

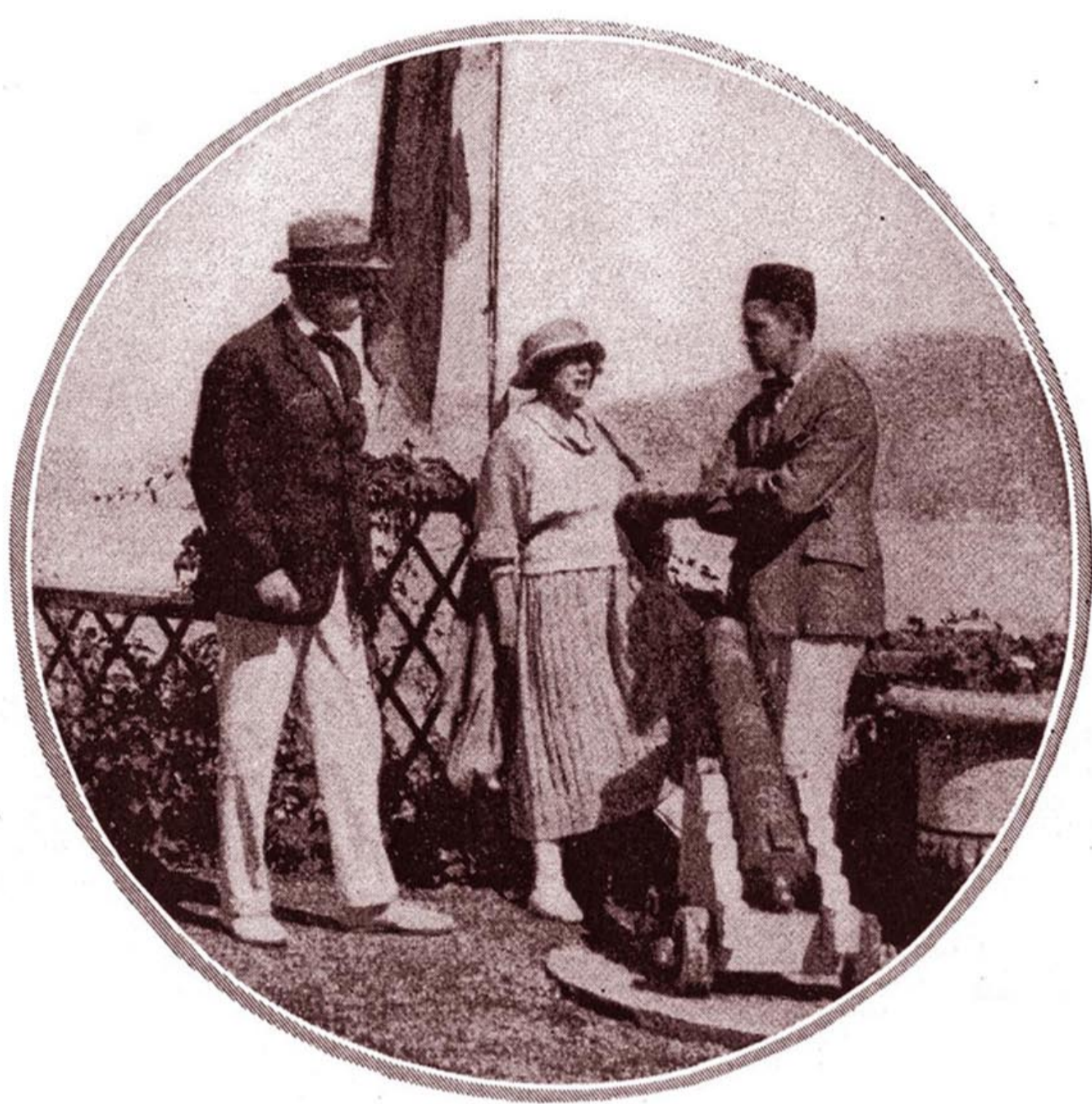
VOGUE

April, 1922: p. 70

A FRENCH PRINCESS SAVOURS TURKISH DELIGHTS

By
PRINCESS LUCIEN MURAT

Editor's Note—The Princess Lucien Murat, a distinguished member of the French nobility, recently returned from a visit to Constantinople, has written an account of her experiences in this City of Contrasts, for Vogue.



