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lift Pilate's name out of the depths, of infamy and make it shine as a star forever and ever. And Pilate did not know. One cannot blame Pilate for not recognizing Jesus as the Son of God, but what we must blame him for is that, knowing Jesus to be an innocent and falsely accused man, he did not defend him with all the power at his command, but basely yielded to the threat of the Jews and condemned the innocent to the cross. If Pilate had followed the light he had, we cannot doubt but that he would have received more light, if he had treated Jesus as an innocent man had a right to be treated, he might have found in him his Saviour. The question which Pilate asked concerning Jesus must press itself on many in this Christian land and in this generation. Men must have to do with Him who was crucified whether they would or not. He stands before them as he did before Pilate, and their attitude towards him determines the judgment wherewith they are judged.

Editorial Notes.

—At the annual meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, recently held in London, Dr. Guinness Rogers, in moving a resolution expressing the sympathy of the body with Mr. Gladstone in his sufferings and high appreciation of the eminent services rendered by him to his country, read a letter received last autumn from Mr. Gladstone, in which the aged statesman said: "Although my general health, to use a well-known phrase, is wonderfully good, I seem indeed—but this is lack of faith—to fear being kept here too long. Meantime, as the day of parting draws near, I rejoice to think how small the differences are becoming as compared with the agreements, and how much smaller they will yet come to be, if God in His mercy shall take away from me the filthy raiment and grant me the happy change of raiment."

—Certain statements contained in a despatch from Washington, if true, are of a character to induce some serious reflections on the part of that great and increasing host of cigarette smokers. It is stated that the percentage of rejections, because of physical incapacity, in the case of those volunteering for service in the present war, is nearly three times as great as in 1861, and physicians who have conducted the examinations say that, outside the ranks of the cigarette smokers, there are even fewer rejections than there were in the days of the civil war. But among the habitual users of cigarettes, it is stated, the percentage of rejections is about 90 per cent. Such facts, if they are facts, are of very serious importance. No country, whether in view of war or of peace, can afford to permit the forces of its manhood to be destroyed after such a fashion. The consumption of cigarettes, which in the United States has become so immense, is rapidly increasing in Canada. Judging from observation, we should suppose there are ten times as many cigarettes smoked in St. John now as there were five years ago. To most men tobacco in any form is more or less injurious in proportion to the amount used, but it is universally admitted that the cigarette is especially injurious, and that those who become addicted to the cigarette habit almost invariably suffer from serious weakness of the heart. It is by use of the cigarette, too, that most young men and boys become smokers. It is so insidiously easy for them in this way to slip into a habit from the power of which few have power to break away. It would be an immense gain to this country if the use of tobacco as a narcotic were wholly abandoned. But while men must, we suppose, be permitted to choose for themselves as to whether they will use the weed or not, we believe that the welfare of society imperatively demands the prohibition of the cigarette.

—Discussing the prospective relations of the United States to the Philippines, the Boston Watchman remarks that "the very men who, a few years ago, were in favor of hounding every Chinaman out of the country are now for annexing several millions of them." While recognizing that there is now abroad in the United States a craze for the annexation of distant islands, despite all the responsibilities toward their half-civilized or barbarous populations which such annexation would involve, the paper quoted considers that it may be that the Providence of God is putting upon the United States a duty toward those remote islands and strange

people who have been reviled and persecuted when they have sought a home under the protection of the Stars and Stripes in America. Perhaps it is not a question of relinquishing the Philippines, perhaps we cannot do so with honor if we want to. It may be that the new responsibilities may arouse the better powers of the nation and that we shall turn our backs forever on the oppression and atrocities that have marked our relations to the Indians. It is entirely conceivable that such a duty would re-act upon ourselves, that we should come to have a corps of administrators who did not in the least resemble the average Indian agents or carpet-baggers or foreign consuls, but were intelligent, just and capable representatives. But while this is conceivable, the Watchman does not perceive any very good reason for believing that the annexation of the Philippines by the United States would have a strong tendency to promote political virtue as to methods of administration.

"Beirut—Constantinople."

