

A suggestion concerning the first
meeting of the Assembly of the
League of Nations.

By

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An

UNEXAMPLED H O N O U R

HISTORY will say that those who are chosen to take part in the inaugural meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations have received the greatest honour that it is in the power of this generation to confer. The delegates will give the first practical expression to the desire of forty nations to unite in the cause of peace. It will rest with them to avert for all time the slaughter, the suffering, the envy, the hate, and the waste which have handicapped humanity since Creation, owing to the absence of any practical alternative to war. This is a mighty task, and unless the authority of the League is made paramount, it will have been undertaken in vain.

There have been many attempts in the past to form Leagues of Nations, although none has yet been established on the present scale. All have failed. Why? Because the former Leagues have never gripped the imagination of the public. They have lacked substance. They have been regarded as paper instruments contrived for the convenience of diplomatists. When difficulties have arisen, the public have placed no trust in them, preferring to sacrifice themselves at war.

How can you, the first delegates to the Assembly, avert such a fate for the new League of Nations? Is not your task the most difficult of all—namely, to *popularise* the League—to cause the public to regard it as a permanent, businesslike institution, as substantial, as just, and as inevitable as the Law Courts? I urge that the first step to this end is to select, as the Headquarters of the League,

a city which will be of such universal fame and significance as to keep the existence of the League ever fresh in the minds of all. In short, the seat of the League should be the great advertisement of the League.

Recognising the importance of this question, the Council have referred it to the consideration of the Assembly. The latter will remember that Geneva is mentioned in the Covenant, but it is the purpose of this pamphlet to demonstrate the weighty arguments which point to Constantinople as the ideal G.H.Q. of Peace.

The actual Headquarters of the League would not be situated within the present confines of the city, but a few miles away, in the territory known as the "Zone of the Straits," which is under the control of an International Commission. Thus the seat of the League would be on ground which is the freehold of all.

At first glance, Constantinople may seem to some to be inaccessible.

For the world generally, there is no more central city than the Junction of the East and West. Its selection for the purpose in view would greatly stimulate the development of transit routes by land, sea, and air, which would bring it within easy reach of countries at present remote from the Bosphorus. Delegates will undoubtedly be willing to suffer *at first* a little inconvenience in order to assist so great a cause. They will remember that the League will succeed only if it unites all the nations of the World, and that a location is required which will be of unanimous acceptability. For the reasons which are very shortly advanced in the following pages, it is claimed that Constantinople pre-eminently fulfils this condition.

EIGHT SHORT
REASONS WHY
YOU SHOULD
MAKE
CONSTANTINOPLE
THE SEAT OF
THE LEAGUE
OF NATIONS

F I R S T R E A S O N



Modern Constantinople

**Giving . .
Substance
to the . .
League . .**

1. Because the first essential of the Capital of the League is that it should be of an international character, endowed with the pomp and circumstance which are as necessary in peace as in war. The name Constantinople grips the imagination. This has ever been a capital city. It possesses a prestige matched by no other place. It figures in the history books of all the world.

THIS IS ONLY THE FIRST REASON

SECOND REASON



The District of Columbia
—Freehold of 48 States.

