

# LIFE OF VENIZELOS

BY

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(CHESTER OF WETHERSFIELD AND BLABY)



VILLA JAIT-QUE-BEL,  
ST. JEAN DE LUC,  
BASSES PYRÉNÉES,

March 10th, 1921.

DEAR MR. CHESTER,

*I received some time ago the manuscript of your Book which you were so good as to send me.*

*So far, I have declined to read manuscripts of books sent to me and dealing with myself and I could not make an exception in your case. I must, however, admit that I have read that part of your Book which deals with the Cretan Question, and it will only be doing you justice by stating that you have managed in a very commendable way to bring order out of a chaos of events, the access to which could only be arrived at by a thorough and laborious search of documentary evidence. You can compliment yourself, indeed, on having managed to avoid—except in very rare instances—the unavoidable errors to which a writer in a work of this nature is bound to fall. In this you merit not only my congratulations, but the grateful recognition of the student of History interested in the evolution of the Cretan Question.*

*Believe me, dear Mr. Chester,*

*Yours faithfully,*

*E. K. VÉNISÉLO.*



## PREFACE

IT would have been impossible for this book to have been written without the intervention of His Excellency M. Caclamanos. From the first day we discussed the question of a Venizelos biography in the summer of 1918 until the present moment he has never withheld his advice.

Mr. John Mavrogordato, M.A. Oxon., to whom I am greatly indebted, has always been most helpful.

I am under the deepest obligations to Mr. Nicholas Eumorfopoulos, whose suggestions have benefited the manuscript and whose guidance has been very real. Indeed, Mr. Eumorfopoulos has cleared up numberless questions for me over a course of years.

I have also had the inestimable advantage of visiting the library and appealing to the unrivalled diplomatic experience of His Excellency M. Gennadius, G.C.V.O.

During a period of six years I have received many important lessons in Greek politics from members or representatives of the late Government. M. Venizelos himself found time, even at the height of his great activities, to enlighten me upon various matters connected with his life and work. My appreciation extends to his permanent secretary, Mr. K. P. Tsolainos, whose assistance has been of incalculable value to me.

S. B. C.

BRITTANY, 1921.

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# BOOK I

## CRETE BEFORE AND DURING THE RISE OF VENIZELOS



## CHAPTER I

On me demandera si je suis prince ou législateur pour écrire sur la politique. Je réponds que non, et que c'est pour cela que j'écris sur la politique. Si j'étais prince ou législateur, je ne perdrais pas mon temps à dire ce qu'il faut faire; je le ferais, ou je me tairais.—JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, *Le Contrat social*.

VENIZELOS was born in Crete, at Mournies, a suburb of Canca, on August 23, 1864. There is a legend that, shortly before his birth, his mother went to the Monastery of the Virgin, near Canea, to pray for a son, promising the Madonna that the child should be born in a cattle-shed, after the manner of Christ. The good woman, who is said to have lost her three previous children, duly fulfilled her vow.

The legend goes a little beyond the birth of Venizelos, for we learn that, when the infant was christened, the Abbot of the Monastery of the Virgin uttered prophetic words. "I baptize thee Eleutherios," he is reputed to have said, "for thou shalt deliver our long-suffering island from the tyranny of the Turks."

Another version of the story connected with his birth was once given by Venizelos himself at a luncheon party in London. He said that his parents, to ward off the fate which had overtaken their other children, were induced to follow a local custom and adopt him as a foundling. It was believed by the superstitious that the child would only survive if treated in this fashion. . . . Eleutherios was duly taken away from his mother and deposited comfortably on a heap of dry leaves outside his father's house. Passing by soon afterwards, some friends of the family, who were in the secret, discovered the child, brought him to his parents, and urged that he should be adopted as a foundling. Eleutherios survived and prospered.

His Christian name has been the origin of various stories. According to one, his mother, who was in great pain, made a vow to Saint Eleutherios, whose name implies that he was concerned with "delivery," that if he would ease her labour, she would call her child after him. Saint Eleutherios is supposed to have inherited the attributes and powers (and perhaps in Athens even the site of the temple) of Eileithyia, the ancient goddess of child-birth.

Some of the friends of Venizelos, driven from Athens to Canea by King Constantine's Government in 1916 and 1917, have fenced round the statesman's birthplace, together with the ruins of his mother's dwelling.

In the eighteenth century the ancestors of Venizelos were surnamed Cravvatas and lived at Mistra (Sparta). During the Albanian invasion of the Peloponnesus, in 1770, one member of the Cravvatas family, Venizelos Cravvatas, the youngest of several brothers, managed to escape to Crete, where he established himself. His sons discarded their patronymic and called themselves Venizelos. The grandfather and father of the statesman were both known by this name.

The father of Venizelos, a merchant, associated himself with the insurrectionary movement in Crete, and, after the rising of 1866, he was exiled by the Turks, because he refused to acknowledge allegiance to the Sultan. With his wife and child, he went to Syra. The amnesty of 1872 enabled the family to return to Canea, where Eleutherios attended the Greek school. Later, young Venizelos studied privately under one Antoniades at Athens.

He carried out his classical studies at the Lycées of Athens and Syra, subsequently proceeding to the law course of Athens University. While he studied French and German at Athens, it is interesting to note that his English and Italian studies were carried out during the heat of the Cretan insurrection of 1897, in which he was a most active leader. His idea in studying English and Italian was to be able to read the various diplomatic reports and newspaper opinions relating to Crete which found expression in these languages.

It appears to have been partly due to the Greek Consul-

General at Canea, one Zygomalas, that M. Venizelos, *père*, Kyriakos Venizelos, was induced to send his son to Athens University. The young man had already spent two years in his father's office. The more congenial atmosphere of the University acted as a stimulant to the Cretan student; he passed his examination with *éclat* and, in 1887, became a doctor of laws. He returned to Canea and practised as an advocate until 1895. It seemed that he was a political leader almost from the moment of his return.

Venizelos made his European *début* in the Cretan insurrection which led to the emancipation of his native island. In 1909 he was offered the leadership of the Greek Liberals. He left Crete for Athens, and in 1910 became the Hellenic Prime Minister. His rise was predicted more than ten years earlier by M. Clémenceau.

One afternoon, in the autumn of 1899, M. Maurice Barrès and Mlle. Vacaresco were conversing together in the *salon* of the Comtesse de Noailles, in Paris, when the servant brought in M. Clémenceau's card. The French statesman had recently returned from Athens. As Mme. de Noailles knew that M. Barrès was not on very cordial terms with M. Clémenceau she warned him. He left the room and presently M. Clémenceau appeared. "Ah, and what are your impressions of Greece?" asked the hostess. "Well, Madame," replied M. Clémenceau, "I am not going to talk of the grandeur of the Acropolis, nor do I intend to torment you with a lecture on archæology. I have been to see strange and picturesque lands, among them Crete. You will never guess, though, my most interesting discovery in the island, one more interesting by far than the splendours of the excavations. I will tell you. A young advocate, a M. Venezuelos . . . Venizelos? Frankly, I cannot quite recall his name, but the whole of Europe will be speaking of him in a few years." <sup>1</sup>

Prince Lichnowsky has said that "M. Venizelos was certainly the most distinguished personality" at the Balkan Conference held in London in the winter of 1912-1913. "His prepossessing charm, and ways of a man of the world," wrote the Prince, "secured him much sympathy."

<sup>1</sup> His Excellency M. D. Caclamanos, late Greek Minister in London.

The late Baron von Wangenheim, German Minister at Athens in 1912 and subsequently Ambassador at Constantinople, ranked Venizelos as supreme among European statesmen.<sup>1</sup>

President Wilson was said to have placed Venizelos first in point of personal ability among all the delegates gathered together in Paris to settle the terms of Peace in 1919.<sup>2</sup>

King Constantine, a most implacable personal enemy, is reported to have said of Venizelos, "When he is with me I confess that his arguments are so convincing that I quickly begin to imagine that they are my own."

After the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat, was allotted the island of Crete as his share in the spoil of the Greek Empire. Crete ultimately passed into the possession of the Venetian Republic, from which it was wrested by the Turks towards the end of the seventeenth century. The siege of the city of Candia, defended by the Venetians from within, and, at fleeting periods, by French, Papish, and Maltese vessels, lasted for nearly twenty-five years. With the fall of Candia the whole island became Turkified. It was left to Venizelos, more than two hundred years later, to capsize the Sultan's authority and to unite Crete with Greece. From the year 1889 until 1910—when he crossed to Athens, soon afterwards to become President of the Council of State—he was himself a champion of the movement, both as a warring Insurgent Chief and as a deputy. Fruitful in the thought of some day freeing Crete from the misrule of the Valis, his mind, always vividly intuitive, matured swiftly. While still in his twenties, the sagacity of his judgment, coupled with his gift of leadership, won for him a stout following. First elected a deputy in 1889, he formed with some of his friends a new group of politicians with liberal and progressive principles. They had a newspaper, published at Canea, called *The White Mountains*.

The Cretan insurrection of 1889 compelled Venizelos to

<sup>1</sup> Baron Wernher von Ow-Wachendorff, of the German Diplomatic Service, President of the German Armistice Commission, 1919, Wangenheim's nephew by marriage, is the authority for this statement.

<sup>2</sup> The Hon. J. Daniels, Secretary of the American Navy, in conversation during his visit to London in 1919.

leave the island in order to escape the persecutions of the Turkish Government, which abolished the privileges of the Cretans and suppressed their political liberties by refusing to convoke the Assembly. Venizelos took refuge in Athens.

Much Cretan history was made between 1868 and 1888. At intervals, of some ten years each, the people exacted from the Sultan, first a Constitution, then a confirmation of their rights, and, lastly, a tacit admission that they were in themselves a vital force. It was in 1868 that Crete secured an Organic Statute, in 1878 that the Pact of Halepa confirmed the islanders' rights, and in 1888 that Biliotti, the British Consul at Canea, began to dwell in frequent despatches upon a new epidemic of homicide. Biliotti described the Mussulmans' great dread of the Christians as well as the Christians' fear of the Mussulmans. And in each case there was good reason for alarm. One murder led to another, and often a series followed: a Christian, a Mussulman; a Mussulman, a Christian. Vendettas were born; massacres and counter-massacres were threatened. The Mussulmans were in a minority, but they were of the ruling breed, since Crete was a Turkish possession.

In the last days of March 1888 the Christians of Canea handed to each of the Consuls a copy of a petition which they had addressed to the Turkish Vali, or Governor, Costaki Pasha Anthopoulos. "It is the first time, at all events since my tenure of office in Crete," wrote Biliotti, "that politics and religion do not play a prominent part in a document delivered to the Consular Corps by Cretan Christians."

It was taken as a sign of the profound disquietude of the petitioners. The murder of a Mussulman or a Christian at that moment might have led to wholesale carnage. The men of the gendarmerie were powerless. An arrested Christian meant a Christian to be liberated by force.

One day the Vali, accompanied by a cavalry escort, proceeded to Galatá, a large borough three miles from Canea, to exhort the chief priests to assist the Government to restore order by not giving shelter to individuals wanted by the police. The Christians replied that they could do nothing as the gendarmes were impotent. The Mussulmans, on the other hand, feared to refuse refuge to malefactors.



Although primitive, the people were not slow to avail themselves of the telegraph. The Moslems of Candia, terrified by happenings in the Western districts, sent desperate telegrams to the Sultan. At Canea the Christians complained of "the persistent increase of the odious crime of assassination."

Costaki Pasha Anthopoulos, the Vali, appeared to be equally disliked by both creeds. "The sooner he is replaced by a man of energy the better for the Sublime Porte and for Crete," wrote Biliotti. Lord Salisbury confessed that the state of affairs in the island appeared to be "rather critical."

Costaki Pasha Anthopoulos's stay in Crete was not destined to be prolonged. It was evident to every one that he was a Governor unable to govern. The bitter tribal feuds raised daily problems which menaced the peace in wide areas. Divided national aspirations were supplemented by a division of creeds among the people. *Laissez faire* or *laissez aller* had almost become a policy in the succession of pashas deputed by the Sublime Porte to rule Crete.

Sir Horace Rumbold had had an interview with M. Trikoupes on March 27, in which the Greek statesman expressed his uneasiness on the Cretan situation. Trikoupes still half hoped that Anthopoulos Pasha would show energy and decision. "I observed," recorded Rumbold, "that I had noticed complaints of a want of vigour on the part of the Governor-General. M. Trikoupes replied that such had, no doubt, been the case. Anthopoulos Pasha had shown weakness towards the Mussulman element because he was afraid of incurring displeasure in high quarters. But now pressure had been brought to bear on the Turkish Government by some of the Powers, and, as a result of this, strict injunctions had been sent to the Governor-General to use vigorous measures in the repression of crime and disorder. . . . It was much better to put backbone into the present Vali than to seek to replace him, for that was a difficult matter."

Anthopoulos Pasha, however, sent in his resignation on April 29. Sartinski Pasha succeeded him. Sir William

White at once telegraphed Sartinski's biography to Lord Salisbury. "Nikolaki Sartinski Pasha is of Polish origin," read the telegram. "He received his education at Constantinople, has held the posts of Conseiller d'Ambassade in Paris and Vienna, and recently occupied that of Assistant-Governor of Adrianople. . . . He is a man of education and learning."

With such a favourable introduction from White,<sup>1</sup> who, in spite of his foreign accent and Polish blood, was one of the ablest men in the British Diplomatic Service, hope may have been entertained for the success of the new Vali.

But fate turned Sartinski's feet into clay, and he became like his string of predecessors.

At the next Cretan general election the Liberals won two-thirds of the seats.

<sup>1</sup> He was one of the two obscure consular officials to reach ambassadorial rank under Queen Victoria. The other was Lord Pauncefoot.

## CHAPTER II

THE affairs of Crete dragged unsatisfactorily onwards, until one day in June 1889 Sartinski received a telegram announcing the coming of two Turkish Imperial Commissioners, Mahmoud Pasha and Ahmed Ratib Pasha. Accompanied by Galib Effendi, a Secretary of the Turkish Foreign Office, and a retinue of servants, together with an abundance of furniture and provisions, they reached Crete, and straightway settled down.

There is one remarkable quality possessed by most Turks : it is the power of repose under unsettled conditions. Mahmoud, the Sultan's Commissioner, made himself and his companions comfortable in Crete, but his stay in the island was short. The golden dinner-service, which he had brought with him, was not destined to adorn many gay banquets during the month that he was occupied with Cretan affairs.

Absolute autonomy appeared to Trikoupes to be the only solution of the Cretan problem. He viewed with pessimism certain financial reforms promised by the Turks. The internal political conditions in the island were perhaps doubly unfortunate, for the Conservative and Liberal parties endangered the welfare of all the inhabitants by their bitter opposition to each other. When the Conservatives had set out in some detail the dire consequences which would arise, through their agency, unless Sartinski Pasha was withdrawn, the Liberals promptly made it their business to announce what would happen if he did not remain at his post.

All the plots of the Conservatives to increase the troubles of the island were combated, as far as possible, by the wise counsels of the Liberals. One can almost detect the brain

of Venizelos in some of the quieting decisions of the time. For instance, one reads that the Liberal leaders had given orders to their partisans in the country "to watch over the safety of the Mussulmans." They were confident that in the Western districts, where they were in the majority, the danger for the Turks would be minimised. Turkey undoubtedly was very remiss in her methods of garrisoning Crete. From responsible quarters the complaint was constantly being made that Ottoman troops were never present in adequate numbers to cope with the situation which might well come into being at any moment. Small drafts of men were useless to maintain order, and, in truth, it was freely asserted that it would take a *corps d'armée* of forty or fifty thousand soldiers two years to suppress a general revolt in the island. There were only 4190 troops distributed between Canea, Candia, and Rethymo.

One day, towards the end of July, two Christians were killed and several others fired upon at a point near Canea. The affray produced a panic.

"At any moment the manifestants may hoist the Greek flag or the Mussulmans may attack the Christians," wrote Biliotti on July 26, 1889. That was after the general irritation had grown still more acute.

The British Vice-Consul at Rethymo was compelled at this time to telegraph for a man-of-war: the local military force was too small to deal with any serious disturbance. Biliotti, who confirmed the Vice-Consul's fears, asked for a gunboat for Canea as well as one for Rethymo.

Matters were indeed becoming serious. Threats filled the air. Demonstrations continued. At Candia Mussulmans assembled in front of the Konak<sup>1</sup> and promised swift retaliation if any harm befell their co-religionists who were coming in from the countryside.

M. Trikoupes in Athens had received a communication from the Greek Consul at Canea detailing the gravity of the crisis, and, incidentally, explaining the "almost super-human efforts" which were being made to induce the insurrectionary leaders to show restraint. The Greek Government was endeavouring also to subdue the agitation through

<sup>1</sup> Government House.

the Cretan agents at Athens. But Trikoupes was inclined to adopt a melancholy attitude on the whole subject. Turkish indifference to the military side of the Cretan affair was, in his opinion, a standing danger. He still thought of saving Crete from an insurrection if the Powers could bring the Sultan to grant certain reasonable concessions. Greece had her own views as to what the ultimate solution of the Cretan question must be, but, for the time being, she was loyally trying to avert an imminent catastrophe.

About this time a wave of alarm dominated the island. Messages announcing an insurrectionary movement issued in quick succession. Here and there a murder took place. Mussulmans migrated. Christians mobilised. Gendarmes deserted. The Vali, still no other than Sartinski Pasha, complained that his orders were ignored by the military authorities. While matters were swirling round and round until those who looked on were in danger of acute vertigo, help was coming to Crete in the form of two British warships—the *Fearless* from Corfu, and the *Albacore* from Port Said.

It is instructive to read what Sir Edmund Monson<sup>1</sup> has to say on the crisis :

"In view," he wrote, "of the very serious nature of Mr. Consul Biliotti's last telegrams, and his requisitions for ships of war, I asked M. Trikoupes this morning his opinion as to the necessity, on the grounds of humanity, of despatching such ships to Crete.

"His Excellency replied that the prospect of general massacre and bloodshed is becoming so threatening that he thought the Great Powers should arrange among themselves, without loss of time, that each should send several ships to Cretan waters. He thought also that these ships should certainly not be of the smallest class. Their very presence might prevent much loss of life, and they would afford an asylum to those in absolute danger."

The Athenian Press published some appeals purporting to come from the Cretans in which the clamour for union with Greece was the principal note. When Monson talked the subject over with Trikoupes, the latter affected indifference.

The situation in the island was of such a character in the

<sup>1</sup> Rumbold's successor at Athens.

summer of 1889 that many of the inhabitants chose to emigrate rather than submit further to the dangers from Turkish misrule. Refugees poured into the Piræus. The islands of Syra, Milo, and Cerigo were invaded by them. Nearly a thousand Cretans had reached Syra by the end of the first week in August, and Smyrna and Samos also attracted considerable numbers. The Porte opposed, not unnaturally perhaps, this grand exodus. With commendable optimism, Sir William White thought he could detect hopeful signs in the darkening Cretan skies. He half believed that the people were not in these days divided by their creeds. He saw only local failures in which both Christians and Moslems were represented. Moreover, the Greek Government appeared to have ranged itself on the side of tranquillity, and this fact lent some encouragement to a less forlorn hope.

There was talk in Berlin about discountenancing any Greek pretensions in Crete; the German Foreign Minister counselled the Porte to restore order in the island "by means of Turkish forces alone." Athens, as it chanced, was in agreement with a conciliatory and just solution of the Cretan question. M. Dragoumis confessed to Sir Edmund Monson that if the Turkish authorities continued listless it would, of course, be impossible for Greece to remain a patient spectator, but one cannot doubt that the Hellenic Government was pacific.

Sartinski Pasha had returned to Constantinople, and Riza Pasha, Vali of Janina, had, for the time being, taken his place in Crete. The Turkish Ambassador to the Czar, Shakir Pasha, who reached the Ottoman capital early in August, was destined to be sent to the island in high authority almost immediately. At Salonica one Hassan Bey had received orders to organise and take command of a corps of gendarmes, a thousand strong, for service in Crete. Such preparations were evidently justified. The Consular Corps at Canea had telegraphed on August 9 that the Mussulmans had begun to insult and assault the Greeks in the town, and that, as a prelude, there had been a massacre at an outlying village. Two battalions of troops from Smyrna were despatched to Rethymo, whither the *Fearless*, a vessel of the Mediterranean Squadron, had already proceeded.

Shakir Pasha, Extraordinary Military Commander and temporary Governor-General, landed at Canea on August 13. On the morrow he issued a proclamation declaring a state of siege throughout the island. He had at his disposal more than 14,000 Turkish Imperial troops, consisting of infantry, and mountain, as well as garrison, artillery. British, French, Russian, and Italian men-of-war lay at anchor in Cretan waters.

### CHAPTER III

THE most wise Moushir His Excellency Shakir Pasha, invested with the Osmanie in diamonds and the first-class of the Medjidie, was inclined to be theatrical. To the sound of threats and trumpets he carried out a grand military demonstration, which was afterwards said to have had a good effect on the population. Albeit, a return to conditions of hate and horror was not very long delayed. An Athens newspaper<sup>1</sup> accused Biliotti of having been the cause of half the trouble. As the British Government was, by the same organ, called perfidious and Machiavellian, a meeting followed between Monson and Trikoupes. It was a barren conversation between the Minister Plenipotentiary and the Minister of State.

Meanwhile in Crete the rumoured profanation of some Christian tombs was attracting the attention of Biliotti. The burnt-out village of Perivolia, Galata, and the purlieus of Canea were reported to have had ghoulis visitants of late. Religious fanaticism did not appear to be so great an incentive to the offenders as the hope that the dead were bedecked with jewels. In following up such questions, and in endowing them with significance, the Consul was unsurpassed.

In a school like Crete Venizelos was unable to learn his lessons slowly. Inspired by the Hellenic tradition of 1821, to bring liberation to all the Greeks, he looked to Athens for the direction of the forces of unionism. He was zealous in his thoughts; in his conduct he was careful and calm. Crete had progressed some distance since 1868, but not yet far enough to warrant the last fight for liberty. When persons of weight and influence clamoured for freedom it

<sup>1</sup> *Palingenesia*.



was hard for the young Liberal leader to resist what he so ardently desired himself.

The oppressive methods of Shakir placed upon Venizelos new burdens. The proclamation of martial law was in itself destructive at every point. "In September 1889," he declared, "the situation had developed unfavourably, and there was nothing left for me to do but go to Athens. It was to Athens that Crete looked naturally for support and guidance. Moreover, martial law interfered with my freedom of action, and I wished to avoid the persecutions arising under the new *régime*. I went to Athens full of expectation that the authorities would not allow Crete to sink into oblivion. I remained there until the following May. During this period the 'election strike' occurred in Crete."

Neither by martial law nor by its suspension could anything be achieved. Firmans,<sup>1</sup> amnesties, and telegrams were of little avail. Crete, the third island of the Mediterranean, whether echoing the clamour of those who cried for Greece and King George or of those others who acclaimed Mahomet and the Sultan, was still in a ferment of military oppression and political discord. "In view of such a deplorable state of things," announced one appeal, which was signed by a variety of military chiefs and deputies, "our unhappy country cannot possibly submit any longer to Ottoman sovereignty. We are, therefore, on the point of commencing an unequal contest for liberty, imploring Divine assistance, and taking no account of the sacrifices we shall have to make, or of the dangers by which we are threatened. We shall make it a point of honour to adhere faithfully to the oath which we have taken not to lay down our arms until the Greek flag floats over every portion of the island."

The capital of the neurasthenic empire to which the Cretans were forced to belong had received a visit from the

<sup>1</sup> An Imperial firman, which was published on December 6, 1889, had enacted that the number of deputies to the General Assembly should be reduced from forty-nine Christians and thirty-one Mussulmans to thirty-five of the former and twenty-two of the latter. This produced bad blood at once. The Christians of the West, who were less favoured by the repartition, were jealous of the Christians of the East, particularly as they had more freely sacrificed their lives in the first place to obtain the privilege of the General Assembly.

Emperor William II. in the autumn of 1889. It was the first time that the overlord of Central Europe had cast his eyes upon Turkey. Five years the senior of Venizelos, William had but lately mounted the Imperial Throne, and his quick mind was hurriedly beginning to rove about in search of the material with which to build the immense edifice of his dreams. The East attracted him. Perhaps he remembered that it had attracted Napoleon. On his way to Constantinople he had witnessed the marriage of his sister to the Crown Prince of Greece.

Although no one considered the Emperor's visit to the Sultan and the marriage of Princess Sophia to be the most important events in the year of their occurrence, they proved to be of immeasurable concern to the outside world more than a quarter of a century later. Venizelos of all men has been most closely touched by the effects of the two Hohenzollern misalliances.

The Prussianising of the Crown Prince Constantine, previously begun, was in the course of time completed by the Princess Sophia. The powerful influences behind the Princess gradually spread over Athens. At her Court German sympathies were more welcome than a sense of etiquette. If it had not been for her inflexible determination from the moment of her marriage in 1889 to remain Prussian in spirit, and to disseminate her native beliefs, the unprecedented adventures of Venizelos could never have taken place. In 1889, while his mind was overburdened with thoughts of the pitfalls and entanglements of his immediate surroundings, the chrysalis of his destiny was actually being formed at Athens and Constantinople.

The never-ending series of incidents which constituted the history of Crete before the Greco-Turkish war of 1897, pass sullenly before the spectator's gaze. Details of assassinations, horrible and yet monotonous, fill the archives of the period. That such things could continue for long within range of the naval guns of the Great Powers seems incredible.

Commander Reginald Carey Brenton, of H.M.S. *Fearless*, made a pilgrimage over the island in search of information. Biliotti was his companion. The object of the inquiry was

to discover how far the Turkish troops who had been imported into Crete were guilty of outrages on the inhabitants. The two men started from Canea on December 3, 1889, and concluded their investigations on December 25. Commander Brenton asserted in his report that "not one single case of what is usually understood as an atrocity has been established."

"The complaints against the soldiers," he says, "were principally that they had stolen fruit and honey and omitted to pay their bills at the *cafés*; even these complaints were not very frequent."

The flocks were feeding in peace on the mountain-sides, the peasants were engaged in ploughing their cornfields or cultivating their olive groves, and women and children were to be met in the country unattended.<sup>1</sup>

Atrocities had undoubtedly been committed—Brenton recognises this—but such deeds had been done by the native Mussulmans prior to the arrival of the troops. The latter's worst misdeeds appear to have been confined chiefly to the flogging of prisoners and to the entry of houses in search of arms.

The inhabitants of the Liberal villages visited by the Commander and the Consul had few grievances: those they had were expressed in very "moderate terms." These followers of Venizelos "were not much troubled by the soldiers and seemed satisfied with the gendarmes." Occasionally, they made serious complaints against Christians of the opposite political party.

Among other matters, Commander Brenton draws attention to the feeling of the Cretans towards Greece. Several natives, "very intelligent," told him that there would be no revolution upon the mountains until the word of command came from Athens. "And this leaning upon Greece they appeared to carry into every calculation, considering it useless to attempt any regular insurrectionary movement unless they were supported by Greek strategy in conducting the rising."

At the Embassy garden party on the Queen's birthday in May 1890, Sir William White exchanged a few words on

<sup>1</sup> Brenton.

the condition of Crete with Kiamil Pasha. The Grand Vizier said that the state of the island was not sufficiently hopeful "to justify the appointment of a permanent Vali or of a Mushavir, or even of judges."

During a little tour, which Biliotti undertook, the ancients who had witnessed the insurrection of 1821 told him that the only happy time they had had in Crete was under Mustapha Pasha between 1830 and 1854.

The varied troubles which frothed and bubbled eternally, now and then flowed in a single mass to rise high and descend like a stream of lava on the island. There were few places within such easy access to the ships of all nations more volcanic politically than Crete.

The outlaw, the professed outlaw, was not unknown. Many of his kind came across from Greece. The turbulence of the inhabitants, the febrile condition of the Imperial authority, and race or religious antagonism induced a state of anarchy which was intolerable to the better Cretans.

Venizelos emerged as the only man of promise. He was never visibly shaken. The situation was bad; in reality, very bad. Yet one day in the isle was very like another. Even the changes wrought from year to year were imperceptible. Every new Governor meant a new hope.

On March 26, 1895, the Austrian mail steamer brought a Christian Governor, His Excellency Alexander Caratheodory Pasha. The Greeks of the province of Cydonia addressed a telegram, signed by Venizelos and other deputies of the last Parliament to sit,<sup>1</sup> expressing to the Sultan their profound gratitude for the appointment. Caratheodory had been Vali of Crete for a few days in 1878. Now he came invested with all the joyous trappings of a deliverer. The Orthodox Bishop met him at the landing-stage. A squadron, under Rear-Admiral Domville, chanced to be lying in the roadstead, a coincidence which, at first, had seemed to the Christians tangible evidence that their claims to security and consideration were to have special Britannic support.

But, with the coming of Caratheodory, no new record

<sup>1</sup> In 1889 there was the parliamentary election strike which had lasted ever since.

of peace and good behaviour was established. On the contrary, a few days after his arrival two Mussulmans were murdered by Christian outlaws in Apokorona. Then, "an aged man, lighting a taper on the spot where his son had been assassinated a year before, was attacked by a Turk and killed. Other murders followed. It was all part of an effervescence springing from trouble in deeper waters. Notwithstanding, Biliotti did not despair of an abatement of the race feud; he had previously been instrumental in bringing together in conference Christian and Mussulman notables. The notables had agreed to use their influence to pacify their co-religionists.

The Consul's object in inducing the island Turks and Greeks to meet was to ameliorate the circumstances of the ignorant classes, but a much wider result was actually attained. In the General Assembly, convoked for the first time since 1889, the deputies of both races showed indications of unexpected harmony. The Imperial firman<sup>1</sup> reducing the number of its members was with general approval modified by the Sultan, who granted an increase of five Christians and three Mussulmans to the parliamentary roll. This concession surpassed the visions of the most advanced optimists. "In fact," noted Biliotti in his voluminous correspondence, "for the first time in Crete, except, perhaps, before 1880, the Christian and Mussulman deputies have acted in perfect concert, and no strife between either of them, nor between any political party and the Vali, has taken place."

It appears that Venizelos, one day in June 1895, received from Athens a paper "signed by such men as Skouloudes, Renieri, and Zymbrakakis," recommending the return of the Assembly to its former character. Letters were received from other Cretans in Greece announcing that if the Assembly refused to apply for its *status quo ante*, the friends of the writers would hold meetings in the island and withdraw the mandates of the deputies "on the ground that they had failed in their patriotic duties." To such threats, they added that they would come to Crete themselves if their friends were neglectful.

<sup>1</sup> Of 1889.

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A group of political malcontents making the most of these Athens manifestoes accused Venizelos of keeping secret the contents of the original paper. There were also criticisms of policy and politics. The excitement was somehow fanned from the outside by news relating to the Armenian question.

## CHAPTER IV

THERE was an interval of one year between the coming and going of Caratheodory. Great was the irritation of the Greco-Cretans when they found that his successor was a Mussulman. Turkhan Pasha, for such was the name of the latest Vali, was accompanied to Crete by a Christian Mushavir, Yanco Effendi Vithinos.

The proclamation of an amnesty, to "individuals wandering at present on the mountains," inaugurated Turkhan's governorship.

In the interior of the island, an armed band of Christians, reformers with a just ideal, represented the Athenian group of Cretan chiefs and committees. The members of the band, styled the Epitropi, were sworn to carry on the active propagation of Hellenism. More than one sanguinary encounter had taken place between the Epitropi and the Ottoman forces when Turkhan came with his amnesty. *Qui veut la fin, veut les moyens*. The Epitropi, if they were prepared to die for their cause, were also prepared to set out their grievances in a reasonable manner, in order that they should not be misunderstood. There was nothing uncivilised in the simple wish for a solution of the island's financial dilemma, nor in an appeal for the reform of the gendarmerie, nor, for that matter, in a demand for the convocation of the General Assembly. On the contrary, the Epitropi were articulate and quite within the limits imposed by common necessity. In asserting that the Vali of Crete must always be an Orthodox Greek, they merely voiced the desire of the majority.

Unfortunately, the reformers, whether patriots, outlaws, or outcasts, met with no very cordial response. Trouble succeeded trouble. The existence of the Epitropi, which

had been used as an excuse to suspend the meeting of the Cretan Parliament, led to grave disorders. Biliotti telegraphed<sup>1</sup> to London to point out that this body of men had surrounded one thousand of the Sultan's troops at Vamos.<sup>2</sup> A column of Turkish Regulars, with mountain guns, was marching to relieve the place, but, on the other hand, Christians in all parts of the country were flying to arms.

The Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs at this juncture<sup>3</sup> admitted privately that the position in Crete was very bad. He said that Abdullah Pasha, Vali of Scutari, "a military man," had received orders to proceed to the island at once to replace Turkhan.

Meanwhile, the Redifs allocated to the relief of Vamos had been held up at Zivara. All attempts to dislodge the Christians had failed, despite the activities of the two forts at the entrance of Suda Bay, as well as of a gunboat anchored off Kalives, which had shelled their positions with heavy artillery.

At length, in desperation, Turkhan sent three deputies to the Epitropi to try to obtain permission for the Imperial troops to retreat. In no less desperation, the Porte was appealing to England. The Grand Vizier complained that while the Hellenic Government gave assurances of disinterestedness, the Greek nation was encouraging the Cretans. In Canea, street-fighting had broken out amid the most alarming conditions. At Rethymo the situation was declared to be critical. The Royal Navy had been called upon to secure the safety of British subjects. France and Russia were sending vessels. During the worst moments of the excitement, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, the German Foreign Minister, said that responsibility for the state of affairs in Crete fell wholly upon the Athenian Government. Lord Salisbury, however, held a different opinion. "So far as I am able to judge," he wrote, "it is the sincere desire of the Greek Government to avoid any serious trouble and to abstain from affording encouragement to the insurgents." He then offered the services of Biliotti as a possible mediator between the warring elements.

<sup>1</sup> Under date of May 18, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> District of Apokorona.

<sup>3</sup> May 21, 1896.



Among a host of other complications, it was alleged that Turkhan had asked Cretan Mussulmans to come to his help.

The new military Vali, Abdullah Pasha, arrived in Canea one afternoon with two battalions of Turkish soldiers, and, almost abruptly, Vamos was relieved.

The siege appears to have been the sequel to a meeting between the Epitropi and the Bishops of Cydonia and Kissamos, who were acting under the direction of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch. At the village of Nipos in Apokorona the Bishops had advised the Cretan leaders to withdraw immediately from the island in the interest of the Christian population. The only material effect of this over plain-speaking was to goad the Epitropi to the assault.

The disturbances reached such a pitch that a mixed fleet awaited events in Cretan waters. Europe was growing more anxious. Each day the Sultan, not unmindful of his authority, poured shiploads of soldiers into the island. "It seems evident," reported Mr. Michael Herbert, "that the Porte is determined to resort to strong military measures and to give the Cretans a severe lesson." So much apprehension was entertained by the foreign diplomatists surrounding Abdul Hamid that Baron Calice, the Doyen, called and presided over an emergency meeting at the Austro-Hungarian Embassy.

It was left to M. Paul Cambon to advise as to what ought to be done in Crete. His recommendations, altogether very sound, were coupled with solemn warnings. The French Ambassador told the Sultan that the Cretan Assembly should at once be revived and with it the Pact of Halepa. He thought that the Christians and the soldiers should be made to lay down their arms. Finally, the Ambassador suggested that the Powers should guarantee all these conditions. There was nothing in the counsel of M. Cambon which could be unfavourably received by well-informed Cretans. As for the Sultan, he seemed conciliatory; too conciliatory, perhaps. But the Ambassador's impression was that conciliation in a talk did not necessarily mean a concession in practice.

It was obvious that France was growing profoundly sympathetic towards the struggling islanders. Germany was less concerned. If Berlin was moved at all it was because of interest on Greek loans rather than interest in a suffering people.

While Europe was endeavouring to guide the Ottoman Government through the crisis of 1896, the reaction in Greece was visible to all eyes. At Athens, the Cretans' true centre of direction, fever was entering into the veins of citizens. Talk was developing into tumult. The Athenian Press, full of attacks on the Turkish Government, censured the Greek Cabinet for its inaction. Cretans in Greece held impassioned mass meetings. One of the greatest of these demonstrations took place at the Temple of the Olympian Zeus. At Milo and the Piræus refugees from Canea were landing in large numbers, the women and children having been provided for by a Crown decree.

As for the Government, it appeared anxious that the Powers should press Turkey to restore the privileges which existed in Crete prior to 1889.

In the island, under the rapidly paling Crescent, the Vali had issued a proclamation. The last line was typical of the whole :

En un mot, le Gouvernement désire que chacun se décide à mener une vie calme et tranquille en respectant les lois en vigueur dans l'île.

Europe was as little impressed as the Greeks and the Cretans. Turkey was forthwith ordered to nominate a Christian Vali, to revive the Pact of Halepa, to convoke the General Assembly, and to grant an amnesty throughout Crete.

One July day the Porte yielded to the Ambassadors. In yielding there was a note of appeal to the Powers. The appeal was for Europe to quiet the Cretans, or at any rate to share in the task.

A Christian Governor of Crete was appointed with unwonted haste, but, by a contrary wave of his wand, the Sultan turned Abdullah into a Moushir. This was jugglery of a flagrant kind. By making the retiring Vali a Moushir,

Abdullah gained in rank. He lost his civil office, but not his military authority in Crete. Georgi Pasha Berovich, lately Prince of Samos, was the Christian on whose shoulders the civil mantle descended. It was a very heavy mantle, and, to the wearer, it may have seemed like a pall.

We find that Berovich's official reception lacked some of the finer distinctions accorded to Mussulman Valis. For one thing, Abdullah, the new Moushir, who took the most prominent part in it, was not in full uniform. Caratheodory, the previous Christian Governor, had likewise suffered omissions in the honours paid to him. Even the military band which usually played in the courtyard of the Seraglio remained silent when he arrived. Thus a line was drawn between Christian and Moslem Valis.

For the Christians, it was an unfortunate land which Berovich had come to rule. Between May 24th and June 20th, no fewer than eleven of their villages had been burnt to the ground, whereas of those inhabited by Mussulmans only three appear in the records to have suffered similarly. From Greece and other countries relief was coming to the Cretans. Food rations were daily apportioned to the Christians at Rethymo. Local authorities emerged from their chronic lethargy to succour the people.

With the entry into office of Berovich Pasha, proclamations were full of promise. The promises sounded more like the promises of a governess to her young charges than those of a Governor to a desperate people. No arms were to be used by the Imperial troops if no outrages were committed; no responsibility was to rest upon those insurgents who returned to the path of rectitude. So spoke the announcements. Had Berovich been sent by the Sultan to convert Crete into Utopia with the assistance of a library of fairy books?

Part of the new programme was to restore to operation the Pact of Halepa, but the people seemed ill-contented with the prospect. As a special incentive Berovich was given to understand by the Government that if he was successful in the task which lay before him he would be honoured with higher rank. Scarcely had the ill-starred Vali undertaken his duties when it became an open secret

that volunteers and munitions of war were reaching the island from Greece.

Feeling in Athens was no longer confined to the unofficial classes. Ministers of State were openly pessimistic. M. Skouses, the Foreign Minister, made no effort to hide his disappointment about the terms secured for Crete by the Powers. As he said, the advantage of a Christian Vali was largely negated by uplifting a Mussulman military commander to independence and higher rank. The Pact of Halepa was now almost an anachronism, and the Minister foresaw complications in the Cretan Assembly.

Cretan Christians, who were reported to be strong and highly determined, looked to the Powers to obtain for them real reforms. Turkey they had finished with. They were drawing nearer the brink. Whether it was the brink of emancipation or of annihilation none seemed to know except Venizelos.

M. Caclamano retains a vivid impression of the Cretan leader in 1896. At that time M. Caclamano was the editor of a journal called the *Asty*. "I was young, very young, for the editor of a newspaper," he says. "The Cretan question had entered a new and acute phase. The Concert of Powers suggested a hybrid solution, namely, a return to the famous Pact of Halepa. Greek hopes and aspirations were once more frustrated. We carried on a most violent campaign, without respite or indulgence, against the Government. We were in favour of a radical solution. We demanded union, nothing but the union of Crete with the mother country.

"The Greek Government was annoyed by this campaign which stirred up public opinion, creating a difficult situation. Ministers with whom I was connected had vainly interceded with me. The King himself had delegated one of his aides-de-camp to expostulate, but my staff and I remained immovable.

"On a certain evening, one of the active leaders of the Cretan revolution was announced. It was M. Venizelos. He had come to calm my impetuosity, though he, like myself, advocated the radical solution.

"At the moment I was writing an article. The Cretan

leader was a man I admired both for his indomitable courage and gallantry, but I did not accept him as a source of inspiration for my article, which I continued to write. M. Venizelos, with eyes glittering beneath his professorial spectacles, seated himself before me. He had a small dark beard; he was wearing a soft collar, a black suit, and Cretan boots coming up to his knees. His physiognomy, the expression of his remarkable eyes, and especially his smile—that mysterious smile which Greek journalists have humorously compared to the smile of Leonardo's Gioconda—had surprised me. But he had begun to speak. I put down my pen. A vague uneasiness had changed swiftly into vivid interest. I listened to this Cretan Chief, this 'highlander,' as I had thought him to be, only to learn new lessons in history, politics, and diplomacy. During half-an-hour he held my closest attention by his wonderful eloquence. Without coming into collision with my opinions, he asserted that although the solution involved by the revival of the Pact of Halepa was less than complete, it was in the interest of small nations not to oppose the policy prescribed by the Powers. In other words, that the little States must adapt themselves to circumstances and endeavour to realise their national aspirations by degrees. He alluded to Cavour and Italy. He prophesied an epoch when the world, uplifted by a sense of the iniquity of despotism, would rise for the realisation of a democratic ideal, the accomplishment of the wish of the people. He made some pleasant remarks about my paper, discreetly adding that its energies might be utilised to greater advantage in the future.

"I confess that M. Venizelos charmed and subjugated me. Profound and instinctive admiration rose within me. It seemed that a new star was about to show itself and shed a brilliant light on the Hellenes. I felt somewhat in the same frame of mind as an astronomer who detects a new and luminous body in the heavens.

"Before M. Venizelos left me, I explained some of my sensations to him. 'Monsieur,' I said, 'there is only one man with the power to make me alter my opinion. You are that man.'

"On the following day, an article, which was considered

very clever, appeared in my journal. This article was nothing in reality but a summary of M. Venizelos' speech to me in my office. It put an end to the campaign of the *Asty*.

"My sudden conversion was attributed to various influences. No one, however, knew anything of my interview of the previous day, nor did any one guess the real cause of my changed policy."

## CHAPTER V

It was said of Count Ignatieff, Russian Ambassador to Turkey, who may have been somewhat given to prevarication, that he was such a complete liar that one could not believe even the opposite of what he said.

The Court to which he was accredited could only have contributed to the perfection of this mystifying, but dubious accomplishment.

Of all people, the Greco-Cretans were the least credulous when the Sultan agreed to the requirements of the Ambassadors in 1896. It must be confessed that even the Turco-Cretans were little more trustful of their kinsmen across the sea. Thus involuntarily they had something in common with the Christians.

They were led into defiance of the Greco-Cretans chiefly because of race schisms and *amour propre*. The emotions which stirred the two sections of the community were perennially increased by the brutalities of the *canaille*.

It is not improbable that the followers of Mahomet might also have turned against the central Turkish Government if there had been a sound alternative *régime*.

In the existing condition of affairs there was no real chance of an understanding. Circumstances had left but a very few modes of egress from the situation, and each one was too narrow to permit the population to emerge through it *en masse*. The Greco-Cretans, numerically predominant, received no encouragement to be clement to the Turco-Cretans. From time immemorial the latter had done them injury. The Mussulmans of Crete were in reality full of pride in their blood-red tradition. "Efforts," began one of their manifestoes in 1896, "are being gradually made to deliver into the clutches of the pitiless enemy our beloved

Crete, once conquered by the glorious sword of our illustrious ancestors. If we desire to gratify our ancestors, let us imitate them. Are we not the descendants of those Turks who, more than two hundred years ago, shed their blood ? ”

The historic root of the trouble was Turkish, the development and growth of it were also Turkish, like the ugly blossoms when they came. A thousand incidents, of course, bear witness that the Christians, if they were oppressed and downtrodden, were retaliatory. They occasionally imitated their oppressors in the wildness of their acts. It is not so surprising in a desperate people.

Venizelos consistently devoted his faculties to the achievement of union.

Patience and restraint were needed in the days preceding the war of 1897.

Scarcely more than thirty years of age, depending wholly on himself, his voice had not yet been heard in Europe. He was a Cretan leader with a Cretan following. It is true that people of the outside world who met him carried away vivid impressions. M. Clémenceau was one of them.

In secret he aimed at breaking the rusting Osmanli fetters. He knew that he must wait until they could be smashed asunder with a single blow. He saw that to tap or batter at them with small or imperfect weapons must surely lead to disaster. He counted always upon Greece and the Greek legend. Both were to be his allies. The most that he could expect to accomplish with his faithful Cretans alone was to continue in revolt. After all, that was useful only if the future included powerful help from beyond the seas.

During a period in which Europe was endeavouring by pressure and compromise to bring Turkey to an agreement with the Cretans, many insurgents were mobilising in the island and taking the oath on the Greek flag.

At St. Theoforos, a small fishing village near the Isthmus of Corinth, a little steamer, the *Mina*, was known to embark, from time to time, Greek supporters for Crete. On one occasion the Hellenic Government had the vessel pursued, happily for the adventurers, without result.

The number of Greek army officers and men who were



able to join the Insurgents in Crete by the end of August 1896 was estimated at eighty. They had, curiously enough, formed a part of the military coast patrol maintained in Greece to prevent the embarkation of Cretan sympathisers. The officers mostly belonged to good families, and were said to be partisans of the Trikoupes policy.

There had been such radical changes in the organisation of the Epitropi during the month of August that a new league of patriots, the "Insurrectionary Assembly," had been evolved. An old revolutionary, Yero Costa Voludaki, who had been prominent in the rising of 1821, now became the nominal leader of the Insurgents. Ninety-six years of age, according to Biliotti, Voludaki wielded great influence, especially in Apokorona, and his son, Captain Christo Voludaki, was declared to be a most active and energetic man. The avowed aim of the Insurrectionary Assembly was the union of Crete with Greece. In their time, the members of the Epitropi were less ambitious, and had limited themselves to winning local reforms in the island. Voludaki's adherents were considered to have more weight of character, experience, and prudence. In the words of the British Consul, their organisation was "a step towards military action," and therefore "more dangerous than the former one." The Epitropi had consisted chiefly of delegates from the provinces of Cydonia, Sphakia, and, in lesser proportion, from Rethymo.

The Insurrectionary Assembly was the flower forced into existence by these men and by the Greek volunteers. In the districts of Candia and Lassithi, small arms and ammunition were now and then being landed in sufficient quantities to attract attention, and to fan excitement.

The Insurrectionary Assembly was instituted shortly before the negotiations between the Powers and Turkey took final shape and fructified in an agreement of fourteen articles. This diplomatic production acted as a sharp astringent on the porous policy of the Porte.

The international agreement defined and settled questions hitherto subject only to the Sultan's will. Administration, revenue, legislation, and public security were provided for.

M. Delyannes, at the head of the Greek Government, confessed that if the aspirations of the Cretans had not been

entirely fulfilled, at least a system of government had been afforded them which in his opinion constituted a tolerable form of autonomy. "Since 1867," he announced, "when I was accredited to the Emperor Napoleon III., I have been convinced that the autonomy of Crete is the object to be sought for."

The arrangement between the Sultan and the Great Powers was promulgated by the Vali of Crete on September 12. Before the end of the month, seventeen battalions of Redifs, sent to the island during the height of the disturbances, were under orders to return home. Seventeen battalions of Nizams were to remain as a garrison. Suda Bay at this period was afloat with ships of the International Squadron.

There is one distinct impression left in the mind by the official documents relating to Crete in the autumn of 1896. It is that the Cretans had too long been misgoverned by Turkey to settle down in tranquil expectation under the recent grand understanding. Their ambitions were left in abeyance by the Ambassadors' achievement. Incidents still occurred that did not bear on their face any of the features of change.

In referring to a meeting held at Vamos, Captain R. Custance, of H.M.S. *Barfleur*, inserted the quaint line, "one man was killed and another mortally wounded, but this does not mean as much as it would in England." It meant, however, when linked with other incidents, that peace and order were not established in Crete, in spite of European intervention and universal concern.

January 1897 opened in Crete with no abatement of the incidents between Mahommedans and Christians. The year was destined to bring to a climax the surging aspirations of the Phil-Hellenes. At Athens the King—George—had already, early in the month of December 1896, approved of serious army reforms. "For years," he declared in a message to Delyannes,<sup>1</sup> "the Greek Army has been occupied with various duties which practically lie outside the sphere of its *raison d'être*. It is now time for it to return to its sole vocation and mission, the uninterrupted training of its

<sup>1</sup> The Prime Minister.

powers, as far as the financial means of the State allow." A recommendation was made in the message for the selection by military experts of "the best rifle for our Army." The creation of a permanent camp and manœuvre-ground evidently exercised the King's mind very deeply. The camp was to "inaugurate the realisation of the ardent desire I cherish with regard to the military position of the country."

Despite difficulties of a financial kind, Delyannes promptly set to work to draft the plans for the necessary loans.

King George was said to have reached the firm conviction, after sundry interviews with other potentates, to say nothing of those which he had had with various political leaders, that the end of the Ottoman Empire was rapidly approaching. He had the more readily lent his ear to military questions. Nor should it be forgotten that the Greek sovereign had been in correspondence with the rulers of Montenegro, Serbia, and Bulgaria, who made it known, confidentially, that they were prepared to join in a grand enterprise against Turkey. "The declarations jointly made to the Greek Chargé d'Affaires at Sofia by King Alexander of Serbia and Prince Ferdinand, at their meeting there in answer to King George's letter, offered a strange contrast to the assurances of peace subsequently addressed by both these rulers to the Sultan and the Great Powers."<sup>1</sup>

The happenings in Crete during 1896 had raised the temperature of the Athenians. We know how boatloads of active supporters were smuggled out of the kingdom and across the water; how also arms, even Gras rifles, the weapon of the Greek infantry, as well as ammunition, found their way to the mountain fastnesses of the Epitropi and the Insurrectionary Assembly. Moreover, by way of supplement, a powerful secret association, called the *Ethniké Hetairia*, patriotic and full of vigour, helped on all sides to mould and stimulate the national policy of the Greeks.

The idea of a war between Greece and Turkey, in 1896, was, from the Hellenic standpoint, reasonable only on the

<sup>1</sup> *Greco-Turkish War of 1897*. From official sources. By a German Staff Officer. London, 1898.

assumption that Greece would have allies on land and that afloat she might expect success. It was thought that the appearance of the Greek Fleet before Salonica and Smyrna might exercise a miraculous influence, and that its arrival off Chios and Samos would lead to a great rising of the people.

In Crete new administrative methods and success in external financial negotiations had thus far failed to produce any very substantial advantage for the islanders. Murders were being committed as usual. In the month of January 1897 Mahomedans and Christians were reported to be killing each other in the district of Candia. Armed Mussulmans, whose number reached a thousand, had been seen moving inland by reliable witnesses. Sir Alfred Biliotti told of an interview between a Greek politician, M. Romanos,<sup>1</sup> and the ex-leader of the Epitropi. It took place at Varnos. Another meeting was arranged at Akrotiri. An oath was sworn to capsize existing conditions, "in order that Greece might intervene and settle the affairs of Crete, notwithstanding Europe."

Candia, Rethymno and Canea, Halepa, Suda Bay: they all had their tragic visitations. Whether it was by assassination or guerilla fighting, the effect was the same.

On February 4, a terrible day for Canea, Biliotti was absent with the Vali on a mission of peace.

Colonel Chermside,<sup>2</sup> from the Constantinople Embassy, who was left in the town, reported constant engagements between the troops and the Insurgents. Towards evening, when the firing became desultory, naval officers and consular officials attempted to pacify the opposing elements.

Captain Custance, of the *Barfleur*, had telegraphed to his Admiral that incendiarism had begun at Canea, that anarchy prevailed, and that refugees had been put on board the British ships. A general exodus from the town followed.

M. Venizelos well recalls the crisis. "I saw Canea in flames," he says. "It had been set on fire by the Mussulmans, who thus started the great revolt."

<sup>1</sup> Late Greek Minister in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> He had come to Crete as a delegate on the International Commission concerned with the formation of a new gendarmerie.

It was at this point that the political leader assumed command of a band of Cretan Insurgents.

“ In the wake of this insurrection, which had broken out in January 1897,” to use his own words, “ I applied myself to the work of a military chief. I organised a corps of troops and established a position on Akrotiri, a dangerous point three-quarters of an hour from Canea. It was there at Koriakies of Akrotiri that the Cretan Assembly and the Provisional Government were established. It was there also that the *pourparlers* with the Admirals of the Powers, whose fleets were assembled off Suda Bay, took place.”

## CHAPTER VI

IN the control and direction of the Cretan movement Venizelos' share was at this epoch a local share. His followers were local followers. He was at once a leader and a follower himself.

He had dived into dangerous waters, fortunately to come to the surface and swim swiftly on the rising tide.

At Akrotiri, whither he went, the Insurgents soon hoisted the Greek flag and proclaimed the Hellenic annexation of the island. Their decree was as unemotional as a deed of conveyance.<sup>1</sup> It was plainly the work of men versed in thought as well as in action and even politeness, as Rear-Admiral Harris suggested some weeks later. "The Admirals," he wrote, "have established friendly communication with the Chiefs of Akrotiri and have had several interviews with them. Among the eight representative Chiefs of Akrotiri, it is curious to note that five are doctors of law and one is a doctor of medicine, thus proving more or less directly that they are either Greeks or men of Greek education."

These wise men of Akrotiri were not, after all, fighting out single-handed their issue with the Ottoman Government; three hundred volunteers from Greece and eight

<sup>1</sup> "After the failure of the Constitution which was granted to Crete by the Great Powers, and as the promise to attempt to enforce it would necessarily lead to no results, the only remaining solution is to proclaim and decree Cretan Union with Greece, of which the island henceforth forms an integral part under the Constitution of that Kingdom; to proclaim the abolition of the Sultan's sovereignty, and to request the King of the Hellenes to assume possession of Crete. The Great Powers are appealed to by the Cretans to allow a solution of a state of affairs repugnant to humanity. Execution of the decree is left to the bravery of the Cretans, assisted by the Greeks and by Greece."

hundred cases of ammunition were landed during the night of February 11 near the headquarters of Venizelos.

Fresh evidence of Greek official co-operation accumulated daily. Ships of war, transport vessels, and munition-freighters defied the vigilance of the European Fleet. On February 12 Prince George anchored off Canea with a flotilla of torpedo-boats. But the Prince received a caution from Admiral Harris and left again the next day.

"I have learned," reported Harris, "that the Greeks are contemplating immediate hostilities. A most critical state of affairs exists in the island."

In the afternoon of February 13, Canea was attacked by the Akrotiri Insurgents from the heights above Halepa. "No decisive result ensued," according to Harris, who had that day been one of the Admirals to warn the Greek Commodore on a war-ship off Canea, "to desist from hostile acts."

During the night of the 13th the Vali, Berovich Pasha, boarded a Russian ironclad, his first step in an ignominious flight from the island.

Everywhere ashore the spirit of revolution ignited inflammable material. On February 16, Colonel Timoleon Vassos, at the head of a military expedition composed of a few thousand men, crossed from Greece and "occupied" Crete on behalf of King George. It was, perhaps, an almost inevitable climax.

Colonel Vassos established his headquarters at Platania Alikianos.

It so chanced that a party of Italians, who had been sent on a small mission to Venizelos and the other Akrotiri Insurgents, had an interview with Vassos. "I have orders to occupy Crete," he bluntly asserted, "and I mean to do it."

The personal calibre of this Hellenic military agent gave vitality to his words. Of mixed Greek and Montenegrin blood, he ranked as one of the most competent officers in the army. A German authority,<sup>1</sup> after noting other more soldierly accomplishments, pronounced upon the Colonel's mastery of various languages and dialects, "which gave

<sup>1</sup> German Staff Officer in *Greco-Turkish War of 1897*.

him an immense advantage in his dealings with the leaders of the Insurgents on the one hand and with the Admirals of the Great Powers on the other."

The proclamation of Vassos reached the Admirals on February 17 through the Greek Commodore at Canea. After reference to the prevalence of anarchy, the ruin of families and the "unbridled fanaticism" in Crete, he talked of "terrible things" having happened, as an excuse, of course, for the military occupation which he was deputed to carry out by his "august master," King George.

Early in the afternoon of February 19, a Greek force, commanded by Colonel Constantinides and composed of six thousand Regulars, Insurgents, and Volunteers, with four guns, launched an attack on Fort Voukolies, situated six or seven miles west of Canea.

The fort was held by Bashi-Bazouks or Turkish Irregulars,<sup>1</sup> whose notorious reputation for a poor sense of discipline was now perfectly sustained. After firing a little, they abandoned their position and fled along the hillside, which fronted on the sea, later falling back on the town outposts.

It was at this point that the foreign Admirals first impeded the operations of Vassos. They began with a refusal to allow food to be landed for the Greek troops unless he undertook to cease fire. The Colonel at once replied that he was prepared to desist from attacking the four towns under foreign naval protection, but that he intended, notwithstanding, to occupy Crete.

The same night a steamer was observed creeping up under the land at the Western end of Canea Bay. When ordered to heave-to by one of the associated naval commanders, the vessel tried to escape. She proved to be a filibuster already discharged of arms and food.

The following day M. Gennades, the Hellenic Consul-General, newly created High Commissioner in Crete, left Canea for Platanfa, where he was received by the Greeks with "great honours."

Sunday, February 21, was a day of two notable events the war-ships of the Powers shelled Akrotiri, where Venizelos

<sup>1</sup> Actually Moslem Cretans in this case: Fort Voukolies was under the command of one Bakahaos.



and his men were flying the Greek colours; and Abdul Hamid announced that Photiades Bey had been appointed Cretan Vali.

Interest attaches to the presence of Venizelos among the Akrotiri Insurgents, because the shells from the naval guns on this occasion actually menaced his life. The origin of the trouble is discovered in the failure of the Insurgents to obey the Admirals' order not to attack the Turks on the heights of Halepa.

Fire was first opened on the position at Prophet Elias, the actual headquarters of Venizelos, by the British ships *Revenge*, *Dryad*, and *Harrier*, the Russian battleship *Alexander II.*, the Austrian cruiser *Maria Theresa*, and the German cruiser *Kaiserin Augusta*, at the signal from the Italian Vice-Admiral. "The French and Italian vessels did not fire, as their guns were masked by other ships."

Harris, the English Admiral, reported that "a few rounds of well-directed shell-fire caused the Greek flag to be hauled down, so I signalled to the British ships to cease firing, and the other ships did so too."

M. Kerofilas has written a graphic description of the naval bombardment, although he seems to have misinterpreted the cause. What is of interest is his statement that Venizelos, during the height of the firing, exposed his life to considerable risk. The Insurgent leader apparently concerned himself with the fate of the Greek flag, which was in momentary danger of being shot away.

The Admirals appear to have accomplished their object, as Harris states that on the morrow of the bombardment, "a satisfactory cessation of the fighting round the outposts has been produced—except towards the South, where guns cannot be brought to bear." He adds that, "The fire of the ships was most accurate and was directed only against those points where the Insurgents were firing or at the Greek flag flying over their headquarters on the hill."

On the day that these words were written the Konak at Canea was burnt to the ground. "It would be premature," wrote Biliotti, "to state whether the fire was intentional or accidental."

Under date of February 26 the Admirals publicly notified

the inhabitants of Crete that the presence of the International Fleet had no other object than to restore order. Nevertheless, incidents were occurring which necessitated a close watch on all shipping. "Three Greek ships of war commenced to land supplies after dark last night for the Insurgents of Akrotiri." Harris was responsible for this information. The Italian Vice-Admiral was responsible for ordering off the ships.

Fighting, mostly guerilla, continued ashore.