DEAR EDITOR.—Our stay in Beirut was made exceedingly pleasant through the attentions given us by Rev. Dr. Bliss, President of the "Syrian Protestant College," and other members of the Faculty. We were shown through the College, its class rooms, library and museum; were invited into the President's house, the only real American one in the city, where Mrs. Bliss gave us lemonade made of lemons from their own garden; were shown through the garden and given roses that for beauty and perfume were delightful. Our Presbyterian brethren of the U. S. may well be proud of such an institution as this and its far-reaching influence will become a great factor in Syria's history in days to come. Then there is a medical department connected with the College, and this is, perhaps, even a greater boon. We were specially interested in this, because one of our party was taken sick in Jerusalem and reluctantly we left him behind when starting for our long tour through the land and arranged for him to come to Beirut and enter the hospital, and be under the medical care of one of these professors. All those days of touring we were thinking of our brother, and it was with gladness we learned from his doctor of his convalescence after a severe attack of typhoid fever. With pleasure a few of us visited his room; though the pleasure was saddened by the fact of being compelled to leave him again behind while we pursued our way westward.

From Beirut to Constantinople, on the Mediterranean and other waters, we had delightful weather. Owing to calling at different ports we were six nights on the way, but the touching at these points gave us an opportunity to land at Cyprus, Smyrna, and then since the steamer is to remain in this port some hours we take a train to visit the site of old Ephesus, some 54 miles distant, to explore its ruins. We stood on the spot where once was the celebrated temple of Diana, viewed the ruins of the old church of St. John and the mounds of long concealed tombs, wandered along a stone quay where ships used to unload in days when Ephesus had connection with the sea, now miles away from these landing places. But the ruins of Ephesus are too complete to be of great interest, save as marking scenes of historic value to those acquainted with ancient history. It was satisfying to the sentimental part of our natures to spend a few hours in Smyrna and amid the disappearing ruins of Ephesus, but beyond this our visit had nothing specially worthy of note.

The sea voyage was exceedingly pleasant, and made intensely so because of the historic connection of these waters and shores along which we steamed. Now we have beautiful views of headlands, and now we pass close to islands that are scattered at irregular intervals on our right and left. All along the scenery is constantly changing and we are all the time on the qui vive for what next. Now we sail past Tenedos and now is seen Mount Ida. The tombs of Achilles and Patroclus are pointed out and seen by the aid of our glasses. We are entering the Dardanelles when we are startled by the cry, "a man overboard." Hastening to the stern we note life buoys are being thrown to two sailors who are fast being left behind. The engines are reversed, boats are quickly making for the distant ones, and soon anxiety is over as we see them brought back in safety.

DARDANELLES

The sail up these straits to the Sea of Marmora was greatly enjoyed in the closing hours of an afternoon. We note the forts armed with guns of such a calibre that the powers of Europe may well consider ere they make an attempt to force these straits. Now we pass Abydos, the point where Xerxes viewed his millions of troops crossing into Europe, where Leander used to swim across to see his "Hero"—a feat that Byron, we are told, attempted and was successful. How these armed heights on the Asiatic shore are coveted by some of the European powers. And well they may be, for they are commanding and strong. We anchor for a little at Gallipoli. This was the first European town that fell into the hands of the Osmanli. Here was the first rendezvous of English and French troops at the opening of the Crimean War.

Out into the Sea of Marmora just as the evening stars appear. We are on deck the next morning at five, for we have been told we should be at Constantinople by seven and that tourists ought to see the city, if they would see it to the best possible advantage, by the approach from the Marmora Sea. The morning is delightful. East the sun drives away the mists that at first we feared would spoil our view, and now as we steam nearer we look with deepest interest on a picture of surpassing beauty, a city said to be the most beautifully situated in all Europe. It is useless for one not a painter to try to picture the same. That early morning sun shines on towers, some of them old as the Byzantine days; on palaces, costly and grand; on mosques, by the hundred, whose graceful minarets, are their special feature, telling us to whom they belong and from which regularly five times a day the "muezzin" calls to prayer. There is much of real splendor in Constantinople in connection with its mosques, especially those in the old part of the city.

As you come yet nearer, you note the city stands on hills sloping to the water's edge. You also see that it is

by the waters of the Sea of Marmora, the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn divided into parts. That part on the east of the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmora—the Asiatic, called Skutari. Then the portion on the European side is divided, the Golden Horn separates the old Byzantine city, called now "Stamboul" and which is especially the Moslem portion from the Galata-Pera portion, where the most of the business of the city is done. Galata lies next the water, and Pera the residence section, where the principal hotels, are further up the steep hill.

