

CHAPTER II

THE "BOSS SYSTEM" IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND HOW IT PROVED USEFUL TO GERMANY

Talaat, the leading man in this band of usurpers, really had remarkable personal qualities. Naturally Talaat's life and character proved interesting to me, for I had for years been familiar with the Boss system in my own country, and in Talaat I saw many resemblances to the crude yet able citizens who have so frequently in the past gained power in local and state politics. Talaat's origin was so obscure that there were plenty of stories in circulation concerning it. One account said that he was a Bulgarian gipsy, while another described him as a Pomak---a Pomak being a man of Bulgarian blood whose ancestors, centuries ago, had embraced the Mohammedan faith. According to this latter explanation, which I think was the true one, this real ruler of the Turkish Empire was not a Turk at all. I can personally testify that he cared nothing for Mohammedanism for, like most of the leaders of his party, he scoffed at all religions. "I hate all priests, rabbis, and hodjas," he once told me---hodja being the nearest equivalent the Mohammedans have for a minister of religion. In American city politics many men from the humblest walks of life have not uncommonly developed great abilities as politicians, and similarly Talaat had started life as a letter carrier. From this occupation he had risen to be a telegraph operator at Adrianople; and of these humble beginnings he was extremely proud. I visited him once or twice at his house; although Talaat was then the most powerful man in the Turkish Empire, his home was still the modest home of a man of the people. It was cheaply furnished; the whole establishment reminded me of a moderately priced apartment in New York. His most cherished possession was the telegraph instrument with which he had once earned his living. Talaat one night told me that he had that day received his salary as Minister of the Interior; after paying his debts, he said, he had just one hundred dollars left in the world. He liked to spend part of his spare time with the rough-shod crew that made up the Committee of Union and Progress; in the interims when he was out of the cabinet he used to occupy the desk daily at party headquarters, personally managing the party machine. Despite these humble beginnings, Talaat had developed some of the qualities of a man of the world. Though his early training had not included instruction in the use of a knife and fork---such implements are wholly unknown among the poorer classes in Turkey---Talaat could attend diplomatic dinners and represent his country with a considerable amount of dignity and personal ease. I have always regarded it as indicating his innate cleverness that, though he had had little schooling, he had picked up enough French to converse tolerably in that language. Physically, he was a striking figure. His powerful frame, his huge sweeping back, and his rocky biceps emphasized that natural mental strength and forcefulness which had made possible his career. In discussing matters Talaat liked to sit at his desk, with his shoulders drawn up, his head thrown back, and his wrists, twice the size of an ordinary man's, planted firmly on the table. It always seemed to me that it would take a crowbar to pry these wrists from the board, once Talaat's strength and defiant spirit had laid them there. Whenever I think of Talaat now I do not primarily recall his rollicking laugh, his uproarious enjoyment of a good story, the mighty stride with which he crossed the room, his fierceness, his determination, his remorselessness---the whole life and nature of the man take form in those gigantic wrists.

Talaat, like most strong men, had his forbidding, even his ferocious, moods. One day I found him sitting at the usual place, his massive shoulders drawn up, his eyes glowering, his wrists planted on the desk. I always anticipated trouble whenever I found him in this attitude. As I made request after request, Talaat, between his puffs at his cigarette, would answer "No!" "No!" "No!"

I slipped around to his side of the desk.

"I think those wrists are making all the trouble, Your Excellency," I said. "Won't you please take them off the table?"

Talaat's ogre-like face began to crinkle, he threw up his arms, leaned back, and gave a roar of terrific laughter. He enjoyed this method of treating him so much that he granted every request that I made.

At another time I came into his room when two Arab princes were present. Talaat was solemn and dignified, and refused every demand I made. "No, I shall not do that"; or, "No, I haven't the slightest idea of doing that,"

he would answer. I saw that he was trying to impress his princely guests; to show them that he had become so great a man that he did not hesitate to "turn down" an ambassador. So I came up nearer and spoke quietly.