"The Cretan is an ultra-cautious and long-bowl fighter," wrote Colonel Chermiside. "He does not close until he thinks his enemy is not looking; but he understands fully the advantage of mobile tactics, difficult ground, and of a scattered line or circle of sharpshooters making a target of any regular body."

On March 10 Venizelos received, under a flag of truce, the English, French, and Italian Admirals; the interview which followed partly cleared the air. Harris himself says: "The Insurgents' action on February 21 has had a new light thrown upon it. The Chief denies that he received the warning which was sent through the Greek Commander." In other words, Venizelos was not made aware that, if the Insurgents continued to attack the Turks, they would themselves be shelled by the European war-ships.

Venizelos had become the spokesman of the Cretan leaders by common recognition of his ability. Each village had its own leader. During the revolution, meetings were held among these leaders almost every day to discuss various questions. At the meetings Venizelos created such an impression that he won for himself the distinction of being regarded as the leader of leaders. He was a courageous and well-informed man. It is not surprising that he proved to be most capable of conducting the negotiations with the Admirals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Louis Louissos, member of the Legislative Council, Cyprus, who was one of the Athens University volunteers in Crete in 1897. He has supplied other information on the period.

## CHAPTER VII

NINE days after the Admirals' visitation the Akrotiri leaders, Venizelos among them, met the Powers' naval representatives afloat. The latter had on this very day issued a proclamation offering complete autonomy to Crete. "As regards the internal affairs of the island," declared the announcement, "the Cretans will be free from all control of the Porte." Beyond this, the Sultan's suzerainty remained.

The party of Insurgents actually discussed with the Admirals the question of Cretan autonomy, although quite unfruitfully. "Nothing but annexation for us" was what they now said.

Upon the following day the Ottoman Government was notified by the Doyen of the Constantinople Ambassadors that Crete was being placed under blockade within twenty-four hours.<sup>1</sup> A week earlier Admiral Harris had been authorised to blockade the island, but the French Admiral had not then received his instructions.

The situation was scarcely a comfortable one for any of the officers charged with the execution of the Powers' decree. The obvious superiority of the European naval forces over any potential opposition was in itself uninspiring. Duty made it necessary, however, to administer from time to time a disagreeable lesson to the unfortunate people who were struggling to throw off the Mahommedan yoke.

On March 22 it came to the notice of the Admirals that a blockhouse, garrisoned by fifty Turks, overlooking Malaxa and the dockyard, was in "a very critical state." Starvation threatened the inmates, who for several days had flown a flag of truce alongside the Ottoman colours. On the 23rd the naval authorities sent the Insurgents notice that the

<sup>1</sup> March 21.

blockhouse must not be attacked under penalty of bombardment by the International Fleet. The Greco-Cretans were heedless of the warning. "Much firing continued," said Harris in a despatch, "but there was some hesitation in taking decisive action."

Two more days were allowed to pass, when "it was at length decided that if on the morrow the Insurgents had not ceased their attack on the blockhouse, the fire of the ships would be used to drive them back." An ironclad and a corvette, both Turkish, had meanwhile begun firing shells at the Cretans' position. "Many of these shells were blind, and most of them pitched so short that the fire was not effective."

At 2 P.M. the Turks in the blockhouse announced that they were only prepared to surrender to a Regular officer. Although the besieging force was made up of Insurgents and University Volunteers, the commander of the latter, Captain Antonopoulos, belonged to the Greek Army. And to him, therefore, the Turks surrendered. Half an hour later the Admirals met and agreed to open fire to compel the victors to evacuate the blockhouse. Soon after three o'clock the naval shelling commenced. Seven ships were engaged for a space of six minutes. The effect was irresistible. The Insurgents were driven from their position, but they returned, when the firing ceased, to loot and burn the blockhouse.

The next afternoon, as the Christian forces were holding new ground, there was another naval bombardment.

Thus day by day the island was subjected to fresh hardships, and the more peaceable inhabitants underwent a sore strain. British troops from Malta had been landed at Canea during the evening of the 23rd. French marines and soldiers of the Russian Army, as well as Austrians, further increased the local influence of the Powers.

One Cretan contingent, reported to be three thousand strong, had made a forward movement to the ridge of hills overlooking the South side of Canea. The Greek commander, Colonel Vassos, occupied a position slightly in the rear.

By April 1, Venizelos and his men at Akrotiri were thought

to be feeling the want of bread-stuffs. Applications were occasionally addressed to the Admirals for "one sort of privilege or another," connected with obtaining supplies or selling sheep, but the laying down of arms had been "made a *sine qua non*." The Akrotirians were entirely hemmed in and unable to take any offensive action.

Harris adopted the view that if these men suffered some privation, they at least had command of a plentiful supply of meat and vegetable food. "The blockade," he admitted candidly, "cannot be absolutely efficient: the nature of the coast-line, with its many well-sheltered inlets, and the proximity of the islands of Cerigo<sup>1</sup> and Cerigotto, always give small vessels and caiques, laden with flour or arms, a fair chance of successfully making a run at night and landing their cargo without being observed by the cruisers."

To the determination of Vassos, Harris paid an unintentional compliment in one of his despatches to the Admiralty. It was apropos the attack on the Malaxa blockhouse. When the Colonel received the warning from the International Squadron, "he replied by ordering the blockhouse to be captured."

"Colonel Vassos has practically declared open war against the Great Powers," Harris announced in a further despatch. It went to confirm that the Greek officer "was intrepid to the verge of foolhardiness," an opinion held by a German authority of the time. But Vassos was original as well as intrepid. For instance, on a certain occasion, he offered to liberate forty-four prisoners taken at the capture of the Malaxa blockhouse, "provided that the Admirals would guarantee their being at once sent out of the island."

Venizelos' encampment was prominent in the record of happenings. Mention of Akrotiri occurs again and again. One day it is that a party of Bashi-Bazouks straggle out of Canea to attack the Akrotiri Insurgents. "Fearing that further fighting might take place, the Admirals sent on shore to stop it." On another day, "owing to the report that the Admirals had authorised the Insurgents of Akrotiri to cross overland to Apokorona," from six hundred to eight hundred armed Mahommedans open fire on Venizelos and his men.

<sup>1</sup> Cythera.

"The Admirals intended shelling the Turks, but refrained. . . ."

These "Admirals" were to Crete at the moment what the "Ambassadors" were to Constantinople during the Eastern Rumelian controversy.

Seaforth Highlanders, Welsh Fusiliers, Russians, French, Austrians, Italians, and Turks were scattered over the island in the grand style, principally with the object of suppressing the humble followers of Vassos and Venizelos or the other Insurgents. As Harris had said, Vassos was at war with Europe.

The cosmopolitan garrison rarely hesitated to employ field artillery against the Cretans. Biliotti was no longer in his element. His despatches were short and not too brilliant. He was clearly no war correspondent. With so many more important individuals at hand, much of the lustre of his pre-eminence had been scaled off. On occasions he got as far as "the Insurgents fired a few shots against the Europeans . . . and ceased at the fifth cannon-shot from the garrison," or "the Insurgents were seen pitching tents about three kilometres distant," and "shots were fired at them," but he failed to elaborate the theme with his customary skill. At times he was petulant, almost disagreeable. He told of the Russian Consul's interview with five hundred Insurgents one afternoon. "He advised them to accept the offer of autonomy," wrote the Doyen of the Consular Corps, "but they refused, saying that they knew by experience what the result would be and that they were firmly decided to adhere to the programme which they had set themselves, 'Union with Greece or death.' The result of such abortive attempts is to encourage the Insurgents."

The Europeans doing military police work in the island were not immune from hostile demonstrations, or even from actual attacks, on the part of both camps, Christian and Moslem. Colonel Chermside, while describing the incident as "of no importance," told of an experience of the Italian Commandant, who, with four companions, was fired at, first by Cretan, then by Turkish, outposts, when riding beyond the ramparts of Candia.

Nearly 50,000 Moslems were assembled in Candia.

Within a "cordon area" of twenty-five square miles was to be found two-thirds of the entire Moslem population of Crete.

Among the Moslem natives in the Candian district there was much distress due to want of food.

Matters were going from bad to worse. The Christians were never idle, either carrying out raids or doing whatever damage was possible. At one point they cut the water supply, and this led the Admirals, at the suggestion of Chermside,<sup>1</sup> to approve an offensive movement.

The Turkish outposts in the vicinity of Venizelos' quarters were replaced by European troops, while the principal towns were encircled by military cordons. Fresh tongues of flame were springing up in every direction. At Constantinople the Ambassadors were devising schemes hurriedly to get some of the Moslem Cretans<sup>2</sup> to another part of the Sultan's empire.

On April 17, Turkey decided to declare war on Greece.<sup>3</sup>

This decision sent a ripple across the sea upon which the great Ships of State were lying becalmed.

Three days later Prince Mavrogordato, the Greek Minister, left Constantinople for Athens.

When the Admirals learned what had happened they took possession of Fort Izzedin, the Paleokastron blockhouse, and the defences on Suda Island. Colonel Vassos had previously threatened to attack these positions in the event of war.

Harris seemed to think that "the exhibition of foreign flags over Paleokastron" subdued the Insurgents of the neighbourhood. "They have," he announced, "partially resumed their agricultural pursuits within range of the rifles of our men and the Turks."

<sup>1</sup> The recommendation originally emanated from the Ottoman Governor of Candia.

<sup>2</sup> Many of these refugees never lost their affection for Crete. When Greek troops occupied territory in Asia Minor in 1919, some of them one day encountered several Moslem Cretans. "You call yourselves Greeks," said the latter, "but you have only got here because of a Cretan!" The reference was, of course, to Venizelos. (From M. Caclamanos, verbal note.)

<sup>3</sup> Soon after the outbreak of war Lord Salisbury notified Bihotti that Crete was to be considered neutral territory under the immediate protection of the Powers.

Occasionally he interviewed Venizelos and the Akrotirians. Once, on April 29, the men of Greek birth told him that they intended to return to fight for their King. At another interview the leaders were disposed to listen to Harris's arguments in favour of Cretan autonomy.

Fighting, of no very sanguinary character, to judge from the available casualty lists, continued uninterruptedly, especially in the sphere round Candia.

On May 9, Vassos, the *bête noire* of the Admirals, abruptly departed from Crete.

A few days afterwards Greece renounced her plan of annexing the island, and ships were sent to remove the Royal troops. On the 13th of May, Venizelos and his friends of Akrotiri "declared that they would not lay aside their arms before the last Turkish soldier had quitted Crete."

The new situation was one outcome of Greek misfortune in the field. "Probably no state ever entered upon a conflict under more difficult and trying circumstances than did Greece in the year 1897."<sup>1</sup>

We know that Athens had been feverish for months preceding the war; that a patriotic society<sup>2</sup> had helped to stimulate public opinion into a frenzy on national expansion; the progression of events was rapid and not uncertain.

M. Skouses, Minister for Foreign Affairs, had informed the representatives of the Great Powers at Athens that war had been resolved upon. That was on April 2. He said that feeling ran high because of the severe measures taken by the Admirals against the Christians in Crete, and also owing to certain rumours of a blockade of Greece by Europe. What the Minister confessed he did not know was the date upon which war would be declared.

A few days before the conversation took place, the Crown Prince Constantine was appointed Commander of the Army in Thessaly. "It appears that the command extends to Arta also," commented Mr. Egerton from the Athens Legation.

On April 6, "in face of the danger arising from the

<sup>1</sup> A German Staff Officer in *Greco-Turkish War of 1897*.

<sup>2</sup> Ethniké Hetairia.



concentration of considerable forces on both sides of the Turco-Hellenic frontier," the Powers made formal representations to Constantinople.

On April 9 the Greek Prime Minister, Delyannes, received news that the frontier had been crossed, near Kalabaka, by three bands of volunteers<sup>1</sup> of the Ethniké Hetairia, 2500 strong, and that shots had later been exchanged between Turkish and Greek Regulars at certain outposts. On the 14th he proposed in the Chamber an extra credit of eighteen million drachmae for the Army and four and a half million for the Navy.

Within four days, reserve troops were being mobilised, but there was no order for general mobilisation. Greece had suddenly reached the second of the three stages of international conflict. The stage of "imminent danger" had come quickly. Now it had passed. The next stage was war.

It was on April 18 that the Turks opened fire from Prevesa and sunk a Greek steamer<sup>2</sup> in the entrance of the Gulf of Arta. In view of Greek Army activities, Marshal Edhem Pasha had on the previous day received orders to take all necessary steps to preserve inviolate the territory of the Sultan. "The entire responsibility of the war recoils on the Greek Government," declared a Turkish Note.

The most interesting personal matter connected with the conflict itself was the military *début* of Venizelos' stubborn and mischievous opponent of later times, Constantine, then Crown Prince of Greece. This young man—he was twenty-eight years of age at the outbreak of the war—began by making his head Chamberlain, one Sapuntsakis, Chief of Staff. "It is impossible to find that Sapuntsakis possessed any qualifications for the post," wrote a German military observer, who explained that in time of peace the head Chamberlain was merely "Chief of Staff of the Crown Prince's Valets. . . . He continued to take the same kindly interest in the Royal baggage and *cuisine*, which, according to the testimony of friend and foe, were the most carefully

<sup>1</sup> The volunteers were directed by an enterprising Greek officer, Alexander Mylonas.

<sup>2</sup> S.S. *Macedonia*, belonging to the Pan-Hellenic Company.

prepared portion of the whole Greek campaign ; the credit for this at least must be given to Sapuntsakis.”<sup>1</sup>

Almost from the moment of its declaration the war was unfavourable to Greece. The Crown Prince “cannot be absolved from the grave charge of having broken up his forces and scattered them over far too wide an area, thereby losing the necessary cohesion as well as the possibility of achieving a marked success at any given point.” The Ottoman military system had undergone many changes and some improvements since the Russo-Turkish war, 1877-1878, “not only in regard to its technical training, but also in its conduct.” Athens was disposed to underestimate the offensive power of the Turks, and to believe them capable only of defensive warfare.

It appeared as ridiculous as it was sublime for Greece to match herself single-handed against the hosts of the ruler on the Bosphorus.

Once the war had begun in earnest the Turks swamped Thessaly. On April 25, a Prussian, General von Grumbkow—Grumbkow Pasha—artillery instructor to the Ottoman Army, took Larissa, a town of beautiful gardens and countless white minarets. Others places fell. Pharsala, a Cæsarian battlefield, Volo, Domoko, each name was now synonymous with a Turkish success. Not that Greece was without capable and brave leaders. The defence of Velestino by Colonel Constantine Smolenski was a fine achievement. The services of Colonel Manos and Colonel Limbritis also merit the highest recognition. But the Crown Prince doomed at the outset any little hope there was in such an unequal contest.

On May 19 an armistice was wisely concluded with Turkey. Thus it was that one month and a day passed between the declaration of war and the first stage of peace. Delyannes fell in the interval, and was succeeded by M. Ralli.

<sup>1</sup> German Officer in *Greco-Turkish War of 1897*.

## CHAPTER VIII

THE Ethniké Hetairia played an important part in precipitating the war between Greece and Turkey. The Hetairia Hellenismos, a society which helped to support students of Athens University who volunteered for service in Crete, of whom 120 accompanied Colonel Vassos, had come into being under the presidency of Professor Kazazes, and, on a very small scale, performed functions resembling those of the Ethniké Hetairia.

Upon the degree of ministerial approval extended to the operations of the Ethniké Hetairia, the revelations of General Macris are informative. Macris was Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Thessaly prior to the arrival of Prince Constantine. On March 19, 1897, he received a telegram from M. Metaxas to "instruct the Ephorship of Larissa, on the authority of this order, to deliver 500,000 Gras cartridges to the representatives of the Ethniké Hetairia." The Prefects of Larissa and Trikhala gave Macris a copy of a despatch from M. Kyriakoulis Mavromichalis, Minister of the Interior, in which the following lines occur :

We direct you for the future not to place any obstacle in the way of the passage of these bands into Turkey but to assist them in every way you can to cross the frontier without delay. You will, of course, act with the greatest discretion and you should in any case concert with the Commander-in-Chief. Our Army must not under any circumstances have anything to do with these irregular movements, and must carefully avoid any conflict with the Turks. No doubt the Turks can, if they wish, declare war against us, and we shall not try to avoid this eventuality.

Macris later allowed all this information to be published. He also declared that he regretted not having belonged to

the Hetairia. His was an heroic attitude, because the Society had already become a disagreeable memory to the Greek public. By way of sequel, M. Delyannes not only asserted that the Mavromichalis telegram was authentic, but he even completed the series of disclosures by publishing a confidential letter of his own, dated March 17. "We no longer insist," read this document, "on the instructions we have given you in regard to the bands or bodies organised by the Ethniké Hetairia. Consequently, if they exist, do not prevent them from leaving if they wish to do so. Please communicate this decision of the Government to the Commander-in-Chief."

It is not surprising that General Macris was accused by a section of the Athenian Press of divulging State secrets received in an official capacity.

The Cretan Insurgents continued in revolution after the signing of the Greco-Turkish armistice. The war between Turkey and Greece had been a set-back to union and had advanced the cause of autonomy in the island. Venizelos was as yet intransigent. He stood by his guns in a double sense.

The actual guns consisted of two ships' field-pieces which had been transferred from a Greek ironclad to Akrotiri. Ultimately Admiral Harris had to send a torpedo-boat to fetch away these weapons, but Hellenic officers carried out the *pourparlers* and there was no bloodshed. The artillery of the spirit remained with the Insurgent leader.

If he was not a lonely unionist figure in a desert of autonomy, he was a man with rivals, and the rivals were autonomists. Hadji Mihali Jannaris, Chief of Lakkas, to whom Colonel Vassos had entrusted the provisional conduct of affairs, submitted to the will of Europe, which, interpreted, meant the acceptance of autonomy. Hadji Mihali was no doubt encouraged to frank submission by his nephew, a professor in a Scottish university. Certainly the nephew was a useful intermediary between the British Admiral and the Alikiano Insurgents.

On the other hand, "the Defence Commission in Archanes, with the Chiefs and Captains of Archanes and Manofatsi," was extremely defiant. A letter addressed by this body

to the European representatives, naval, military and consular, contained an enlightening paragraph :

Bring your fleets, armies, and cannons, as mere conquerors, in order to subdue us, but you will find only heaps of bones. Do not believe that the unfavourable outcome of the struggle of our mother country, Greece, will influence us or that we shall submit to your decisions. We have food and munitions. Right is in our favour. We intend to struggle desperately in order to attain our object, union with Greece—which is our eternal longing.

In June, Dr. Sphakianakis, a Cretan leader at Athens, proposed a scheme of government for the island at the head of which there was to be a Prince, a Christian, a foreigner, chosen by the Powers and recognised by the Sultan. "A Prince is esteemed who knows how to prove himself a real friend or a real enemy," wrote Machiavelli. Sphakianakis' Prince—and destiny was about to create one for him—was to be placed on an alien pedestal and expected to behave like a statuette. He was to command an "armed force"—a police force; he was to have the "right of pardon and amnesty," of appointment to office, even of veto under the legislature's enactments; but he was to be neither Machiavellian nor Metternichian, nor anything but a deferential dependent of Europe.

Dr. Sphakianakis' interest outside Crete is of the reflected kind; he was for some time a close associate of Venizelos.

On July 10, 1897, he was elected President of the General Insurrectionary Assembly for a term of one month at a meeting of Christian delegates held at Armenous in Apokorona. Biliotti declared, "the choice is good."

A few days after the election the delegates at Armenous received a sharp protest from Hadji Jannaris, who was full of complaints about Hellenic intrigues and the danger of irritating the Powers. The Greek flag was still flying over Akrotiri.

In August, Venizelos became the presidential successor of Sphakianakis.

About one half of the deputies had moved from Armenous to Archanes in the province of Candia. Here a quorum of the Assembly was formed on August 10. At the head of

the Archanes deputies were "Eleutherios Venizelos and Constantine Fournis, both known"—the statement is Biliotti's—"as the most active agents of the Athens Committee."

Anything that impeded the successful and speedy application of autonomy was irksome to the foreign officials and alarming to those Cretans who were tired of strife. Two ambitious legislators, Papadakis and Evangelos Zoustakis, who took part in the proceedings at Archanes, tried to impress their constituents and certain of their fellow-deputies by means of a fanfaronade, with pin-pricks for Venizelos. When Venizelos and Fournis submitted a proposal to nominate a Provisional Government, "we were obliged to oppose it," announced these dissentients, "as serving the political programme of the *Ethniké Hetairia* and calculated to perpetuate the insurrection."

"It is known," continued Papadakis and Zoustakis, "that all deputies recognised as partisans of the National League<sup>1</sup> . . . endeavour to enforce the election of M. Venizelos. On the other hand, all followers of complete autonomy . . . are supporting Dr. Hadjidakis." The *Ethniké* was then called "accursed and nation-murdering."

The alternative policies which were presented to the Cretans were all uncertain of realisation. Even the Powers were unprepared to go beyond the somewhat half-hearted concession of autonomy. The outlook was generally vague :

1. Venizelos at this moment was the leader of the Annexationist party. Union with Greece was also the policy of the *Ethniké Hetairia*.

2. The deputy, Papadakis, gave his support, for whatever it may have been worth, to autonomy.

3. Dr. Sphakianakis was inclined to listen to compromise.

4. The Admirals, representing the Powers, were the visible, but rather blurred, symbol of autonomy.

In spite of evident ill-will in the Assembly, Venizelos was elected President. As many deputies were now determined upon autonomy, submission to the Admirals was agreed upon. Thus defied, Venizelos retired, and a dozen of his supporters went with him.

<sup>1</sup> *Ethniké Hetairia*.

The body from which he withdrew was not, however, to be quitted with a hand-wave. It demanded less informal adieux. Therefore, on August 25, a decree of expulsion was issued against the President :

The General Assembly of the Cretans taking into consideration that M. Eleutherios Venizelos, in his capacity as President, refused to perform his duties, and absented himself without reasonable cause, and without previous discussion on the subject, withdraws from him all presidential authority, forbids him to attend the sitting, and empowers one of the Vice-Presidents to transact all official business, to correspond with the Admirals and any other functionaries, and generally to conduct the affairs of the Assembly, until further notice.

The President's Committee is authorised to forward a copy of the present decision to the Admirals, another copy to the Central Committee at Athens, and a similar copy to the said ex-President of the Assembly, M. Eleutherios Venizelos.

The Insurgent Chief remained firm in his resolve, notwithstanding, to maintain his freedom of action. If he seemed to be a firebrand, it must be admitted that at this moment of his career he was risking his life in a lost cause. Union with Greece was then absolutely impracticable.

Biliotti appeared to derive malicious satisfaction in describing the dangers and discomforts to which Venizelos was subjected by his opponents.

"It may interest your lordship to know," he wrote, "that Eleutherios Venizelos, whose appointment as President has been cancelled by the General Assembly, and his partisans, twelve in number, were kept prisoners during eight hours in a house at Archanes, which the mob threatened to set fire to, and that they were stoned nearly everywhere during their twelve days' return journey to Akrotiri."

We find that Admiral Harris's attitude is also unfriendly.<sup>1</sup>

"The election of Venizelos as President of the General Assembly by the aid of Greek money and intrigue," reads one of the Admiral's reports, "was carried out by strategy against the wishes of the majority of Cretans. He was dismissed after holding the office for only a few days, and narrowly escaped being killed by the populace. The Cretans were, for the time being, in favour of accepting the European proposals; but that which

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<sup>1</sup> Despatch dated September 17, 1897.

gained him a temporary majority in the Assembly may again re-elect him, if the removal of the Turkish troops is much longer delayed. Venizelos went to the camp at Akrotiri, where the Greek influence predominates, and is now in Athens, I understand. The policy of the Greco-Cretans, probably against the wishes of the Greek Government, appears to be to prevent at all cost the acceptance of autonomy in Crete ; it is averred that they are making endeavours to arrange with Turkey for the latter to remain in the island, fearing that autonomy might be fatal to their hopes of the ultimate union of Greece and Crete."



## CHAPTER IX

THE swift rise and fall of Venizelos in the Insurrectionary Assembly were followed by incidents which maintained unbroken the curious record of disturbance so irritating to the European statesmen.

Collisions between Insurgents and Turks were reported in the usual vein. Sometimes these collisions became serious conflicts, with fighting fierce and dogged. At other times, the Turkish authorities could only accuse the islanders of burning fruit-trees.

The attitude of Venizelos at this period is interesting as showing that he was never afraid of defying his supporters. His enemies have called him a demagogue. But this was only the first of many occasions in his career when he refused to abandon a policy which he knew to be unpopular, but believed to be right.

In 1897 he had merely proved himself to be a vigorous revolutionary, and the fact that his genius was capable of a host of expressions was as yet unknown to the world. There was little reason, it must be admitted, for Europe to observe in the Cretan leader's efforts to defeat the schemes of peace anything save that which was troublous and wicked. A French critic has said with some truth that the best statesman is the revolutionary who has lived to mend his ways.

If there was one man in Crete in those far-off days who was between the devil and the deep sea—the Turkish Governor ashore and the Council of Admirals afloat—it was Chermiside. His venue was a Moslem stronghold.

Captain Harry Grenfell, of the *Royal Sovereign*, at Suda, acting as spokesman of the Allied Fleet, at moments required Chermiside's co-operation. "The Admirals," he declared on

one occasion, "wish to back you up in anything you, who are on the spot, may propose, with a view to mending this state of unrest which tends to bring discredit on the work of pacification." Whereupon Chermside made several recommendations, including one for a supply of food for the people and pay for the local police.

The English military commander believed that the rural Moslem refugees, then swarming in Candia, should be repatriated, while the Christian Candians, who had been driven into the wilderness, should be helped to return to the town. He thought that any other action dealt "mainly with effect instead of cause."

The predicament of Candia supplied one of the most distressing aspects of the entire Cretan imbroglio.

Towards the end of October, a new Cretan Assembly, under the presidency of Dr. Sphakianakis, met at Meldoni, in Mylopotamo. One of its first functions was to issue a declaration accepting autonomy and promising full co-operation if the Turkish troops were withdrawn from the island. Autonomy had previously been accepted without this qualification.

Venizelos, who was officially concealed from view for the time being, assumes no credit or blame for the policy of Dr. Sphakianakis, for which he was not responsible.

One of Sphakianakis' earliest manoeuvres was to address a note to the Admirals in which he said that the Governor of the island must no longer be chosen from among Ottoman subjects, nor even from among the foreigners who had served the Sultan. In effect, the President applied for the appointment by the Powers of a European Chief of State.

In a further note, Dr. Sphakianakis attempted to define the future relations between the Moslems and Christians of Crete. Once more there was a reference to the removal of the Turkish garrison. "The withdrawal of the troops," he wrote, "will show the Mussulmans clearly that they must abandon all hope of reconquering their former preponderance. Mussulmans have for the future only to live on an equal footing with Christians and co-operate with them for the common good."

What the Christian leaders aimed at was absolute adminis-

trative control of the island and the complete exclusion of the Imperial influence. Sphakianakis is said to have been an able and honest man.

Early in its life the new Legislature became the Cretan Assembly.<sup>1</sup> It thereupon ceased to be "Insurrectionary."

While public affairs were beginning to assume a more hopeful appearance in Crete, news came from Constantinople of a Russian proposal to apply the Eastern Rumelian Statute to the island. For the Governorship of Crete, Russia recommended either Caratheodory Pasha, Mavroyeni Bey, ex-Ottoman Minister to the United States, or Bojo Petrovitch, a cousin of the Prince of Montenegro.

Lord Salisbury immediately informed the British Ambassador at the Porte that Her Majesty's Government refused to accept either the first or second of these candidates. He was willing that England should support the Montenegrin, Petrovitch, if the other Great Powers did the same. But the Prince of Montenegro himself opposed the nomination of his kinsman.

It was generally agreed that a strong Governor was essential. The naval officer, Grenfell, wrote that the withdrawal of Turkey and her troops from the island must be guaranteed by the Powers and that certain moneys must be advanced. Order might then be looked for by degrees, he thought, if the Governor displayed great firmness. The expulsion "or getting rid of all Greek *avocats*," was also declared to be necessary.

The allusion to "the Greek *avocats*" showed the official hostility which was directed against Venizelos and some of his associates. Grenfell had previously formed the impression that "all the new Assembly are Greeks and most of them are in the pay of the Greek Society." The Greek Society was the Ethniké Hetairia. Venizelos denied at the time that there was any truth whatever in the suggestion so far as he was concerned.

The close of the year found the Turks making a last effort

<sup>1</sup> A flag was officially adopted in which a white cross on a sky-blue square, a souvenir of the Greek ensign, occupied the top corner nearest the staff; to this was added a field of white cut into squares by a black cross. The new flag was hoisted at Akrotiri by the followers of Venizelos on November 7.

to throw 5000 fresh troops into Crete, but, fortunately, the Powers firmly asserted themselves and prevented a new folly.

The general animosity between the Moslems and Christians became more acute again owing to mutual acts of aggression which occurred in the island in December. A Mussulman attack upon a caravan on December 22, at a point outside the cordon round Candia, led to the death or serious injury of several Christians and the capture of thirty-eight loaded mules. It was a disagreeable incident, and the consequences threatened for a while to be still more disagreeable.

At the moment that the Powers were arresting the despatch of Turkish troops, Russia suggested Prince George of Greece as Governor for the island. Great Britain favoured the suggestion and France was not opposed to it.

On the other hand, Austria, in the words of Count Goluchowski, was "strongly convinced that such a candidature would certainly not be accepted by the Porte." Nor was the German Government able to agree to the choice of Prince George. The Imperial Foreign Secretary, Von Bülow, said that if the Prince were to be appointed Governor, Crete would very shortly afterwards be annexed by Greece, with complications in the Balkans.

By the end of January 1898, Prince George had sufficient support in some quarters to win the favour of M. Gabriel Hanotaux. The French Foreign Minister told Sir Edmund Monson that it had virtually come to a choice between a Turkish pasha and a Greek prince. He fully approved of Prince George.

Despite the ingenious suggestion that the Prince should go to Constantinople to be invested by the Sultan, thus affirming the principle of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Government remained unmoved.

Germany also withheld her approval of the Prince's nomination. During the Subscription Ball held at the Royal Opera House in Berlin on February 16, the Emperor William told the British Ambassador, the late Sir Frank Lascelles, that he had made the last proposals he intended to make with regard to Crete, and that he would withdraw his flag if they

were not accepted. "I asked what these proposals were," reported the Ambassador, "and His Majesty replied that the Great Powers should entrust two of their number with the pacification of Crete."

The true root of the Cretan question now lay in the often uncertain attitude of Europe towards Turkey. The Christian inhabitants of the island were in a state of perpetual suspense. The Caneans struggled to put up a brave front (and began to rebuild the Christian quarters of the town), but at Candia, where the Mussulmans were crowded, no similar spirit could be discerned. The interference with ordinary communications placed some regions in a serious predicament regarding food supplies. Moreover, mercantile relations could not be maintained on the accustomed basis.

Between the months of August 1897 and February 1898, nearly fifteen hundred Christians from the interior of the island embarked for Greece at Rethymo alone. At all unoccupied points, sailing-vessels were taking away numbers of refugees. This new emigration was attributed to the chaos and despair which prevailed in many districts.

On March 16 the German Emperor, piqued by the general absence of interest shown in his recent announcement, withdrew from the European Concert on the Cretan question. He said that Germany had no interests in the Mediterranean, and that as his suggestions had not been accepted with regard to Crete, his withdrawal might facilitate an agreement between the other Powers. He volunteered the statement that he would neither oppose nor approve the appointment of Prince George of Greece.

On the following day the German war-ship *Oldenburg* embarked her small contingent of seamen (who had been doing duty in a fort at Canea) and sailed for Messina.

Meanwhile, efforts were being made to cajole Abdul Hamid into a gracious acceptance of the inevitable. Count Mouravieff had gravely requested the Ottoman Ambassador in Petersburg to present the Greek Prince's case in a new light. "If the Sultan will only agree to the nomination of Prince George," said Mouravieff, "His Majesty's Mahomedan subjects will interpret it as the glorification of the

Caliphate. They will know that the Sultan has waged a successful war against the King of the Greeks, and that, as a result of this victory, the son of the King, who is also cousin to the Emperor of Russia and a still nearer relation to the Prince of Wales, has come in person to Stamboul to be invested by the hands of the Sultan in the office of Turkish Vali."

The ingenuity of this argument is enough to raise Mouravieff to the level of Talleyrand's clubfoot. Why the Russian troubled himself to be so thorough is the only incomprehensible feature in the affair. Perhaps it was because Austria had by this time shown a disposition to follow the lead of Germany.

The first official intimation of the Dual Monarchy's intention to withdraw from Crete was given to Sir Horace Rumbold when he called at the Ballplatz in the afternoon of March 23. The only naval force which the Imperial and Royal Government proposed to leave in Cretan waters was to be for the protection of Austro-Hungarian and German subjects.

The outcome of this announcement was somewhat modified by Count Goluchowski's avowal that his Government would continue to co-operate diplomatically with the Governments of the other Powers. The deadlock that had arisen in connection with the appointment of a Governor was an excuse which the Count did not, of course, omit to supply.

On April 12 the Austrian flagship, with Admiral Hinke on board, left Canea, together with a contingent of the Emperor's troops.

The effect of Austria's exit, however, was not very apparent. We find, for example, that, on April 15, M. Hanotaux advocated supporting Prince George "as firmly as ever." The words are those used in a despatch from the British Ambassador in Paris.

Sir Arthur Evans, who visited Crete in the spring and early summer of 1898, describes the celebrations undertaken by the islanders on St. George's Day, the name day of their future Prince. "Prince George," he told them, "is all very well, and of course his arrival will be an irrevocable

step towards an eventual union with Greece. But what will Prince George himself bring you? Some smart aides-de-camp, a few Court ladies, and a French cook. He is only, at best, a beginner. What Crete wants is a strong and experienced man. When Prince George comes, the first thing you will have to do will be to find him a tutor!"<sup>1</sup>

Disembarrassed of German and Austrian interference, England, France, Russia, and Italy now decided to convert the Admirals' Council into an Administrative Council; to concentrate the Turkish troops of the Cretan garrison at certain points; to increase the International contingent, if required; and to provide the Admirals with special funds.

The Admirals, for their part, demanded of their respective Governments that the Ottoman troops in Crete should be withdrawn: "The presence of these troops not only causes difficulties, but is a real danger."

The establishment of bazaars, or markets, recently undertaken in the island, was considered to have created a more amicable feeling between the Christian and Moslem natives. But, in reality, with the emigration and continued absence of 8000 Christians from Candia, coupled with the influx of 34,000 country Mahommedans into the town, the position remained most disquieting.

From Akrotiri, on June 15, Dr. Sphakianakis wrote to Admiral Pottier further urging the withdrawal of the Turkish troops. The President of the Assembly also pointed out that the delay in establishing autonomy served to foster strained conditions.

By July 1 the four Ambassadors at Constantinople announced that, at the request of the Admirals, the Cretan Assembly was to be given power to appoint an Executive Committee. This Committee was to be entrusted with the provisional administration of those parts of the island which came within the jurisdiction of the Assembly. The International naval chiefs were to retain supreme authority, and to control directly the zones occupied by European and Ottoman troops.

The Admirals' Council at once set to work to mould the plans necessary for an improved administration. The

<sup>1</sup> *Letters from Crete*, printed for private circulation, Oxford, 1898.

Consuls were ordered to prepare the basis of a provisional government, and withdrawal was demanded, not only of the Sultan's soldiery, but of his civil functionaries as well.

When, a few days later, Djavad Pasha, the Turkish military chief, applied to Pottier concerning the return home of 5000 time-expired soldiers, the French Admiral replied that they could not be replaced by fresh men.

The custom of protesting had long ago been established, and whether those who followed it were Turks, Europeans, or natives, it threatened to persist ever afterwards. It seemed to be the Turks' turn to protest in July 1898, for the proposal to institute a provisional administration gave them little joy.

It was on the 28th of the month that the name of Eleutherios Venizelos emerged again from the eclipse which had hidden it since the previous summer. It was left to Biliotti to bring it to light. "The final scheme for a temporary government," he telegraphed, "has been unanimously ratified by the General Assembly. The following members have this day been appointed as the Executive Committee . . . for the five provinces of Crete." Venizelos, representing Cydonia, headed the Consul's list.

There were certain modifications in the plan of government suggested by the Assembly, and "after considering these, it was decided" by the Admirals "to accept them, as they seemed most moderate and reasonable."

When the approved text had been transferred to the Assembly, the Executive Committee exerted itself to frame suitable regulations. The members of the Committee were afterwards thought to have exhibited *trop de zèle*. The regulations, indeed, might have served the minor requirements of an empire. But it was also equally evident that the Cretans took themselves and their task seriously.

The Admirals chose Halepa, a suburb of Canea, as the seat of government. One of their next decisions was to take over the collection of the Dime taxes early in September. This decision was full of possibilities, the most dramatic of which were very soon to be realised. The revenues of the Dime had been represented some years previously by



an export duty, which varied, according to the nature of the product, between 10 and 13 per cent.

On September 3 the Turkish Governor of Candia refused to give up the collection of the Dime, unless he first received instructions from the Porte. A polite compromise in the method was suggested, but the Governor, who was apparently without vanity, refused again. A higher authority, Ismail Pasha, the Acting Viceroy, agreed to allow the collection, if a clerk was put into the office to check the receipts. On the 4th the clerk entered upon his duties. On the 5th the Admirals issued an ultimatum that the Dime Office must be given up at once; if it were not, it was to be seized. On the same date Ismail Pasha telegraphed to Candia that the British representative was not to be prevented from taking control of the Dime.

The next day there was a mad outbreak. British troops were attacked and killed; the British Vice-Consul was murdered; and hundreds of Christians were put to death by the Mussulmans.

Candia had suddenly become an inferno. Foreign war-ships were hastening from Suda Bay; Christians were hurrying to the scene from other parts of the island. H.M.S. *Hazard* was shelling the Mole.

Biliotti received a desperate telegram at 5 P.M. to announce that the Turks had set fire to the town.

That night Christians were massacred in the true Mussulman manner. The casualties suggested Armenia rather than Crete. To be a Christian was to become a victim. There were no death-warrants, no executions on the grand scale. There was simply a cascade of blood: carnage, determined and hideous. There was not even the usual pause for carnal knowledge with the women. The town was coloured bright blood-red. And the red reached up to the sky from the burning houses.

Biliotti arrived on the scene the next morning on board the *Camperdown*, the *Camperdown* that sank the *Victoria*. One of the most illuminating despatches the Consul-General ever wrote was inspired by his visit to Candia.

"The Foreign Admirals," he recorded, "had insisted that the Dime should be taken possession of immediately. Colonel

Reid, on receipt of orders to this effect, proceeded by himself to do so, while a party of about twenty men were landed from Her Majesty's ship *Hazard* to guard the Dime Office, which is situated near the quay.

"The Mussulmans had been since the morning in a state of great excitement. They had prevented the opening of the daily bazaar at Gazi; they had also prevented the landing of Christians from mail steamers. Towards noon they became so restless that a British common picket was sent to patrol the town.

"During the morning the Moslem leaders had presented to Colonel Reid an address with a statement of their grievances. Many of the grievances are well grounded, and Colonel Reid had promised that they should be looked into.

"On proceeding to the Dime Office he found the doors closed, but obtained the key from one of the office guards. At that moment one of the picket was stabbed from behind. As the man fell down his rifle went off and killed a Moslem.

"Meanwhile firing had begun in the town: in a short time the party on the quay were fired upon, and almost annihilated, before reaching the British distilling ship, *Turquoise*. Bullets were falling like hail from the surrounding houses and the ramparts, and whizzing through the gates leading to the port. The port itself had been burned.

"Forty-five British soldiers, who were quartered near the telegraph office, were driven out of their huts and must have suffered severely. The casualties so far as they are known were about twenty killed and fifty wounded, but there may be more, as no communications exist between the different quarters.

"There need be no apprehension with regard to outposts.

"The town is still burning. I can detect the skeleton of the British Vice-Consul's house. Mr. Calocherino himself was burnt."

Colonel Reid gives some information as to his experience at the Dime Office on the morning of the 6th. It is contained in a telegram of jerky phrases.

"I was cut off from the camp," it reads. "There was a general Moslem rising. I held out with bluejackets, marines, and a Highland Light Infantry picket. Desperate fighting, like rats in a trap. I was afterwards reinforced by a party driven from the telegraph barracks. Four hours' fighting. . . . One officer and twelve men killed. Two officers and forty men wounded. Many instances of amputation, several dying."

On September 8, 1500 Insurgents, the followers of

Venizelos during the great insurrection, accompanied French and Italian troops to the Turkish outposts. The Christian Chiefs then offered their services, but the senior British officer begged them to assist him by remaining passive.

The aftermath of the Candian rising cannot be said to have contained any political disadvantages for the rest of the Cretans. On the contrary, the Christians reaped indirect benefit. The Admirals' Council turned definitely in their favour and even went to the length of believing that the Turkish authorities, despite their apparently correct attitude, were at the bottom of the whole movement.

We find in extracts from an identic despatch to the Admiralty an indication of the changing outlook of the naval chiefs. Their opinion, no longer fluid, was solidifying rapidly under the vigorous influence of recent events. They mention that Turkish soldiers were reported to have fired on the British. "Consequently, the Admirals request in the most formal manner the withdrawal of the Ottoman troops and authorities; those at Candia at once." They also considered that the time had come to appoint "the Governor demanded by the Cretans."

## CHAPTER X

ON the morning of September 13, Edhem Pasha, the Governor of Candia, was received by Rear-Admiral Noel on board H.M.S. *Revenge*.

Without preamble the Admiral handed a memorandum to Edhem, pointing out his responsibility for the attack on the British of September 6. The burning of the Consulate, the murder of the Vice-Consul, and the loss of life among Her Majesty's troops created formidable counts in what formed a singularly grave indictment.

In the presence of increasing force Edhem was ordered to carry out the arrest of the Moslem ringleaders, the murderers and incendiaries, to destroy certain loop-holed houses, which might otherwise be used again against the International troops, and to hold the Eastern ramparts of Candia at the disposition of the English authorities. There were fresh troops from Malta and heavy naval guns ready to enforce these demands.

The conversation between the Admiral and the Governor on board the *Revenge* is preserved among the British archives. So far as the Admiral is concerned, it is unornamental and entirely to the point.

"I have," began Edhem, "arrested one of the ringleaders."

"I cannot have any more delay," interrupted Noel. "I am prepared to take extreme measures. The moment our troops are fired upon the fleet will bombard the town. You must advise the population to this effect."

"I can disarm the people," said the Governor, "if sufficient time is allowed. But there are 40,000 in Candia and 10,000 outside. The disarming cannot, for example, be carried out in a single day."

"If you have any trouble, I will assist you," declared Admiral Noel.

Edhem shrugged his shoulders.

"How am I to begin?" he asked. "Am I to disarm the population first or deliver up the ringleaders?"

"I have given you," said Noel, "forty-eight hours. If at the end of that time you can produce a satisfactory number of prisoners and weapons to show that you are making good progress, you will be allowed an extension to complete the work."

Two days later forty-two prisoners had been handed over to him, while the Dime taxes were being paid to the British naval authorities.

The number of prisoners surrendered was quickly increased to seventy-two. Rifles also were delivered up in considerable quantities.

By September 26 the Admiral had ninety-eight prisoners in his custody and no less than 4300 rifles.

The aim of Venizelos and the other Cretan leaders was about to be partly accomplished. The Governments of London, Paris, St. Petersburg, and Rome had at length formed a compact to demand and enforce the early withdrawal from Crete of the Turkish troops and authorities. The four Powers were to assume, on November 4, all responsibility for the maintenance of order in the island.

On October 10, Djevad Pasha, the Sultan's Governor-General, left Canea on the Imperial yacht, *Fuad*. His destination was Beirut, where he expected to meet the German Emperor.

Sir Herbert Chermiside, the British Military Commissioner, reported that seven natives had been hanged on October 18, in connection with the murder of English soldiers during the Candian massacre. Similar hangings took place on other occasions.

Before the end of the month Ottoman troops were being transported from Crete in hundreds. The four Ambassadors in Constantinople, however, seemed in constant danger of being drawn into the bottomless bog of Turkish diplomatic correspondence. The Sultan's advisers persisted in making

irritating demands which now and then threatened the success of the Cretan proceedings. For example, the proposal by the Porte that a handful of soldiers should be left in the island, as a mere symbol of Imperial suzerainty, was in itself provocative. Dr. Sphakianakis and the members of the Executive Committee had no hesitation in protesting. They saw risk in such a manœuvre: there were already enough souvenirs of Ottoman suzerainty. A fleshy embodiment of the Sick Man in a vigorous Redif was not, it appeared to them, in harmony with the guarantees and special arrangements of Europe.

By the 28th of October nearly eight thousand Imperial troops from the garrisons of Candia, Rethymo, and Canea had been embarked for Turkey; less than two thousand men remained in the three towns.

On November 4, Chermiside "took over the keys of the fortress" and assumed control of the civil and military administration at Candia. The proceedings were repeated by other officials at Rethymo and Canea.

On November 5 the last of the Sultan's soldiers in Candia were escorted to the landing-stage and embarked without resistance by Admiral Noel. Early the following day the evacuation of the town was completed.

Nevertheless, there was difficulty elsewhere in affecting the removal of the Turks and their impedimenta. There were delays and arguments which sprang from unfathomable depths. The Sublime Porte was concerned with symbols of sovereignty, with flag-flutterings and the like. The whole process of exit suggested the workings of an eviction order on a grand scale. The baggage of the out-going tenants seemed immovable, but, on the other hand, England and the Powers associated with her in the task of authority constituted an irresistible force. Here and there some soldiers lingered; a General lagged behind; a minor official attempted to parley. But to no purpose. In the end the whole motley array of soldiers, high officers, and low officials, as well as their baggage, was cast unceremoniously out of the island. Weeks had gone by; and one notice to quit after another had expired before the work of expulsion was finished.

Meanwhile, on November 25, the Athenian representatives of France, England, Russia, and Italy had presented a memorandum to the King of the Hellenes offering the post of High Commissioner of Crete to his son, Prince George. In the words of Sir Edwin Egerton, the British Minister at Athens, "His Majesty the King and His Royal Highness Prince George accepted the offer."

Three years were allotted to the Prince by the mandate for the pacification of the island and the establishment of a regular administration. Nominally, at any rate, the High Commissioner was to recognise the sovereignty of the Sultan. The Prince was to allow a Turkish flag to be flown upon one of the fortified points in Crete. Indeed, he was constituted the official protector of the Imperial ensign. M. Venizelos is said to have recommended light-heartedly a painted tin flag, as the emblem of Turkey would then be attacked by rust and the more quickly disappear.

Prince George's first care, in concert with the National Assembly, was to institute a system of autonomous government capable of securing in an equal degree the safety of persons and property, as well as absolute religious liberty. A gendarmerie was to be created immediately, and, to facilitate the organisation of the new administration, each of the four Powers behind the scheme was to advance a sum of one million francs to the High Commissioner.

These arrangements showed that the Powers were determined to establish in Crete a government which would never be handed over in the future to the representatives of an Oriental State. The reality of this determination was obvious, in spite of the lingering politeness shown towards the Sultan through his flag. The actual sovereignty of Abdul Hamid had come to an end. The misrule of more than two centuries could never again be resumed in the name of Mahomet. Whatever was destined to happen in the island was to bear the imprint of European civilisation. If the machinery was soon to fall into disrepair that was the affair of Christians alone. Religious fanaticism, the most difficult of all things to subdue, was gone for ever.

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The Powers had seen in the uprising at Candia what dangers might accompany it. Thus the loss of a handful of British fighting men had done more to goad Europe into definite action than the massacre during several generations of many thousand Cretans.



## CHAPTER XI

THERE was a considerable amount of enthusiasm among the Christians as the time approached for the arrival of the Greek Prince. Once, when they came to deliver up their firearms, each rifle had attached to it a photograph of the High Commissioner. A Russian military band headed a procession of these native demonstrators, who were showered by their admirers with perfume and flowers.

A few days later the Ottoman Government was on the *qui vive* to assert its barren authority on a point of no material importance. "We hear from a private source," declared Tewfik Pasha, "that the Powers are exchanging views on the question of the proclamation of a general amnesty in Crete. As the proclamation of an amnesty in the island falls within the sovereign rights of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, our august master, we are convinced that the Imperial Government will be approached in the first instance if such a measure of clemency is considered necessary." This assertion was circulated by Anthopoulos Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador in London, under date of December 7.

In Crete the Executive Committee, of which, as we know, Venizelos was the most prominent member, announced that its mission would be finished on the arrival of Prince George.

The Cydonian Christians, led by Venizelos and other Chiefs, yielded up possession of more than three thousand small arms on December 11.

On December 18, Sir Nicholas O'Connor telegraphed from Constantinople that he, with the Ambassadors of France, Italy, and Russia, had settled the design of the latest Cretan flag.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On a blue ground a white St. George's cross, having in the upper left-hand canton on a red ground a white five-pointed star.

On December 19 the Admirals proceeded to Milo to greet Prince George. Two days afterwards the High Commissioner reached Canea. There he was received joyously by the Christians and with decorum by the Moslem natives. The Cretan flag, as devised by the Ambassadors, was duly hoisted at Canea, and, on the same day, the Admirals transferred the Government to the Prince.

A naval salute accorded to the Cretan colours on the day of his arrival had reverberations in Constantinople. Fresh consternation prevailed among the high officials. Protests were made against the very existence of the flag. But it continued to fly boldly over the island.

On December 26 the Admirals, whose administration had been highly beneficial, took their leave of Suda Bay. Credit attaches to the work of the European military authorities also, more especially to the British, who "in a little over a fortnight," to use the words of General Chermiside,<sup>1</sup> "successfully conducted the disarmament of a province of 100,000 inhabitants and organised local governments and gendarmeries as well as opening the districts to the free circulation of Christians and Moslems."

Before leaving Crete the Admirals' Council settled by protocol the distribution of the European troops who were being left. For one thing, General Sir Herbert Chermiside remained in command of the English sector.<sup>2</sup> There were French, Russian, and Italian sectors, in addition to an International sector, with an International Military Commission in session at Canea.

The year 1899 opened promisingly for the Cretans. Prince George was new to office and eager, it seemed, to please and conciliate. Moslems and Christians were encouraged to acclaim him vehemently. He was King Carnival in many triumphal processions. Though one fails to discover anything heroic in the acceptance of the High Commissionership, the Prince struck brave attitudes. The attitudes were of the circus ring or the theatre. M. D. Papadiamantopoulos, who had been Greek Consul

<sup>1</sup> He had been promoted to the rank of Major-General since his association with Crete.

<sup>2</sup> Which embodied Candia.

at Salonica, was appointed his political secretary. (This personage for a while addressed the Governments of the Powers as a sort of Foreign Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and confidential clerk combined.)

On January 21 the High Commissioner issued a decree for the convocation of the Cretan Assembly. The Christian electors were to consist of the deputies sent to the Assembly, 1897-1898. The Moslem deputies were to be elected by the electors of the deputies to the General Assembly of 1895.

The elections took place early in February: on the 20th of that month the Assembly met. Some colour was lent to the opening scene by the presence in full uniform of all the naval, military, and consular officers. In his speech Prince George referred to the suzerainty of the Sultan and the sanctity of the Imperial Ottoman flag. A distinguished visitor, his brother, Prince Nicholas of Greece, who had come to the island ten days before, was present at the ceremony. The Presidency of the Assembly went to Dr. Sphakianakis, but his election to this office would not have been possible without the Mahommedan vote. In a postscript to a despatch Biliotti comments on the matter.

"It has been explained to me," he writes, "that the unanimous voting of the Moslem deputies in favour of the former President of the Insurrectionary Christian Committee is to be attributed to their resolve always to side with the High Commissioner. They supposed that His Royal Highness desired the election of Dr. Sphakianakis as President of the Assembly."

From the outset the Cretan legislators aimed at the creation of a Constitution. It fell to Venizelos, the main-spring of the executive mechanism, to carry out this difficult and delicate task.

After the Assembly had considered the draft, the Ambassadors of France, England, and Russia, under the presidency of the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, met at Rome and shortly afterwards submitted a report embodying certain suggested alterations.

On March 18, Dr. Sphakianakis, as the mouthpiece of

the Legislative Assembly, thanked the four Great Powers for their action in emancipating Crete from Turkish misrule.

The whole course of events in Crete at this time indicated the intention of the leading Cretans to establish as quickly as possible the machinery of administration.

On April 29, Prince George issued a decree appointing seven Councillors, including Venizelos and Sphakianakis.

One of Sphakianakis' first conversations with Prince George gave some idea of the latter's outlook. "I have," announced the Prince, "the blood of Peter the Great in my veins."

"I hope your Highness will at least spare us the executions,"<sup>1</sup> replied the Cretan promptly.

Venizelos and Sphakianakis felt from the beginning that the Prince's attitude made it impossible for them to work with him successfully. He showed a tendency to accept the advice of favourites rather than that of his legitimate councillors.

It was left to Venizelos to insist on continuing his official functions in proximity to the High Commissioner, to whom he not infrequently expressed some very candid and possibly equally disagreeable opinions. There was a decided difference in the psychology of the two men.

Their points of view were in many essentials irreconcilable.

A couple of days after the appointment of the seven Councillors, Sphakianakis resigned on the ground of family troubles. On May 9, Venizelos was appointed Councillor of Justice, while the Departments of the Interior, of Public Instruction and Public Worship, of Finance, Posts, Telegraphs, and Communications, and of Public Safety were duly distributed.

In June the National Bank of Greece arranged to establish a house at Canea, to be styled the Bank of Crete, with a capital of 10,000,000 francs.

Towards the end of the year Venizelos, as Councillor of Justice, laid before the Consuls proposals connected with the newly organised judicial system in Crete.

<sup>1</sup> Derived from M. Caclamanos.

He explained that the establishment in Crete of judicial autonomy had put an end to the reference of cases on appeal to Constantinople. He asked that the Governments of the Powers enjoying special rights under the Capitulations should consent to recognise the competence of the Cretan Court of Appeal, as well as that of the *Tribunaux de Paix* and Civil Courts.

The whole question was discussed in a friendly spirit between M. Venizelos and the Consuls, whose Doyen, M. Blanc, drew up an identic memorandum, approved by all his colleagues, to be forwarded by them to their respective Governments, with the recommendation that the proposed modifications should be authorised subject to certain conditions which were willingly accepted by Venizelos on behalf of Crete.<sup>1</sup>

Venizelos became, as time went on, the recognised medium of communication between the Cretan Government and the Consuls-General. He was not slow to prove his ability in the Council of State. He busied himself not only with legal reforms, but with the details of taxation. His wide range of administrative activities supplied him with a practical foundation for his work in Greece in later years. He secured his ends by strength of purpose, supplemented, where interests clashed, by ingenious and conciliatory methods. In great issues, where diplomatic skill failed to achieve the desired results, he was capable of adopting strong measures and fighting for the completion of the tasks which he had set himself.

M. Kerofilas draws attention to a conflict of opinion existing between Prince George and Venizelos on the process of transition from Cretan autonomy to Cretan annexation by Greece. Venizelos considered that the Cretan people should not proceed too abruptly from recent Turkish bondage to absolute liberty; he felt that they should receive tutelage, as it were, in emancipation; that there should be a gradual and educative change. On the other hand the High Commissioner, whose temperament very

<sup>1</sup> Consul-General Graves to the Marquis of Salisbury (December 1899). Sir Alfred Biliotti had left the island in the preceding summer, and had been succeeded by Graves.

often led him to ill-judged and ill-timed actions, was bent upon a rapid development of the political situation. In the summer of 1900, when he was about to journey to certain European capitals, he said that he meant to ask the Powers to approve of annexation.

M. Kerofilas quotes the Prince as having added, "And I hope to succeed on account of my family connections."

Venizelos looked upon Prince George's method of dealing with a complicated problem as highly indiscreet.

## CHAPTER XII

At this time Venizelos was thirty-six years of age. His hair and beard were still dark, but otherwise he was not very different in appearance from the man of to-day. One who saw him when he came to confer with Vassos at Platania three years earlier, and who met him again in London in the autumn of 1919, declares that the intervening years registered scarcely any change in his outward aspect.

At thirty-six Venizelos was still a Cretan in Crete. The eleven preceding years of his life had been spent in acquiring political experience of an unusual kind. It was with Prince George that he now had to compete, for the good of the island, which in very opposite ways was a kingdom for them both. Stripped of all difference in title, the two men divided the privilege of ruling in Crete, somewhat after the fashion of the Ancient Greeks when two kings reigned together over the same people. On the one hand, whatever power Venizelos possessed was the product of his own arduous activities; the Prince, on the other hand, had acquired his by an accident of interests. Although Venizelos was an ex-leader of revolutionaries, a man who could shoot straight and live on a rough diet, he was endowed with singularly fine qualities of mind. It has been seen in Abraham Lincoln how a man of uncultured life can rise to remarkable heights of thought and understanding, but Lincoln always remained an uncouth personage and pretended to no social gifts. Venizelos, when the mountains were exchanged for the council chamber, seemed to have been bred for his new sphere. But his ideals remained as bold and sure as in the days of Akrotiri. He fell under no enervating spell. On the contrary, he expressed his views with candour and persistence. So outspoken was he to the Prince that

before long a crisis developed in some respects analogous to that which ended his relations with King Constantine many years later. Prince George was not a sovereign, but he had been set up in a position of authority which Venizelos considered that he abused.

In opposing the counsels of a local leader whose adherents were faithful, numerous, and near at hand, he laid the foundation of his own undoing. His joyous welcome to Crete, when he first appeared as the herald of salvation to the islanders, no doubt accentuated his self-confidence. If he had been fortunate in his political instincts, he might well have placed himself at the outset under the guidance either of Sphakianakis or Venizelos, but he showed himself to be inimical to both. A man of no great ability himself, he made an enemy of one whose resourcefulness and talent have since become the talk of Europe. It was not necessary to read into so strange a future: Venizelos had a past sufficiently well known in Crete to make him recognisable as a great force. Allied in policy, he and the Prince might have gone some distance together; divided, it became a question of the survival of the fittest. The entire association was ruffled by disagreement, for a long time without extending to the Cretan people. There were many incidents of an apparently trivial character which sprang from curious causes. Prince George once thought of building a palace in the island: Venizelos discountenanced the proposal on the ground that the palace would imply the permanency of the High Commissionership and thus retard the progress of those who aimed at Hellenic annexation. It soon became obvious to him that the Prince had no aptitude for ruling Cretans: his absence of imagination, his lack of adaptability, and his over-confidence in himself dispelled any hope that he might some day become a capable administrator.

The needs of Crete were peculiar. The people had passed through a series of revolts against an outside authority and, at the same time, they had been at war among themselves.

The sinister hand which had until recently stretched across from Constantinople, almost at fixed periods, to be moistened with their blood, had now become invisible. But it was



known to hover menacingly in the air whenever the European diplomatists showed symptoms of exhaustion. And how often had they not grown weary of the Cretans and of the other little peoples who created correspondence with the Porte? The day in reality arrived when Abdul Hamid heard whispers about the situation at Canea. It was invigorating to learn that the chosen instrument of the Powers, the offspring of the King of Greece, was earning the same odium as an illustrious Moslem Vali.

The discord between Venizelos and Prince George was unfortunate during such a critical period, when the island was slowly passing from the darkness into the light. The fact that Venizelos threw down the gauntlet to a prince of the Greek dynasty, with Europe looking on, when his aim was Hellenic annexation, affords an insight into his character. He had fought the Turk, and now immediately afterwards he appeared ready to fight a Greek emissary extraordinary. He became intransigent because the High Commissioner was unfitted for the work in Crete. As this was so, it mattered little to Venizelos whether his opponent was the Caliph, the Sheik-ul-Islam, or the Emperor of Japan.

The final rupture between the Prince and Venizelos was certainly not brought about by the events of a day or a week; it was the cumulative effect of incidents extending over months and even years.

"When," writes M. Gaston Deschamps, "Prince George of Greece, younger brother of Constantine, was nominated High Commissioner in Crete by the four European Powers, M. Venizelos had the courage to prefer the democratic interests of the country to the favour of His Royal Highness. On perceiving that the administrative inexperience of the young Prince, whose studies had but scantily prepared him for his new situation, invited the risk of dissatisfying the population of the island and of delaying the complete and fraternal union of Crete with Liberated Hellenism, he did not hesitate to separate from a collaborator who did not appear to him to be sufficiently well equipped for such a difficult position."

