. M. C. A. council, the New York state committee and the board of managers of Prospect Park Branch in New York City.

Active in the New York City Sooner club, Mr Groseclose wants to make a class reunion at Norman.

A distinguished Oklahoman himself, Mr Groseclose has an Oklahoman for his hero—Will Rogers.