BALKAN PROBLEMS AND EUROPEAN PEACE

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NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

597–599 FIFTH AVENUE

1919

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WITH the kind permission of the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, portions of an article published in that review are incorporated in Chapters V and VI.

PART I

THE BALKANS BEFORE THE WAR

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF THE BALKAN NATIONS

THE importance of the Balkan Peninsula in world politics is determined primarily by its geographical position. At the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles only a few hundred yards of water separate Europe from Asia. On the Asiatic side feasible routes give access to all parts of the Middle East, and the Isthmus of Suez presents no obstacle to communication with yet another of the great land masses of the earth. On the European side several practicable routes lead into the Danube valley, from which other parts of Western Europe may be reached without much difficulty. In addition, the Peninsula lies on the route from the Black Sea caravan termini to the Mediterranean ports. This commanding position in relation to Europe, Asia, and Africa has given the Balkan Peninsula in all ages a political and economic value which can best be indicated by the blood and treasure expended for its possession.

Remains dating from ages before men had learnt to record their deeds in words reveal to archæological research the same cycle of invasion and settlement and then again invasion, which is familiar—or perhaps only half familiar—to us as the course of events in the Balkans during historical times. Successive waves of barbarian immigration and imperial conquests and colonizing have left a population far exceeding any other in the complexity and variety of its stock. Yet in addition to those whose part in Balkan history can still be read in the languages and even in the faces of its present inhabitants, there have been at least an equal number of incursions which have left no permanent trace behind them. Goths and Vandals, Huns and Avars, swept over the Peninsula during the *Völkerwanderung*, but their occupation was too transitory to bear any permanent effects. It is not from these, but from the subject and the governing peoples of Hellenic civilization, from the colonizing of Imperial Rome, from a series of Slavonic invasions, and from the Turks, that the existing population descends.

The last of the peoples of the Peninsula to gain political independence—the Albanians

—are the most ancient of its inhabitants, for they are the direct descendants of the primitive Illyrian population which dwelt there before 2000 B.C. They were pushed back by later comers into the mountainous districts of the west, but there successfully defied Greek and Roman, Slav and Turk. Isolated but unconquered, they least among the Balkan peoples have experienced the dubious benefits and indubitable evils of "civilization." Apart from the exploits of Scanderbeg against the Turks, the rôle they have played in Balkan history has been of minor importance, and even their existence as a political entity is due much more to European jealousies than to their own nationalist aspirations.

The modern Greeks are descended from tribes which migrated from Asia Minor in prehistoric times. After a prolonged period of growth and maturity, the Greeks were subjugated by the Romans, but Hellenic culture conquered the whole of the Ancient World. Later, throughout the Middle Ages, the Greek Empire of Byzantium remained the chief bulwark of Europe against the Asiatic hordes.

The Rumanian nation is perhaps the greatest monument to the might of Imperial Rome. The colonizing of the region from

the valley of the Dniester to the basin of the Theiss, its occupation by legionaries and civil administrators, and their intermarriage with the natives, brought about a complete Romanization of the provinces both in language and in customs. During the series of barbarian invasions which followed the withdrawal of the Roman troops at the end of the third century, the Latinized population found refuge from Slav and Tatar in the fastnesses of the Transylvanian Alps. Thus the Dacians of the Roman Empire both acquired and preserved the bare elements of a national consciousness definitely Latin in character. Their history during the Dark Ages is obscure, but about the beginning of the fourteenth century two principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia, emerged and maintained a precarious existence against the Magyars. Thanks to the superior attractions of the middle and upper Danube, they escaped the full force of the Turkish onslaught, and survived to become the nuclei of modern Rumania.

The immigration of Slavonic tribes into the Balkans began in the third century A.D., but did not reach its greatest proportions till much later. By the seventh century the new-comers had occupied the whole of the

Peninsula, with the exception of the mountainous region of the west, where the Albanians held out, and the coastal lowlands which remained predominantly Greek. Early in the eighth century a Turanian people, coming from the Volga basin, penetrated into the Balkans and subjugated the Slav inhabitants of Moesia and Thrace. In a comparatively short time, however, these Bulgarians were themselves assimilated by the conquered population and completely "Slavized." From the end of the ninth century to the middle of the fifteenth, Balkan history is a record of successive Slav "empires," now Bulgarian, now Serbian, and of their struggles with each other and with Byzantium. The first Bulgarian Empire, founded by Simeon (893–927), stretched from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, but within a century was overcome by the Byzantine Emperors, John Zimisces and Basil II. After an eclipse of a century and a half a Bulgarian State again emerged into independence about 1186, and under Ivan Asen II (1218–1241) once more included the greater part of the Peninsula.

The Serbs, however, who had first obtained unity during the latter part of the twelfth century, gained strength under a series of able rulers; and the weakness of the Latin

Empire founded in 1204 as a result of the Fourth Crusade, and of the Greek Empire re-established by Michael Paleologus in 1261, left the hegemony of the Balkans to be disputed by the two Slavonic Powers. The crushing victory of the Serbians at Velbuzhd in 1330 placed the issue beyond doubt, and under Stephen Dushan (1336–1356) mediæval Serbia reached its greatest extent. The heart of Stephen's kingdom was that group of upland plains around Uskub and Kossovo which are still called "Old Serbia." Uskub itself was his capital, and his dominions included all, and more than all, the pre-war (1914) areas of Serbia and Montenegro, while he exercised suzerainty over Bulgaria and the rest of the Balkans up to the gates of Constantinople. But Serbia's development was cut short by the advance of the Turks, who shattered the hastily collected force of the Serbs at Kossovo in 1389, and captured the Bulgarian capital Trnovo four years later. The conquest of the Peninsula was completed by Mohammed II (1451–1487).

The downfall of the Byzantine Empire and the Balkan States brought the Turks into direct contact with Western Europe, which awoke to find its civilization threatened with extermination as it had not been since the

days of Leo the Isaurian and Karl Martel. The burden of defence fell almost entirely on the Habsburg Empire, For two hundred years the struggle was waged on the plains of Hungary, and it was not till the Turks were beaten back from the walls of Vienna in 1683 that victory turned definitely against them.

Henceforward two factors of importance which are inextricably entangled determine the course of Balkan history. On the one hand, the Peninsula is brought into the field of European politics and becomes the focus of the age-long conflict of Teuton and Slav represented by the empires of Austria-Hungary and Russia. On the other hand, the oppressed Christian populations awaken to national self-consciousness and begin an epic struggle for political independence of which even the Great War is not the final act. This latter development is really a new factor. The mediæval "empires" of Bulgaria and Serbia were not in any true sense Nation States, but rather despotisms founded on the military successes of the various dynasties. Nevertheless, their influence was, and still is, of enormous importance in crystallizing nationalist aspirations. At the same time these mediæval traditions have been the curse of the nationalist

movement. The fact that at one period or another Greeks and Romans, Serbs and Bulgarians, have been the rulers of the greater part of the Peninsula, has tempted each to aim at the revival of its ancient dominion in disregard of ethnographical principles.

CHAPTER II

THE BALKAN NATIONS AND EUROPEAN POLITICS

THE policies of Austria-Hungary and Russia in the Balkans have been mainly dictated by a similar consideration—both suffer from inadequate access to the open sea. The desire to reach the Ægean inspired Russia from the reign of Catherine the Great. Austria's need did not become acute until Italy obtained national unity and began to threaten her Adriatic supremacy; thus, it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the Habsburgs were sufficiently free from their entanglements in Western Europe to cast their eyes beyond the Iron Gates in the direction of Salonika.

Early in the nineteenth century insurrectionary movements among Greeks and Serbs were encouraged by Russia, and led to sanguinary repression. Finding that the risings were not likely to lead to Russian aggrandizement, the Tsar abandoned them until a more pro-

pitious moment; but the thirst for liberty had been roused, and after the destruction of the Turkish Fleet at Navarino in 1827 Greece gained her independence. Shortly afterwards, Serbia was recognized as an independent principality. Modern Rumania dates from the union of Wallachia and Moldavia, which took place in 1861.

The history of the liberation of Bulgaria is more familiar to English minds. It began with a literary and educational renaissance, and took political shape over the question of religious independence. The Bulgarians were orthodox, but in mediæval times their Church had enjoyed a measure of independence under the Greek patriarchate which had lasted till 1767. The Greek Church had hitherto been the only one recognized by the Turks, who included all their orthodox subjects, whatever their nationality, under the term *Roum-mileti*. After the recognition of Greek independence, Greek nationalism became a danger to the Ottoman Empire, and the patriarchate lost favour with the Turks, who reversed their previous policy and began to take advantage of the discord which always existed, either openly or latently, between the Slavs and the Greek priesthood. During the sixties this discord became acute among the Bulgarians,

who showed themselves willing even to accept Catholicism as the price of religious independence; but before the plans for a Bulgarian Uniate Church matured a more attractive proposal came to the fore. Russia lent it support, and in 1870 the Turks conceded the Bulgarians an autonomous National Church subject to purely formal recognition of the patriarchal supremacy.

The adherents of the new Church—the Bulgarian Exarchate—were declared schismatic, and excommunicated by the Patriarch, but these fulminations served only to intensify Bulgarian nationalism.

During 1875 and 1876 powerful risings took place in Bulgaria. They were ruthlessly suppressed, but the hideous atrocities of the Turks and their denunciation by Gladstone roused the Powers to action. In December 1876 a Conference of Ambassadors at Constantinople framed schemes of drastic reform, including the formation of an autonomous Bulgaria, which left little in Europe to the Turks except Albania and Thrace. The active part played by Russia in these events alarmed the British Government, which thought it saw the results of the Crimean War about to be nullified by the extension of Russian influence over the proposed Bulgarian princi-

pality. Beaconsfield withdrew his support, and Russia took up arms against Turkey. The Russian victory in the campaign of 1877–1878 was complete, and on the 3rd March 1878 the Porte was forced to sign the Treaty of San Stefano, which established an autonomous Bulgaria on practically the same lines as recommended by the Ambassadorial Conference of 1876.

The Powers, led by England and Germany, again intervened, insisting that the fate of the Turkish Empire was a matter for all the European Powers to decide. A Conference was summoned at Berlin, and the Concert of Europe proceeded to emphasize its own discords by repeating them in the Balkans. The big Bulgaria of the Constantinople Conference and the Treaty of San Stefano was divided into three parts. That lying between the Balkan Mountains and the Danube became an independent Bulgaria. South of the Balkan Mountains, the province of Eastern Rumelia was given autonomy. But the greatest crime and the greatest blunder was perpetrated by the return of Macedonia to Turkey, subject only to pledges of reform which proved to be not worth the paper they were written on. The independence of Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro was recog-

nized. Russia annexed Bessarabia from Rumania, which in return was assigned the Dobrudja, a region peopled almost entirely by Bulgarians and Turks. Further, in accordance with an agreement made by the Austrian and Russian Emperors at Reichstadt two years earlier, Austria-Hungary was given the right to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From the point of view both of the Balkan nations and of the Austro-Russian rivalry, the Treaty of Berlin was only a temporary compromise, but it reveals the diverse methods which the rival Powers were forced to adopt in Balkan affairs. Austria-Hungary was chiefly intent upon gaining a frontier coterminous with Turkey, and regarded Serbia as a sphere of influence which might eventually be absorbed. Under the influence of this policy the possibility of "Trialism," in which the Southern Slavs would take equal rank with the Germans and Magyars of the monarchy, was envisaged. Russia, on the other hand, had little hope of extending her own frontiers across the Balkans to the Ægean. Doubtless her rulers looked to a time when both sides of the Straits should be Russian territory, but for the rest her interests could best be advanced by the establishment of a subservient

Bulgaria and Rumania. Rumania had always been aware of the dangers with which her neighbour's policy threatened her. She had been compelled to allow a free passage to Russian troops during the war against Turkey in 1877–1878, and the Russian annexation of Bessarabia left a rankling sore. In 1883 Rumania passed into the camp of the Triple Alliance on terms similar to those by which Italy was bound.

In the newly established Bulgaria, Russia soon found, not a submissive and cringing client, but an independent Power which was determined to place Bulgarian interests always first. The pro-Russian policy of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who had been chosen to rule Bulgaria, roused violent opposition. In 1885, by a bloodless revolution, Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia declared their union in defiance of the decision of the Powers. Russia determined to destroy what she regarded as a rebellious colony, and urged Turkey to re-occupy Eastern Rumelia.

A sensational *volte-face* now occurred. Lord Salisbury had seen that the Bulgarians (as Mr. Gladstone had prophesied) had become a barrier against Russia, and that his former chief had "put our money on the wrong horse." He decided to adopt a spirited policy

in Bulgaria's favour. Through the vigour of the ambassador at Constantinople, Sir William White, he thwarted Russia's proposal and saved Bulgaria from extinction.

Bulgaria's danger, however, was not yet over. Austria incited Serbia to attack her. Russia, whose officers held every post in the Bulgarian army above the rank of captain, suddenly withdrew those officers in order to leave Bulgaria a helpless victim. It was then that the Bulgarian army performed its famous *tour de force*. Led by officers who had never commanded a battalion, it routed the Serbians at Slivnitza, invaded Serbia, and occupied Pirot. Only the intervention of Austria prevented a victorious march to Belgrade.