The "Horn" is bridged thereby connecting Stamboul and Galata-Pera. I would like again to emphasize this fact that the view of the city from the sea, is one most charming. You cannot possibly think of any location that could be more beautiful; but having said this, the most and best is said. Entering the city, you are constantly disappointed. You feel that you have been deceived. The most of the streets are so narrow, you fear your coachman will run over people and you may be arrested for manslaughter; they are filthy dirty and noisy. This is Babel indeed. What disappointments are yours! You expected narrow, crooked, dirty streets in Damascus; but you are in Europe now, you surely will have something better. I had not kept in mind that the same power, that dominates Palestine and Syria, that has crushed out the life and makes of fruitful vales a wilderness, has its headquarters at the Bosphorus and Golden Horn. I had not kept in mind that while Mahomedanism builds costly Mosques, robbing people so to do—while daily from minarets goes forth the cry, "God is great,"—that it has been and is the foe to civilization; that under its banners it is impossible for a nation to keep up in the march of improvements.

For weeks past I've been where could be felt the awful darkness that this false religion brings, where I've seen its fruits and longed that in its stead a religion of helpfulness and inspiration might be given and enjoyed; I have seen the blight that for centuries has rested on some of the sunniest hills and vales of earth and I am convinced that it is one of the greatest foes to man's best interest that confronts a Christian civilization today. I would I could live to see the day when the flag that bears the crescent was being dragged in the dust. Go where you will, where that flag floats and you face a power inimical to social and moral progress. I shall be glad when in Europe, the power on the Bosphorus, representing Mahomedanism, becomes a thing of the past, I could pray God to hasten the day, when release from tyrant bondage might be given to tens of millions of men. Some reading these lines may think me prejudiced, and may tell me of certain things that are to be commended in Mahomedanism but after what I've seen and experienced in the past weeks, after noting the fruits—bitter fruits—in lands visited I confess to the conviction that as a secular and religious power, and it is both, earth would be a thousand times better off if it was wiped out.

Constantinople has from its earliest played a considerable part in the history of Europe and Asia, and if it were not for making this letter too long I should here like to refer to some things that make the city interesting but I know space forbids.

As the centre of an Empire, an empire ruling many millions, it, with its empire and dependencies is wretchedly governed. Sultan Hamid II, is no more a tyrant than those who have preceded him, but a tyrant he is, his power grinds the bodies and souls of men, in the far, far East—in the land given by God to his ancient Israel, and I would be pleased to know tomorrow's sun was to shine upon another power, controlling that Empire, with headquarters on "the Bosphorus and Golden Horn." Then would men breathe more freely, then might hope come to millions, from whose breast hope has become well nigh extinct. The world has no use today for the Crescent flag. This is an age of freedom. It fetters in cruel bondage. Men ought in view of a compassionate Christ, to be growing more and more humane. It makes men inhuman, who otherwise might become loving and tender. But enough! During our six days' stay in Constantinople we carefully improved our time. We visited many of the mosques and within as well as without they are grand. That old "Santa Sophia" with a history dating back to Byzantine times, and when it was a Christian place of worship—a building to which old and young fled as a last resort for protection when Mahmud's forces gained the city and within whose walls thousands met death at the conquerors' hands, a building that still bears on one of its noble columns the blood mark of the conqueror's hand. We visited the Museum in the old Seraglio grounds, where we found treasures, recovered by Archaeologists from Tyre and Sidon and other old cities of the past. We studied columns that in the days of long ago had witnessed remarkable events. We climbed the old Galata Tower, that once in Genoese days was a stronghold and defence, and from it obtained another splendid view of the City and its environments for miles around; we sailed up the Bosphorus to the entrance of the Black Sea, and all along the way we note magnificent and costly palaces some occupied and others vacant; forts on both the European and Asiatic shores, that played prominent parts in invasions and defences in days long since gone. We noted the beautiful summer residences of Foreign Legations and of the more wealthy citizens of Constantinople. We are rowed up the Golden Horn to that mosque where no Christian is allowed entrance, except at cost of life, and where Sultans are crowned, no not crowned as are Christian rulers, but where the sword is girded on and the Sultan becomes the defender of the religion of Mahomet. We saw, through the kindness of the American Minister, the Sultan himself as he went to his mosque for prayer, surrounded and accompanied by some 6,000 soldiers and amid the grandest military display I had ever witnessed. These are but bird's-eye glimpses of what was ours while in Constantinople. We left with no regrets that we were going away. We longed for freedom; freedom to say what we wished, to write the truth and not fear a censor or prison. The caged bird must long for freedom. The light must be sweet to those who for a while have been immured in darkness—so with us. Once more on the blue waters of the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas we rejoice in a sense of freedom that we felt was denied us so long as we were where the Sultan's rule could touch us. Palestine, Syria, Constantinople are behind us, and with gladness our faces are turned to lands of freedom that lie towards the setting sun.

G. O. G.