Princess Lucien Murat and Count Charles de Chambrun chat with the Minister of Persia in the gardens of the French summer Embassy at Therapia



Abdul Medjid, son of the Cherif of Mecca, carefully considers Near Eastern questions

BEFORE leaving Paris for Constantinople, seven consular visés must be fought for, and then still one more, for full measure, from the Police Department.

It is a wild dash through the Consulates, permeated with vague emanations, each of its own land. The Bulgarian, from the very door, suggests the smell of buffaloes browsing on their endless plains. The Greek, instead of the odours of Hymettus, radiates garlic. The Italian, as he stamps my passport, eyes the woman, for to him every woman is a possible adventure. The Swiss is as impersonal as his own granite. And so it goes, till a courteous Turk, with a gesture that sums up the whole Orient, hands me back my papers—and, at last, I am armed for the ordeal of every frontier between the Seine and the Hellespont.

THE ORIENT EXPRESS

In the Orient express, methodically, I sort my week's wardrobe—icy-blue pyjamas for the Swiss glaciers, a beflowered Botticellian creation to match the warm roofs of Verona, and a varied collection of garments to meet the various conditions of temperature. During an endless, useless stop at Sophia, I walk the platform in a red dress which contrasts vividly with the shirt-sleeves of a party of English officers who pace the asphalt like conquerors. Finally, the sixth morning dawns, with its cheerful scriptural promise of a coming day of rest, but how that last day drags and drags as the summer sun bakes the car roofs. In the next compartment lives a fat German-Armenian woman from Chicago, who is taking this interminable journey to present her son Sammy to his grandfather in Stamboul. Sammy, aged seven, (dreadful age), blacker than the firemen and shriller than the engine whistle, has been sucking oranges ever since we left Paris and emitting "disparaging remarks (from a Chicago viewpoint) on everything in sight. "Why ain't the buildings taller Ma? Don't they have trol-

Turkish Delights



The American High Commissioner, Mr. Bristol, and Mrs. Bristol enjoy a place in the sun on the terrace of the American Embassy at Pera

leys here? What kind of a place is this, anyhow?"

But, at last, the day draws to a close, and, as I lean far out of the window, my orange veil floating in the breeze, suddenly, minarets, mosques, St. Sophia, and Constantinople itself, the lovely courtesan of Antiquity, break into view: a radiant vision in the molten fire of the sunset. The train stops. My dream is shattered by a piercing yell. Sammy has hurled himself upon his beak-nosed grandfather, whose fez undignifiedly jostles to the ground.

Pera is to-day a Russian city of refuge. Thousands of *émigrés* (and especially *émigrées*) flying before the wrath of the Bolsheviks, have found asylum here. As other nations will not grant them right of entry, so, in Pera, as in a huge concentration camp, they are gathered, without means, wandering homeless through the streets,

Pera is today a Russian City of Refuge. Thousands of emigres flying before the wrath of Bolsheviks have found refuge here.

their eyes filled with visions of the past, of the Volga, of the Caucasus, of limitless plains, and sempiternal snow. In the great "Main Street" of Pera, the throngs are so dense that one can hardly circulate. Turning suddenly into an open door to avoid a group of "Tcherkess" (Circassians) from the Caucasus, I am almost paralyzed at the sight of a familiar face.

Can it be possible? In a ragged coat, a blacking brush in hand, Baron S. . ., son of the late Imperial Minister of Foreign Affairs, is elegantly polishing the boots of a fat Turk!

"You! You!" I mutter.

"Why yes, *c'est moi*", he answers grimly. "Any work is good nowadays", and he continues his polishing.