"I see you are trying to make an impression on these princes," I said. "Now if it's necessary for you to pose, do it with the Austrian Ambassador---he's out there waiting to come in. My affairs are too important to be trifled with."

Talaat laughed. "Come back in an hour," he said. I returned; the Arab princes had left, and we had no difficulty in arranging matters to my satisfaction.

"Someone has got to govern Turkey; why not we?" Talaat once said to me. The situation had just about come to that. "I have been greatly disappointed," he would tell me, "at the failure of the Turks to appreciate democratic institutions. I hoped for it once, and I worked hard for it---but they were not prepared for it." He saw a government which the first enterprising man who came along might seize, and he determined to be that man. Of all the Turkish politicians whom I met I regarded Talaat as the only one who really had extraordinary native ability. He had great force and dominance, the ability to think quickly and accurately, and an almost superhuman insight into men's motives. His great geniality and his lively sense of humour also made him a splendid manager of men. He showed his shrewdness in the measures which he took, after the murder of Nazim, to gain the upper hand in this distracted empire. He did not seize the government all at once; he went at it gradually, feeling his way. He realized the weaknesses of his position; he had several forces to deal with---the envy of his associates on the revolutionary committee which had backed him, the army, the foreign governments, and the several factions that made up what then passed for public opinion in Turkey. Any of these elements might destroy him, politically and physically. He understood the dangerous path that he was treading, and he always anticipated a violent death. "I do not expect to die in my bed," he told me. By becoming Minister of the Interior, Talaat gained control of the police and the administration of the provinces, or vilayets; this gave him a great amount of patronage, which he used to strengthen the power of the Committee. He attempted to gain the support of all influential factions by gradually placing their representatives in the other cabinet posts. Though he afterward became the man who was chiefly responsible for the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Armenians, at this time Talaat maintained the pretense that the Committee stood for the unionization of all the races in the empire, and for this reason his first cabinet contained an Arab-Christian, a Deunme (a Jew by race, but a Mohammedan by religion), a Circassian, an Armenian, and an Egyptian.

He made the latter Grand Vizier, the highest post in the Government, a position which roughly corresponds to that of Chancellor in the German Empire. The man whom he selected for this office, which in ordinary times was the most dignified and important in the empire, belonged to quite a different order of society from Talaat. Not uncommonly bosses in America select high-class figureheads for mayors or even governors, men who will give respectability to their faction, yet whom, at the same time, they think they can control. It was some such motive as this which led Talaat and his associates to elevate Saïd Halim to the Grand Vizierate. Saïd Halim was an Egyptian prince, the cousin of the Khedive of Egypt, a man of great wealth and great culture. He spoke English and French as fluently as his own tongue and was an ornament to any society in the world. But he was a man of unlimited vanity and ambition. His great desire was to become Khedive of Egypt, and this had led him to trust his political fortunes to the gang that was then ascendant in Turkey. He was the heaviest "campaign contributor," and, indeed, he had largely financed the Young Turks from their earliest days. In exchange they had given him the highest office in the empire, with the tacit understanding that he should not attempt to exercise the real powers of his office, but content himself with enjoying its dignities.

Germany's war preparations had for years included the study of internal conditions in other countries; an indispensable part of the imperial programme had been to take advantage of such disorganizations as existed to push her schemes of penetration and conquest. What her emissaries have attempted in France, Italy, and even the United States is apparent, and their success in Russia has greatly changed the course of the war. Clearly such a situation as that which prevailed in Turkey in 1913 and 1914 provided an ideal opportunity for manipulations of this kind. And Germany had one great advantage in Turkey which was not so conspicuously an element in other countries. Talaat and his associates needed Germany almost as badly as Germany needed Talaat. They were altogether new to the business of managing an empire. Their finances were depleted, their army and navy almost in tatters, enemies were constantly attempting to undermine them at home, and the great powers regarded them as seedy adventurers whose career was destined to be brief. Without strong support from