Alexander, however, again allowed himself to be the tool of Russian intrigue, and was forced to abdicate. After an interregnum, Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was elected by the Sobranje, but the man to whom Bulgaria owed the preservation of her independence during these years was Stamboloff. He successfully countered Russian intrigues by despotic methods, which, however, in 1894 brought about his downfall. A reconciliation with Russia was then effected, but the new relations were very different from the old. Russia had burned her fingers in trying to

use for her own ends even a truncated Bulgaria, and was not likely to sacrifice any more for the Bulgaria of San Stefano, which would be strong enough to treat her still more cavalierly. By this time, in fact, Russia had recognized that it was more important for her to block the Austrian road to Salonika and to defer her own ambitions till the Sick Man of Europe should breathe his last. For this purpose the supremacy of Russian influence at Belgrade was essential. Serbia, however, ignored by Russia at San Stefano and Berlin, had sought Austrian friendship, and in 1881 concluded a secret treaty in which Austria declared that she would support Serbian expansion in the direction of the Vardar valley on condition that Serbia renounced the Adriatic seaboard. A permanent alliance of Austria-Hungary and Serbia was impossible owing to the strength of the nationalist movement among the Southern Slavs outside Serbia. The murder of King Alexander and the return of the Karageorgevich dynasty in 1903 was at once an effect of and a stimulus to this nationalist movement. It emancipated Serbia from Austrian influence and led to an immediate *rapprochement* with Russia, which was rendered practically irrevocable by Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908.

The return of Macedonia to Turkey in 1878 made "the Balkan question" synonymous with "the Macedonian question." The Macedonian Bulgarians who had risen against the Turks with their fellow-countrymen were callously handed back to their oppressors, but an undivided Bulgaria remained the goal of all their efforts.

The whole question was now complicated by the conflict of Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek ambitions. Hitherto the Macedonians had always been considered Bulgarian both by themselves and by their neighbours. When a plebiscite was taken under Article 10 of the Firman of 1870 in the provinces of Uskub and Ochrida, the requisite two-thirds majority was easily obtained for the appointment of exarchist Bishops. The existence of a Greek minority in southern Macedonia was generally admitted, but nothing was ever heard of Macedonians of Serbian nationality until Austria insisted on the renunciation of Serbian expansion to the Adriatic and agreed in return to support the latter's extension southward. The Serbian statesman, Dr. Milovanovich, admitted in 1898 that "the Serbs did not begin to think about Macedonia till 1885." The spontaneous revolutionary movement in Macedonia was Bulgarian in character. Mace-

donian Serbs and Greeks had to be created by Government propaganda, and when schoolmasters and priests failed to produce inhabitants of the required nationality in sufficient number to justify the political ambitions of their employers, new and fantastic theories had to be devised to prove that the inhabitants of Macedonia were anything but Bulgarian. Even Rumania took a hand in the game, and organized her own propaganda among the Vlachs who are scattered over Macedonia. Rumania, however, had no designs on Macedonian territory (there is a limit to nationalist pretensions even in the Balkans!), but merely desired to create an instrument for barter against Bulgarian irredentism in the Dobrudja.

The fate to which the Macedonians were condemned by the European Concert in 1878 left them no hope of rescue from Turkish massacre, rape, and pillage by the Powers. All their hopes were now centred on their own efforts and the aid which their more fortunate fellow-countrymen in Bulgaria could give them. A widespread revolutionary organization was soon created, which at length reached the ears of the Turkish authorities, with the result that guerilla warfare became the order of the day. But of what avail were a few thousand rifles against the tens

of thousands of troops which Turkey could pour into the province? From time to time reports of some especially hideous atrocity would excite a passing wave of public interest in Western European countries. England, in particular, made attempts to insist upon the execution of the reforms to which the Porte had agreed in 1878. Austria-Hungary and Russia, however, were alike too much interested in the maintenance of the *status quo*. As some one happily said, whenever they were called in as physicians they also considered themselves to be the heirs of the Sick Man. Thus neither was willing to put the Turkish administration on a sound basis or to agree to any arrangement which might prejudice the ultimate disposal of Turkish territory.

In 1903 widespread risings took place in Macedonia. Germany had now become the friend of Turkey, and the insurrection was savagely suppressed by the aid of German officers. Relief to the refugees was mainly sent from England, and the existing sympathy with that country was still further increased. The danger of an explosion of feeling in Bulgaria or in Russia, combined with humanitarian agitation in England and France, compelled the Powers to remember their undertaking (given in Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin)

to reform the Macedonian province. Lord Lansdowne, while admitting the responsibility of the "interested Powers," Russia and Austria, took the lead in urging upon them a plan for real control of public order by officers of all the Great Powers. After long negotiations with the Porte, officers of each Power except Germany were established in the five different districts, but their functions was limited to inspection of the gendarmerie; and an international finance commission, located at Salonika, was empowered to make suggestions to Hilmi Pasha, the Sultan's Inspector-General.

Five years followed in which the Porte strove to crush the power of Bulgarian Macedonia by encouraging Greek, Serbian, and Turkish bands to massacre Bulgarians. The "murder lists" compiled by the British Embassy reached a total of 2,500 a year, and many villages sought safety in an ostensible change of "churchmanship," i.e. of nationality.

Agreement among the Balkan States to eject the Turk seemed more remote than ever; control by the Concert was hampered by Germany; invasion by Bulgaria was vetoed by Russia. Every solution appeared impossible, when suddenly, in February 1908, the

Austrian Government announced an agreement for railway concessions in Turkey. Great resentment at this disloyalty was felt in England, and Sir Edward Grey some weeks later surprised the world by advancing a policy of real control by the Concert. In June of the same year the end of the historic feud between England and Russia was signalized by King Edward's meeting with the Tsar at Reval. For the first time the Turks felt themselves seriously threatened, and the Committee of Union and Progress, profiting by the general disgust at Abdul Hamid's government by espionage, carried out the bloodless revolution. The Sultan, frightened by the defection of his faithful Albanians, granted a constitution. The unity of all Turkish subjects as "Ottomans" was declared by the Young Turk committee, sitting at Salonika under the leadership of Talaat and Enver. Political prisoners were released. Turks and Christians, Bulgars and Greeks, demonstrated their brotherhood with common rejoicings, and even with common prayers.

Austria seized the opportunity and annexed Bosnia. War with Serbia was long in the balance, but in the end Germany—"the ally in shining armour"—by a sudden and humiliating menace to Russia forced the Powers to

recognize Austria's defiance of treaties regarding Bosnia. Meanwhile Bulgaria declared herself an independent kingdom and seized the Bulgarian railways controlled by a Turkish company.

In the period which followed, the Young Turks rapidly proved themselves chauvinists of a new and more dangerous kind by their relentless persecution of the various subject peoples. The Powers having (too hastily) withdrawn their officers, the condition of Macedonia, which Lord Lansdowne had called "a standing menace to European peace," became more desperate and irremediable than ever. So desperate, in fact, was it, that common misfortune produced the miracle of harmony among the Balkan rivals.

The difficulties in the way of a Balkan League were many. Was Macedonia to become autonomous or was it to be partitioned? In the latter case, could Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece come to any agreement? The opinion of Bulgarians and of the Macedonians generally was in favour of autonomy, but the prospect of obtaining military action by Serbia and Greece for that end was hopeless. Both knew that an autonomous Macedonia spelt "finis" for their own designs, and more probably than not would follow the example

of Eastern Rumelia and be incorporated eventually with Bulgaria. Until Serbia could bring Croats and Slovenes within its frontiers, until Greece could obtain the Islands and the Greek parts of Asia Minor, and until Rumania could redeem its nationals in Transylvania and Bessarabia, the balance of power in the Balkans remained the prime consideration for every State with the exception of Bulgaria, whose only field for expansion lay within the Peninsula itself.

Beginning in 1909, conversations between Serbia and Bulgaria took place intermittently under Russian auspices. M. Malinoff declined to make any concessions to Serbia in the districts of Uskub and Koumanovo or to the Greeks in Kavalla, Serres, Vodena, and Kastoria, but the outbreak of the Turko-Italian war in September 1911 hastened events. M. Gueshoff, who was now Bulgarian Prime Minister, brought himself to the point of agreeing to concessions in Macedonia, and a Treaty of Alliance was signed on the 13th March 1912. The territorial partition was temporarily settled by the allocation to Serbia of the Turkish territory north of the Shar Planina and the division of Macedonia into two parts, the south-eastern (including Monastir) being allotted to Bulgaria, while a north-western

strip (including Uskub) was left as a "contested zone" to be finally disposed of by the arbitration of the Tsar. Beyond the southern limit of this zone Serbia undertook to make no claim.

Against the outcry which they knew would be provoked at home when the concessions were made public, the Bulgarian diplomats sought to strengthen their hands by means of a stipulation that partition and arbitration were only to take place if both parties become convinced that "their organization (i.e. of the territories between the Shar Planina, the Rhodopes, the Ægean, and Lake Ochrida) as a distinct autonomous province is impossible."

The Serbo-Bulgarian treaty of alliance, vague and unsatisfactory as it was, is almost a model of precision in comparison with that which was signed on the 29th May 1912 by Bulgaria and Greece. Conversations had been initiated in May 1911 by the good offices of Mr. J. D. Bourchier, *The Times* correspondent in the Balkans, but almost broke down on the question of autonomy for Macedonia and the Adrianople vilayet. Ultimately, Bulgaria was satisfied with the insertion of a clause guaranteeing "rights accruing from treaties," i.e. Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin. Both

parties seem to have understood that agreement about the disposal of Salonika and southern Macedonia was out of the question, and to have postponed settlement till after the war, in the course of which each doubtless hoped to obtain the advantage of military occupation.

The subsequent history of the Balkan League is well known. In the summer of 1912 Montenegro joined the *bloc*, and military conventions were negotiated by the Allies. War was declared against Turkey in October, and within a few weeks a series of victories brought the Bulgarian army to the lines of Tchatalja and placed Serbs and Greeks in occupation of the greater part of Macedonia and Albania. The success of the Allies startled the chancelleries of Europe, where any suggestion of the Balkans for the Balkan peoples was anathema. Austria-Hungary intimated that the permanent inclusion of Durazzo and the Adriatic coast within Serbia could not be tolerated. The Conference of London, assembled to negotiate peace, set up an independent Albania in deference to Austria's protest. At this point the latent dissensions between the Balkan States became plain. Serbia demanded the revision of the treaty with Bulgaria on the ground that new circum-

stances had arisen. It was urged that Serbia had lost the Adriatic seaboard, while Bulgaria had gained Thrace; that Serbian troops had been sent to assist in the siege of Adrianople, whereas Bulgaria had failed to fulfil promises of military help in the Macedonian theatre of war; and finally that Bulgaria had not given full support to Serbia against the Austrian demands. Bulgaria replied that Serbia had flagrantly violated her undertaking to hold Macedonia in trust during the war by her active proscription of the Bulgarian nationality, culminating in the expulsion of Bulgarian notables.

The break-up of the Alliance was now in sight. The London Conference ended the war with Turkey by giving Bulgaria the Enos-Midia line, and then disbanded. During April both Serbia and Greece approached Rumania with proposals for an alliance against Bulgaria, and next month themselves concluded a secret treaty for the delimitation of Macedonian frontiers "on the principle of effective occupation and of equilibrium between the three States." While preparations for war were hurried on, a final effort was made for a pacific settlement by the arbitration of Russia. Serbia and Bulgaria alike were suspicious of the impartiality of Petrograd,

but under pressure agreed to the proposal. At this moment General Savoff, the Bulgarian commander-in-chief, either on his own responsibility or under orders from King Ferdinand, gave instructions for an attack on the Serbs and Greeks, which took place on the 29th June. The Cabinet cancelled the order at once, and retired the general who had given it. Russia also tried to prevent military measures on the part of Serbia and Greece. Bulgaria's enemies, however, were no longer in the mood for diplomacy, and immediately declared war. Within a fortnight Rumania and Turkey joined in the plunder, and by the end of July Bulgaria was forced to sue for peace. Negotiations were opened at Bukarest, and peace was concluded on the 10th August.

Rumania annexed the southern part of the Dobrudja; Serbia and Greece partitioned Macedonia almost in its entirety. The terms of the Serbo-Greek treaty of the previous May had left the towns of Serres, Drama, and Kavalla to Bulgaria. At Bukarest Greece included this district in her demands. To the protests of the Bulgarian delegates, M. Venizelos replied that he himself recognized that Kavalla was of little value to Greece, although well-nigh indispensable to Bulgaria, but that he had formal instructions from King

Constantine forbidding him to sign the treaty on any other condition. In the early days of the negotiations Rumania intervened to obtain Kavalla for Bulgaria, and King Charles told the Bulgarian delegation that the port would be given to them. At the last moment she made a complete *volte-face.* It is now known that in the meantime she received a peremptory message from the German Emperor to leave Kavalla to Greece. This intervention, aiming at depriving Bulgaria of a satisfactory Ægean port, and so rendering her more dependent on the Central Empires, was decisive. Under the threat of a Rumanian occupation of Sofia, Bulgaria gave way.

Negotiations with the Porte followed at Constantinople. Bulgaria found that of the Powers under whose auspices and guarantees the Treaty of London had been concluded, only England considered it worth while to make a formal protest against the scrapping of that instrument. In face of such apathy she had no alternative but to return half her conquests in Thrace, including Adrianople, to Turkey.

The instability of the equilibrium which these treaties pretended to establish was patent to every one with a first-hand knowledge of the circumstances. With a wisdom which

would have been commendable had it been inspired by disinterested motives, the Great Powers withheld their recognition.