"The last time we met, I think, was at a dinner in your father's honour in Petrograd, just before the Revolution?"

"Yes, my father died of hunger in a Bolshevik gaol."

"And what has become of the Princess Z. . .?"

"She is still in Petrograd among the Bolsheviks. Gorki protects her, and so her life is spared. Yes, I remember that dinner. You sat next to the Grand Duke Nicholas Michaelovitch. I saw him murdered."

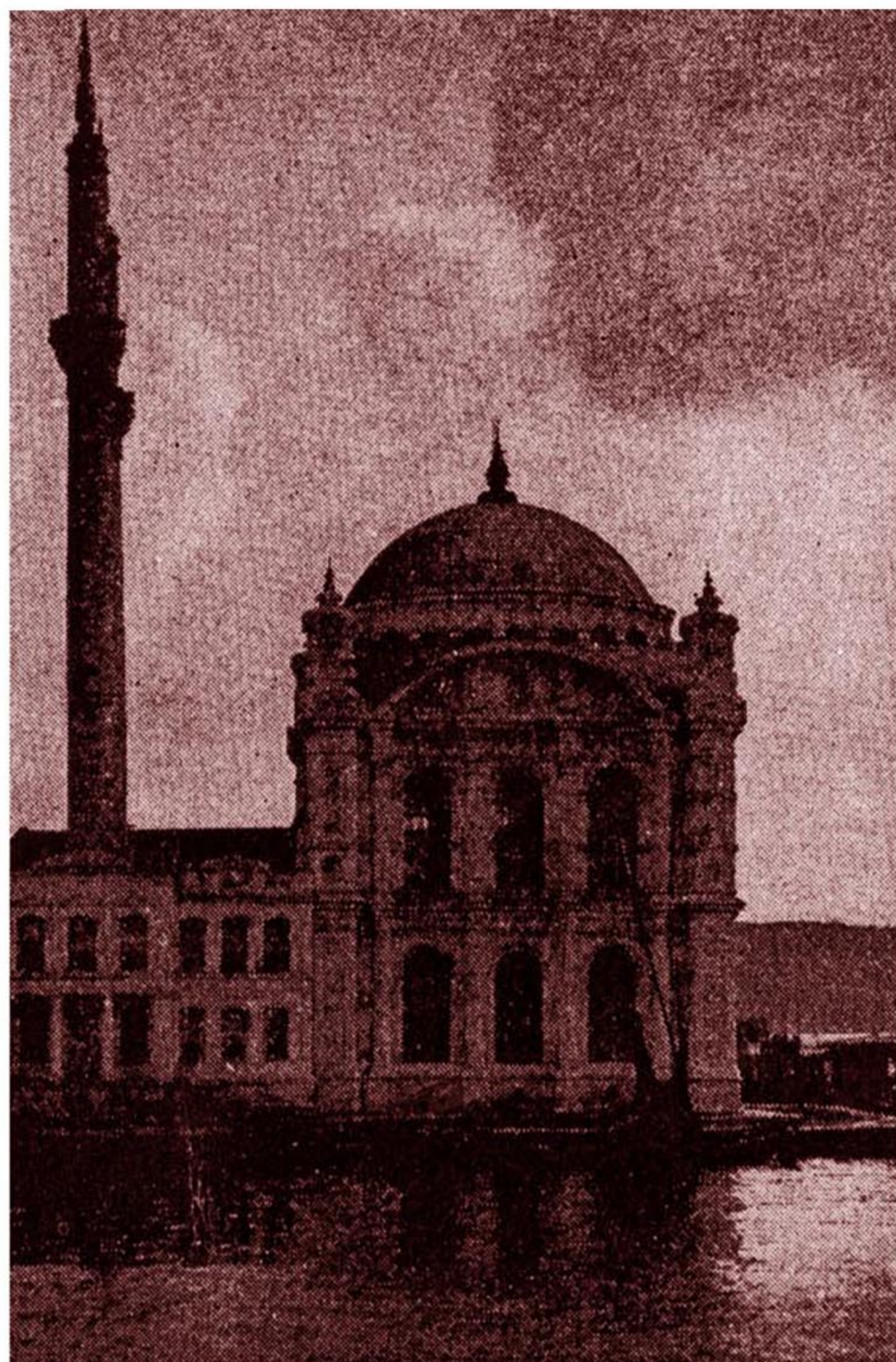
My friends drag me on, shocked by such a meeting, by the sad evocations of former days, and by the present condition of the unfortunate man, a condition which he seems to accept as a fatality in a Greek tragedy.

