

## A MAN IN A BOAT

By ETHEL HOLMES

Among the reasons for establishing the capital of the eastern Roman empire at Constantinople—it was first called Byzantium—was that the site was very beautiful. The Bosphorus, on which it is built, connecting the Black sea and the sea of Marmora, is one of the most attractive streams of water in the world. All manner of craft are sailing and steaming back and forth and across it, while the shore on either side, especially the European, is lined with attractive buildings.

On the European side of the Bosphorus—the side on which Constantinople is built—a portion of the water front is a park or garden free to the public. One day a Turkish woman, whose daughter was in delicate health and needed the air, took the girl to this place and, seating themselves near the margin of the water, looked out on the many boats plying back and forth across it. They were the only persons about, and any one passing on the walk behind them could only see their backs, their faces being turned to the water.

"Lift your veil, dear," said the mother, "that you may get the benefit of the breeze. No boats are passing near us, and your face cannot be seen."

The girl lifted her veil and, resting her head against her mother's shoulder, enjoyed the constantly moving panorama and the breeze cooled by the water. At times she closed her eyes for a brief nap, and her mother fell asleep. The daughter, after one of her cat naps, on opening her eyes found herself looking straight into the face of a young man sitting in a boat not a dozen yards from her. And the young man was gazing upon her rapturously.

Margaritza, the young lady, instantly dropped her veil, but not soon enough to shut out the effect of that handsome, youthful face, those admiring eyes. The young man, who had approached without being seen or heard and had rested on his oars, gazing on the dazzling beauty, pulled away, but not so far but that he could keep the two women in sight. Margaritza saw him far out in the stream and knew that to see her, even at a distance, was a pleasure to him.

In time the girl awakened her mother. They arose and walked away, for a time keeping on the shore westward, then, turning inland, ascending a rise in the ground to the house in which they lived. The man in the boat could observe them from the water and saw them go into their home.

It was not long after this that a proposition of marriage was made for Margaritza's hand. Marriages in Turkey are made by the parents of the young persons, who are not permitted to see each other until after the wedding. Margaritza, from whose mental vision the young man who had seen her from his boat had never been dimmed, was filled with grief at this application. The social standing of the suitor and his financial condition were all that could be desired, and his suit was met with favor by Margaritza's parents, so there was nothing for her to do but yield to her fate.

And yet, though there was something dreadful in her marrying with the memory of the vision she had seen constantly before her, why should she not do so? She had no reason to suppose she would ever again see the man who through that brief vision had captured her heart. And even if she did he would not see her, for it is not permitted in Turkey that a man shall look upon the face of any woman except

his wife or one of his own blood.

While the preparations for the wedding were being made Margaritza showed no interest in them. On the contrary, she grew thin and pale. Her health, which after her visit to the bank of the Bosphorus seemed to improve, was again delicate. Her mother frequently took her to the river, but without the previous effect. One day Margaritza while there saw the young man she had seen before go by in his boat, but since all Turkish women, being veiled, look alike, he did not recognize her. How she longed to lift her veil and call to him! But even had her mother not been present and now awake she would not have done so, for this for a Moslem girl would have been immodest. And what pained her was that while she was plunged in grief on account of him he seemed contented and happy.

The day of the wedding finally came around. The wedding guests were assembled in the groom's house—not at the bride's house, as in Christian countries—and were looking over the wedding presents while waiting for the bride to be brought. Then it was announced that she was at the door. The groom passed out to receive her, the guests lining up within, leaving a passage for the pair to enter.

Margaritza stood veiled waiting for her betrothed who in another moment emerged from his house with a look of supreme happiness on his face. And behind Margaritza's veil that look was repeated, though more intense in contrast with the dolorous expression that it replaced. For the groom's face was uncovered, and she recognized the man in the boat.

Having watched to see where she went after she had left the bank of the Bosphorus, he had only to inquire who she was and make a proposition for her hand. But he dared not reveal himself as one who had seen the face of the girl he proposed for. This would in Turkey have created a scandal and would likely have resulted in his application being refused.

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