

CHAPTER XX

MORE ADVENTURES OF THE FOREIGN RESIDENTS

The Gallipoli deportation gives some idea of my difficulties in attempting to fulfil my duty as the representative of Allied interests in the Ottoman Empire. Yet, despite these occasional outbursts of hatred, in the main the Turkish officials themselves behaved very well. They had promised me at the beginning that they would treat their alien enemies decently, and would permit them either to remain in Turkey, and follow their accustomed occupations, or to leave the empire. They apparently believed that the world would judge them, after the war was over, not by the way they treated their own subject peoples but by the way they treated the subjects of the enemy powers. The result was that a Frenchman, an Englishman, or an Italian enjoyed far greater security in Turkey than an Armenian, a Greek, or a Jew. Yet against this disposition to be decent a persistent malevolent force was constantly manifesting itself. In a letter to the State Department, I described the influence that was working against foreigners in Turkey. "The German Ambassador," I wrote on May 14, 1915, "keeps pressing on the Turks the advisability both of repressive measures and of detaining as hostages the subjects of the belligerent powers. I have had to encounter the persistent opposition of my German colleague in endeavouring to obtain permission for the departure of the subjects of the nationalities under our protection."

Now and then the Turkish officials would retaliate upon one of their enemy aliens, usually in reprisal for some injury, or fancied injury, inflicted on their own subjects in enemy countries. Such acts gave rise to many exciting episodes, some tragical, some farcical, all illuminating in the light they shed upon Turkish character and upon Teutonic methods.

One afternoon I was sitting with Talaat, discussing routine matters, when his telephone rang.

"*Pour vous*," said the Minister, handing me the receiver.

It was one of my secretaries. He told me that Bedri had arrested Sir Edwin Pears, had thrown him into prison, and had seized all his papers. Sir Edwin was one of the best-known British residents of Constantinople. For forty years he had practised law in the Ottoman capital; he had also written much for the press during that period, and had published several books which had given him fame as an authority on Oriental history and politics. He was about eighty years old and of venerable and distinguished appearance. When the war started I had exacted a special promise from Talaat and Bedri that, in no event, should Sir Edwin Pears and Prof. Van Millingen of Robert College be disturbed. This telephone message which I now received---curiously enough, in Talaat's presence---seemed to indicate that this promise had been broken.

I now turned to Talaat and spoke in a manner that made no attempt to conceal my displeasure.

"Is this all your promises are worth?" I asked. "Can't you find anything better to do than to molest such a respectable old man as Sir Edwin Pears? What has he ever done to you? "

"Come, come, don't get excited," rejoined Talaat. "He's only been in prison for a few hours, and I will see that he is released."

He tried to get Bedri on the wire, but failed. By this time I knew Bedri well enough to understand his methods of operation. When Bedri really wished to be reached on the telephone, he was the most accessible man in the world; when his presence at the other end of the wire might prove embarrassing, the most painstaking search could not reveal his whereabouts. As Bedri had given me his solemn promise that Sir Edwin, should not be disturbed, this was an occasion when the Prefect of Police preferred to keep himself inaccessible.

"I shall stay in this room until you get Bedri," I now told Talaat. The big Turk took the situation good-humouredly. We waited a considerable period, but Bedri succeeded in avoiding an encounter. Finally I called up one of my secretaries and told him to go out and hunt for the missing prefect.

"Tell Bedri," I said, "that I have Talaat under arrest in his own office and that I shall not let him leave it until he has been able to instruct Bedri to release Sir Edwin Pears."

Talaat was greatly enjoying the comedy of the situation; he knew Bedri's ways even better than I did and he was much interested in seeing whether I should succeed in finding him. But in a few moments the telephone rang. It was Bedri. I told Talaat to tell him that I was going to the prison in my own automobile to get Sir Edwin Pears.

"Please don't let him do that," replied Bedri. "Such an occurrence would make me personally ridiculous and destroy my influence."

"Very well," I replied, "I shall wait until 6.15. If Sir Edwin is not restored to his family by that time, I shall go to the Police Headquarters and get him."

As I returned to the Embassy I stopped at the Pears residence and attempted to soothe Lady Pears and her daughter.

"If your father is not here at 6.15," I told Miss Pears, "please let me know immediately!"

Promptly at that time my telephone rang. It was Miss Pears, who informed me that Sir Edwin had just reached home.

The next day Sir Edwin called at the Embassy to thank me for my efforts in his behalf. He told me that the German Ambassador had also worked for his release. This latter statement somewhat surprised me, as I knew no one else had had a chance to make a move, since everything transpired while I had been in Talaat's office. Half an hour afterward I met Wangenheim. himself; he dropped in at Mrs. Morgenthau's reception. I referred to the Pears case and asked him whether he had used any influence in obtaining his freedom. My question astonished him greatly.

"What?" he said. "I helped you to secure that man's release! *Der alte Gauner* I (The old rascal.) Why, I was the man who had him arrested!"

"What have you got against him?" I asked.

"In 1876," Wangenheim replied, "that man was pro-Russian and against Turkey! "

Such are the long memories of the Germans! In 1876, Sir Edwin wrote several articles for the London *Daily News*, describing the Bulgarian massacres. At that time the reports of these fiendish atrocities were generally disbelieved and Sir Edwin's letters placed all the incontrovertible facts before the English-speaking peoples, and had much to do with the emancipation of Bulgaria from Turkish rule. This act of humanity and journalistic statesmanship had brought Sir Edwin much fame and now, after forty years, Germany proposed to punish him by casting him into a Turkish prison! Again the Turks proved more considerate than their German allies, for they not only gave Sir Edwin his liberty and his papers, but permitted him to return to London.