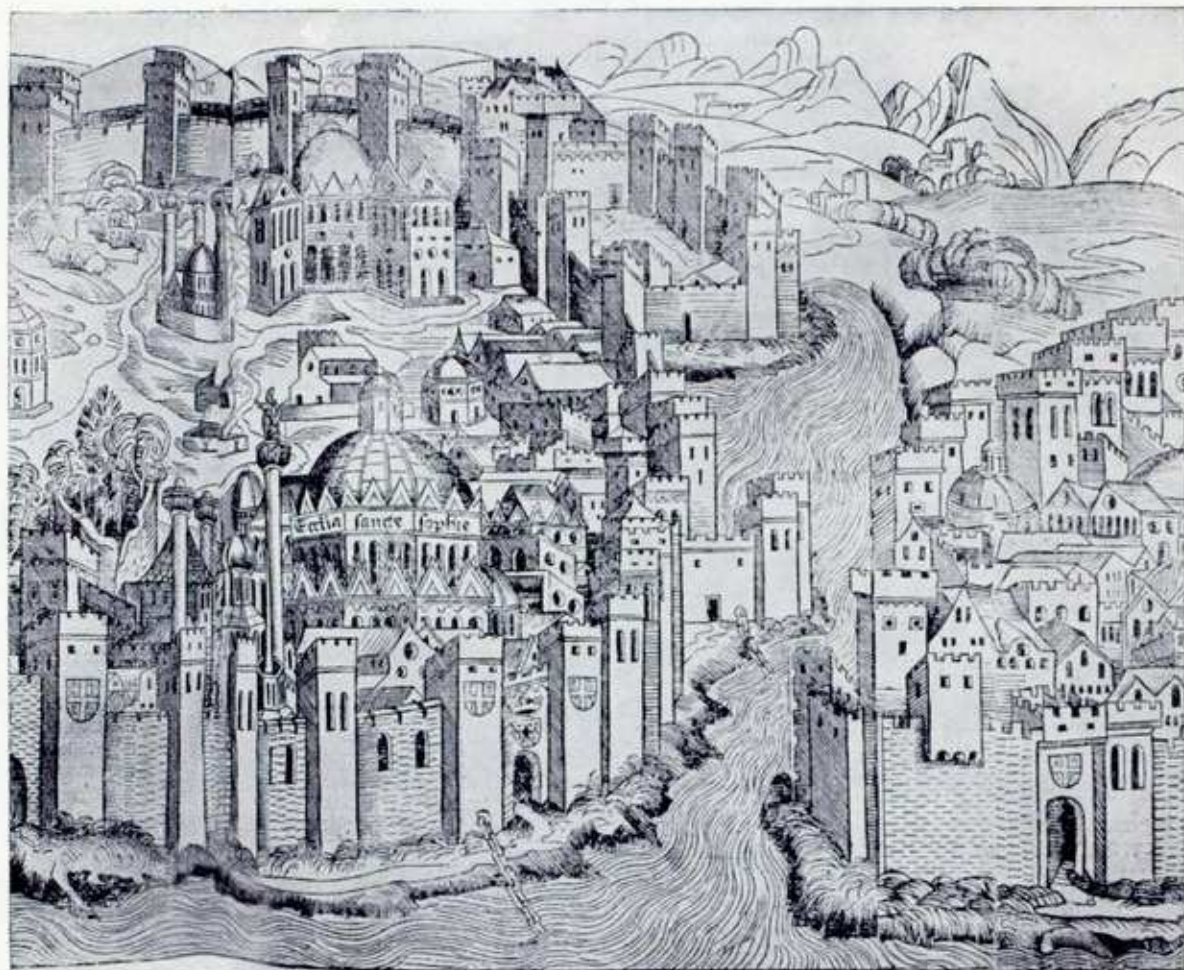
The Zone of the Straits
—Freehold of the World.

**The . . .
Freehold
of the . .
World . .**

2. Because the actual seat of the League can be built near to Constantinople in the Zone of the Straits. By the terms of the Turkish Peace this Zone comes under the control of an International Commission. The home of the League would thus be on international