an outside source, it was a question how long the new regime could survive. Talaat and his Committee needed some foreign power to organize the army and navy, to finance the nation, to help them reconstruct their industrial system, and to protect them against the encroachments of the encircling nations. Ignorant as they were of foreign statecraft, they needed a skilful adviser to pilot them through all the channels of international intrigue. Where was such a protector to be obtained? Evidently only one of the great European powers could perform this office. Which one should it be? Ten years before Turkey would naturally have appealed to England. But now the Turks regarded England as merely the nation that had despoiled them of Egypt and that had failed to protect Turkey from dismemberment after the Balkan wars. Together with Russia, Great Britain now controlled Persia and thus constituted a constant threat---at least so the Turks believed---against their Asiatic dominions. England was gradually withdrawing her investments from Turkey, English statesmen believed that the task of driving the Turk from Europe was about complete, and the whole Near-Eastern policy of Great Britain hinged on maintaining the organization of the Balkans as it had been determined by the Treaty of Bucharest ---a treaty which Turkey refused to regard as binding and which she was determined to upset. Above all, the Turks feared Russia in 1914, just as they had feared her ever since the days of Peter the Great. Russia was the historic enemy, the nation which had given freedom to Bulgaria and Rumania, which had been most active in dismembering the Ottoman Empire, and which regarded herself as the power that was ultimately to possess Constantinople. This fear of Russia, I cannot too much insist, was the one factor which, above everything else, was forcing Turkey into the arms of Germany. For more than half a century Turkey had regarded England as her surest safeguard against Russian aggression, and now England had become Russia's virtual ally. There was even then a general belief, which the Turkish chieftains shared, that England was entirely willing that Russia should inherit Constantinople and the Dardanelles.

Though Russia, in 1914, was making no such pretensions, at least openly, the fact that she was crowding Turkey in other directions made it impossible that Talaat and Enver should look for support in that direction. Italy had just seized the last Turkish province in Africa, Tripoli, at that moment, was holding Rhodes and other Turkish islands, and was known to cherish aggressive plans in Asia Minor. France was the ally of Russia and Great Britain, and was also constantly extending her influence in Syria, in which province, indeed, she had made great plans for "penetration" with railroads, colonies, and concessions. The personal equation played an important part in the ensuing drama. The ambassadors of the Triple Entente hardly concealed their contempt for the dominant Turkish politicians and their methods. Sir Louis Mallet, the British Ambassador, was a high-minded and cultivated English gentleman; Bompard, the French Ambassador, was a similarly charming, honourable Frenchman, and both were personally disqualified from participating in the murderous intrigues which then comprised Turkish politics. Giers, the Russian Ambassador, was a proud and scornful diplomat of the old aristocratic régime. He was exceedingly astute, but he treated the Young Turks contemptuously, manifested almost a proprietary interest in the country, and seemed to me already to be wielding the knout over this despised government. It was quite apparent that the three ambassadors of the Entente did not regard the Talaat and Enver régime as permanent, or as particularly worth their while to cultivate. That several factions had risen and fallen in the last six years they knew, and they likewise believed that this latest usurpation would vanish in a few months.

But there was one active man in Turkey then who had no nice scruples about using such agencies as were most available for accomplishing his purpose. Wangenheim clearly saw, what his colleagues had only faintly perceived, that these men were steadily fastening their hold on Turkey, and that they were looking for some strong power that would recognize their position and abet them in maintaining it. In order that we may clearly understand the situation, let us transport ourselves, for a moment, to a country that is nearer to us than Turkey. In 1913 Victoriano Huerta and his fellow conspirators gained control of Mexico by means not unlike those that had given Talaat and his Committee the supreme power in Turkey. Just as Huerta murdered Madero, so the Young Turks had murdered Nazim, and in both countries assassination had become a regular political weapon. Huerta controlled the Mexican Congress and the offices just as Talaat controlled the Turkish Parliament and the chief posts of that state. Mexico under Huerta was a poverty-stricken country, with depleted finances, exhausted industries and agriculture, just as was Turkey under Talaat. How did Huerta seek to secure his own position and rehabilitate his distracted country? There was only one way, of course---that was by enlisting the support of some strong foreign power. He sought repeatedly to gain recognition from the United States for this reason and, when we refused to deal with a murderer, Huerta looked to Germany. Let us suppose that the Kaiser had responded; he could have reorganized Mexican finances, rebuilt her railroads, reestablished her industries,

modernized her army, and in this way obtained a grip on the country that would have amounted to virtual possession.