It has been said that the estrangement resembled the notorious affair of King Constantine and his Prime Minister

in 1915. The Cretan episode displayed the inflexible will of the political leader pitted against the supreme constituted authority. There was a sharp struggle for mastery. Venizelos then went away to inaugurate a revolt, which ultimately led to the departure of the Prince.

The animosity of King Constantine towards Venizelos is said to have originated in this affair.

Prince George's European tour in the year 1900 had not been very successful. Early in January 1901 there were rumours that he would refuse to accept the renewal of his Cretan mandate unless the Powers gave their consent to the union of the island with Greece. Europe, as represented by England, France, Russia, and Italy, was equally determined still to maintain the autonomous political phase.

Fresh ideas, or combinations of ideas, were occasionally brought forward to induce the Powers to modify their attitude. The four nations that had undertaken to protect Crete remained at once amiable and firm. The Cretans and the friends of Crete were persistent. If they could not at that moment have their ambitions completely realised, they wished to approach the high road to realisation by more rapid strides. One proposal was submitted to substitute Hellenic troops in Crete for those of the International Force, and to establish in the island a Greek administration, while admitting the Sultan's nominal supremacy. But it left the Powers wholly unmoved. Venizelos now saw the futility of forcing the pace too swiftly; he won little honour for himself in advising restraint. If at all points the annexationists' appeals were rejected, they were never themselves rebuffed. When the Ambassadors of the Protecting Powers met at Rome, they only expressed the opinion that any manifestation in favour of union with Greece would be inopportune. They proposed to continue the existing provisional system of government in Crete without assigning a definite term to the Prince's mandate.

One day in the early spring of 1901, Venizelos made a speech in which he advocated the institution of an autonomous principality on the lines laid down by the Cretan

Constitution. He had observed the workings of various autonomous Balkan principalities, two of which had already blossomed into kingdoms. He was convinced that Crete, when the moment arrived for the isle to flower politically, could by a word unite its destiny with Greece. His speech created an uproar among the members of his audience, and aroused bitter indignation in Athens. Prince George saw and seized his opportunity.

In an instant his pent-up feeling found an easy and popular vent. The Prince declared that the sentiments expressed by Venizelos were at variance with the national interest and contrary to policy.

Venizelos was dismissed.

Local opinion was said to agree with the High Commissioner's action, but not all the Consuls of the Powers at Canea were so sure that it was wise.

The elections to the Chamber took place soon afterwards, when fifty-four members of the Opposition were returned, as against six supporters of the Government, of whom three were considered doubtful. Ten other deputies remained to be designated by Prince George. The new Assembly also had three Mahommedan members.

Venizelos forthwith applied himself to the task of re-organising his followers. The triumph of the High Commissioner was more irritating than humiliating.

On the last day of May, Prince George opened the Assembly with some references to the repatriation of the rural Moslem population, and to the success with which the general disarmament had been carried out. He said that it was not necessary to raise the loan of four million francs which had been authorised by the previous Assembly, although means must be found for the institution of public works and the encouragement of agriculture. After making some complimentary remarks about the International troops and the newly organised gendarmerie, the Prince turned to the deputies and addressed them on the question which was uppermost in the minds of all. "In Europe," said he, "I have repeated your ardent prayers for the union of Crete with Greece, but I was told that the Powers were unable to sanction any change in the political situation

here, and that they even advised that Cretans should not make premature demands."

When the Prince had retired, the Assembly passed a resolution thanking the Powers for all that had been done, but urging that the noble work should be completed by the concession of union. Such persistence was astonishing on the facts. The Moslem deputies, whose objections could not be heard in the general din, drew up a solemn written protest.

M. Michelidakis,<sup>1</sup> a member of the Opposition, was elected President of the Assembly.

Demonstrations in favour of Greek annexation followed swiftly upon these happenings. At Candia and Rethymos enthusiasm prevailed, and the sound of rejoicing echoed and re-echoed among the Hellenes of the mainland.

The High Commissioner rather inconsistently delivered to the Consuls a copy of the Assembly's resolution. The message from the Powers, to which he had but just given public utterance, appeared to make this action merit for him the rebuff which he actually received. When, indeed, he handed the document to the foreign representatives, they returned it without comment. The incident, if a trifling one, had the effect of raising the spirits of the Sultan. The man of massacres and masquerades promptly sent his Grand Master of Ceremonies to thank the four Ambassadors for rejecting, through the Consuls, the Cretans' impertinent demand.

The Prince was constantly meeting with bitter criticism in the Legislature. In July he demanded the right to nominate the various mayors. To this the deputies took the most vigorous exception. They said that the mayors must be elected by the people. Next the Prince claimed the right to control the Press.

The following month, he began one of his periodic tours to the capitals of the four Protecting Powers.

It happened, also in August, that a convention was signed between the Cretan Government and M. Adossides, the delegate of the Ottoman Public Debt. By it all rights and privileges in Crete were renounced in return for 1,500,000

<sup>1</sup> He was not a Venizelist.

francs and the concession of the salt monopoly for twenty years.

The year 1901 for Venizelos was ever-changing, but always from bad to worse. His dismissal had removed the value of his counsels from the circle of the Prince. The loss fell upon Crete. The Prince could offer no substitute. Papadiamantopoulos had been criticised and was disliked.

Although he remained a deputy, Venizelos was compelled to exercise his abilities outside the council chamber. He was thus handicapped in the performance of any national achievement, while men who were foreign to the land sat high in judgment.

In October the French and Russian Consuls were recalled from Crete. During the succeeding month there was some talk among the Constantinople Ambassadors because Turkey had failed to recognise the Cretan flag : vessels flying it had been refused entry to Ottoman ports.

When the term of the High Commissionership was approaching its close, the Powers advised the Prince to continue in office. On December 22 the anniversary of his arrival was celebrated with more than ordinary solemnity.

## CHAPTER XIII

WITH public opinion against him it was useless for Venizelos to press for an autonomous principality. In the month of December 1901 he abandoned the scheme and announced his intention of supporting union. His change of policy was made known in the first number of *The Herald*, a local Cretan newspaper. The sacrifice of public approval for one plan, which was not entirely understood, when another plan less subtle but all popular lay close at hand, would have yielded him nothing.

With the coming of the year 1902 he found himself at the head of an important political party with a clear issue before him. Twice in a period of about four years he had completely reversed his policy in the national interest. He was driven from the Presidency of the Assembly in 1897 because he stood for Greek annexation when Cretan autonomy had become the louder cry. He fell in 1901, for his ideas had become so unpopular that Prince George could with safety dismiss him. He was neither a chameleon, nor a turncoat, nor an ordinary careerist. He was a Cretan leader, and it was his function in life to lead, not to stand alone without a following.

Thus he became a unionist once more, a vigorous one, just as he had been in 1897. When there were public demonstrations in favour of union, he showed that the demonstrators had his support.

The conflict between Venizelos and Prince George smouldered. For convenience, cautious people only referred to it by leaving out the High Commissioner's name and using that of his secretary, still Papadiamantopoulos. Crete no longer commanded the services of Dr. Sphakianakis, who

had entirely withdrawn from politics and lived at Candia. Prince George remained the mandatory of the four Powers.

The judicial administration of the island underwent revision in 1902. The Assembly had passed a law empowering a Council of Justice to select candidates for the judicial appointments. To defeat the earlier work of selection, for which Venizelos was responsible, it was declared that all previous appointments were of a provisional character, and that the new nominations were to be submitted to the High Commissioner. The Council of Justice was composed of five members, of whom four were Greeks. The Procurator-General of the Court of Appeal was also a Greek, M. Tselos of Athens.

When he was Councillor of Justice, Venizelos had given time to the elaboration of new laws, among them those relating to fraudulent debtors and to minor civil causes. During the brief period before 1895, when he appeared as an advocate in the courts of law at Canea, he won an incomparable reputation as an orator. His value as a jurist in those days was fully recognised.

In the spring of 1902, Venizelos, who was then leader of the Opposition, confessed that he had never conceived making Crete into a permanent principality. He had suggested an autonomous government, with a local military force, for he considered that the presence of the International Force was a serious obstacle to the realisation of union. He also believed that the diplomatic difficulties in the way of the consummation of this aim would be appreciably lessened by a transitional administration. This is the true explanation for his conduct.

Prince George had advocated the union of Crete with Greece, but his real design was to obtain a personal union. The Prince's tendency to assume powers greatly in excess of those delegated to him, or even permissible through European indifference, and to ignore, or set aside, constitutional safeguards, was already notorious. When Venizelos proposed an autonomous principality the High Commissioner represented that it was intended to frustrate union. He even described it as a bold attempt to set up a separate Cretan kingdom: this charge was exactly contrary to the

truth. It was known that his father, the King of Greece, approved the creation of a viceregal government in Crete with the Prince himself at its head. The King also wanted to see viceroalties established in Samos and Rhodes for two of his other sons. The Greek Royal Family fell into some disfavour when these intentions became public, but the ultimate overthrow of Prince George in Crete brought the King's visions to an end.

Venizelos before his dismissal recommended a scheme which took into consideration the wishes, fully and repeatedly expressed, of the Great Powers. If he did not then clamour for union, his guiding principle, it was because he considered it impolitic. He nevertheless set himself the task of devising the quickest and safest plan to advance, logically, step by step, to that goal. We have seen that his reward was to be placed in a false position, of which Prince George took the fullest advantage.

During the period that Venizelos was suffering the full force of his unpopularity, the High Commissioner was busily occupied in winning the favour of the Cretans. His importunate demands upon the Powers to compel Turkey to carry out certain reforms met with small response. In July 1901, the Prince had urged that protection should be given to Cretans in Turkey. He asked for the repatriation of inhabitants convicted in Crete during the former rule, but undergoing imprisonment on the mainland. He also laid before the Powers the Cretan Government's claim to levy dues for harbour improvements. A year later, his demands had not been satisfied.

The High Commissioner was an itinerant Prince, one interminably *en voyage*. His close family ties with the principal Courts of Europe tempted him into rounds of visits which must have been fatiguing to every one concerned. The proposed coronation of King Edward irresistibly attracted him: so much so that we find him sailing gaily off from Canea on June 11, 1902, on board the yacht *Amphitrite*, *en route* for London. Nearly three months later—September 5—we discover him as far away as St. Petersburg conferring importantly with Count Lamsdorff, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. The instinct without the capacity for



intrigue appears to have been one of Prince George's notable attributes.

It was the day of the Little Three—of the Prince, M. Papadiamantopoulos, and M. Koundouros in Crete. It was an inglorious day of trifling achievement. The partisans of Venizelos had a hard life and met with "implacable persecution." At this stage the struggle had not reached the point of armed conflict; it was a contest between wits on one side and tyrannous authority on the other. The very difficulties, which rose up in a solid phalanx to prevent the reascendancy of the national leader, gave breadth to his experience and sharpened to an extraordinary degree his already very acute intelligence. Venizelos himself says that the negotiations which he conducted with the Admirals in the days of Akrotiri awakened his diplomatic instincts, but assuredly he owes the development of his other qualities to the period of stress and strain which imposed upon him the need for watchfulness, resource, and courage. No European political leader has had to face, fight, and conquer one tithe of the obstacles which were strewn by fate with a generous hand along the path of the illustrious Cretan. Not a very robust man physically, he overcame hardship by the sheer insistence of his will and the inspiring effect of his genius.

On the last day of the year 1902 there was an extraordinary demonstration outside the High Commissioner's residence at Halepa, near Canea. Amid scenes of intense enthusiasm, the crowds cried "Long live Union!" The Crown Prince Constantine and his wife Sophia, the Emperor William's sister, were present with Prince George, and the town, the suburbs, and the mountains were brilliantly illuminated to celebrate the occasion.

A couple of days later the Princess and the two Princes departed on the *Amphitrite*. It so happened that Prince George was absent for three weeks. When he returned to Canea he brought with him his mother, the Queen of the Hellenes, who came to witness the consecration of a church which had been built in the district with funds supplied by the Grand Duchess Marie.

Although all the Cretans were in agreement upon the union question in the early days of the new year, 1903 was

destined to show a greater schism than ever between the Venizelists and the Ministerialists. Prince George went to Candia on March 1, preparatory to making a tour of the interior of the island. The High Commissioner's journeyings preceded the elections by so short an interval that his intention to influence the voting was obvious. The Venizelists were exasperated beyond measure with the Government, or Court, party, whose principal figure was the irrepressible Papadiamantopoulos. The Prince's private secretary had the most active support of his master in all matters.

Prince George "stumped" the country of Sphakia, Monofatsi, Lassithi, and Pediada, winning adherents to the Government not only with his smiles, but often with the promise of public office to the latest convert.

Venizelos declared at the time that the tour was electoral and that the High Commissioner "used his whole influence" against the candidates of the Opposition. He also referred to the Prince's efforts to seduce these very candidates by the offer of Government appointments.

One day a good and prominent Venizelist, M. Polychronides, was felled senseless in the streets of Candia. It was a scandalous incident. There were others. The Athenian Press began to be attracted anew to the state of affairs in Crete.

There is little wonder that, when the election results were announced, the Venizelist party was found to have been beaten to the earth. Only six candidates had been returned in the whole island. Some days later, Prince George went to Athens.

When the Chamber of Deputies opened on May 4 a further resolution was passed by the Cretans in favour of union with Greece. It was prayed that the Protecting Powers might give effect to this unalterable desire.

In the following August the High Commissioner requested the Italian Foreign Minister to use his influence in the matter. The Foreign Minister was a member of the Conference, whose other members were the Ambassadors at Rome of Russia, Great Britain, and France. Prince George believed that it was a propitious moment to force Turkey to acquiesce, owing to the attitude of the Athens Government on the

revolution, then efflorescent, in Macedonia. Albeit, the appeal led to no material change.

The situation in Crete was truly disquieting. The behaviour of Prince George over the elections had added a great deal of fuel to the fire. The Venizelists felt more and more acutely that they had serious grievances against him. His maladministration of the island, with a Court clique to do his bidding ; his likes and his dislikes ; his Papadiamantopoulism ; his defiance of Venizelos ; and his natural hatred for every one and anything tending to minimise his magic authority as absolute, if unanointed, sovereign of Crète, produced so much friction that an outbreak became inevitable. He was gradually poisoning the minds of those who were best among the Cretan people. His self-confidence far exceeded his ability, and his vanity was a defect which made him appear ridiculous.

The year passed : 1904 began. Venizelos, the poor lean man of the mountains, whose very existence was an outrage upon authority, was at bay. Beyond the palace wall, there were some who felt that the situation was growing worse every day. It was growing worse every hour in May 1904.

Among those who had seen clearly the black clouds on the horizon was Professor Anthony Jannaris. Without thought of the consequences to himself, he addressed two private letters to Prince Nicholas of Greece, in which he set out the popular grievances against the sway of Prince George and Papadiamantopoulos. He explained how unconstitutional were the actions of the High Commissioner ; he complained of the abolition of the freedom of the Press and the interference with local self-government by the central authorities. He deplored, like many other thoughtful persons, the absence of a responsible administration as provided by the Constitution. But Jannaris, in his sincerity and eagerness to make known the difficulties which beset the islanders, had ignored the principles of *lèse majesté*. Not that they could be applied in Greece or in Crete ; but they existed in the minds of the Hellenic Royal Family. The erring Professor was cast into gaol, charged with using language insulting to Prince George, convicted and sentenced

to two years' imprisonment. There was a petition, but the conviction was upheld. The actual prosecution was based on the criminal law of libel under the Greek Code.

Under the Sultan, Crete was divided into two armed camps by religion ; under Prince George, political feeling was the cause of dissension. In both cases the trouble was general and extended to the entire island. The arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment of Jannaris, a former lecturer in a Scottish University, denoted a very reckless spirit in the High Commissioner and his advisers. The unfortunate man had written the two letters to Prince Nicholas merely with the object of enlisting the support of the Greek Court against the abuses of the Cretan Government. The letters had been marked "Confidential." Jannaris might well have recalled the Biblical injunction, "Place not your trust in princes," and acted guardedly, but, conscious of the urgency of the situation, he threw all caution to the winds and spoke his mind. Prince Nicholas, it seems, turned the correspondence over to his brother.

The sentence of two years' imprisonment was the maximum which could be inflicted for the offence alleged. After all, Jannaris was not a fanatical reformer ; his criticism of the Cretan administration was not without justification ; it was, indeed, the criticism which many people had made.

After the Jannaris episode, a delegation of island notables presented a petition to Prince George wherein the grievances to which the professor had given expression were set out independently. A great deal of feeling undoubtedly existed because of the loss of the freedom of the Press, the interference with the people's right to elect mayors and other municipal authorities, the intimidation of voters at parliamentary elections, and the subservience of Parliament itself. The Prince had exercised monarchical privileges, when at most he was the agent of the Protecting Powers. His installation as High Commissioner had certainly delighted the Cretans at first, as the idea of having a son of the Greek King in charge of their fate was almost a miraculous change so soon after the eclipse of the Sultan. The novelty had worn off, and now there was nothing left to show that as an

administrator the Prince was an improvement upon the Valis who had preceded him.

Solutions were offered from time to time ; the most persistent was the union of Crete with Greece. The Cretans were resolved that it should be a veritable union, by which they would stand on equal terms with the Greeks and not rank as a subjugated people. Crete was not to be regarded as a fief of King George of Greece. Failing union, there were such alternatives as the appointment of a European High Commissioner—an Austrian, or a Belgian, or a Swiss--the nomination of a Greek Prince with a European assistant, or the establishment of a system of administration in some respects resembling that of Austria in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In August 1904, Prince George set out on another of his innumerable pilgrimages to the European capitals to lay the Cretan question before his official masters. On September 3 he was received by Signor Tittoni, the Italian Foreign Minister. About a fortnight before his departure large meetings in favour of union had once more been held in Crete. The Venizelists had held separate meetings, in order to show that there was no division in the island on this subject.

## CHAPTER XIV

IN the late autumn of 1904, Lord Lansdowne expressed the opinion that the Protecting Powers could do no more than promise Prince George neither to annex Crete themselves nor to allow any other Power to do so, except with the consent of the inhabitants of the island. The British Foreign Secretary considered that if the financial situation could be improved in Crete, where the Government had no credit and the revenue was insufficient, the demands of the natives for union with Greece would be altogether less pressing. Prince George's allowance as High Commissioner had always exceeded by £2000 a year the sum originally agreed upon, and his Government was also considered to be conducted on a relatively extravagant scale. The Powers, nevertheless, showed a disposition to assist the island by waiving for a certain number of years their claims to interest on the Cretan loan,<sup>1</sup> and also by supporting a scheme to cover the cost of carrying out the necessary public works. It was proposed among other things to send two financial experts to Crete. The diplomatic correspondence indicates that each step, suggested from time to time by one Power or another, had to be carefully and gently felt before the whole group would attempt to put their feet down firmly and stand upright. The process is reminiscent of a timid bather who puts his foot in the cold and ruffled sea, only to withdraw it swiftly the next moment, repeating the action at intervals before the final, desperate plunge.

Weeks and even months had passed by in the exchange of the polite futilities which invariably preceded the smallest European decision on Cretan affairs, when one day, towards

<sup>1</sup> Of four million francs.

the end of March 1905, M. Delcassé, the French Foreign Minister, received a message from Canea to say that Venizelos, at the head of armed forces hostile to Prince George's Government, had taken to the hills.

On the night of March 20, M. Marcantonakis, the friend and companion of Venizelos, had been sent to Greece as the intermediary of the revolutionaries. He was the bearer of a letter from Venizelos to Delyannes. The Prime Minister received him, but the interview led to nothing. Later, and with the same absence of success, M. Scoulas, M. Marcantonakis, and M. Gianalakis laid the case for the Venizelists before the King.

The Venizelist Chiefs themselves were quickly rallying round them the most seasoned fighters of Crete. The main body, already 2000 strong, with 600 rifles, was concentrating in the region of the White Mountains.

Rapid conferences took place between the Consuls-General of the Powers at Canea; panic occurred among the Mussulmans; while talk of reinforcing the gendarmerie with troops from the International Force was heard everywhere.

Excitement had blazed up like a sudden flame in the night. Every Cretan who had gone to the hills was a veteran. Venizelos was in command. Fournis and Manos were with him. The revolution of Therisso was at hand. Drums were beaten in the barracks of the Internationals. The townspeople prayed or shouted as the spirit moved them. It was war. It was revolution. It was Venizelism against Autocracy. The house of cards, the monument of Papadiamantopoulism, was about to be pulled down.

The High Commissioner's fury was tempered now and then by frenzied waves of exultation. If he had been an angry Figaro, he would have cried to Europe, "I told you so!" but he was not an angry Figaro. "All my previsions which I had the pleasure of exposing to you," he declared sourly, "are realised to-day. . . . After waiting for more than four months for an answer to the questions I laid before the Powers on my last visit, I now pray the four Governments to indicate to me what I ought to do and what I can do." There were other remarks in the same vein.

The Prince was helpless. Papadiamantopoulism had failed him at the first real test. But what could Europe do? A British squadron was anchored at Suda. The vessels composing it were not landships; they could scarcely climb mountains. Who, indeed, would have cared to start off for Therisso in pursuit of the Cretan leader?

Armed bands of Venizelists were making for the chief rendezvous. An encounter between gendarmes and Insurgents had been reported in the first moments of the revolt. That was a mere incident, a detail of no importance. All these hurrying, hardy Cretans were bent upon some mission higher than a brush with the police or a fracas with the European Force. Were they not, after all, or before all, Venizelists, whose leader valued brains above bloodshed?

What, then, did they do at Therisso?

In a great concourse they proclaimed the political union of Crete and Greece. They proclaimed the island and the motherland a single State, free and constitutional. "*Le peuple crétois, réuni en assemblée générale à Thérissos de Cydonie, aujourd'hui le 11/24 mars 1905, proclame son union politique au Royaume de Grèce, en un seul État libre et constitutionnel.*" These were the actual words of the *plébiscite*, which was signed in the Church of St. George of Therisso.

M. Papayanakis was elected President of the Assembly. There were four Vice-Presidents. M. Manos was the Secretary-General. But it was Venizelos who towered over them all and over the multitude.

M. Maurouard, the French Consul-General at Canea, blames the Venizelists for starting what he calls a seditious agitation, but he explains their action with great lucidity.

"The primary origin of to-day's happenings," he writes in one of his first reports on the uprising, "is found in the exclusion of these notable Cretans from the Government which systematically kept them at a distance. It would have been cleverer to have looked for a way to utilise, as far as possible, their abilities. Many of the Venizelists' proposals for political reforms, especially those which concern the development of certain liberal institutions, are in harmony with the spirit of the Greco-Cretan popula-



tion. The allusion which they make to the need for economic development in the island corresponds with a most desirable ideal."

On the day after the Therisso proclamation, M. Papanakis and M. Manos communicated to the Consuls a summary of the events which led Venizelos into revolt.

"Seven years ago," they wrote, "the Great Powers conceded, and the Cretan people were obliged to accept, autonomy. Autonomy was considered as a purely transitory stage on the way to the final liberation, which, in conformity with the unalterable desires of the people, could only mean the union of the island with Greece. Despite the provisional nature of the *régime*, the Cretan people, not only out of deference to the Great Powers, but also in their own interest, sincerely co-operated in the scheme. Unfortunately the duration of autonomy has been lengthier than the vitality of such a hybrid and transitory arrangement will permit."

The two Venizelists then stated that the financial condition of Crete weighed heavily "on a country so small and so poor." They also explained that autonomy meant separation from the Customs system of every other political organism, and that as a result of the provisional and uncertain character of autonomous government, it was impossible to attract the foreign capital necessary for the economic development of the island. They next referred to the national discontent, "which augments day by day"; they also complained that the Cretan people, against their eminently liberal tendencies, had come to be governed "after a fashion not very remote from pure absolutism."

The actual document shows that the Cretan leaders remained reasonable in their interpretations to the end. The last paragraph may be placed on record as an example of what outlawry with ideals may attain to :

Mais jusqu'à notre organisation définitive qui nous permettra de pouvoir assumer la responsabilité du gouvernement provisoire de toutes les parties de l'île, sur lesquelles s'étend le plébiscite de l'union, nous ne nous bornerons pas seulement à reconnaître les autorités qui fonctionnent aujourd'hui hors du village de Thérissos où nous siégeons, mais nous leur donnerons toute notre assistance, pour rendre possible le maintien de l'ordre public.

If the words do not bear the signature of Venizelos, at least they bear the imprint of his mind.

The citadel of the High Commissioner during these days contained a shaken and anxious group of nonentities. By day and by night Prince George was despatching messages for European intervention, and, terrified lest Venizelos should be able to muster all the men in the island, he was frantic with apprehension. At last he saw his blunders in a clear light. Then one day the news reached him that the Czar's Cretan contingent was to march into the mountains with the gendarmes.

The Foreign Ministers of the Powers were much engaged in dictating phrases on the exact degree of intervention required to restore order in Crete. As there was no real lack of unanimity among them, they succeeded in their efforts to reach a complete understanding and, on March 21, a detachment of the International Force was set in motion, with orders to proceed to Alikiano and there to await events. It was intended that the troops should exercise the utmost prudence and self-restraint; the Venizelist leaders were to be invited to enter into *pourparlers* with a delegation of European officers.

Within a few days these *pourparlers* actually took place.

In the meantime Dr. Sphakianakis, who, as we know, ranked high among Cretan patriots, was about to acquit himself of the duty of giving public support to the Venizelists. On April 3 he addressed a great meeting at Candia as the ardent champion of the Therisso movement and its instigators. A resolution was then and there passed for union with Greece, followed by the hoisting of the Greek flag over the Prefecture and the municipal offices.

The previous day the Consuls had notified the High Commissioner that the Protecting Powers were opposed to any revolutionary experiment tending to alter the political status of Crete. The Prince was assured that the orders given to the International troops were sufficiently definite to show that he had the unanimous support of Europe.

Within twenty-four hours the long-delayed Collective

Note on "the observations presented by His Royal Highness during his recent voyage in Europe" was delivered to "the Prince High Commissioner."

The Note announced that the Powers were unable to modify the political status of Crete; they were prepared to undertake neither to annex the island themselves nor to permit any other Power to do so against the wishes of the inhabitants;<sup>1</sup> they agreed to reduce their military contingents to half strength whenever order was re-established, and they expressed some interest in the future increase of the Cretan gendarmerie to meet this eventuality. Cretans were recommended to concentrate on the economic development of the island and, to encourage them, the payment of interest due on the loan of four million francs was waived for five years. Moreover, two experts were to examine the possibilities of financial reconstruction. As a special manifestation of goodwill, the Sultan was to be admonished about the detention of Cretans in Ottoman prisons and also ordered to recognise the Cretan flag, as well as Cretan judicial acts.

With the arrival of the Internationals at Alikiano in the afternoon of March 31, Colonel Lubanski, of the French Army, at once sent a message to the Venizelist Chiefs to propose an interview for the following day at the village of Fournéo on the Platanos.

This rendezvous proved to be acceptable to the Insurgents and, at mid-day on April 1, M. Fournis and M. Manos met the delegation of European officers.

In the words of Colonel Lubanski, "I first defined the object of the interview, which was to induce the Insurgents to cease their manifestation and return to legal methods, so that their programme of political reforms might be valued according to its merit.

"M. Fournis and M. Manos," continued the Colonel, "replied very respectfully that they had received orders not to engage in *pourparlers* until the following question had been answered: 'What exactly are the actual inten-

<sup>1</sup> Austria-Hungary subscribed to this understanding, and Germany had declared herself to be, as in the past, disinterested in the affairs of Crete,

tions of the Protecting Powers regarding the annexation of the island of Crete by Greece ? ’

“ I at once responded that I would communicate their desideratum to my Chief, who, in turn, if he felt so disposed, would refer it to the right quarter.

“ As such net language was not conducive to the advance of the negotiations, I was willing to listen coldly to some of the claims formulated by the missioners in turn. I only interrupted them to say that this part of the interview must be regarded as outside the negotiations. I repeated my earlier exhortations and suggested a further meeting.

“ I may point out that during the morning the troops composing the detachment sent to Alikiano had executed a small manœuvre in the valley of Platanos which had terminated in a prolonged halt, in deployed formation, on a hill within sight of Fournéo. The Insurgent Chiefs, in returning to Therisso, could not avoid seeing the troops or their national flags.”

When Colonel Lubanski left the Venizelists he returned to Canea to consult with the officer commanding the International garrison. The latter directed him to get into touch again with the Insurgents without delay. “ My orders were,” continues Colonel Lubanski’s narrative, “ to read to the Insurgents this message : ‘ The Protecting Powers are in unanimous accord not to permit, under the existing conditions, the annexation of the island by the Kingdom of Greece.’

“ I was authorised, after reading the message, to allow the Insurgents, as if without previous intention on my part, to state their political programme in writing.

“ I left Canea at two o’clock in the morning of April 2—accompanied by a gendarme—and duly reached the outskirts of Therisso, after passing through the villages of Fournéo and Mescla. An Insurgent I met between Fournéo and Mescla volunteered to act as my guide. About eight o’clock I effected contact with M. Venizelos, M. Fournis, and M. Manos, at a distance of 200 yards or so from Therisso. I began by arranging that our group should remain isolated.

“ ‘ The Commandant of the International troops,’ I said, ‘ has delegated me to read aloud to you a short note

which replies to the question formulated by you at your previous interview.' I then read the note. Afterwards M. Manos,<sup>1</sup> who took a copy, engaged in a private conversation with his two companions. He then addressed me.

" 'Our party,' he declared, 'which at the present moment, and as far as one can say, represents the desire of all Cretans, bows before the latest decision of the Powers which it has been possible for you to make known to us. We shall adjourn the realisation of our supreme aim, and trust implicitly in the Protecting Powers, for whom the Cretan people are known to entertain both deference and respect.'

" M. Venizelos and M. Fournis supported this declaration.

" Before proceeding to the latter portion of my mission, and to give it a secondary or accidental character, I allowed myself, as I had done before, to listen to a recital of the policy of the Opposition party. At the moment which seemed to be most favourable, I proposed to my companions that they should themselves commit to writing the reforms, political and administrative, they thought to be desirable. To give time for the accomplishment of this work, I said that, as I had spent half of the night on horseback, I would repose myself for an hour or two under an olive tree, but M. Venizelos thereupon told me that it was impossible to trace, off-hand, a programme touching such grave questions. He said that he would have to concert a plan with all his friends, who were more or less scattered over the entire island owing to the elections. In eight days, he declared, he could supply the necessary information. I again suggested that it might not really be worth so much trouble, as I only proposed the making of notes as an aid to my memory. In spite of all, M. Venizelos persisted in his wish to consult his friends.

" I then took my leave, after stating that any papers which might be prepared should be addressed to me per-

<sup>1</sup> M. Manos, who was an Oxford man, helped Venizelos to perfect his English during moments of leisure at Therisso. Although the author has always talked with the statesman in French, he learns from M. Cacalmanos that Venizelos sometimes uses an interpreter for English conversations. When the interpreter makes a mistake, Venizelos quickly interrupts him in excellent English.

sonally, for no one else had any claim to receive them. I insinuated also that the period of eight days must not be counted as a necessary phase in the *pourparlers* ; in a word, that the whole question was subsidiary and only by chance might the document be of utility.

“ I refused for reasons which these gentlemen understood to penetrate into the village or to accept the coffee which they had had prepared for me. But I could not help remarking that the group of 100 to 130 armed men, who were stationed at a point one hundred yards from us, saluted my departure with the cry, “ Long live the Protecting Powers ! ’ ”

## CHAPTER XV

THE Therisso insurrection spread like wildfire over the island. It soon manifested all the aspects of a general rising, and Prince George was not slow to make known the many fears which assailed him. From his stronghold he daily urged the Consuls to secure greater help from Europe. The situation had suddenly become extremely complicated. Apparently, neither the Prince nor his supporters could find an immediate remedy of sufficient effect to overcome the Venizelists. Venizelos himself had spent much thought on the details of the revolt, with the consequence that it was not to be quelled by such simple expedients as those within the reach of the High Commissioner. The Cretan had a fund of experience, with an exact knowledge of the forces which might be slowly turned against him. Although he had, of necessity, to conceive measures to counter the possible action of the Protecting Powers, he knew very well that France, England, Russia, and Italy had no intention of starting a great punitive campaign in an island where the non-revolutionaries shared precisely the same ideal as the rebels. If Venizelos had taken to the hills to inaugurate an outbreak against the Cretan Government, making the Prince's shortcomings the sole basis for a rebellion, his action, however justifiable in the opinion of his friends, would have attracted fewer sympathisers. He made union or annexation the war-cry of Therisso, for it was bound to be effective. Union, as the aim of the High Commissioner and all his satellites, offered harmless material for propaganda: it excited enthusiasm, and left the Christians undivided at heart.

The Therisso *plébiscite*, the first remark addressed to Lubanski by Fournis and Manos at Fournéo, and the talk of the elders and the gossip of the people, showed that

union was either branded on everything or was in the mouths of all. Venizelism meant Crete united with Greece. It also meant the expulsion of the misgovernors, but this was to be the effect and not the cause. There is little wonder that Prince George felt unequal to the task of suppressing Venizelos single-handed. All, indeed, depended upon the Protecting Powers. The French statesman, M. Delcassé, recognised the Venizelists' point of view, when he said the "revolt is directed above all against the Government of the island, and the complaints which are made against it do not appear to be wholly without foundation."

Friction was threatened at the elections, which necessitated the despatch of the Internationals to certain villages here and there. No doubt the more unruly of the Venizelists were troublesome occasionally; who, indeed, could forget the way the elections of the previous year had been influenced by Prince George and the Court party? If there were scuffles now and then in which election urns were mistaken for footballs, it is at least possible to understand the mistake. In the result, Michelidakis and Koundouros combined raked together a majority for the Prince in the Chamber.

Colonel Lubanski, the wily negotiator of Fourneo and Therisso, was sorely disappointed by the contents of the letter which he ultimately received from the Venizelists. Instead of walking into a trap, even a trap with a broken spring, they merely said that an *exposé* of their case was untimely. The one and only demand contained in the letter was, of course, "*Union of Crete with Greece.*" Maurouard, the French Consul, added, "And they know quite well that this is impossible."

In the last days of April a serious conflict occurred at Bukolies between the Insurgents and the gendarmes. Three of the latter and two of the former were killed. Fifteen unarmed peasants were wounded. During the encounter the gendarmerie barracks were burnt down by the population.

At Candia, on May 2, a British detachment lowered the Greek flag, which had been flying over Government House, and hoisted the Cretan colours in its place. The ceremony was carried out with discretion and no untoward incident



was reported. Dr. Sphakianakis' real work had been done in supporting "the men of Therisso" before the gathering at Candia on April 3. His prestige among all sorts of Cretans was based upon his high character and patriotism. When he decided to give his support to Venizelos and the Therisso movement, thousands of waverers straightway went over to the Insurgents. The act of lowering the Greek flag and running up the flag of Crete, not only at Government House, Candia, but at many other points in the island, was badly timed to undo the political conversion of the Sphakianakist-Venizelists. They remained unshaken.

It was a very troublous season. Everything had again been thrown into the political melting-pot. Europe, utterly tired of Crete, watched the islanders with some anxiety and not a little irritation. Even the Prince began to show active signs of submitting to the de-control of the Press and the municipal authorities. He was destined to reach such a desperate, or democratic, state of mind that he was prepared to allow his own most splendid feathers to be plucked out, one by one; but his plumage had, in truth, begun to moult before any one attempted this woeful and ominous task.

During the opening of the Chamber on April 20 he had spoken of economics and reforms in a loud voice. The Chamber, after he and the members of the Consular Corps had departed, showed that it moved as swiftly as the times by voting the old formula, "Union with Greece."

Four days later the Cretan Conference resumed its sittings at Rome. The position of the Powers was a singularly uncomfortable one in those days. To extinguish the Cretan question they would at certain moments perhaps have overthrown any opponent or thrown over any friend. They often almost conveyed this impression in so many words. There was a whisper that Turkey might with advantage be reinstated. Fortunately the majority refused to hear it. They were not themselves eager to carry out the work of exterminating Cretans. But what alternative action could they take? The point was debated. By general consent among the members of the Conference, it was decided to adopt the expedient of issuing a manifesto in Crete.

This momentous decision was put into operation at Canea on May 12: the Cretans were told to abandon all idea of union, to live in hope of administrative and financial reforms, and to beware of seditious inclinations, "as the Protecting Powers are firmly resolved to have recourse to whatever naval and military measures are necessary to assure respect for their decision to re-establish order."

A fortnight later Prince George addressed a letter to M. Delcassé, in which "acute astonishment, and at the same time great chagrin," were expressed in the first sentence. The High Commissioner allowed his feelings to run riot. All the emotions which had been accumulating in his breast for half-a-dozen years came to the surface.

He discharged a broadside of complaints and recriminations at the four Foreign Ministries, which were already more than half swamped by the troubles of Crete. The Prince was in a frenzy of indignation because of the reports which had been circulated concerning his private secretary.

The innocent Papadiamantopoulos; the wicked Consuls at Canea; the vain and adventurous Venizelos: according to the High Commissioner, such innocence, such wickedness, and such vanity had never before been known to exist in one island:

I learn with acute astonishment, and at the same time with great chagrin, that certain Governments attribute to my entourage, and especially to my private secretary, the seditious movement which for the past two months has disturbed the calm and hope of six years' standing.

Your Excellency will permit me, I trust, to explain, in all frankness, my thoughts and actions, which will not allow me to admit the accusation, an entirely unjust one. After all, this accusation is founded upon no evidence whatever and finds support only in the rumours which are echoed in the reports of some of the Consuls-General.

After occupying the position of High Commissioner of the Protecting Powers for six years, I am able to distinguish the true causes which have led to the revolutionary movement and encouraged the prolongation of disorder and anarchy.

To understand perfectly the situation and to recognise on whom the responsibility for the past six years should rest, it is necessary to divide into two distinct parts the work relating to the political questions of the island. The first part includes the

condition of affairs from the time of my arrival in 1898 down to the inauguration of the seditious movement; and the second part, the movement in itself and the manner in which it has been dealt with.

In respect of the first part, I will recall to your Excellency the memorandum which I had the pleasure of sending to you in 1901. I explained in a very detailed fashion the ruling inclination of the Cretan people, an inclination in accordance with national aspirations. I also indicated what would follow inevitably if the Cretans saw that the provisional system created by the four Great Powers was to be extended beyond the first three years. The passage of these three years would, I knew, encourage the hope in the people that the Cretan question was to be settled definitely.

Unfortunately, the Powers would not admit my arguments, and proposed to me the renewal of my mandate for an unknown period. Though foreseeing the great difficulties that were being created for me by this decision, I accepted the renewal of the mandate, inspired solely by a sentiment of duty and devotion to my country.

The state of opinion in the island from that time has been very uncertain upon all that concerned my position and my rights as High Commissioner of the Powers. That this should be so is only natural, as the position of the Consuls-General and the International troops was never defined nor were our common relations. The Consuls-General failed to communicate to me the instructions which they received from their respective Governments, although they kept their Governments informed of the happenings in Crete, without ever addressing themselves to me to ask for or receive explanations for my own acts, the decisions of the Cretan Government, or the administration of the island. I myself addressed to the Powers proposals for the solution of the administrative and financial problems. I also, for example, made suggestions on the relations which ought to exist between the High Commissioner and the International Force. At the beginning I addressed the Governments through the approved channel of the Consuls-General. But as I found that my words and my prayers were unheeded I thought that the Consuls-General had perhaps refrained from forwarding my demands or my explanations or had reported them incorrectly. I then resorted to the method of addressing myself direct to the Foreign Ministers, because all the necessary questions concerning the maintenance of autonomy and the restraint of impatience in the people were left unanswered.

The impatience of the people for the realisation of their national ideals increased day by day. As a result, the dema-

gogues and malcontents, who exist in all countries, but especially here, where many men expect to live at the cost of the State Exchequer, found it extremely easy to provoke disorders and manifestations, having for their aim the satisfaction of personal vanity or private interest.

Shortly after my first journey in Europe, when I had interviews with the Foreign Ministers on the Cretan question and on the detailed memorandum to which I have already referred, M. Venizelos, then Councillor for Justice, perceiving that my efforts for annexation came to nothing, commenced to work on a new scheme to convert the autonomous state into a principality. Unfortunately, as the Governments of the Protecting Powers are aware, some of the Consuls-General were prepared to facilitate his activities.

In vain I tried, with all my force, to induce M. Venizelos to abandon an idea which could only have vexatious and even dangerous consequences, both for Crete and Greece. Apparently encouraged by the support of the Consuls, he insisted, entirely against my wishes, I repeat, on making his proposition public. This new attitude on the solution of the Cretan problem bred, as I knew it would, a polemic of hostility in the Press. I, who was from the first opposed to his plan, was forced, in order to prevent any false interpretation of my motives, to rid myself of his services.

I think your Excellency will understand how difficult was my position in the circumstances. I am sure it will be admitted that if I had lent my attention to a solution of the Cretan question by the erection of a principality, even with myself as Prince of Crete, I should have been considered a traitor to Hellenism and a usurper of the rights of my father, H.M. the King of the Hellenes.

M. Venizelos, who wished to avenge himself against me, continued after his loss of office to have the protection and encouragement of certain Consuls, a protection which continued after the replacement of these functionaries themselves. I affirm that, to this very day, when he stands established at the head of the seditionists, he receives official support.

Unable to place himself against me openly, he has lanced his poisoned arrows against my private secretary, whom he has calumniated in every way, in the hope that, with the departure of this gentleman, in whom I repose the utmost confidence, he could operate more freely for the realisation of his personal interests and his immense ambitions. He was able to arrange that the calumnies and accusations which he unjustly levelled at M. Papadiamantopoulos should reach the ears of the Consuls.

All the employees of the Consulates, except a very few, and even the Vice-Consuls at Candia and Rethymo, are entirely devoted

to M. Venizelos, and, consequently, the Consuls-General, perhaps against their natural inclinations, live in an atmosphere of Venizelist aspirations and opposition, receiving all news and all information moulded in a manner to suit the political views of the transmitters.

The Consuls are thus never able to judge public opinion. In order to show your Excellency to what extent my words are correct, I have only to inform you that several of the Vice-Consuls, to whom I have made reference, have themselves taken part in the latest Venizelist demonstrations, while others have encouraged the movement either by words carrying a quasi-official authority, or by giving or receiving money for the cause of Venizelos.

I ought to make it clear to your Excellency that the Venizelist party has never been persecuted. I have on no occasion permitted an adviser of an opposite party to dismiss an employee who might be considered a Venizelist, unless the latter has shown himself to be incapable of the service confided to him.

Two-thirds of the members of the civil service belong to the Venizelist party. It is due to my goodwill and leniency that we have to-day such great difficulties. M. Venizelos, when he was in Opposition, assumed more privileges than the Ministerial party, and, curiously enough, while the majority said nothing, he complained all the time that he was unfairly treated, and that it was, above all, my private secretary who was the cause of the trouble. The latter does not mix himself up with the administration, but his position obliges him to come into contact with the political world more frequently when he is executing my orders.

In the Chamber, out of the sixty-four elected deputies the party of M. Venizelos only returned four.

M. Venizelos now demands the dismissal of my private secretary. Were I to accede to this demand, and I will not dwell upon the great injustice which I should inflict upon an excellent man whom most people deeply respect, would it not be a triumph for those who are to-day outlaws; men who stand in direct opposition to the wishes expressed by the Powers?

Were I, indeed, to adopt the course suggested, it would have disastrous results in the future: the prestige of my authority would be extinguished. How could I ever admit to discussion the subject of replacing or not replacing a person in my private service, one, moreover, who is not in the pay of the State?

Your Excellency will now permit me to deal with what I designate the second part of the question, namely, with the measures which have been taken since the commencement of the seditious movement.

I confess that the Consuls-General worked out all their plans

for re-establishing order without me, and it is no exaggeration to say that I had to depend upon the Press to learn what was passing. Never did the Consuls consult me ; never did they make known to me their decisions ; and when I asked for support to be given to the gendarmerie, or for the military occupation of this place or that, they never followed my suggestions. The outcome of it all has been that a movement which could have been repressed in twenty-four hours by the International troops has now dragged on for two months ; and, to be stamped out, will involve more troops and increased expenditure.

The first action of the Consuls was to despatch a column of 150 men drawn from the contingents of the four Powers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Lubanski was sent with this column to acquaint the Insurgent Chiefs with the determination of the Powers to re-establish order. As Colonel Lubanski had but lately arrived in Crete, I considered it my duty to talk with him and explain the state of affairs. I requested him, therefore, to come to see me.

I explained to him that it was necessary to be firm with the Cretans if he proposed to attain the object of his mission. I supplemented my remark by saying that, as he was not under my orders, I considered it my duty to tell him how best to manage the people. I advised him to inform the Insurgents that the Powers were firmly decided to enforce the peace in Crete, and that all the inhabitants ought at once to lay down their arms. Otherwise, serious action would have to be taken. The Colonel appeared to share my opinion.

Your Excellency can judge of my astonishment when, the same night, Lubanski let me know that he had seen the Insurgent leaders, and told them that the International column had accompanied him for the sole purpose of military exercises. The Insurgents were delighted, and with reason, and thereupon returned to the mountains. Colonel Lubanski pretends that he followed the instructions of the Consuls-General, whereas the latter assert that he worked on his own initiative and contrary to their instructions.

Since then the Insurgents, encouraged by their first success, carry on the campaign by overrunning the countryside with small armed bands. To put an end to these incursions, which disturb the calm of the peaceful population, I begged the Consuls to have a certain road occupied for a distance of about twenty kilometres. The communications of the Insurgents would thus have been cut and the revolutionary movement isolated. But my request was never carried out.

I repeat that all the decisions of the Consuls were taken without my knowledge ; I received no notice of them at all. It

is entirely due to my respect for the four Great Powers that I tolerate with patience the abnormal conditions of which I complain, and it is through humanitarian sentiments that I do not turn the rest of the people against the small Venizelist party.

Because of his vanity and his inability to satisfy his personal ambitions by legal methods, Venizelos has gone into the mountains to impose his wishes upon the bulk of the islanders. If I had desired to maintain my prestige over the country, we should certainly have had civil war, which I am anxious to avoid. But in sacrificing my authority for the moment, and perhaps also my prestige, I have been animated only by thoughts of the welfare of Crete.

I had hoped that the Consuls-General would not have been slow to understand the great errors they were committing : that they would have ended by recognising the correct attitude to adopt towards me. Instead, I now see that, far from understanding the harm they are doing to the country, they are engaged in throwing all the responsibility for the course of events upon my shoulders. This they do indirectly by presenting to their Governments reports designed to give the impression that the members of my entourage, and especially my private secretary, are the true cause of the trouble.

I can tell your Excellency that certain of the Consuls, through their Venizelist associates, are even in direct communication with the Insurgents. This astounding and seemingly incredible fact can be proved, because all notes from the Governments, all instructions and all decisions taken by the Consuls-General, are known by the revolutionists of Therisso several days before anything is communicated to me.

I leave it to the judgment of your Excellency to appreciate the difficulty of governing a country under such conditions, where every one wishes to interfere with the affairs of State, and where the High Commissioner of the Powers is the last person to be considered.

The Prince addressed a copy of his letter to the Foreign Ministers at Paris, Petersburg, London, and Rome ; and the impression it created could scarcely have been a favourable one. The High Commissioner made the mistake of complaining of those who, if they disbelieved in him, believed in Venizelos and did so from honest conviction.

## CHAPTER XVI

ON June 10, 1905, we find M. Rouvier, Prime Minister of the Republic, who succeeded M. Delcassé in the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, writing to M. Maurouard, the French Consul at Canea, for information on the allegations contained in the Prince's letter "addressed to my predecessor."

It is noticeable that in all his correspondence M. Maurouard maintains a sound critical sense. His reply to M. Rouvier, dated June 20, is the more noteworthy for this reason. He says that, throughout the crisis, the Prince had been kept regularly informed of the decisions of the Consuls and of the military orders issued. The Doyen of the Corps had been specially deputed by his colleagues to act as intermediary between the Prince and the Commandant of the International troops. M. Maurouard declares that there had been complete accord between the Consuls and the various military authorities. "It seems to me necessary," he remarks, "to assure your Excellency that the personnel of this Consulate-General and those of our consular agencies in Crete have constantly observed the most scrupulously correct attitude towards the partisans of M. Venizelos and that I have no reproach to address to them."

The nature of the Russian Consul-General's reports is unknown; but it is an historic fact that the members of the Russian contingent were exceptionally severe in their treatment of Venizelist sympathisers.

The British Consul-General, Howard, who was in the Diplomatic Service, has since attained ambassadorial rank,<sup>1</sup> and hardly appeals to the imagination as a likely co-conspirator with a band of Mediterranean islanders. Generally the complaints fail; the Prince attacks Lubanski when the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Esmé Howard became Ambassador in Madrid in 1919.



latter's own report shows that he was trying to steal a march on Venizelos.

Willingly or unwillingly the Powers had somewhat augmented their military forces in the island; and naval movements were also more common.

At one moment a project for a deputation from the Chamber to meet the Therisso leaders was under discussion, but through want of tact at a critical stage it came to nothing.

Venizelos adopted an orderly tone in all his public utterances. He was in favour of a system of administrative and financial union with Greece, as a substitute for the wider political programme. He never neglected an opportunity to make known what minimum he and his associates were prepared to accept on behalf of the Therisso Assembly. "In a speech which he made recently at Therisso," wrote M. Maurouard on June 16, "M. Venizelos was not responsible for a single violent remark. He said that if the system, which he recommended, of administrative and financial union with Greece were not agreed to, his party would oppose a passive resistance to new European proposals and yield only to force."

The Prince High Commissioner complained of various misdeeds on the part of the Therissiotés, such as attacks on the gendarmerie, the obstruction of local authorities, and interference with the International troops. There were other perturbations for the Prince. His supporter, Koundouros, the Councillor of Finance, a man of considerable political influence, resigned; and, what was worse, announced that he was "going into the mountains to raise the standard of revolt." Kriaris, another Councillor, also resigned.

In the middle of July the Consuls met a Therisso delegation, composed of Venizelos, Fournis, and Manos, at the Monastery of Aghiamoni, near Mournics. The Chiefs were accompanied by a certain number of their men, who took up their positions round the monastery, but all passed off very tranquilly. Venizelos and his companions were told that it was impossible for the Powers to modify in any way the political status of the island.

"If the revolutionary movement continues," said the spokesman of the Consuls, "Crete will be completely ruined."

"As the movement," replied Venizelos, "is the effect and not the cause of the trouble, would it not be more logical for the Powers to apply their remedies elsewhere first?"

"We are not blind to the facts," answered the official, "but the situation must be met from what we consider to be the most convenient angle. Plainly, if you prolong the insurrection, we propose to enforce martial law. But I am also authorised to say that if you deliver up your arms the Powers will grant an amnesty."

Venizelos remained unmoved. "An amnesty is all very well," he said, "but it is only a beginning. What else do you offer us?"

"For one thing, we confirm the intention of the Powers to support the proposed internal reforms."

The Cretan reflected for a moment before answering. "Frankly," he resumed, "I do not believe that any scheme for the reconstruction of the Provisional Government would last in practice for more than five or six months. Possibly the best method for reaching a *modus vivendi* would be to call into being a National Parliament: partly elected by the Chamber and partly by the Insurrectional Assembly."

About a fortnight later, the Consuls received an official note from Therisso upon the conversations which had taken place at the monastery. It confirmed the impressions formed during the meeting; but the interrupted *pour-parlers* between the Venizelists and the Cretan Chamber were also mentioned.

When the time had expired for the surrender of arms by the Insurgents without any sign of acquiescence, the Consuls proclaimed martial law.

At Rethymo the Russians had declared a state of siege. The measures adopted to maintain order were there more severe than in the International sector. One day the Custom House at Castelli Panormos fell into the hands of the Insurgents. On the morning of August 7 the war-ship *Krabry* with 200 Imperial troops and a few Cretan gendarmes on board set sail for this station. During the day the

vessel anchored off Castelli. Two Russian officers and an Italian lieutenant of gendarmerie were sent to parley with the Insurgents. As the boat containing the party drew near land, an Insurgent patrol appeared on the beach and adopted a threatening attitude. Whereupon the Italian gendarme, obeying instructions, ordered the Insurgents to hoist a white flag within thirty minutes or submit to bombardment. A delay of more than half an hour followed, but, as no flag of truce was shown, the *Krabry* opened fire.

This incident merely led to greater trouble. While Manos himself was reported to be marching on Rethymo to liberate some political prisoners, the Insurgents attacked Coubé. The following day Colonel Ourbanovitch despatched fifty Russian infantrymen, with a small detachment of Cretan gendarmes, to defend the point. The fighting appears to have developed some intensity. The Russians were pressed back. As soon as Ourbanovitch learned what was happening he left Rethymo for the scene of action at the head of 400 troops. In the face of these reinforcements, the Insurgents began a retreat towards the South, on the village of Azzipopoulo. They stubbornly defended the approaches of the village "foot by foot." After many fierce encounters with the Russians and gendarmes combined, they yielded Azzipopoulo to Ourbanovitch. Manos, Calogeris, Biris, and Papadakis were among the Chiefs who took part in the fighting. Biris was killed.

In his account of the fight between the Russians and the Insurgents, M. Maurouard draws attention to the fact that hitherto the latter have never attempted a systematic attack on the International troops. He considers it all the more remarkable that they should on this occasion have carried hostilities to the very gates of the Russian headquarters.

During a brief sitting of the Cretan Chamber, in September, various measures of reform were voted, and it was noticed that they were chosen from the original programme of Venizelos :

1. Abolition of the Prince's privilege to nominate mayors and municipal councillors.
2. Universal suffrage in connection with the election of all municipal functionaries.

3. Suppression of the Prince's privilege to nominate ten deputies.
4. The abrogation of various restrictions upon the freedom of the Press.
5. Modification in the electoral laws.

In order that these reforms should be reviewed, the Chamber voted the convocation of a National Assembly, which, according to the Constitution, could not meet until six months had elapsed. A project for the creation of a civil guard was approved by the Legislature before the end of the session. Furthermore, the deputies granted the Government the right to raise a loan of half a million francs to meet the needs of the situation, but, as M. Maurouard points out, "voting the loan in principle will perhaps prove to have been easier than realising the actual sum."

If the Cretan Government was beset with money troubles, at least as much could be said of the Venizelists. Venizelos and the Therisso Committee were in truth driven to the expedient of trying in Greece to float a little loan of 100,000 francs in "*obligations*" of 5 francs each. But though the amount required was so insignificant, Venizelos was obstructed and indeed foiled at the outset by the hasty action of the Powers, whose Ministers at Athens were ordered to intervene. M. Ralli, the Greek Premier, appeared to be only too willing to thwart the whole scheme.

Certainly the Venizelists were hard pressed for funds. Whatever sums they possessed in the first place had already dwindled to a vanishing point by the beginning of October. It was in the first days of the month that a band of Insurgents in the Sitia district laid down their arms and claimed the benefit of an amnesty for political offenders. Maurouard was in receipt of some private information to the effect that the Therisso leaders themselves were disposed to come to terms. "For some time past," he writes, "one has been able to see that the state of affairs among the Insurgents has been growing more difficult. This process of evolution has been manifested in the attitude of the leaders."

M. Sphakianakis confided some information to Mr. Esmé Howard one day when the latter was visiting the British

headquarters at Candia. Sphakianakis was, as we know, a good friend of the Venizelists. He now barely disguised the fact that the men of Therisso were open to persuasion. Certain French agents were even more explicit. They gave Maurouard to understand that Venizelos was prepared to renounce any further insistence upon a change in the status of the island. He spoke of internal affairs, but confined himself to commercial and financial questions in his references to the outside world. "They were wishes, not conditions," remarks Maurouard. "In my opinion," adds the Consul, "the attitude of the Insurgents, except in connection with some suggestions difficult of accomplishment, is reasonable and worthy of serious examination."

Maurouard was an extremely able man with a political sense far above that of the average consular official. When he saw that the unfortunate Therissiotes were approaching the limit of their endurance, he recommended a moderate course to M. Rouvier. He pointed out the inconveniences which might be produced if they were trodden underfoot. "It would not be," he asserts, "just to profit from the enfeebled condition of the Venizelists to take away from them all means of defence. If we were to do this, should we not assume moral responsibility for any reprisals of which they might be the victims, or subject ourselves to the new embarrassment of having to defend them from such a menace? On the other hand, might not a handful of Insurgents be able to escape to the mountains with their arms and make themselves very troublesome? Is there not an appreciable advantage in having finished as quickly as possible with an insurrection which prejudices the economic interests of the island, in addition to imperilling the safety of the inhabitants? These considerations incline me against the pursuit *à outrance* of the Insurgent party, if its leaders will accept proposals compatible with the political requirements of the Powers." Maurouard concludes his despatch by remarking that one difficulty must be provided for by extending to the gendarmerie deserters the amnesty likely to be accorded to the Insurgents. This, he thinks, can be accomplished as an act of grace, in keeping with the requirements of military

discipline on the one hand and the scruples of the Venizelist leaders on the other.

By the middle of October, Venizelos and his colleagues recognised that they could hold out no longer against the Powers, and, after fresh military operations were directed against them, notably by the Russians, they informed the Consuls that they were prepared to confide the business of settling the Cretan reforms to Europe. Most of the Insurgents were ready to give up their arms, but, on behalf of those who would not go to this length, it was suggested that they should be conveyed to Greece without being disarmed. When the Consuls met, it was decided that the Insurgents should be ordered to surrender 800 rifles and a corresponding number of cartridges, while an amnesty was to be extended to all except the gendarmerie deserters and Insurgents who had been guilty of common law offences.

On this basis, M. Venizelos agreed to end the insurrection.

It was on November 15, 1905, that he met the Consuls of France, Britain, and Italy—the Russian Consul was ill—and settled the details connected with the delivery of arms and ammunition. He managed to arrange that the deserters from the gendarmerie should be embarked for Greece. Ten days later an amnesty was proclaimed throughout the island.

## CHAPTER XVII

WHEN Venizelos consented to the surrender of arms in the face of the Internationals, he may have given the impression of being a man hopelessly beaten, the leader of a lost cause, a failure, a human creature *vis-à-vis de rien*. But he was not to play such a part for long. It ill became his abilities or his personal feeling.

In the autumn of 1905 few gamblers in the universe would have been encouraged by the appearance of things to lay money upon the rise of the fallen champion of Therisso. It would have been like wagering on the great value of a heap of ashes. But the ashes were to yield a phoenix.

In a few months only, Prince George was to leave Crete for ever. The Great Powers were to stoop to such talk as the impossibility of reconciling Venizelos and the Prince. The leading statesmen of the period were to recognise and candidly admit that one or the other, the Prince or Venizelos, would have to go from the island, for it was not large enough to harbour two such conflicting spirits.

By the end of November 1905, nearly 1000 Insurgents, some among them the gendarmerie deserters, and others, the irreconcilables, had arrived in Greece. In Crete, everything was unsettled and insecure. Occasionally, friction between factions led to strife. During the mayoral elections, when forty out of seventy-seven victorious candidates belonged to the Opposition, the strife was accompanied by bloodshed. In January 1906 an Italian soldier was killed. Italy demanded an indemnity for the dead man's family. As the demand was not acceded to, the Customs revenues in the Italian sphere were appropriated in order to meet the case.

One of the first important events of the New Year was the arrival in February of the Powers' delegates charged with the mission of investigating the financial and administrative questions relating to Crete. The Commissioners set to work and duly acquitted themselves of their task by the end of March.

The elections to the Chamber brought the Government party into power with 78 members, as against 36 of the Opposition. These results were announced in May. The grievances of Prince George began to be known by a wider circle of critics or sympathisers than ever before.

When the Cretan Assembly was opened in July, he said that the report of the International Commission was being examined by the Powers. He explained that Europe was also considering how the national aspirations of the Cretans could be satisfied. On the strength of all this information, the Assembly voted for Greek annexation and suspended its sittings until the decisions of the Foreign Ministers became known.