A PRINCESS MIXES COCKTAILS

In the cloakroom of the fashionable Kievsky Restaurant, Colonel X. . ., formerly of a smart St. Petersburg regiment, is handing out checks for sticks and umbrellas. At the Stupeus bar, I fall upon my old friend, the Princess B. . . We embrace. Fortunately for her, she had once been to America and there had learned the now lost art of mixing cocktails. Here in Pera, all night long, in order to feed her child, she shakes Martinis and Manhattans. To talk to her, I climb awkwardly on one of the high, bar stools, my legs hanging loose. I think of the last ball in Petrograd at which we met. How beautiful she was that night in a silvery dress, with her marvelous emeralds in a diadem on her lovely forehead. All the white-uniformed officers of the Guard were in love with her, surrounding her, begging for a one step or tango. Afterwards, three-horsed sleighs sped us out to the islands, where we saw the sun rise under the glistening branches of the frozen trees. The Princess tells me her lament-

Turkish Delights

able tale, her escape from the Bolsheviks, her flight in a crowded cattle-car, standing up with her child in her arms for days and days A client interrupts us. She smiles and suggests an American cocktail. Meanwhile, the "Boss" hovers around, an ebony black, who, in the old days, kept the most fashionable restaurant in Moscow where, many a time, the Princess dined and danced to the music of the tziganes. To-day, these unfortunate women are half-starved. With hardly enough food to keep body and soul alive, they serve caviar and expensive delicacies to foreigners and to *nouveaux riches*. On the restaurant tables are pinned the Christian names of the titled waitresses, with various appellations: Sonia, la blonde, Katrinka, la brunette. They rise, when called, without a murmur of complaint, resigned to their fate. Turbans "à la Schéhérazade" tightly bind their delicate heads. They have sold everything they possess save only their pearl earrings, which shine in the lobes of their tiny ears. They obey, when summoned, patiently, tightening the strings of their dainty aprons, symbols of the *soubrette* of light comedy, but here the badge of their debasement and wretchedness.