Only one thing prevented Germany from doing this ---the Monroe Doctrine. But there was no Monroe Doctrine in Turkey, and what I have described as a possibility in Mexico is in all essentials an accurate picture of what happened in the Ottoman Empire. As I look back upon the situation, the whole thing seems so clear, so simple, so inevitable. Germany, up to that time, was practically the only great power in Europe that had not appropriated large slices of Turkish territory, a fact which gave her an initial advantage. Germany's representative at Constantinople was far better qualified than that of any other country, not only by absence of scruples, but also by knowledge and skill, to handle this situation. Wangenheim was not the only capable German then on the ground. A particularly influential outpost of Pan-Germany was Paul Weitz, who had represented the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in Turkey for thirty years. Weitz had the most intimate acquaintance with Turks and Turkish affairs; there was not a hidden recess to which he could not gain admittance. He was constantly at Wangenheim's elbow, prompting, advising, informing. The German naval attaché, Humann, the son of a famous German archaeologist, had been born in Smyrna, and had passed practically his whole life in Turkey; he not only spoke Turkish, but he could also think like a Turk, and the whole psychology of the people was part of his mental equipment. Moreover, Enver, one of the two main Turkish chieftains, was on friendly terms with Humann. When I think of this experienced trio, Wangenheim, Weitz, and Humann, and of the charming and honourable gentlemen who were opposed to them, Mallet, Bompard, and Giers, the events that now rapidly followed seem as inevitable as the orderly processes of nature. By the spring of 1914 Talaat and Enver, representing the Committee of Union and Progress, practically dominated the Turkish Empire. Wangenheim, always having in mind the approaching war, had one inevitable purpose: that was to control Talaat and Enver.

Early in January, 1914, Enver became Minister of War. At that time Enver was thirty-two years old; like all the leading Turkish politicians of the period he came of humble stock and his popular title, "Hero of the Revolution," shows why Talaat and the Committee had selected him as Minister of War. Enver enjoyed something of a military reputation, though, so far as I could discover, he had never achieved a great military success. The revolution of which he had been one of the leaders in 1908 had cost very few human lives; he commanded an army in Tripoli against the Italians in 1919 ---but certainly there was nothing Napoleonic about that campaign. Enver himself once told me how, in the Second Balkan War, he had ridden all night at the head of his troops to the capture of Adrianople, and how, when he arrived there, the Bulgarians had abandoned it and his victory had thus been a bloodless one. But certainly Enver did have one trait that made for success in such a distracted country as Turkey---and that was audacity. He was quick in making decisions, always ready to stake his future and his very life upon the success of a single adventure; from the beginning, indeed, his career had been one lucky crisis after another. His nature had a remorselessness, a lack of pity, a cold-blooded determination, of which his cleancut handsome face, his small but sturdy figure, and his pleasing manners gave no indication. Nor would the casual spectator have suspected the passionate personal ambition that drove him on. His friends commonly referred to him as "Napoleonik"---the little Napoleon---and this nickname really represented Enver's abiding conviction. I remember sitting one night with Enver, in his house; on one side hung a picture of Napoleon; on the other one of Frederick the Great; and between them sat Enver himself! This fact gives some notion of his vanity; these two warriors and statesmen were his great heroes and I believe that Enver thought fate had a career in store for him not unlike theirs. The fact that, at twenty-six, he had taken a leading part in the revolution which had deposed Abdul Hamid, naturally caused him to compare himself with Bonaparte; several times he has told me that he believed himself to be "a man of destiny." Enver even affected to believe that he had been divinely set apart to reestablish the glory of Turkey and make himself the great dictator. Yet, as I have suggested, there was something almost dainty and feminine in Enver's appearance. He was the type that in America we sometimes call a *matinée* idol, and the word women frequently used to describe him was "dashing." His face contained not a single line or furrow; it never disclosed his emotions or his thoughts; he was always calm, steely, imperturbable. That Enver certainly lacked Napoleon's penetration is evident from the way he had planned to obtain the supreme power, for he early allied his personal fortunes with Germany. For years his sympathies had been with the Kaiser. Germany, the German army and navy, the German language, and the German autocratic system exercised a fatal charm upon this youthful preacher of Turkish democracy. After Hamid fell, Enver went on a military mission to Berlin, and here the Kaiser immediately detected in him a possible instrument for working out his plans in the Orient, and cultivated him in numerous ways. Afterward Enver spent a considerable time in Berlin as military attaché, and this experience