Bulgaria had been the mainspring of the League. Until May 1913 Serbia and Greece were allies solely in virtue of the treaties which bound each to Bulgaria. Moreover, upon Bulgaria had fallen the brunt of the campaign against the Turks. Serbian and Greek casualties together hardly amounted to more than one-third of the Bulgarian total. These efforts and sacrifices had been made for one end alone—the liberation of Macedonia. The disastrous war among the Balkan Allies left Macedonia once more without hope either of incorporation in Bulgaria or of autonomy. At Bukarest the Bulgarian delegates made a final desperate effort to obtain the insertion in the treaty of a clause guaranteeing the educational and religious privileges which the subject nationalities had enjoyed under the Ottoman Empire. Serbia returned an implacable negative. Indeed, the familiar process of "Nationalization" was already well under way in all the newly acquired territories. In the Dobrudja and in the parts of Macedonia annexed by Serbia and Greece, the Bulgarian Church was abolished and the schools closed, Bulgarian

books burnt, and even the Bulgarian form of nomenclature forbidden. The most pitiless proscription of Bulgarian nationality was carried out in the Macedonian territory annexed by Serbia. Its character may be gauged from a few of the articles included in a decree for "public safety" published by the Serbian Government on the 4th October 1913.

"*Article* 2.—Any attempt at rebellion against the public powers is punishable by five years' penal servitude.

"The decision of the police authorities, published in the respective communes, is sufficient proof of the commission of crime.

"If the rebel refuses to give himself up as prisoner within ten days from such publication, he may be put to death by any public or military officer.

"*Article* 4.—Where several cases of rebellion occur in a commune and the rebels do not return to their homes within ten days from the police notice, the authorities have the right of deporting their families whithersoever they may find convenient.

"Likewise the inhabitants of houses in which arrested persons or criminals in general are found concealed shall be deported." [1]

[1] This decree may be read *in extenso* in the *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and*

In December a draft constitution for "Serbian" Macedonia was published. In the opinion of the Carnegie Commission, "the Turkish law 'of vilayets,' in combination with the ancient rights and privileges of the Christian Communities, granted to the different nationalities by different treaties and firmans, gave far better assurance of mutual toleration and even a more effective rein on the arbitrary power of the administration than was afforded by this new draft constitution, which, from the administrative point of view, did nothing to abolish the measures laid down in the ordinances of 4th October." [1]

The régime thus introduced proves up to the hilt that in 1913, at any rate, the inhabitants of Macedonia were not of Serbian nationality. If confirmation is needed, it is supplied by the Greek propagandist who writes under the pseudonym "Polybius." He writes: "It is true that Serbia annexed (by the Treaty of Bukarest) a large portion of northern and central Macedonia (Uskub, Veles, Istip, Kochana, Prilep, Ochrida, etc.), where the majority of the Christian population is not Serbian, but Bulgarian in sentiment." [2]

Conduct of the Balkan Wars (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), pp. 160–2.

[1] Loc. cit., p. 164. [2] *Greece Before the Conference*, p. 21.

A policy of proscription and terrorism similar to the Serbian was adopted by the Greek and Rumanian authorities in the territory annexed by them.

CHAPTER III

THE BALKAN PEOPLES TO-DAY

WESTERN Europeans are usually disposed to dismiss the inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula from their minds with a scant consideration which borders on contempt. There is therefore good reason for reminding them of the vicissitudes of their own country's history before it attained a real and permanent unity on the basis of nationality. To an Italian or a German whose fathers may have seen, if not participated in, the unification of their respective nations, the extreme insistence on the idea of nationality which is the most prominent feature of the political life of the Balkan States is much more easily comprehensible than to an Englishman or a Frenchman, who finds it almost impossible to understand the narrowness of view which national consciousness tends to produce among these peoples.

As we have seen before, the population of the Balkans does not present a number of

compact and homogeneous ethnic units, but rather a mosaic of races in which may be discerned several well-defined nuclei, separated, however, by regions in which the population exhibits a diversity of race unparalleled in the experience of Western European nations.

Moreover, at one time or another in history each one of these peoples has obtained an ascendancy over the rest, and bases its present claims on the maximum territory it has ever possessed. In this way nationalism develops into megalomania; the Greeks, for example, consider themselves the heirs not merely of the Hellenic supremacy in the ancient world, but also of the Macedonian and Byzantine Empires, while the two Slavonic peoples look to a revival of the dominion they enjoyed at different periods in the Middle Ages, although in strict justice it must be stated here that the Bulgarians have always been the least offenders in this respect.

The long struggle for national existence which all the Balkan nations have had to wage, together with the fact that hitherto none has succeeded in obtaining the boundary to which the principle of nationality entitles it, has had two important results. In the first place, war, and the preparation for war, have become so inseparably connected with

the establishment of national claims that all have tended to forget that the ultimate condition which should be kept in view is not war but peace. Again, the nation has come to be regarded as something which must sharply define itself and separate itself from other nations. This ideal is carried even into the sphere of economics, and a frontier is regarded as a barrier to trade and intercourse.

In spite of all this the peoples of the Peninsula have many qualities which entitle them to respect and admiration, and it is not too much to look forward to a future when their political relationships will be stable and they will take their rightful place in the family of nations.

We will now examine each a little more closely.

The Balkan State most familiar to the Western European is Greece. The associations which its ancient civilization has brought it, the memory that its liberation was accomplished through the naval victory of the allied fleets of England, France and Russia, its extensive foreign trade, and its colonies, small perhaps in number but not in influence, scattered along the highways of the world's commerce—all these have brought Greece into

an intimacy with the rest of the world which other Balkan countries have lacked. Modern Greece has had a chequered history. For many years financial troubles beset her, and the Powers had to intervene and set up a Commission of Control. Further administrative deficiencies were revealed by the disastrous war with Turkey in 1897. Since the violent incidents of 1909, corruption and inefficiency have been largely eradicated under the leadership of the able Cretan statesman, M. Venizelos. Though clever and successful in commerce, modern Greeks have gained a reputation for plausibility and untrustworthiness. Jealousy and fear of Bulgaria, and dreams of the Great Hellas surpassing the glories of the Byzantine Empire, are the main features of their foreign outlook. The King's "Bulgarokthonos" (Slayer of Bulgarians) medal, struck in commemoration of the victories of 1913, constitutes an ironical commentary on Greek pretensions to Hellenic culture.

Rumania is the only other Balkan country which rivals Greece in the assumption of a superficiality of Western culture. It is a commonplace of the Rumanians to talk superciliously about their superior civilization.

They look down on Serbs and Bulgars as nations of peasants and domestically virtuous people.

In Bukarest enormous wealth, drawn from land and oil, is concentrated. The luxurious hotels, the narrow streets crowded with motors and carriages, and the *demi-monde* flaunting itself everywhere, are sufficient indication of one side of Rumanian life. The counterpart of this meretricious luxury is to be found in the gross poverty of the country-side, and of the workers' dwellings in Bukarest itself. The land is mainly divided into great estates cultivated by hired labourers under conditions little better than serfdom. Peasant revolts have occurred more than once, and, in view of the proximity of the example of Russia, are not unlikely to occur again.

The two Slavonic peoples have many qualities in common; both are primarily nations of peasants, owning the land from which they make their livelihood, and both have shown military attainments of the highest order. There is none of what we call "snobbery" and "flunkeyism"—the "snobbery" which consists in the admiration of trivial and superficial social distinctions, or the "flunkeyism" which leads men to express an outward

deference which they do not really feel towards those who are richer than they or who are supposed to be superior in station.

Both are countries which have only recently entered on the path of material progress, and many of their people think that Western civilization is something to be imitated or something to be taken over as a whole without discrimination. Fortunately, however, there are a large number of enlightened men and women who see that this is a profound mistake and that Western civilization consists of many diverse elements, some good and some very bad. They realize that the concentration of wealth in a few hands and the excessive elaboration of comfort and display are examples of the latter kind, and distinguish these from the inventions of modern science—the railway, the telephone, and the triumphs of sanitation, irrigation and agricultural development.

The Serbs are distinguished by their mysticism and by their devotion to art and literature. They resemble Russians in many respects—they are dreamy and emotional, and deeply religious. Ever since they gained national independence, the pressure of economic forces has made either the Adriatic or the Ægean the goal of all their policy. Sufficient emphasis

has already been laid on the weakness of their claims in south-east Macedonia. Even the success which attended Serbian designs in that region in 1913 was inadequate for her needs, and the arrangement concluded with Greece for commercial facilities at Salonika had been found unsatisfactory during the months between the Treaty of Bukarest and the outbreak of the European War.

The people of Bulgaria present several striking contrasts with the Serbians. They have been variously described as the Scotch, the Germans, and the Dutch of the Near East. It is generally admitted that they are distinguished by industry, prudence, love of progress, method. These qualities inspire admiration in all, liking in some. It is when we come to other national characteristics —reserve, bluntness, thrift, calculation—that we begin to differ. Perhaps no other national psychology gives rise to such violent difference of opinion. Bulgarophobes find in the Bulgar pure egoism, leading to suspiciousness, ingratitude, and brutality. The Bulgar's friends, on the other hand, detect in bluntness and phlegmatic reserve an additional proof of real feeling and honesty. They contrast these qualities with the superficiality and trickiness of more nimble-witted traders and the noisy

emotionalism of more poetic nationalists. Parsimony and suspiciousness they excuse as the product of subjection to an alien tyranny. On the surface the Bulgar is certainly unsympathetic, and he is considered unfeeling. An element of calculation and order enters into his aims and emotions. Even in matters of religion it is said that his estimate of moral progress savours too much of desire for profit. But this cast of mind is readily forgiven if affection and regard, when once bestowed, are deep and durable. The few foreigners who have seen the Bulgarian when his sympathies are put to the test have sometimes been surprised to find him deeply moved. For instance, when King Ferdinand's first wife, Princess Clementine, was carried to the grave, the population of Sofia, whose attendance at the funeral ceremonies was expected to be perfunctory, was seen, to the astonishment of the foreign diplomatists, to be dissolved in tears. It is, again, rather singular that the portrait of Mr. Gladstone, whose efforts for Bulgaria were not only in a distant land, but were unsuccessful, is quite commonly found in Bulgarian houses.

One thing is certain—that the Bulgar's neighbours, while they scoff at his brutal directness and his domestic puritanism, are

alarmed at his rapid progress in efficiency. The industrial arts have been pushed forward in a way which has brought to Bulgarians the title of the Japanese of Europe. It may be admitted that the practical Bulgarian is less poetically romantic than the Serb; but when the antagonism to Russia of many Bulgarians to-day is held to show a baseness of which a poetic disposition would not be capable, it must be recalled that till the murder of King Alexander, Serbia, now regarded as a model of loyalty to the Slav idea, was Austrophil. Bulgarians are less apt to adopt the veneer of civilization than the Rumanians, less clever than the Serbs and Greeks. It is noticeable, however, that British officials who have dealt with all these peoples find the Bulgarians the most honest of the four.

Among their most notable achievements has been their progress in education. Hardly more than a generation has passed since Bulgaria was without any educational system whatever. Until 1878 there were no schools except Greek and Turkish, and these hardly extended beyond the towns; but immediately after the liberation education was made obligatory, and a large proportion of the national revenue has been expended for this purpose. In the Turkish districts the Mohammedan schools,

equally with the Christian, are aided by the State. With regard to higher education, little would be expected of a country so young. It is therefore surprising that, even compared with Rumania and Greece, where the wealthy citizens are able to build and endow institutions, unexpected progress has been made. After the exhausting wars of 1912 and 1913 new schools on the most expensive model were pushed forward. The stranger feels, from the well-kept appearance of the schools, that education is not an exotic which is nourished with difficulty, but is deep-rooted in the mind of the people. It has about it nothing slipshod, half-hearted, or slovenly. There is hardly a peasant who cannot read and who does not habitually follow the incidents in Bulgaria's foreign relations, and as these happen to be the main feature in the political life of the country, the Bulgarian peasant appears in some ways even more educated than the average inhabitant of Western European countries.

The influence of English thought through the activity of American educationists has been immense. Long before the liberation in 1878 Bulgarians had been the first to profit by the great American institution on the Bosphorus, Robert College. Although the

national University has latterly been highly developed, and though national sentiment gives it preferential treatment, Robert College is still largely attended by the sons of influential men. A marked feature of the educated world is its devotion to English culture. The Society for the Study of English at Sofia counts some hundreds of members, and it is a unique phenomenon in Balkan life that a large audience can be collected in Sofia able to understand an English speech.

It is no doubt due to the development of education that Bulgaria is distinguished from her neighbours by her greater toleration of alien churches. Turks, Jews, and Catholics enjoy full religious liberty. Bulgaria is peculiar among Balkan countries in producing a large number of Protestants whose sincerity in adopting Western ideas creates among English and American travellers a sense of affinity not often felt in other Balkan countries. The national character of the Bulgarians is reflected in their political outlook, which is objective and realistic. They are not dominated by historical illusions like the Great Hellas which vitiates so much the politics of Greece. Bulgarian nationalism has thus not degenerated into Imperialism, and by this it gains rather than loses in intensity. Just as nationalism

has been the determining factor in Bulgarian politics from the moment of her independence, so, too, it has been the crucial issue in deciding the part she has played since 1914.

The Albanians are one of the obscurest and least known of the peoples of Europe. Their mountainous home is rarely visited by travellers; but all who venture there speak highly of the loyalty and bravery of its primitive inhabitants. The Albanians are divided into two main branches—Ghegs in the north, and Tosks in the south. Each of these consists of Mohammedans and of Christians, both Orthodox and Catholic. The three religions count approximately the same number of Albanian adherents. Tribal rivalry is intense, and blood feuds prevail everywhere. It has been said that intolerance of alien authority is the only bond that holds them together, and it is indeed certain that neither Serbia nor Greece could govern Albania except by a policy of extermination. The continuance of Albanian independence under the benevolent auspices of the League of Nations offers the best hope of preserving the many noble qualities of its people and of enabling them to contribute their share to the achievements of the human race.