On July 25 the reforms proposed by the Protecting Powers were proclaimed at Canea. The proclamation, which was dated July 23, set out a number of important concessions :

(a) Reform of the gendarmerie under Greek officers not on the active list.

(b) Creation of a Cretan militia (to result in the ultimate withdrawal of the International troops).

(c) The granting of a loan of 9,300,000 francs. Two-thirds of the loan to be applied to the execution of public works, and one-third to the payment of indemnities to the victims of past insurrections. (The 3 per cent Surtax to stand.)

(d) Extension of the Greek Finance Commission to Crete ; the system of foreign inspection to be instituted.<sup>1</sup>

(e) Appointment of mixed commissions, composed of Consuls and Cretans, to examine cases of the dispossession of Mahomedan communal properties, mosques, lands, and cemeteries.

(f) Equal rights for Christians and Moslems, especially in connection with public appointments.

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<sup>1</sup> Finance control could be averted if the Assembly refused the Powers' proffered loan of 9,300,000 francs. The Foreign officials who were to establish this service were to make an annual report to the Cretan Chamber.



(g) Revision of the Constitution to permit reforms.<sup>1</sup>

(h) Settlement of outstanding differences with Turkey: the question of the national flag, judicial acts, the detention of Cretans in Turkish prisons, lighthouse dues, telegraph rates, the appointment of cadis, and the protection of Cretans in foreign countries and in Turkey.

(i) Recommendation that Consuls on all ordinary matters should consult responsible local advisers (whose administrative authority would thus be increased, while at the same time causes of friction affecting the prestige of the High Commissioner would be avoided).

(j) Postponement until 1911 of payment of interest on the four million francs advanced by the Powers.

Venizelos was disposed to agree to the proposals as better ones were unlikely to be made. The Prince regarded the scheme of reform with hostility. Within a few days he was reported to have applied to Athens for authority to tender his resignation to the Powers. In the Greek capital, the Government was not in favour of the financial control proposed in the reforms. But the Opposition recognised without difficulty the various benefits conferred upon Crete.

When he understood the course matters were taking, the King endeavoured to obtain permission from the Powers to nominate his son's successor. On July 29, M. Buffidis, the President of the Hellenic Chamber, went to Canea to have interviews with Prince George and Venizelos. Afterwards he returned to Greece in the High Commissioner's yacht.

King George had invoked whatever influence he could command in the European capitals to bring the Powers to modify the proposed reforms, but the only concession he could obtain was that he might choose the candidate for the High Commissionership. The details of the arrangement were actually settled on August 14 between the King and the representatives at Athens of England, France, Russia, and Italy.

<sup>1</sup> Notably those connected with the organisation of the militia, the expropriation formalities, the annual session of the Assembly, an annual budget, the establishment of a financial control department, and a permanent civil service.

In September the King nominated M. Alexandre Zaimis, a former Prime Minister. Whereupon the Powers signified their approval.

In Crete, matters were not progressing in quite such a cut-and-dried fashion. The political jackals marshalled together by Prince George for the purpose of government perceived that with his departure they would be confronted by starvation. With one accord they rallied round him, imploring him to remain their ruler. Their hatred of Venizelos, which had always been a principle of business among them, burst into flame: in this remarkable man they saw the true cause of their master's banishment. In the Assembly, 80 out of 130 members protested against the departure of the Prince. The objectors all belonged to the Government parties. Outside the Assembly a great hubbub arose; challenges were flung to the universe by frenzied Ministerialists. Another insurrection was half threatened, and even the most careful observers were compelled to recognise that the situation was fraught with grave possibilities. The sullen, angry note of beasts at bay resounded most loudly wherever the placemen of the Prince had special influence. Scandal was followed by riot.

After the protest in the Assembly against Prince George's enforced retirement, the Consuls, at the suggestion of Venizelos, prevented the deputies from attending the Chamber. Both sides felt outraged; the Consuls, through the open defiance of the Powers, and the followers of the Prince, through beholding the sword of justice drawn against them. The situation was decidedly alarming. Every moment that the Prince remained added to the danger.

He showed but small inclination even to pacify his misguided adherents during the interval preceding his final exit.

One day Venizelos was speaking in the Assembly on the need for the international finance control, when Councillor Koundouros leapt to his feet and created a wild disturbance. In an instant a battle of fists, of books and inkpots, too, perhaps, was raging among the deputies. Koundouros, the heroic revolutionary, who in days not long past was

by his own declaration to rival Venizelos as the leader of insurrections, now struggled in the midst of a seething mass of fellow-legislators. The tumult was unnerving to those outside. Peaceful townsmen gazed at one another in wonderment. What was going on? The Internationals had been called out. Those Caneans who prized repose fled indoors in despair. Within the Chamber, drops of blood mingled with the flow of ink. But the fire of pandemonium could not be quenched until the troops took possession of the place.

Michelidakis, the leader of one of the Government parties, was President of the Chamber at the time.

The stubborn anti-Venizelism of the Ministerialists, instead of abating as the Prince's departure drew near, tended to increase. If the agitators expected the Powers to be moved at the eleventh hour by demonstrations in his favour, their miscalculation was complete. Every fresh act of folly hardened opinion upon the urgent need for ending the princely administration. As long as Prince George remained, the trouble would never subside.

\* One great band of ministerial sympathisers was formed in the country, with the object, it was said, of visiting Canea to bid farewell to the Prince. As about 600 of the men were armed, there was some reason to fear that the message of farewell might miscarry. It was considered expedient, in the circumstances, not to delay for another hour the Prince's departure. Instead of a stirring ceremony, followed by Royal salutes, he slipped on board the Greek battleship *Psara* as unostentatiously as a stowaway. On shore there was some excitement. Troops were out and British bluejackets were landed.

It was on September 25 that Prince George, of imperishable memory, sailed away. Eight years, all save two months, had passed since he came to Crete.

The most favourable remark that can be made about this amateur statesman is that he was not nearly clever or experienced enough to balance the quadruple allegiance which he owed to the Protecting Powers, to Greece, to Crete, and to his family.

## CHAPTER XVIII

CRETAN events for the year 1906 appeared to disappoint or irritate every one. In Constantinople, the Turk declared that his suzerainty in the island had been gravely infringed. In this there was nothing new. But in Athens there were people who said that Crete had been reduced to slavery. It was left to Sofia to cry from the housetops that Bulgaria must have concessions in Macedonia as a compensation for the advantages acquired by Greece. The Cretans themselves were very hopeful. The departure of Prince George created a pacific majority. Their excitement vanished when M. Zaimis came among them almost as a Greek viceroy. And before the year had closed, Greek officers for the militia and gendarmerie had reached Canea.

M. Zaimis' arrival heralded more clearly than a trumpet-blast the approach of union with Greece. The new High Commissioner was in every way an excellent man to maintain the strange hybrid *régime* which sprang up during the last phase of the transition. He was at once the agent of the Powers, the ambassador of the King of the Hellenes, and the hope of the Cretans. As he was too experienced to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, he stopped the chase and induced the hounds to walk on one side and the hare on the other, while he led the way slowly towards the goal which had been marked out for him. Venizelos speaks favourably of Prince George's successor, under whose viceregal sway he was the leader of the Opposition.

In March 1907, Zaimis reported good progress in the organisation of the Cretan militia and gendarmerie.

The administration of the island was carried on tranquilly. It was a little doubtful what the technical nationality of the Government was, certainly, but it served its purpose

very well and the Cretan people had no ground for complaint. While they may have wondered at times whether they were Internationals, or Cretans, or Greeks, they were satisfied that they were Ottoman bond-slaves no longer.

In July 1907, Michelidakis was elected President of the Chamber by 34 votes against the 31 votes recorded in favour of Fournis, the Venizelist.

By the following spring the Powers were so impressed by the administration of Zaimis that they decided gradually to withdraw their troops from the island. (They had laid down conditions which had to be fulfilled before they would take this important step : (1) the organisation of the native gendarmerie ; (2) the maintenance of the peace throughout Crete ; (3) the complete security of the Mahommedan population. It was considered that these conditions had been substantially carried out.) On August 26, 1908, two companies of the French battalion left Canea, amid scenes of great enthusiasm. This was the beginning of the end.

In October of the same year Prince Ferdinand declared Bulgaria independent, Austria annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, and, during the absence of Zaimis, the *soi-disant* Government of King George in Crete proclaimed the union of the island with Greece. The last event led to the abolition of the High Commissionership. Meanwhile a Coalition Government, representing all the Cretan political parties, was formed, with an Executive Committee of Six, consisting of Venizelos, Michelidakis, Trochanis, Loyadis, Petichakis, and Paleogeorgi. This Committee was empowered to carry on the administration of Crete in the name of King George and in accordance with Greek law. Legal measures were to be put into operation by means of decrees. Until the decrees were promulgated, Cretan law was to be applied so far as it was not in opposition to the Greek Constitution. The power of the Committee was to end as soon as the Hellenic Government assumed control of affairs in the island. Venizelos was at the helm.

As the destiny of Crete was soon to be linked with that of Greece, and as the road was being prepared for the coming of Venizelos by the movement of events in Athens, it is necessary to note the political crisis which occurred

in the Hellenic capital in the early spring of 1909. A turn of the wheel had placed M. Ralli in the position of being asked to form a Cabinet, which meant the dissolution of the Greek Chamber, accompanied by a serious political upheaval. There was an instantaneous reaction upon the Cretans, who announced that if the Hellenic Parliament was dissolved, they also would dissolve their Chamber and send representatives to Athens.

M. Ralli not unwisely refrained from accepting the invitation to form a Cabinet, after he had tried in vain to induce the Cretans to abandon their intention. He then requested King George to ask M. Theotokis, the leader of the majority, to retain office. Ralli even went to the length of promising to abstain from all obstruction and to support the Government. Whereupon the King congratulated him on his patriotism, and Theotokis consented to withdraw his resignation and resume office. Thus a brief respite from serious political trouble was assured in Greece. Before the autumn of the year, however, a great military disturbance, not far removed from a revolution, was to occur in Athens. Upon the crest of the wave so unexpectedly set in motion, Venizelos was destined to be borne to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The evacuation of Crete by the International Force was completed before the end of June 1909. The troops, not unnaturally, perhaps, received an extremely hearty send-off from the Cretans, who marshalled their new militia and gendarmerie on the quayside. Venizelos and his colleagues of the Executive Committee, as well as the Consuls and all the local authorities, were present. It was the third important departure in the recent history of the island. The first was that of the Turks, with all their impedimenta; the second was that of the stowaway Prince; the third was almost, but not quite, equal to the transfer of the island to Greece. Venizelos was sufficiently satisfied to make an eloquent speech in honour of the departing Internationals.

Rather less than two months later, there was a small incident between the islanders and the European naval forces stationed in Cretan waters. It appears that, after

the International troops had been withdrawn, the Greek ensign was hoisted over the Canea fort, instead of the authorised Cretan colours. When they perceived the forbidden flag, the naval commanders sent ashore to say that they would despatch landing-parties to haul it down unless the Cretans performed this task for themselves.

Venizelos at once declared in the Assembly that Crete would not molest the landing-parties, who could, if the Powers desired it, lower the flag on the fort. He said that he had no intention of raising any opposition, for the Powers had always intervened benevolently to protect Hellenic interests. Bluejackets then removed the flag as a matter of formality, but there was no disturbance whatever. The action was a little far-fetched: for months, and while the Internationals were still in occupation, justice in the island had been administered in the name of the King of Greece, and the Post Office had transmitted letters bearing Greek stamps. Venizelos, however, would not for a moment countenance any friction with Europe, so the flag incident failed to develop significance.

It was about this time that the political situation in Greece commenced to show signs of coming to a serious head. The Military League, an influential association, composed of officers, took a very severe view of the administration of the Army. Reforms of a drastic character were demanded. Moreover, much hostility was felt towards the Crown Prince Constantine, the Commander-in-Chief; and towards his brothers, who held high commands, without the personal ability required for an efficient military organisation. On August 28, 500 officers at the head of 1500 troops, cavalry, artillery, and marines, marched out of Athens to the Goudi Hill and there encamped. They then sent an ultimatum to Ralli, who had become Prime Minister since the April episode, demanding the instant removal of the Commander-in-Chief and the other Princes. Reorganisation of the Army and Navy was also demanded "so that Greece would not have to undergo any more humiliation." These humiliations included a Turkish ultimatum; the enforced renunciation of Macedonian aims and the continued "slavery" of Crete were keenly felt.

Ralli refused to accept the order of the officers and immediately went out of office. M. Mavromichalis succeeded him. Colonel Lapathiotis, one of the ablest men associated with the Military League, was appointed Minister for War on August 31. A *coup d'État* had taken place.

The Military League was determined to rid the Greek Army of the incompetent Princes. The Crown Prince had proved himself to be useless as a military commander in the war of 1897; since that disastrous conflict there was no evidence to show that he had become a competent leader. His brothers' proficiency in arms was inconsiderable.

The grievances of the Military League were both real and justifiable. Added to these grievances, the League members had arrayed against them a hardy band of professional politicians, who valiantly resisted the demand for the Princes' enforced retirement. A military dictatorship nearly came into being in October. King George contended in secret that the whole movement was anti-dynastic and not a *bona fide* demand for reform. This view was incorrect. When a Bill had been introduced into the Chamber to remove the Princes from the Army, they hurriedly resigned their commands.

The position of King George owed its importance to his close ties with other reigning families. These dynastic ties were useful to Greece, just as the Hohenzollern blood of King Carol had its advantages in Rumania. It pleased the King to consider himself Hellenic Ambassador to all the Courts of Europe. It would have required generations for any native dynasty to establish such an extensive relationship as his. Although the King's nominal authority was limited by the Greek Constitution, he was jealous of his own pre-eminence in the affairs of the kingdom. It has even been said that he never allowed a promising political leader to become too powerful. Trikoupes, a man of extraordinary gifts, caused him anxiety in this respect. But Trikoupes was handicapped by a custom which weakens the authority of Prime Ministers. As Venizelos has explained, "he fell into the error of thinking that, to remain in power and so carry out his programme, it was necessary for him to give way to the system of changing the personnel of the civil



service when a new Government came into office. If he had refused," remarks Venizelos, "to be a party to this proceeding, he would have improved his political position. It must, on the other hand, be confessed that, from this point of view, Trikoupes had to face greater difficulties than I faced, because, when I went to Greece, I found the country much riper politically than Trikoupes found it."

No doubt, the Greek Princes felt that they had some strong supporters in Greece when they clung so tenaciously to the Army commands, in defiance of the Military League. But it was obviously not a case or a time for tenacity. The King permitted the Princes to hold their ground too long.

The troubles connected with Army administration extended to the Navy, although in a lesser degree. On October 29, Commander Typaldos, a naval officer identified with the Military League, started a mutiny and with several destroyers attacked three Greek ironclads, the *Hydra*, the *Spetsae*, and the *Psara*. The crews of the large vessels remained at their posts during the engagement which followed. Shore batteries were brought into action, and for a brief moment excitement ran high. Then Typaldos made off. The Prime Minister and the Military League, fortunately, held together, after an interchange of opinions. Thus the mutiny was soon only remembered as a fiasco. The situation, nevertheless, remained very unsatisfactory as a whole. The Military League would have been glad to see Venizelos set up as Prime Minister. Indeed, after the exploit of August 28, the League actually invited him to come to Greece to assume control of affairs, but he excused himself on the ground that his presence was required in Crete.

Mavromichalis retained office as a buffer between the Crown and the League.

On December 22 there was a students' demonstration in Athens in favour of a military dictatorship. The following day, Colonel Lapathiotis, who, as we know, had become Minister for War at the instigation of the Military League, was thrown out of office by his own supporters. That was because he had been discovered in the act of gazetting promotions on his own initiative, without first consulting his

masters. On the same day, the Cretan Executive Committee resigned. Urgent appeals were sent to Venizelos to come over from Crete and settle the situation in Greece. The Military League wished him to extricate the officers from the political morass into which they were rapidly sinking. This time he consented to intervene, and on January 10, 1910, he landed at the Piræus.

On arriving at Athens, he became the representative of the League in the complicated negotiations which he himself opened between the leading politicians and the Crown. He said that he would reduce Greece to order and then return to Crete. It was not a light undertaking, but the amazing capacity of the man immediately became evident. He set to work to create a basis of accord between the conflicting elements. His personality, so smooth, so insinuating, reached into their midst. His gift of persuasion, his subtlety and swiftness of thought, added to his ability to bargain diplomatically, gained for him an immense influence, which soon amounted to complete ascendancy in the opposing council chambers. He proposed the convocation of a National Assembly and the formation of a Cabinet d'Affaires. A National Assembly was, of course, a recognised Cretan remedy and Venizelos knew it to be a good one. But the King and Theotokis were opposed to it. Then Venizelos placed the question in the light of an advantageous bargain. He showed Theotokis and the King the profit that would result from the convocation of such an Assembly. The King, especially, was difficult to move. Venizelos had known him since 1897; he had been received by him during one of the interludes of the Cretan insurrection. "Sire," said the spokesman of the Army, "the day the National Assembly meets, the Military League will be dissolved."

It was an intelligent manœuvre, for, of all the *bêtes noires* of George I., the powerful body which had led to the overthrow of the Government and the humiliation of his sons was the blackest and most terrifying.

One of the first utterances of King George on the subject of Venizelos indicates the hostility with which he regarded him. "I hope," said the King, "that Venizelos will soon be hanged from the mast of a battleship."

Although there was no comparison between the forceful intellect of Venizelos and the mind opposed to him, the King was not inexperienced in diplomatic negotiations. While the prospect of witnessing the Military League evaporate was irresistibly attractive to him, the idea of a National Assembly was highly disagreeable. Venizelos, however, foresaw that, of the two alternatives, the latter would be the King's choice. He also knew that the King would try to gain a concession. That was why he had left room for a little bargaining in his proposal. He had offered to dissolve the Military League when the National Assembly met. He was prepared in his own mind to dissolve it when the National Assembly was convoked. The opportunity was obvious. The King seized it. Not as a drowning man seizes a straw, but as a diplomatist grasps another mile of territory for a new frontier. Venizelos acquiesced. The bargain was made. Any other result would have been as impolitic as a dispute between the Lion and the Unicorn.

King George was really much concerned by Venizelos' demand for a National Assembly. He was most anxious because he feared that such a body once summoned into existence would deprive him of his throne. "It is a very dangerous expedient," said the King one day to M. Caclamanos.<sup>1</sup> "I wish to remain in Greece, but I dread a National Assembly." "You need fear nothing, Sire," replied M. Caclamanos. "It will not be directed against you, but against a system. The new system will be better than the old one and the King will be most popular." "You are very young," answered King George, shaking his head. "I remember only too well the National Assembly which was called when I first arrived in Greece!"

The King's secret apprehensions had no influence on the march of events, for on January 31 it was proclaimed in his name that a National Assembly would be convoked. Theotokis and all the other opponents of the proposal had been won round by Venizelos. Mavromichalis had gone out of office some days before. A new Cabinet d'Affaires, selected by Venizelos, was announced, under the presidency of M. Dragoumis. Thus, within three weeks from the

<sup>1</sup> Who was then First Secretary at the Paris Legation.

moment of his arrival, Venizelos had performed an all but impossible task with astonishing efficiency. His dexterity in manipulating the groups had led to the passing of the revolutionary crisis. In Greece, where political interests are the active daily concern of a great proportion of the people, the work of Venizelos was the more remarkable. There was nothing apathetic in the Athenians of any class. The Military League could never have reached a position of national importance if it had not held the sympathy of the civilian population.

The prospect of a Greek National Assembly was interesting to the Cretans who were reputed to be eager to participate in its deliberations. Venizelos considered that it was not yet the time for the coming of the Cretan representatives.

On February 4 he left the Piræus for Canea. Eight days after his arrival in the island, the Protecting Powers, through their Consuls, delivered a Note forbidding the Cretans to send deputies to Athens. This had been foreseen, and Venizelos had been charged by the Military League with the mission of making his compatriots obey the inhibition.

By February 14 he was back again in Greece. His constant presence at Canea was no longer necessary. In Greece it was a vital necessity, if an ordinary state of government was to be maintained. The people, who had witnessed his success in bringing to an end the political *impasse*, acclaimed him as the regenerator of Hellas. The workmanship and finish which he added to all his achievements won for him the reputation of being thorough. He set himself to wind up Cretan affairs while ever increasing his hold upon the Greek political situation.

Crete had reached the last phase in the transition from Turkish to Greek nationality, and the destinies of the island were on the point of being united with those of the motherland. For a while Venizelos adopted the course of staying for a few days in Crete and a few days in Athens alternately.

On February 28, after a fortnight on the mainland, he returned to Canea. It was essential for him to be in Crete

during the electoral excitements. It was not his policy to risk having the handiwork of years rendered defective through want of supervision at the eleventh hour.

On May 17 he was elected President of the Cretan Executive Committee. Michelidakis became the leader of the Opposition. One of Venizelos' first acts was to declare, briefly, his policy for Crete. "I shall strive," he said, "for the recognition of Greek annexation, for the preservation of order, for the protection of the Mahommedans, and for the maintenance of the sympathy and goodwill of the Protecting Powers, coupled with reforms in our administration."

Michelidakis endorsed these sentiments.

Towards the end of July, Venizelos was in Athens once more. The approaching National Assembly elections were in everybody's mind, and the talk was of nothing else. He at once made his position clear. "I will not stand for election," he announced, "but if I am elected I will not refuse the mandate."

The prospect of seeing a former Ottoman subject in the Greek Assembly was intensely irritating to the Turks. Crete and the Cretans still rankled in the hearts of the Sultan's advisers. Venizelos was to them the very embodiment of retribution. If he had been a former Ottoman subject from Baghdad or Konia, it would not have disturbed them to see him returned to a dozen Hellenic Parliaments, but in a Cretan, a man who had spent his entire life fighting triumphantly to extract a precious territorial jewel from the Ottoman crown, it was an outrage not to be permitted.

But Venizelos was actually a Greek subject; it was subsequently remembered that his own father was one before him, or at any rate had ranked as a Greek and suffered for his patriotism in 1866.

To appease the Powers and to calm the Turks, it was considered that the Athenian politicians should arrive at a decision on the subject of other Cretan candidates. Theotokis and Ralli consequently came to an understanding: there were to be no (other) Cretans returned to the National Assembly. Venizelos thereupon left Athens for Trieste, and in August he was found to be travelling in Switzerland.

Before the elections, Ralli made no secret of his opinion that Venizelos ought to be called to power as Prime Minister of Greece.

When the Turks saw that there was no hope whatever of keeping Venizelos out of the National Assembly, they allowed it to become known that if he divested himself of his Cretan political offices they would suppress their natural indignation. That is to say, they would not declare war upon Greece.

Thus it happened that Venizelos was elected to the Greek National Assembly. He forthwith resigned the Presidency of the Cretan Executive Committee.

His visits to the Greek capital had already convinced him of the truth in Oxenstiern's words : " Go forth, my son, and see by what fools the world is governed ! "

The life of Venizelos from 1910 to 1920 was literally the history of his country.



BOOK II

VENIZELOS AS THE MAKER OF  
MODERN GREECE





## CHAPTER I

It was in September 1910 that a delegation of Greek politicians set out for Crete on board a ship chartered for the occasion. Their mission was to fetch Venizelos from the island and instal him at Athens in triumph. This they did, amid the acclamations of the populace.

The election returns showed 189 Theotokis-Ralli Coalitionists, about 34 followers of Mavromichalis, 10 Socialists, 45 Thessalians, and 80 *soi-disant* Independents. Thus there were 358 members of the National Assembly.

There was much controversy in Athens concerning what should be the exact character of the National Assembly; whether it ought to be charged with the creation of a new Constitution or the revision of the existing one. Venizelos was determined in his own mind that it should not exceed the functions of a revisionist body, but he was confronted by many opponents who demanded a change in the very root of things. While he was not blind to the faults of the King, he was also able to see advantages in retaining him upon the throne. There were rumours that Venizelos was anti-dynastic, but he was actually a pillar of monarchy at this time.

On September 14, the Assembly met, under the presidency of the senior deputy, Katrivanos, the representative of Arcadia, who had sat in the first Parliament of King Otho and was between eighty and ninety years of age. Venizelos, the actual creator of the Assembly, was not present at the inaugural sitting.

Four days later he addressed a large crowd of Athenians from the balcony of the Grand Hotel, where he had taken up his residence. His speech, which excited a great deal of attention and has supplied various writers with material for

comment, sharply criticised the administration of Greece by the political parties. He declared that the management of the national finances had been unsatisfactory.

"I believe," he said, "that the poorer classes have been unduly taxed. I feel sure that all right-thinking people approve of the military revolution, and I hope that the ideas which prevailed at the recent elections will be maintained in future Parliaments. The National Assembly need not confine itself to the revision of those clauses of the Constitution which were denounced by the last Chamber. I am opposed, however, to any fundamental changes in the Constitution. As for the dynasty, it is rooted in the country, but I consider that the Crown ought to take a more energetic part in the affairs of State. I have come from Crete to share in the regeneration of Greece. I left Crete with reluctance and only because I believed it to be my duty to obey the call. I have not come as a leader of political parties, but as the champion of new ideas, and I hope for the co-operation of all who desire the betterment of the country. No politician should take office at the expense of his principles. He should tell the truth to those above and to those below him. I advocate the formation of clubs throughout Greece for the political education of the people. I call for cheers for the nation and the King."

It was in this speech that he insisted on the revisionist character of the Chamber in the face of demands for a Constituent Assembly. "The Chamber," he said, "should conserve its purely revisionist character." The audience, which numbered about 30,000 people, interrupted him with cries for a Constituent Assembly. Whereupon, Venizelos repeated, with greater firmness, "The Chamber must be revisionist!"

The independence of his will had manifested itself. He was opposed to the popular demand, loudly expressed by a great concourse of Greeks. He had been imported from Crete to build up a policy in conformity with the wishes of the people. Hitherto they had found that their nominees were invariably obedient. Now, at the outset, while his powers were as yet untried in Greece, and, indeed, unknown, except by hearsay, Venizelos had set his will in definite

opposition to the Athenians. It was a bold decision, but a sound one. It showed that he was not a demagogue. "I insist upon a Revisionist Chamber," declared Venizelos. The people still clung to the more radical alternative. "We want a Constituent Assembly," they cried. Again the Cretan pronounced the words clearly and firmly, "No, a Revisionist Assembly." He seemed to project his personality so that its influence could be felt by the people. In an instant they appeared to appreciate the sincerity which animated him. He had moved them. They were with him from that moment.

M. Caclamanos, who was standing in the crowd, was impressed by the extraordinarily sudden change which Venizelos had wrought. "His insistent demand for a Revisionist Assembly," remarks the diplomatist, "proved that he was not a revolutionary."

The difference between the Constituent Assembly called for by the Athenians and the Revisionist Assembly insisted upon by Venizelos was great. It was almost as great as the difference between a violent revolution and reform by legislative enactment. It was not his policy to break down the machinery of the Constitution, which included the monarchy. He aimed at making careful repairs which would put every part of the political engine in working order.

In October he was invited to form a Ministry. On the 18th of the month it was announced that the King had been pleased to approve of the following arrangement :

Venizelos	.	.	.	Prime Minister, Minister for War, and Minister of Marine <i>ad interim</i> .
Repoulis	.	.	.	Minister of the Interior.
Coromilas	.	.	.	Minister of Finance.
Dimitracopoulos	.	.	.	Minister of Justice.
Alexandris	.	.	.	Minister of Education.
Gryparis	.	.	.	Minister for Foreign Affairs.

A few days later, on October 22, Venizelos presented himself before the Assembly as the head of the Hellenic Government. It should have been a triumphant occasion, and, in a sense, it was, but there were still to be reckoned with very

many political malcontents, who, on this great day, were able to show their teeth.

"The Crown," said the new Premier in his maiden speech to the deputies, "acting in harmony with public opinion as manifested at the elections, has summoned me to office. The principal duty of the Government is to revise the non-fundamental articles of the Constitution."

Subsequently, when a vote of confidence was demanded, the Government found itself without the necessary quorum. The old parties had been at work in their subterranean plotting-places. Venizelos was said to contend that the right to dissolve the Chamber, whatever designation it might assume, belonged to the Crown, and could be exercised.

He secured the vote of confidence, but it was invalidated because of the absence of a quorum. He thereupon tendered his resignation to the King, who refused to accept it. A further effort was made to secure a vote of confidence from the Assembly on October 24. Many deputies abstained from voting. Though the Government won 208 votes against 31, the result was considered unsatisfactory by Venizelos. Owing to the unstinted support of the people, whose demonstrations outside the Grand Hotel and outside the Royal Palace were the talk of Greece, the Prime Minister decided to dissolve the Chamber. On October 25 a Royal decree was published declaring that the Revisionist Assembly was dissolved, that the elections for a new Legislature would be held on December 11, and that it would be convoked on January 21.

The announcement met with general approval throughout Greece. Even the shares of the National Bank rose in value. Venizelos was beginning well. Foreign observers were impressed. His firm, uncompromising attitude appealed to every one with a distaste for the usual political intrigues. The Athenian politicians alone felt uneasy. What was this man, this islander, who dared to come to Greece and impose his will on the nation, when he claimed no experience whatever of the sacred parliamentary methods which had stood the test of time? The mere thought of being mastered by a revolutionary was too much for the seasoned leaders. Why should they, men of the world, submit to the ideas of

this outlaw from the mountain fastnesses of Crete? Enemies became friends, so bitter was the feeling against Venizelos among the professional politicians. But the Prime Minister was too strong to be shaken by their hatred; indeed, was not his *raison d'être* in Athens the cleansing of Greek political life? He looked neither for love nor loyalty from those whom he was pledged to drive into oblivion.

During the period that the first National Assembly pre-occupied Greek public attention, Serbia and Bulgaria were carrying on conversations for a common Balkan policy. It was believed by these two States that Greece and Montenegro would join if the negotiations led to anything.

The influence of Venizelos had been translated to the mainland, as we have seen, but the Venizelists of Crete were still reflecting his views in the political life of the island. Koundouros had been watching events very closely for some time, with the happy result that he decided to abandon Opposition tactics and to embrace the Cretan programme of the absent leader. Wisdom had come to him at last. The fusion of the two parties occurred in November.

Crete had ceased to occupy a place of importance in the estimation of Europe: it had long been recognised that the island would sooner or later become Greek. The Turks, however, delighted in bringing up the subject whenever an opportunity occurred. The opening of the Cretan Chamber in the name of the King of Greece, coupled with the affirmation of union, supplied the necessary pretext for fresh Turkish complaints. The Foreign Ministers of the Powers were not to be tempted into a long discussion. They nodded their heads at the Sultan, with the mechanical precision of porcelain Chinamen; they agreed that the Cretans were very troublesome. There the matter ended.

Meanwhile, in Greece, Venizelos was preparing the ground for the December elections. During an electoral tour, he declared that the Assembly had been dissolved because of the discord among the political parties. He was welcomed on all sides, for the people were opposed to a parliamentary oligarchy. His ideas were irresistible; he infected every one, save the Thessalian landowners perhaps, with new hope. There was a romantic flavour in his coming; there was

magic in his personality ; concerning his ability there could be no shade of doubt. People wondered how far he would go. Sentimentalists perceived in him one above the level of man.

In his triumph at the December elections of 1910 there was tangible evidence to justify those who were most hopeful. When the new Chamber met on January 21, 1911, there was no speech from the throne.

Venizelos was deeply occupied with the preliminary project for the revision of the Constitution. This revision was to be based upon proposals approved during the Dragoumis Cabinet on March 4, 1910, and elaborated by a parliamentary commission. On February 5, M. Stratos was elected President of the Chamber.

The reforms recommended by the Commission included the modification of Article III. of the Constitution, in order to qualify foreigners for appointment to the government service. Elementary education was to be made compulsory. Judges were to be appointed for life, while all public officials, except the heads of diplomatic Missions, Consuls-General and Prefects, were to be irremovable. The number of deputies necessary to constitute a quorum in the Chamber was to be reduced from one-half to one-third of the total number. There was to be a redistribution of seats which would reduce the number of members to 110. Civil and military functionaries were to be ineligible for membership. Deputies who refrained from attending Parliament were to be liable to a fine. The verification of election figures was to be taken from the Chamber and entrusted to a tribunal composed of judges. The re-establishment, on a new basis, of the Council of State, which had been abolished in 1864, was recommended as the best method of overcoming the disadvantages associated with Single - Chamber Government. It was intended that the State Council should, among other functions, have power to hear appeals of interested parties on the legality of official decisions and acts. It was also to have disciplinary control over all irremovable functionaries, except magistrates.

A great deal of time was taken up in discussion. On February 17, Venizelos called the attention of the deputies

to the necessity for providing against (1) the abuse of questions to Ministers, and (2) long and useless parliamentary discussions. He proposed that the work which was being carried on by the commission charged with the examination of the constitutional reforms should be expedited. The scheme for the revision of public law was completed and placed before the bureau of the Chamber on February 27. On April 1, Venizelos made a speech on the agrarian question of Thessaly; feudal principles of land tenure still prevailed in Thessaly and caused serious discontent.

The constitutional reforms provided for the confiscation of journals offensive to public morality, and those which disclosed secret military information. Residents abroad who acquired Greek citizenship were to be made eligible for election to the Chamber: this measure was introduced for the benefit of Unredeemed Greeks. The provision to admit foreigners to the Greek Government Service was designed to cover the employment of French Military and British Naval Missions.

On June 3 the work of revising the Constitution was completed. On June 5 the Constitution Revision Bill was passed in its entirety by the Chamber.

The reforms in the Greek Constitution throw the legal and political perception of the Cretan into a strong light. It may be possible for a man given to the close study of law to follow the workings of the various legal systems of the world and to draw sound conclusions from his reading, but it requires a very unusual talent to be able to apply the principles that have been mastered to the special requirements of a given State. Venizelos, whose reputation had centred in revolutions, now appeared as a law-giver of extraordinary capacity. He took a very imperfect Constitution and converted it into a sharp and highly tempered instrument. He also provided a remedy for the minor ills of the State. The importance of his achievement cannot be overestimated in examining the development of Greece from the time he came to power at the invitation of the Military League. It was certainly the military revolution which did the work of a steam-roller on the first strip of the road. But it was Venizelos, all but single-handed, who



built the long, straight highway which led the Greeks into rich and famous territories.

When he dissolved the first National Assembly, he saved the situation. What he says about it himself is not without special interest: "In October 1910 I was charged with the formation of a Ministry. This I accomplished. When I appeared in the Chamber, I explained my programme and asked for a vote of confidence. The chiefs of the old political parties manifested great reserve when they realised the significance which attached to a vote of confidence in the circumstances. I said I would accept no reservations. After this, I judged that the majority assembled to support the vote of confidence was insufficient. Consequently, I brought about the dissolution of the Chamber and proceeded to submit to a new national election. The old parties, recognising their impotence, did not go to the polls."

When the work of reforming the Constitution had been brought to a successful conclusion, the King offered Venizelos the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Saviour. But this Venizelos refused, with characteristic indifference, on the ground that he could not countersign a decree for his own decoration!

M. Caclamanos came into contact with the King some time after the National Assembly of Venizelos had met. "I reminded him," he says, "of our previous conversation. 'I warned your Majesty not to be afraid,' I declared. He responded in a pleasant enough spirit. 'You were right,' he agreed. 'I am very satisfied with the work of the Assembly. Venizelos is a very strong man. I did not realise this before, but I now appreciate that my fears were groundless. Venizelos is the ablest statesman Greece has had during my reign.'"

## CHAPTER II

THE Serbian saying that a naked man jumps far applies to Venizelos on his arrival in Greece. He came to the land with nothing. He was unencumbered with wealth or family interests. He was in Athens to show what he, as an individual, of great promise certainly, but independent of traditions or political ties, could accomplish on behalf of the Greek people. His failure would have been disappointing to those who hoped for settled conditions in the State. But Venizelos himself would have slipped into the restricted field of Cretan politics again, without even the opportunities that Crete had offered him in the past, while the Hellenic race would have looked for another leader, possibly in vain. The naked man jumped, however; it was seen that he jumped far and alighted upon his feet.

At this time there was peace in the Balkans; that is to say, the countries were not at war, either among themselves or with Turkey. There were indications that they would not be preserved in this fortunate state for ever, if one took the trouble to see what was passing. Venizelos was aware of everything. He was more aware of everything than the Turks themselves, whose glance of suspicion fell on Sofia and Belgrade a dozen times in a month. In the year 1911, Europe regarded King Ferdinand as the cleverest man in the Balkans. Whether the world loved him or not was of little importance. Vienna—and Vienna was the capital of the Balkanic universe—saw in him a monarch whose faculties were worthy of employment. Venizelos observed him with great and undisguised interest. Not that he held the local kings much above their chess value. Still, if Ferdinand was to be moved, what better guiding-hand was

there than his own? Bulgaria and Greece consequently drew closer together.

The Balkan League was brought into being primarily through the activities of Venizelos. It was not a new idea, but one which had taken many years to mature. Trikoupes in 1891 "proposed to Belgrade and Sofia the partition of Turkey in Europe on the basis of a Treaty in which the future frontiers of the Balkan States were to be exactly determined in advance." King Milan dutifully reported the matter to Austria,<sup>1</sup> and Stambuloff disclosed the facts to Turkey. It is scarcely necessary to add that the proposal bore no fruit. Delyannes repeated the effort to link together the Balkan States in 1897. He was as unsuccessful as Trikoupes. Soon after his arrival in Greece, Venizelos, recognising that the "growing pressure on Bulgarians and Greeks in Turkey required counteraction," made an attempt to reach an agreement with the Sofia Government. Another failure was registered. In April 1911, undaunted by the sterility of all past efforts, he approached Sofia once more, this time unofficially. His proposal was limited (a) to an *entente* with the object of common action with Bulgaria for the defence of Christians in Turkey, and (b) to an eventual defensive alliance to provide against a Turkish attack on either of the contracting parties. Bulgaria feared that the Cretan difficulties might lead to another Greco-Turkish war: she refrained from sending a reply. This left the proposal in suspense. The outbreak of the Turco-Italian war in the autumn of 1911 suddenly stimulated Bulgaria's interest in a Balkan combination. Ferdinand and Gueshoff were amusing themselves at Vichy. The Bulgarian Prime Minister immediately started for Sofia. He was joined at Belgrade by the Serbian, Milanovitch, with whom he laid down the bases of an Alliance. However, these Pullman car negotiations scarcely outlasted the journey. It was left to Serbia to initiate fresh *pourparlers* in December. At first, indeed, they were not exactly *pourparlers*, but a one-sided effort which left Bulgaria unresponsive. It was only after the Serbians had modified their proposals that Gueshoff condescended to treat. Even then, the negotiations lasted

<sup>1</sup> At that time Serbia's Ally.

until March 13, 1912, on which date the Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance was concluded. The formation of the Greco-Bulgarian Alliance was still slower. Bulgaria was not prepared to go to war with Turkey over Crete, and the efficiency of the Greek Army and Navy was as yet an unknown quantity. The work of the British and French Missions, the former to improve the Navy and the latter to improve the Army, could not be judged very readily at Sofia. But the relations between Bulgaria and Greece had certainly become more cordial.

The three men actually responsible for carrying through the Alliance were Venizelos, Coromilas, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Gueshoff. Hadjimischef, the Bulgarian Minister at Athens, took no part in the proceedings, which began in earnest in the last week of February. An agreement was reached in April, and the Treaty was signed by Panas and Gueshoff on May 29. It provided that if war broke out between Greece and Turkey over the admission of the Cretan deputies to the Athens Parliament, Bulgaria's engagement towards Greece should be limited to benevolent neutrality.

Military conventions followed the Treaties: the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement was dated May 12 and the Greco-Bulgarian September 26, 1912.

After his successful appearance as a mender of the Constitution, Venizelos determined to strike out in a direction which would have brought to the earth a less bold or less dexterous politician. The Military League, in the days when it flowered in the valley and on the summit of the Goudi Hill, had called upon him to rescue Greece from maladministration and also from the progeny of the King. The Crown Prince Constantine was a figurehead so great and so cumbersome that he interfered with the further navigation of the Ship of State. The Military League declared that he must be removed from the stem of the vessel and cast adrift. As the axes were about to be applied, he dislodged himself from his proud position. In an instant he ceased to be the Crown Prince Commander-in-Chief and became the Crown Prince *en voyage*. Berlin was one of the places he visited.

Constantine was not a popular hero in 1911. The Army had not clamoured for his recall. But Venizelos had weighed the advantages of restoring him to some semblance of military authority. It was unsafe at this time to contemplate such a move: it was likely to be dangerous to attempt to put it into practice. But upon the scales, so delicately poised in his hand, Venizelos thrust his own great popularity. He observed that this outweighed, if only very slightly, the disadvantages of rehabilitating the Prince. At first he would lose ground, slip back, in the public estimate; he might even fall, in which case it would be the end of his career in Athens. He could see that clearly. He remembered with no less distinctness that it was possible also to move backwards in order to jump better: *reculer pour mieux sauter*. And, as the Serbians said, a naked man jumps far.

After planning the reconstruction of the military forces, Venizelos decided to risk his own political existence on the hazardous manoeuvre of raising up the fallen Prince. Without preamble, he one day introduced a measure instituting an Inspector-Generalship of the Army: this appointment he intended to confer upon Constantine, the ex-Commander-in-Chief.

On June 28, following an all-night sitting, the Chamber passed the proposal by 134 votes to 22. There was an outcry among the officers who had formerly belonged to the Military League. This was understandable. The League in the first place had extinguished the Crown Prince's military status; it had invited Venizelos to Athens, and then, by arrangement, he had extinguished the League itself; now, following upon great political feats, he re-established Constantine in the Army. It was not to be wondered at if many officers were inclined to rebel; if they did not precisely rebel, they rebuked their former nominee. "Well, my friends," said the Prime Minister, "let us fear nothing and be hopeful. The Crown Prince will, no doubt, have learned a valuable lesson from his last military experience. He will be wiser in the choice of his officers."

The former members of the Military League saw that Venizelos was ever faithful; that he was guided by national

policy ; that it was personal conviction, and not Court influence. Thus, what might have led to a great public crisis soon led to great public indifference.

Although his policy was to give support to the monarchy, Venizelos was disliked by the members of the King's family. The recall of the Crown Prince to the Army brought him little appreciation. Prince George, his former antagonist, was still very hostile. During August 1911 an interview appeared in an Athens paper, in which the ex-High-Commissioner of Crete was represented to speak of the Prime Minister in very unfavourable terms. The Prince was compelled immediately to repudiate the interview. It was a mere incident, but it plainly indicated the state of feeling in certain quarters.

While the actual political situation in Athens was already well in hand, Crete was effervescing again, as in the days of old. The Cretans were determined to send deputies to the Greek Chamber, and Venizelos was equally determined not to allow any premature action of this kind to interfere with his carefully conceived plans. His position was really a strong one ; for was he not himself a Cretan whose life had been spent in a struggle to unite the island with Greece ? He could not be accused of being indifferent to the welfare of a people whom he had led from the darkness into the light. When, therefore, he declared that he would, if necessary, use force to prevent the Cretan deputies from entering the Greek Chamber, his authority carried special weight. A rumour, which the Prime Minister denied, was circulated concerning a secret engagement with the Porte. It was not necessary for Venizelos to enter into clandestine agreements in order to formulate a pacific policy towards Turkey. It was evident to him that the time was not ripe for Greece and Turkey to become embroiled, especially on the Cretan question, in which the Great Powers were directly interested. He refused to allow a policy to be imposed upon Greece which might be attended by ruinous consequences.

What concerned him was the rapid and effective re-organisation of the Hellenic Army and Navy, the improvement of the internal administration of the country, and the establishment of Greek finances on a sound basis. The

movement in Crete was fostered by the political rivals of Venizelos, who saw in persistent agitation one method of weakening his position.

On the last day of the year, 1911, Venizelos discussed the naval and military proposals in the Chamber. Certain modifications recommended by the French Military Mission were explained; the construction of ships for the Navy was also a question dealt with. Meanwhile, a group of Cretan deputies who were trying to reach Athens fell into the hands of the Allied war-ships. It was announced that the Consuls meant to set them free as soon as the life of the Greek Revisionary Chamber was ended. Venizelos dissolved the Chamber on January 3; the work for which it had been elected was completed. It was the last phase of the revolutionary period. Greece could now progress, safeguarded against many dangers.

But if the political atmosphere had been cleared in Greece, the agitation in Crete was extending daily. Early in January 1912 the Executive Committee changed its name. It became the Insurrectionary Committee, in honour of the past, but with this difference, that it no longer had at its head the man of genius who had wrenched Crete from the Turks. Whether the spell of the old name attracted allegiance, or whether it was love of intrigue, matters little, but the Venizelists of the island joined the movement, and it soon became known that Cretans were to be sent to the next session of the Greek Parliament.

In Athens there was some public evidence of a friendly disposition towards Bulgaria. The Crown Prince Constantine was sent to Sofia to attend the coming-of-age celebrations of King Ferdinand's heir. A band of Bulgarian students, who had visited Athens in April 1911, were said to have placed a *rapprochement* between the two countries on a popular basis. Now, at the end of January and beginning of February 1912, this *rapprochement* was manifesting the first signs of a close Alliance.

The Sofia Cabinet signified that Bulgaria was agreeable to the Greek proposals of the previous May. And later, Prince Constantine was appropriately received by King Ferdinand, who at once proceeded to decorate him with a dazzling Order.

The Greek elections were fixed to take place on March 24, to be followed by the meeting of the Chamber on June 1.

The situation in the Balkans was not regarded with much optimism by England. The Albanians were in a disturbed state; Macedonia was just then in the grip of a homicidal epidemic. On St. Valentine's Day, in the House of Lords, Lord Lansdowne referred to the Balkan outlook with distinct pessimism. One does not always find in his speeches the inspiration of a prophet, but in his remarks about the situation in the Near East on February 14 he seems to have recognised that trouble was inevitably approaching.

Venizelos was occupied with the elections. An insidious campaign of libel and slander was directed against him during this period. His life record was searched for incidents serviceable to a sinister biographer. An anathema once pronounced by the Archbishop of Crete, a tool in the hands of Prince George, was recalled and dilated upon. Nothing that could be said against the Premier was left unsaid. What might have been a benign chronicle became malign. Political harpies, men fallen from the offices of state, struggled to emerge from oblivion by attacking the national leader whose avowed object was to purge the kingdom of their presence. The election results may well have left Venizelos unconcerned as to the doings of his enemies, for he secured an overwhelming majority. Greece spoke with one voice, clear, decisive. The merit of his policy and the talent with which he was endowed were fully recognised by the people on this occasion. Multitudes had gathered to hear him speak. It is solemnly recorded that 40,000 inhabitants listened to him spell-bound when he came out on to the balcony of the Grand Hotel to address them on March 21.

Venizelos was compelled by his policy towards Bulgaria to repress any forcible attempt on the part of the Cretan deputies to enter the Athens Chamber, but it was quite well known, on the other hand, that he was willing to utilise the first favourable opportunity to further the wishes of his fellow-countrymen. On April 27 he received a committee of five Cretan deputies. The meeting led to nothing. The



troubles in the island were growing more acute. The friends of Crete were afraid that an Allied occupation would be the net outcome of the disturbances. It cannot be said that the excitement was wholly without provocation. The Turco-Italian war aroused the fear that Crete might be stranded on a diplomatic arrangement. That is to say, it was thought that the terms of peace might include a fresh guarantee of the Turkish *status quo*, a condition which would react unfavourably upon the island, still nominally under the Sultan's suzerainty. A desperate effort of the Cretans to gain admittance to the Greek Parliament was, on this ground, not beyond comprehension.

In April the Greco-Bulgarian Treaty was signed. A few weeks earlier the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty had been entered into. Montenegro also had a Treaty with Serbia, but not with Greece or Bulgaria.

At the end of May—it was the 28th of the month—Venizelos received another small committee of Cretan deputies, who begged to be admitted as members of the Greek Parliament. The Prime Minister treated them with consideration and supplied them with good reasons for his refusal to grant their request. "These deputies of the Cretan Chamber," he says, "pressed by the Opposition, which desired to force embarrassments on the Cabinet, arrived in Athens and pretended to the right to take part in the debates of the Hellenic Parliament. If their claims had been admitted, a conflict with Turkey would inevitably have followed. I exhorted them by amicable arguments to abandon their project. I explained the perils to which the Hellenic Government would be exposed, as it was not yet ready to sustain the shock of a collision with the Turks. When I perceived that words had not the desired effect, I was compelled to employ force to prevent the deputies from entering the Chamber. I resisted their claims to the end, but, in the meantime, I proceeded to make military preparations for Greece by creating an Army capable of inspiring confidence in the other Balkan States. Thus unity was assured with Serbia and Bulgaria in the war which later broke out against Turkey."

On May 13 the Cabinet met to discuss measures to obviate a fracas with the Cretan deputies. Venizelos felt,

as he states in the note, that force might have to be employed. He explained his views to his colleagues, whereupon a crisis was precipitated and the Minister of Justice resigned.

Not to be deterred in his effort to safeguard the peace of the city, the Prime Minister ordered a battalion of soldiers to be kept in readiness for emergencies. Other arrangements for the public safety were carried out. When the time came for Parliament to be opened on June 1, all the roads leading to the Chamber were occupied by cavalry, infantry, and gendarmes. Half an hour before the opening ceremony the streets were cleared and patrolled by gendarmes with fixed bayonets. It was noticeable that the crowds withdrew without any manifestation of excitement. Venizelos and his colleagues reached the Chamber unescorted. Most of the deputies had already taken their seats, and all the members of the Diplomatic Corps, except the Turkish and Italian Ministers, were present. The proceedings were opened with the customary prayer recited by the Archbishop of Athens. Then Venizelos read the Royal decree convoking the Chamber. Next the deputies were sworn. A Cretan, one of the island legislators, who had contrived to enter the Assembly unnoticed, suddenly made known his presence by calling for the union of Crete with Greece. The Prime Minister at once ordered the man's arrest and removal. While this incident was taking place within the building, another scene was being enacted outside. Some thirty Cretan deputies, picked and determined men, had appeared in the vicinity of the Chamber and forced their way through several cordons of troops, who appeared to be not unsympathetic. At the entrance to the building they hurled themselves upon the military guards. The excitement became intense when a Greek deputy, General Koumounduros, leading other members of the Opposition, joined in the struggle. The General waved a revolver in the air, and for an instant it was difficult to prophesy how the matter would end. The troops, although they now showed resistance, were soon surrounded. Fortunately, the Prefect of Police appeared and announced that Venizelos would receive a deputation. The period of danger passed. No one had been seriously injured; the Cretans

were already in a fair way to be pacified. Accompanied by the Prefect, a deputation of four was ushered into the Prime Minister's private room. Venizelos at once told the Cretans that the Government had decided to prorogue the Chamber to October 1. This meant that there would be no Parliament for them to force their way into until the autumn. The episode was closed.

The deputies departed, the crowds melted away, and peace was restored. The election of the President of the Chamber was then proceeded with,<sup>1</sup> followed by the prorogation of Parliament by Venizelos.

European onlookers could see at a glance that Bulgaria and Serbia, as well as Bulgaria and Greece, were developing very cordial relations during the course of the summer. It was obvious that a common hatred for the Turk was welding them into a strong and solid mass. Then, too, little Montenegro, the tiny state with fifty thousand fighting men out of a population of a quarter of a million, was tingling with excitement. The Crescent was more than ever accentuated by the deepening crimson on which its ascendancy depended. The lot of the Macedonian Christians was a tragic one. It stirred the emotions of the Balkan peoples, and in Sofia, in September, public opinion was for war. In Belgrade, M. Pachich, the Serbian Premier, admitted that the situation was very dark. He added that Serbia could face events without fear: 250,000 men were ready for action. If Bulgaria took the field against Turkey, it was clear that Serbia would not be far behind. Venizelos also was beginning to show his hand. Greece was now in a position to mobilise 130,000 men and to raise 170,000 more in a brief period. They would, according to his arrangements, have arms and ammunition for a long campaign. A mass meeting had been held in Athens on September 8, when a group of patriotic associations had protested against the condition of the Greeks in Turkey. A resolution was passed urging the Government to intervene by whatever method it judged most appropriate. A copy of the resolution was sent to Venizelos.

<sup>1</sup> The Presidency of the Chamber fell to M. Tsirimokos, who had held the same position in the Revisionist Assembly.

The Prime Minister was inspired by peaceful motives, but Greece was ready for any emergency.

One fine day the Sublime Porte issued the order for general mobilisation. It was believed that Bulgaria and Serbia would follow suit.

On October 8, Montenegro<sup>1</sup> declared war on the Turks. The gallant fifty thousand were not contented to be the defenders of the Black Mountain.

Austria and Russia, the Powers most intimately concerned, writhed about in a belated effort to prevent hostilities. Their Ministers at Sofia and Belgrade warned the Balkan peoples that if such a sad event as war were to occur it would lead to no acquisition of territory on the part of Serbs or Bulgars: the territorial *status quo* of Turkey in Europe was to be preserved inviolate.

On October 9, shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, Venizelos made a speech to the populace of Athens. "I still hope," he said, "that peace will be maintained. Our Allies and our neighbours and friends do not desire conquests. What we ourselves ask for corresponds also with the interests of the neighbouring empire and represents the first and indispensable condition for the peaceful co-existence of the Balkan peoples and of Turkey. If, however, we should be deceived in our hopes, the Hellenic people know that they can depend on their Army and their Fleet, which, should the occasion demand it, will be able to defend the national interests. I call upon you all to cry with me, 'Long live the Army! Long live the Navy! Long live the Nation!'"

On October 13 the Allies formally demanded Turkey's consent to the autonomy of the European vilayets, re-divided according to nationality.

On October 14 the Hellenic Government sent an ultimatum to Turkey demanding the release of Greek shipping in Ottoman waters within twenty-four hours. Failing this, action to safeguard the dignity of Greece would be taken.

On the day that his ultimatum was delivered in Constantinople Venizelos proclaimed Crete to be annexed by Greece. Simultaneously, he invited the Cretan deputies to the Greek Chamber. Never forgetful, even in times of stress

<sup>1</sup> Where military age was from eighteen to sixty-two years.

and emotion, that there were formalities to be observed, he invited the Cretans to return to the island and proceed with new elections in accordance with the requirements of the Greek Constitution. He spoke feelingly of the strength of Greece and of her readiness to face any perils in support of her Allies.

On October 12, Italy and Turkey had signed the Peace of Ouchy. Five days later Turkey declared war on Bulgaria and Serbia. On October 18, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece declared war on Turkey.

### CHAPTER III

WHEN the Balkan League blossomed in the form of war, there was a certain primitive unity of purpose among the several States. This purpose was the overthrow of the Turks in Europe, coupled with the redemption of Christian lands and peoples. It was not a remarkable aspiration in men who had preserved the conviction that though they were not Turks themselves they had long been the victims of the Osmanli power. Then, too, there were special incitements, definite provocations, of a more immediate character. Salonica, the centre of the Young Turk movement, a European town, European in the sense that it was in Europe, had emitted waves of anti-Christianism unendurable to the peoples whose chief bond with civilisation was their religion. And there were some entirely material aspects of the situation, whether these aspects could best be examined from Athens, or Sofia, or Belgrade. As the Great Powers had chosen to allow the Sultan to extend his tenancy of lands in Europe, without so much as a peppercorn rent, when his presence was an affront upon progress, the little nations of the Balkan peninsula were tempted to undertake his eviction.

The war of 1912 was an amazingly rapid conflict, like the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885. The Allies flung themselves upon the hesitating Turk ; so sudden was their attack that he was left no time to throw off his accustomed lethargy. At best he could only recoil before the encounter. Within a few weeks the followers of Mahomet were flying in all directions.

The Greek Army was the army of Venizelos. It was neither the army of the enervated politicians nor the army of Constantine.

The King was not permitted to undertake, or interfere with, its reconstruction.

In a much deeper sense than critics appreciated, Venizelos had reinfected large sections of the Hellenes with the ancient spirit of their race. He had reawakened in the people national ideals and ambitions. He had carried out his policy, which was based upon high traditions and the principles of fairplay. He had broken down the custom of favouritism in the public service. The shifty methods of a corrupt bureaucracy had been arrested. A change had been wrought in Greece. It was a change so profound that it showed itself in the psychology of the nation. And the army, as a part of the nation, felt and expressed the new spirit.

This power to inspire others with hope and faith sprang from Venizelos; he showed his practical understanding by equipping and reorganising the troops on the most modern basis. Nor had the navy been neglected in his plans. The *moral* of the Greek sailors was considered excellent when war dawned in the East. Although there had been no time to build up a modern fleet, or even to supplement the old one with new capital ships, Venizelos had employed British naval officers to assist in training the men. If the personnel of the Naval Mission was not perhaps above criticism, it performed some useful work. War came at short notice. Venizelos was prepared, but not fully prepared, for the conflict; in his judgment, indeed, the spring of 1913 would have been a more propitious moment for Greece. Immediate war against Turkey was preferable, however, to neutrality or to war against Bulgaria and Serbia.

No provision had been made by Venizelos for the Greek share of conquered territory if the Allies were victorious. Thus Greece was compelled to enter the field on trust. It amounted to trust in the ability of Venizelos not to be cheated on the day of reckoning.

Prior to the outbreak of war, Turkey endeavoured to come to terms with the Greek Premier, in order to detach Greece from the Balkan combination. With the same object in view, war was declared by the Sublime Porte on

Serbia and Bulgaria only. Venizelos, as we have seen, remedied this omission by declaring war upon Turkey.

The first phase of the war was full of swift movement. There were Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, and even Montenegrin successes. Successes matured into triumphs. The Great Powers beheld the Sick Man rise like a malingerer from his pallet and run. He ran with the fast sure strides of one whose legs at least are sound. No longer could the statesmen of Europe contemplate restoring the *status quo ante bellum*, with the Greeks in Salonica, the Bulgarians in possession of the Adrianople forts and the Serbs in Durazzo. War seemed to have become a series of military promenades, with only an occasional interruption. The Allies possessed vitality and the Turks were lacking in will.

Venizelos placed the Crown Prince Constantine at the head of a great host, with orders to lead the way to Salonica. It can never be said that he was ungenerous to the future King. On the contrary, he appeared to be actuated by an almost paternal desire to make the Prince a hero in the eyes of the people. He delighted in placing Constantine in a brilliant light, where bright uniforms and flashing sabres told of military prowess. The tranquil-looking, black-coated man, bearded and bespectacled, who was responsible for laying the foundations of success, stood smilingly aside.

Scarcely more than a fortnight after the outbreak of hostilities the Crown Prince was inclined to arrest the advance on Salonica. But at this point Venizelos intervened.

When war first broke out, he had impressed upon the General Staff that Salonica must be taken at all costs: "*Salonique à tout prix!*" After the victory of Sarandaporon, which opened the road to the Macedonian city, he telegraphed to the General Staff that there must be no disobedience on the part of the Crown Prince: the army must march on Salonica. As the Prime Minister was still afraid that Prince Constantine, the nominal Commander-in-Chief, might disobey the General Staff, he took the extra precaution of telegraphing to King George, who was somewhere in the rear of the advance. He warned the King



that he would hold the Commander-in-Chief responsible if he diverted his army from the main objective.<sup>1</sup> The King was given to understand that Constantine's inclination to turn off in the direction of Monastir must not be gratified. "He must leave the Northern expedition alone," asserted Venizelos. "It would be of no value if we failed to take Salonica first." This shows the influence of Venizelos behind the scenes on the conduct of the campaign.

Salonica was surrendered on November 9.

The Greeks had scarcely got possession of the town when the Bulgarians appeared at the gates. The army of Theodoreff was prepared to struggle for admittance.

Accompanied by a staff officer, the Bulgarian commander called upon the Crown Prince when the latter was occupied in attending to some official papers. As there had been rain, Theodoreff begged that two of his battalions, which had suffered greatly from sickness and privation, might be allowed by the Prince to enter the town and seek shelter. Constantine consented. He invited the General to join him at dinner that night. Dinner was in progress when suddenly down the street sounded the loud music of a military band; people went to the balconies to see what new troops were coming in. It could hardly be expected that the two sickly Bulgarian battalions would have themselves played into the town. It soon became apparent, however, that the procession was indeed composed of Bulgarians. There were not merely two battalions, but the whole of General Theodoreff's division, marching through the streets.<sup>2</sup> The Bulgarians immediately established themselves in Salonica, where they stayed for more than seven months. The municipal administration remained in the hands of the Greeks.