soil. It would be the freehold of the World, just as Washington, the seat of the American Parliament, is the freehold of the United States as a whole and owes allegiance to no single state.

THERE ARE SIX MORE REASONS

THIRD REASON



[By courtesy of Messrs. Methuen & Co.]

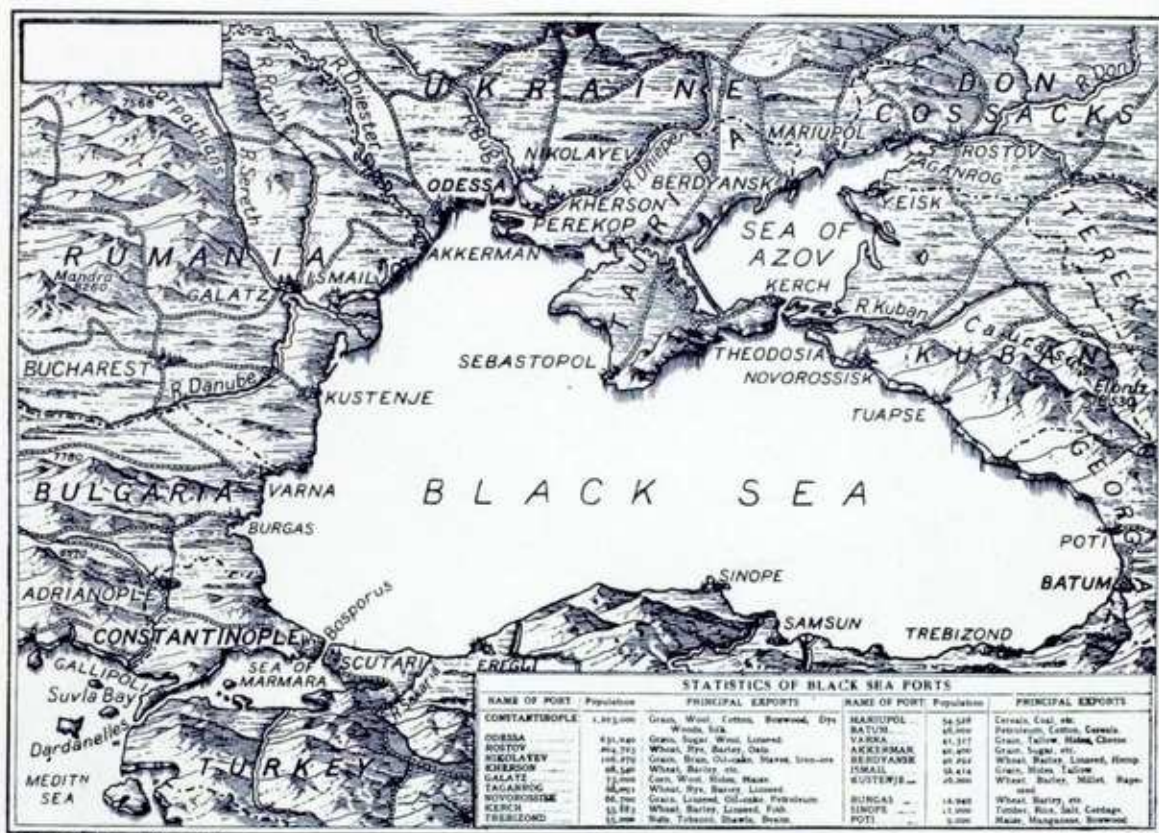
Constantinople in Olden Times—from the Nuremberg Chronicles, A.D. 1493