PART II

THE BALKAN NATIONS DURING THE WAR

CHAPTER IV

THE CONFLICT OF POLICIES

It is not yet forgotten that a political assassination committed in the cause of Greater Serbia was the spark which set Europe ablaze in 1914, but the extent to which the more distant origins of the conflict were influenced by Balkan problems is less generally realized. This influence was exercised in two ways: first through the interplay of Balkan Nationalism with Austrian Imperialism, which has already been dealt with; and secondly through the growing interest of Germany in Near Eastern affairs.

For a decade or more previous to the war the prestige of Germany in the Near East had been increasing. German policy aimed primarily at the acquisition of economic facilities, and in particular of railway concessions. It is possible that her determination to obtain such privileges in the Ottoman Empire was dictated by political motives. Be that as it may, German diplomacy repre-

sented by Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, and German finance under the leadership of the Deutsche Bank, reigned supreme at Constantinople during the later years of Abdul Hamid II, and very soon regained their old position after a temporary eclipse in the early days of the " Young Turk " Revolution. The political ambitions of Austria and the economic designs of Germany working hand in hand rendered the *Drang nach Osten* a formidable reality.

The formation of the Balkan League in 1912 and its startling successes in the war against Turkey dealt a shrewd blow at the Central Empires, and it seemed for the moment as if the slogan " the Balkans for the Balkan peoples " had put an end to Austria's policy of *divide et impera*. The rupture between the Balkan allies, however, gave a new lease of life to Habsburg Imperialism. The separation of Serbia from Bulgaria by the driving of the former away from the Adriatic and towards Macedonia was an Austrian triumph. Austria, indeed, seems to have made up her mind to settle accounts with Serbia at the time of the second Balkan War, for Signor Giolitti has revealed the fact that enquiries were made at Rome whether Italy would agree that a *casus fœderis* had been made

out for a joint attack on Serbia. Italy replied with a refusal, and the Central Powers postponed action, doubtless because the increase in the German military forces deemed necessary in consequence of the formation of the Balkan League had not yet been carried through.

In dealing with Balkan problems the Triple Entente suffered from the disadvantage of inadequate definition both of its aims and of the conditions which held it together. It may be granted that on the side of England at least the primary object was the maintenance of peace; but since the method adopted to that end consisted in countering German policy by lending support to the alliance of France and Russia, Great Britain's interests in many spheres were subordinated to those of her partners, whose aims were not always equally pacific. This subordination of England's pacific interests to those of her partners is particularly evident in the Balkans, and the war only served to put it beyond doubt.

In spite of the blunder committed by Beaconsfield in 1878, and the fact that Sir Edward Grey had allowed the Treaty of London to be torn up within three months of its signature with merely a verbal protest, England had earned a reputation as a defender

of weak and oppressed nationalities, and being without any Balkan interests of her own to pursue, possessed the additional asset of impartiality.

Of the Entente Powers, Russia was the most vitally and directly interested in Balkan affairs. The nature of her aspirations was well known not merely to her allies and enemies, but to all Balkan States, neutral and belligerent. Russia wanted the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and the fixity of purpose with which she had striven for that aim would surely have convinced any one of average intelligence, even in the very early days of the war, that the conflict would at no very distant date be extended to Turkey. The influence which Germany wielded with the Porte made it equally certain that Turkey would range herself on the side of the Central Powers. The British seizure of the two Turkish warships under construction in England, followed by the escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* to the Bosphorus in the first month of war, placed Turkey's attitude beyond the least possibility of doubt. At the same time the permanent officials at the British Foreign Office were possessed by a fixed idea that Bulgaria and Turkey had a secret alliance. They considered that Bulgaria was already

lost, and that all efforts at Sofia were therefore hopeless. The official view was apparently that Turkey and Bulgaria could not be separated.

The criticism generally levelled at Sir Edward Grey's policy before the war took the line that it committed England to liabilities which were supposed to be limited, but the limits of which were never clearly defined to the public, to the Cabinet, or even to those Powers with whom we had " understandings." It was said that the British Foreign Secretary pursued a Continental policy without following the first rule of the game as generally conceived, which was to obtain the alliance of every Power whose military strength or strategical importance warranted such consideration. His policy involved the risk of committing England to a Continental war, but he did not prepare opinion for it at home, and only partially paved the way for it abroad. On this question the last word has not yet been said, and judgment must still be suspended. Whatever point such criticism may have, one would imagine that the mere fact of war—and of a war which found the Entente much less prepared than her enemies—would have brought home at once the necessity of enlisting on the right side every Power whose help was obtainable.

Doubtless many men shrank almost instinctively from extending the war in any direction; but when the reality of war is an accomplished fact, such sentimentalism is a source of weakness. Moreover, it was clearly beside the point in the case of the Balkan States, each one of which was only half a nation and had no hope of redeeming its kinsmen from alien rule except by war.

British statesmen should have been quick to grasp the fact that the advantages which Germany enjoyed over France by her treacherous attack on Belgium, and over Russia by her more rapid mobilization, made it essential for the Entente to strengthen its military position by gaining new allies. We think it may be assumed—with all deference to the official view—that Turkey's entry on the side of the Central Powers was from the beginning only a matter of months, and after the arrival of the German warships at Constantinople hardly more than a matter of days. But Italy and the three Balkan States, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Greece, were open to advances. Of these countries Italy was by far the strongest individually, but her active participation had no great immediate value from the strategical point of view, since the British and French

fleets were sufficiently strong to maintain the blockade of Austria and Turkey.

The weakest joint in the Central Powers' armour lay farther East. They could only turn the Turkish alliance to account by effecting a junction of forces, which was impracticable while Bulgaria barred the way; while for the Allies the imperative necessity of opening up communications with Russia made the adhesion of Bulgaria of first-class importance. Thus a glance at the map reveals that for both sides Bulgaria held the key to the situation. If she sided with the Entente, the Austro-German Oriental policy would be frustrated at a vital point; Serbia's flank would be secure; and, even apart from the advantages which would accrue from her assistance in forcing the Straits, her adhesion would at once give the Western members of the Entente easy access to their Russian ally.

The conditions upon which Bulgaria could be induced to fight for the Triple Entente were definite and limited. In general terms they amounted to a revision of the Treaties of Bukarest and Constantinople, and the substitution of a territorial settlement based on the principle of nationality. This settlement involved the absorption of Bulgarian Macedonia and Thrace, together with adequate

access to the Ægean, which would be ensured by the restoration to Bulgaria of the Drama-Serres-Kavalla district of eastern Macedonia. Bulgaria indulged in no dreams of Empire ; Constantinople was never seriously considered, and Salonika but rarely. Her ambition was rather to form a compact, homogeneous mass between the two empires of Austria and Russia—a buffer State which it would be to the interest of both to maintain.

Her experiences in 1912 and 1913 had left her with no illusions concerning the trustworthiness of diplomatic assurances. Nothing but guarantees of the most explicit kind would persuade Bulgarian politicians, soldiers and people to fight yet a third war.

Political opinion in Bulgaria was pretty evenly divided between the Entente and the Central Powers. The Radoslavoff Ministry, which came into power just before the outbreak of the second Balkan War, had sought a *rapprochement* with Austria-Hungary, but without concluding an agreement. At the elections held in October 1913 it had failed to obtain a majority—a fact which indicates the strength of the traditional friendship of the Bulgarian people for the Entente Powers. In February of the following year it was

compelled to go to the country once again, and this time, thanks to the support of the eighteen Turkish deputies elected in the recently annexed regions, it succeeded in obtaining a majority of fifteen.

The disinclination of the Entente financiers to raise a loan for the rehabilitation of Bulgarian finance threw the Government into closer intimacy with Austria and Germany, and, with the support of Count Berchtold, it successfully negotiated a loan in Berlin. It should be noted, however, that the German Government's approval of this loan was only given after it had received assurances from Greece and Rumania that they would raise no objections.

Immediately on the outbreak of the European War, tempting offers were made to induce Bulgaria to join *le bloc Austro-Allemand*. King Constantine of Greece had promised the Kaiser that Greece would remain neutral in the event of a Bulgarian attack on Serbia, while Rumania informed Sofia directly that her neutrality could be relied upon in the same circumstances. Despite their strong Austro-German leanings, King Ferdinand and M. Radoslavoff, knowing the resistance of the people and the strength of the Opposition parties, rejected these advances.

This was the opportunity for the Entente to make their bid for Bulgarian assistance by strengthening the hands of the Opposition against the Court and the Cabinet. The argument that nothing would have deterred Ferdinand from joining the Central Powers fails to take account of the well-known fact of his cowardice which rendered him incapable of standing out against public opinion unless his own security was assured. His elaborate precautions for personal safety were the object of general ridicule and an index of his subservience to popular feeling.

The sympathy and admiration of the cultured classes for France and England, the universal feeling of gratitude towards Russia, and the still active hatred of Turkey, constituted the strength of the Opposition's attitude. Their weakness lay in the fact that Bulgarian aspirations could only be realized by the acquisition of those parts of Macedonia annexed by Serbia and Greece at the Treaty of Bukarest; and Serbia was already committed to the Entente. This weakness, however, was more apparent than real. As has already been pointed out, the Treaty of Bukarest had never received the confirmation of the Entente Powers, nor were they responsible for its terms. They were therefore not precluded

from applying upon Serbia whatever pressure might be necessary to induce her to restore to Bulgaria so much of the territory which the latter had lost under the Bukarest Treaty as would ensure her adhesion to the Entente cause. Subsequent military events made such concessions desirable in the interests not merely of the Entente, but of Serbia herself.

Moreover, the Entente held in their hands a trump card of incalculable value if played at the right moment and in the right way. This was nothing less than a prospective partition of both the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires in accordance with the principles of freedom and nationality so eloquently proclaimed by their leading statesmen. Thus for the Entente it was a question not merely of winning Bulgaria by forcing Serbia to make concessions, but of inducing every Balkan State to join issue against the German-Austro-Turkish alliance for the realization of true national unity by all. The Balkan League could be re-created and a permanent settlement of the Near Eastern question achieved.

The following memorandum, submitted to the Foreign Secretary early in August 1914, summarizes the vital factors affecting British

policy at Sofia—the crux of the whole Balkan situation:—

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO SIR EDWARD GREY BY MR. NOEL BUXTON.

Assuming that H.M. Government's object is to prevent Bulgaria's adhesion to the German side, Bulgaria's peculiar point of view must be remembered.

(1) Her eyes are on her "lost provinces," and the breach between her and the three Powers which took them is very deep.

(2) Bulgarians are of calculating disposition. The possible gain from a victory of the Entente counts less than the present dangers in which Bulgaria stands from Turkish attack. A guarantee against Turkey would be the chief lever to use. Bulgarian neutrality should be attainable if H.M. Government can be explicit on this point, while offering further advantages in the event of the success of the Entente.

(3) In regard to Bulgaria, special effort is needed, because Sir H. Bax-Ironside has been openly pro-Serb.

(4) Bulgarians feel that what they have to offer is freedom for Serbia, Rumania, and Greece to take part in the war. It may be answered that Bulgaria is not able to fight, but it is very noticeable that in a recent debate in the

Sobranje all parties spoke of fighting as probably inevitable. Bulgaria has munitions to begin a war, though requiring a loan.

Assuming that H.M. Government wishes to prevent the paralysation of Serbia through a Bulgarian attack, or through the passage of Turkish armies across a neutral Bulgaria, the object in view is armed Bulgarian neutrality, giving the Entente freedom from Turkish attack and from the paralysation of Bulgaria's neighbours. It is much more than pacific neutrality.

Conditions for securing armed Bulgarian neutrality are :—

(1) Guarantee against Turkey.

(2) Assurance that England and France and Russia will continue to act together in this guarantee.

(3) Definite approach from England. English support or acquiescence in Russian proposals is not enough. The Bulgarian Ministry came into office as anti-Russian, and could not execute a *volte-face* unless the Premier could say he had not turned pro-Russian, but was siding with England.

(4) Revision of the Bukarest Treaty frontiers in the event of victory for the Entente. This must be more or less specific.

(5) A loan.

The possibilities of the situation thus created were seriously considered by the British Cabinet very shortly after the declaration of war. Several members of the Cabinet urged that the Balkan League was not an impossibility. Other ministers, however, considered it a chimera. The section which believed that the co-operation of the Balkan States was feasible declined to be satisfied with a policy of inaction, and suggested to Sir Edward Grey that Mr. Noel Buxton should be sent to Sofia, where the situation was reported to be critical. The First Lord of the Admiralty arranged for H.M.S. *Hussar* to be at Brindisi to take him on to Salonika, and wrote the following letter, which is now published by his special permission:—

Rt. Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., to Mr. Noel Buxton.

"ADMIRALTY, WHITEHALL, S.W.,
"*August* 31, 1914.

"MY DEAR BUXTON,

"It is of the utmost importance to the future prosperity of the Balkan States that they should act together. This is the hour when the metal can be cast into the mould. It is only by reclaiming from Austria territories which belong

naturally to the Balkan races that the means can be provided to satisfy the legitimate needs and aspirations of all the Balkan States. Without taking Austrian territory, there is no way by which any Balkan State can expand except by internecine war. But the application of the principle of nationality to the southern provinces of Austria will produce results so advantageous to the Balkan States that the memory and consequences of former quarrels could be assuaged for ever.