From the outset Greece obtained substantial benefits on the sea. Her ships wholly prevented the transport of Turkish troops, and sea power brought her the Ægean Islands.

A story is told of a meeting held before the war at Sofia, at which M. Gueshoff was present with the Greek, Serbian, and Montenegrin Ministers. "The discussion turned upon

<sup>1</sup> M. Caclamano.

<sup>2</sup> Trapmann.

the number of troops which each Ally could put into the field against Turkey. M. Gueshoff stated that Bulgaria would be able to supply 400,000 men, the Serbian Minister answered for 200,000, and the Montenegrin representative for 50,000. Thereupon they all turned towards M. Panas, the Greek Minister. He said, 'Greece can supply 600,000 troops! . . . We can place an army of 200,000 men in the field, and then our fleet will prevent about 400,000 Turks from being landed on the coast of Thrace and Macedonia, between Salonica and Gallipoli.' " <sup>1</sup>

The value of sea power served as a definite inducement to Bulgaria to enter into an Alliance with Greece.

On October 18, the day they put to sea, Venizelos addressed the officers and men of the navy. During the ceremony, in which the King took part, it was announced that Commodore Coundouriotis,<sup>2</sup> who achieved some celebrity four years later as one of the Salonica Triumvirate, was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral.

"There are," said Venizelos, "moments in life when men regret the careers that they have chosen. I must admit that I now find myself in this predicament. I regret that my career has brought me to the helm of the State, instead of being one of you. Yes, I assure you at this moment I envy you all, even down to the common sailor, for it is to you that our country is now entrusting her fate with every hope.

"We enter the struggle full of confidence on land, for have we not our Allies? But our confidence is no less great at sea, where our Allies have entrusted their fate to us.

"We are full of hope, for we know what you are made of and that you are well prepared, and above all we know the courage that inspires you.

"Greece expects you not merely to die for her, for that is little, indeed; she expects you to conquer. That is why each one of you, even in dying, should be possessed by one

<sup>1</sup> Cassavetti. This writer points out that if there had been no naval intervention by Greece, Turkey might well have landed some 2000 troops a day.

<sup>2</sup> He was appointed Regent on the death of King Alexander, but was succeeded by the Dowager Queen Olga after the election of November 15, 1920.

thought alone—how to conserve your strength to the last so that those who survive may conquer.

“And you will conquer. I am more than sure of this.”<sup>1</sup>

Born of a sea-faring race, the sailors of the Levant, the Greek bluejackets required but little stimulus, although the presence of the King and Venizelos was a direct incentive to patriotic endeavour.

The Minister of Marine, M. Stratos, issued an Order of the Day exhorting the personnel of the fleet to do its duty: “War has been declared against Turkey; our country calls upon you to do your duty.”<sup>2</sup>

Thus the naval forces of Greece put to sea from the Piræus on October 18. All told, there were between 11,000 and 12,000 officers and men in the Hellenic Navy. The fleet itself consisted of about 51 vessels, ranging from armoured battleships to torpedo-boats. Some of the ships were very old; one corvette was reputed to have been built in 1860. The Turkish Navy was also encumbered with obsolete and defective vessels.

On October 21, after the proclamation of a blockade of the Turkish coast and the ports of the Ægean, the Greeks landed at Lemnos and established a naval base in the Bay of Mudros. Ten days later, they took possession of the islands of Thasos, Imbros, and Strati. While there was little or no opposition on the part of the Turks during these movements, individual Greeks were not lacking in daring and initiative. One nocturnal exploit in which a torpedo-boat commander<sup>3</sup> entered Salonica harbour and blew up a Turkish gunboat—the *Fetik Bouled*—is an instance in point. “Whenever I wanted to see my way, the moon came out,” afterwards declared the officer, somewhat lightly, “and whenever I wanted to be hidden it disappeared.”<sup>4</sup> As the harbour was scientifically mined and as the guns and search-lights of Fort Karaburnu, which commanded the approach, were modern, the adventure evidenced much the same spirit as that shown by the American, Pearson, at Santiago de Cuba in 1898 and by the British in the raids on Ostend and Zeebrugge in 1918.

The occupation by the Greeks of the Ægean Islands

<sup>1</sup> Cassavetti.

<sup>2</sup> Cassavetti.

<sup>3</sup> Lieut. Votsis.

<sup>4</sup> Cassavetti.

continued. Samothrace was taken over on November 1; then Psara on the 4th. On the 5th, Coundouriotis landed a naval contingent on the promontory of Mount Athos. The following day the Greeks occupied a dozen villages on the promontory of Cassandra. On the 17th they took the island of Icaria. And on the 21st, Mytilene fell into their possession. A landing at Chios was effected soon afterwards, but the last of the Turks in the island failed to surrender until January 3, 1913.

On December 16 there was an encounter outside the Dardanelles between the capital ships of the Greek and Ottoman navies. The Turks were supported by the troops at Seddil Bahr and Kun Kale, and probably, also, by field artillery. Despite these auxiliaries the Sultan's sea forces were outclassed. In the superior seamanship of the Greeks, coupled with the greater speed of their ships, lies the probable explanation.<sup>1</sup>

The last great adventure of the Turks afloat lay in the serpentine career of the *Hamidieh*. This vessel had slipped through the blockade during a general sortie on January 7 and was apparently unable to re-enter the Straits. On January 14 she bombarded Syra and sank the auxiliary Greek cruiser *Macedonia*, which was lying in the harbour. From Syra the *Hamidieh* went to Port Said.

The remaining capital ships of the Imperial Navy made another sortie on January 17. The next day they were engaged by the Hellenic Fleet. As the Turks were again forced to retire, the *rencontre* had the effect of definitely establishing the sea supremacy of the Greeks.

Meanwhile, the *Hamidieh* roved the seas like a corsair. She swept the Eastern Mediterranean and the Adriatic, causing anxiety to responsible mariners. No one would hazard a prophecy concerning the scene of her next exploit. Although the *Hamidieh* was in search of sea-prey, townspeople felt equally insecure. Once the Turk attacked some Greek transports in the harbour of San Giovanni di Medua. The skippers grounded their ships and thus saved the situation. As the vessels carried Serbian troops,<sup>2</sup> in addition to war material, the escape was a fortunate one for the

<sup>1</sup> Cassavetti.    <sup>2</sup> For co-operation with the Montenegrins at Scutari.

Allies. The *Hamidieh*'s shells fell like rain on the hillside rising from the shore.

The *Hamidieh* ultimately retired into the Suez Canal.

The *Emden* and the *Moewe* have since more daringly illustrated the reckless spirit which filled the Levant with apprehension during the extravagant operations of the *Hamidieh*.

The essentials in the Greek naval programme were realised. Admiral Coundouriotis occupied Samos in the spring of 1913. All the Ægean Islands, except those held by the Italians, were thus in the hands of the Greeks.

As for the Greek land forces, it has been seen that they were successful in the Macedonian campaign, which culminated in the capture of Salonica. In Epirus the troops were commanded by an unlucky and untalented officer, no other than Sapuntsakis. His only achievement lay in the taking of Preveza on November 3. His Chief of Staff, Colonel Joannou, a brave man, drove the Turks out of Pesta at the point of the bayonet on December 11, but owing to the tortoiselike movements of Sapuntsakis, the Turks recovered their spirits as well as their lost ground. The capture of Janina, the true objective of the Greeks, was long delayed and dearly bought, as a consequence.

The Turkish garrison was reinforced by contingents from the Monastir army newly escaped from Macedonia, and, with Bashi-Bazouks, the total force defending the city was fairly estimated at 30,000 men.<sup>1</sup>

Greek reinforcements began to arrive in the first week of January. On January 25 the Crown Prince assumed command in Epirus. In spite of his shortcomings, Sapuntsakis was left at the head of important army groupings. The systematic siege of Janina, which had been begun after so much delay, soon had its effect upon the Turks. On March 5 the town was surrendered by Essad Pasha.<sup>2</sup> General Danglis, who had followed the Crown Prince from Macedonia, where he had been his Chief of Staff, was employed in the last phases of the siege. He was one of the Salonica Triumvirate in 1917.

<sup>1</sup> Cassavetti.

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with the Albanian leader, Essad Pasha.

Less than a fortnight after the fall of Janina, King George was assassinated in Salonica.

Greece waged war against the Turks on land and sea from October 1912 to March 1913. Her three Allies, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro, had signed an armistice with Turkey on December 3, 1912. To preserve intact her excellent naval achievement—that of checking the transport of Turks from Asia Minor—Greece remained outside the armistice. Venizelos, however, attended the London Peace Conference, which inaugurated its sittings in December. It was in London that he began to add new international lustre to his reputation.

Among the successes which distinguished the operations of the other Allies, both before the armistice and after its expiration, the most notable were those of the Serbians at Monastir, Durazzo, San Giovanni di Medua, and, with the assistance of the Montenegrins, at Scutari; and of the Bulgarians at Kirk-Killisse, Lule Burgas, and Adrianople. The Bulgarian advance to the Chatalja lines, which involved hard fighting, although somewhat spectacular, remained uncrowned by triumph.

## CHAPTER IV

SURROUNDED by portraits of the Kings and Queens of England, the visage of Henry VIII. prominent among them, the delegates of the Balkan States and Turkey assembled in St. James's Palace on December 16, 1912, to discuss the fruits of war. Sir Edward Grey, who opened the proceedings, addressed the delegates in French. The Foreign Secretary was then elected Honorary President of the Conference.

Venizelos was the chief of the Greek Delegation. With him were M. Skouloudes, a former Foreign Minister, M. Gennadius, Minister in London, and M. Georges Streit. General Danglis, Colonel Metaxas, and M. Politis accompanied the delegates as technical advisers. Turkey was represented by Mustapha Reshid Pasha, Salih Pasha, and Osman Nizami Pasha. Bulgaria sent M. Daneff, General Paprikoff, and M. Madjaroff. The Serbian Delegation was composed of M. Novakovitch, who had held office as Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Nikolitch, ex-Foreign Minister, and M. Vesnitch, of the Hague Tribunal. The Montenegrin Delegation was headed by M. Mioutchkovitch, a former Premier. M. Voinovitch and M. Popovitch accompanied him.

It was arranged that the chief delegates should preside over the Conference in rotation.

The Turks at the first meeting raised no objection to the presence of Venizelos and his colleagues, although Greece had not been a party to the armistice. The anomaly of carrying on peace discussions during a period of active warfare was a point reserved by the Turks for use the following day. Thus, on December 17, when the delegates exchanged their credentials, the representatives of the Sultan discovered that

they had no authority to negotiate with the Greeks. This led to an adjournment for instructions.

The day that the Peace Conference was interrupted, another Conference, the Conference of Ambassadors representing the Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, met for the first time at the Foreign Office, under the presidency of Sir Edward Grey.<sup>1</sup> The Ambassadors' Conference was charged with the function of safeguarding the interests of the Great Powers in connection with the Near East.

After a brief delay, the Turkish delegates said that they would negotiate with the Greeks in the Peace Conference on condition that Turkey received permission to revictual Adrianople. To this proposal the Allies were unable to agree. Another delay resulted.

On December 23, Venizelos and the members of his Delegation were admitted to the Conference unconditionally. On the same day the Allies demanded the surrender by Turkey of all territory West of the line extending from Rodosto to Cape Malatra, 5 miles South of Midia, and of all the Aegean Islands belonging to Turkey (including Crete) with certain exceptions<sup>2</sup> to be specified by the Powers. The Allies were prepared to leave the Gallipoli Peninsula to the Sultan.

With the Turks rolling in the dust on land and driven from the open sea afloat, the Ottoman Delegation might not unreasonably have agreed to the Allies' terms, but the traditional Turkish policy of procrastination, with its promise of possible benefits, was irresistible. Turkey ignored her own defeat and drafted a firm reply :

1. The vilayet of Adrianople to remain under the complete sovereignty of the Sultan.

2. Macedonia, with Salonica as capital, to be converted into an autonomous principality under the Porte. A Prince, preferably a Protestant, selected by the Allies from a neutral State, to be appointed as the Sultan's nominee.

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Secretary had announced in the House of Commons on December 11, that the Ambassadors in London of the Signatory Powers would meet together for "informal and non-committal consultation."

<sup>2</sup> Exceptions had special reference to the islands near the mouth of the Dardanelles.



3. Albania to be constituted an autonomous province, ruled by a Prince of the Turkish Imperial House.

4. The Cretan question to be reserved for the Porte and the Protecting Powers only.

5. The Islands, as forming part of one of the administrative divisions of Asia Minor, to remain Turkish.

The Turkish answer was vexatious, but it was not to be taken too seriously. The actual cost of delay was the most serious element in the situation for the Allies. Large armies could only be kept mobilised at a great expenditure. By wasting time the Turks wasted the money of the Balkan States. Daneff, the Bulgarian, was anxious to obtain the cession of Adrianople, which he knew the Turks would not give up, except to an actual conqueror. They were certainly not prepared to cede the town under the existing conditions. The Bulgarians believed, rightly, that the place could still be taken by force of arms. Daneff was inclined to resume hostilities. The Turks were prepared to haggle behind the scenes to gain time. But as Daneff failed to obtain the concessions he sought, he was not to be kept engaged in secret negotiations indefinitely. Adrianople was what he wanted and what he intended to have.

One of the Greek delegates, M. Gennadius, G.C.V.O., for many years Minister in London, has added some personal information on this subject.

"While the Turks were procrastinating," he says, "it soon became clear that the Bulgarians also were disinclined to conclude peace. The latter were determined to take Adrianople, which, of course, the Turks would not have ceded, unless the place had been captured by the Allies.

"I remember quite well that at the private meeting of the delegates of the Allies, when it was debated whether we should continue negotiating with the Turks and compel them to give some positive answer or whether the Conference was to be broken up, M. Daneff, the chief Bulgarian delegate, who had all along assumed a domineering and unmannered attitude, allowed it to be clearly understood that the Bulgarians preferred that negotiations should be broken off, because they had meanwhile formed the conviction that they would soon be able to take Adrianople. So the Conference

was broken up. Adrianople *was* taken, not by the Bulgarians alone, but with the effective assistance of the Serbians. The latter were immediately ordered out of the city by the Bulgarians. This was the first practical indication of the already matured plan of the Bulgarians to fall upon their other Allies, thus bringing about the second Balkan war."

Venizelos was bent upon the annexation of the Ægean Islands, those, at least, which had been occupied by the Greeks since the outbreak of war; Salonica he never meant to yield up; Janina had not yet fallen, but even then he was vigorously encouraging a more powerful assault upon the town. His responsibilities were great during the Conference, for no one knew better than he what hazards might have to be faced before the Greek naval and military successes could be ranked as material conquests.

M. Take Jonesco, the Rumanian political leader, has credited Venizelos with extraordinary foresight in escaping the penalties of a pre-arrangement with Bulgaria upon the division of war spoils. Indeed, M. Jonesco considers that no treaty between Greece and Bulgaria would have been concluded if the partition questions had been discussed in advance. In his opinion, "not to have discussed the partition beforehand places Venizelos on a level with Cavour or Bismarck." Venizelos was certainly compelled to rely implicitly on his own talent, whatever course he adopted. It was a great hazard whether he attempted to regulate the distribution of the unknown spoils of a war which had not been fought or fought out the war before approaching the question.

Although the London Peace Conference was proceeding towards dissolution, owing to internal discord, the Balkan States were not without their external afflictions. One of the Allies, Serbia, was being unnerved by Austria. M. Pachich, the head of the Belgrade Cabinet, attempted to appease Count Berchtold by making proposals through Professor Masaryk.

It is said that the proposals<sup>1</sup> were neither accepted nor

<sup>1</sup> (a) Serbia desires friendly relations with Austria and bows to the will of Austria on the question of Albanian autonomy. (b) Serbia desires

discussed by Berchtold, although Pachich offered to go to Vienna to treat with him personally.

The Turks, after the manner of drowning men, were inclined to seize at straws. They were encouraged by Austria's opposition to Serbia, by the fact that Bulgaria was likely to be pressed hard by Rumania for territorial concessions, and by the differences existing between the Allies themselves. Moreover, the Turkish intelligence could never entirely forget the enchanting possibility that the Great Powers might even yet adhere to their original decision concerning the maintenance of the *status quo*. It is not, then, altogether surprising that Turkey was unwilling to submit to the terms imposed by the Balkan States. She could be brought to the water-trough, but she could not be made to drink.

On the first of January 1913 the Peace Conference met under the presidency of Venizelos. On this occasion the Turks appeared to be in a more reasonable state of mind. They laid new proposals before the Allied delegates, proposals which were indicative of a truer appreciation of the military position. Shortly, the representative of the Sublime Porte were prepared to agree to the cession of all territory West of the vilayet of Adrianople. They insisted, however, that the determination of boundaries and the future of Albania should rest with the Great Powers. They claimed possession of the vilayet of Adrianople and the right to negotiate any rectification of frontiers with Bulgaria. They also refused to give up the Ægean Islands, but expressed their willingness to discuss with Europe any questions relating to them. They assented to any decision which might ultimately be reached by the Protecting Powers on the subject of Crete.

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a sea outlet, and aspires to the possession of a port (not to be used as a war port and not to be ceded to any other Power). (c) If Austria will help Serbia to obtain a port, Serbia will give preference to Austria regarding loans, industrial concessions, purchases of railway material, etc. (d) Serbia will adopt towards the Yugo-Slav population in Austria-Hungary a correct attitude. (e) If Austria declines these proposals or displays a spirit of hostility, the Serbian Government will not regard such action as a *casus belli*. Serbia does not intend to make war. Hostility would merely compel her to refrain from commercial intercourse.

These, then, were the essential points in the reply. When Venizelos had heard the Ottoman delegates go through their list of concessions, he proposed an adjournment to enable the Allies to discuss and draft an answer.

The proceedings were resumed at the end of an hour and a half. It was evident from the moment that he returned to the chair that the Balkan delegates half-expected the Turks to come to an understanding.

The Hellenic Premier began by reading aloud the Allies' reply, which was expressed in temperate terms :

1. The Allies take note of the cession of territories to the West of the vilayet of Adrianople on the express condition that this cession will apply not only to occupied territory, but also to territory not yet completely occupied.

2. The Turkish proposal regarding the vilayet of Adrianople is unacceptable because it implies separate agreements and, moreover, does not grant the territory demanded.

3. The Ottoman proposals concerning the Ægean Islands and Crete are also unacceptable. The Allies maintain their former demand as regards the cession of the islands and the relinquishment of Turkish rights in Crete.

On January 3 the Conference reassembled, when the Turks announced their willingness to cede the South-Western district of the vilayet of Adrianople, but no more, to the Allies; and to transfer the Sultan's rights in Crete to the Great Powers on condition that no other islands were demanded. On hearing these conditions, the Allied delegates asked for time to discuss matters in private. Whereupon there was an adjournment which lasted for forty-five minutes.

When the representatives of the Balkan States rejoined the Turks they repeated their minimum claim :

1. The renunciation of Turkey's sovereignty over Crete.
2. The cession of the Ægean Islands.
3. A frontier leaving the town of Adrianople to the Allies.

The Ottoman delegates were plainly informed that if this offer was not accepted, the negotiations must be considered "interrupted."<sup>1</sup> An interruption in the proceedings was considered less definite than, for example, a severance

<sup>1</sup> The Peace Conference was formally suspended on January 6. Sir E. Grey used pressure on both sides to prevent a rupture. His efforts were unsuccessful.

of all intercourse and it also left a better opening for further negotiations. It was a question of language and nothing else, for, in practice, the negotiations came to an end and were not reopened until after the occurrence of fresh hostilities in the field.

M. Take Jonesco came to London and entered into *pourparlers* with Daneff early in January. The Rumanian was anxious to gain some advantages for his country while Bulgaria was still engaged in the South. In the result, Daneff consented to a rectified frontier, to follow a straight line from Silistria to the Black Sea.

Before leaving London the Bulgarian also held conversations with M. Misu, who had been sent to St. James's as King Carol's diplomatic representative. A protocol was drawn up between them in which the claims of the two countries were duly set out. It was then arranged that this protocol should be sent to the Rumanian and Bulgarian Governments and that future negotiations should be conducted between Bucharest and Sofia.

Venizelos remained in London until February 1. "We know the Turks," he said, on the eve of his departure, "and we are convinced that war is the shortest way to peace." Daneff complained of the dilatory attitude of the Turks. He declared that nothing had been accomplished.

Between Greece and Turkey, the *Ægean* Islands were the outstanding point of difficulty. It is true that they were claimed in the name of the Allies, but only on the understanding that they were to be formally annexed by Greece. Venizelos made out a sound case for annexation. With his accustomed skill, he brought out point after point, which, in spite of Italian opposition, made a great impression at the Ambassadors' Conference. Immediately after the suspension of the Peace Conference, he summarised, for the guidance of public opinion, the grounds upon which he founded the Greek claim :

Whatever point of view is adopted, the only possible solution is that offered by the Allies: the annexation of the islands by Greece. This solution is in keeping with the outcome of the war and is also supported by the principle of nationalities. It serves alike the interests of the Great Powers and Turkey.

Greece has uncontested possession of all the islands except those which are occupied by the Italian forces. Greece is certainly entitled, owing to her mastery of the sea, to maintain her position intact. Taking possession of the islands, particularly Mytilene and Chios, where important enemy forces were encountered, has involved a great sacrifice in men and money. This sacrifice serves as a first title, but Greece's claim is based upon wider rights. Although the product of force is in this case justified and purified, we claim the islands not so much by conquest as by inheritance. Our title is based upon conditions anterior and superior to the war. It is supplied to us by the principle of nationalities, for nowhere can a more homogeneous people of pure race and national aspirations be found than in the Archipelago. Out of a total of 423,000 inhabitants, there is a compact majority of 394,000 Greeks. The 29,000 people who remain are made up of Mussulmans, Jews, and foreigners. Thus the islands are Greek by nationality and culture, moral and intellectual; and in the maritime and commercial activities of the people. The scholastic movement in the islands is a characteristic of all Greek countries. In the Archipelago there are nearly five hundred schools, among which are five large *lycées*; one in each of the islands of Mytilene, Chios, Samos, Rhodes, and Calymnos.

Sense of race is so strong that, in spite of Ottoman domination during several centuries, the Turks have never succeeded in establishing themselves completely. The Mussulman element was always feebly represented in the Ottoman administrative system, which was never perfectly applied. From the beginning of the period of conquest, the Sultans allowed the islands a large measure of fiscal and administrative independence, which, in principle, has continued to our day, in spite of the tendencies towards assimilation which were manifested in 1886, when the law of vilayets was passed, followed by the recent politics of the Young Turks.

Of all fragments of Hellenism, those constituted by the communities of the *Ægean* have perhaps suffered most for secular and national ideals. It is right to declare that nothing could be more unjust than to oppose to-day, after a victorious war of liberation, the definite triumph of the legitimate aspirations of these people. All that the Ottoman delegates could find to say against our demand for the cession of the islands is that the islands form geographically a part of Anatolia, and that by their abandonment the defence of Asia Minor might be compromised. The objection does not support examination. As I have already remarked at the Conference, all frontiers necessarily throw into contact limitrophe states.

The contact is more immediate and the parting more dangerous on land than in the case of Greece, mistress of the islands, and Turkey in Asia ; because the islands are separated by the sea, the best frontier furnished by nature. But if nature invites Turkey and Greece to make a choice of this frontier, history imposes it upon them. Under all systems of government, from ancient times to our day, the Archipelago has constituted a political, administrative, and economic grouping distinct from neighbouring territories. After the revolution of 1821, the Archipelago was arbitrarily cut in two pieces, of which only one was given to Greece. The other, left to Turkey, was not attached to any province of the Ottoman Empire. It formed a separate administrative unity which was later called the vilayet of the isles of the Archipelago. The proximity of the Asiatic coast never exercised any influence on this organism. Indeed, when it was asked if the vilayet was to benefit by the reforms promised by Article XXIII. of the Treaty of Berlin, the International Commission charged with the elaboration of these regulations for the European provinces of Turkey decided in 1881 that the new rule should be applied.

Far from creating a danger for Asia Minor, the cession of the isles is an imperative necessity for the future tranquillity of Europe and the security of the Ottoman Empire.

Whatever decision is reached, the islands remain Greek. There can be no guarantee of peace in the Archipelago so long as the inhabitants have failed to realise their national aspirations. If left under the dominion of Turkey, even with the widest concession of autonomy, the Archipelago would be a theatre of continual trouble and agitation. With Turco-Greek relations envenomed and in constant danger of rupture the Great Powers would witness on a wider scale the spectacle of which they saw enough in Crete. If, on the contrary, the islands are returned to the mother country, all motive for conflict will simultaneously disappear. The prospects of friendship and neighbourliness would be improved. In the economic community of interests, Greece and Turkey would be drawn into ever closer relations.

Every one affirms, with reason, that peace must be concluded on a durable basis. It is not sufficient that old causes of conflict should be removed. An endeavour should also be made to sterilise the seed of future war. Once peace is concluded, this result will surely be attained between Turkey, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Serbia. With Greece it can only be attained through the cession of all the islands.

The claim of Venizelos to the Archipelago and Bulgaria's

demand for Adrianople found official support among the Great Powers. On January 17, the Ambassadors at Constantinople of Great Britain, France, Russia, Austria, Germany, and Italy presented a Note to the Porte in which the altered opinion of Europe was clearly indicated. The Turks were informed that they would have only themselves to thank if the prolongation of the war brought the fate of Constantinople into question or if hostilities extended to the Asiatic provinces. The Note declared that the Great Powers' efforts could not then be counted upon to preserve Turkey from danger. The Turks were also reminded that their country would need the moral and material support of Europe, in order to make good the losses occasioned by the war, to consolidate the situation at Constantinople, and to maintain the vast Asiatic territories whose prosperity constituted Turkey's most effective force. The Ottoman Government was advised to cede Adrianople to the Balkan Allies and to leave the fate of the Ægean Islands to the Powers. In return, the latter promised to concern themselves with the safety of Mussulman interests in Adrianople and to prevent any menace to Turkey through the solution of the Archipelago question.

The Turks appeared to be in no great haste to reply to the European Note, which remained unanswered until the end of January.

Certain local political disturbances were in a measure responsible for the delay. When the reply was delivered it was found to contain two principal concessions :

1. Turkey is prepared to leave the decision of the Adrianople question to the Great Powers (so far as the right bank of the River Maritza is concerned).
2. Turkey is willing to abide by the decision of the Great Powers regarding the status of the Ægean Islands occupied by the Balkan Allies, provided that certain considerations are taken into account.

Almost at the moment that the Turks delivered the Note containing these concessions, the armistice was denounced by the Allied States. "I declare," said Daneff, "that the reply of Turkey is not of a character to form a basis for fresh negotiations. We have said that Adrianople and the



Ægean Islands must be ceded. Otherwise our negotiations will not be resumed. Moreover, this cession must be made before fighting is recommenced. After the first shot is fired, our conditions of peace will change. Emphatically, the Turkish reply is unacceptable."

On February 3 the Bulgarians reopened their attack on Adrianople, which was heavily bombarded.

On his way back to Greece, Venizelos had a conversation with Count Berchtold in Vienna and an audience of King Ferdinand at Sofia. It was remarked when he reached Salonica that he preserved a confident demeanour.

Rumours had been in circulation among the Greek people concerning the probability of trouble with Bulgaria. The continued presence of the Bulgarians in Salonica added reality to the menace. Venizelos endeavoured to calm public opinion. It was part of his policy throughout the war to check the excitements due to popular fears and enthusiasms. He had begun by taking a firm stand with the Athens press, which was subjected to the restraining influence of a Censor. In the war of 1897, the newspapers of the Greek capital had had too free a hand: the people often received alarming reports which were not even justified by the disasters of the campaign. In 1912 and 1913 the press was steadied by the hand of Venizelos. The very real success of the Greek forces on sea and land probably set off the ephemeral irritations caused by the Censor.

## CHAPTER V

VENIZELOS was acclaimed as a national hero wherever he went in Greece. His work in the field of international politics had been vigorous and well sustained, but the harvest had not yet been reaped. No one could assert positively what would come to Greece when the period of suspense had ended. The hardy Bulgarians, with their insatiable appetite for conquest, were far more disturbing to the imagination than the Turks, whose talent for war seemed to have disappeared with a past epoch.

Venizelos never underestimated the strength of Greece's chief Ally, although he tried to regard Bulgaria as a friend, while appreciating her danger as an enemy.

On the battlefield, the troops of King Ferdinand were pressing forward towards Constantinople. On March 25 they occupied Chatalja.

Meanwhile, the Great Powers were making efforts to bring about a second armistice. They had offered their services as mediators to the Allies, who had accepted mediation on condition that an indemnity was exacted from the Turks.

There was no slackening of operations in the field. On March 26, Adrianople was surrendered. In another theatre, the Montenegrins were hurling themselves against the well-defended walls of Scutari. Within the town, Essad Pasha, the Albanian leader, one of the most adventurous spirits in Europe, was in supreme command. The fighting was fast and furious. The Powers were deeply irritated by the persistence of the Black Mountaineers in making Scutari a great objective.

On April 19 all the Balkan States, except Montenegro, signed an armistice with the Turks.

Unfortunately, the friction between the Allies was growing more active every day. Greece was having forced upon her at many points unmistakable evidence of Bulgarian hostility. Venizelos, although working hard for peace, prepared for war. He had never entirely lost sight of the Bulgarian danger during the Peace Conference. Later the tales of Greeks who had lingered in Macedonia were rarely lost upon him.

Solidarity among the various Balkan peoples was all but impossible. The conflict of interests outweighed even the qualities common to Bulgars and Serbs.

As soon as it was seen that the Balkan misalliance was about to involve divorce, the advantages of an inner combination became obvious. With Serbia opposed to Bulgaria and Bulgaria opposed to Greece, Venizelos and Pachich grew tired of maintaining a foothold in the swampy area peculiar to the League.

The spring of 1913 had matured into summer before Bulgaria turned upon her Allies. Before May was out, however, Greece and Serbia had adopted the precaution of concluding a defensive Alliance. It was the same Alliance which in the years of the European War was destined to bring fresh credit to Venizelos and disgrace upon his King.

When the Serbian Treaty was discussed and concluded, Pachich insisted on inserting in it that Greece was bound to declare war on any Power which attacked her Ally. King Constantine remarked, "That clause is very bad!" Venizelos shrugged his shoulders. "It is a matter of indifference to me if we accept it," he said. "If, for example, Austria attacked Serbia, it would mean a general European war, and we should fight with the Entente." The conversation was prophetic. It also showed that, as far back as the period intervening between the two Balkan wars, the King was disinclined to respect a Treaty with Serbia.<sup>1</sup>

In London the members of the Ambassadors' Conference spent an arduous winter trying to keep the atmosphere of Europe free from the poisonous vapours arising in the Near East. No one would have cared very profoundly what

<sup>1</sup> M. Caclamanos.

fate was in store for Albania, Serbia, or Bulgaria, if every one had not been very much concerned in the politics of Russia and Austria. "Sir Edward Grey," writes Prince Lichnowsky, "proposed an informal conversation to prevent the Balkan war from developing into a European war," and he adds, "after we had unfortunately refused, at the outbreak of the war, to agree to the French proposal of a declaration of disinterestedness." The former German Ambassador at St. James's points out that Sir Edward Grey, from the outset, took up the position that England had no interests in Albania, and had no intention of going to war on this question. Lichnowsky considers that the Foreign Secretary wished to mediate in an honest manner between the two groups of Powers, the Entente and the Triple Alliance. "His goodwill and his authoritative influence contributed in no small degree to the attainment of an agreement." Germany, instead of imitating the attitude of England, "invariably took up the position which was prescribed . . . by Vienna." The Ambassador of the Emperor Francis Joseph, old Count Mensdorff, who was said to have asked permission to remain in England when Austria and Great Britain entered upon war in 1914, "was the leader of the Triple Alliance in London," and "I," asserts Lichnowsky, "was his 'second.' It was my duty to support his proposals. Count Szogyenyi was conducting affairs in Berlin. Mensdorff's refrain was, 'Then the *casus fœderis* will arise,' and when I once ventured to doubt the truth of this conclusion, I was severely reprimanded for 'Austrophobia.' . . . On all questions we took the side of Austria and Italy about the delimitation of the frontiers of Albania, but Sir Edward Grey hardly ever supported the French or Russian claims."

Prince Lichnowsky's notes concerning the Ambassadors' Conference, if somewhat personal, supply a clear impression of the proceedings. "Sir E. Grey," he writes in another paragraph, "conducted the negotiations with circumspection, calm, and tact. When a question threatened to become involved, he sketched a formula for agreement, which was to the point and always accepted. His personality inspired equal confidence in all the participants. . . . Russia was obliged to give way to us on all points, as she was never

in a position to assure success for Serbian aims. Albania was established as a vassal state of Austria. Serbia was pressed back from the sea."

The Prince remarks upon the dissatisfaction felt in certain quarters in Russia, and also upon the German descent and Roman Catholicism of Count Benckendorff, Ambassador of the Czar in London. Lichnowsky once said to Benckendorff that he presumed Russian feeling was very anti-German, to which Benckendorff replied that there were very strong and influential pro-German circles, but that in general people were anti-Austrian.

King Nicholas of Montenegro and his wild men of the hills were bent upon the capture of Scutari. Owing to reasons of State the Great Powers were incensed. Scutari ceased to be the name of an Albanian community, and became the description of a European problem. England was not prepared to encourage Russia, and Germany was not prepared to discourage Austria. As early as April 14 an International Blockading Squadron, under Admiral Troubridge, consisting of British, Austrian, French, German, and Italian ships, assembled off the Montenegrin port of Antivari to strike terror in the hearts of the hillmen. But the Montenegrins continued to lay siege to Scutari. King Nicholas placed a low value on the benefits likely to come to him if he desisted in deference to Europe. He was a shrewd old man. He recognised that Scutari was making the Great Powers glance at each other obliquely. April 19 passed, and all his Allies signed the second armistice. The King still obstinately ignored such an enervating condition as peace. Was not Essad Pasha, the war-like Albanian, cornered in Scutari? Had not Venizelos once defied Europe from the Cretan hills? Thus Scutari became as famous among sieges as Berg-op-Zoom. For a few days it was no small thing to be Nicholas Petrovitch, King, Commander-in-Chief, and War Bogey of peaceful Europe. The game was well worth the candle or the ammunition or whatever was most used by the besiegers. On April 22, Scutari fell. General Essad Pasha surrendered to the lieges and legions of His Majesty the King of Montenegro.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> King Nicholas was compelled to evacuate Scutari less than a month

While Europe was watching with a nervous eye the heroic stand of Essad and the ferocious onslaughts of King Nicholas, the Conference of Ambassadors had notified the belligerents of the League (1) that the Enos-Midia line would be accepted as a basis for negotiating new Turco-Bulgarian boundaries; (2) that the fate of the Ægean Isles, the majority of which would go to Greece, must be reserved for decision; (3) that the proposed indemnity, together with all financial questions arising out of the war, would be considered by a Financial Commission; (4) that the Albanian boundary questions, already partly settled, would be dealt with.

On April 21 the three Allies replied by begging that the principle of a war indemnity might be accepted; they reserved the right to discuss with the Powers the status of the Ægean Islands and the demarcation of the frontiers of Thrace and Albania.

It was arranged that the Peace Conference should meet in London in May, as the activities of the gathering were likely to be confined to the ceremony of signing the Treaty. As the presence of Venizelos was required in Greece, he decided this time to remain at his post. Daneff, the Bulgarian, Novakovitch, the Serbian, and Osman Nizami Pasha once more appeared at St. James's Palace, together with M. Skouloudes and M. Gennadius. The Treaty, which they were expected to sign, provided:

1. For the cession to the Allies of all Ottoman territory on the mainland of Europe situated West of a line to be drawn from Enos to Midia.
2. For all Albanian questions to be left to the Powers.
3. For the cession of Crete to the Allies and the renunciation by Turkey of all her sovereign rights in the island.
4. For the Ægean decision to be made by Europe.
5. For all financial questions arising out of the war to be left to the International Commission.

On May 27 the Ambassadors' Conference held a meeting at which it was resolved that the peace delegates should be

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later. The flags of France, England, Germany, Austria, and Italy replaced the Montenegrin tricolour at Scutari on May 15. In March the town had been allocated to Albania by the Ambassadors.

informed that no delay in signing the Treaty would be brooked by the Powers, and that the discussion of modifications in the agreement must be waived.

Sir Edward Grey received the delegates on the day that the resolution was framed, and told them very plainly that they must leave London or sign the Treaty without more ado. He explained that questions left unsettled by the Treaty could be made the subject of protocols, which, so far as the Powers were concerned, could be negotiated by the belligerents themselves. The direct method of address adopted by the Foreign Secretary and the simplicity and force of his language had the desired effect. On May 30, after the delegates had exchanged their *pleins pouvoirs*, the Treaty was signed at St. James's Palace.

With the signing of the Treaty of Peace the military conventions of the Balkan Allies came to an end, and with them the League.

Far away from the scene where the delegates had carried out the last formal act connected with the notorious Confederation, Venizelos was making efforts to settle the differences which had been steadily increasing between Bulgaria and Greece. He was engaged in discussing with M. Sarafoff, a representative of King Ferdinand, a plan by which disputes arising out of rival claims to conquered territory might be ended amicably. "The Peace Treaty has now been signed," he said, "and the Balkan States should settle all their differences by mutual concessions uninfluenced by the Chauvinists. Where no agreement is reached, a solution must be found by referring the claims to arbitration. Clearly no more fitting use could be found for arbitration than ending disputes between Allies, not enemies."

He reminded the Bulgarian that the League's success in the war had surpassed all expectations; that the war had been undertaken with the object of exacting reforms from Turkey, but that within fifteen days from the outbreak of hostilities the Allies had been faced by the complete collapse of Turkish power in Europe.

It is probable that Venizelos would have accomplished his purpose if he had been trying to find a basis of understanding with any one actuated by good faith. But all the

time he spent in negotiating with Bulgaria was wasted. Bulgaria had certain inflexible claims, whether their enforcement was to be at the point of the sword or the pen. Greece also had claims. They had grown out of the war, and they could not be modified in all respects. Salonica, for instance, was to be held. No compromise could be associated with the fate of this town. Venizelos would have conceded points to Bulgaria elsewhere in the disputed territories, but Salonica itself was to be regarded as inviolate.

The Bulgarians hoped to extend their new hold upon Macedonia to the chief Macedonian port. Salonica became the object of a fierce struggle, at first confined to words, but quickly extending to blows and bloodshed. An Adriatic outlet was to accrue to Serbia by agreement with Bulgaria in the event of a successful war. The loss of this outlet was regarded in Belgrade as something to be compensated for in another direction. Bulgaria did not see the question with Serbian eyes. Serbia was clamorous. Bulgaria was firm. An *impasse* became inevitable. In this way, the elements of a triangular drama, Greece against Bulgaria, Serbia against Bulgaria, and Bulgaria against both, were produced in such vigour that another war began to threaten the Balkan States before the Peace Treaty was signed. An Alliance of Greece with Serbia was the logical *but*. Venizelos foresaw the dangers and concluded the Treaty. This Treaty, which was signed in Salonica on June 1, had been preceded on May 14 by a Greco-Serbian Military Convention. As early as May 19, the Bulgarian, General Savoff, had telegraphed to Gueshoff that on May 31 he would be "in a position to undertake energetic action at certain points."

On June 1, Pachich and Gueshoff met at Suchovo to discuss the difficulties that had arisen between Serbia and Bulgaria on the division of Macedonia. They agreed in principle to a Conference between all the Allied States. But Gueshoff was merely working to gain time, "to maintain the situation in suspense."

Meanwhile, Venizelos and Sarafoff at Salonica were pursuing their conversations calmly. Certain very grave incidents had lately occurred between Greek and Bulgarian



troops in the Pangheon region, and, as recently as May 20, an encounter had taken place in which the casualties on both sides ran to hundreds. Venizelos, however, conducted his negotiations with the Bulgarian envoy in a spirit of moderation. He was fortified by the knowledge that Greece had not to stand alone. But he preferred to exhaust all peaceful expedients before resorting to arms. A meeting which he had had with M. Take Jonesco in London during January had imported the possibility of a new element of support for Greece. Rumania and Greece had previously not been on very cordial terms.

Venizelos had never for a moment lost sight of the value of Rumanian co-operation, which he saw was likely to be all the more sincere because of differences which existed between the Governments of Bucharest and Sofia. On returning to Rumania, Jonesco sounded King Carol on an *entente* with Greece, but for the time being the question ended at that. In May, when both Venizelos and Pachich were growing anxious about the attitude of Bulgaria, it was arranged that Rumania should be asked to define her position in a fresh war.

Towards the middle of June, the Greek Minister at Bucharest was directed by M. Coromilas, Minister for Foreign Affairs at Athens, to ascertain what attitude Rumania would in fact adopt. The inquiry and the answer which it produced two days later tend to illuminate the matter :

*From the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Athens, June 3, 1913.*

I beg you to see M. Jonesco and make the following communication to him from M. Venizelos : the present moment is a critical one for the future of the peninsula, and Rumania cannot be indifferent to the prospect of a war between the Allies nor to its ultimate result. She could prevent war by adopting a firm attitude at Sofia ; she could also prevent a more extensive alteration of the Balkan balance of power.

By safeguarding peace she would acquire considerable international prestige ; by coming to an understanding with Greece and Serbia she would ensure the issue of a possible war with Bulgaria and in that way contribute to the suppression of Bulgarian ambitions for the hegemony of the Balkans.

Furthermore, an opportunity is presented to Rumania for the improvement of her frontiers. By taking part in the war she

would not be opposed to Austria. I am aware that M. Take Jonesco does not direct the external politics of Rumania, but neither does M. Venizelos direct immediately the external politics of Greece. My present communication is, therefore, of a semi-official and quite friendly character. I might assume an official tone if Rumania is agreeable.

*From the Greek Minister, Bucharest, June 15, 1913.*

I have the honour to inform you that M. Take Jonesco received me at midnight on his return from Constantza. I handed him the communication from his Excellency the President of the Council and we had a long interview. M. Take Jonesco begged me to reply that he fully agrees with M. Venizelos that the mobilisation of Rumania would force peace on Bulgaria, and secure the balance of power in the Balkan Peninsula. In any case Rumania would not co-operate with Bulgaria to the detriment of Greece and Serbia; M. Bratiano is of the same opinion. M. Take Jonesco added that mobilisation has been postponed owing to a telegram from H.M. the Emperor of Russia, but that it will be carried out if Bulgaria makes trouble.

In the first communication the remark that "neither does M. Venizelos direct immediately the external politics of Greece" is correct in the sense that the Prime Minister did not retain for himself the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. No statesman in Europe had more actually to do with the direction of the foreign policy of his Government than Venizelos. He not only conceived and directed the policy, but his individual effort carried it through to realisation.

In response to a suggestion, the Czar had determined to offer his services as mediator between the Kings of Serbia and Bulgaria. There was a tendency in Russia to show greater concern for Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro, as Slav States, than for Greece. But Greece was in the whole affair from the beginning. She was indeed the leading spirit in recommending a Conference at St. Petersburg. Venizelos adopted the principle that any arbitration must be directed to effect the division of all the conquered territories: all questions between the four Allies, he declared, must be settled together. Bulgaria proposed that she and Serbia should submit to the arbitration of Russia within the limits of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty. Serbia demanded a new and wider basis for the arbitration. She wished to disregard the Treaty

altogether and start afresh on war results. This attitude is comprehensible, as the richest fruit promised in the Treaty had withered through the action of Austria in preventing the Adriatic outlet. Bulgaria stood on the letter of the Treaty. As both countries were firm, there was little or no real hope of compromise. Old M. Pachich offered to resign, but, apparently, King Peter would not hear of such a change. Indeed, Pachich was the best man in the little peasant State.

In the last days of the crisis Bulgaria cultivated Russian opinion with great persistence. She recalled that the Czar Alexander II., through the Treaty of San Stefano, had decided that Macedonia was Bulgarian soil.

The triangular character of the situation added to its complexities. It would not have been easy for Russia to solve the differences between Bulgaria and Serbia, but it seemed absolutely impossible for her to find a solution for these differences, coupled with those of the Bulgarians and the Greeks. Yet, as Venizelos had asserted, all the outstanding disputes had to be settled simultaneously.

On June 28, Rumania informed the Bulgarian Government that she did not intend to remain neutral in the event of war in the Balkans, and that if an outbreak occurred she would mobilise her forces immediately. On the same day, General Savoff, Bulgaria's deputy Commander-in-Chief, issued an order to the G.O.C., 4th Army, in which the following sentences appear :

I command you to attack the enemy most vigorously along the front ; without unmasking your forces and without allowing yourself to be drawn into a continuous engagement. . . . Open fire in the evening for choice, and during the night, under cover of the darkness, deliver a violent attack along the whole front.

On the following day Savoff issued another order simply addressed, " To the Army Commanders." He reminds these officers that " our operations against the Greeks and Serbs are taking place without any official declaration of war." He adds that the action of Bulgaria has been dictated by important considerations : (1) " to raise the moral " of the Bulgarian troops and to make them regard their ex-Allies as enemies ; (2) to force Russian policy to expedite the solution

of the Bulgarian question by the threat of a declaration of war between the Allies ; (3) to compel the Allies to be " more conciliatory " by delivering violent blows upon them ; (4) to succeed by force of arms in occupying new territories, and to remain in possession of these new territories until the intervention of the Powers has brought all military operations to a standstill. " And as such intervention may take place at any moment," observes the General, " it is imperative that you should act promptly and energetically."

Savoff was obeyed with evident willingness, for the Greeks and Serbs were at once attacked by the Bulgarians at all points along the line.

## CHAPTER VI

THE swift and violent descent of King Ferdinand's soldiery upon the Allied outposts enabled the Greeks to expel, without further hesitation, the Bulgarians who still lingered in Salonica.

On the morning of Monday, June 30, General Hessaptchieff, with two of his staff, left the town voluntarily. The Bulgarian troops who remained behind were ordered by the Greeks to leave in a train that would convey them to Serres, the enemy headquarters. Hessaptchieff had previously warned the soldiers not to move, "as within nine hours of the outbreak of hostilities the Bulgarian Army would enter and occupy Salonica."<sup>1</sup> Encouraged by this expectation, the Bulgarian battalion put up a vigorous stand, and fierce encounters took place with the Greeks throughout the afternoon and night; indeed, the fighting was not completely suppressed until dawn of the next day. On counting their gains and losses, the Greeks found that they had taken about 1250 prisoners and that more than fifty Bulgarians had been killed, whereas their own death roll proved to be lighter by two-thirds.

The Greek garrison marched out of Salonica on the afternoon of July 1 to take part in the campaign. It was destined to be another whirlwind war.

On July 4, Venizelos declared that Bulgaria had provoked hostilities by her attempt to seize Salonica and by her premeditated attack on Greek and Serbian outpost lines. "In self-defence," continued the Prime Minister, "Greece is embarking on a righteous war. Her aim is not to establish the predominance of any State, but to create a balance of power in the Balkans on an ethnological basis."

<sup>1</sup> Trapmann.

On July 10, King Carol of Rumania, whose warning to Sofia had brought no reply, declared war on Bulgaria. Rumania forthwith invaded Bulgarian territory.

King Nicholas of Montenegro also declared war on Bulgaria.

The excellence of the opportunity moved Turkey herself to action, and, on or about July 20, Enver Bey retook Adrianople. The Bulgarian garrison had been depleted through the urgent need for troops in other theatres. In effect the Turks obtained possession of the town without encountering much resistance.

The Allies agreed between themselves not to enter into a separate peace. Rumania showed her sympathy with their cause by sending staff officers to the Greek and Serbian headquarters.

At a meeting of the Council of Ministers on July 18, Venizelos referred to Russian representations about a settlement. He explained that both Greece and Serbia were willing to enter into direct negotiations with Bulgaria, though they reserved to themselves the right of communicating the terms upon which peace would be made. He also pointed out that both the Allied States would formally declare that the responsibility for the war rested with Bulgaria.

On July 13 he had visited King Constantine's headquarters at Hadji Bejlik, to discuss, among other questions, Russia's latest proposal—that the Allies should sign an armistice and then confer about peace at St. Petersburg. "Neither the King nor the Premier, however, found the Russian proposition acceptable. They were willing enough to negotiate with Bulgaria, but felt themselves unable to enter into interminable discussions. M. Venizelos was determined to insist upon the creation of three approximately equal States and thus assure a balance of power."<sup>1</sup>

From the first shot, the Greek Army swept swiftly forward. Sometimes the Bulgarians fought with extreme tenacity and sometimes they fled *pêle mêle*. The serial battle of Kilgis-Kilinder-Doiran ended in the occupation of Doiran. "On July 2, 3, and 4 was fought the battle of Kilgis, on the 5th the battles of Yennes and Kilinder, on the

<sup>1</sup> Crawford Price.

6th, Doiran, on the 7th and 8th, Strumnitza. During the seven days, the Greek troops had not only fought a pitched battle every day, but had actually progressed some 60 kilometres." <sup>1</sup> The Bulgarians had received reinforcements, upwards of 30,000 fresh troops, at Kilkis, Yennes, Doiran, and Strumnitza. The Greeks, who had not been reinforced, had done their fighting on short rations and little sleep. Still they advanced. On July 25 they had reached the Southern opening of the Kresna Pass, which they entered. At the Northern opening the Bulgarians tried without success to stay the tide. The battle of Semitli, a scene of carnage, followed soon afterwards.

The most northerly Greek lines were close upon Djumaia, more than 150 kilometres from Salonica as the crow flies, when the news of a truce came through from Bucharest on July 31. The ports of Kavalla <sup>2</sup> and Dedeagatch <sup>3</sup> had been occupied by Greek naval forces before the war was brought to a close.

The operations of the other Allies and Rumania had fulfilled the requirements demanded by policy.

The war had lasted one month, the month of July, and in that time Bulgaria had fallen from the summit of military success to the depths of degradation and defeat. The sudden indication that the little State which he had ruled for a quarter of a century was strong and virile beyond his dreams had in an evil moment tempted King Ferdinand to place too great a tax upon its resources. Now the reckoning was at hand.

On July 30, under the presidency of M. Majoresco, the Rumanian Premier, there entered into conference at Bucharest the delegates of Greece, Rumania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. Turkey was refused admittance. Although the Allied delegates could not foresee the momentous consequences of their decisions, the Conference of Bucharest was destined to lay the concrete foundation of the European War.

Austria had shown at the Conference of Ambassadors in London that she was definitely opposed to the aggrandisement of Serbia. She had once saved Serbia from the

<sup>1</sup> Trapmann.

<sup>2</sup> July 9.

<sup>3</sup> July 25.

Bulgarian conqueror, but since 1885 the policy of Vienna had undergone a complete change. The kinsmen of the Serbs within the Empire were in themselves growing more troublesome, and a stronger Serbia could only tend to intensify this unwelcome condition. Austrian statesmen, it is true, could hardly imagine that Serbia might some day supply the nucleus for a state built up out of Austrian territories and populations, but they saw in Serbia an irritating little neighbour, whose doings threw a certain reflection across the frontier. The reflection would have been almost invisible to the ordinary eye, if Russia had not developed an interest, real or artificial, in the Serbs. Plainly, the Serbian nation was important in the estimate of Europe only to the extent that it could rely upon the support of Russia. Failing this support, Serbia was negligible, except in a local sense. The second Balkan war brought fresh vitality to Belgrade and fresh irritation to Vienna. The irritation was enormously increased by the entry of Rumania into the field. The Treaty of Bucharest was almost the last straw. "Vienna statesmen could, of course, depend on our support," admits Prince Lichnowsky in this connection.<sup>1</sup>

The Conference, which began its sittings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on July 30, resolved to concede a truce of five days' duration to Bulgaria. Rumania's plenipotentiaries included M. Jonsco, M. Marghiloman, and M. Dissesco. In the peace deliberations Venizelos was supported by M. Panas, who was soon to become for some months Hellenic Foreign Minister. Patriarchal M. Pachich, the chief Serbian delegate, had an energetic lieutenant in M. Spalaikovitch, who, in later years, as King Peter's Minister at Petrograd, distinguished himself by roundly upbraiding Lenin for detaining M. Diamandy.<sup>2</sup>

As for Montenegro, she sent her Prime Minister, M. Vukovitch, to struggle in the shifting sands of peace. A professional warrior accompanied him.

M. Spalaikovitch was in some respects the most talented of the Balkan Slavs at the Conference. It was during his

<sup>1</sup> *Memorandum*, English edition.

<sup>2</sup> Rumanian Minister in Russia.



mission to Sofia in 1912 that an Alliance emerged from the Serbo-Bulgarian negotiations.

"I formed the impression at Bucharest," he said one day in 1919, "that Venizelos would in the end realise even the greatest ambitions of the Chauvinists, not because of Chauvinism, but, to speak paradoxically, because of his complete lack of this taint. I had many opportunities to judge his brilliant abilities during the Conference."

Bulgaria was represented at Bucharest by M. Toncheff, M. Radeff, and M. Ivancheff. The terms of peace with which these emissaries of King Ferdinand were confronted were, in addition to frontier demands, as follow .

(a) Bulgaria to renounce her claims on all the Ægean Islands.

(b) Bulgaria to make compensation for losses sustained by private persons in the war.

(c) Bulgaria to supply guarantees for the maintenance of scholastic and ecclesiastical freedom in Thrace.

On July 31 the Rumanian and Bulgarian Delegations had in principle settled the Dobruja frontier line. It was on the following day that Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro jointly presented their demands. To strengthen the position of Greece and Serbia, Rumania arranged to keep her troops in the field until every outstanding question was decided. A complete agreement between all parties was reached on August 6. On the 10th the Treaty was signed. Thus, in a very brief space of time, the Balkan leaders had undone the Treaty of Berlin, the handiwork of Bismarck, Beaconsfield, Salisbury, and Gortchakoff, to say nothing of Andrassy and Corti.

Before the ink of the delegates' signatures was dry, people were discussing the revision of the new Treaty. The Emperor Francis Joseph told the Marquis Pallavicini in May 1914 that "the Central Powers would not accept the Treaty of Bucharest as a settlement of the Balkan question," and "that a European war was inevitable."<sup>1</sup>

The Treaty provided (1) that the Rumano-Bulgarian frontier should henceforth run from the Danube above Turtukai and terminate on the Black Sea to the South of

<sup>1</sup> Morgenthau.

Ekrene; (2) that Bulgaria should within two years dismantle her existing fortifications at Rustchuk and Shumla, as well as in a zone of 20 miles round Baltchick; (3) that the Serbo-Bulgarian frontier should start from the old frontier of the Pantarica mountain and follow the former Turco-Bulgarian frontier and the watershed between the Vardar and the Struma (except that the upper valley of the Strumnitza should remain Serbian) to the mountain of Belashitza, where it would join the Greco-Bulgarian frontier; (4) that the Greco-Bulgarian frontier should start from the new Serbo-Bulgarian frontier on the crest of the Belashitza range and terminate at the mouth of the River Mesta on the Ægean Sea.

There were two names which had served for the higher jugglery of the peace delegates at Bucharest. One was Kavalla and the other was Sofia. Although the connection between the two is not at once obvious, it existed ominously for the Bulgarians for a full and bitter hour. "Kavalla" alone was a symbol which carried weight with all Europe for many days. It was only during the final crisis that "Sofia" was linked to it as if by magic. Kavalla had been occupied by Greek naval forces on July 9, when the second Balkan war was being waged with extreme violence.

Venizelos was given to understand through various channels that Kavalla was an object of interest to certain members of both groups of Great Powers. They championed the Bulgarian claim to the town. This happy circumstance awakened the masterful instincts of King Ferdinand's cavaliers. At first they only repeated "Kavalla" as if it had been the essence of a prayer. It might have been "Allah," and not "Kavalla," and they might have been quoting the Koran instead of base political authorities. Then they repeated it more swiftly and more loudly. It never ceased to be a fetish. It was unnecessary for them to argue in the antechambers of ministries and legations. To cry "Kavalla!" was more than any one could possibly misunderstand. But Kavalla was soon to become the Bulgarians' Valhalla. The long series of appeals, arguments, promises, and offers, coupled with spells of mighty support, led to nothing. Every method of approach, whether it was the marble staircase or the attic ladder, the basement

steps or the coal-hole, was tried in vain. There were moments when hope swelled out like a well-inflated balloon, but at the best of times it never became a real aeronautical contrivance, or if it did, it was simply a *ballon d'essai*.

Certainly, Greece was faced by the prospect of a revision of the Treaty ; Austria and Russia both seized upon Kavalla as a grand excuse ; but Kavalla went to Venizelos in spite of threats and cajolery, in spite even of Italy. It was the function of M. Majoresco to serve as a mouthpiece on the Kavalla question for several Great Powers. France and Germany supported the Greek claim.

Rumania proved a valuable, an invaluable, friend to Greece and Serbia by threatening to occupy Sofia. It was then that the Bulgarian delegates realised that they were not victors, but vanquished. The Conference ended with the Treaty, which established "an equilibrium of forces" in the Balkans, with Rumania holding the scales.

From "Kavalla" and the Bucharest Foreign Office the hardy Bulgarians transferred their attentions to "Adrianople" and the Sublime Porte. They confessed among themselves that they were too severely shaken to undertake another war, even with such an incentive as Adrianople, and with this laudable recognition of their own weakness, they agreed to be guided by reason.

The Great Powers might have intervened to uphold the Treaty of London, previously signed by Turkey, but, in order to minimise the irritation caused by the Treaty of Bucharest, they allowed matters to take their course. Mr. John Mavrogordato considers that they should have insisted on Turkey's evacuation of Adrianople, "as this would probably have averted a Turco-Bulgarian Alliance and brought Bulgaria back into the Balkan federation."

We find that on August 29 the Bulgarian Cabinet decided to negotiate with the Sultan's Ministers. General Savoff acted as one of King Ferdinand's plenipotentiaries, and an agreement was ultimately reached at Constantinople on September 17 by which the Turks retained Adrianople.

September 1913 is memorable in the life of Venizelos, because in that month King Constantine was created a Prussian Field-Marshal, and, in the warmth of his gratitude

to the Emperor William, he made some remarks which were irritating to the French.

Venizelos was willing to have Constantine receive all the laurels of the two campaigns, notwithstanding the secret order, *Salonique à tout prix*, back in the early days of the first war, but it was quite another matter to sanction an insult to France.

It was at Potsdam on September 6 that the King received his Marshal's *bâton*, the Collar of the Black Eagle, and the colonelcy of the 2nd Nassau Infantry Regiment. Although the Hellenic Army had been reorganised by a French Mission, which had been called to Greece by Venizelos, the King spoke only of his gratitude to Prussia. In the presence of the Emperor William and his generals, King Constantine told how he had learned all the great secrets of warfare at the Prussian Staff College, and in the 2nd Regiment of Prussian Foot Guards. "We have," declared the King, "to thank for our victories, next to the invincible courage of the Greek troops, the principles of warfare which I and my officers acquired through intercourse with the Prussian General Staff. To the General Staff I owe the knowledge that brought me such brilliant successes in the war."

News of the speech reached Venizelos while he was undergoing a rest-cure at Lutraki, near Corinth. He foresaw complications of such an unpleasant character that he returned immediately to Athens to assure the French Chargé d'Affaires that no significance must be attached to the Royal utterances. He adopted the attitude of the keeper of a menagerie who has by accident allowed a dangerous animal to escape and menace some visitors. An announcement in the *Hestia* to the effect that the King was not accompanied by a responsible Minister during his verbal outbreak, and that the foreign policy of Greece remained unchanged, lessened the tension in France. The wild beast was to be captured and thrust back into its cage before any one could be harmed. The French Press, quick to respond, at once drew an intelligent distinction between the sentiments of the Greek King and the policy of the Greek Government.