Historical and Religious Associa- tions . . .

3. Because the Ancient Byzantium possesses historical and religious associations that appeal to all creeds and countries. It was once the capital of Christendom. It is intimately associated with Mohammedanism and with the Greek Church. Its roots, sunk deep into the past, will preserve continuity between the old and the new.

FIVE NEW REASONS ARE YET TO COME

FOURTH REASON



George Philip & Son, Ltd

32 Fleet Street, E.C.4

The above bird's-eye view shows the immensely strong strategical position of Constantinople, commanding the only means of access to the riches of the ports of the Black Sea.

**A Peril
of the
Future**

4. Because the magnificent strategical position of the place, with its command of the almost unlimited riches of the Black Sea ports, has been a potential cause of war since earliest history. Constantinople was attacked on at least ten occasions before the dawn of the sixteenth century. It commands the outlet of the great strategical waterway of the Danube. It menaces the shipping routes of the world. As a submarine base it is capable of unlimited evil. A

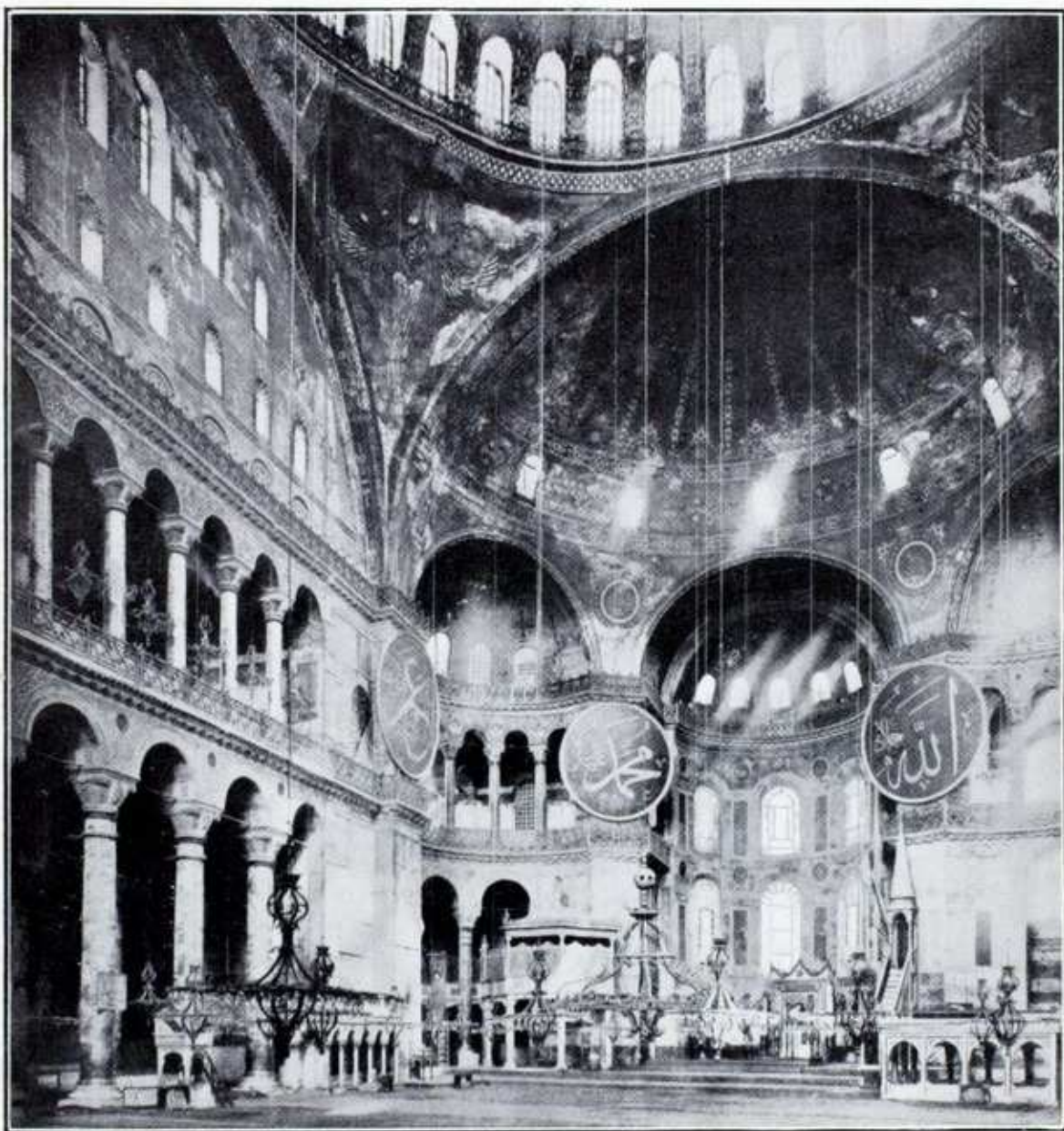
THESE ARE ONLY HALF THE REASONS

FOURTH REASON — *Continued*

strong power is made too strong by its ownership. In the hands of a weak power it is a menace to International relations, because sooner or later covetous eyes are certain to be cast towards it. Russia will become a great nation again. If Germany should keep apart from the League of Nations and should form an alliance with Russia, the future of Constantinople may be raised anew. Experience has shewn that conflicts concerning Constantinople invariably embroil many nations in addition to those who are directly concerned.

Constantinople is a traditional disturber of the peace. The city would be freed from all risks of further attack if the League were established near by. No power would then dare to face the prejudice which it would incur if it threatened a place made so sacred to the world.

F I F T H R E A S O N



Interior of St. Sophia

Moham- medanism

5. Because the selection of Constantinople would greatly impress the followers of Mohammed. The League would be housed within a mile or two of the palace of the Sultan, Commander of the Faithful.