"The creation of a Balkan Confederation comprising Bulgaria, Serbia, Rumania, Montenegro, and Greece, strong enough to play an effective part in the destinies of Europe, must be the common dream of all their peoples. The result of this war is not doubtful. Sooner or later Germany will be starved and beaten. Austria will be resolved into its component parts. England has always won in the end; and Russia is unconquerable. England has been the friend of every Christian State in the Balkans during all their years of struggle and suffering. She has no interests of her own to seek in the Balkan Peninsula. But with her wealth and power she will promote and aid every step which is taken to build up a strong union of the Christian peoples, like that which triumphed in the first Balkan War. By acting together in unity and good faith the Balkan States can now play a decisive part, and gain advantages which may never again be offered. By disunion they will simply condemn themselves to tear each other's throats without profit or reward, and left

to themselves they will play an utterly futile part in the destinies of the world.

"I want you to make your friends in Greece and Bulgaria realize the brilliant but fleeting opportunity which now presents itself, and to assure them that England's might and perseverance will not be withheld from any righteous effort to secure the strength and union of the Balkan peoples.

"Yours very sincerely,

"WINSTON S. CHURCHILL."

CHAPTER V

THE DIPLOMATIC AUCTION

THE two greatest obstacles to energetic action by the Entente in Bulgaria were constituted by the attitude of the British representative at Sofia and the policy of Russia.

The British Minister at Sofia, Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, was known to be violently pro-Serbian. It was not surprising that he was spoken of as "Minister for Serbia rather than for England." His unsuitability was doubly injurious to British interests. In the first place, Bulgarian Ministers were disinclined to open pourparlers through the normal channels; and secondly, the news received by the British Foreign Office was unduly pessimistic, and, therefore, disastrously misleading. It seems strange that, at a time when Bulgaria was recognized as the crux of the situation, the opportunity should not have been taken of giving a Minister of such capacity and personal charm a more suitable post. The blame clearly rests with the Foreign Office and not

with Sir Henry Bax-Ironside. Eventually the warnings given to Sir Edward Grey from many quarters took effect, and in the spring of 1915 the Foreign Secretary recalled him and despatched Mr. O'Beirne in his place.

Russia alternated between wishing Bulgaria to fight in order to help against Turkey and to liberate Rumania for military action, and wishing her not to fight lest she should anticipate Russia in Thrace. After the war Russian Ministers did not want to find a strong Bulgaria or Rumania barring the way to Constantinople; and M. Sazonoff had, moreover, to reckon with the anti-Bulgarian campaign in the Petrograd Press, which called Bulgaria the Judas of the Slav cause. On the other hand, the Orthodox religion and affable manners of the Serbians endeared them to the aristocracy and bureaucracy which controlled Russian policy. Finally, Russia's desire to have the task of allotting Macedonia herself made her chary of giving explicit promises to Bulgaria.

To set against these difficulties was the fact that Bulgaria was not yet committed to the Central Powers. The uncertainty with which her attitude was regarded by Turkey and her allies was indicated by the attempt on the lives of Mr. N. Buxton and Mr. C. R. Buxton by a Turkish assassin on the 15th October

at Bukarest.[1] The assassin was a political enthusiast who had taken part in the Young Turk movement. Later it transpired that he was on terms of the greatest intimacy with Fetih Bey, the Turkish Minister at Sofia, who during the whole of the time was cognizant of, if not directly responsible for, the hatching of the plot. The reception of the news of the attempted assassination by the German Press, if it does not give any clue to the question of German complicity, at least indicates very forcibly the nervousness which was felt in Berlin on Bulgaria's account.[2]

[1] The assassin was condemned by a Rumanian tribunal to five years' imprisonment. He was liberated by the Germans when they overran Rumania, and subsequently became a popular figure in Turkey. He was killed by the Greeks during the disturbances at Smyrna in June 1919.

[2] The following extract from an article by Paul Block in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, reputed to be the German counterpart of *The Manchester Guardian*, will suffice to illustrate the point :—

" Out of Christianity and hatred of the Turks, Buxton did a splendid business for his fatherland, and when he snapped his mighty jaws one could hear the bones of Turkey crushed between them. A wild young Turk has shot Herr Noel Buxton in the jaw. Of course this is a deed which every civilized man must disapprove. But I cannot help myself. I rejoice that it was precisely in the mouth that this Mr. Buxton was wounded. For it was a mouth full of guile and arrogance to everything

editorialising much?

The victory of the Marne and the further check which Germany suffered at the first battle of Ypres strengthened the current of opinion favourable to the Entente in Sofia, and the entry of Turkey upon the side of the Central Powers on the 31st October, coupled with the Austrian advance in Serbia, spurred the Entente Ministers to action. Tangible proofs of an improvement in the Bulgarian Government's attitude were not wanting. The appointment of General Fitcheff as Minister for War and the changed tone of the *Echo de Bulgarie* may be quoted as instances. On the 17th November the Entente Ministers actually telegraphed to their Governments advocating a promise to Bulgaria of Macedonia up to the 1912 line and immediate occupation of the district east of the River Vardar. Three days later a reply arrived to the effect that immediate occupation was impossible, and that nothing precise could be promised. The Russian Minister was told by M. Sazonoff that vagueness should be tried first and more substantial proposals submitted at a later

that was not English, and so this shot seems to me symbolical. Your own island country has been shot through your esteemed jaw, Mr. Noel Buxton. I know that it is brutal, but with all my heart I hope that it may do you and old England good."

date. Traditional diplomacy, in fact, maintained its reputation for following the most belated, ineffective, and undignified course.

The following memorandum, submitted to Sir Edward Grey in January 1915, is given in full as a summary of the Balkan situation written at the time from personal knowledge:—

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO SIR EDWARD GREY BY MESSRS. N. AND C. R. BUXTON.

Immediate Dangers.

The uncertain attitude of Bulgaria constitutes a loss to the Entente. (*a*) It provides Rumania and Greece with a pretext for not entering into the war, so that pressure cannot be put on these Powers to induce them to move. (*b*) Serbia is compelled to keep troops on the Eastern frontier and in Macedonia, where the railway is guarded by sentries every few hundred yards. (*c*) We lose the military advantages which might be gained from the co-operation of Bulgaria herself. The three armies now inactive exceed 1,100,000 trained men.

Again, there is still a danger of Bulgaria entering the war on the other side. The situation is not secure. So lately as the end of November it was generally thought at Sofia that Bulgaria might at any moment be forced to take the side of Austria. The pressure has been removed by the successes of the Serbians, but a similar situation is likely soon to arise again.

The state of Macedonia provides a constant temptation to Bulgaria to respond to the urgent pressure of Austria and to attack Serbia.

It is sometimes thought that Rumania and Greece constitute a guarantee against a Bulgarian attack on Serbia. In our view it is highly probable that if Bulgaria made such an attack, Greece and Rumania, who have nothing further to gain at Bulgaria's expense, would consider it their interest to remain neutral. The Bulgarian army might therefore, at any moment, be free to co-operate with the Austrian armies, and to exercise a very prejudicial effect on the general military situation of the Entente by placing Berlin in direct communication with Constantinople.

Future Dangers.

Looking to the interests of peace in the future, it seems certain that those interests cannot be secured so long as the claims of Bulgaria remain entirely unsatisfied, particularly in Serbian Macedonia; Bulgaria will always have the means of creating a movement in her favour.

It is contended that the Bulgarian sentiment of the Macedonian population can be made to give way to another national sentiment in a short time. Our study of Macedonia during fifteen years past convinces us that this is untrue. It is a question, not of blood or language, but of political and ecclesiastical sympathies. A conspicuous proof of this lies in the fact that the violent persecution carried on

by Greeks and Serbs with Turkish help between 1903 and 1908 did not avail to alter the sympathies of the peasants. Another proof is, that the Bulgarians have always been ready to accept the creation of an autonomous Macedonia, confident that if the wishes of the people were consulted the government would be Bulgarian.

There is no Serbian movement in Macedonia corresponding in intensity or in persistence with the exarchist movement.

It has led numbers of Bulgarians of property and influence in Macedonia to sacrifice their position, endure long imprisonment, or devote their lives to organization in comparative poverty.

In regard to Serbian Macedonia, Serbian officials admit they have had the greatest difficulty in securing recruits and in staffing the schools, the great majority of which were previously staffed by Bulgarians.

The widespread maladministration of the Serbian officials which comes to the notice of the British and Russian consuls arises in the main from the disaffection of the population.

It may be also pointed out that to leave Macedonia under a rule which does not represent the wishes of the majority of the people is inconsistent with the declared intentions of the British Government in regard to the principle of nationality.

The above views are confirmed by the exodus of a large part of the Macedonian population into Bulgaria and also into Greece.

Again, if the war is not completely successful in the Eastern theatre, there is a danger that unsettled questions of nationality relating to all the Balkan States will lead to another war, and such complete success can hardly be secured without Bulgaria's co-operation.

Possibility of an Arrangement.

(*a*) For securing Bulgaria's friendly neutrality, so as to set Greece and Rumania free for military action.

It is held by some that the evils of the present situation are incurable. After spending four months in Rumania, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, we have come to the conclusion that this is untrue. We suggest below the terms which, while not unjust to Serbia, constitute the minimum terms on which Bulgaria could be induced to range herself on the side of the Entente, i.e. to adopt such an attitude of friendly neutrality as has been adopted by Greece. Bulgaria might, e.g., commit herself to allowing the passage of war material and troops to Serbia. Such an attitude would remove the obstacle which now tends to prevent Rumania and Greece from actively helping the Entente, and would completely liberate Serbia's forces. Bulgaria's adhesion for these purposes can, we think, be secured without dealing with Bulgaria's dispute with Rumania about the Dobrudja, or with Greece about Kavalla.

We suggest that a declaration should be made

by the Governments of the Entente in conformity with the following conditions :—

(1) The arrangement contemplated must be dictated from without. It is quite unreasonable to expect the Balkan States to settle the problem by mutual concession. None of the peoples concerned would allow their Governments to cede territory voluntarily ; but to accept the terms of the Entente is a different matter.

(2) England must take an equally prominent part with France and Russia in dictating the terms. In Bulgaria little confidence is felt in Russia or France, owing to the events of 1913.

(3) The arrangements proposed must be precise and not vague.

(4) The declaration must be communicated in substance to the leaders of the Opposition in Bulgaria.

It is suggested that the intentions of the Triple Entente should be declared on the following lines, viz., that in the event of victory by the Entente—

(1) Serbia shall receive Bosnia, Herzegovina, and access to the sea in Dalmatia.

(2) Serbia shall in that case cede to Bulgaria Macedonian territory up to the minimum secured to Bulgaria by the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912.

(*b*) For inducing Bulgaria to attack Turkey.

For this purpose it may be necessary to deal with the question of Kavalla. In any case, for a permanently peaceful settlement, this will be essential. If the transfer of Kavalla (at the end of the war) should be decided on, it should be done in conjunction with a promise of Smyrna—conditional, of course, on the victory of the Entente. A Greek Premier would represent this transaction to his Parliament as a brilliant diplomatic success for Greece.

Considerations Regarding Serbia.

It is said that Serbia is unwilling to cede territory. In reply it may be said that Serbia would not be asked to make territorial concessions voluntarily, which of course cannot be expected. Her Government would be in a position to say to the Skupshtina that it was merely accepting the terms imposed by Russia and her allies.

The strong objection felt in Serbia to any concession arises from the general belief that the proposed arrangement involves precise promises to Bulgaria without correspondingly precise promises to Serbia. But we have found many Serbs ready to admit that it is to Serbia's advantage to obtain promises from the Entente, and that it is worth while to concur in promises to Bulgaria in order to make their own future more secure. Many leading Serbs feel that it is more true to Serbia's traditions to keep her eyes on the glories of a United Serbia (as indicated in M. Passich's recent declaration) than to sacrifice the latter for a part of Macedonia.

Serbian access to the sea, as suggested above, does not clash with any claim seriously advanced on the part of Italy.

The view is widely held that large concessions must be made. A prominent Foreign Office official, for instance, said to us privately that the Ishtib and Kochana district represented the "minimum" that would have to be ceded to Bulgaria.

They do not deny that the interests of the Entente must be considered, because Serbia would have been annihilated without Russia's aid, and that the Entente's interest ought not to be sacrificed by Serbia's opposition to an arrangement.

It is alleged that the Serbian army would be chilled, and has in fact been chilled, by the prospect of pressure from the Entente. The recent victories prove that this was not the case, but in any case a scheme which helped to bring in Rumania to the aid of Serbia, and which removed the danger coming from Bulgaria, would be the best service to the Serbian army.

It is questionable whether the recruitment in Macedonia has not been, on the whole, a source of weakness rather than of strength to Serbia. It is significant that the argument from sentiment, of which so much has been made in England, viz., the view that an ally ought not to be asked during the war to make any concessions, was never insisted upon, or even raised, by Serbians in conversation with us. It is admitted by Serbs that in the critical stages of a war considerations

of a sentimental kind must give way to practical necessities.

The interests of Serbia, rightly viewed, are bound up in the success of the Entente as a whole. The question is indeed sometimes asked by Serbians: "Why should Serbia be called upon to make concessions, when no similar demand is made on Greece or Rumania?" The answer is that Bulgaria's adhesion can be obtained without touching the relations of Greece and Rumania. It is a simple question of military necessity.

Considerations Regarding Greece.

The Greek Government objects to any cession of Serbian Macedonia to Bulgaria. Its point of view is that this would involve a strengthening of Bulgaria without any corresponding strengthening of Greece. Alone of the Balkan States, Greece adheres rigidly to the Treaty of Bukarest, which she regards as enshrining the principle of the equilibrium. She even blames Rumania for concurring in Serbia's willingness to concede and for regarding the Treaty as superseded.