## CHAPTER VII

It may sometimes happen that those who know how to make war do not know how to make peace. The Peace of Bucharest unfortunately intensified the jealousies of Europe, and left hatred smouldering in the Turks. Greece had not yet had her title to the Ægean Islands confirmed, nor had the Epirus frontier been settled. Albania was in a state of chaos. There was at first the Adrianople question between Bulgaria and Turkey. Trouble had become less concentrated; it seemed to be vigorous in half-a-dozen camps. It was possible for all the Great Powers collectively to curse the Balkan States, but the Balkan States aroused feelings which also made the Great Powers curse each other.

Although the Sick Man had passed through a severe crisis in his everlasting illness, he had not died.

There was the New Greece of Venizelos for him to smash up. He had thought of ships, but the ships he wanted meant gold.

All the Moslems of Turkey were irritated by the ceremony of Hellenic annexation which took place in Crete on December 14, 1913. Venizelos attended the proceedings with King Constantine, the Crown Prince, and the late King Alexander.

It was a great day in the life of the statesman and in the history of the island. Before all the local authorities, and the Consuls, two Cretan veterans hoisted the Greek flag over the Canea fort. The island, which had been the scene of such long-drawn-out strife, was at last formally annexed by Greece. The man who had been abused by those he was trying to help, and accused by those who feared his talent, was able to witness the final act in the drama. He had long ago recognised that in the struggle between Christians and Moslems, the former, if well led and free to choose their

allegiance, would infallibly turn to Greece. From the beginning Venizelos had consistently implied by his conduct that he was bent upon breaking down the old policy of Europe in the Near East. As a Cretan, he had begun in Crete. With regard to the territories won in the wars, it was his avowed aim to develop them by peaceful methods.

He believed that the heritage of European interference, the Ægean Islands and the Albanian frontier, should be considered by the Powers as interdependent questions. In this he found both firm supporters and bitter opponents.

Turkey turned to the best account the opposition which Venizelos provoked.

The aggrandisement of the Sultan's authority afloat soon promised to become real through the purchase from Brazil of the super-Dreadnought *Rio de Janeiro*, then under construction in Great Britain.

The Turkish preparations for a war with Greece—the naval activities of the Ottoman Government were directed against no other Power—never slackened for a moment during the winter of 1913-1914. The plan to enlarge the navy was prosecuted with Western tenacity. The one country which above all others in the world was given over to a policy of inaction suddenly became active to an extent hitherto unknown in the Orient. A certain self-confidence seemed to show itself very openly as time went on; the deliberate persecution of the Ottoman Greeks was extended to Hellenic subjects in the Sultan's Empire. The persecutions took definite shape, notably at Smyrna, where all Greeks were thrown out of employment, even those in the employment of foreigners, by order of the Imperial authorities. The boycott was real and effective and extended in varying degrees throughout Turkey. Venizelos, also harassed by the disputes and arguments of the Great Powers on the Epirote question and on the other important decision held in suspense concerning the Archipelago, was hard driven in the winter preceding the European War.

The late Baron von Wangenheim, German Ambassador to the Porte, was one of the most redoubtable political agents in the Emperor William's service. He held the adventurous Turkish Ministers in a grip of steel, pushing

them this way and that in accordance with the policy dictated by Berlin. He never allowed any personal scruple to stand in the way of the German cause. He belonged, however, to an excellent family, and his wife was a young and attractive woman of equal rank. Wangenheim rarely paused once he had formed a definite purpose. With him the end justified the means. In this sense, he had all the other members of the Diplomatic Corps at a disadvantage. It appeared to give him a certain cynical satisfaction to goad the Turks against the Greeks, the genius of whose leader he had been one of the first to recognise.

Venizelos was anxious to reach, with as little delay as possible, a solution of the external problems which confronted him, those in which both Europe and Turkey were interested. In the month of January 1914 he left Athens on a tour of the principal capitals. At Rome he had an interview with the Italian Foreign Minister, Marchese di San Giuliano, and later he had conferences with Sir Edward Grey in London, with Herr von Jagow in Berlin, with Count Berchtold in Vienna, and with M. Sazonoff in St. Petersburg. He visited Paris twice during his journeyings. The old Emperor Francis Joseph, with whom he had a prolonged conversation, decorated him with the Grand Cross of Leopold, and when the Czar received him a few days afterwards, he was given the Order of Alexander Nevsky. On his way home he had an interview with Count Tisza at Budapest. In this manner he succeeded in forming a clear and direct impression of European opinion on the two questions uppermost in his mind, the *Ægean* Islands and Epirus.

He ultimately told the Chamber, during an all-night sitting—March 9 and 10—that at a critical moment four out of the six Great Powers had sided with Greece. He said that if he had maintained a closer policy with Germany, as Theotokis, the Minister in Berlin, had recommended, Greece would have found herself enjoying the friendship of only one Power, faced by the enmity of two and the indifference of the others. He supplemented his remarks by pointing out that, as Greece could not fight Austria and Italy, she must make the sacrifice demanded in Epirus. Rather less than a month before this announcement was made, it

became known that an understanding had been reached between Rumania and the two Balkan Allies. This understanding indicated that Rumania would support Greece or Serbia in the event of a Turkish attack.

Prince William of Wied's comedy in Albania began in March 1914. All through the months of spring the absurdities connected with the autonomous Government amused or irritated Europe. Essad Pasha, the defender of Scutari, who had on one occasion in 1913 proclaimed himself King of Albania, contributed to the variety of the entertainment. Venizelos considered that the only way to establish an autonomous government in Albania was by commencing with a system of international control, after the former Cretan pattern, directed to enforce the decisions of Europe.

There were two questions to distract public attention throughout the last months of peace, before Serbia came prominently into view: the effervescence in Albania and the strained relations between Greece and Turkey.

Venizelos was constantly troubled by Albania through frontier complications encouraged by the attitude of Europe. In deference to the Powers, Greece finally evacuated the Epirote territory in dispute; she further ceded an island, Sasseno, to the Albanian principality. In this way Venizelos obtained greater support for the Greek annexation of Chios and Mytilene, the islands off the Asia Minor coast.

In the meantime the Turkish landmen thought only of the acquisition of battleships. The fate of their navy was not to be entrusted to picturesque Arabs in flowing robes, masters on ships of the desert. It was to the British Naval Mission that they looked for expert direction. The Mission had been at Constantinople since the autumn of 1913.

While the Sultan, in reality a flabby personage with a transparent brain, reflected gravely upon the relative merits of Argentinian, Brazilian, or Chilian Dreadnoughts, all, it must be confessed, of British origin, the Greeks were negotiating for two American vessels available for immediate use. The Idaho and the Mississippi, for so they were named,



were neither new nor old, neither of the first line nor the last. Mr. Daniels, Secretary of the United States Navy Department, approved the sale of these vessels to the Greek Government. He put the proposal before the Naval Affairs Committee in the Senate in the month of May. Venizelos was inclined to be on tenter-hooks because all his work in reclaiming the Archipelago was threatened by the anticipated increase in the Ottoman Fleet.

In Constantinople a definite effort was being made to induce the United States Government not to sell the Idaho and the Mississippi to Greece. The American Ambassador, Mr. Morgenthau, was approached by Djemal Pasha, the Turkish Minister of Marine. He was also approached by Wangenheim. The much-beset representative of the United States finally advised the Turks to act through their Ambassador at Washington. It appears that they decided to follow this suggestion, but the Greeks were the first to reach President Wilson.

The Idaho and the Mississippi became the property of the Hellenic Government early in July. Probably President Wilson consented to the sale of the ships "because he knew the Turks were preparing to attack Greece, and believed that the Idaho and the Mississippi would prevent such an attack, and so preserve peace in the Balkans."

The purchase of the ships had in fact a salutary effect. Although they never abandoned the hope of revenge, the Turks perceived that the overlordship of the Ægean was not to be won back hurriedly.

The boycott directed against the Greeks in Turkey had begun in November 1913. It had led to the evacuation of towns and districts by thousands of Greeks scattered all over "the neighbouring Empire." These unfortunate people, many of them refugees from the interior, were exposed to danger and want. They had, nevertheless, a watchful champion in Venizelos, who made plans to liberate them. The situation had become acute in June. On the 12th, Venizelos had declared in the Chamber that it was "impossible for it to continue." His whole speech indicated the gravity of his apprehensions. "I am anxious," he said, "that irreparable words shall not escape my lips. Yet I should be

wanting in the fulfilment of an imperious duty if I were to omit telling you that the situation is extremely grave. The Government is imbued with the conviction that if an immediate stop is not put to this unexampled persecution,<sup>1</sup> Greece will be unable any longer to face the catastrophe which is being consummated before her eyes."

<sup>1</sup> Of Hellenic subjects and Unredeemed Greeks.

## CHAPTER VIII

JULY began by bringing the two American war-ships under the Greek ensign, and ended in the outbreak of the Great War. In the middle of the month Venizelos left Athens. His object was to meet the Grand Vizier in one of the North European cities, and there to endeavour to bring about a readjustment of Greco-Turkish relations. He started upon this mission with the inflexible intention of leaving no roadway to peace unexplored, but he was under no illusion whatever concerning the chances of a settlement. He admitted candidly that he was not hopeful. Before he disembarked from the Austrian Lloyd liner at Trieste, the Hapsburg Empire had sent <sup>1</sup> the ultimatum to Serbia which led, five days later,<sup>2</sup> to the declaration of war.

Venizelos got no farther than Munich. It was far enough for him to see that there would be no peace for any of the Great Powers for some time to come.

The intended *pourparlers* with the Chief Turk paled into insignificance in the shadow of the great events which signalled the grouping of the nations. The alternative, belligerency or neutrality, concerned every one. Venizelos returned to Athens soon to declare himself in favour of the Entente. He was what has been called an Ententist from first to last. As Mr. Bonar Law declared in the House of Commons on April 14, 1920, "No single statesman has supported the Allied cause through good report and ill so strongly as M. Venizelos."

The strange thickets into which this loyalty was to conduct him in the years following 1914 add a lurid interest to the most amazing political romance of our time. There was something primitive in the absolute immovability of

<sup>1</sup> July 23.

<sup>2</sup> July 28.

the man's will. He took his stand, and there he stood, like one of his own Cretan mountains in the presence of thunder and lightning and earthquake. He passed through one ordeal after another. His former sovereign first brought about his downfall, but, as Napoleon said of Massena, "if defeated, he began again as if he had been victorious." He remained faithful to himself, to the Venizelos whose prolonged and hardy struggle in Crete had perfected in one man the qualities of patience and endurance.

War was a gamble for Germany, but it was a greater gamble for Russia and France. With the entry of Great Britain, the chances of victory became less uneven. There was still, however, a considerable degree of hazard even after the United States had joined the Allies. All the greater credit attaches to Venizelos, whose firmly confident attitude throughout the years of strife received but little encouragement.

On July 24, 1914, M. Georges Streit, then Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs, one of the delegates to the London Peace Conference, 1912-1913, a politician of mixed German and Greek ancestry, telegraphed to Venizelos that information had been received to the effect that Germany would side with Austria if war resulted from the Austro-Serbian *contre-temps*. "Bulgaria," declared M. Streit, repeating the warning which he had been given, "would probably take advantage of such a situation. It is not known whether Turkey would remain indifferent. It would be desirable for Greece to break away from Serbia in time. Although the conclusion of an alliance with Turkey now seems to be impracticable, an arrangement for mutual neutrality appears to be indicated." He appealed to Venizelos for guidance, adding, "I have pointed out the difficulty of our situation in case of Bulgarian participation. If Bulgaria attacked Serbia, we should have to remember our obligations in view of the danger of our being isolated if Serbia remained neutral in a Greco-Bulgarian conflict."

There can be little doubt that the German Chargé d'Affaires at Athens, with whom Streit had been closeted, was able to reassure the Foreign Minister about the future of the Serbian bogey. One of the Austrian Ministers had,

indeed, told Yovanovitch, King Peter's representative at Vienna, that Austria would absorb Serbia in the event of war. "On the contrary," the Serb replied, "the territory which is now known as Austria would be absorbed by Serbia." The more inconceivable of the two threats by a series of curious accidents came true. The day following Streit's appeal to Venizelos, M. Alexandropoulos, Greek Minister at Belgrade, also telegraphed to the Prime Minister, at the request of M. Pachich, to ascertain what action Greece would take (a) if Serbia were attacked by Austria; (b) if Serbia were attacked by Bulgaria. Pachich had announced that Montenegro would range herself with Serbia in "both contingencies." What was of real importance was that "the Ministerial Council in Russia" had "decided to support Serbia militarily."

Venizelos immediately replied from Munich that he would make a decision on the question of Greek action in the event of an Austro-Serbian war "as soon as we become cognizant of all the elements, and taking into account the efficiency of our aid." On the other hand, "regarding the contingency of an attack on Serbia by Bulgaria, I am resolved to propose to His Majesty the King and the Royal Government that we array all our forces against Bulgaria, in order to relieve Serbia from every anxiety about the Bulgarian danger, and to ensure the maintenance of the Treaty of Bucharest."

In his message to M. Streit, Venizelos reserved his opinion on the applicability of the Serbian Treaty in an Austrian war, "but we shall not stand with folded arms in the presence of a Bulgarian attack against Serbia." "It would," he said, "be impossible for us to tolerate such an attack, which might result in the aggrandisement of Bulgaria and bring in question the Treaty of Bucharest. It is not only our duty as the Ally of Serbia, but an imperative necessity imposed upon us for our own self-preservation."

In another message from Munich addressed to M. Streit, under date of July 29, Venizelos states his position at greater length:

At the moment when the declaration of war by Austria

obliges us to face serious contingencies, I think that I must indicate to you certain guiding principles.

If, in a war localised between Serbia and Austria, we could remain neutral, we should not forget that our Alliance obliges us to mobilise immediately 40,000 men. Still, it is in the common interest for Greece not to proceed immediately to such a step which might provoke the general mobilisation of Bulgaria and greatly risk the precipitation of some very grave events. Please give at once the necessary instructions to our Minister, so that he may explain to the Serbian Government the reasons for our attitude. Also direct him to give assurances of our firm resolution to mobilise in the event of a Bulgarian mobilisation. He should add that our attitude corresponds absolutely to that which the Serbian Government had decided to take, in the common interest, at the time of our crisis with Turkey.

I am of opinion that the co-operation of Greece and Rumania should be made known at Sofia by an identical declaration that they are resolved to mobilise without delay if Bulgaria mobilises. Please come to an understanding with Bucharest, in order that joint instructions to the above effect may be given to the respective Ministers.

Furthermore, we should consider the possibility of a generalisation of the war, in order to determine beforehand our policy. My opinion is that the Royal Government could not under any conditions range itself with the camp opposed to Serbia; that would be contrary to the vital interests of Greece, in defiance of the sanctity of treaties and the dignity of the State. I shall under no pretext whatever deviate from this policy.

Thus, before Russia or France had mobilised, before England's action was known, Venizelos was decided upon the chief Serbian question. He hastened to announce also his policy in connection with the Austro-Serbian war.

On August 2, M. Streit notified the Greek Minister at Belgrade that "the Royal Government is convinced that it fully discharges its duty as friend and Ally by the decision that it has made to maintain towards Serbia a most benevolent neutrality, and to be ready to repel every attack on the part of Bulgaria of which Serbia might be the object."

Streit then proceeded to point out that by becoming a belligerent in the Austrian war Greece "would be able to offer her Ally but very feeble assistance in comparison with

the power of the adversary," and that Salonica, the only open port through which Serbia could be revictualled, would be menaced by Austria.

Greece by this time had taken all the preliminary steps to facilitate mobilisation in the event of need.

On Sunday, August 2, 1914, King Constantine sent a message to the Emperor William through Herr von Bassewitz, German Chargé d'Affaires at Athens. The message, with marginal notes by the Emperor, was found after the war among the archives of the Berlin Foreign Ministry; it was published by *Le Matin* (Paris) on December 13, 1920.

#### DOCUMENT No. 702

#### *The King of Greece to the Emperor*

ATHENS, August 2, 1914.

(H.M. the King has had handed to me the following telegram for transmission to H.M. the Emperor and King. Bassewitz, Chargé d'Affaires at Athens.)

*Communicate to Athens that I have concluded an Alliance with Bulgaria and Turkey to combat Russia, and I shall consider Greece as an enemy if she does not immediately adhere to it. I have personally informed Theotokis of my attitude, and made known to him our Alliance with Turkey and Bulgaria.*

*You ought to go against the Russians!*

*Impossible!*

*There is no longer any question of this, now that the Balkans are in movement.*

I thank you cordially for your telegram and for your promise to support us in our understanding with Turkey.

We have never had the intention of aiding the Serbs, but it does not seem to me possible, as we are their Allies, for us to become associated with their enemies in order to fall upon them.

It appears to me that the interests of Greece demand absolute neutrality and the maintenance in the Balkans of the *status quo* as established by the Treaty of Bucharest. If we abandoned this point of view, Bulgaria would enlarge herself by the annexation of territories recently conquered by Serbia; she would then border on our Northern frontiers as far as Albania, and create for us a great danger. I have no guar-

*Exaggerations !*

antee that my fears in this connection will not be realised. We are obliged to maintain our neutrality and do our utmost, in agreement with Rumania, to prevent Bulgarian intervention.

You know my opinions concerning the Slavs and upon Russian predomination in the Balkans. These opinions are shared by all my people. If Bulgaria were to obtain the great increase of power I refer to, the equilibrium in our region would be destroyed, and a Slav hegemony would be set up.

CONSTANTINE.

NOTE OF THE EMPEROR.—If Greece does not at once move with us, she will lose her position as a Power in the Balkans; she will cease to be upheld by us in her aspirations and be treated as an enemy. It is no longer a question of the Balkan equilibrium, but of the common operations of the States in the Balkans to liberate the peninsula from Russia.

W.

On August 4, the day that Great Britain's ultimatum to Germany expired, bringing war in its wake, M. Theotokis, the Greek Minister in Berlin, sent a telegram to King Constantine of which the Emperor William was the chief subject. Theotokis had, it appears, received a telegraphic invitation to attend the Emperor "immediately." He obeyed, as he cherished the privilege of an audience. "As soon as I was ushered in," he reported, "His Majesty handed me a telegram to read, which he had just received from your Majesty (through the Chargé d'Affaires of Germany). His Majesty the Emperor asked me to telegraph at once to your Majesty. . . ."

The information which William II. wished to have transmitted to his sister's husband was as follows: (1) an alliance had been concluded between Germany and Turkey; (2) Bulgaria and Rumania were ranging themselves on the side of the Central Empires; (3) German ships,<sup>1</sup> which were in the Mediterranean, were to be merged in the Turkish Fleet.

<sup>1</sup> *Goeben and Breslau.*



It is true that Germany believed that Rumania would never join the Entente. It is even true that Rumania was destined to assist in provisioning the Central Powers. It is certain that King Carol, a member of the Roman Catholic Sigmaringen branch of the Hohenzollern family, would never have allowed Rumania to fight the German Fatherland. But it did not follow that he was strong enough to force his adopted country to fight for Germany. The information otherwise was correct.

"His Majesty," continued the despatch, "while reminding you that through his support Greece definitely retained Kavalla, begs you, as a comrade, as a German Marshal—of whom the German Army felt proud when the title was bestowed upon you—and as a brother-in-law, to be pleased to order the mobilisation of your Army, to place yourself at his side and to march with him hand in hand against Slavism, the common enemy."

This appeal was supplemented by an Imperial threat: "If Greece does not side with Germany, then there will be a complete severance of relations between Greece and the Empire."

Theotokis' last sentence is also full of significance. "I think I must add," he says, "that the Emperor appeared to me to be absolutely determined in what he told me."

There can be little doubt that the *bâton* of a Prussian Marshal had been used to give the finishing touches to the Germanisation of the King. His notorious speech at Potsdam had expressed only heartfelt sentiments, but he had not, it is said, confined himself to oratory during his triumphal visit. He appears to have extended his activities to the wider and more dangerous sphere of secret diplomacy. Without even attempting to procure the passage of legislation to empower him to make treaties, the King seems early to have entered into engagements with Germany without the knowledge of Venizelos.

M. Theotokis saw the German Foreign Secretary on August 4, after the Imperial audience. Herr von Jagow merely elaborated the information received from the Emperor. He confirmed the existence of the newly-born Turco-German Alliance and supplied some details about

the control of the Ottoman Army. He declared that both Bulgaria and Rumania would fight on the side of Germany.

In making his report, the Greek Minister explained that he had gained the impression that compensations were to be looked for in Serbia and Albania. "I beseech you," he urged, "to weigh in a most careful manner the immense consequences which a refusal on our part to accede to the request of the Emperor would entail."

It was left to M. Streit, another whole-hearted supporter of Germany, to transmit King Constantine's reply to Berlin. The Royal message from Athens contained the candid admissions of a Germanophile. "The Emperor knows," it commenced, "that my personal sympathies and my political views draw me to his side. I shall never forget that it is to him that we owe Kavalla. After mature reflection, however, it is impossible for me to see how I could be useful to him if I mobilised my Army immediately. The Mediterranean is at the mercy of the united Fleets of England and France. They would destroy our Fleet and mercantile marine, occupy our islands and prevent the concentration of my Army which, owing to the absence of a railway, can only be effected by sea."

## CHAPTER IX

At the Court of the German Emperor, M. Theotokis was kept admirably informed of the programme of the Central Powers. He was able to reassure M. Streit about the military movements in Turkey. He was also in a position to announce that Bulgaria would at a given moment march against Serbia. He declared, with confidence, that Rumania would not restrain the action of her late enemy. "If," he said, "Germany and Austria are victorious over Russia, it is incontestable that Bulgaria will be enlarged at the expense of Serbia, and Rumania at the expense of Russia." Theotokis then recommended that Greece should join Bulgaria in the proposed attack on Serbia. "Of course," he admitted candidly, "I fully understand the scruples which such a policy would inspire in you in regard to our relations with Serbia; but it is now a question of our own existence and of our profiting as much as possible from the general upheaval."

Theotokis never omitted any secondary points likely to favour a pro-German policy in Greece. "In view of the attitude Italy<sup>1</sup> maintains towards Germany and Austria," he writes, "I am of opinion that, if an understanding is reached with Vienna, Berlin would have no objection whatever to our receiving compensations in Albania, for, with Serbia non-existent, the reasons which have contributed to Albania's creation and maintenance would cease to exist for Austria." Again, in a despatch dated August 11, he mentions, prematurely, that "Bulgaria and Turkey are already linked together." On August 12, the German Minister told Streit that Greece must remain neutral, and that in no circumstances was she to assist

<sup>1</sup> Italy had claimed compensation from Austria on August 2.

her Ally. The emissary of the Emperor William announced that he would demand his passports and leave Athens if Greece attacked Bulgaria.

During the correspondence of Theotokis and Streit in the early days of the war, Venizelos was proceeding to formulate a policy favourable to the Entente. About August 23 he asked for formal permission to declare that Greece, "not merely in consciousness of her indebtedness to the Protecting Powers, but from a clear perception of her vital interests as a nation, understood that her place was at the side of the Entente." He recognised that Greece could neither reinforce the Serbians in the war with Austria, owing to the Bulgarian menace, nor send an expeditionary force to France, but he offered the assistance of the Greek Army and Navy in a Turkish war, if the Entente Powers would secure his country against Bulgaria. He said that war between Greece and Turkey, the war for the Ægean Islands, had been suspended, but its resumption promised to be advantageous to Greece, with France, England, and Russia as Allies. If Greece took no part in a war with the Sultan, Hellenism would in the event of a Turkish victory be obliterated in Asia Minor; the islands near the Asiatic coast would thus be lost for ever. If, on the other hand, the Ottoman Empire met with defeat, the Asia Minor question would be settled without reference to Greek interests. It was necessary for Greece to fight. Such were the views of Venizelos.

Although he was compelled to sanction a benevolent attitude towards the Entente Powers after the outbreak of the war, King Constantine was operating behind the scenes with amazing fidelity to German interests. Greek destroyers and coal agents were at his instigation directed to supply the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* with enough fuel to reach the Dardanelles and Constantinople. The King was also active in his efforts to furnish the German Minister with all information regarding the naval and military movements of the Entente Powers.

From the moment war broke out, Constantinople hoped to become a haven of refuge for the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. While these two ships were at Messina on August 4, they

had received a wireless message to the effect that "His Majesty the Emperor expects the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* to succeed in breaking through." The Treaty of Paris, 1856, and the Treaty of London, 1871, provided that warships should not use the Dardanelles except with the special permission of the Sultan, which could be granted only in times of peace.<sup>1</sup> It is true that a British squadron had entered the Dardanelles without permission in 1878 at the close of the Russo-Turkish war, but the grave impropriety of making use of the passage by the Germans in August 1914 is scarcely lessened by this fact. Baron Wangenheim was responsible for the great *coup* which brought two modern warships of the finest construction to the Golden Horn at a most critical hour in world history. Their arrival had a multiple effect, for Constantinople was automatically safeguarded from the Russian Black Sea Fleet, so that Turkey could enter the war; the city was placed at the mercy of German guns in the event of Ottoman insubordination; two of the best ships in the Emperor William's Navy were saved from destruction, and the Turks could revel in the march they had stolen on Greece, whose American vessels were much inferior to the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. When Theotokis in Berlin objected to the transfer of the ships to Turkey, the German authorities relieved him of his worst anxieties. "When the Entente Ministers protested against the presence of the German vessels, the Turkish officers blandly kept up the pretence that they were integral parts of the Ottoman Navy."<sup>2</sup>

There was a proposal from Berlin that the larger of the two ships should enter the Black Sea under the Ottoman flag, to be attacked by the Russians as a unit of the German Fleet. Thus Russia might be held responsible for an act of war against Turkey.

On September 1, Mr. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, suggested a plan to be worked out by Lord Kitchener and the naval authorities for the seizure of the Gallipoli Peninsula by the Greek Army.

Three days later, General Caldwell advised that 60,000 troops would be required for this enterprise.

<sup>1</sup> Morgenthau.

<sup>2</sup> Morgenthau.

Turkey mobilised and Greece became proportionately apprehensive. On September 3 the Entente Powers warned the Turks that the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* would be treated as German war-ships if they ventured outside the Dardanelles.

There seemed to be little hope of a Greco-Turkish settlement on the outstanding questions, despite the fact that Venizelos was prepared to acknowledge the Sultan's suzerainty over Chios and Mytilene. In the event of a war with Turkey, Greece could not carry on land operations without crossing Bulgarian territory. It was known that Bulgaria would not grant any facilities to Greece at this moment.

Some time after Venizelos had declared his country to be ranged on the side of the Protecting Powers, the King received a telegram from King George V., expressing lively appreciation of Greece's action.

The Admiralty had instructed Admiral Mark Kerr, the head of the British Naval Mission, to come to an understanding with the Greek General Staff about plans for an attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula, but, when King Constantine received Kerr, the official declarations of Venizelos were practically repudiated.

"Why all this?" the King said. "I have no intention of making war against Turkey. You know," he added, "that M. Venizelos has spoken to me about this matter. He feels very strongly about it. I agree with him to this extent: if Turkey declares war upon us, and you wish to help us, I will accept your help."

When Kerr asked the King for permission to report the conversation as a definite indication of the Greek attitude, Constantine said that the draft telegram must first be submitted to Venizelos. It is true that during the audience the King had shown to the Admiral a plan of attack prepared by Colonel Metaxas. The plan is said to have displayed much talent.

When he learned what had taken place, the Premier tendered his resignation. The tendency of the King to contradict the views of the head of the responsible Government was insupportable.

Venizelos addressed the following letter to the King .

YOUR MAJESTY—Admiral Kerr has communicated to me the text of a despatch based on his conference with your Majesty. It was in reply to a telegram from the British Admiralty. I begged the Admiral not to send off the original, a copy of which I now submit, before receiving new orders.

I respectfully hasten to tender my resignation, to restore complete agreement between the Crown and the responsible Government in the very critical moments through which the nation is now passing.

After the declarations which I had made with your authorisation to the representatives of the Triple Entente, and the telegrams exchanged between the King of England and your Majesty, I do not think that your reply to the new *démarche* of the British Government ought to be that Greece must refuse to enter into war with Turkey so long as Turkey does not first attack her. As I have had the honour to tell your Majesty, we cannot undertake an offensive war against Turkey so long as we are not assured of the co-operation of Bulgaria, or, at least, of Bulgarian neutrality. But to declare that in no case do we intend to declare war against Turkey before she attacks us is manifestly contrary to our interests. We must not delude ourselves. Turkey has for a long time been waging against us a war which has never been declared. After her refusal to recognise the decision of the Powers regarding the islands, she began, and is continuing, a most ferocious persecution of the Greek element within her frontiers: 250,000 Greeks have already been expelled, and their property, valued at fr.500,000,000, has been confiscated. There cannot be the least doubt that the Sultan, encouraged by the unlimited support which he receives from Germany, will to-morrow develop the persecution of Hellenism on an even wider scale. He will expel all the Greeks, of whom there are several millions, from the country, and will confiscate all their property amounting in value to milliards of francs.

When an opportunity presents itself for us to wage war on Turkey, with numerous and powerful Allies, are we going to reject it and be compelled to undertake isolated action without Allies or friends?

In a war against Turkey in alliance with Great Britain, France, and Russia, with either the active co-operation of Bulgaria, or a guarantee of her neutrality, we have no interest in also declaring war against the Central Powers. But if they rank us as belligerents, then, whatever may be the issue of the war in Central Europe, the predominance in the East of the group of which Great Britain forms part will be complete. By refusing our

assistance in the war against Turkey, we do not avoid war—we postpone it, but we do not postpone it for long. It is evident that Turkey will not demobilise before settling accounts with us.

The choice before us, therefore, is defined within very narrow limits. Either we shall engage alone in a war with Turkey, when we can, even if victorious, gain only the islands, without preventing the subsequent extermination of the Ottoman Greeks; or we shall, alternatively, enter the present war on the side of three Great Powers, and thus succeed not only in re-establishing in their homes the exiled Greeks, but also definitely secure the safety of the Hellenic element in Turkey.

Which alternative, then, must we choose? Evidently the latter.

But what, I believe, conceals these things and arouses in the mind of your Majesty and in that of M. Streit tendencies opposed to those which I support, is the wish not to displease Germany by engaging in a war with Turkey with the assistance of the other Powers belonging to the Alliance against the Central Empires. Your Majesty must be aware that when England, at the time of my journey to Europe last year, announced that she was ready to impose upon Turkey the Powers' decision regarding the islands, even to the point of despatching an International Fleet, if Germany agreed to the proposal, the latter Power caused the plan to be abandoned by withholding assent. Your Majesty is equally aware that when later on the Powers of the Triple Entente decided to use very severe language in the Note which was to be addressed to Turkey on the subject of the islands, Germany interposed. And to-day, is it not Germany who is supporting the Turk, giving him ships, money, rifles, equipment, and even officers? It is true that these preparations are more especially directed against Russia, but, at the same time, they are turned against us, since Germany, with the object of forcing us to violate our engagement with Serbia, is clearly threatening us with a Turkish attack on our rear (in case we should go to the help of Serbia when she is attacked by Bulgaria). Even if, in the course of a European war, Turkey is utilised solely for an attack against Russia and not against ourselves, can there be any doubt that, when the war is over, if Turkey finds herself on the winning side, she will be animated by such presumption that she will not content herself with destroying the Greek element in her midst, but, profiting by the support of Germany, she will take away the islands from us at the very moment when we shall be without friends and without assistance. We know even from the mouth of the German Minister to Greece that Germany, in agreement with Austria, is inclined, in the event of a complete victory, to create a Great Bulgaria, stretching



as far as the Adriatic, to serve as a bulwark against Slavism (since, according to a recent German discovery, Bulgarians are not Slavs, but Tartars).

Why, then, should we show ourselves so complaisant towards the Power which seeks to assist in every possible way the two principal enemies of Hellenism, the Bulgars and the Turks; and why should we remain indifferent towards those Powers who, after having called Greece into being, are to-day ready, in case of an attack on us by Turkey, to range themselves on our side? I know, Sire, that the stipulation I am making for our military co-operation with the Triple Entente in a war against Turkey, the stipulation of our joining if the neutrality of Bulgaria is guaranteed, is one very difficult to carry out.

But this difficulty does not remove the radical conflict of tendencies and preferences which has existed between M. Streit and the other members of the Government, a conflict which, even after his resignation and temporary retention in the Cabinet, threatens a serious cleavage between the Crown and the Government.

In order to facilitate the re-establishment of perfect harmony between the Crown and its responsible councillors, I have the honour to tender my resignation.

I take advantage of this opportunity to renew the expression to your Majesty of my unalterable sentiments of fidelity to the throne.

VENIZELOS.

It appears that on September 6, the night before the interview between Kerr and the King, Streit, the Foreign Minister, submitted a memorandum to the King in which it was declared that Greece had no interest in attacking Turkey if Turkey entered the war against the Entente Powers. Streit supplied Venizelos with a copy of this memorandum after the Premier had handed his resignation to the King. On September 28, Venizelos, who, meanwhile, had been induced to remain in office, directed Streit to resign from the Ministry.

While these internal troubles were going on in Athens, Sofia and Constantinople were plotting together in concert with the German Government.

A statement made by Venizelos on September 13 clearly indicated that the community of dissatisfaction on the part of Bulgaria and Turkey had developed more or less into a community of interests:

The Minister of Germany came to see me in order to state that an agreement had been definitely reached between Bulgaria and Turkey. The latter will lend Bulgaria two army corps, with a view to a joint attack against Serbia, and will maintain four army corps in Thrace by way of a threat against any possible attack of Rumania upon Bulgaria. The Minister of Germany told me that neither Bulgaria nor Turkey intended to attack Greece.

I replied to the Minister of Germany that, as I had already declared, it would be impossible for Greece to be a passive spectator of an attack by Bulgaria and Turkey on Serbia, and that apart from her interests, her ties as an Ally oblige her to go to the defence of Serbia in case the action announced should be adopted.

It is not impossible that the Minister of Germany made this communication to me in order to obtain a promise of neutrality on the part of Greece. The German Government would then utilise this information to induce Bulgaria to come to an understanding with Turkey for the purpose of a joint attack against Serbia.

The head and heart of Bulgaria were not in conflict. The temptation was strong for her to enter the field on the side opposed to Serbia. Human feeling made the temptation very strong. Added to this, there was already sufficient material evidence to create a certain confidence in the triumph on land of the Central Empires. It seemed that, at worst, if they did not win the war they could never lose it. Bulgaria was disposed to follow her natural inclinations, which were perfectly adapted to the policy of the Hohenzollern combination. If the outlook was not absolutely serene, it seemed in many respects very hopeful to King Ferdinand.

Venizelos, after his final return to power in 1917, remarked in one of his speeches that Bulgaria would have been rewarded by Serbia for neutrality. If neutral, Bulgaria would have received Turkish territory in the event of an Entente victory; a German victory would also have brought her territory without firing a shot.

In the last days of September an incomplete agreement was reached between Greece and Turkey on the question of the *Ægean* Islands. This agreement was called the Treaty of Athens, as the Hellenic capital was the venue of the

plenipotentiaries. The future sovereignty of the four islands nearest to the Asiatic coast was left undecided.

In the month of October 1914, Sir Edward Grey proposed to Greece that she should enter the war in aid of Serbia, which was just then being hard pressed by the Austrians. Venizelos considered that the Bulgarian menace was too great to risk exposing the Greek frontier to invasion. Among other things, invasion would have threatened the Serbian communications with Salonica. Consequently he offered to bring Greece into the war on condition that Bulgaria also came in on the side of the Entente Powers. At this moment King Constantine appears to have manifested some willingness to discuss a possible war against the Sultan. He was prepared to strike a military attitude in the council chamber and to use a tone of authority on campaign questions. Theatricals and theories effectually eliminated all danger of an actual conflict.

Although of secondary importance, Northern Epirus was rarely absent from the calculations of Venizelos after the outbreak of war. By the autumn of 1914 Greece was enabled to reoccupy this territory with the consent of the Entente Powers and Italy. Prince William of Wied had abandoned Albania and resumed his connection with the German Army. The International Commission had recognised Essad Pasha as Prime Minister, but this amiable chieftain had no means of enforcing his authority over the whole area constituting the London Ambassadors' principality. Venizelos was presented with an opportunity of taking over the administration of the territory adjacent to the Greek frontier. The breakdown of the Albanian Government, its inability to maintain order and exercise authority, the departure of Prince William of Wied and the expediency of putting an end to the anarchy in Northern Epirus were among the reasons he gave to the Protecting Powers for proposing a Greek occupation. He stated in the Chamber on October 27 that the occupation was a police measure and did not belong to the category of conquests: it was to give protection to the Greek frontier at a time when the European conflict prevented the Powers from settling the Albanian question.

If the trouble in the principality before the war is a criterion of the trouble afterwards, the plea of Venizelos was justified. Italy and Austria suddenly discovered a common interest in protecting Albanian independence. But as Venizelos had only suggested the provisional occupation of Northern Epirus by Greece, while implying that Italy should occupy Valona, his plan received the necessary endorsement.

The Greek General Staff had at one moment suggested landing a force at Dedeagatch, a Bulgarian port, or at Enos, or lower down in the Gulf of Sanos, in order to isolate the Dardanelles' defence force at the Bulair lines. But Russia and England were generally disinclined to support Greek pretensions. At a most important moment a plan with some promise was ignored.

The Greek Minister in Berlin was an efficient agent for the spread of terror. At such close quarters he saw only the terrifying invincibility of Germany. If he had been a good diplomatist, he would at least have seen everything with the eyes of a Greek.

When Turkey came into the war by attacking Odessa from the sea on October 29, his fear or admiration received a fillip.

M. Morgenthau describes the attack and its effect on Djemal Pasha.

Three Turkish torpedo-boats had entered the harbour of Odessa, where they had sunk the Russian gunboat *Donetz*, killing a part of the crew. They had also damaged two Russian Dreadnoughts and sunk the French ship *Portugal*. They had then bombarded the town and destroyed a sugar factory. German officers commanded the Ottoman vessels; there were very few Turks on board, as the crews had been given a holiday for the festival of Bairam. The act was simply wanton and unprovoked: the Germans raided the town deliberately, to make war inevitable. The German officers on board the *General* were constantly threatening to commit some such act. Now they had carried out their threat. When the news reached Constantinople, Djemal was playing cards at the Cercle d'Orient. If the attack had been an official act of Turkey, it could have been made only by the orders of Djemal, as Minister of Marine. When some one called him from the card table to tell him the news, Djemal was much excited. "I know nothing about it," he replied. "It has not been done by my orders." . . . I had another talk with

Talaat. He told me that he had known nothing beforehand, that the whole responsibility rested with the German, Admiral Souchon. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Two days later Theotokis addressed the following despatch to Venizelos, who had taken over the portfolio for Foreign Affairs :

The German Government considers that events have obliged Russia to declare war against Turkey. It is believed that this war will necessarily extend to France and England. It is also believed that it will divert the Russian forces from Germany and Austria and enable Turkey to declare a holy war in Asia, India, and Africa. The rising of the Islamic world will embarrass France and imperil England's position in the East.

The Under Secretary of State gave me again the most categorical assurance that Turkey is not thinking of attacking us, and that the German interests require that Turkey should limit herself to a war against Russia. He therefore advises us to remain passive spectators in this struggle.

As for Bulgaria, M. Zimmermann thinks that she will not intervene for the present, and he expressed the opinion that, even if she later declares war on Serbia, we shall have every interest not to intervene. After I had observed to him that we had a treaty with Serbia, he answered that to-day treaties were of little value. He mentioned the small importance which the treaties binding Germany and Austria to Italy and Rumania have exercised on the attitude which the last two Powers have followed from the beginning of the war. "Try to make," concluded the Under Secretary of State, "your links with Serbia as loose as possible."

Baron Moncheur, the Belgian Minister at Constantinople, an extremely talented diplomatist, was unable to conceal his chagrin in reviewing the situation which led up to the intervention of Turkey. In his opinion, Russia and England had displayed excessive patience. "It would," he asserted, "have been better if they had sent their ultimatum in August last, when the *Goeben* arrived in the Dardanelles."

A few days after Turkey had bombarded Odessa, British ships shelled the defences of the Dardanelles for a very short period and with so little effect that the attack seemed to be in the nature of a demonstration. The bombardments on a great scale were reserved for some months later.

<sup>1</sup> Morgenthau.

## CHAPTER X

AN event of potential value to the Entente Powers was the death of King Carol of Rumania in October 1914. This monarch had been one of Germany's most consistent adherents, and, as long as he occupied the Rumanian throne, there was little likelihood of a Francophile triumph at Bucharest. Several political leaders in the Rumanian capital favoured France, but the old King was not to be drawn into an entanglement which went against his Germanic inclinations. Immediately before he died, Rumania was in a whirl of anti-Austrian martial ardour, but it was an ephemeral condition which left the country firmly, or it may have been infirmly, neutral. Indeed, even some time after his death, it was not believed in Germany that Rumania would ever enter the lists with the Allies, although there were individuals who considered that such a contingency might well arise. It was recognised that the new King of Rumania was less difficult to move than his predecessor. His wife, a daughter of the late Duke of Edinburgh, was regarded as a supporter of Great Britain.

Rumania soon became the centre of Entente activities, which received a fresh impulse whenever Russia made any headway against Austria-Hungary. The Transylvanians, the subjects of Francis Joseph, were not without a vague hope of some day being joined to the kingdom of their kinsmen. The Transylvanian movement was not yet mature in the autumn of 1914; in truth, it had scarcely emerged from an embryonic state, but it was destined, in the course of time, to undermine a portion of the Hapsburg Empire. The leader of the Transylvanians in the important stages of their progress towards emancipation, M. Vaida-Voevod, became, in 1919, first Prime Minister of Greater Rumania.

Bulgaria, through the artificial process of war, reached a high degree of importance after Turkey joined the Germans. She created a dangerous obstruction in the path of Greece, which in every calculation had to give her the first place. Bulgaria was eager to regain her lost power. On a usurious principle, she was prepared to transact business with either side. What remained in some doubt for a while was, who would pay the price ?

The Germans made offers and threats in the same breath, and the threats were effective because they were like the threats of a desperate highwayman whose pistol covers his victim's heart. Whereas the Entente was inclined to present an illuminated address before presenting the pistol, which, through carelessness, was generally unloaded. Bulgaria was one of the nations which would have better understood a good promise and a vigorous threat than diplomatic conversations, however insulting.

In November 1914, Russia proposed to Serbia that she should cede certain territory to Bulgaria. The area in question would have compromised the Salonica-Nish railway, on which the Serbians depended for all their supplies. Venizelos opposed the suggestion.

The offers of the various Powers were at times almost amusing in view of the situation. They watched each other with cannibal eyes. Austria offered to Italy advantages in Albania which were not in her power to bestow. And the Entente promised to Rumania, as a reward for her neutrality, and in compensation for the cession of territory to Bulgaria, a very rich slice of Hungary. The offers and counter-offers were continued actively : if A would kill B, C would give A the property of D. Then B would promptly offer A the property of D, or E, if A would destroy the life of C. It has been said that Greece stood the best chance of getting something to devour, as the carcasses offered to her were within the sphere of naval operations and the Entente was still Mistress of the Seas.

By the month of December 1914, responsible Bulgarians were talking of meeting the Russians with their bayonets if the St. Petersburg Government " should dare to offend the integrity of our State." In London, Hadjimischef, the

Minister of King Ferdinand, and Mincoff, the ferocious but intelligent First Secretary, were protesting their respectful admiration for the inexhaustible resources of France and England as well as their profound devotion to Russia, as the liberator of Bulgaria.

In January 1915 a fresh and vigorous attempt was made by Sir Edward Grey, this time on behalf of all the Protecting Powers, to induce Greece to come into the war as the active ally of Serbia. Rumania and Bulgaria also entered prominently into the speculations of the Foreign Secretary, who was anxious to place the entire situation on a more definite basis. He addressed himself to Sir Francis Elliot, British Minister at Athens, in unmistakable language.

"You are requested," he wrote, "to speak non-officially with M. Venizelos, as follows :

"As a serious Austrian attempt to crush Serbia is imminent, it is of great importance that the latter should be succoured by any nation which will help her. If Greece ranged herself with Serbia and participated in the war, I know that England, France, and Russia would gladly acknowledge the right of Greece to very considerable compensations on the coast of Asia Minor ; and if M. Venizelos is willing to come to a definite understanding on these terms, he may rest assured that any proposal he cares to put forward will be very favourably considered. The matter is urgent, for if Serbia is conquered, although this would not in any way weaken the supposition of the defeat of Austria and Germany, nevertheless certain accomplished facts would supervene during the war in the Balkans which would render difficult, if not impossible, obtaining for Serbia and Greece results as favourable as those contemplated at the present time. . . . The immediate intervention of Greece and Rumania would, on the other hand, render certain a fresh defeat of Austria, would frustrate the attempt to crush Serbia, and would assure to these three States, Greece, Rumania, and Serbia, the realisation of their aspirations and give them control of events which are taking place round them. . . . It is very desirable that Bulgaria should be assured that if the aspirations of Serbia and Greece were satisfied elsewhere, she would receive territorial concessions in Macedonia, on condition that she participated in the war against Turkey, or at least did not maintain an attitude of malevolent neutrality in case she should not decide to fight actively on the side of Serbia. The whole matter especially interests Serbia, and will be the subject of *pourparlers* at Nish. You will discuss the



question with M. Venizelos only so far as to ask him not to oppose the concessions which Serbia might eventually make to Bulgaria on condition that Serbia realised the Slav objectives on the Adriatic." <sup>1</sup>

Venizelos says of the offer made by England on this occasion : " The day I received the communication from Sir Edward Grey, referring to very considerable territorial concessions on the coast of Asia Minor, was for me as much a day of rejoicing as the day of the signature of the Treaty of Bucharest. . . . The arrival at that moment of Sir Edward Grey's announcement was unexpected even by myself."

The Premier at once advised the King as to the course of action which Greece ought now to take. There was no hesitation, no *arrière pensée*, in his mind ; he saw only the plain necessity for Greek intervention in the new and promising circumstances created by the British Government, acting in concert with the Governments of Paris and St. Petersburg.

The two memoranda submitted to Constantine by Venizelos in this connection clearly expressed the views which governed the statesman's policy. The first, dated January 11, reads thus :

SIRE—I now have the honour to submit to your Majesty the contents of a communication which the British Minister here has made to me by direction of Sir Edward Grey.

Through this communication Greece is again confronted by one of the most critical situations in her national history. Until to-day, our policy has consisted in the preservation of neutrality, in so far as our engagement with Serbia has not required us to depart from it. We are now called upon to take part in the war, not only in order to carry out a moral duty, but in exchange for compensations, which, if realised, would create a great and powerful Greece, such as not even the boldest optimist could have imagined a few years ago.

In order to obtain these compensations great dangers would inevitably have to be faced. After carefully examining the question, I have formed the opinion that we ought to face the dangers. Even if we were not now to join in the war, and if we contrived to maintain our neutrality to the end, we should still be exposed to peril.

<sup>1</sup> Approximate to text.

If we allow the new Austro-German invasion to crush Serbia, we have no guarantee whatever that it will stop short at our Macedonian frontier, or that the advance will not be pressed forward as far as Salonica. Assuming that this menace were averted and that Austria, satisfied with the military defeat of Serbia, did not seek to establish herself in Macedonia, is there any doubt possible that Bulgaria, with the approval of Austria, would fail to advance and occupy Serbian Macedonia? We should be obliged, in accordance with the terms of our Treaty of Alliance, to hasten to the aid of Serbia unless we wished to incur the dishonour of disregarding our obligations. If, however, we were indifferent to moral dictates and remained impassive, we should still have to submit to the disturbance of the Balkan equilibrium in favour of Bulgaria, who, thus strengthened, would either attack us immediately or in the near future, when we should stand alone, without an ally or a friend.

If, on the other hand, we had, in the circumstances indicated, to go to the help of Serbia, in order to fulfil the duty incumbent upon us, we should do so under far more unfavourable conditions than if we were to go to her assistance now, because Serbia would already be crushed, and, in consequence, our aid would be of little or no avail. Moreover, by rejecting the overtures of the Powers of the Triple Entente, we should, even in the event of their victory, secure no tangible compensation for our support in their struggle.

Let us now examine under what circumstances we ought to take part in the conflict. Above all, we must seek the co-operation not only of Rumania, but if possible, of Bulgaria as well. If we should succeed in obtaining their co-operation, through an alliance of all the Christian States of the Balkans, not only would every serious danger of local defeat be averted, but our participation would bring a most important influence to bear on the struggle of the Entente Powers. It is no exaggeration to say that any such united participation would greatly contribute to the ascendancy of England, France, and Russia.

So far we have refused to discuss making any concessions whatever. Further, we have declared that we should emphatically oppose any important concessions by Serbia which might disturb the balance of power established in the Balkans by the Treaty of Bucharest.

Hitherto this policy has been the only one to follow. But now matters have changed. At this instant when visions open out for us the realisation of our national aims in Asia Minor, it is possible to make some concessions in the Balkans. To begin with, we should withdraw our objections to concessions on the part of Serbia to Bulgaria, even if these concessions

extended to the right bank of the Vardar. If such concessions neither sufficed to induce Bulgaria to co-operate with her former Allies, nor to extend a benevolent neutrality to them, I would not hesitate, however painful the severance, to recommend the sacrifice of Kavalla, in order to save Hellenism in Turkey, and with a view to the creation of a real *Magna Græcia* which would include nearly all the provinces where Hellenism flourished through the long centuries of its history.

The sacrifice of Kavalla would not merely be the price of Bulgaria's neutrality, but would be in exchange for her active participation in the war. If the suggestion were accepted, the Entente Powers would guarantee the purchase by Bulgaria of the property of all those inhabitants who wished to emigrate from the ceded district across the boundaries into Greece. At the same time, an agreement could be made to exchange the Greek population living within the boundaries of Bulgaria for the Bulgarian population living within the boundaries of Greece, each State arranging to buy the lands vacated. It would be understood that this interchange of populations and the purchase of their possessions would be carried out by a Commission consisting of five members, one member each to be appointed by England, France, Russia, Greece, and Bulgaria. The actual cession of Kavalla would only take effect after the fulfilment of all these conditions. In this way a definite ethnological system in the Balkans would be reached. The idea of a confederation could be realised or, at any rate, an alliance could be formed with mutual guarantees between the States to enable them to devote themselves to their economic development, without being primarily and almost exclusively absorbed in the task of strengthening their military organisation.

As partial compensation, we should demand the Doiran-Ghevgeli district from Serbia, in order to obtain frontier safeguards against Bulgaria to take the place of the present excellent frontier to the East of Greek Macedonia.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, on account of her greed, it is not at all certain that, whatever concessions we offered to make, we should be able to satisfy Bulgaria and lead her to co-operate with her former Allies. If we found it impossible to obtain Bulgaria's co-operation it would then be essential for us to secure Rumania's, for otherwise our joining in the war would be hazardous.

My opinion that we should accede to the request that has been made to us to take part in the war is founded upon various considerations.

Turkey coming unscathed out of the war, which she has dared

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<sup>1</sup> The safeguards referred to were necessary to meet the danger arising out of Bulgarian expansion beyond the Vardar.

to wage against three Great Powers, and emboldened by her alliance with Germany, would set to work systematically and without delay to exterminate Hellenism within her frontiers. She would encounter no opposition from her Ally, Germany, but on the contrary, would receive encouragement, as Asia Minor, which Germany covets, would be freed from a competitor. The wholesale expulsion of thousands of Greeks living in Turkey would not only ruin them, but would probably drag the whole of Greece to economic disaster.

For all these reasons I have come to the conclusion that our participation in the war is absolutely imperative. As I have already pointed out, this participation must inevitably expose us to grave dangers.

But above all such dangers, there rises a hope, and, as I trust, a well-founded hope, of saving a great proportion of Hellenism now under the Sultan, and of creating a great and powerful Greece. And even in the event of our failure, we should have a clear conscience, knowing that we had fought to free those of our countrymen still held in subjection by Turkey, and knowing that we had fought also for the general interests of humanity and for the independence of small nations, which a Turco-German triumph would jeopardise irreparably. And, finally, we should retain the esteem and friendship of those powerful nations which created Greece and have helped and supported her so many times. While our refusal to carry out the obligations imposed by our Alliance with Serbia would not only destroy our moral existence as a nation, and expose us to the dangers already mentioned, but it would leave us without friends and without credit in the future.

Under such conditions our national life would be endangered.—  
Your Majesty's most obedient servant,

E. K. VENIZELOS.

From the first paragraph, Venizelos sets himself to show that the moral duty of Greece to assist Serbia is identified with her material interests. He visualises what may result from the adoption of his recommendations: "a great and powerful Greece, such as not even the boldest optimist could have imagined a few years ago."

What was Kavalla, Drama-Kavalla, compared to the historically and aboriginally Greek coast lands of Ionia?

His second memorandum, dated January 17, is no less instructive than the first:

SIRE—Your Majesty is already acquainted with the reply

of the Rumanian Government to our proposal relative to common action in favour of Serbia. This reply, as I understand it, signifies that Rumania will refuse us any military co-operation unless Bulgaria also takes part. Even supposing that the Bucharest Government would be satisfied by an official declaration of neutrality from Bulgaria in the event of Greco-Rumanian co-operation with Serbia, it is highly improbable that such a declaration could be obtained. The Staff itself does not consider joint military operations by Greece, Rumania, and Serbia, an absolute guarantee of security, so long as Bulgaria holds aloof, even after a declaration of neutrality.

Under these circumstances, I think it is time to face steadfastly the problem of the sacrifices which may be necessary in order to bring about co-operation among the Balkan States for participation in the war. Joint action would not only ensure to them local supremacy in the Southern theatre, but it would also be a valuable reinforcement to the Powers of the Triple Entente, and might, indeed, suffice to weigh the balance decisively in their favour in the terrible conflict now being waged.

The cession of Kavalla is certainly a very painful sacrifice, and I feel the profoundest regret in advising it. But I do not hesitate to advise it when I contemplate the national compensations which it would ensure for us. I feel that the concessions in Asia Minor, about which Sir Edward Grey has made overtures to us, may, especially if we resign ourselves about Bulgaria, assume such proportions that a territory as large as, and no less rich than, Greece would be added to the Crown.

I believe that we could ask for that part of Asia Minor which is situated West of a line starting from Cape Phineka in the South and following the mountains of Ak-Dag, Kistel-Dag, Kerli-Dag, Anamus-Dag, as far as Sultan-Dag, thence by Kessir-Dag, Tourman-Dag, Gesil-Dag, Doumnitza-Dag, and Mysian Olympus, to the Gulf of Adramyti—in the event of an outlet in the Sea of Marmora not being accepted. The extent of this territory exceeds 125,000 square kilometres; it is thus the same size as Greece doubled by two wars.

The dimensions of the territory which we should give up, the cazas of Sharishambant, Kavalla, and Drama, do not exceed 2000 square kilometres: only one-sixtieth of the probable compensations in Asia Minor without counting Doiran-Ghevveli, which we should also demand. It is true that, from the point of view of wealth, the value of the territory which it is proposed that we should cede is very great and out of all proportion to its extent. But it certainly cannot be compared with the wealth of that part of Asia Minor which we should obtain. The loss of Greek populations is indeed of much greater importance. The Greeks

inhabiting the part of Asia Minor which we claim number more than 800,000 souls. The population is thus certainly twenty-five times greater than that which we should give up.

As I have already pointed out in my previous memorandum, the cession of the Drama-Kavalla district would only take place under the formal condition that the Bulgarian Government should purchase the property of all those who wish to emigrate out of the ceded territory. And I do not doubt that our countrymen after they had sold their possessions would emigrate to that New Greece which would arise in Asia Minor.

I firmly believe that we ought to lay aside any hesitation. It is improbable that such an opportunity as that offered to Hellenism to-day will ever arise again. If we do not take part in the war, whatever the result, the Hellenism of Asia Minor will be lost to us finally. If the Powers of the Triple Entente are victorious, they will divide among themselves or with Italy both Asia Minor and the remains of Turkey. If Germany and Turkey are victorious, not only will the 200,000 Greeks, who have already been driven from Asia Minor, have to renounce all hope of returning to their homes, but the number of those who will ultimately be expelled may assume alarming proportions. In any case the triumph of Germanism would mean the absorption of the whole of Asia Minor.

Under these circumstances how can we afford to neglect this opportunity, which Divine Providence has given to us, to realise our most cherished national ideals, to create a Greece enfolding almost all the lands where Hellenism reigned supreme during its long history, a Greece comprising very fertile territories which would ensure for us preponderance in the Ægean Sea?

The members of the General Staff do not seem to be greatly attracted by these considerations: (a) they appear to fear the difficulty of controlling new territories on so vast a scale; and (b) they fear that by our participation in the war we might be more exhausted than the Bulgarians, so that the latter would afterwards seize the chance to attack us. No one can minimise the first difficulty, but I do not think it should lead us to abandon the realisation of our national ideals on the unique occasion which is offered to us to-day. The results of Hellenic administration in Macedonia prove that, in spite of numerous difficulties, the task is not beyond the power of Greece and Hellenism.

The second fear is less justifiable. The Balkan wars prove that we do not become exhausted more quickly than the Bulgarians. It is, nevertheless, true that, for several years, until all our military powers have been organised on the basis of our resources from the recruiting of Greater Greece, we should be obliged, in the event of war in the Balkan Peninsula, to utilise

part of our forces in Asia Minor to prevent a local rising. Such a rising would be unlikely, for the Ottoman Empire would have become almost negligible, and our Mussulman subjects would be good and peaceful citizens. However, the army necessary for the purpose could soon be raised from among the Hellenic populations in Asia Minor.

Furthermore, it would be simple to guarantee ourselves against the Bulgarian danger by drawing up for this period a formal agreement with the Powers of the Triple Entente, by virtue of which they would come to our aid in case of attack.

In my opinion, even without such an agreement, we should have nothing to fear from Bulgaria after a successful war in which we had fought side by side. She would be sufficiently occupied by the organisation of the new provinces which she would have acquired. If, however, she were so blind as to wish to attack us, there is no doubt that Serbia would be bound to us both by the obligations of her alliance and by her gratitude.

As to the cession of Kavalla, there is no assurance, of course, that Bulgaria would abandon her neutrality and take common action with Greece and Serbia.

Bulgaria might put forward a claim either to get these concessions simply as an exchange for neutrality or to get them at once before the war, and apart from the results proceeding from it.

We cannot accept any of these conditions. If, however, our participation in the war should fail owing to Bulgaria's attitude, we should at least have preserved the friendship and sympathy of the Powers of the Triple Entente.

And if we could not hope for concessions equal to those we should have obtained in exchange for our active participation in the war, we could, at least, feel quite certain that our interests would have the sympathetic support of these Powers, and that we should not be deprived of their financial assistance after the war.

I must further add that the whole progress of affairs, and the proposal that very wide territorial concessions would be made to us in Asia Minor, prove to me without the slightest doubt that the activities displayed by the New Hellas have attracted the confidence of certain Powers who consider her an important factor in the settlement of the Near East at the moment of the collapse of the Turkish State.

The support of these Powers provides us with the financial and diplomatic means to cope with the inherent difficulties of such a sudden increase of territory. Confident in this support, Greece can follow boldly the new and wonderful paths opening out before her.

To your Majesty, still, happily, in the prime of manhood,

it may be given not only to create by your sword the Greater Greece, but to confirm your military success by a complete political organisation of the new State. To you it may thus be given to transmit to your successor, when the fulness of time demands, a work of such magnitude as has been given to few monarchs to achieve.—Your Majesty's most obedient servant,

E. K. VENIZELOS.



## CHAPTER XI

DURING the time that Venizelos was actively working to bring Greece into line with the Entente, the Greek Court was being drawn further into the powerful current of Hohenzollernism. Although this current appeared to sweep every crevice in the deepest political sewer, it washed with equal violence the sunny surface of the earth. The subterranean channels explored by the German propagandists soon extended in every direction below the Hellenic capital. Sections of the Press were subsidised, influence was bought up like packets of tea, peaceable citizens were converted into advance agents of German hegemony, and in the places where the thickest vapours of corruption created the vilest political stench the King himself seemed most at ease. His earlier years had been spent in living down what appears to have been merited unpopularity. Venizelos had given him a fictitious importance in the public mind before the assassination of King George took place. The Prime Minister's motives were praiseworthy: he had sound reasons for distrusting the judgment and ability of the Glücksburgs after his own deplorable experiences with Prince George in Crete, but it was against his policy to give colour to the anti-dynastic sentiments of which he had been suspected. As the Glücksburg dynasty existed in Greece, it was for him to accept it as it was and to do with it what he could in furtherance of the aims which he had ever before his mind. The Military League had in a single breath called him to Greece, and demanded the expulsion from the Army of the heir to the throne: a large body of opinion had demanded more, nothing less than the expulsion of the entire Royal Family from Greece. As a man seemingly born for State affairs, with instinctive balance, he preferred a policy of moderation.