TURN OVER FOR THREE MORE REASONS

SIXTH REASON



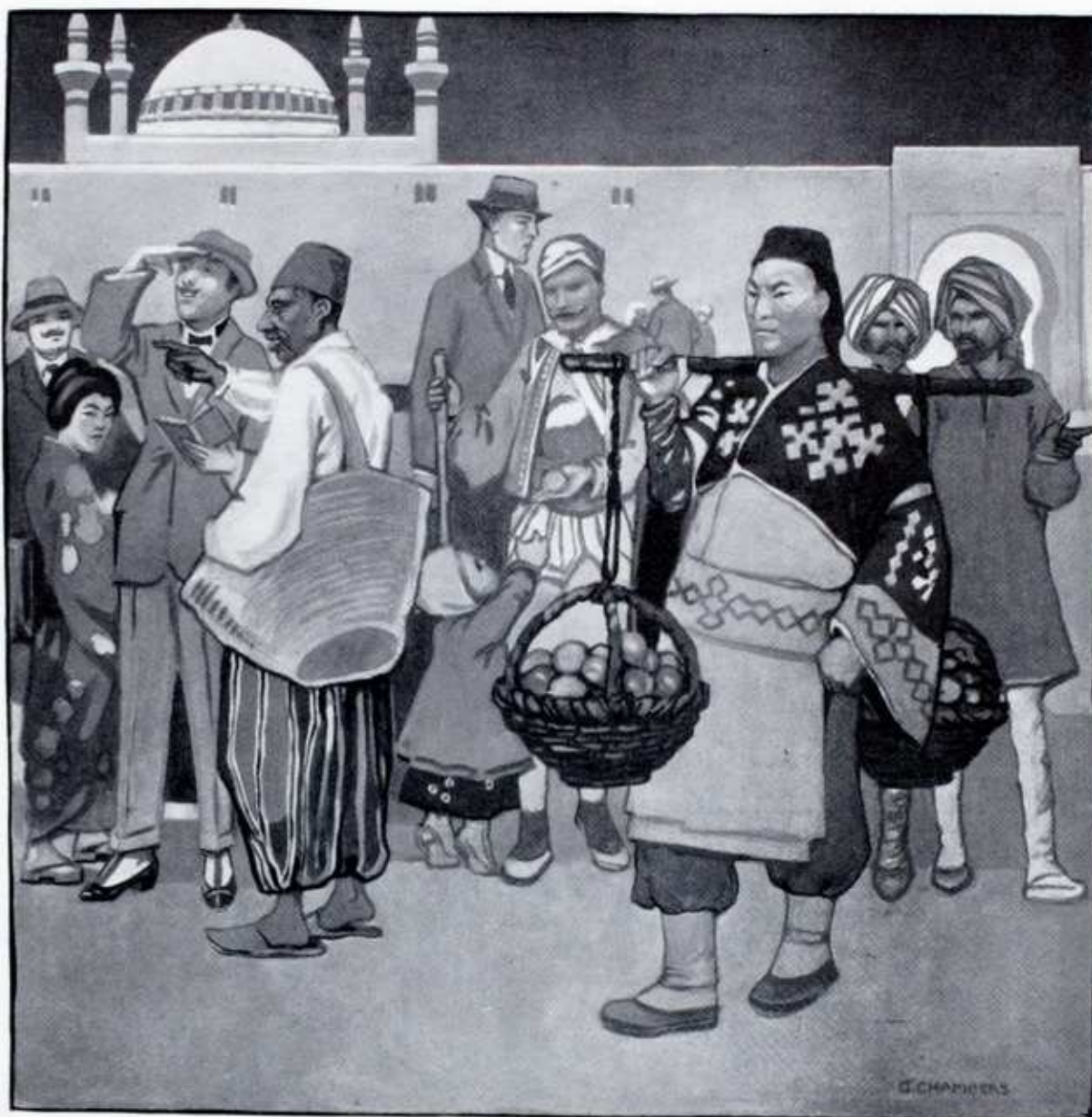
The Cradle of Wars

**"On the
spot"**

6. Because it is near the danger zone of the Balkans. It is "on the spot." Everyone knows what is to be gained by settling disputes and planning policy "on the spot." Nowhere else will the statesmen of the League be so well able to study those insidious influences which are ever at work in the Balkan cradle of war.