The objections of Greece are, to this extent, well founded, that Greece herself has not yet obtained any guarantee of further expansion; her objections in this respect are similar to those of Serbia and Rumania, but her politics are not governed by the same broad outlook as those of Serbia. There is a reaction from the former ideal of uniting the Greeks of Asia Minor in "Megale Hellas," which is due

largely to the cost of the recent wars. The question of the Asiatic Greeks is looked upon as a problem which it will require another war to solve. The present opportunity is viewed as "coming too soon." King Constantine expresses the hope for a more convenient war in the near future. The outlook of Greek politicians is limited for the present to Balkan States within their present frontier, and this being the case it is natural that they should regard any accession of territory to Bulgaria as involving risks of making Bulgaria too strong. In a true view of the probable future of the Balkan States it must be realized that Serbia may well have a population of 10,000,000, Rumania 10,000,000, Greece 8,000,000, and Bulgaria only 5,000,000. Yet M. Venizelos states that his opposition to concessions is based on the balance of numbers.

With regard to the immediate strategic danger involved in the Bulgarian occupation of Monastir, a continuance of the present Serbian occupation might be no less dangerous. So long as Serbia remains at Monastir she has a motive for coveting Salonika. Balkan alliances are short-lived. There is already friction between Greece and Serbia. It is always possible that Serbia and Bulgaria might form an alliance against Greece with a view to taking Salonika and Kavalla respectively. Greeks in the highest position already contemplate this possibility.

In the case of Greece there is a general belief that her present frontiers with Bulgaria will be recognized whether she assists the Entente or not. There

is, therefore, no motive for removing the friction with Bulgaria, while the maintenance of the friction provides an excuse for not going to war.

The true solution of the problem of Balkan unity, so far as Greece is concerned, would seem to lie in encouraging Greece to look for expansion outside the Balkan Peninsula, and in promising to her definite acquisitions in Asia Minor. The objection of the Greek Government, as M. Venizelos admits, has been based on the assumption that the territorial problem is limited to European soil. An essential factor in a scheme for the establishment of ultimate unity in the Balkans is the recognition and definition of Greek claims in Asia. M. Venizelos explicitly stated, in confidence, that his objection to Serbian concessions is due to his fear of Bulgarian superiority in military strength, and chiefly in point of population. He said that if Thrace were not ceded to Bulgaria he had no objections to Serbian concessions in Serbian Macedonia ; while if Greece was assured of accessions in Asia he would view the question of Bulgarian accessions, both in Serbian Macedonia and in Thrace, in an entirely new light.

Greek claims in the vilayet of Smyrna do not clash with those of Italy, which refer to Adalia and the Dodecanese.

Considerations Regarding Bulgaria.

It is said that Bulgaria would not accept the proposals made.

It is true that the Radoslavoff Government came

into office as an Austrophil Government, and that the King is regarded as having Austrian sympathies. But the position of the Government is very unstable, depending on a majority of fifteen, and its supersession by an opposition or a coalition Government without a General Election is an admitted possibility.

The elements in the country which would support a pro-Entente policy are very powerful. Popular feeling for Russia as the liberator of Bulgaria, and for England as her subsequent protector, is extremely strong. The Opposition *bloc* is well organized, and contains many more men of high standing than the Government party. The only weakness of the Opposition in their strenuous efforts to promote a pro-Entente policy has been that they could not point to any precise advantage in territorial compensation which such a policy would bring. If they could point to a promise of the Treaty of 1912 line, it is certain that the hands of the Government would be forced. There is no proof of definite engagements between Bulgaria and Austria; on the contrary, M. Radoslavoff has studiously left the way open for a change of front.

It is important to realize the great effect produced on public opinion by the events of last year, when Bulgaria, whether owing to her own fault or not, was attacked by four enemies at once, and when the Treaty of London, the Protocol of Petrograd, and the Treaty with Serbia of 1912 were all contravened. There is a general want of faith in diplomatic engagements, and a feeling that Bulgaria's

just claim involves an extension of her present territory on four frontiers. But in dealing with Bulgarians we have, of course, endeavoured to minimize this claim to the utmost, and in our suggestions have put forward the minimum terms for which the adhesion of Bulgaria can be secured.

General Objections.

The main objections raised to the policy of a simple declaration of the terms of the Entente and of definite promises are—

(1) That Serbia might be disheartened, or even make terms with Austria, and that Greece might refuse to give military aid when called upon.

The real test of the soundness of this objection is not what a Prime Minister says at a time when he is holding out for the highest terms, but what statement he would be able to make to his own people. The points which could be made in such statements are indicated above, in our notes on Serbia and Greece respectively.

(2) That it savours of absurdity to promise territory which we have not yet acquired.

This objection has already been overruled, since territorial promises have been made both to Serbia and Bulgaria.

Germany and Austria have already made definite

promises, and these are not regarded as absurd, their conditional character being understood.

(3) That the declaration suggested might not at once secure Bulgaria's adhesion.

This objection might appropriately be raised in time of peace, but the grave issues at stake, involving one of the largest factors in the conduct of the war, necessitate the taking of some degree of risk. The present situation is very dangerous, and it is a question of balancing one risk against another.

Apart from Russia's vacillating attitude, the failure of the Entente to press home its efforts to obtain Bulgarian co-operation in November 1914 seems to have been due principally to the fear of alienating Serbia and Greece. The inference is that the Balkan question had never been envisaged as a whole.

Indeed, so late as December 1914 the Greek Government was allowed to remain under the impression that there was no prospect of territorial compensations for Greece in Asia Minor. Soon afterwards, M. Venizelos raised the subject with the British Minister, and in January 1915 an offer of the Smyrna district was made. The Entente's assumption that Greece would be alienated if the concession of Kavalla to Bulgaria were insisted upon

now proved to be unfounded. M. Venizelos actually made this proposal, although under no pressure from the Entente, and his inability to plead *force majeure* contributed very largely to his downfall in the spring of 1915.[1]

During March and April, at dinners arranged

[1] On the 11th January 1915 M. Venizelos wrote to King Constantine: "We ought before all to withdraw our objections to concessions on the part of Serbia to Bulgaria, even if such concessions extend beyond the right bank of the Vardar. But if these are not sufficient to induce Bulgaria to co-operate with her former allies, or at least to maintain a benevolent neutrality towards them, I should not hesitate—painful though the necessity would be—to advise the sacrifice of Kavalla to save Hellenism in Turkey and to assure the creation of a really great Greece, including almost all the regions where Hellenism has held sway during its long history through the ages." Six days later he wrote again to the King: "The cession of Kavalla is indeed a very painful sacrifice. . . . But I do not hesitate to propose it when I consider the national compensations which would be assured to us by this sacrifice. I am of the opinion that the concessions in Asia Minor, upon which Sir Edward Grey has made overtures to us, would assume—especially if we made sacrifices to Bulgaria—such an extent that a Greece as great and certainly not poorer would be added to the Greece already doubled by two victorious wars." M. Zographos, Greek Foreign Minister, stated the case of the anti-Venizelos party in an interview accorded to *Le Petit Parisien* and reported in *The Times*, 19th April 1915: "I am of the opinion that a people should in no circumstances barter its patrimony or *voluntarily* abandon an inch of its territory." (Authors' italics.)

by a third party, unofficial conversations took place between the Bulgarian Minister in London and an important member of the Cabinet who had taken a prominent part in advocating energetic action in 1914. In April, as a result of these communications, the Bulgarian representative was invited by the Minister in question to telegraph to his Government an attractive proposal, which was undoubtedly adequate for obtaining Bulgaria's adhesion. When the Bulgarian Government replied making a request for a definite statement of the Entente's intentions and saying that it would then come to a decision, the proposal was not adhered to by the Cabinet, and after a long delay a cold answer was returned. Such an experience was enough to discredit and discourage the pro-Entente parties at Sofia, and it is perhaps, even by itself, a sufficient answer to the charge that Bulgaria had no justification for mistrusting the Allies.

The success of the Russian army in the Carpathians about this time made a strong impression on the Bulgarian Government, which began to contemplate the possibility of immediate adhesion to the Entente. The launching of the Dardanelles expedition and the knowledge that Italy's entry into the

war was imminent added to its anxiety. Throughout this period M. Radoslavoff promised the Opposition that he would join the Entente Powers as soon as he received satisfactory proposals.

The breach of the Russian line at Dunajetz and the check sustained by the Dardanelles expedition at last provoked the Entente to fresh overtures to Bulgaria through the official channel. On the 29th May the four Entente Powers (Italy was now included) despatched a Note to the Bulgarian Government to which it made the following declarations if Bulgaria agreed to attack Turkey :—

" (1) The Allied Powers agree to the immediate occupation by Bulgaria of Thrace up to the Enos-Midia line, which shall become Bulgarian territory.

" (2) The Allied Powers guarantee to Bulgaria at the end of the war possession of the part of Macedonia, limited on the north and west by the line Egri-Palanka, Sopot on the Vardar, and Ochrida, including the towns of Egri-Palanka, Ochrida, and Monastir, and on the south and east by the present Serbo-Greek and Serbo-Bul-

garian frontiers. This promise is subject to the following conditions :—

" (*a*) Serbia shall receive equitable compensation in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and on the Adriatic coast.

" (*b*) Bulgaria shall make no attempt to occupy any part of the above-mentioned territory until the conclusion of peace.

" (3) The Allied Powers pledge themselves to use all their efforts with the Hellenic Government in order to assure the cession of Kavalla to Bulgaria. The Allied Powers needing for this purpose to be in a position to offer Greece equitable compensations in Asia Minor, the Bulgarian army must go into action against Turkey.

" (4) The Allied Powers are disposed to look with favour upon the negotiations which Bulgaria and Rumania may desire to open for the settlement of the question of the Dobrudja.

" (5) The Allied Powers pledge themselves finally to give to Bulgaria all the financial assistance which she may require."

These proposals marked a considerable advance. They embraced the Bulgarian question in all its aspects and made some approach to a territorial settlement on the principle of nationality, but they were afflicted with the disease which is often congenital in the offspring of diplomacy—vagueness and indecision at every critical point where the opposite was required.

The Bulgarian Government was being asked to do something of a very definite character, and it replied by requesting the Entente to state precisely the extent to which the compensation promised to Serbia and Greece would have to be realized before Bulgaria's aspirations as regards Macedonia and Kavalla could be satisfied. It also enquired the views of the Entente concerning the principles of the settlement of the Dobrudjan question which it desired to promote between Bulgaria and Rumania. The Bulgarian reply was dated the 14th June 1915; up to the 3rd August no answer had been returned. The outcry of the Serbian chauvinists discouraged the Entente, and nothing further was done to meet Bulgaria's demands.

After this date King Ferdinand and M. Radoslavoff veered to the side of the Central Powers, but the temper of public opinion was

still so predominantly pro-Entente that they did not dare to commit themselves until the 6th September 1915. The general mobilization of the army which followed on the 21st September was only effected by the assiduous dissemination of the report that Bulgarian neutrality was threatened by the prospect of an Austro-German advance across Serbia towards Constantinople. Mr. O'Beirne, who was appointed British Minister at Sofia in the spring of 1915, and whose tragic loss with Lord Kitchener was such a heavy one to the diplomatic service, insisted that Bulgaria's final decision to fight against the Allies was only taken when Russia presented an ultimatum on the 4th October summoning her to break off relations with the Central Powers within twenty-four hours. On the following day the Allied troops landed at Salonika; and on the 7th October, Bulgaria's reply being deemed unsatisfactory, diplomatic relations were severed.

CHAPTER VI

THE RESULTS OF "MUDDLING THROUGH"

THE salient features of the Entente's policy —or lack of policy—in the Balkans down to the autumn of 1915 may now be summarized.

When the war began, the eyes of England and France were naturally focused on the Western theatre. It was only after many months that interest began to be aroused by the exploits and sufferings of Serbia. It was evident from the first to those familiar with the Near East that Serbian aspirations could only be permanently realized if the Balkan States worked together, and that events would thwart Sir Edward Grey's policy of keeping them out of the war because one of Germany's main objects was to establish a corridor through the Balkans to the East. The Allies held the trump cards, for the best opportunity for every Balkan State to achieve its unification lay in help from the Allies at the expense of Turkey and Austria. With difficulty mutual

agreement might have been arranged among the States lately engaged in bitterest strife; at the least, a fair scheme of claims based on the wishes of the population, if held out as a reward by the Entente Powers with an appearance of sincerity and with definite undertakings, would have had irresistible attraction not only for Bulgaria, but also for Greece and Rumania.

The so-called "pro-Bulgars," far from being deceived by Bulgaria, insisted that, although Bulgaria might be won, she would, if not fairly treated, try to get her rights from the other side. Allied diplomacy, however, thought such action too difficult. It exerted no comprehensive activity, but at intervals made isolated efforts to please one State or another by promises, some of which proved only contradictory and embarrassing to action in another direction demanded by circumstances a little later. Such sympathy as existed in England took spasmodic and antagonistic forms. The school which desired to see the whole matter dealt with as of vital importance, and as requiring the recognition of the rights of Bulgaria, because through her geographical position and military strength she held the key to the situation, had to contend with the unthinking excitement of "pro-

Serbian " feeling, which tended merely to the blind adoption of the point of view of one Balkan State alone. The peculiar tragedy lay in the fact that this undoubtedly altruistic passion actually prevented the salvation of Serbia herself—the very country which it desired to save. The Foreign Office, though warned repeatedly of the certainty that Bulgaria, if not dealt with by the Entente, would be forced to resort to Germany with disastrous results for Serbia, hesitated under the influence of rival pressures, and sought safety in not committing itself to either policy, thus irritating both sides at once.