He was inspired with the ambition to raise Greece from her mediocrity and unimportance. When he first came to Athens, the magnitude of this ambition may well have stamped him in some quarters as a visionary.

If he was lucky, his was that form of luck, the enjoyment of which, in itself, amounts to genius. Originally, the making of the Crown Prince Constantine entered into his plans. The sudden outbreak of the 1912 war enabled him to place the royal pawn in a position to receive a halo automatically. The pawn, however, quickly lost itself in the labyrinth of success and forgot its real motive power. From the triumphal entry into Salonica, in November 1912, to the conflict of opinion on the attitude of Greece in the European War, early in 1915, Constantine was steadily widening the gulf which he had allowed to come between himself and Venizelos. If the Prime Minister had been a supporter of the Central Powers, the gulf would have narrowed into a strait. But the Hohenzollernised King beheld the Minister of whom he had long been envious boldly taking the road which led away from Prussia.

The two memoranda on the situation were not unbecomingly Ententist. If there was any sentiment at all, it was incidental. Even honouring the Treaty stipulations with Serbia would have fallen short of sentiment, unless the principle that honesty is the best policy is invariably sentimental. The memoranda merely showed that, as the King had reached cross-roads, unless he adopted the dangerous expedient of halting where the traffic was heavy and thick, his interests lay in turning to the right. The highway ahead was unknown to those who started to trudge onward, save that it immediately entered a wood which to the eye looked like a dark and impenetrable forest. The steps of the wayfarer could not be retraced. It was the strange rule of this road. Still, many people believed it to be the right road. What they ranked as the wrong road looked much the same as the other from the point where the two branched out. Venizelos stood with his arm outstretched and his hand pointing to the right. The King hesitated: he afterwards stopped short. He took up the attitude of a mule. He tried to move backwards. He edged away. The Prime

Minister pointed. The King then flung himself on the ground, and the cloud of dust and dirt which soon arose hid him from view.

The immediate effect of the two letters to King Constantine on the January crisis was to increase the uncertainty of the Greek policy. The endeavours of Venizelos to align Greece with the Entente were both sincere and active, but he received little encouragement from Rumania or Bulgaria and no encouragement from the King. On the other hand, the tension which was developing between Italy and Austria was notably increased by the Italian attitude in Albania. At the end of January, Venizelos, in order to relieve Serbia, warned Austria of possible Greek action.

At the beginning of the month Russia had expressed the hope that England would divert the attention of the Turks from the Caucasus by a demonstration in some other quarter. To this the British Government agreed. Lord Kitchener had written to Mr. Churchill about this time that England had "no troops to land anywhere . . . the only place in which a demonstration might have some effect in stopping reinforcements going East would be the Dardanelles." Before the middle of the month had been reached, it was decided that the Admiralty should prepare for a naval expedition "to bombard and take the Gallipoli Peninsula, with Constantinople as its objective." . . . It was not until February 19, when the preliminary attack was begun, that the importance of this decision was felt in Greece. Then it was that Venizelos made a last vigorous effort to impose his will upon the King. "Immediately," he afterwards declared, "I was led, on hearing of the attack, to the firm conviction that we had been presented with an opportunity of following up our 'very considerable' expectations of territory in Asia Minor, but without the dangerous condition attached to the original promise, the condition, that is, of pushing our forces forward as far as the Danube to the assistance of Serbia. . . . I understood that the attempt on the Dardanelles required an auxiliary landing force, and apparently no landing force was in readiness to co-operate with the attacking fleets. This landing force, I proposed to the Crown, should be provided by Greece."

He asked only that one army corps should be mobilised and sent to the Dardanelles, but the General Staff, which was the greatest obstruction in his path after the King, showed hostility to the proposal. If the German Emperor himself had appointed the members of this body, it could scarcely have manifested a more loyal regard for Prussian susceptibilities. Any manœuvre on the part of Greece which might have reacted against the interests of Germany somehow excited its destructive criticism. The General Staff was prepared to assume a note of equal authority on political matters, which were quite outside the purview of the army.

Faced by the opposition of the General Staff and by that of the King on the great question of Greek intervention in the Dardanelles campaign, Venizelos decided to see the King privately. "I then brought to him," he declares, "the third memorandum of that period, which has never been seen, and unfortunately cannot be published. I begged the King to allow me to read it to him, because it contained, set out in detail and in order, all the arguments which in my opinion obliged us to take part in the Dardanelles enterprise. The King read the memorandum and was visibly disturbed. For I must admit, to do him justice, that he rarely failed to be fully convinced whenever I was in his presence. Such was the earnestness with which I spoke, so strong were the arguments which were set out in the memorandum, that the King, who had evidently from the beginning promised the German Emperor that he would never be found in the opposite camp unless one of the Balkan States directly attacked him, said to me with great emotion, 'Very well, then, in God's name.' That is to say, he consented. . . . But when I came out of the audience chamber into the ante-room, I found myself in the presence of Colonel John Metaxas, the Chief of the General Staff, who handed me an envelope, with the remark, 'This is my resignation. I cannot remain Chief of Staff if a policy of which I do not personally approve is decided upon.' The impression made on me by these words was startling, not so much because I had the highest opinion of the military talent of Colonel Metaxas as because I began to perceive that political opinions were affecting his judgment. I was afraid also that the insubordinate impulse

of the Chief of Staff, who, in spite of his long studies in Germany, had not learnt that the first duty of a soldier is discipline, might shake public opinion and prejudice the future administration of national affairs. When I came out and heard that the newspapers had already published the information that Metaxas had resigned, I understood the situation which confronted me."

Venizelos was profoundly stirred, "because, when it became known in Sofia, Bulgaria might believe that the General Staff considered that the position of Greece would be so hazardous, if one army corps were sent to Gallipoli, that the Chief of Staff went as far as to resign in defiance of discipline."

The statesman immediately asked the King to summon a conference of former Premiers, to take place on the morrow: "I called a Crown Council<sup>1</sup> in order that every opinion might have a hearing."

It was altogether one of the most extraordinary gatherings ever held in modern Athens, for the persons requested to adjudicate on the issue included among them some of the most notorious opponents of Venizelos and Venizelism. That is to say, as they had been supplanted by the man whose policy it was to obliterate the principles of misgovernment for which they had themselves previously stood, they disliked him as they disliked his work. It is therefore all the more astonishing that two of these ex-heads of Government, M. Ralli and M. Dragoumis, proclaimed themselves to be in favour of Venizelos on the question before the Crown Council. Another of the former leaders, M. Theotokis, said that Colonel Metaxas should be called so that his view might be heard. It was thereupon decided that a second Crown Council must be held. It was at this point that it occurred to Venizelos that if he could not get an army corps he might get a division, for Metaxas had given his opinion in writing that a division could be replaced by mobilising reserve troops, "so that there would remain available against the contingency of a Bulgarian attack the whole original force of fifteen divisions, with the only difference that one would be a reserve instead of an active division."

<sup>1</sup> The Council of State as provided for in the revised Constitution, see p. 142.

At the second Crown Council the Premier put forward his modified proposal. "I asked," he says, "for one division to enable Greece to take part in the expedition. Every one expressed the opinion that the King was bound to accept the proposal of his Government. 'You know my opinions,' observed M. Theotokis, 'although I am bound to admit not only that my opinions may be regarded as old-fashioned ones, but also that they are not shared by the Greek people. Consequently, your Majesty must not depend on the fact that, if you choose to follow another policy, you might find me disposed to undertake its application.' After this declaration of M. Theotokis, we all left the Crown Council convinced, naturally, that the question was at an end, that we should abandon our neutrality and take part in the expedition to the extent of one division at least."

However natural this view was, it was not destined to be realised.

The members of the Crown Council went their ways, but scarcely had they left the King when he made it known that Venizelos was dismissed and that he refused his assent to the invasion of Gallipoli.

The position which Venizelos had created for himself in Greece had made it imperative for the King to follow him obediently at this stage of the war and at this moment in the history of the Hellenes. As Carlyle has said, "Find in any country the Ablest Man that exists there; raise *him* to the supreme place, and loyally reverence him: you have a perfect government for that country; no ballot-box, parliamentary eloquence, voting, constitution-building, or other machinery whatsoever can improve it a whit. It is," continues Carlyle, "in the perfect state: an ideal country. The Ablest Man; he means also the truest-hearted, justest, the noblest man; what he tells us to do must be precisely the wisest, fittest, that we could anywhere or anyhow learn; the thing which it will in all ways behove us, with right loyal thankfulness, and nothing doubting, to do!"

Although Greece was faced by a great emergency, the King was neither prepared to endorse a modified version of this doctrine, nor even to acquiesce formally in the Venizelist policy. If Venizelos had been of the calibre of his immediate

predecessors, it would then have been the King's duty to use, perhaps to strain, his own faculties to reach independent decisions, because, to repeat the old formula, the outcome of the war was very uncertain and any action was a mere gamble. The record in Greece of Venizelos entitled him, however, to the full support of the country, a constitutional country, in which the King was supposed to reign, but not to govern. A *pas seul* by the monarch in defiance of the exigencies created by the strategic position and political history of his kingdom, was as surprising as it was intolerable. If the policies of the two men, the Prime Minister and the King, had been reversed, the King could have claimed moral authority for any bias exhibited in favour of France and England, as Powers primarily associated with the foundation and maintenance of Greece, but, owing to this very relationship, he was definitely precluded from manifesting bias of a contrary character. He chose neutrality, when neutrality offered a concession of infinite value to the enemies of Greece's guarantors.

Venizelos was succeeded by M. Gounaris, a personal enemy, in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The new Cabinet entered office on March 10, 1915, five days after the dismissal of Venizelos. It immediately issued a *communiqué* to the Press, embodying some innocent reflections on the maintenance of neutrality. This statement, which is preserved among the "Diplomatic Documents" of the late Greek Government, is thus worded :

Greece, after her victorious wars, had the imperative need of a long period of peace in order to work for prosperity. The organisation of the public services, of the land and sea forces, and the development of wealth, would have guaranteed her against any attack on what she had acquired at so much sacrifice. She would also have been permitted to put into execution a programme serving the interests of the State, and to adopt a policy in conformity with the national traditions.

Under these circumstances neutrality from the beginning of the war was a necessity for Greece. It was and still is her absolute duty to carry out her obligations of alliance and to pursue the satisfaction of her interests, without, however, running the danger of compromising the integrity of her territory.

The Greek Government, conscious of its duty thus to serve

the interests of the country, is convinced that the patriotism of the people will ensure the entire preservation of these interests.

If this manifesto were to be accepted as a true expression of policy, the intentions of the new Cabinet bore a suspicious taint from the moment it entered office. The advent of Gounaris was acclaimed only by the anti-Venizelists and the Court party, who, combined, and efflorescent, at that period represented a mere fraction of Greek opinion. With Gounaris<sup>1</sup> at the wheel of the Ship of State, the King could repose in the captain's cabin and issue his orders at leisure through the speaking-tube. Most of the channels were uncharted, but the kingly navigator in moments of doubt could always obtain wireless directions from Berlin. As the neutrality cruise was expected to last a long time, fuel was economised and the speed of the vessel reduced.

There was at Athens a German propagandist, Baron Schenk, who had come ostensibly to offer Krupp guns to the Greek Government. His most effective artillery was soon found to be hidden within his purse and behind his personality.

Schenk was a pillar of monarchy, but the monarchy he supported had either to be Prussian or Hohenzollernised. He was possessed of *finesse* and determination, useful qualities in his campaign for the subversion of the Athenian Press which appears to have been planned on a gold basis.

"On March 5," said M. Georges Kafantares, "the King dismissed from office the parliamentary Government of the country, inflicting on the State the first serious wound, while on the other hand, on that day the German propaganda under the Baron celebrated its accession by the open purchase of a certain section of the daily Press of the capital."<sup>1</sup> The chief function of Schenk was to create a strong anti-Venizelist party. His immediate purpose was to manipulate public opinion in order to secure the defeat of Venizelos at the approaching elections.

A few days after Gounaris became Prime Minister, M. Zographos, Minister for Foreign Affairs, telegraphed to M. Alexandropoulos, the Greek representative in Serbia, that he had issued instructions to the Ministers at London,

<sup>1</sup> M. Kafantares in the Greek Chamber, August 24, 1917.



Paris, and St. Petersburg, "to give to the respective Governments the most categorical assurances that the new Cabinet would follow the policy inaugurated by Greece at the beginning of the present war, and that in no way did it intend to deviate from a line of conduct traced by traditional sentiments, or to ignore the bonds which unite the vital interests of Greece with the Protecting Powers. The divergencies which brought about the recent crisis had to do with immediate dangers: the basis of our policy is unaffected."

It seems that the Gounarist Government denied that the King had ever contemplated the cession of Kavalla to Bulgaria. And in order to discredit Venizelos, they spread the report that he had been dismissed for wanting to give up Kavalla to Bulgaria without consideration. It was left to Venizelos to remind the King of conversations which had taken place on the subject. "In the King's name, the Government replied that M. Venizelos had misunderstood the royal meaning."<sup>1</sup> Venizelos was incensed. He was conscious of the ingratitude of the King and of the jealousy of the Gounarists, but he knew that the Greek people were still faithful.

The favourable elements presented for the invasion of Gallipoli were transitory. The opportunity, which Venizelos had proposed to seize, passed quickly. Even supposing that the Gounarists had been inclined to consider operations in the peninsula, the changed conditions made such an undertaking more doubtful. Venizelos contends that if the King had followed the policy he recommended at the time of the crisis, when "it was indicated not simply by the Government representing the majority of the country, but by the other party leaders as well," the seizure of Gallipoli "would have been a military exploit of no great difficulty." It was not possible for the King "to maintain in good faith that he had doubts about the state of public feeling in the kingdom. . . . Five days after the decree of mobilisation the army corps which I had asked for would have been mobilised. In another nine days, with the abundance of material which we and our allies had at our

<sup>1</sup> Kerofilas.

disposal, we should have found ourselves with our army corps, or with our one division, in occupation of the Gallipoli Peninsula, which was unguarded, ungarrisoned, and unfortified. . . . If the policy which I advised had not been resisted, as in fact it was, by muffled as well as open hostility, the Greek Army would have arrived at the Peninsula of Gallipoli in the earlier part of March. The English report proves that the fortification of the peninsula took place a month later. The task which 100,000 or 200,000 men were not equal to later on, when the place had been fortified under the guidance of German military experts, could have been accomplished, would indeed have been a comparatively light undertaking for the Greek Army in those early days, when I discerned the state of affairs and advised the attack, at the moment when the Peninsula of Gallipoli was unfortified and almost unwatched. . . . If the plan had not been frustrated, we should have found ourselves at Gallipoli in March, as I have said. Within ten or fifteen days, a part of our Gallipoli forces, especially if we had had an army corps, would have advanced to Constantinople and found it abandoned by the Turks."

With the possible exception of von der Goltz and Enver Pasha, the Constantinople leaders were gravely perturbed by the prospect of a serious British attack on the Dardanelles, and all was prepared for the sudden evacuation of the city. Wangenheim and Pallavicini were no less anxious than the herd of Turkish pashas. Preparations had actually been made for the removal of the machinery of government, and special trains were kept in readiness for the flight of the chief dignitaries.<sup>1</sup>

Venizelos believes that the attack he proposed would not have been opposed by more than six thousand Turkish troops, "not concentrated, but scattered among the various forts."

Some instructive messages on the situation in Constantinople were received in Athens in February. On the 27th, for example, M. Tsamados telegraphed from Pera that the Turkish and German banks had been notified to remove their gold to Konia. The work had already begun: "Archives are also being transferred." On February

<sup>1</sup> Morgenthau.

29th, M. Tsamados sent another telegram to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which he reported that a decision had been taken to abandon Constantinople, but that the day of official departure had not been fixed. He mentioned that the Austrian and German Ambassadors would not leave the Turkish capital as long as the troops remained; he observed that the Committee of Union and Progress had that day decided to hold out to the last. All sense of security had, however, disappeared. The Marquis de Pallavicini telegraphed to the Austrian Consul at Philippopolis to find accommodation for his family in that locality. And the Bulgarian representative at Constantinople received instructions from his Government to return to Sofia if the Turkish authorities moved to Konia. The Bulgarian Government had lately concluded great loans in Germany and Austria.

Meanwhile, the machinations of the inner Court party at Athens were directed (1) against the recovery of power by Venizelos; (2) against the slightest disposition on the part of any member of the Gounarist Government towards a warmer relationship with the Entente.

The Protecting Powers were still prepared to come to an arrangement with Greece for her co-operation against the Ottoman Empire. On the 11th of April they offered the vilayet of Smyrna to Greece as a reward for her proposed services. Some negotiations followed. The Hellenic Government offered to join forces with the Entente Powers if the latter would guarantee the integrity of Greece's continental and peninsular territory for the duration of the war and for a period following its conclusion. Greece, by this offer, undertook to join with the Entente in a war which had for its specific object the dissolution of Turkey. A special convention was to regulate military matters. Greece stipulated that if Bulgaria continued to remain neutral, the Hellenic Army would have to confine its operations to European Turkey. She demanded of the Entente a definite indication of the territorial compensations which she might expect, as well as information concerning financial assistance and war supplies.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Price.

General Dousmanis then expressed it as his opinion that 450,000 men must be placed in the field by the Entente, in order to meet the contingency of Bulgarian intervention on the side of Turkey. This suggestion appears to have been considered extravagant, even by M. Zographos, the Foreign Minister in the Gounarist Cabinet. About April 20 another Note was despatched to the Entente Powers. In it the Gounarists considerably amplified their requirements.

They pointed out that as serious operations were no longer possible on either shore of the Dardanelles, owing to the "numerous fortifications and important forces at the disposal of the enemy,"<sup>1</sup> the disembarkation of the Allied Armies must be effected to the West of the River Evros, or at a point on the Asiatic coast far removed from the Straits. "The Government of Athens is prepared to allow the Greek Army to co-operate with the forces of the Entente, but only on condition that the Allies are the first to land in Turkish Thrace."<sup>2</sup>

The Allies were not in a position to send the number of troops demanded by Greece, nor were they prepared to state whether they intended, if their operations were successful, to dissolve the Turkish Empire or merely to reduce it in size.

In May, the Gounarists offered certain facilities to the Entente in Greek ports and on Greek territory. They also proposed to give full naval co-operation. The Army they reserved for an emergency.

On December 8, 1920, after Greece had decided to exchange the abilities of Venizelos for the disabilities of Constantine, a French newspaper, *Le Matin*, published a statement from the King referring to repeated efforts on his part to come to terms with the Allies during the war. One of the King's assertions was contradicted by ex-President Poincaré in the next issue of the paper.

"I cite from memory another proposal," said the King, "for the eventual co-operation of our Fleet. It was made, I think, the same month that M. Guillemin, afterwards French Minister in Greece, visited Athens. . . . I telegraphed to M. Poincaré, as a Chief of State to a Chief of

<sup>1</sup> Price.

<sup>2</sup> Price.

State, a course which is perfectly well known to ministers and diplomatists. I offered the co-operation of all our forces on condition that our territorial integrity was guaranteed. . . . M. Poincaré replied that the proposal was unacceptable because it was necessary to consider Bulgarian susceptibilities. Our telegram was, I think, sent on May 5, 1915."

Ex-President Poincaré's contradiction was published on December 9, 1920. "I regret that my recollection of events does not agree at all with King Constantine's," said M. Poincaré. "It is true that on May 2, 1915, before the Greek elections, M. Romanos was directed by the Athens Government to make known to M. Delcassé, the Foreign Minister in the Viviani Cabinet, that Greece would be disposed to lend us the assistance of her Fleet on condition that she was guaranteed against an attack by Bulgaria (which was not yet in the war). After deliberation by the Cabinet, M. Delcassé replied that France would accept with pleasure a firm proposal provided that it was unconditional. I have no recollection of having received a telegram from King Constantine on this subject and I therefore had no occasion to telegraph to him. . . . For myself I only remember that on May 11 I received a visit from Prince George of Greece, who had been asked by his brother to support the conditional proposal of the Athens Government. I naturally pursued a constitutional course and confirmed to the Prince, in a brief and courteous conversation, the answer of the Government of the Republic. I may add that on the same day our Minister at Athens, M. Deville, had informed us that in his opinion the conditional Greek proposal, put forward on the eve of the general elections, was a simple manoeuvre directed against M. Venizelos and his party. I should be interested to have King Constantine publish the telegram of which he speaks. The French Government would publish, on its side, the telegrams of M. Delcassé and M. Deville."

M. Popp, a member of the Opposition, in a speech in the Greek Chamber in October 1920, pointed out that as Gounaris had taken office on the specific programme of Greek neutrality, he was guilty of a tremendous error in resuming

negotiations for supporting the Entente ; as these Gounarist proposals, borrowed from the programme of Venizelos, only and inevitably had the effect of making the Entente distrust all Greek leaders except Venizelos.

The Gounarists claimed the Asia Minor concessions originally promised to Venizelos and guarantees of territorial integrity for Greece, in addition to financial assistance. The Powers received these proposals without any manifestation of approval. It was not at that time their policy to ignore Bulgaria, whose services they half-believed might still be won over to their interest. The Bulgarians themselves never hesitated to impress upon the world that their intervention was to be secured by private treaty. In England, they pretended that their heartfelt wish was to be bought by the Entente, whereas in Berlin their financial transactions had already borne fruit.

Venizelos gives the Gounarist Minister for Foreign Affairs, Zographos, credit for honestly adopting all that was possible in the Liberal policy, " the foundation of which was a very benevolent neutrality towards the Entente, with a firm determination never to allow a Bulgarian attack on Serbia." The Constitution had, however, been superseded by the first phases of a despotism.

Venizelos, who was chagrined by the threatened overthrow of national liberty, retired to Spetsæ for a brief rest. " On my return," he says, " I found that a police order had been made forbidding me to land at the Piræus. I was thus obliged to land at Phaleron. A few days later the national festival was celebrated, but this I was not permitted to attend. Indeed, I was besieged in my own house. These happenings marked the beginning of the abrogation of the Constitution."

The elections took place on June 13. The agents of the Court engaged in a propaganda which placed before the electors the alternative, the King or the statesman, peace or war. Although Venizelos took no part in the elections, the people registered their approval of his policy by returning out of the 184 deputies allotted to Old Greece 123 Liberals. " I make a distinction between Old and New Greece," Venizelos explains, " because in Macedonia the retired

Admiral Goudas, who was entrusted with the subversion of the electorate, was guilty of unprecedented practices, and thus the Liberal party only succeeded in saving four out of 73 seats. All honourable men are ready to affirm that if the elections in that quarter had been conducted impartially, the Liberal party would have had a veritable triumph. Albeit, out of a total of 310 seats, the Liberals won 184 seats. All the parties in opposition combined secured only 126 seats. There was an attempt to represent this result as proof that the Liberal party had lost ground in the country. What did it signify if, under such conditions, by the violation of the Constitution and the exploitation of every possible incident, the Court party did succeed in proving that the Liberal majority was smaller than it had been three years before? Was the mandate of the majority any less obligatory? Was it that the King could now appear more openly in the character of an autocrat, knowing that he had succeeded by one dissolution in reducing the Liberal majority, and hoping to effect a further reduction by a second dissolution . . . and again by a third, and so on? "

The Gounarists, who had been repudiated by the people, remained in office for seventy days after the elections. "When," asserts Venizelos, "we asked that the rule of the Constitution should be put into operation and that the Government which had failed at the elections should retire from office, the excuse was put forward that the King was dangerously ill, and might die if he was obliged to send for me and submit to the ordeal of discussing the political situation.

"We replied that this emergency had been provided for in the Constitution, which permitted a Regency to be set up."

The bare suggestion that a Regency was the correct method to meet the circumstances of the case sent the King's followers into a frenzy. The most candid contention of the Constantinists was that Venizelos could not be recalled to power because his policy was not approved by the King.

"At last," continues Venizelos, "on August 23, the Liberal party again took office, after the state of feeling

had been sounded. It was judged that the effect of the German propaganda, then directed by Baron Schenk and unfortunately working, it must be said, under the protection of the King and Queen, was not yet sufficiently advanced to enable the King to challenge public opinion. At this stage the Crown thought it dangerous to refuse to recall me to office, as it was known that I was prepared to undertake the leadership of the Liberal party."

On July 30, a few weeks before Venizelos was requested to form a Cabinet, the Greek Minister at Bucharest, M. Psychas, telegraphed that his English colleague had informed him that Germany had formally intimated to the Government at Sofia that the neutrality of Greece had been definitely assured even in the face of an attack on Serbia by Bulgaria. M. Gounaris, on August 2, circulated his official pronouncement upon this question. "A Bulgarian attack against Serbia," he said, "could not leave us indifferent; the Bulgaro-Turkish agreement will only strengthen the bonds between Greece and Serbia." This statement is in direct conflict with his less public avowals, for it seems that on the day he received the telegram from M. Psychas, the Bulgarian Government was secretly notified that it had nothing to fear from Greece in the event of an attack upon the Serbians. Venizelos has himself referred to the question:

"Before the Liberal party had resumed office," he states, "the King had declared to the Central Powers that he cared little for the Serbian Treaty. Thenceforward Bulgaria had nothing to fear in the prosecution of her policy, which was simply to acquire the hegemony of the Balkans. While I have no positive proof, I consider it extremely probable that the King acted with the cognisance of M. Gounaris, who was both the head of the nominal Ministry and a member of the real Government which worked behind the scenes."

From all of which it will be seen that the situation awaiting Venizelos on his return to power was amazingly involved. One of his earliest acts on resuming the Premiership was to remove any nebulous impressions which M. Theotokis, the pro-German Greek Minister in Berlin, the serf of the Emperor, may have formed on the attitude of



Greece towards Serbia. On this point Venizelos was clear and decisive, as his communication shows :

ATHENS, September 3, 1915.

The prospect of a possible attack against Serbia by the combined Austro-German forces continues to preoccupy intensely the Royal Government on account of the evident *rapprochement* between Bulgaria and the Central Empires. If this *rapprochement* had no other effect than to insure to the Teutonic forces a free passage through Bulgaria, we should have no reason whatever to be alarmed. But if, taking advantage of the arrival of such forces, Bulgaria should undertake to attack Serbia, we could not remain indifferent. Apart from the extent of our obligations of alliance, our vital interests would compel us to forestall a Bulgarian victory, of which we should become, sooner or later, the first victims.

The German Government undoubtedly had in mind the various contingencies in deciding upon the expedition through Bulgaria, but you would do well to explain again these views privately by saying that they represent the opinion predominating in the country. We think that the German Government has no interest in seeing the outbreak of a Balkan war. We believe also that Germany may wish Greece to remain neutral. We, therefore, hope that even in case the Eastern expedition is organised, the German Government will use all its influence to check Bulgaria, dissuading her from any attack on Serbia, in order to insure the maintenance of peace on our frontiers.

VENIZELOS.

Venizelos distinguished between the Gounarist Government and the actual Government of Greece before his own accession to power in the latter part of August. By inference he placed Gounaris in both the real and the nominal administration. "My conviction," he admits, "is drawn from a knowledge of the relations which existed during the whole of the nominal Government's term of office between the Prime Minister, M. Gounaris, and the actual Government behind the scenes. I cannot believe that M. Gounaris was not personally aware of what was going on. There is also M. Radoslavoff's declaration to his friends on September 26."

Radoslavoff had reassured his followers about Greece and Rumania; he gave out that he had received official assur-

ances that neither kingdom would abandon neutrality if Bulgaria decided to attack Serbia.

Confronted by such anomalies, Venizelos entered office with the support of the Greek people, but without any hope of co-operation from the Sovereign who owed him so much.

"Does it or does it not," he asked the Chamber long afterwards, "constitute a complete violation of the Constitution when the King, either alone or in collaboration with the head of the Government rejected by the electorate, proceeds to declarations of policy wholly at variance with the known aims of the party, which, with the fresh imprimatur of the people's approval, is about to materialise its programme?"

At the moment of his return to office, Venizelos was unaware that King Constantine had pledged Greece behind his back. In those early days the King was able to hide from him every important indication of the truth. It was possible to see in the King the victim of an exaggerated ego, or perhaps a nervous man of unsympathetic temperament, but it was difficult to believe that he was capable of going to an extreme length of personal dishonour.

One day the Serbian Minister at Athens, M. Balukchich, called on Venizelos to ascertain his opinion on the point of a suggested attack by Serbia on Bulgaria, "before she had time to mobilise." Venizelos reserved judgment until he had time to come to an understanding with the King.

"When I saw the King," he said, "and communicated to him the *démarche* of the Serbian Minister, he told me that he thought it would be better if the Serbians did not attack the Bulgarians, because our alliance was defensive, and, if the Serbians were the first to attack, it would then be a question whether our obligations to go to their assistance would apply. How can the conduct of the King be described in giving such an opinion, and at the same time informing the common enemy that he was at liberty to fall upon our ally?"

Venizelos considers that as long as Greece consistently maintained a threatening attitude and abided by the policy of never permitting Bulgarian aggression against Serbia, the Bulgarians held themselves in restraint. "I do not," he

adds, " wish to affirm that Bulgaria would never have proceeded to invade Serbia if she had known that we should counter-attack ; I merely assert my deep conviction that Bulgaria would have hesitated very considerably before taking such a step. . . . And what reason had we to remove this check which served to hold the attack on Serbia in suspense ? "

## CHAPTER XII

VENIZELIST Greece had not only to contend with the difficulties created at home by the King and his *entourage*, who mirrored the policy of the Emperor William, but complications were often thrust upon the Liberal party by the Protecting Powers.

The diplomatic vagaries of the Entente were due to divided counsel, preoccupation and inability to utilise fruitful opportunities. The directors of policy either saw too many sides of a question or they could see no part of it at all. They were either blind when they ought to have seen great issues clearly, or they examined the most insignificant details with a microscope. There were always the international influences to be considered. Then, too, each Power held opinions of its own, apart from those which sprang from secret causes. There was no efficient effort made to establish a policy of complete unity among all the Allied States. The ties of one monarchy with another were a constant source of embarrassment to those who aimed at victory by the swiftest process.

The Greek King George had in his day embarked upon some hazardous political adventures, but compared with those of his son they bore the resemblance of *petits chevaux* to the Derby. During his long reign, Greece gained little and lost little through the old King. King Constantine began to play heavily without first acquiring the principles of the game. He risked the security of the Crown and the safety of the nation on his own initiative. Although King George dissolved the Chamber eight times in twenty-five years, in 1885, 1887, 1892, 1895, 1902, 1905, 1906, and 1910, it was only in the dissolutions of 1892 and 1895 that the cause was dissension between the Crown and the Majority Government.

Venizelos has remarked that King George "never entrusted the Government to minorities, but always to the interregnum of a business Ministry whose object was to ascertain the true state of public opinion." King Constantine, in the dissolution of March 1915, opposed the majority of the Chamber and of the Government as well as the opinion of the country. In the words of M. Kafantares, "he set himself in his own person against the unanimous vote of the Greek people." The responsible Government, the leaders of the different political parties, the majority and minority in the Chamber and of the country itself supported one policy, and because the sovereign supported another the will of Greece was overridden.

Between the dismissal of Venizelos in March and his recall to office in August, Italy openly abandoned the Triple Alliance, to enter the Triple Entente and the war. For France and England, and even Russia, Italy had her uses.

Greece had in the first year of the war offered repeatedly to intervene, with sincerity when Venizelos was at the helm, but the question of Greek intervention never received sufficient attention from the Powers. With a greater array of bayonets, Bulgaria, which occupied long sections of the direct road to Constantinople, had for the Entente more obvious attractions. These attractions, as time went on, exercised a spell on the councillors of the West. The alluring prospect of winning Bulgaria at the last moment, in the face of clamorous Germanic suitors, was too much for the bolder spirits to resist. To prevent her elopement with a rival, they offered her Eastern Macedonia. But as Bulgaria belonged to the *demi-monde* among States, she had calculated long and carefully. As every one could not possess her at the same moment she yielded to Berlin.

On September 23, Venizelos received the intelligence that Bulgaria had mobilised. Two days earlier he had notified the Ministers of the Entente Powers at Athens that he had decided to mobilise the Greek Army, with which he proposed to support Serbia in the event of a Bulgarian attack.

On the day that Venizelos learned of Bulgaria's mobilisation he obtained the King's assent to call to the colours twenty classes of reserves "as a defensive measure." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Price.

On September 24 he learned that Bulgaria had proclaimed general mobilisation. Extracts from one of his own statements <sup>1</sup> best explain the events which succeeded this *dénouement* :

"The King was at Tatoi. I asked by telephone to be received in order to communicate the news of the Bulgarian mobilisation and to submit to him an order for the general mobilisation of the Greek Army. I was received at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

"I had previously called a meeting of the Ministerial Council. I came to an agreement with my colleagues and instructed the Minister for War, General Danglis, to summon the Chief of Staff and ask him to draw up the order for mobilisation. I was going up to the Palace at 5 o'clock, and it was arranged that General Danglis should come up with the order ready for signature an hour and a half later, when I expected to have finished my conversation with the King.

"When I told the King that it was not a matter of partial, but of general, mobilisation, since we now had to face the general mobilisation of Bulgaria, his real intentions were revealed. He did not say, of course, that we were under no obligation to go to the assistance of Serbia ; he did not dare say that to me, because he knew very well the conditions under which the Treaty was signed, and how clear our obligation was to go to the assistance of Serbia even in a purely European war ; but he said to me, ' You know I do not want to help Serbia, because Germany will win and I do not want to be beaten.' "

Venizelos then made out a very plausible case for intervention on military grounds. But, as the King harped upon the chord, " I do not want to fight, for if I do we shall be beaten," he was obliged to apply heroic remedies :

" ' Your Majesty,' I said, ' as I represent at this moment the sovereignty of the people, it is my duty to tell you that you have no right to differ from me. By the election of June 13, the people have approved my policy and given me their confidence. The electorate knew that the foundation of my policy was that we should not allow Bulgaria to crush Serbia, and so expand that she would be able to crush us

<sup>1</sup> Made in the Greek Chamber, August 1917.

immediately afterwards. At this point, therefore, you cannot depart from my policy, unless, of course, you are determined to set aside the Constitution. You must say clearly if you wish to abrogate the Constitution and assume full responsibility by a Royal decree.'

" 'You know I recognise that I am bound to obey the popular verdict,' replied the King, 'when it is a question of the internal affairs of the country, but when it is a question of foreign affairs, a great international issue, I consider that as long as I think a thing is right or not right, I must insist that it is done or left undone, as the case may be, because I am responsible before God alone.'

" 'I remember that a feeling of distress came over me . . . and after a little I said to the King that in the existing circumstances I could not undertake a fight for the Constitution. 'After calling your Majesty's attention to the Constitution,' I said, 'I feel that I must submit my resignation, which I beg you to accept.'

" 'How can you possibly resign now,' asked the King, 'if the Bulgarian mobilisation was ordered yesterday? We must not delay even twenty-four hours.'

" 'I have no means to know,' I answered, 'that the policy of my successors will be one of mobilisation. Such I believe it will be, because even if you abandon Serbia, you do not know what may happen, so long, at least, as you fail to make sure that Bulgaria does not attack you first. But I cannot impose a policy upon my successors. Summon immediately the Government which is to succeed me, even for the present with only four Ministers and, of course, the Minister for War; summon it at once this evening to take the oath and publish the decree for mobilisation. I cannot sign such a decree after submitting my resignation.'

" 'After all we cannot be certain that Bulgaria will attack Serbia,' he remarked. 'Bulgaria may maintain a state of armed neutrality, and it is quite possible that she will never attack Serbia. The cause of our difference would then disappear and you could remain in office and continue to carry out your policy.'

"So he persuaded me to remain in office and sign the decree of mobilisation, although, as we later had proof, he

had already given William II. every assurance that he had no intention of fighting Germany's Allies.

"In the course of our discussion there arose a question which had troubled the members of the General Staff. They maintained that Serbia could not produce the 150,000 soldiers for the war against Bulgaria, as she was obliged to do by the terms of the military convention.<sup>1</sup> Without having inquired at all whether such an obligation really existed, I said to the King, 'Do you not think it would be possible, in order to dispose of the argument, and still more in order to increase substantially our own and Serbia's military strength, to ask for French and English reinforcements? England and France might be able to find the 150,000 troops required. Do you not think we ought to ask them?'

" 'Certainly,' the King replied, 'but they must send white troops and not colonials.'

"The man was determined in any circumstances not to fight. Still, when he found himself opposed by my question he did not think he was justified in giving me a direct negative.

"I left the King—it was about a quarter-past or half-past six—just as General Danglis was entering the palace to get the mobilisation order signed.

"I returned to the Ministry at 7 o'clock and telephoned to the Ministers of the Entente to come to see me on urgent business. . . . When they arrived, I informed them that an order for mobilisation was being signed at that very moment and that it would be published in the course of the evening. I told them that for our future guidance I must know whether the Powers would themselves be disposed to furnish the 150,000 bayonets which, according to our Treaty, Serbia was obliged to devote to the war with Bulgaria.

<sup>1</sup> Article II. in the agreement for military co-operation provided that Serbia should supply 150,000 men for use against Bulgaria in the circumstances foreseen, thus:

"In the beginning of the hostilities, at whatever moment they begin, Greece is bound to have an army of ninety thousand fighting men concentrated in the region between the Pangaion Mountain, Salonica, and Goumenitsa, and Serbia an army of one hundred and fifty thousand fighting men concentrated in the region of Ghevgheli, Veles, Koumanovo, and Pirot. Besides, Greece is bound to have at the same time her fleet in the *Ægean* Sea ready for action."



"The Ministers promised to telegraph to their Governments and to inform me of the result. It was then about 8 o'clock. At a quarter-past eight, M. Merkatis arrived to say that he had received a telephone message from the King to ask me not to make the suggested *démarche* to the Entente. 'Inform his Majesty,' I answered, 'that the *démarche* has already been made, and add, if you please, that if this had not been done I should not have been prevented from taking the step through the King's expression of opinion. As responsible Minister, it is necessary for me to know whether the Entente Powers are disposed to furnish the assistance referred to.'

"After forty-eight hours came the reply of the Powers that they were willing to supply the required number of white troops. They even fixed the time within which this force would arrive.

"I communicated this answer to the King, who said, 'Please tell the Ministers that as long as Bulgaria abstains from an attack on Serbia, the contingency which obliges us to abandon our neutrality does not arise, so the Anglo-French troops must not be despatched. Their arrival on Greek soil would constitute a breach of our neutrality as it is still possible that Bulgaria may not attack Serbia.'

"I conveyed the King's message to the Ministers, who telegraphed accordingly. They returned, however, with a fresh answer from their Governments to the effect that troops were already on their way to Greece from Mudros and Marseilles. 'As you have informed us,' declared the reply of the Entente, 'that your policy is to counter-attack Bulgaria and to take your place as our Ally in the event of a Bulgarian attack on Serbia, we do not see why the arrival of these reinforcements should be delayed; we are certain that Bulgaria will not remain in a state of armed neutrality but will attack Serbia, and you will then have reason to thank us: you will have your reinforcements at hand instead of having to wait for them. In this respect we undertake full responsibility.'

"I told the Ministers of the Entente that this statement was very reasonable and that I could not deny that I liked it very much, but that the question was one of our formal

neutrality, at any rate up to the moment when the Bulgarian attack took place. 'I must inform you,' I announced, 'that I am obliged to protest against the disembarkation of these forces as this step constitutes a breach of our neutrality.'

" 'Very well,' said the Ministers, 'you will protest, but we hope that your attitude will be friendly, not hostile.'

" 'Most friendly,' I replied. 'Not only will you not find yourselves in a hostile place, but, after making our protest, we will afford you all possible facilities for disembarkation, quartering, and so forth.'

" 'I saw the King and informed him of all this. 'It is well,' he said, 'but I must beg you to make your protest emphatic.'

" 'Yes,' I agreed. 'It shall be emphatic up to a certain point. Taking into consideration, however, what is behind the protest it cannot be very emphatic, but I will try to make it as emphatic and serious as the circumstances permit.' "

On September 25, M. Radoslavoff informed the Greek Minister at Sofia that Bulgaria was not animated by the desire to attack either Greece or Serbia. On the 29th, Venizelos addressed the Chamber at Athens, and in the course of his speech he explained how Greece and Bulgaria had formally reassured each other.

" M. Radoslavoff," he said, "has informed our Minister in Sofia that the Bulgarian mobilisation had no aggressive aim either against us or against our Serbian Allies. He declared that it was made necessary to Bulgaria by her proximity to the theatre of war; the object was to make it possible henceforth for Bulgaria to maintain armed neutrality. We replied that, as long as the character of the Bulgarian mobilisation was defined in that sense, our mobilisation—the inevitable result of Bulgaria's—must not be regarded as implying any aggressive intention, but as a means for the maintenance also of armed neutrality."

Nevertheless, Venizelos regarded the situation which had developed between Greece and Bulgaria with the utmost disquietude. His remarks in the Chamber on September 29 were capable of the gravest construction:

“Under the modern system of national armies a general mobilisation, which entails a profound disturbance of the economic and social life of a country and leads to an enormous expenditure, cannot be prolonged without grave danger to peace. This danger is all the greater when one of the mobilised countries does not disguise that it fails to consider satisfactory the territorial *status quo* established by treaties between itself and its neighbours.

“I do not say this in order to depict the situation in colours more sombre than the reality; but, on the other hand, I have not the right to conceal the true state of affairs from the country. For, if all of us in Greece ardently wish for peace, I also know with what a spirit of incomparable self-denial the Greek people in arms are ready to defend the integrity of the vital interests of the country and to oppose any attempt by any Balkan State to create for itself a preponderant position which would mark the end of the political and moral independence of the others.

“I should, however, be glad if the reassuring explanation given on both sides by the Governments of the two mobilised States were to bring about without delay a simultaneous demobilisation, thus eliminating the dangers to peace which would naturally be threatened by an indefinite prolongation of mobilisation.”

Despite his official protests, Venizelos was actually relieved when he learned that a contingent of French troops had been disembarked at Salonica. M. Guillemin, the Minister of the Republic, intimated formally on October 2<sup>1</sup> that the landing had been carried out. There was no reference in his Note to the original invitation extended to the Allies by Venizelos.<sup>2</sup> The document is worded clearly and is of no great length :

ATHENS, October 2, 1915.

M. LE PRÉSIDENT—At the order of my Government, I have the honour to announce to your Excellency the arrival at Salonica of the first contingent of French troops. I have to advise you at the same time that France and England have sent these troops

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<sup>1</sup> This date does not conform with the date given by Venizelos for the landing. He asserts that the troops were first disembarked on October 5, the day he left office.

<sup>2</sup> Price.

in order to assist Serbia and to preserve their communications with her ; and that both Powers base their action on the assumption that Greece, who has already given many evidences of her friendship, will not oppose measures taken in the interests of Serbia, who is her Ally.

GUILLEMIN.

Apart from the fact that Venizelos originated the plan for the Salonica landing, France and England as Protecting Powers had an inferential right to intervene on Greek territory under the Treaties of London, 1827 and 1846. Beyond this, there was also a moral sanction for their action in the acquiescence of the Greek people in the war policy of Venizelos.

After the Liberal leader had discharged his duty by registering a protest against the disembarkation of Allied soldiery, he expressed his determination to stand by Serbia. At the same time he referred to the Entente Powers in an unwaveringly amicable vein. His dual functions, as Prime Minister of neutral Greece and steadfast champion of the Entente Powers, required adroit management. Indeed, with a secretly hostile King, hostile both to the statesman and his opinions, the predicament of Venizelos was growing unbearable.

He succeeded in obtaining substantial support<sup>1</sup> for his policy in the Chamber. During the course of his speech, he made an allusion to the Central Empires which evidently infuriated the King.

"Greece," said Venizelos, "has no immediate quarrel with Germany and Austria, but if, in the course of events in the Balkan Peninsula, she should find herself faced by other Powers, she will act as her honour demands. Such is the policy of the present Government, and, to the many arguments which can be put forward in support of it, I would add that it has been approved by the Greek nation at the recent elections."<sup>2</sup>

Although Venizelos obtained a vote of confidence with a majority of forty-six, his success in this direction was of no avail in the other. The King sent for him and requested him to resign.

<sup>1</sup> His policy was approved on division by a majority of 46. This was on October 4.

<sup>2</sup> Price.

It may be that he would have refused to agree to this proposal, if he had not known that the General Staff was also opposed to him. With the King and the army leaders acting in concert, grave troubles throughout Greece would have followed an exhibition of defiance.

Once again the Prime Minister left the application of despotic principles to those who were prepared to accept the rule of an absolute monarch. On October 5 he retired from office. The King thereupon requested M. Zaimis, the Cretan Commissioner of earlier years, to undertake the formation of a Cabinet. A Government of anti-Venizelists emerged from the political twilight. Gounaris, Dragoumis, Theotokis, and Ralli, all talented in enmity, followed the lead of Zaimis, who, for a short time, docilely obeyed the King.

It was important to Greece that she should fulfil her treaty obligations to Serbia in deference to the principles of international morality, but there were other principles at stake which were of equal importance to the Hellenic people, the constitutional principles involved in the usurpation of power by the King. Was the will of the King or the will of the people to prevail in a national crisis? The conduct of the King showed that he was fully determined to leave no effort untried to establish the supremacy of his own authority in the State. Assisted by his group of obedient military and political supporters, he aimed at making his will the law of the land.

As Venizelos at the time of his resignation commanded a majority in the Chamber, he has since had to defend himself for giving up the leadership of the nation without a struggle. It has been asked why he did not remain at the head of affairs and stir the Greek people into a revolt against the Crown, which was hourly defeating the most vital provisions of the Constitution. Perhaps his innermost reason for refusing to lead Greece into civil war was because his own knowledge of revolutions was so intimate. He was able to appraise in minute detail the effect of an outbreak at that moment. "I am considered," he has said, "to have shared the responsibility for the violation of the free institutions of the country." That was in the

sense that the Constitution entrusts these institutions of liberty to the people, who delegate their authority to the responsible leader of the parliamentary majority. Venizelos had not made a stand against the abuses of the King in March. Almost in consequence of this omission, it was held by some that he ought to make a stand during the new crisis which had overtaken Greece.

The individuals who believed that it was his duty to refuse to resign, on the ground that the King had forfeited all his rights as a Constitutional monarch, expected him to defend the liberties of the State in a tournament with despotism. "But those who have made the criticism," said he, "seem to be lacking in psychological insight. No man is changed in twenty-four hours from the responsible adviser of a country with a regularly established form of Government into the leader of a revolution. Before the idea of revolution matures, a certain development must take place which cannot possibly be brought to a conclusion in the course of a few minutes. But even if this could be regarded as an accusation aimed at me on the ground that I did not prove to be a man of quick decisions, I should still have to answer that it was impossible for me to follow any other course than the one I did. At that moment it was not possible for me to make a stand for the liberties of the State. Such a contest would have provoked a civil war. We had mobilised and Bulgaria had mobilised. If we had then proceeded to divide our mobilised forces into Monarchists and Nationalists, Bulgaria would have taken advantage of our internal strife to invade Macedonia; she would have crushed our armies engaged in their own dissensions; she would have occupied the whole of Eastern Macedonia, and then she would, with a mind free from apprehension, have turned on Serbia, in order to complete the task of destroying her rivals and establishing her own absolute hegemony in the Balkans. It would therefore have been a political crime on my part if I had provoked a civil outbreak at that moment. I did not do so because I should only have been contributing to the earlier manifestation of those unhappy events which were in any case bound to come."

## CHAPTER XIII

Soon after the Zaimist Government came into power it issued a manifesto on the Serbian question. The Serbian question in one shape or another was the most persistent question of the whole war and even in the making of peace. But the Greek relationship with Serbia was based upon inflexible conditions, which were embodied in the 1913 Treaty.

Zaimis formed his Ministry on October 5. On the 8th he announced that his policy would "rest on the same essential bases as the policy followed by Greece from the beginning of the European War." To this he added that the country would "remain in a state of armed neutrality and adapt itself to events, the evolution of which" the new Cabinet promised to "follow with unabated interest." His principal statement was dated October 12 and addressed to the Greek Minister at Nish :

The Serbian Minister has left with me a copy of a telegram from his Government. As it is considered that the impending attack of the Bulgarian forces on the Serbian Army will constitute the *casus foederis* provided for by our Alliance, he requests us to declare at once whether, in accordance with our agreements, the Greek Army will be ready to act against Bulgaria, and whether the Royal Government will be disposed to instruct the General Staff to come to an understanding with the Serbian Staff.

The Royal Government regrets exceedingly that it cannot accede to the demand of the Serbian Government thus formulated.

In the first place, we consider that the *casus foederis* does not arise. The Treaty which was concluded in the year 1913 in anticipation of a Bulgarian attack and with the view of establishing and maintaining an equilibrium of forces between the States of the Peninsula, has, according to the preamble, a

purely Balkan character, imposing no obligations upon us in a general conflagration. Notwithstanding the generality of the terms of the first article, the Treaty of Alliance and the military convention which completes it prove that the contracting parties contemplated only the hypothesis of a single-handed attack directed against one of them by Bulgaria. Article 4 of the military convention furnishes in itself the proof of this; it is intended to limit the aid of one of the Allies already occupied elsewhere, and it does not foresee any *casus foederis* except the attack of Bulgaria against the other Ally. Nowhere is there any question of a combined attack of two or more Powers. On the contrary, the first article of the military convention is limited to the hypothesis of a war between one of the two Allied States and a single other Power. And it could not have been otherwise; it would have been an act of folly if, in the event of one party being at war with several States at the same time, the other party were compelled to supply the feeble and ridiculous assistance of its military forces.

This hypothesis now presents itself. If the Bulgarian attack feared by the Serbian Government takes place, it will be due to an agreement made with Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. It will be carried out in combination with the attack already undertaken against Serbia by the two Central Empires. It will appear as an incident of the European War. Serbia has already recognised that such was the character of the anticipated attack by breaking off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria in order to follow the example of the Entente Powers, her European Allies, without previously coming to an understanding with Greece, her Balkan Ally. It is evident that the attack will be found to be outside the provisions as well as the spirit of our Alliance.

The Royal Government is convinced that under these circumstances it is not bound by any contractual obligation, and it is also persuaded that its military assistance if offered spontaneously at such a time would ill serve the common interests of the two countries. It is because of these interests that Greece has remained neutral during the European War, in the belief that the best service which she could render to Serbia was to hold Bulgaria in check, by preserving her forces intact and her communications open in view of a possible attack. Greece was ready to face the Bulgarian danger, even in the course of the European War, although Serbia was already struggling with two Great Powers. For this reason, the Royal Government hastened immediately to answer the Bulgarian mobilisation by ordering the general mobilisation of the Greek Army. But Greece anticipated a Bulgarian attack undertaken separately, even though in con-



nection with other hostilities aimed at Serbia. The hypothesis of a combined attack with other Powers was outside the question: Greece would have been lost, without the hope of saving Serbia. Clearly, Serbia could not desire such a result. The common interests require, on the contrary, that the Greek forces should be kept in reserve for a better use. It is of importance that Greece should remain neutral and under arms and that she should follow attentively the march of events, with the resolution always, and by the most appropriate means, to watch over the preservation of the vital interests she has in common with Serbia.

The Royal Government is convinced that the Serbian Government will recognise the correctness of the reasons that prevent Greece from promising her armed assistance. A profound regret is felt that it is impossible, at present, to do more for Serbia, who is assured that Greece, faithful to her friendship, will continue to give all the aid and facilities compatible with her international position.<sup>1</sup>

The Zaimist manifesto, the declaration of M. Zaimis for the enlightenment of the Serbian Government, left unsaid that Greece had important Anglo-French forces to assist her if she went to help the Serbs. She would not in truth have had to rely exclusively or principally upon her own resources in any military operations. If the King had not been engaged in efforts to co-operate with the Central Powers, and if France and England had not been in a position to send large bodies of troops to Salonica; if, for example, Greece had been thrust into a state of isolation and helplessness, involuntarily, without, at any rate, making the situation worse by her own secret arrangements with the enemy, then the policy of detachment from Serbia might perhaps be appreciated and attributed to the overwhelming dread inspired by Germany. Detachment would still have remained a breach of faith by Greece.

Venizelos was Prime Minister at the time the Serbian Alliance, with the supplementary military convention, was conceived, settled, and signed in 1913; he interpreted the agreement as binding upon Greece under all conditions if

<sup>1</sup> The Serbian reply to the Greek communication of October 12 ultimately reached Athens on November 15 in the form of a further appeal for military co-operation. It came through the Greek Chargé d'Affaires in Serbia, who, in his introductory remarks, repeated the views of Pachich, which appeared to harmonise with the recognised formula of the Greek Interventionists

Serbia were attacked by Bulgaria. He maintained this policy consistently during the European War in the face of the King's obstructive action, coupled with the various objections of the General Staff. When the question was asked in 1913 what position Greece would occupy if Serbia became involved in a war with Austria, he remarked that in such an event the other Great Powers would also become belligerents. The inference was that Greece would find security in powerful Allies.

M. Zaimis entered into office with the expressed purpose of avoiding the Serbian Treaty obligations. "I know," Venizelos asserted long afterwards, "that when the permanent officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attempted to enlighten M. Zaimis by calling his attention to all the points involved, he merely said that he did not wish to occupy himself in the study of such details."

Venizelos, who made the Serbian Treaty the watchword of his party, once remarked that, "If the Great Powers have the audacity to set aside treaties with impunity, it is not permissible for smaller States to profess theories about old parchments. Small Powers are not allowed to commit great infamies. And the greatest act of dishonesty which a State can commit is to repudiate a promise to help another State, after using that promise to obtain a corresponding pledge of mutual assistance." He saw in the Treaty with Serbia a general and not a purely Balkan application, and "consequently those who maintained that we were not obliged to go to the assistance of Serbia when Bulgaria as the Ally of Germany and Austria attacked her, sought knowingly to imprint a sinister blot on the Greek escutcheon." The Prime Minister always contended that the material interests of Greece would also be gravely endangered if Serbia were left to her fate. "Even if, during the war, the German Emperor, in payment for the services of the King of Greece, resolved to prevent Bulgaria from robbing us of Macedonia, the Zaimists knew very well that no human agency existed to deter the Bulgarians, after the destruction of Serbia, from pushing us back not only as far as the Strymon, but as far as Mount Œta."

The Zaimist Government served to fill the interval of

transition between the parliamentary Government of Venizelos and the autocracy of King Constantine. It was a weak and sickly body of politicians, of whom the least malign was M. Zaimis himself. He became President of the Council almost at the same moment as the Austrians crossed the Drina, the Save, and the Danube in the Serbian invasion which obliterated for the time being King Peter's little State. Belgrade fell on October 9. The capture of other centres soon followed.

Meanwhile, King Constantine maintained through secret channels of communication an ever closer touch with Germany. He and Queen Sophia surrounded themselves with persons who favoured the Hohenzollern cause. M. Theotokis, who was the father of the Greek Minister in Berlin, Streit, and Rhoides, the King's Secretary, were among the foremost councillors in the private deliberations which took place at the Royal Palace.

A couple of days after Zaimis had issued his manifesto disclaiming the application of the Serbian Treaty clauses, Bulgaria declared war on Serbia. That was on October 14. The next day Great Britain declared war on Bulgaria. She had on October 7 offered to cede Cyprus<sup>1</sup> to Greece in exchange for intervention in the war, but on the 12th the offer was withdrawn.

Zaimis was "pursuing," said Venizelos, "a policy of genuine neutrality, the result of which is recognisable in the fact that, for the one month he remained in office, our relations with the Powers of the Entente were quite peaceful, and, although he was the man who overrode the Serbian Treaty, they even supplied him with money and gave the Government every proof of friendliness. M. Zaimis met with disfavour in the eyes of the actual Government, the secret combination behind the scenes, on account of his relatively benevolent attitude towards the Entente Powers.

<sup>1</sup> England had held Cyprus, then a Turkish possession, since 1878, on the principle that she was to occupy the island as long as Russia occupied Khars. Concerning the offer of Cyprus to Greece during the Zaimis administration, Venizelos said, "The feeling of the mass of the Greek people is that it would be too great a risk to accept Cyprus under conditions of a co-operation which, in their opinion, might lead to the forfeiture of most of the rest of their territory."

He seemed disposed to exhibit a certain flexibility in his relations with the Crown, to respect its wishes up to a certain point, but he was not prepared to abandon every kind of good faith. It, therefore, only remained for him to resign. And when the Giannakitsas incident took place in the Chamber, the inner Government pushed matters to extremes in order to get rid of him."

The exit of M. Zaimis was certainly abrupt if it was not positively dramatic. The immediate cause of the downfall of the neutral leader—Zaimis was neutral not only in his purview of the war, but neutral in a local political sense, as he occupied a patch of ground which was neither Venizelist nor Constantinist—was provoked by the behaviour of General Giannakitsas, the Minister for War. Roused by Giannakitsas into a sharp criticism of the Cabinet policy, Venizelos defeated the Government, on a vote, by a majority of 33.

He had declared, among other things, that the Government was well aware that it had existed on sufferance. The Liberals had recognised that "if the Government were overthrown it would order new elections, and for this purpose would demobilise the Army, thereby exposing the country to a grave danger for which the Opposition might have been blamed by the nation."<sup>1</sup> A scene took place during the speech of Venizelos in which an anti-Venizelist deputy endeavoured to draw the statesman into a controversy respecting the "King's policy." Venizelos adroitly confounded the interrupter by pointing out that as the King was irresponsible under the Constitution it was obviously anti-parliamentary to refer to his "policy."<sup>2</sup> He explained that the King was a distinguished soldier, but that he had had no experience in political matters and no opportunity of exercising power in the manner of a responsible statesman. Venizelos also said that Greece had had the misfortune not to enjoy constitutional liberty since the last change of Government.

Giannakitsas, who appears to have been the great offender of the occasion, might have been dismissed from office without the other members of the Zaimist Cabinet, as Venizelos was

<sup>1</sup> Price.

<sup>2</sup> Price.

prepared to support the Premier on condition that the departing Minister for War was not reinstated. But Zaimis declined to remain in office, and General Giannakitsas was appointed A.D.C. to the King.

Venizelos announced that if the Constitution was again defied through the improper dissolution of the Chamber, the Liberals would abstain from the elections. The dissolution, nevertheless, took place on November 6. On that day M. Skoulouides, a very aged man, was called to office as Prime Minister of Greece. The King thereupon ordered that the new elections should be held on December 19.

After the manner of Gounaris and Zaimis, Skoulouides proclaimed to the world that the new Cabinet would follow the well-defined path already trodden by Greece. He ordered M. Panourias, Hellenic Chargé d'Affaires in Serbia, to give "the most categorical assurances of our sentiments of sincere friendship" to King Peter's Government, "as well as our firm resolution to continue to afford Serbia all the facilities and every support compatible with our vital interests." To the Legations at Paris, London, Rome, and Petrograd, M. Skoulouides sent a telegraphic circular explaining that the policy of the new Government was to maintain neutrality "with the character of the sincerest benevolence towards the Entente Powers."<sup>1</sup> He adopted as his own "the repeated declarations of M. Zaimis concerning the friendly attitude of the Royal Government towards the Allied troops in Salonica." He confessed that the new Cabinet was only too conscious of its real interests and of what it owed to the Protecting Powers "to deviate in the least from this line of conduct." He also manifested a certain polite anxiety that the Entente should "not at any time be influenced by the malicious and misleading news" which was "circulated intentionally in the hope of impairing the good relations of these Powers with Greece."