still further endeared him to Germany. The man who returned to Constantinople was almost more German than Turkish. He had learned to speak German fluently, he was even wearing a moustache slightly curled up at the ends; indeed, he had been completely captivated by Prussianism. As soon as Enver became Minister of War, Wangenheim flattered and cajoled the young man, played upon his ambitions, and probably promised him Germany's complete support in achieving them. In his private conversation Enver made no secret of his admiration for Germany.

Thus Enver's elevation to the Ministry of War was virtually a German victory. He immediately instituted a drastic reorganization. Enver told me himself that he had accepted the post only on condition that he should have a free hand, and this free hand he now proceeded to exercise. The army still contained a large number of officers, many of whom were partisans of the murdered Nazim, and favoured the old régime rather than the Young Turks, Enver promptly cashiered 268 of these, and put in their places Turks who were known as "U. and P." men, and many Germans. The Enver-Talaat group always feared a revolution that would depose them as they had thrown out their predecessors. Many times did they tell me that their own success as revolutionists had taught them how easily a few determined men could seize control of the country; they did not propose, they said, to have a little group in their army organize such a *coup d'état* against them. The boldness of Enver's move alarmed even Talaat, but Enver showed the determination of his character and refused to reconsider his action, though one of the officers removed was Chukri Pasha, who had defended Adrianople in the Balkan war. Enver issued a circular to the Turkish commanders, practically telling them that they must look only to him for preferment and that they could make no headway by playing politics with any group except that dominated by the Young Turks.

Thus Enver's first acts were the beginnings in the Prussification of the Turkish army, but Talaat was not an enthusiastic German like his associate. He had no intention of playing Germany's game; he was working chiefly for the Committee and for himself. But he could not succeed unless he had control of the army; therefore, he had made Enver, for years his intimate associate in "U. and P." politics, Minister of War. Again he needed a strong army if he was to have any at all, and therefore he turned to the one source where he could find assistance, to Germany. Wangenheim and Talaat, in the latter part of 1913, had arranged that the Kaiser should send a military mission to reorganize the Turkish forces. Talaat told me that, in calling in this mission, he was using Germany, though Germany thought that it was using him. That there were definite dangers in the move he well understood. A deputy who discussed this situation with Talaat in January, 1914, has given me a memorandum of a conversation which shows well what was going on in Talaat's mind.

"Why do you hand the management of the country over to the Germans?" asked this deputy, referring to the German military mission. "Don't you see that this is part of Germany's plan to make Turkey a German colony--- that we shall become merely another Egypt? "

"We understand perfectly," replied Talaat, "that that is Germany's programme. We also know that we cannot put this country on its feet with our own resources. We shall, therefore, take advantage of such technical and material assistance as the Germans can place at our disposal. We shall use Germany to help us reconstruct and defend the country until we are able to govern ourselves with our own strength. When that day comes, we can say good-bye to the Germans within twenty-four hours."