The entry of Bulgaria into the ranks of the Central Powers was a decisive event in the history of the war. From the diplomatic point of view it reflected nothing but discredit upon the Allies, a discredit which is only very partially extenuated by the difficulties of co-ordinating the policies of London, Paris, Petrograd, and Rome. The idea that Bulgaria was from the first committed to our enemies led to a policy of conciliating King Constantine of Greece and his faction, with the result that M. Venizelos' plan of buying Bulgaria by ceding Kavalla was made to appear a treasonable proposal, a proposal to give up the soil of Greece without necessity. M.

Venizelos saw the Balkan problem as a whole, but the Entente would not help him through by dictating a settlement. Thus the great statesman of modern Greece was driven into exile, and King Constantine's policy of treacherously harassing the Allies was given a further lease of life. If we look at the question as a matter of loyalty to our friends, we shall have to admit that as large a section of opinion was unfriendly to us in Greece as in Bulgaria. The idea that Greece should be conciliated rather than Bulgaria with a view to getting Greek help in forcing the Dardanelles could never have been tolerated for a moment if any attempt had been made to co-ordinate diplomacy and strategy. The sentimental argument, however, was mainly founded on the assumption that the so-called pro-Bulgarian policy was anti-Serbian. The true fact of the case is that it was the only real method of helping Serbia immediately and effectively. It was largely a question whether Serbia should be flattered or benefited, and those who knew the Serbians and invited sympathy for them years before their new and noisy advocates, desired to see Serbia not flattered by promises, but saved by deeds.

From a military point of view the failure of the Allied diplomacy in the Balkans was

a disaster of the first magnitude. The defection of Bulgaria sealed the doom of the Dardanelles Expedition, and left Serbia without help from her Allies against the great Austro-German drive in the autumn of 1915. It gave the Central Empires control of the corridor to the East and enabled German munitions and German officers to be despatched to the assistance of the Turkish forces in Palestine and Mesopotamia. Most decisive of all, it put an end to every hope of opening up communications between Russia and her Western Allies.

There is little value now in speculating to what extent command of the route from the Ægean to the Black Sea would have influenced the course of the war on the Eastern front. It is at least possible, however, that the Allies could have supplied arms, munitions, and equipment in quantities which would have maintained the fighting efficiency of the Russian army. It is even just conceivable that in such circumstances the Russian Revolution would not have occurred as soon as it did —perhaps not at all. One thing, however, is incontrovertible—if Bulgaria had been gained for the Entente in the autumn of 1915 the war could not have lasted for three years longer.

In the Balkans lay the Entente's sole opportunity of an early and crushing victory. The importance of seizing it at once and turning it to good account was urged repeatedly by statesmen and politicians, soldiers and publicists, whose only common aim was speedy victory. Mr. Lloyd George in England and M. Miliukoff, one of the leaders of the Cadet party in Russia, strove their utmost to stimulate energetic diplomatic action for the purpose of bringing Bulgaria in on the side of the Entente. Journalists of the calibre of Mr. J. L. Garvin, editor of the *Observer*, added their support. The efforts of these influential authorities were not altogether relaxed even after Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers.[1]

[1] Mr. Garvin's attitude is clearly indicated by the following letter :—

Mr. J. L. Garvin to Mr. Noel Buxton.

"*Observer* Office,
9th December, 1915.

"Dear Buxton,

". . . I am most firmly of the view that a strong and wise foreign policy, supported by equivalent military action, could secure Bulgaria even yet without prejudice in any respect to the honour and existing engagements of the Allies.

"Yours sincerely,
"J. L. Garvin."

The question of detaching Bulgaria from the enemy *bloc* first arose in a practical form in August 1916. It was then decided by the Allies that, whether the Bulgarian advances were genuine or not, it was preferable to reject them and to continue the policy of cutting the German corridor by military pressure in the hope of joining up with the Russian armies.

The proposal that an attempt should be made to break up the alliance of the Central Powers took a new complexion as a result of the change of policy in Russia which followed the revolution of March 1917. M. Miliukoff, who had become Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, allowed his view that efforts should be made to detach Bulgaria to be known even in public, and the Bulgarian Government, to the disgust of the Germans, permitted it to appear in the Bulgarian Press. In France, too, detachment was being fully discussed at the time. In *La Victoire*, for instance, M. Gustave Hervé kept urging the point ever since the Russian crisis. Mr. Bonar Law, in the House of Commons on the 14th May, stated that "no blow would seem so fatal to the Germans as the detachment of one of their Allies." Thus public feeling in the Entente countries was beginning to look

favourably upon the idea of inducing Bulgaria to break with Germany, the real enemy.

The military advantages to be derived from the successful execution of the scheme are obvious. The corridor to the East would be cut and Turkey would become comparatively helpless ; the situation of our forces at Salonika and in Palestine and Mesopotamia would be enormously strengthened. The advantages in regard to tonnage, transport, and the submarine problem in general, which had now reached an acute stage, are sufficiently evident. Last, and not least, the defection of Bulgaria from her Allies would provide an opportunity, if a belated one, of retrieving the failure of the Dardanelles expedition ; and Russia might still be saved.

Many reasons could be urged in support of the view that Bulgaria would be disposed to consider the proposal. Whatever other considerations may have weighed with King Ferdinand and his advisers in taking up arms on the side of the Central Powers, the nation thought of nothing but Macedonia. Indeed, Mr. J. D. Bourchier, the late *Times* correspondent in the Balkans, whose knowledge of the peoples and politics of the Near East is almost unique, stated that "unquestionably the bulk of the community would have pre-

ferred to effect the liberation of the kindred race with the aid of Russia and the Western Powers." In his view, and he was in Sofia when Bulgaria entered the war, it was only by maintaining martial law and a vigorous Press censorship, while encouraging an active German propaganda and winking at a liberal distribution of German gold among the politicians and the Macedonians, that the party in power succeeded in stifling the views of the people, and in spreading the belief that Macedonia could only be rescued with the aid of the Central Powers. By the spring of 1917 Bulgaria had gained everything in Macedonia she desired. There was no conceivable inducement for her to continue the war for the advancement of the German Oriental policy, the success of which would reduce her to the undignified position of a corridor State. If she could be assured that the victory of the Entente would not entail the restoration of Macedonia to alien rule, there was good ground for believing that she might be induced to desert the Central Powers. The latter could never give her the Enos-Midia line, and, indeed, it has even been said that many Bulgarians suspected a secret pact between Germany and the Porte for the restitution of the Maritza valley to Turkey. More-

over, in view of the command of the sea enjoyed by the Entente it was a practical impossibility that Bulgaria could ever obtain Kavalla without their consent.

Influenced by these considerations, and in particular by the changed attitude of the new Russian Government, the Entente initiated informal conversations with the representatives of Bulgaria in Switzerland during the early summer of 1917. The causes which made them ineffective still remain obscure. It may be that the Western Powers only undertook them at the instance of M. Miliukoff, and that the downfall of the Government of which he was a member left them free to follow their own policy. The soundness of this explanation, however, is open to question. It would be more reasonable to suppose that the military collapse of Russia would have stimulated rather than hindered the attempt to break up the hostile alliance. Perhaps a more probable explanation is that the diplomacy of the Entente was still spasmodic and uncoordinated, and that it had not been decided whether the detachment policy should be concentrated upon Bulgaria or upon Austria-Hungary.

Opposition to the policy of detachment consisted usually in the assertion that Bulgaria

could not be induced to forsake Germany until the latter was beaten. The course of the war in its latter stages established the fallacy of this contention, for Bulgaria had to admit defeat and accept an armistice dictated by the Allies while the military fate of Germany was still hanging in the balance.

PART III

THE BALKANS AND THE FUTURE

CHAPTER VII

THE TERRITORIAL ASPECT OF A LASTING SETTLEMENT

ANY Balkan settlement, conceived as a whole, can only follow one of two alternative general outlines. It may be based either on the distribution of the spoils of war among the Balkan States which have supported the Allies, or on the recognition of the right of the inhabitants of disputed areas to determine their own destinies. If the problem is regarded from the point of view of lasting peace in the Balkans and in Europe, the considerations which should count most in determining the choice are practically self-evident.

The Allies, and especially Great Britain and the United States of America, consistently placed the rights of small nationalities in the forefront of their war-aims. During the armistice negotiations they explicitly adopted nationality and self-determination as the guiding principles of the final settlement. In

some quarters, however, it is still urged that Bulgaria must be punished for her "treachery." Those who employ this argument shut their eyes to the fact that it was the shortcomings of Allied diplomacy which enabled Germany and Austria to turn to their own ends the burning desire of Bulgarians to redress the universally admitted injustices of the Treaty of Bukarest, by which regions known to be Bulgarian in sympathy were subjected to Greece and Rumania, and on a still larger scale to Serbia. Any punishment which might be meted out by the Allies would fall, not upon the Bulgarians, whose Government was persuaded to fight against us, but upon Macedonians and Dobrudjans, whose only crime is their desire to be included in the Bulgarian State. Bulgarian resentment against Serbia and Greece would be perpetuated, and would lead to a *rapprochement* with Italy, whose designs in Dalmatia, Southern Albania, and Asia Minor conflict with Serbian and Greek ambitions. The dependence of Greece upon French capital would bring that country into close political relations with France, while Serbia and Rumania would gravitate in the same direction owing to their possession of territory inhabited by people of Bulgarian nationality. A new

" balance of power " of this kind would be as great a danger to the peace of Europe in the future as Austro-Russian rivalry was in the past. There would still be troubled waters in which the Central Powers could fish.[1]

The objection that Bulgaria must be punished because she fought against the Allies will not bear examination. More than 6,000 sentences of death, pronounced and executed by military courts-martial during the war, bear witness to the pro-Entente sympathies of the Bulgarian people and the intensity of their hatred at being compelled to fight on the side of their ancient oppressors against Russia and the democracies of Western Europe. An American journalist, who is able to regard these events with an unbiassed mind, states the case against merely vindictive punishment with telling force. " The attitude of Bulgaria in 1915 is often compared with that of Greece in 1917, and it is asked why the Bulgarians did not get rid of their King as the Greeks did." He points out that MM. Gueshoff and Liaptcheff, leaders of the Bulgarian Opposition, pressed for the landing of an Allied force at Salonika, but were not listened to. He continues: " But for the Allied blockade and

[1] See Mr. H. N. Brailsford's article, " The Balance in the Balkans " (*International Review*, February 1919).

the geographical position of Greece, which allowed M. Venizelos to play the part he did, Constantine would have accomplished in Greece exactly what Ferdinand accomplished in Bulgaria—the more certainly since Constantine had the majority of the Greek people behind him, whilst the majority of the Bulgarian people were opposed to Ferdinand's policy. Hundreds of thousands of Poles, Tchecho-Slovaks, and Jugo-Slavs were compelled to fight for the Central Powers. Rumania herself concluded peace with them. Must Rumania be punished for the policy of Marghiloman? Many thousands of Polish patriots welcomed the Central Powers as liberators of their country; Poland is not to be punished for it. Are the Bulgarian people alone to be singled out for punishment on account of the policy of their King?"

History has shown that nationalism in the Balkans cannot be suppressed. A settlement which disposes of living people as "chattels," contrary to the wishes of the majority, is bound to be temporary. The configuration of the country in the most hotly disputed region, Macedonia, makes the complete suppression of armed bands a task beyond the physical capacity of any alien government, however efficient. Political assassinations,

sporadic revolts and open war would follow in inevitable sequence. Left to themselves, the Balkan States will undoubtedly impose another Treaty of Bukarest. It rests, therefore, with the Western European Powers to decide whether the settlement is to be a peace of justice or of revenge. Will they rise to a sense of their great responsibility or will the short-sighted self-seeking which prevailed in 1878 prevail once more? A settlement based on nationality and self-determination, with adequate provision of economic safeguards where necessary, is the only hope of establishing permanent peace in the Near East.

Owing to the inextricable interlacing of the various nationalities in many parts of the Peninsula, the difficulties in the way of the application of these principles are very great, although not insuperable. All that can be hoped of any frontier is that it will leave a minimum of grievances on both sides. But it is important that further adjustments on ethnographical lines should be made by means of a scheme for transmigration under the direct auspices of the League of Nations. Just as in other parts of Europe recourse has been had to the League for the settlement of critical problems turning mainly upon the control of transport routes and ports, so in

the Balkans it must be called in to devise and execute a sorting out of nationalities. The collapse of Turkish dominion in Europe, which renders this need most urgent, provides at the same time a unique opportunity for meeting it. Clearly the Balkan States themselves are too much divided to be able to carry out any transmigration scheme except under the immediate control of the League. M. Venizelos has often expressed his enthusiasm for such a scheme.

Whatever facilities are devised for encouraging emigration and however well the frontiers are drawn, small and scattered groups of alien nationality will perforce be left in almost every Balkan State. Adequate protection for these national minorities must be incorporated in the peace treaties by means of international guarantees for their religious, educational, and political freedom, under the sanction of the League of Nations.

The disinterested application of the principle of nationality would bring to those Balkan States which have supported the Allies accessions of territory equal to their digestions, if not to their appetites.

Serbia has already merged with Montenegro, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia to form a compact Jugo-Slav State

with an excellent Adriatic seaboard from Fiume to Dulcigno. It also includes the preponderantly Serbian districts of the Banat.

Rumania has incorporated the kindred province of Bessarabia, filched from her by Imperial Russia in 1878. On the principle of nationality she will gain in addition Transylvania and the greater part of the Banat and the Bukovina.