TWO NEW REASONS LIE AHEAD

SEVENTH REASON



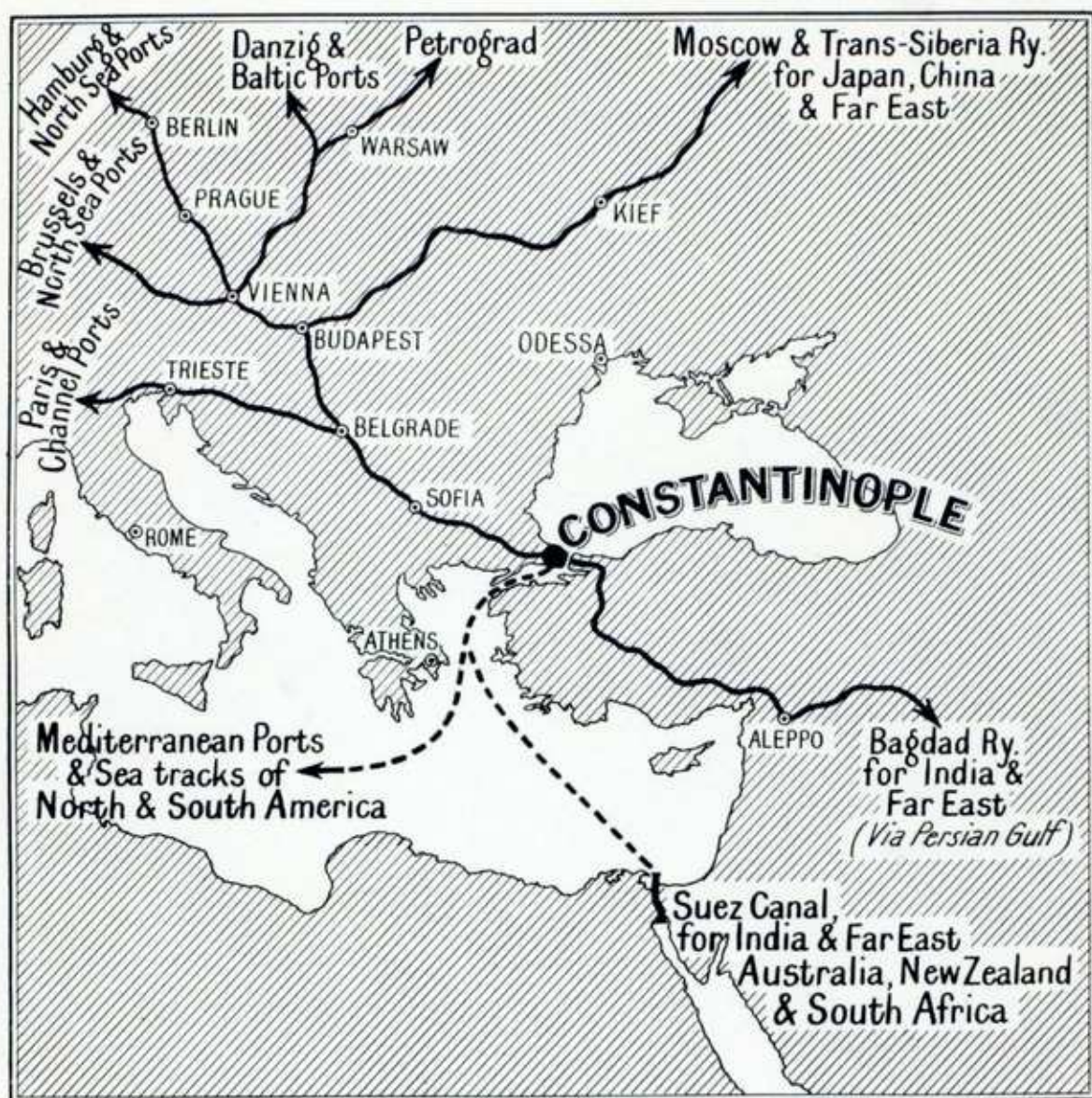
The Rendezvous of Every Race

Meeting . Place . . . of East . and West

7. Because from time immemorial it has been regarded as the meeting place of East and West. It, therefore, possesses natural claims for its selection as the political capital of the World. In the opinion of many well qualified to judge, the East will play a more important part in the evolution of the World during the next hundred years than the West. The choice of Constantinople as the seat of the League will impress Eastern peoples that the League is a World institution—not an alliance of Western powers.

THE LAST REASON IS STILL MORE CONVINCING

EIGHTH REASON



The Great Junction

World . . .
Accessi-
bility . . .

8. Because it is accessible for the majority of the Capitals of the North, South, East, and West. It can fairly be described as the centre of the Earth. Many routes by land and sea already exist. Should the League select Constantinople as its seat, many other routes will be developed. Air services will speedily come into operation. No nation will think that the place has been chosen for the convenience of others.

MANY MORE REASONS COULD BE CITED

Other Cities which have been suggested as the Seat of the League

GENEVA

Swiss reputation for neutrality is a poor argument in favour of Geneva. The principles of the League are entirely at variance with neutrality. The world must "pull together" for the common cause of mankind. There is no room for the nation which will look idly on while oppression is afoot.

The city is far from the sea and cannot be internationalised. The atmosphere is influenced by the great Chancelleries. Were Geneva to be chosen, it might be said that the League had been established only for the convenience of the Western powers. If such a belief gained headway, the effect on the League would be disastrous.

The Geneva Convention is an association of ill-omen. Future agreements should not be framed at the city which saw the construction of one which has been so shamefully abused.

JERUSALEM

Just as Geneva is too closely identified with the West, so Jerusalem is too Eastern in character. Its distance from the sea and its difficulty of access weigh heavily in the scale. It also cannot be internationalised.

ROME

A city with an atmosphere of politics. It also cannot be internationalised.

BRUSSELS, VERSAILLES AND STRASSBURG

Have the disadvantages of Geneva. They are landlocked and lacking in World significance which lends weight to the selection of others. They could provide no international territory.