Certainly the physical condition of the Turkish army betrayed the need of assistance from some source. The picture it presented, before the Germans arrived, I have always regarded as portraying the condition of the whole empire. When I issued invitations for my first reception, a large number of Turkish officials asked to be permitted to come in evening clothes; they said that they had no uniforms and no money with which to purchase or to hire them. They had not received their salaries for three and a half months. As the Grand Vizier, who regulates the etiquette of such functions, still insisted on full uniform, many of these officials had to remain absent. About the same time the new German mission asked the commander of the second army corps to exercise his men, but the commander replied that he could not do so as his men had no shoes!

Desperate and wicked as Talaat subsequently showed himself to be, I still think that he at least was not then a willing tool of Germany. An episode that involved myself bears out this view. In describing the relations of the great powers to Turkey I have said nothing about the United States. In fact, we had no important business relations at that time. The Turks regarded us as a country of idealists and altruists, and the fact that we spent

millions building wonderful educational institutions in their country purely from philanthropic motives aroused their astonishment and possibly their admiration. They liked Americans and regarded us as about the only disinterested friend whom they had among the nations. But our interests in Turkey were small; the Standard Oil Company did a growing business, the Singer Company sold sewing machines to the Armenians and Greeks; we bought a good deal of their tobacco, figs, and rugs, and gathered their licorice root. In addition to these activities, missionaries and educational experts formed about our only contacts with the Turkish Empire. The Turks knew that we had no desire to dismember their country or to mingle in Balkan politics. The very fact that my country was so disinterested was perhaps the reason why Talaat discussed Turkish affairs so freely with me. In the course of these conversations I frequently expressed my desire to serve them, and Talaat and some of the other members of the Cabinet got into the habit of consulting me on business matters. Soon after my arrival, I made a speech at the American Chamber of Commerce in Constantinople; Talaat, Djemal, and other important leaders were present. I talked about the backward economic state of Turkey and admonished them not to be discouraged. I described the condition of the United States after the Civil War and made the point that our devastated Southern States presented a spectacle not unlike that of Turkey at that present moment. I then related how we had gone to work, developed our resources, and built up the present thriving nation. My remarks apparently made a deep impression, especially my statement that after the Civil War the United States had become a large borrower in foreign money markets and had invited immigration from all parts of the world. This speech apparently gave Talaat a new idea. It was not impossible that the United States might furnish him the material support which he had been seeking in Europe. Already I had suggested that an American financial expert should be sent to study Turkish finance and in this connection I had mentioned Mr. Henry Bruère, of New York---a suggestion which the Turks had received favourably. At that time Turkey's greatest need was money. France had financed Turkey for many years, and French bankers, in the spring of 1914, were negotiating for another large loan. Though Germany had made some loans, the condition of the Berlin money market at that time did not encourage the Turks to expect much assistance from that source.

In late December, 1913, Bustány Effendi---a Christian Arab, and Minister of Commerce and Agriculture, who spoke English fluently (he had been Turkish commissioner to the Chicago World's Fair in 1893)----called and approached me on the question of an American loan. Bustány asked if there were not American financiers who would take entire charge of the reorganization of Turkish finance. His plea was really a cry of despair---and it touched me deeply. As I wrote in my diary at the time, "They seem to be scraping the box for money." But I had been in Turkey only six weeks, and obviously I had no information on which I could recommend such a large contract to American bankers. I informed Bustány that my advice would not carry much weight in the United States unless it were based on a complete knowledge of economic conditions in Turkey. Talaat came to me a few days later, suggesting that I make a prolonged tour over the empire and study the situation at first hand. He asked if I could not arrange meanwhile a small temporary loan to tide them over the interim. He said there was no money in the Turkish Treasury; if I could get them only \$5,000,000, that would satisfy them. I told Talaat that I would try to raise this amount for them, and that I would adopt his suggestion and inspect his Empire with the possible idea of interesting American investors. After obtaining the consent of the State Department, I wrote to my nephew and business associate, Mr. Robert E. Simon, asking him to sound certain New York institutions and bankers, on making a small short-time collateral loan to Turkey. Mr. Simon's investigations soon disclosed that a Turkish loan did not seem to be regarded as an attractive business undertaking in New York. Mr. Simon wrote, however, that Mr. C. K. G. Billings had shown much interest in the idea, and that, if I desired, Mr. Billings would come out in his yacht and discuss the matter with the Turkish Cabinet and with me. In a few days Mr. Billings had started for Constantinople.

