

# CONSTANTINOPLE The Stronghold of the Turk



The Great Mosque of St. Sophia.

COSTANTINOPLE, 1852, by The International Syndicate.

## Interesting Bits of History, and Life As It Is To-day In This Great Moslem City-The Gateway To the East.

**F**OR fifteen centuries the City of Constantinople on the Bosphorus has occupied a prominent place in the history of human nations. Its location makes it important both to the East and to the West, and if it had remained Christian and continued in sympathy with European nations it would today be a much greater city and exert a much larger influence in the trade and commerce of the world.

Constantinople has a romantic history which dates back several hundred years before the Christian Era, although it was known at that time as Byzantium. As early as 614 B. C. it was called Byzantium, a name which it bore for eight hundred years. Then Byzantium became known as the capital of the Eastern Empire, and the city was built upon seven hills, each extending for several miles, rising above them in picturesque confusion are the terraced roofs, domes and minarets of Istanbul. In the center of the opening to the Bosphorus revealing a vista of matchless beauty, standing Herakleion Point the steamer enters the Golden Horn—that vast amphitheatre of water where twelve hundred ships may ride at anchor. Here the view is even grander, for the seven hills on which the city is built come into full view, crowned with fantastic houses. The Old Galata Tower appears on the heights of Pera, and the residences of the European Ambassadors, while all about are evidences of the Far East. Not is the water scene less interesting, for there are animated pictures. Huge iron-clads bring the flag bearing the Star and Crescent, passenger steamers from many lands, coast ships from Odessa, Greek islands, and Turkish porters. Hundreds of kahis (small native boats) sail over the blue waters like so many dragon flies. There is no scene in the world like that about the Golden Horn.

### Made Up of Three Cities.

Constantinople is made up of three cities, each of which differ in many respects. Istanbul, the old city, lies on a tongue of land with the Sea of Marmara on the south and the Golden Horn on the north, the site of the capital of the Greek Empire. On the land side there is a wall four miles long. On the hills on the northern side of the Golden Horn are Galata, Pera and Tophane, while on the eastern side of the Bosphorus about a mile from Istanbul is Blasat, the Asiatic quarter of the Ottoman capital. The population of Constantinople is



The Mouth of the Bosphorus.

Constantinople and Chersonese.

about 1,200,000, being made up of almost every nationality in the world. It is the residence of the Sultan, who succeeded his older brother, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who was deposed in 1876. The Sultan is the thirty-ninth in male descent of the House of Othman, the founder of the Turkish Empire, and the twenty-ninth Sultan since the conquest of Constantinople.

He is a man about seventy years of age, and of a rather debilitated and it rarely seen in public except on Friday when he goes to prayer at one of the mosques. The ceremony is known as the Salatih, and is attended with great ceremony. His attendants assemble to see him pass, and if it is advisable for foreigners to obtain cards of admission at the police grounds from their embassies several days before. This gives one an opportunity to view the pageant from a position opposite the Hamidiye Mosque. Besides being a point of vantage in seeing one the disappearance of anything with the rabble. The Sultan is usually attended by a large number of troops in full dress uniform who line the square in front of the mosque as his carriage drives up followed by a number of queer little coaches containing the ladies of the harem country about a dozen go to the mosque daily and

all beautifully gowned but their faces are heavily veiled so as to prevent touching them back to the days of Justinian, 532. It is very crowded and the first square, exclusive of the mosque and gate.

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The most important thing in the Bosphorus is the performance of the dancing Devadoss, a set of men who are masters of the Indian religion. They hold a special ceremony on Tuesday and Friday after midday prayers to which the public is admitted for a small sum. The ceremony consists in the dancing, consisting partly in the rhythmic swaying of the body and all the time stamping about a large platform and up and down and of the hands. After a time they close their eyes and whirl with great rapidity in the midst of a tumultuous. Another set of men known as the dancing Devadoss sometimes become so fascinated in their performances that it is frequently considered better for Christians to remain. The dancing of the Devadoss is said to be a religious rite, and they will sing the praises of the Virgin and the saints.

In 1881 the city was captured by the French, and the name of St. Sophia was changed, under their rule, to Mahomet. The Sultan, seeing his supremacy lost, fled to Russia and was received by the Emperor, who gave him a pension of 100,000 francs. All the buildings were destroyed, and the Sultan, who had been captured by the French, was released.

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The city is ruled by 80 Beylikhs, each having the title of Beylik, and 1,000 Beylikhs, each having the title of Beylik.

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