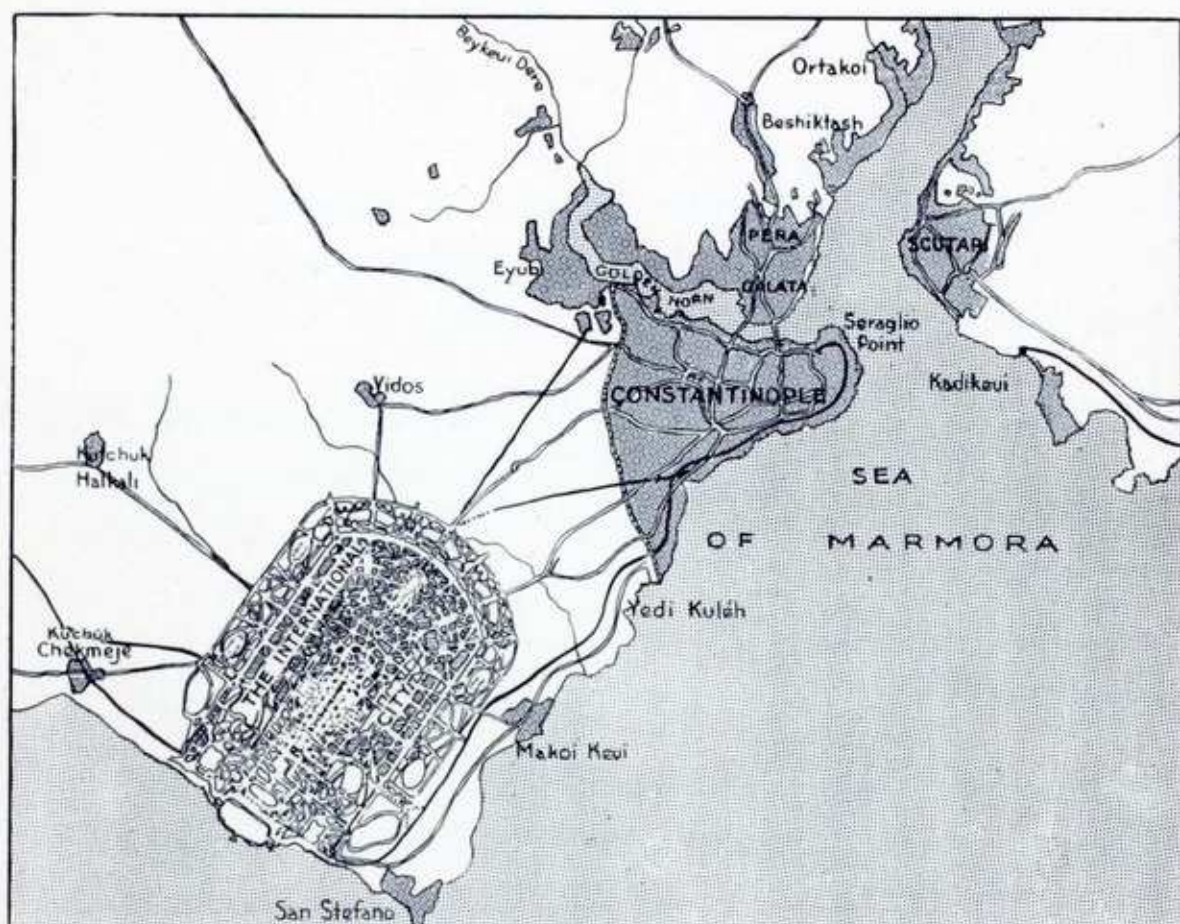
Not a New Suggestion

More than forty years ago Lorimer, the eminent international jurist, suggested that Constantinople should be made the centre of international life. This is what he wrote :—

The key of Europe to Asia, and of Asia to Europe, always strong, and by modern appliances capable of being rendered well-nigh impregnable, whether by land or by sea, its possession by a strong power would be a menace to the freedom both of the East and of the West ; whilst, in the hands of a weak power, the possibility of its seizure by a *coup-de-main* must render it a perpetual source of international distrust. If we add to these considerations the extraordinary mixture of races by which it is inhabited, and the vehement antipathies which hold them asunder, the possibility of its ever assuming a national character seems permanently excluded.

The wretchedness of its present condition is a matter of universal admission, and, yet, unless a rôle can be found for it, new as yet in the history of nations, that condition must remain substantially unchanged. On these grounds it appears to me that the difficulty which Dr. Bluntschli sees in maintaining a denationalised centre of international life is pretty fairly balanced, in the case of Constantinople, by the still greater difficulty of nationalising it, and that this coveted object can be utilised by civilised mankind only by its being devoted to their common use. Turks, Greeks, and Slavonians, Armenians, and Jews, might all preserve their respective nationalities under a government which belonged to all nations and to none.

A Plan of an International City



The wonderful situation of Constantinople appealed to the Advocates of a World-centre which would unite peoples and nations for the attainment of peace and progress upon broader humanitarian lines. This project originated in Italy. Its supporters drew attention to the advantages of San Stefano (near Constantinople), and the above shows how the City, proposed by them, would be planned.