The news of Mr. Billings's approach spread with great rapidity all over the Turkish capital; the fact that he was coming in his own private yacht seemed to magnify the importance and the glamour of the event. That a great American millionaire was prepared to reinforce the depleted Turkish Treasury and that this support was merely the preliminary step in the reorganization of Turkish finances by American capitalists, produced a tremendous flutter in the foreign embassies. So rapidly did the information spread, indeed, that I rather suspected that the Turkish Cabinet had taken no particular pains to keep it secret. This suspicion was strengthened by a visit which I received from the Chief Rabbi Nahoum, who informed me that he had come at the request of Talaat.

"There is a rumour," said the Chief Rabbi, "that Americans are about to make a loan to Turkey. Talaat would be greatly pleased if you would not contradict it."

Wangenheim. displayed an almost hysterical interest: the idea of America coming to the financial assistance of Turkey did not fall in with his plans at all, for in his eyes Turkey's poverty was chiefly valuable as a means of forcing the empire into Germany's hands. One day I showed Wangenheim a book containing etchings of Mr. Billings's homes, pictures, and horses; he showed a great interest, not only in the horses---Wangenheim was something of a horseman himself---but in this tangible evidence of great wealth. For the next few days several ambassadors and ministers filed into my office, each solemnly asking for a glimpse at this book! As the time approached for Mr. Billings's arrival, Talaat began making elaborate plans for his entertainment; he consulted me as to whom we should invite to the proposed dinners, lunches, and receptions. As usual Wangenheim got in ahead of the rest. He could not come to the dinner which we had planned and asked me to have him for lunch, and in this way he met Mr. Billings several hours before the other diplomats. Mr. Billings frankly told him that he was interested in Turkey and that it was not unlikely that he would make the loan.

In the evening we gave the Billings party a dinner, all the important members of the Turkish Cabinet being present. Before this dinner, Talaat, Mr. Billings, and myself had a long talk about the loan. Talaat informed us that the French bankers had accepted their terms that very day, and that they would, therefore, need no American money at that time. He was exceedingly gracious and grateful to Mr. Billings, and profuse in expressing his thanks. Indeed, he might well have been, for Mr. Billings's arrival enabled Turkey at last to close negotiations with the French bankers. His attempt to express his appreciation had one curious manifestation. Enver, the second man in the Cabinet, was celebrating his wedding when Mr. Billings arrived. The progress which Enver was making in the Turkish world is evidenced from the fact that, although Enver, as I have said, came of the humblest stock, his bride was a daughter of the Turkish Imperial House. Turkish weddings are prolonged affairs, lasting two or three days. The day following the Embassy dinner, Talaat gave the Billings party a luncheon at the Cercle d'Orient, and he insisted that Enver should leave his wedding ceremony long enough to attend this function. Enver, therefore, came to the luncheon, sat through all the speeches, and then returned to his bridal party.

I am convinced that Talaat did not regard this Billings episode as closed. As I look back upon this transaction, I see clearly -that he was seeking to extricate his country, and that the possibility that the United States would assist him in performing the rescue was ever present in his mind. He frequently spoke to me of Mr. "Beelings," as he called him, and even after Turkey had broken with France and England, and was depending on Germany for money, his mind still reverted to Mr. Billings's visit; perhaps he was thinking of our country as a financial haven of rest after he had carried out his plan of expelling the Germans. I am certain that the possibility of American help led him, in the days of the war, to do many things for me that he would not otherwise have done. "Remember me to Mr. Beelings" were almost the last words he said to me when I left Constantinople. This yachting visit, though it did not lack certain comedy elements at the time, I am sure ultimately saved many lives from starvation and massacre.