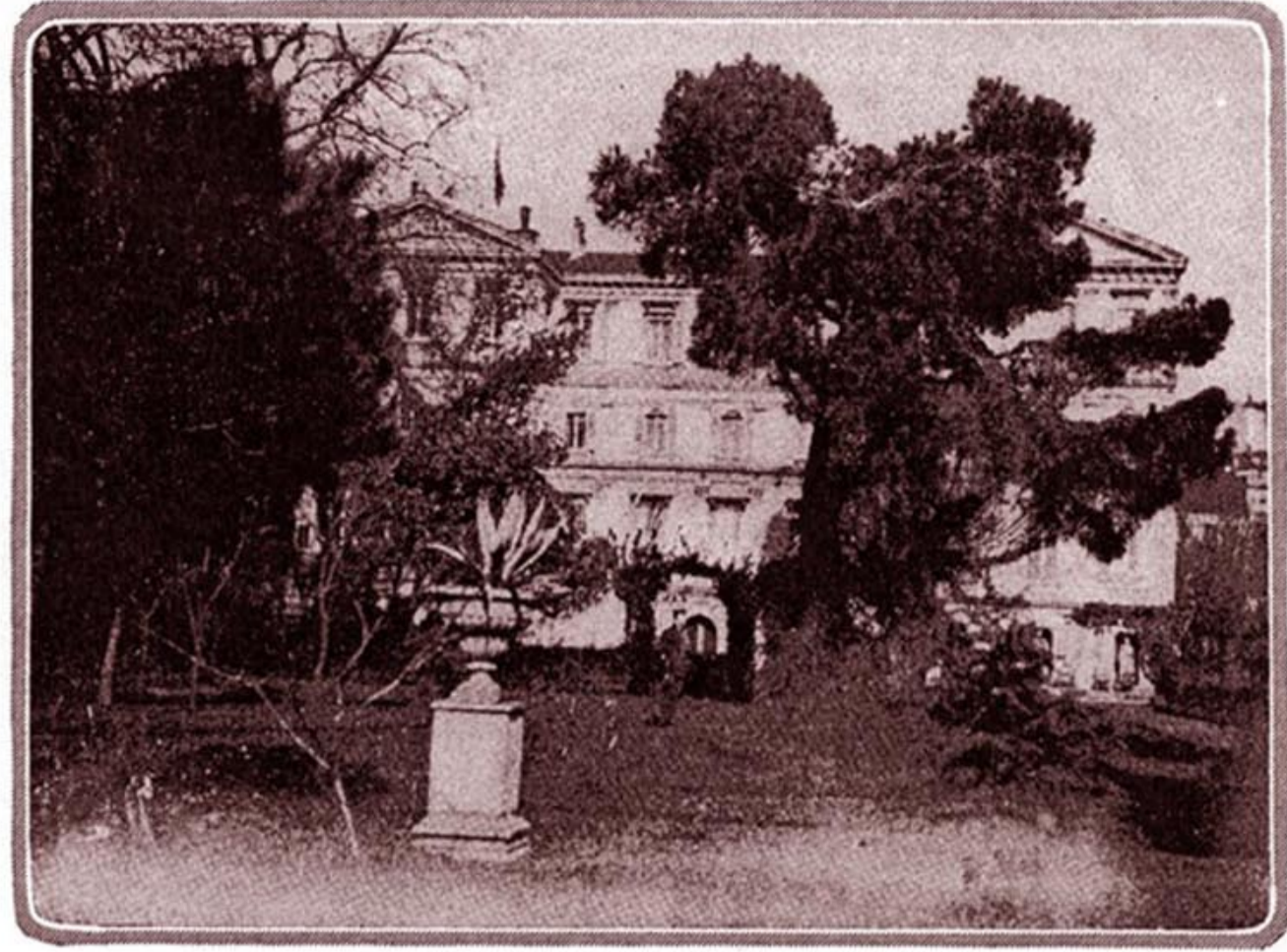


The shores of the Bosphorus are made lovely by many such mosques as this

On a perfect day in the year 1822, Marshal Sebastiani, French ambassador to the Sublime Porte, was floating on the Bosphorus when his eyes were attracted by a vision of Paradise. Leaving his "caïque", he entered an enchanted garden thick with flowers and flowering hedges, with fig trees bending under their burden of luscious fruit. The following day, the Ambassador was received with high pomp by His Majesty the Sultan Mahmoud. Sitting at the foot of the Grand Divan, the Ambassador described to the Poet-Prince the marvels of the garden he had seen, how the roses and the moss hid the running waters, how the songs of birds were the songs of Elysium. Beneath the high brocaded dais, from under his great turban, the Sultan listened, but made no reply. Next day, the Ambassador received from the Sultan a sealed parchment: a deed of gift of the enchanted garden! Overjoyed, the Marshal leaped into his caïque and sped to Therapia. At the garden gate, an emissary of the Sublime Porte bowed low and said, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, you are at home". After the usual compliments, the Ambassador remarked, "But the proprietor of this paradise, what does he say?" "Why, nothing at all," was the reply, "I had him hanged this morning to a branch of yonder fir-tree."