LOOKING AHEAD

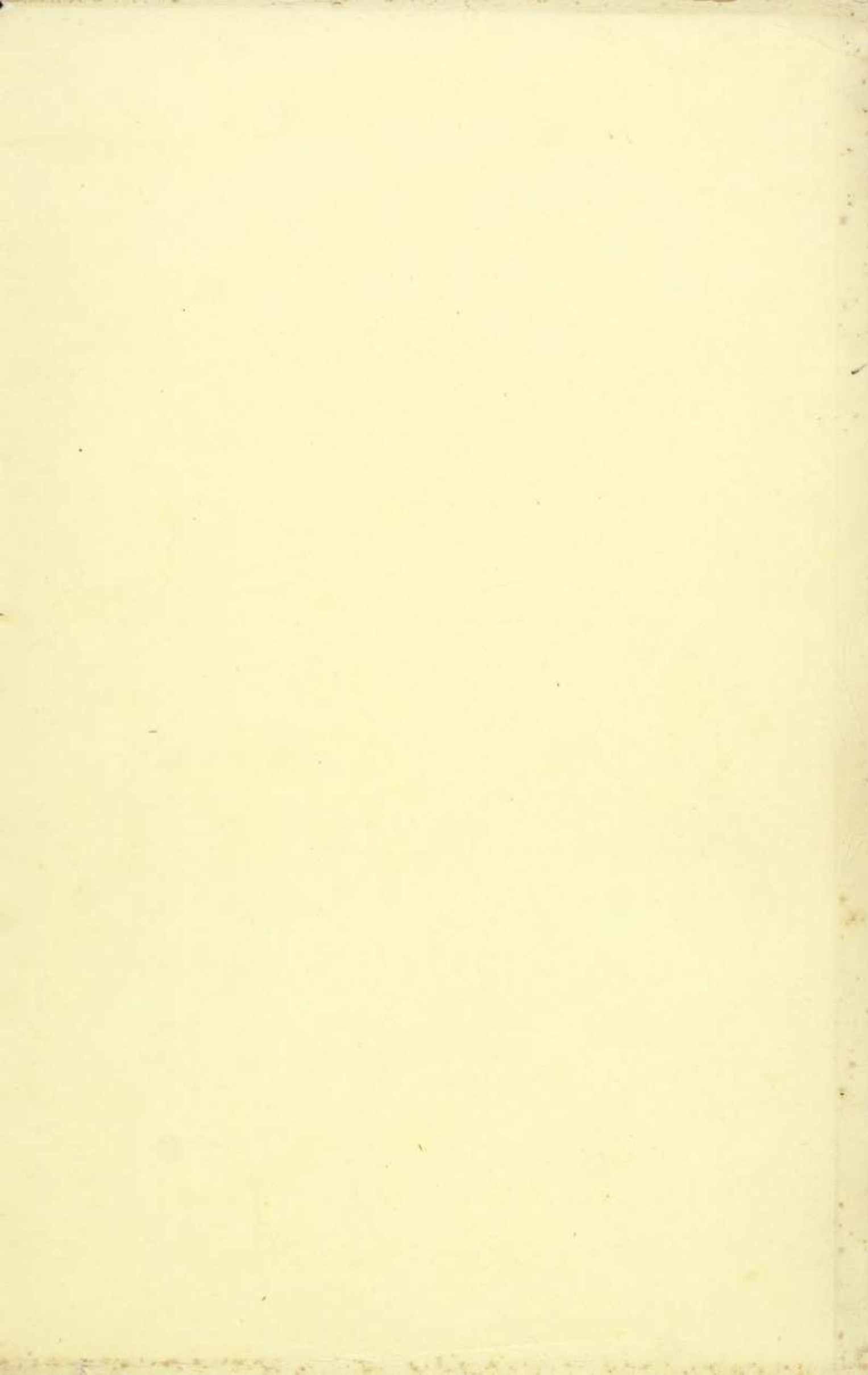
No one suggests that the League of Nations should go at once to Constantinople. At present such a location would be inconvenient.

What is urged is this—that the delegates should look ahead, should search *now* for the location that will be ideal when normal conditions reign again throughout the world.

The foregoing pages have shown the importance of the choice. This is not a matter for haste. A small Commission might be appointed to investigate the question. The planning and building will occupy from five to ten years.

Here is an opportunity to demonstrate to our children our faith and our foresight. It is an opportunity that will come once only during the life of the League.

Will you grasp it before it has been stolen by the hand of time?



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