Bedri, however, was a little mortified at my successful intervention in this instance and decided to even up the score. Next to Sir Edwin Pears, the most prominent English-speaking barrister in Constantinople was Dr. Mizzi, a Maltese, 70 years old. The ruling powers had a grudge against him, for he was the proprietor of the *Levant Herald*, a paper which had published articles criticizing the Union and Progress Committee. On the very night of the Pears episode, Bedri went to Dr. Mizzi's house at eleven o'clock, routed the old gentleman out of bed, arrested him, and placed him on a train for Angora, in Asia Minor. As a terrible epidemic of typhus was raging in Angora, this was not a desirable place of residence for a man of Dr. Mizzi's years. The next morning, when I heard of it for the first time, Dr. Mizzi was well on the way to his place of exile.

"This time I got ahead of you!" said Bedri, with a triumphant laugh. He was as good-natured about it and as pleased as a boy. At last he had "put one over" on the American Ambassador, who had been unguardedly asleep in his bed when this old man had been railroaded to a fever camp in Asia Minor.

But Bedri's success was not so complete, after all. At my request Talaat had Dr. Mizzi sent to Konia, instead of to Angora. There one of the American missionaries, Dr. Dodd, had a splendid hospital. He arranged that Dr. Mizzi could have a nice room in this building, and here he lived for several months, with congenial associates, good food, a healthy atmosphere, all the books he wanted, and one thing without which he would have been utterly miserable---a piano. So I still thought that the honours between Bedri and myself were a little better than even.

Early in January, 1916, word was received that the English were maltreating Turkish war prisoners in Egypt. Soon afterward I received letters from two Australians, Commander Stoker and Lieutenant Fitzgerald, telling me that they had been confined for eleven days in a miserable, damp dungeon at the War Office, with no companions except a monstrous swarm of vermin. These two naval officers had come to Constantinople on one of that famous fleet of American-built submarines which had made the daring trip from England, dived under the mines in the Dardanelles, and arrived in the Marmora, where for several weeks they terrorized and dominated this inland sea, practically putting an end to all shipping. The particular submarine on which my correspondents arrived, the E-15, had been caught in the Dardanelles, and its crew and officers had been sent to the Turkish military prison at Afium Kara Hissar in Asia Minor. When news of the alleged maltreatment of Turkish prisoners in Egypt was received, lots were drawn among these prisoners to see which two should be taken to Constantinople and imprisoned in reprisal. Stoker and Fitzgerald drew the unlucky numbers, and had been lying in this terrible underground cell for eleven days. I immediately took the matter up with Enver and suggested that a neutral doctor and officer examine the Turks in Egypt and report on the truth of the stories. We promptly received word that the report was false, and that, as a matter of fact, the Turkish prisoners in English hands were receiving excellent treatment.

About this time I called on Monsignor Dolci, the Apostolic Delegate to Turkey. He happened to refer to a Lieutenant Fitzgerald, who, he said, was then a prisoner of war at Afium Kara Hissar.

"I am much interested in him," said Monsignor Dolci, "because he is engaged to the daughter of the British Minister to the Vatican. I spoke to Enver about him and he promised that he would receive special treatment."

"What is his first name?" I asked.

"Jeffrey."

"He's receiving 'special treatment' indeed," I answered. "Do you know that he is in a dungeon in Constantinople this very moment?"

Naturally M. Dolci was much disturbed but I reassured him, saying that his protégé would be released in a few days.

"You see how shamefully you treated these young men," I now said to Enver, "you should do something to make amends."

"All right, what would you suggest?"

Stoker and Fitzgerald were prisoners of war, and, according to the usual rule, would have been sent back to the prison camp after being released from their dungeon. I now proposed that Enver should give them a vacation of eight days in Constantinople. He entered into the spirit of the occasion and the men were released. They certainly presented a sorry sight; they had spent twenty-five days in the dungeon, with no chance to bathe or to shave, with no change of linen or any of the decencies of life. But Mr. Philip took charge., furnished them the necessaries, and in a brief period we had before us two young and handsome British naval officers. Their eight days' freedom turned out to be a triumphal procession, notwithstanding that they were always accompanied by an English-speaking Turkish officer. Monsignor Dolci and the American Embassy entertained them at dinner and they had a pleasant visit at the Girls' College. When the time came to return to their prison camp, the young men declared that they would be glad to spend another month in dungeons if they could have a corresponding period of freedom in the city when liberated.

In spite of all that has happened I shall always have one kindly recollection of Enver for his treatment of Fitzgerald. I told the Minister of War about the Lieutenant's engagement.

"Don't you think he's been punished enough?" I asked. " Why don't you let the boy go home and marry his sweetheart?"

The proposition immediately appealed to Enver's sentimental side.

"I'll do it," he replied, "if he will give me his word of honour not to fight against Turkey any more."

Fitzgerald naturally gave this promise, and so his comparatively brief stay in the dungeon had the result of freeing him from imprisonment and restoring him to happiness. As poor Stoker had formed no romantic attachments that would have justified a similar plea in his case, he had to go back to the prison in Asia Minor. He did this, however, in a genuinely sporting spirit that was worthy of the best traditions of the British navy.