The legend says that his ghost still haunts the paths of his beloved gardens. Perhaps it was his ghost which, long since, set fire to the original house, burning it to the ground. In this month of September, a century later, we dine in

Turkish Delights



The garden of the French Embassy at Pera is haunted by the ghost of the owner who was hanged from the limb of the great pine tree in order that the estate might be conferred by the Sultan upon Marshal Sebastiani

front of the rebuilt house, upon the terraces, under the quiet moon, and under the light, too, of a thousand lamps that form delicate festoons over our heads. The wife of the present French High Commissioner, Madame Pellé, does the honours with youthful charm. Lady Rumbold and the Marquise Garoni, the English and Italian Ambassadors, and the Ambassador from Japan are present, the latter looking upon the scene with the legendary Japanese eye, the eye that registers everything while apparently seeing nothing. The dinner-table is on the greenest turf, under the trees; jasmines fill the soft air with heavy, troubling perfume; huge sunflowers look out upon the sea that stretches far out into unknown distances. Above, on the highest terrace, parasol pines creak gently, touched by breezes fresh from the Black Sea. Trebizond, Batoum, Kherazonda, cities of my youth, the night wind seems to bring you straight from the mysterious East, straight into my heart.

A BALL IN STAMBOUL

"In honour of His Imperial Highness, the Hereditary Prince of Persia, Madame Ali Kuli Khan Morareh Es Sultaneh, will give a ball to-night at the Persian embassy."

A ball in Stamboul, in the high city, surrounded by mosques and bazaars! The spell of the East thrills me as I slip on my dress, a velvet incarnadine, and weave into my hair a half dozen of the perfumed carnations from the Sweet Waters.

Amid all the splendours of decoration, what can be more luminous than the carpets of Persia; the "Shiraz" of the sixteenth century with the border of Rhodesian lilies; the "Tabriz" with the peacocks beloved of Shahs; those with the branches of the Tree of Life outspread to shelter true believers when they reach Paradise to live forever in ecstasy with the houris, singing like Sadi or Hafiz, the poets of Shiraz, of wine, love, nightingales, and flowers.

"Iram indeed has gone with all his Rose"

THE EAST FACES WEST

Alas, to-day the symbolism of the East and its realities are vanishing before the high cost of living. Harems are an extravagance; the cost of eunuchs is prohibitive; the blacks of the Arabian nights are priceless; even duennas must be cut out of the budget.

Democratization is the word of to-day. Most of the women go about unveiled—all but the ugly, who still cover their faces, hoping to awake desires that will never be fulfilled.

The crowd in the ballroom thickens. The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marshal Izzet Pacha, is presented to me. Courteously, he talks of the bravery of Murat, Napoleon's Murat; I, in turn, congratulate him upon the news of the Turkish advance upon Eski Cheir. A moment later, the High Commissioner of Greece announces to me that the Greek army has valiantly advanced in the same direction. Both Greek and Turk cry out "checkmate" in the same breath! In embarrassment, I congratulate the Turk, I congratulate the Greek, when, suddenly—and luckily—a blare of trumpets breaks out in the garden, and I escape on the run from the alleged victories!

Admiral Robeck, who commanded the "Iron Duke" in the battle of Jutland, comes up to say good-bye. Out there in the blue night, on the warm

Turkish Delights

waters, his gigantic man of war gleams, a magnificent specimen of the floating cities that ruin civilized nations with their costliness and which may soon be suppressed by the now celebrated 5-5-3 of Secretary Hughes.

In the great drawing-rooms, the dancing keeps on and on. The fez mingles with sky-blue uniforms. French "spahis", like poppies in a corn field, pass by, escorting Mrs. Bristol, Mrs. Dulles, and all the beautiful blond Americans. I step out upon a balcony. The City of Minarets is asleep. A fresh young voice arises from the great Place de l'Hippodrome: a French soldier boy, thinking of his sweetheart at home, sings "La Madelon" as he guards Stamboul.



General Harrington, Commander of British troops, Lady Harrington, and Admiral Bristol, U. S. N., were photographed at the Sweet Waters of Europe, where they seem, from their smiles, to have solved the problem of "striking from the calendar Unborn To-morrow and Dead Yesterday"

V O G U E