Greece would obtain all the islands, including Cyprus, and considerable portions of western Asia Minor, including the important town of Smyrna.

The effect of these acquisitions would be to give Rumania a population of about 14,000,000, Jugo-Slavia of about 12,000,000, and Greece of about 8,000,000.

Albania, the one Balkan State which has not been a belligerent, would retain its frontiers as drawn in 1913, subject only to such alterations as an impartial Boundary Commission might find desirable. Probably only two noteworthy changes would be required: the towns and districts of Dibra (in the Contested Zone of 1913) and of Ipek and Diakovo (assigned to Montenegro in 1913) would perhaps be included in Albania.

The Dobrudja, Macedonia, and the remnant of Turkey in Europe remain to be dealt with.

The Dobrudja is peopled by Turks, Tatars, and Bulgarians, with a proportion of Rumanian colonists introduced since 1878. The region seems too small for autonomy, and there is a strong nationalistic movement among its Bulgarian inhabitants. Since Rumania has now incorporated the kindred province of Bessarabia with its excellent port, Akerman, and since Russian control of the lower Danube is at an end, there is no good ground for denying to the Dobrudjans the opportunity of deciding their own fate by means of a plebiscite conducted by an impartial international commission. If they voted for incorporation in Bulgaria, provision should be made for the purchase from Rumania of the harbour works and railways of Constanza, subject to guarantees of equality of treatment for Rumanian trade. A still better solution, if feasible, would be to place Constanza under international control.

The ideal solution of the problem presented by Macedonia can only be reached by a plebiscite conducted by an impartial international commission over the whole of the historical province of Macedonia. The Bulgarian sympathies of the mass of the Macedonian population are apparent to every enquiring traveller. The parts of Macedonia

assigned to Greece and Serbia by the Treaty of Bukarest are unquestionably not theirs on grounds of nationality, and ought to be assigned solely on the results of a plebiscite. The plebiscite would allow the frontiers of Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria in Macedonia to be drawn with the maximum of justice to all parties. The proposals in the treaty with Germany regarding northern Schleswig and a part of East Prussia constitute an important precedent in favour of such a settlement. If, however, the frontiers are to be decided without a plebiscite, it is most important that the evidence should be taken of disinterested witnesses with first-hand knowledge such as Sir Arthur Evans, Mr. J. D. Bourchier, Mr. H. N. Brailsford, Dr. G. B. Washburn, and the American missionaries in Macedonia.

Alternatively, Macedonia should be granted complete autonomy under the League of Nations.

Kavalla and Salonika have an importance as ports which overrides the wishes of their very mixed populations. In both cases the hinterland is mainly Bulgarian, and if the frontier is drawn so as to cut them off from it, they are wasted as ports, as was the case after the Treaty of Bukarest. Unless Kavalla is given to Bulgaria, President Wilson's prin-

ciple of freedom of access to the sea will be infringed. Salonika would have an adequate hinterland either as a port of the complete Bulgaria or as the capital of an autonomous Macedonia. Its European importance on one of the routes to the East renders some measure of international control eminently desirable. To cut Bulgaria off from the Ægean would be to play into the hands of the Central Powers,[1] and to hamper British trade with the richest and most industrious of the Balkan countries.

Since Russia has renounced the secret treaty by which the Allies, fearing that she would make a separate peace, agreed to her acquiring Constantinople, it is generally admitted that the part of Thrace east of the Enos-Midia line, together with a strip of Asia Minor from the Ægean to the Black Sea, should be placed under international control with guarantees of complete freedom for the commerce of the world. If the only completely disinterested Power—America—is averse from accepting a mandate for this territory, the most satisfactory solution would probably be to place it under the direct administration of the League of Nations.

The desirability of assigning Thrace up to

[1] See p. 38.

the Enos-Midia line to Bulgaria was admitted in 1913 by M. Venizelos, who thereby showed his appreciation of the fact that the Greek colonies in the centres of commerce in that region are too weak and too scattered to justify annexation by Greece. This arrangement was approved by all the Great Powers, but the outbreak of the second Balkan War prevented its execution. For ethnological and economic reasons it is to be hoped that this recent European decision will now be put into execution.

A settlement of the kind just outlined is essential for the stabilization of Balkan affairs. Although it would demand the renunciation of certain Greek, Serbian, and Rumanian ambitions which have no ethnological justification, it would apportion to those States—and to Albania as well—all the territory to which they are properly entitled, and give to the peoples of the Peninsula an opportunity they have never yet enjoyed of growing to their full stature as members of the comity of nations.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BALKANS AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

THE adoption of the League of Nations Covenant by the Powers assembled in conference to determine the conditions of peace marks an epoch in the progress of internationalism. This is not the place to discuss the numerous criticisms with which the Covenant has been assailed by different schools of political thought, but the diplomatic history of the war in the Balkans has at least one direct bearing upon the question whether the League constitutes a real advance in international relationships. The series of failures recorded by Allied diplomacy in dealing with the Balkan problems was due at bottom to the traditions of short-sighted circumspection which weighs small risks and ignores great ones, and of unwillingness to risk rebuff however slight, ingrained in time of peace. No one who has any direct knowledge of the methods and outlook of the European chan-

celleries, of the network of red-tape with which officialdom is surrounded, and of the jolts and jars with which the diplomatic machinery moves whenever action has to be taken, can doubt the importance of the creation of the League.

However excellent may be the Near Eastern settlement which is now being drafted, its permanence will depend as much upon the measure of co-operation which it initiates among the Balkan States as upon the satisfaction which it gives to legitimate national aspirations. For some time, if not for ever, the struggle between Russia and the Teutonic Powers for Balkan hegemony is at an end. But the immediate decision which the Balkan States themselves have to make is between the perpetuation of the same evil by assisting or opposing French and Italian Imperialism and the development of co-operation one with another, aiming ultimately perhaps at some form of federation which will enable them to live, not merely in harmony together, but on terms of equality with the Great Powers themselves. If territorial questions are settled on the principle of nationality and self-determination, a Balkan Federation becomes possible. The advantages which the Balkan nations would derive from its establishment

are too obvious to need elucidation, while the benefits which would accrue to the other European Powers from the promulgation of a Monroe doctrine for the Peninsula are equally undeniable.

It seems perhaps absurdly optimistic to plead the cause of a Balkan Federation while the echo of guns is still sounding in our ears, but even the despised Balkan peoples cannot live by war alone. Since 1914 all of them have suffered heavily—some more heavily in proportion than any of the Great Powers. At the peace the majority obtain new territories which will tax all their energies to organize and administer. Concord and co-operation alone will enable them to restore the arts of peace and rebuild the shattered fabric of their political, social, and economic institutions. The Great Powers, faced by similar conditions, have realized the necessity of co-operating and have established the League of Nations. Is it, then, too much to expect from the peoples of the Balkans a similar breadth of view, and to look forward to a Balkan League?

The three Balkan States—Serbia, Rumania and Greece—which fought on the side of the Allies, are included among the original members of the League of Nations. None of them

enjoys permanent representation in the Council of the League, although, of course, they may obtain such representation among the four which are to be selected by the Assembly from time to time. The question of Bulgaria's admission to the League is governed by Article 1 of the Covenant, which stipulates a two-thirds majority of the Assembly, effective guarantees of a sincere intention to observe international obligations, and the acceptance of such regulations as may be prescribed by the League in regard to military and naval forces and armaments. These conditions are not insuperable obstacles to Bulgaria's joining the League, and there seems good reason to believe that she may be admitted at any rate not later than Germany and Austria.

With Bulgaria once a member of the League, far-reaching possibilities open out. The immediate result will be to bring all the Balkan States into more intimate relations. The sense of joint responsibility and community of interests in the efficient working of such international control as becomes a permanent feature of the Near Eastern settlement, may reasonably be expected to point the way to a further co-operation under the guidance of far-sighted statesmen such as M. Venizelos. The logical development of co-operation in

a transmigration scheme and in the administration of the internationalized regions (Constantinople and the Straits, and possibly Constanza and other ports) must surely be some kind of federation on the basis of a Customs Union and a defensive alliance. If this conception took shape, a new Great Power would come into being and "the Balkans for the Balkan peoples" would be achieved at last. The case for the permanent representation of the Balkan Federation upon the Council of the League of Nations would be irrefutable. This in itself is likely to be an added inducement towards Balkan co-operation if the League develops the strength and usefulness which is to be desired.

Internationalism in the Balkans may develop along another line either independently of the League of Nations or side by side with it. If the territorial settlement really settles the question of Macedonia, a *rapprochement* between Serbia and Bulgaria is not beyond the bounds of possibility. As long ago as the sixties of the nineteenth century the notion of a Jugo-Slav Federation consisting of a union of the free and independent Southern Slav democracies was the ideal of the young Radicals of both nations. The Macedonian adventure in which Serbia became entangled

after 1878 stifled the conception and threw the two nations into antagonism. Now, however, since Serbia has absorbed Montenegro and the Southern Slav provinces of the Habsburg Empire, the realization of this ideal has become a practical possibility. The fact that Bulgarians are devoted to their national Church should not prove an obstacle, for, within the newly-established Jugo-Slav State itself, the Croats are as fervent adherents of Catholicism as the Serbs are of the Patriarchate. Moreover, it is not inconceivable that the schism between Exarchate and Patriarchate may be healed. If, as is possible, some form of autonomy is granted to the various provinces of the Greater Serbia, the movement which has never been completely extinguished in favour of a complete Jugo-Slav federation will be greatly strengthened both in Bulgaria and in Serbia.

The possibilities which have hitherto been discussed may seem too distant; admittedly they cannot come to pass until some years of peace have obliterated past dissensions. The mere cessation of war will lead to the renewal of commercial and social intercourse, which is essential for international co-operation of a political character. The importance of such intercourse from the political point of

view is aptly instanced in recent Balkan history. In his book entitled *La Genèse de la Guerre Mondiale*, M. Gueshoff, the Bulgarian statesman, makes the interesting admission that it was the visit of the Bulgarian students to Athens in the spring of 1911 and the warm welcome which they received there that created an atmosphere favourable to the diplomatic exchanges which resulted in the Greco-Bulgarian treaty of alliance.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

SINCE the Treaty of Vienna one-half of European history has been a record of the triumph of nationalism. Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Norway realized their national independence at comparatively little cost. For the eastern fringe of European peoples, from Finland in the north to the Balkan Peninsula in the south, the struggle was infinitely harder, and the issue was still in doubt when Europe plunged into war in 1914.

Decisive as the conclusion of the war has been, there are certain indications that among the Great Powers future cleavages will tend to be horizontal upon class lines rather than vertical upon national lines. For the present this is not the case in the Balkans. There, through long centuries of suppression, the idea of nationality has acquired an intensity which will ensure its predominance for many generations to come. "In its name," as Mr. Brailsford well says, "people have done great

deeds which liberty should have inspired, and perpetrated oppressions of an iniquity so colossal that only an idea could have prompted them. The miseries of ten centuries have been its work, and the face of the Balkans to-day, furrowed with hatreds, callous from long cruelty, dull with perpetual suffering, is its image and memorial." [1]

No single Balkan nation can be held responsible for the fact that Balkan standards of conduct in war are on the whole inferior to those of Europe generally. The breaches of international law committed by the belligerents of 1912 and 1913 were the subject of impartial enquiry by the Carnegie Commission. A calm study of the pages of its Report reveals beyond doubt that the outrages committed by the Bulgarians were far exceeded both in number and in hideousness by those perpetrated by other Balkan armies. But, as the Report justly says: "The burning of villages and the exodus of the defeated population is a normal and traditional incident of all Balkan wars and insurrections. It is the habit of all these peoples. What they have suffered themselves they inflict in turn upon others. . . . An estimate of the moral qualities of the Balkan peoples under the strain of war

[1] *Macedonia: its Races and their Future*, p. 107.

must also take account of their courage, endurance and devotion. If a heightened national sentiment helps to explain these excesses, it also inspired the bravery that won victory and the steadiness that sustained defeat. The moralist who seeks to understand the brutality to which these pages bear witness must reflect that all the Balkan races have grown up amid Turkish models of warfare. Folk-songs, history, and oral tradition in the Balkans uniformly speak of war as a process which includes rape and pillage, devastation and massacre."[1]

The pride of victory and the embitterment of defeat which produced these atrocities came again into play, now on one side, now on the other, during the European War—and with the same results. It must be remembered that during the war information has been "controlled" more rigorously than any article of diet; the public has been allowed to hear only one side of the case. In view, however, of the statements of the Carnegie Commission, it is incumbent upon every judicially minded person to suspend judgment until *all* the facts are known. Then let the instigators of

[1] *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), pp. 73, 108.

atrocities committed by either side be tried, and if found guilty condemned. Nothing is to be gained by endeavouring to decide whether any nation is morally justified in casting the first stone at its neighbours. In any case, the issue is a subsidiary one. The greatest atrocity of war-time is war itself; and the greatest atrocity of peace-time is oppression of one nation by another. General and unsubstantiated charges of barbarism, aimed at depriving nations of the right of self-determination, are beside the mark.

The war itself has not diminished the intensity of Balkan nationalism, but it has at least presented the world with a unique opportunity of placing it in correct perspective with influences of international significance. The necessary formula is contained in the following three passages from the pronouncements of President Wilson :—

" The relations of the several Balkan nations to one another should be determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality, and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan States should be entered into."

" Every territorial settlement must be made

in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment for compromise amongst rival States."

"All well-defined national aspirations must be accorded the utmost satisfaction without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely to break the peace of Europe, and consequently of the world."

Upon these foundations, and these alone, can a lasting settlement in the Balkans be constructed.

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