The official declarations of Skoulouides at this stage were at variance with what one may suppose was his real attitude towards the Entente. Whether it was that some part of his vacillation was due to the mental defects of a very old

<sup>1</sup> The telegram containing this declaration was dated November 8, 1915.

man one cannot say. It is at least certain that he was the appointed instrument of the inner group which controlled the policy of Greece, and it is possible that he always faithfully executed the exact orders of the moment. However, the only point of any importance is what the real attitude of the real Government was. The Serbian Treaty was no longer the chief question. Serbia was daily suffering fresh punishments from mixed enemies. But, beyond this, there were now the great questions associated directly with France and England, who were carrying on military operations from a Greek base.

One day M. Skouloudes was asked by M. Guillemin, the French Minister, what the Government would do if the Serbians retreated into Greece.

"You know," replied Skouloudes, "that if they cross our frontier we shall be under an obligation to arrest them."

"How is that possible?" asked the Minister. "They are your Allies. You are under an obligation to observe towards them the most benevolent neutrality. Moreover, the Serbians are our Allies, and we came to Salonica with your consent."

"As a matter of fact, we ought," said Skouloudes, "to do the same thing to you."

When it was pointed out to him that his remark connected with the Serbian retreat was not by any means in keeping with his promised attitude of benevolent neutrality, he grew suddenly angry. "What is all this," he cried, "about benevolent neutrality? I know only two kinds of neutrality: willing neutrality and compulsory neutrality."

The old man had either forgotten his earlier declarations, or he felt sufficiently assured of the King's support to speak candidly. What he said at least reflected the actual opinion of the partisans of the Palace. When the question of fighting with Serbia had arisen, their neutrality was willing, but when they saw a chance of fighting with a victorious Germany their neutrality was compulsory. It was compulsory because the Entente could still seriously interfere with them, both in a military and economic sense, from the sea.

In the nominal Government Skouloudes had with him

M. Gounaris, General Giannakitsas, and M. Michelidakis, all declared enemies of Venizelos.

While the Liberal leader never wavered in his policy of pro-Ententism, he had to contend with ever-increasing doubts in the minds of the Greek people. Since the advent of Baron Schenk, Greece had been subjected to a severe course of German propaganda, which was aided by the position which Germany had maintained in the field.

France and England had entered the war with the sympathy of the Hellenic populace, but new circumstances had reduced this sympathy if they had not helped to create elements of actual antagonism. When the Allied Powers offered Greek territory to Bulgaria, in a somewhat clumsy fashion, the Greeks received a shock, which was of real service to Schenk and the King's followers. "Thanks to German propaganda in Greece,"<sup>1</sup> said the ex-Premier, "a great part of the Greek people, although still ardently desiring the victory of the Allies, believe not that Germany will win, but that Germany has won already."

<sup>1</sup> Price.

## CHAPTER XIV

SKOULLOUDISM in Greece was like Hollwegism in Germany. It was obedient to the orders of the General Staff, which in its turn was sufficiently Royalist to act as the faithful executive of the Crown. King Constantine had long observed with what perfect precision the German Ministry obeyed the Emperor and his military advisers. The Reichstag also effaced itself so effectually that its functions as a legislative body harmonised completely with the Imperial will. As far as possible, this system of monarchical government, ideal in the eyes of the King, was to be established at Athens. The senility of Skouloudes was adapted to the execution of the Royal plan.

The Chamber had been dissolved with the object of carrying out a general election during the continued mobilisation of a very large number of electors, some 300,000 according to Venizelos. The dissolution was not in itself unconstitutional, but the real aim of the Government was to arrive at a result which could not have been reached by straightforward methods. That is to say, an election had taken place six months earlier on what was substantially the same issue: the people then voted for the policy of Venizelos. As that policy was not agreeable to the King, he misapplied the machinery of the Constitution to bring about another election, when hundreds of thousands of the electors were prevented from registering their votes. "And we saw the State," to use the words of M. Repoulis,<sup>1</sup> "in revolution against law and order, a State teaching its Army what? Abstention from war! We saw the German propaganda poisoning the souls of the Greek people in order to keep them from all thought of defence, even though

<sup>1</sup> Late Minister of the Interior.



their own liberty as well as that of their brothers was at stake."

One of the Government organs called Venizelos "the Messiah," in a spirit of sarcasm, of course, but, "so far as many of his followers are concerned, the expression is so near the truth as to be merely an exaggeration."<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the December elections the Greek people were told that as "the man who made you mobilise, the bloodthirsty Venizelos, has gone, we will dismiss you to your homes." This happy prospect was invented to secure votes, for the Government had no intention whatever of demobilising the Army. Under arms it served as a menace to the Anglo-French forces in Macedonia. Mobilisation gave the Government full authority to apply martial law at any moment. It also gave the General Staff the right to control the movements of all officers, to send them at will from one end of the country to the other. When the nation was not mobilised the transfer of officers was effected by the Council of Generals, which supplied a reasonable barrier against arbitrary action. Under conditions of general mobilisation, it was the General Staff which possessed the power to send officers wheresoever it willed.

Venizelos had ordered the Liberal party to abstain from the elections. The result was that only 230,000 electors recorded their votes as against 720,000 in the previous June. In Athens 7000 went to the poll out of 30,000; at Salonica, 4000 out of 38,000. The deputies returned to the Chamber thus represented less than a third of the Greek electorate.

It seems that from this moment an almost theatrical secret service came into being, by operation of which Athenians were subjected both to indignity and inconvenience. Those who met in the public centres hesitated to ask each other the news of the day, for fear that among the strangers about them there might be Crown agents whose *raison d'être* was to provoke trouble. Those who took their places in the *cafés* were apparently never certain that their conversation was not being noted with malign purpose by some Royalist spy. Respectable citizens were dragged before the courts and denounced; sometimes automobiles and carriages were

<sup>1</sup> Price.

held up and their occupants ordered to give an account of themselves. All Venizelists were placed under surveillance. The system of espionage instituted by the Royalists was efficient in the sense that it filled the population of Athens with dread, almost with awe. Freedom of speech became an obsolete principle. The tentacles of absolutism extended in all directions throughout the State: the people were held in a grip of Russian tightness. The oppression of the country was not for the good of Greece; it was in support of what was embodied in Germany's *Drang nach Osten*.

The persecution of the Venizelists became more intense as power was gathered up by the King. He was no longer King by the force of the Constitution, but King by the theory that might was right and right was Divine. There were many defects in the setting for his great exploit in unrestrained kingship. There was the disagreeable proximity of forceful influences. It is true that at moments the Allied Armies in Macedonia were in no position to divert their flagging efforts towards Athens. But the Allied ships were masters of the Ægean; indeed a limited blockade of Greece had been established on November 20. This blockade was not, however, intended to force Greece out of her neutrality, nor to break the King's will; it was designed to give greater security to Allied troops operating in Greek territory. At best, or at worst, it was a mild blockade involving the suspension of the economic and commercial facilities hitherto extended by France and England.

Lord Kitchener had had an interview with King Constantine in November, and it was thought at the time that it might lead to the creation of more favourable conditions for the Allied soldiery. France had sent M. Denys Cochin at the head of a mission to the King, but he was unable to accomplish anything. The only nations which were in the fortunate position of being able to treat profitably with the King were those of the Germanic group.

The year 1916 opened without any prospect of the night ending for Greece. The Skouloudists controlled the Chamber and the King controlled the Skouloudists. The General Staff, instead of directing a sound military policy, occupied itself in degrading Greek arms, first by one subterfuge and

then by another. On February 8 it ordered the troops of His Majesty the King of Greece to allow the Bulgarians to enter the kingdom without opposing any resistance. "The decision to this effect," Venizelos has pointed out, "had been in existence for some time, but on that date definite orders were given to permit the Bulgarian invasion."

What was the object of prolonging the Greek mobilisation when the Bulgarians were allowed the free run of the country? In consumption of war material and expenses of maintenance, mobilisation cost more than three hundred million drachmæ. "Why," Venizelos asked, after the King had been dethroned, "did they keep the Army mobilised for nine or ten months and demobilise it only under compulsion, when the injury caused by mobilisation to the economic condition of the country can be estimated as much heavier than the actual sum which it cost the State? . . . Why did they keep the Army mobilised when they had no intention of fighting either Germans or Bulgarians, and when they always complained bitterly if they were credited with the intention of fighting the French and English?"

Venizelos has declared that "the hanging of the General Staff would be a very lenient punishment" for the outrages perpetrated against Greece in connection with the mobilisation.

One of the real reasons for mobilisation was that it justified the distribution of extra allowances to officers, extra allowances by means of which the King expected to secure the favour of those who constituted the Army. Those in control aimed at breaking down rather than building up the moral of the troops, in order "to reduce Greece to such a plight that in any circumstances, even in the best possible circumstances, she would be incapable in body and in spirit of taking part in the war. This was the final service which they wished to render to the German Emperor and his Allies, his Allies who were our hereditary enemies."

There were many other evidences of German policy in Athens. As Venizelos says, "When the English asked to make use of the Salonica-Dedeagatch railway in order to send reinforcements to their troops at Doiran, it was contended that this line could not be utilised because it did not follow

the valley of the Vardar and that the troops must, therefore, be sent by the Anatolian railway, whose services were already wholly absorbed by the French. Thus twenty-four hours were lost during which the English troops at Doiran remained without reinforcements; the General Staff later gave way and allowed the troops to use the Enos line as well. If this was the attitude displayed towards the British and French, why did not the General Staff arrange that any invasion by Germans and Bulgarians should also be carried out through the Vardar valley? Both Eastern and Western Macedonia would then have been preserved from invasion and the whole of Macedonia secured against developing into a theatre of war." The answer is that the Government was following a German policy. "But we have," adds Venizelos, "yet another proof that 'the Elder Statesmen' were not maintaining genuine neutrality. When, for example, it was proposed to transport to Macedonia the Serbian Army, which had been reassembled and re-equipped in Corfu, opposition was at once raised to its passage overland. They tried by every means in their power to prevent the transport of the Serbian Army so that the work might not only take longer, but be more dangerous. In this case also they were furthering German policy."

On April 10, 1916, M. Romanos, the Greek Minister in Paris, telegraphed to M. Skouloudes that "the rejection by the Royal Government of the proposals of the British and French Ministers concerning the question of facilitating the passage of the Serbian Army through our territory had disposed the French Government very unfavourably towards us. M. Briand told me that there could no longer be any question of furnishing us with an advance of the 150 millions asked for by the Royal Government. The Commissariat officer, Bonnier, told me the same thing with regard to the Army supplies. The newspapers, particularly the *Écho de Paris*, have published very violent articles, in addition to news suggesting a blockade and other coercive measures; on account of the general attitude of Greece, however, and without special reference to the question of the passage of the Serbian troops. . . . They avoid, for the moment, speaking of the latter matter because, if the public were informed, we

should be severely criticised and the French Government would then perhaps be obliged to adopt an attitude which is repugnant to M. Briand, who desires to maintain friendly relations between the two countries. The President of the Council of State would like to have the Serbians transported by sea round the Matapan promontory, but the Minister of Marine is opposed to it because he considers that the passage is dangerous and difficult on account of the submarines. It cannot be denied that if a Serbian transport were sunk, public opinion would throw the responsibility upon us."

One of the most interesting official documents of the Skouloudist period is the answer that M. Romanos received from Athens on the following day :

I cannot but be painfully surprised by the declaration of M. Briand that, on account of the point of view of the Royal Government in the matter of the passage of the Serbian Army, there can no longer be any question of granting us the advance of the 150 millions for which we had asked. In fact we did not ask for this advance as a price for the violation of neutrality, to which we never thought of consenting, and nothing in our attitude can permit the French Government to attach such a meaning to our request. We asked for the financial assistance of the Western Powers in the belief that it could not be a matter of indifference to them to see Greece weakened militarily and disorganised financially. This interpretation was certainly engaging the attention of the Powers, because they did not oppose our request by a refusal in principle. Under these circumstances, the difficulty which has now arisen does not seem to be of a nature to alter the financial position, unless M. Briand intends deliberately to set aside considerations of a general and permanent character in order to punish Greece for refusing to consent to a serious violation of her neutrality.

A mind so penetrating and liberal as M. Briand's can scarcely fail to perceive that, if Greece is obliged to repulse energetically every new violation of her neutrality, she does not possess the necessary means to resist the pressure of a coalition of Great Powers. There are many things that Greece is compelled to submit to or endure because she cannot help herself. The Powers already know this from long experience. There are other questions which, owing to the rapidity of their development and the fact that they are less annoying to our country, escape the action and even the vigilance of the authorities. Thus, in connection with the very matter that has so exercised the

Powers, something has just happened which confirms the experience of the past : on Sunday evening the French transport, *Jean Corbière*, carrying Serbian detachments from Corfu to Salonica, passed through the Corinth Canal almost completely unobserved.

Please have semi-official and friendly conversation with M. Briand. You will not have any trouble in making him understand that Greece, placed between two groups of Powers, is obliged to submit to the recriminations, the protests, and the bad humour of one group whenever her neutrality is in fact violated in favour of the other, and that, under such conditions, it is impossible for the Royal Government to maintain officially an attitude different from that maintained at present.

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On the contrary, the attitude of the Greek Government towards the proposal that the Serbian troops should be allowed to pass across Greece was one of the most unpleasant exhibitions of the hour. Venizelos considered that the Skouloudists lost an easy opportunity to make amends, at little or no cost, for the treatment of the Serbs over the Alliance clauses. "Not only did the Government make no attempt to take advantage of the opportunity," he said, "but an effort was made to dig still deeper the chasm which divided us at that moment from our Serbian friends."

Mr. John Mavrogordato adds the following observation on this subject : "I have been told that the agitation for the transport of the Serbian Army overland was a complete 'fake' got up by the British Secret Service (Captain Compton Mackenzie) in order to divert the attention of German submarines while the Serbians were actually being transported by sea."

Unless the Royalists of Athens were absolutely convinced that the Allies of the Entente were not only outclassed in the field, but actually on the verge of a crushing defeat, it seems incredible that Skouloudes could have adopted in some of his official utterances the tone of insolence which characterised them. In answer to an appeal addressed to him by the Serbian Minister at Athens, the Greek Premier announced officially that he had "already replied to the representatives of the Entente that the transportation of the Serbian troops could not possibly be permitted by the Royal Government,

and that, consequently," he "could not enter into a new conversation on this subject." When the French and British Ministers notified him that their Governments had instructed them to support the step taken by the Serbian Minister, he replied that "these declarations were to no purpose, since the Royal Government persisted resolutely in its refusal, expressed from the beginning, to permit any transportation of foreign troops by our railways."

In May we find Skouloudes submissively acknowledging a notice of invasion received from Count von Mirbach, the German Minister :

*Letter of M. S. Skouloudes, President of the Ministerial Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs, to Count von Mirbach-Harff, Minister of Germany at Athens.*

ATHENS, May 23, 1916.

M. LE MINISTRE—I have received the communication under yesterday's date, which your Excellency honoured me by transmitting, informing me that "in consequence of the aggressive measures recently undertaken by the troops of the Entente, Germany and her Allies are obliged to enter Greek territory so as to insure the free passage of the very important narrow passes of Roupel. This is a purely defensive measure which is due exclusively to the movements of the military forces of the Entente; it will be maintained within the limits dictated by purely military interests; proceeding from this point of view, the Imperial Government of Germany does not hesitate at all to give to the Royal Hellenic Government assurances :

"(1) That the territorial integrity of the kingdom will be absolutely respected.

"(2) That the Allied troops will evacuate Greek territory as soon as the military reasons requiring this action shall cease to exist.

"(3) That Greek sovereignty will be respected.

"(4) That personal liberty, private property, and the existing religious conditions will be respected.

"(5) That any damage caused by the German troops during their stay in Greek territory will be indemnified.

"(6) That the Allies will conduct themselves in an absolutely friendly manner towards the population of the country."

I take note of all the assurances contained in this communication, and beg your Excellency to accept the expression of my high consideration.

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When the German and Bulgarian forces occupied "the narrow passes of Roupel," on May 26, Skouloudes protested with the sincerity of an actor who has at least read over his part. Venizelos ridicules the suggestion that Skouloudes was acting under pressure. "Why did he surrender Roupel?" he asks. "Because we were following a German policy."

As time went on, Athens became a centre of intense and even anxious interest to all the Entente Powers. Rome had taken up the talk with the rest. On May 30, M. Coromilas, the Greek Minister at the Court of King Victor, sent a long telegram full of Italian comment on the situation created by the Skouloudists. "I have seen some persons of importance," he reported, "since the telegrams from Greece and Sofia announced that the Bulgarians, with fifes and drums, had entered our territory and occupied our outposts and villages upon the heels of our soldiers who withdrew without offering any resistance. The impression which this news has made in Rome is deplorable. The people recall our recent declaration that we should never allow our hereditary enemy to cross our frontier." While the despatch continues in this style, the item of real importance is contained in the sentence, "The Italians are prepared to believe that we shall retreat before the Bulgarians, with or without the aid of the Austrians, in Epirus, as we have retreated in Macedonia."

The Italians themselves were not only "prepared to believe," but they soon were able to persuade their Allies that the Greek occupation of Northern Epirus was a danger and must be terminated. Venizelos declared in the Chamber during his great narration in August 1917, that the surrender of Fort Roupel by the King led to the loss of Northern Epirus. "It was," he said, "natural for Italy to turn to the other Powers, through whose mediation it had been arranged that the advance of the Greeks in Northern Epirus should synchronise with the Italian disembarkation at Valona, to explain to them that it was no longer possible for her to entrust the security of her forces in that sector to the Hellenic authorities. Although I do not, of course, know what correspondence was exchanged between the Powers, I have no doubt that from that moment commenced the



diplomatic action which culminated in our being deprived of the occupation of Northern Epirus." Venizelos goes on to say that the surrender of Roupel had other consequences, among them General Sarraill's proclamation of martial law in Macedonia, "which amounted to a revocation of Greek sovereignty."

On June 1, 1916, M. Caclamanos, who was then Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, reported to the Greek Foreign Office the substance of a conversation which he had that day had with M. Margerie, the Director of Political Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay. "M. Margerie," wrote M. Caclamanos, "told me that the public were under the impression that the events which have taken place within the past few days are the outcome of an agreement between Greece and the Central Powers. Indeed, information from German sources proclaims as much. As for the French Government, it is disposed to accept the explanation that considerations of defence have led the Bulgarians to occupy strategic positions such as the narrow passes which the fortress of Roupel commands. But the advance of the Bulgarian Army into the interior of Greek Macedonia and the occupation of the environs of certain towns known to be coveted in Sofia, coupled with the prospect of a march on Kavalla by the Bulgarians, naturally lead the French Government to the conclusion that Greece has received assurances guaranteeing the restitution of the regions involved. In the value of any such assurances she ought not, it is suggested, to place the slightest faith. . . . In any case, the situation has changed radically by reason of the Bulgarian advance. By adopting a passive attitude in the face of an invasion which might weaken the military position of the Allies, Greece appears to be abandoning her policy of benevolent neutrality. The Entente Powers can but take all needful precautions in order to insure the preponderance of their armies operating in the Balkans. . . . General Sarraill has already received orders extending his powers."

On June 3 the Athens Government received from Petrograd the message, "There is the impression, if not the conviction, here, that the occupation of Roupel and the advance of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, to which Greece

has consented, prove the existence of a preliminary agreement with Bulgaria."

In Athens itself the activities of Baron Schenk were daily becoming more daring. At times street demonstrations against the Entente Powers and their Greek champion developed almost into riots. Schenk worked alike upon the lowest elements of the population and upon the members of Athenian society. He bought or sold, he persuaded or intimidated, always with the object of advancing the cause which it was his business to represent. The *revue* players who nightly insulted the Entente, and the theatre *claque* which cheered the German Military Attaché on King Constantine's "name day," were in the pay of the Baron.<sup>1</sup> The authorities connived at almost any excess which was directed against the interests of Venizelos or the Protecting Powers. Window-smashing and all the other concomitants of disorder registered the artificial heat of anti-Venizelism in the Greek capital. The deification of the King was part and parcel of the Schenk propaganda, with the result that the most arrant nonsense very often appeared in the Royalist papers. It is unimaginable that the Greek people really accepted for a moment the new doctrine of autocracy which was offered to them as a wonderful improvement on liberal institutions. Venizelos, for the moment overpowered by the ingratitude of the King, struggled, nevertheless, to maintain a slender rein on Greek policy by means of the Press, a small section of which remained loyal to him. Matters were, however, drawing towards a climax.

On June 3 General Sarraïl had proclaimed martial law in Macedonia; on June 6 Greek shipping had come under naval blockade restriction, and on June 21 M. Guillemin and Sir Francis Elliot delivered a Note to the Greek Government in which the Entente Powers at last began to manifest very definitely the symptoms of returning vitality. This Note, which is here set out, demanded the demobilisation of the Greek Army, the formation of a non-political Cabinet, the dissolution of the Chamber, followed by fresh elections, and the restoration of law and order :

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<sup>1</sup> Price.

Instructed by their Governments, the undersigned Ministers of France, Great Britain, and Russia, representatives of the Powers protecting Greece, have the honour to communicate to the Greek Government the following declaration, which they also have been instructed to make known to the Greek people. As they have already solemnly declared and stated in writing, the three *Puissances garantes* of Greece do not request that she shall abandon her attitude of neutrality. They give definite proof of this by placing in the forefront of their demands the complete demobilisation of the Greek Army, in order to assure tranquillity and peace to the Hellenic people. But they have numerous and legitimate motives for regarding the Greek Government with suspicion, as its attitude towards them is in conformity neither with its reiterated engagements, nor even with the principles of a loyal neutrality. It has too often favoured the activities of certain foreigners who have openly worked to mislead the opinion of the Greek people, to lead astray the Greek national conscience, and to create on Greek territory organisations hostile to the neutrality of the country and tending to compromise the security of the naval and military forces of the Allies.

The entry of the Bulgarian forces into Greece, the occupation of Fort Roupel and other points of strategic value, with the connivance of the Hellenic Cabinet, constitute a new menace to the Allied troops, and one which imposes on the three Powers the obligation of demanding immediate guarantees and measures.

On the other hand, the Greek Constitution has been disregarded, the free exercise of universal suffrage has been impeded, the Chamber has been dissolved for the second time in less than a year, in spite of the definitely expressed will of the people, and the electors have been convoked at a time of complete mobilisation, so that the existing Chamber only represents a fractional part of the electorate; the entire country has been subjected to a system of pressure and police tyranny and left to disunify, in defiance of the legitimate observations of the Protecting Powers. The Powers have not only the right, but it is their duty to protest against the violation of the liberties which they are entrusted to preserve for the Greek people.

The hostile attitude of the Hellenic Government towards the Powers who freed Greece from foreign rule and assured her independence, and the obvious collusion of the existing Cabinet with their enemies, give them additional reasons for acting with firmness in basing their action upon the rights established by treaty, rights which have been invoked for the protection of the Greek people whenever the enjoyment of their liberties has been threatened.

As a consequence, the *Puissances garantes* of Greece find it

necessary to demand the immediate application of the following measures :

1. The absolute and total demobilisation of the Greek Army, which must be reduced to its peace footing with the least possible delay.

2. The replacement of the actual Ministry by a non-political Cabinet, one offering all necessary guarantees (A) for the loyal application of the benevolent neutrality which Greece has engaged herself to observe with respect to the Allied Powers, and (B) for the genuineness of a new reference to the electorate.

3. The dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies followed by new elections, to be held after the expiration of the delay necessary under the Constitution, and after the general demobilisation shall have restored the electoral college to its normal condition.

4. The replacement, by arrangement with the Powers, of any police officials whose attitude, inspired by foreign organisations, has facilitated the persecution of peaceable citizens or encouraged the insults directed against the Allied Legations and persons appertaining thereto.

Always animated towards Greece by the most benevolent and amicable sentiments, the *Puissances garantes* are decided at the same time to obtain without discussion or delay the application of these indispensable measures, and they cannot do other than throw upon the Greek Government the entire responsibility for any events which may come to pass if their just demands are not immediately accepted.

GUILLEMIN.<sup>1</sup>

F. ELLIOT.

DEMIDOFF.

The importance of the Note, both from the national and international angles, is apparent. But from the point of view of Venizelos, it is of extraordinary personal interest. By the Note, England, France and Russia accept his contentions on the Constitutional abuses ; they recognise that "the free exercise of universal suffrage" has been "impeded," that "the Chamber has been dissolved for the second time in less than a year in spite of the definitely expressed will of the people," and that "the electors have been convoked at a time of complete mobilisation, so that the existing Chamber only represents a fractional part of the electorate." All these conditions were already notorious

<sup>1</sup> Price.

throughout Europe, but by referring to them formally the Allies add recognition to the declarations of Venizelos. Although friendly towards the Greek leader, the Allies rarely volunteered him such full support.

The immediate effect of the Note was the disappearance of Skouloudes from the political arena. The terrifying spectacle of Allied warships close to the Greek coast was too much for the King to withstand. Streit, his secret councillor, was also in a yielding mood. On June 23, Skouloudes was succeeded by M. Zaimis, who replied to the Allies by agreeing to carry out all the demands of the Note.

"The real Government remained the same," commented Venizelos, in going over the events of this period on his return to the head of affairs.

After prolonging the mobilisation, the men behind the throne now fell back on the organised reservists, who swore that they were ready to fall fighting the King's enemies whether these enemies were within the realm or without. Politically, the King headed one party and Venizelos the other. The latter was convinced that all the indications foretold "a tremendous defeat for monarchy" at the polls. "It was," he said, "estimated that out of 146 constituencies in New Greece, perhaps not one would have returned a Monarchist deputy. Similarly, in Old Greece, they did not expect a single success in Larissa. In Attica, the Liberals would have secured three-quarters of the seats and in Achaia and Elis at least half. The Monarchists would neither have secured a majority of the seats in Cephalonia, in Zante, nor in the Cyclades, but they were certain of success in Arcadia and Laconia, and of a majority in the constituencies of Corinth, Argolis, Pthiotis, and Phocis. In other districts the contest would have been equal. The elections would have resulted in the return of about 200 Liberal deputies against the 100 of all other parties combined."

But the elections were never to be held. It is not clear whether it was at the direct invitation of the King or merely with his passive approval that the Bulgarians suddenly began to flood large sections of Eastern and Western Macedonia, preventing all possibility of a political appeal to the country. The invasion coincided at any rate with the Bulgarian

military plan and with the political interest of the King of Greece.

Presently Kavalla, Drama, and Serres were occupied by King Ferdinand's troops. One of the strangest incidents of the war, the surrender of a Greek army corps at Kavalla, occurred during this calamitous hour. Like so many sheep, 8000 Greek soldiers were removed to Germany and interned at Goerlitz. For a neutral State to intern belligerent troops was perhaps a common happening, but for a belligerent State to intern the troops of a neutral country created a fantastic precedent.<sup>1</sup> Heavy artillery and war supplies were also delivered up by the Greek military authorities.

Every Greek who supported the King's "policy" after these ignominious occurrences was a German at heart. The issue had ceased to be the old one, the King or Venizelos. Henceforward it was Germany or Greece, Greece or Germany, without a verge of ground on which to stand and chatter of compromise. No longer could the black sheep of the Royal domain be bleached white. Even in the myopic eyes of complete optimists they now looked black; they were black and, in fact, they were becoming blacker at each moment. By no subtlety could it be shown that the interests of Greece were being served by the surrender of Greek towns and territory, of Greek troops in thousands, of big guns and war stores. Short of declaring Greece to be annexed by Germany there was nothing left for the King to say or do. The time of Venizelos had passed; Venizelos himself had passed, but he had passed in the way that the old moon passes before it again becomes new.

The interval for him was an anxious one, charged with desperate resolves and hopeless calculations. The man who had dispersed the storm-clouds which had darkened Crete for decades, he who had doubled Greece in a single year, the man who had irrigated the land at one point and drained off the political sewage at another, the maker of the Greek King, the Greek Army, the Greek Navy, and, in some respects, the Greek people, was confounded, nonplussed, at the end of his resources. That was what he felt himself. It was wrong that he should have come to such an *impasse*, wrong that his

<sup>1</sup> Seligman.

own amazing talent should be ignored by those who owed to it so much, wrong above all that in an age of immense progress all the archaic notions of the past should be brought to life and thrust upon the world by force of arms. What was he to do ?

On August 28, 1916, Rumania entered the war as a member of the Entente group. The General Staff had professed that if this event, so long awaited and so often invited by the Allies, ever came to pass, the moment for the intervention of Greece would have arrived at last. "I considered," said Venizelos, "that the considerations were now removed, which had hitherto kept me from undertaking the fight against autocracy."

Three days later a band of Venizelists at Salonica, who had formed a Committee<sup>1</sup> of National Defence for the purpose of expelling the Bulgarians from Greece, started a revolt in conjunction with some Cretan gendarmes and other volunteers. An attempt was made to seize the local barracks: French troops had to be called out to restore order. This was the humble beginning of the movement which was first to divide Greece and afterwards to weld the country together again, with vast accretions of rich and populous territory.

On September 2 the Entente presented a Note to the Athens Government, peremptorily demanding the control of the Post and Telegraphic Services, including the Wireless installations, on the ground that the enemy was, through these channels, being supplied with important information. The Note also demanded the expulsion of enemy agents. Among those to go was Baron von Schenk.

Admiral Dartige du Fournet in command of an Allied Fleet represented *force majeure*.

M. Zaimis resigned on September 11. On September 16 M. Kalogeropoulos became Prime Minister, "with," said Venizelos, "the intention of giving continuity, if possible, to the understandings with the Entente Powers in respect of Greek intervention. But I already knew that M. Kalogeropoulos would fall a victim to the real Government and that he would only give a semblance of variety to our affairs,

<sup>1</sup> Zymbrakakis and Argyropoulos were the founders of this Committee.

when in reality there was no intention of making any change in Greek policy."

Within ten days Venizelos once more emerged, this time as the leader of the Salonica revolt. The new situation was composed of complex elements. Russia, France, and England themselves were closely concerned.

Their canine devotion to the King was about to end.



## CHAPTER XV

ON August 27 there had been a mass meeting of the Venizelist party at Athens to consider the political situation. On that occasion Venizelos had addressed the people from the balcony of his house advising them to send a deputation to the King to beseech this misguided personage to take warning at the eleventh hour. He recommended his audience to remind the King of the long series of misdeeds which had served to undo the work of "two honourable wars" and "five years of laborious reform." He told the people to plead for the principles upon which Greece had been built up since the military revolution of 1909, exactly seven years before.

The deputation was formed in the evening of that day, but the King refused to see the delegates.

In the course of a conversation with Venizelos not long afterwards, M. Embiricos, the Greek shipowner, told a little story of his barber which so clearly brought out what the people felt, that the Liberal leader was suddenly stirred to action. The barber, as the reflector of Venizelism among the working classes, appears to have formed the opinion that if the people's champion remained inactive, it would be useless for the people to take matters into their own hands, though it was in their hearts to do so.

"This conversation," said Venizelos, in explaining to the Chamber how the rebellion was given birth, "does not appear to be of any great significance. I am obliged, however, to confess that the impression it made upon me was startling. M. Embiricos had hardly left me, when I said to myself that this barber was right, that my hesitation about fulfilling my duty to the end, even to the point of becoming a rebel, must

be put aside, because it might be due to purely selfish motives."

It was as Napoleon had said: "I have seen that in the greatest affairs a little thing has always decided important events."

Very carefully Venizelos went over the facts of the situation. His introspective mood tempted him to put many questions to himself. In the end, he decided to discuss certain points with Admiral Coundouriotis, with whose opinions he was more or less familiar.

When he had stated his case—the Admiral agreed to share the dangers of an uprising.

Once evolved, the enterprise was quickly put into execution. Venizelos himself has described exactly what took place.

"At about 2 o'clock in the morning of September 25," he writes, "I left Athens in a motor car accompanied by Admiral Coundouriotis. Our immediate destination was Old Phaleron, where we embarked in the steamship *Hesperia* of the Embiricos Line. Fifty faithful friends, who had been got on board secretly at the Piræus, were awaiting us.

"The vessel sailed for Crete. Late in the night of the same day we anchored in Suda Bay.

"The next day an official landing took place at Suda Bay. Afterwards I went to Canea. Outside the town a great meeting was held in which thousands of peasants took part. I addressed the multitude. I explained why it was necessary for the Greek nation to rebel against the Germanophile policy of the Athens Government.

"The Provisional Government, consisting of Admiral Coundouriotis and myself, was then duly elected. On his arrival in Crete from Athens two days later General Danglis became the third member of the Government.

"We remained at Canea for ten days. We then went on to Samos accompanied by other political personages, who later took part in the revolt. At a large gathering at Samos, the Athens Government was declared to be dissolved. On the following day we proceeded to Mytilene, where a similar happening was recorded. The same thing was repeated at Chios and Salonica.

" There was a Provisional Government already in existence at Salonica, but it resigned and we thereupon took its place.

" The conscription of men of certain ages was proclaimed in all the regions where the allegiance of the Provisional Government was acknowledged. In this way the Army of National Defence was brought into being. When the men had been converted into efficient troops they were sent off to the front."

The departure of Venizelos at the break of day on September 25 was made public by the issue of an important manifesto in which his reasons for heading a revolt were explained to the Greek people. The main points in his statement were as follows :

He had always maintained that the interests and fortunes of Greece were dependent upon her traditional friendship with the Entente Powers. He had resigned in March 1915, because his policy of intervention was not sanctioned. Although he returned to power in August 1915, as a result of the elections held in June, he was obliged to retire because the King failed to fulfil the Treaty with Serbia. Even if no Treaty had existed, it was plainly in the interest of Greece to join the Entente Powers the moment Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Empires.

When Rumania declared war, it seemed impossible to him that Greece should any longer delay in taking action. After the surrender of Fort Roupel, Kavalla, Serres, and Drama, the very existence of the country had become the issue and he could no longer remain passive. He had exhausted every possible means of inducing those who governed Greece to take up arms in defence of their country. He had offered to give his unconditional support to any Cabinet which would carry out the policy of intervention, the only policy compatible with the national interests of Greece. He had recently sent a message to the King, through one of the Ministers of the Entente, urging him to lose no more time in coming to the rescue of the country. If his own retirement promised to facilitate matters, he was still willing to retire. As all had thus far been in vain, he had decided to take the supreme step ; because, also, he was convinced that those who really controlled Greek policy had no intention of arming the country to drive out the enemy. He was not heading a revolution in the ordinary interpretation of the word. His movement was in no way directed against the

King or his dynasty. The movement indicated a last effort to induce the King to emerge as the Sovereign of Greece and follow the path of duty in the protection of his subjects.

It was on October 5 that Venizelos established his Government at Salonica. He did not at first receive from the Allied Governments the support to which his policy entitled him. Moreover, he had many enemies abroad. Most of them had become his enemies because he had challenged the claims or endangered the fortunes of their friends. Although it was a roundabout form of animosity, it was at times very active.

In November a Neutral Zone was drawn between the Greece of the national leader and the Greece of the King. On November 19 French troops retook Monastir. On the same day Admiral Dartige du Fournet notified the German, Austrian, Bulgarian, and Turkish Ministers at Athens to leave Greece within forty-eight hours. Several days before he had demanded of the Royal Government the surrender of 18 field batteries, 6 mountain batteries, 4000 Mannlicher rifles, 140 quick-firing guns, as well as ammunition, and fifty motor lorries. The nominal Prime Minister, Professor Lambros, a distinguished scholar whom the King had dragged into office, refused to obey the order although he used all the polite and indirect phrases of a Turkish diplomatist.

On November 24, Admiral du Fournet again demanded the surrender of the Greek cannon: mountain batteries by the 1st of December and the rest by the 16th. It was also on the 24th that Venizelos declared war, as chief of the Salonica Triumvirate, on Germany and Bulgaria. A Conference of Entente Ministers at Boulogne on October 20 had assumed a hesitating attitude towards the opposite aspects of the Greek position. About ten days later Lord Robert Cecil said: "Whenever we find part of the Greek community which is in fact under the Government of M. Venizelos, where the majority of the population recognise him as their Government, we recognise as *de facto* the ruler of that portion of Greece."

Venizelos rallied round him the sounder elements; but

Greek reservists were ready to fall upon his followers everywhere. At Athens the situation was developing into a crisis. On November 26, Du Fournet landed some detachments. This action was merely intended to serve as the symbol of force.

On the last day of the month several of the principal Constantinists became a little apprehensive concerning the fate of their kingly leader. They were, however, overruled.

Large numbers of reservists had been coming into the city and new troops were being enrolled. Grave trouble had been threatened for several days: the lives of the Venizelists of Athens were in imminent peril.

On December 1, the day that Constantine was to deliver up the first instalment of guns, the small Allied forces were in ignorance of their real danger, namely, that the Royalist troops had received instructions to resist any attempt on the part of the French or English to enter the military depots. Arms had been distributed and Constantinists were about to defend the interests of Germany first by a treacherous attack on French and British marines, then by a successful massacre *à la Turque* of the hated Venizelists. To the King this plan evidently appeared to be rather heroic. He said afterwards that he had only intended to make a display of resistance, so that he could obey the Allies without appearing weak in the eyes of his own people.

December 1 was to be a very great day. It was to be the day of treachery reduced to a system: the extermination of the Anglo-French. And December 2 was to mark the final disappearance of Venizelism from Athens.

No Constantinist was disappointed. But like the Ottoman orgy at Candia in 1898, the outbreak had an unexpected effect. The Allied Powers were moved; they began to reach more definite decisions.

During the night preceding December 1, overwhelming numbers of Royalist troops were scattered round Athens. All the commanding positions in the neighbourhood were occupied. Guardian circles of zealous anti-Venizelists sur-

rounded the King's Palace. No precaution had been omitted to make the Massacre of Athens a complete triumph. Within the city, cavalry, infantry, and marines awaited the call. Two generals divided the honour of command: the troops of the military district of Athens were under General Kallaris; the soldiers of the active defence were led by General Papoulas; the marines were under Typaldos, who had changed his politics since his sea exploit of 1909. About 20,000 men of one sort or another are said to have been available for the King's supreme enterprise.

The soldiery had been brought under severe, if original, propagandist treatment. The King's sons were reported to have visited all the barracks and worked upon the men. "The greatest degradation," they said, "that it is possible to put upon an army is about to be put upon you. A handful of French and English marines are coming to disarm you. They believe you to be such cowards that you will not resist. And after that your King is to be dethroned."<sup>1</sup>

About 10 o'clock in the morning of December 1, Admiral du Fournet's men, in all 2500 French and English marines, marched into Athens in three sections. . . . Suddenly a French column advancing in close formation from the Piræus was attacked by large numbers of Royalist troops who used machine-guns to multiply the casualties. A second column in another quarter was attacked while the men were having a meal. The third column was also taken unawares. In a short time fighting became general. From one of the hills Greek artillery opened fire on the Zappeion, where Admiral du Fournet had been decoyed and surrounded.

Du Fournet soon became a prisoner with some of his men, although the King had promised him the night before that the Allies had nothing to fear. Of course, he was quickly released. The diplomatists appear to have parleyed with the King to an accompaniment of rifle fire and exploding shells. Heavily outnumbered and inextricably trapped, the Allied marines were either killed, wounded, or overpowered. . . . As for the Allied Ministers,

<sup>1</sup> Vaka.

they were laughed at by the King, who assured them that he was "not the Emperor of China, but a constitutional monarch." There is a story that Sir Francis Elliot ran out with an umbrella and drove away a band of reservists who were advancing to attack the British Legation. •

Ministers and marines later withdrew from Athens to the security offered by the ships of war. The Constantinists were left in possession of the field to celebrate their success as they pleased. It only remained for the unfortunate Athenian Venizelists to meet the full force of the tide of terror which then began to flow. On December 2 the now Ententeless city became the scene of a savage onslaught by the Royalists upon the Venizelists, some of whom were murdered. Helpless old men were dragged through the streets, battered and bruised. Many were thrown into gaol for indeterminate periods, without the benefit of *habeas corpus*. The Mayor of Athens, by name Benakis, was among them. Refugees from Asia Minor, unfortunate people who had fled from the Turks, were shot at sight by the frenzied followers of the King. Any one who believed in Venizelos was soon identified by the secret agents. Then either his life or his liberty was taken from him. Cabinet Ministers,<sup>1</sup> Generals,<sup>2</sup> and University professors were not even left freedom of thought, if they had ever been known to think well of Venizelos. They were plunged into the filth of prisons as foul as those the Allies later found in Constantinople.

Prince Theodore Ypsilanti was the most notorious of the Royalist ringleaders. Reservists plundered the rich. The rich among the Royalists used their day-old omnipotence either to kill or incarcerate their rivals. There was no Bastille in Athens, but there were prisons full of innocent men.

In a week, between one and two thousand unjustifiable arrests were made. But the Royalists were not destined to consolidate their work.

Although they ardently wished it, the Emperor William was not coming to Athens: he had once got as near as Sofia, but he missed the crowning joy of marching into

<sup>1</sup> M. Raktivan.

<sup>2</sup> General Korakas.

Greece. His sister, the Queen Consort, had toiled by night and by day for his coming.

"By a miracle," she had telegraphed him, "we are safe after a bombardment of three hours of the Palace by the French Fleet, which fired without warning. The shells burst quite close. We took refuge in the cellars. Violent encounters took place also the following day in the streets. The revolutionaries fired from the houses. The Army and the people fought magnificently and remained faithful. The tables are now turned. It was a great victory over four Great Powers, whose troops fled before the Greeks and afterwards withdrew under the escort of Greek troops. The Mayor is in prison. Many arrests have taken place. The panic has subsided. The garrison has been brought up to ten regiments. . . . What will be the demands of the Entente? We are prepared for everything. . . . Please inform us when the Macedonian Army will be sufficiently reinforced to undertake a definite offensive."

The effect of the December outrages was that Constantine's reign during the war was brought to an end about six months later. The 1st of December half killed his sovereignty; the abdication of his cousin Nicholas II., in March 1917, weakened it still more. It received the *coup de grâce* in June. But December was the beginning of the end.

On the eighth day of that month the French Republic began a blockade of Royalist Greece, with which her Allies were "in agreement." The King was accustomed to all kinds of blockades, including threatened blockades. But this was an entirely new sort, for it aimed at being effective.

There was much in the situation to disturb the balance of the King, who was being vigorously encouraged by the Germans, and as vigorously discouraged by the Entente. On December 14 he received a Note from the three Protecting Powers, with Italy added, which was no ordinary Note; it almost read like the preamble in a declaration of war. It demanded the removal of the troops to the Peloponnesus within a period of grace fixed at twenty-four hours.

The King's Government agreed. In other respects, the Greek reply was less satisfactory.

Mr. Lloyd George, who had succeeded Mr. Asquith in the Premiership on December 6, announced on December 19



that the British Government was prepared to recognise the diplomatic representatives of the Venizelist Government. M. Gennadius, who had resigned his position as Greek Minister in London after the affair of December 2, was appointed Venizelist Diplomatic Agent. Lord Granville was sent to Salonica to represent England. France sent M. de Billy.

Meanwhile, the blockade of Athens was maintained, and for six weeks nothing happened to alter the relations between the King and the Entente Governments. Constantine was holding out, temporising, in the hope that the Germans would launch a great and victorious attack on the Allies in Macedonia. On January 6, 1917, he caused an inquiry to be made in Berlin concerning the probable date of such an attack. There had been a suggestion, definitely expressed by the Queen, that the Royal household had begun to feel the shortage of rations by January 2.

Soon after the December massacres, Venizelos, who was not within reach physically, was made the object of a solemn anathema pronounced by the Archbishop of Athens, with the approval of the Royal Government. Prince George had ordered and had carried out a similar ceremony in Cretan days. Venizelos had survived. On both occasions the people had prayed for his life and prosperity.

On January 29 the flags of the Allies were saluted by Royalist troops at the Zappeion. The ceremony was intended to set off the little incident which had taken place there on December 1. The Venizelists were, however, left to the squalor of the prisons; the movement of troops to the Peloponnesus was never fully carried out, and the reservists continued to harass both the Allies and the supporters of Venizelos who remained at large. In the Neutral Zone the King was represented by bands of irregulars, outlaws, whose function it was to interfere with General Sarrail's communications.

The attitude of Italy was not sympathetic to Venizelos. Some colour was given to the suggestion that Italian sympathies were in fact with the other camp. Italy was inclined to object to various concessions, which the other Powers, especially France, were prepared to

grant to the Salonica Government. There was an evil rumour in Rome to the effect that Venizelos was actually in league with King Constantine, and that the two were merely developing, at the expense of everybody but themselves, the chief parts in a most sinister drama.

At a Conference which had taken place in Rome in the early part of January 1917, the Entente Powers had been tempted to give King Constantine guarantees that they would neither "on land or sea allow the extension of the Venizelist movement in the territories hitherto occupied by the State of the kingdom of Greece." Between the despatch of the Note supplying these assurances and its acceptance by the Athens Government, Venizelist forces occupied the island of Cythera or Cerigo. "I was asked to evacuate Cythera," said Venizelos, "and I did so in order not to cause difficulties to the Entente." The feelings of the islanders were apparently not considered in the matter. When they heard that Cerigo was not allowed to remain under the Venizelist Government, they proceeded, rather than submit to Constantine, to proclaim it an independent Republic.

The State of Athens was never still; it bubbled always, sometimes more, sometimes less, and only very rarely was it half subdued. It not only bubbled; occasionally it seethed. The Government corresponded dutifully with the Allies, and the King obeyed the Emperor. The language of the Cabinet was not absolutely servile to the Entente; but it was generally submissive, at moments deferential, and more than once the King himself touched his crown like a stable-boy touching his cap. All was a mockery, except the Royal correspondence with Berlin: this was as sincere as the family tie was unquestionable. Authentic examples of this correspondence have been preserved. There is a telegram, dated January 26, 1917, in which the hatred of the King and Queen for the enemies of Germany manifests itself as usual. It was sent to the Emperor William through Theotokis. In it the following lines appear:

We send you from the depth of our hearts the most cordial wishes on the occasion of your birthday. We are following with

admiration the great events on land and sea. We pray that God grants you very soon a glorious victory over all your infamous enemies. We have been honoured by the landing of forty Senegalese soldiers intended to guard the French Legation. What a charming picture of civilisation.

Under the King, Athens had ceased to be the capital of Greece. It was a small enemy State. It had grown so small, had this State, that in some respects Monaco or Andorra or San Marino would have seemed in comparison very large. In a sense, it was the exact size of the King's Palace, for within the precincts of the building was to be discovered the inexhaustible fountain of hostility which showered upon Venizelists and upon all things connected with the Entente.

In February 1917 the Salonica Government intercepted a message from the Kaiser to the King: the German Sovereign was compelled to confess that it was no longer possible for him to bring relief in the form of an attack on the Allies in Macedonia. "All I ask of you, now," said the one brother-in-law to the other, "is that you shall keep your throne." In spite of all, the King never quite dispelled the chimera of some day being lifted high up by the Emperor and his legionaries, while at the same time making a good appearance at the *fête* of welcome by heading a little army of his own.

The winter and spring of 1917 brought the Venizelist forces up to a high standard of efficiency. The jurisdiction of the Salonica Government extended over territories peopled by 2,000,000 souls. The King's sway was supposed to be effective over 2,700,000 inhabitants. In reality, at least one million out of their number belonged to the regions which were known for their Venizelism. Outside Greece, whether in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, a very large percentage of Greeks were Venizelists; but due regard was paid to King Constantine by allowing him a diplomatic representative in countries where there was an agent of the Venizelist Government. In Egypt official provision was made to protect the legal rights of all Venizelists in the local courts. They were thus clearly distinguished from Royalists; every Greek was ordered to register as of one

variety or the other before April 5, 1917, at the Agency of Salonica or Athens.

In Greece itself there were desertions from the Army of the King which augmented the Army of Venizelos. Yet the Royalist leaders talked of extinguishing Venizelism like a feeble night-light. It was the King's authority that was being blown out by a new breeze, which sprang from the people themselves. The islands of Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, Skiathos, and Cythera had banished the Royalists by the middle of April. When the Athens Government protested to the Entente, Sir Francis Elliot declared that "the events in the islands must be attributed to the rising of the inhabitants."

The world situation had undergone two great changes. In March Russia ceased to be a European Power, and in April America entered the war. The abdication of the Czar reacted in Athens: the King lost the support of Russia. Melodramatic plots were still carefully prepared by the General Staff. General Dousmanis, A.D.C. to the Athenian ruler, endeavoured, up to the last moment, to invigorate the King's irregulars in Northern Thessaly.

On May 3, M. Zaimis became Prime Minister again. His immediate predecessor, Lambros, Professor of Archaeology, was removed from office by the King, in order to propitiate the Entente. In Paris, on the 1st of the month, a congress of Greeks, representing vital sections of Hellenism, had declared King Constantine and his dynasty deposed. Towards the end of the month Venizelos made a statement in which he is reported to have said, "A reconciliation between myself and the King is in every respect impossible. The chasm which separates us is similar to that which separates the Allies from the Central Powers. It is a question of political conceptions diametrically opposed and absolutely irreconcilable. . . . The King," he continued, "has betrayed his treaty obligations to Serbia; he has violated the Greek Constitution; he has brought the nation to the brink of an abyss; he has driven the majority to rise up against him. If he were allowed to keep his throne, no guarantee would exist that the political liberties of the people would in future be respected. . . . King Constantine descended from his throne to become a party leader; the

leader of a party condemned by the revolution of 1909; as this is so, he must suffer the consequences of political defeat."

The idea of a Hellenic republic gradually secured substantial support among Greeks all over the world.

A mass meeting had been held in Salonica early in May, which followed the example of the Greeks in Paris by proclaiming the deposition of the King and his dynasty. A republic was then demanded of M. Venizelos. The Venizelist Army had previously manifested similar inclinations.

But the Venizelists were not the only Greeks who were weary of King Constantine. The people of the Athenian State were already restive. They found that perpetual homage before a despot, one who left them apprehensive about their food supplies, was a tiresome mode of life. Many had begun to realise that Germany might not win the war; some no longer even placed much faith in a *paix blanche*. In varying degrees their disillusionment had commenced. They could not help remembering that America had lately embarked upon a crusade against the Central Powers. It recurred to them frequently as the days passed. They were almost prepared to cry, "*Le Roi est mort! Vive le Roi!*" The King was in fact not yet dead, even politically. He still had sufficient life to urge fresh trouble and resistance in secret. Dousmanis was actively engaged in elaborating schemes directed against the Entente and the Venizelists. The latter talked of dethroning the King; they were still persecuted in divers ways. Athenians were suffering from prolonged nervous tension. At one instant they were expectant, the next they were plunged in despair. The great crops of Thessaly were in the people's minds. Citizens disputed with each other as to which Government would reap the harvest. It was a very important political question. If the crops went to the King, the Allied blockade would become a farce.

From Salonica, Venizelos was directing the destinies of a growing State.

A Greek cruiser and two Greek destroyers had been placed at his disposal by the Allied Powers to ensure his communications with the Archipelago. His troops had

proved their mettle in action. His influence extended as the King's power declined. The fate of the Thessalian crops was one of the greatest economic problems by which he was faced. His followers would, he knew, suffer bitter privation if the King received the harvest. All the islands had now acknowledged the authority of the Salonica Government, and they, at least, were absolutely dependent upon the contested crops.

Venizelos had drafted a scheme of peasant proprietorship to emancipate the Thessalians from their landlords. The yoke endured, however.

About the 5th of June, Senator Jonnart, newly appointed High Commissioner of the Protecting Powers, arrived in the Bay of Salamis on board a French cruiser. Formerly Governor-General of Algeria and later French Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Senator had come to Greece to wind up King Constantine's enemy enterprise.

After conferring with the Entente Ministers, M. Jonnart the next day continued his voyage to Salonica. It was essential that he should discuss the whole situation with Venizelos and General Sarrail. In the result, decisions were reached between them for the Allies to occupy Thessaly, the Isthmus of Corinth, and the city of Athens. On June 9 the High Commissioner returned to the Bay of Salamis.

M. Jonnart, firm and uncompromising, then proceeded with his unpleasant task courageously. Everything was definitely settled. The Entente Powers intended to purchase the entire Thessalian crop and establish a system of control so that all the Greek provinces would receive their share.

The Allied diplomatists, somewhat fearful in memory of the Decembrists, were troubled by what might happen if Jonnart began to apply pressure.

The Athenians had been forced to go through so many emotions since the war that they had developed a state of psychology peculiar to themselves. The conflict of opinion between the national leader and the King had left them confused. They had been nourished on news of German victories from every quarter. Their King himself had repeatedly shown that he believed in the triumph of German arms. It was known that the ablest members of the

General Staff derided the notion that the Allies would win the war. The Allies themselves had been notoriously vacillating in their local policy. The blockade had caused irritation and made bad blood. The arrival of Jonnart had created, as the Entente Ministers were well aware, a sullen stupor in the overtaxed and uncertain minds of the populace. Certainly, the citizens of Athens were as likely to submit as to resist, but resistance would in their existing condition have been as natural to them as submission.

On June 11 the High Commissioner presented Zaimis with a Note demanding the abdication of the King on the ground that Constantine had on his own initiative violated the Constitution of which France, Great Britain, and Russia were the guarantors :

"I have the honour to inform your Excellency," wrote M. Jonnart, "that the King has lost the confidence of the Protecting Powers. . . . Consequently I am authorised . . . to demand the abdication of H.M. King Constantine, who will himself choose, in accord with the Protecting Powers, a successor among his heirs. I feel obliged to request your answer within the next twenty-seven hours."

A secret memorandum annexed to the Note excluded the Crown Prince from the succession and guaranteed a pension of 500,000 francs to the King after his departure from Greece and subject to his good behaviour.

Within twenty-four hours, at 9.30 A.M. on June 12, M. Zaimis replied by accepting the Allied ultimatum :

*To the High Commissioner*

France, Great Britain, and Russia, having demanded by your note of yesterday's date the abdication of H.M. King Constantine and the naming of his successor, the undersigned, President of the Council of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has the honour to bring to the knowledge of your Excellency that H.M. the King, anxious as always for the welfare of Greece, has decided to leave the country together with the Prince Royal, and has chosen as his successor Prince Alexander.

ZAIMIS.

On June 12, French troops were disembarked from the

transports and Allied aeroplanes appeared over Athens. There had been a plot evolved at the Cercle Militaire during the preceding night to raise a revolt to prevent the King's departure. Reservists had demonstrated in the vicinity of the Palace during the day.

Meanwhile the King had announced his departure and appointed his son, Alexander, as his successor.

With the news of the landing of French troops, the ardour of the reservists began to abate. In the night of June 12 the ex-King left Greece.

All the most dangerous members of his *entourage* were also deported: Dousmanis, Metaxas, Dragoumis and two Germans, Blum and Hosslin, were sent to Corsica. Several reservist leaders who had been actively engaged in inciting the people to rebel were arrested. Skouloudes and Lambros, together with half-a-dozen other ex-Cabinet Ministers, one General and one Admiral, were placed under surveillance.

On June 12, the day of his accession, King Alexander issued a proclamation, which was immediately withdrawn, because the Allies disapproved of his references to the ex-King. The proclamation, countersigned by M. Zaimis, was supposed to have been dictated by Constantine.

#### PROCLAMATION BY KING ALEXANDER

At the moment that my august father makes a supreme sacrifice for our dear country and entrusts to me the heavy duties of the Hellenic throne, I express but a single wish, that God will hear his prayers to protect and reunite Greece.

Although I grieve to be separated from my well-beloved father in the present critical circumstances, I have one consolation: that is, to endeavour to carry out his sacred mandate in harmony with the precedents of his brilliant reign, and with the help of the people, upon whose love the Greek dynasty is supported.

I am convinced that the people will, by their submission, respect the wishes of my father, and help to save our dear country from the terrible situation in which it finds itself.

Before leaving Athens, the deposed King addressed a valedictory message to the Greek people:



Necessity imposes upon me the duty of going from my dear country. The Crown Prince is accompanying me. I am leaving my son Alexander on the throne. Though far from Greece, the Queen and I will always preserve our unalterable love for the Hellenic people. I beg all Greeks to accept my decision calmly and quietly, and to trust in God, whose protection I invoke for the nation.

In order that my bitter sacrifice for Greece may not be in vain, I exhort you, for love of God and for love of our country, to maintain perfect discipline. The slightest public disorder might cause a great catastrophe. The love and devotion which you have always manifested for the Queen and myself in days of happiness and sorrow are a great consolation to us at the present time. May God protect Greece.

CONSTANTINE.

On June 16, M. Jonnart issued a manifesto in which he declared to the Greek people that the Protecting Powers desired to "put an end to repeated violations of the Constitution and of the treaties and to the deplorable intrigues which culminated in the massacre of the soldiers of friendly countries." In another sentence he reminded the citizens that "yesterday Berlin was in command at Athens and was gradually bringing the people under the yoke of the Bulgarians and Germans."

The way was quickly paved for the return of Venizelos.

"On June 20," he writes, "I boarded a Greek torpedo-boat destroyer at Salonica and went to the Piræus. There I transhipped to a French war vessel. I remained on board the latter for six days, during which *pourparlers* were carried on between M. Jonnart and the Zaimis Government. The remaining members of my administration arrived from Salonica on June 25. On June 26 I went to Athens, where I and all the other members of the Provisional Government took the oath in the presence of Alexander."

On June 24, Senator Jonnart had sent Zaimis a Note to demand the summoning of the Chamber, which had been elected on June 13, 1915. In reply M. Zaimis notified the High Commissioner that he was ready to resign from office. It is only just to state that Zaimis had in some measure facilitated the work of M. Jonnart.

The new Cabinet of Venizelos included the following members :

M. Politis . . . . .	Foreign Affairs.
M. Repoulis . . . . .	Interior.
M. Dingas . . . . .	Public Instruction.
M. Michalacopoulos . . . . .	Finance.
M. Spyridis . . . . .	National Economy.
M. Papanastasiou . . . . .	Communications.
M. Tzirimokos . . . . .	Justice.
M. Coundouriotis . . . . .	Marine.
M. Negropontis . . . . .	Agriculture.
M. Simos . . . . .	Relief.
M. Embiricos . . . . .	Food.

The Prime Minister assumed the functions of Minister for War.

French troops, with a small force of Cretan gendarmes from Salonica, were present in Athens during the period of transition. The Athenians were not slow to recognise that the King and his party had been beaten beyond recovery and that Royalist demonstrations would be as pointless as an outcry for the Emperor of Korea.

The war waged against the Central Powers by the Venizelist Government of Salonica was now waged by the Venizelist Government of Greece. The Royalist Ministers at Vienna, Sofia, Berlin, and Constantinople were instructed to demand their passports under date of June 29.

Greece began to be restored to unity. Allied troops were withdrawn from Athens and Venizelist troops took their place.

Senator Jonnart left Greece on July 7. The blockade had been raised a couple of days after the departure of ex-King Constantine. More Greek vessels were returned to Venizelos by the Powers.

The Chamber, which had been elected in June 1915, was restored to the functions of which it had been deprived by the arbitrary action of the King. It met again on July 25, 1917.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author has found the manuscripts of Mr. Leonard Magnus of the greatest use in connection with King Constantine during the war. He wishes to express his indebtedness to Mr. Magnus for having placed them within reach.

## CHAPTER XVI

THE return of Venizelos to Athens in 1917 closed a dramatic phase in his political life. It remained for him to restore unity of purpose—to create solidarity of opinion—among all Greeks on the great outside questions, which, as it happened, were also questions intimately affecting the welfare of the people within the State. The Hellenic inhabitants of territories lying beyond the existing frontiers of Greece had ever held a pre-eminent place in the thoughts of the Prime Minister. As an Unredeemed Greek by birth, he had always worked, with extraordinary sympathy, to bring the scattered people of his race, whether of the islands, Asia Minor, Albania, or Thrace, under one flag with the inhabitants of the kingdom. The Treaties of London and Bucharest had increased enormously the size of Greece, but more than two million people of Greek blood were left in the Turkish Empire alone.

The first concern of Venizelos when he took up the Government of Greece at Athens was to make one nation out of Venizelists and Royalists ; after that to recover the lands lost by the ex-King ; and lastly, to carry out the wider salvage of Hellenism.

Circumstances favoured the reduction of internal strife to a minimum. With the removal or imprisonment of the Constantinist leaders, the anti-Venizelist machine was left without motive power. In a moment it became an almost total wreck. Among the people bitterness at once began to evaporate. If there had been a dispute in the past, it belonged to the past ; the past was neither the present nor the future. It was seen that any attempt to perpetuate the feud would have involved fresh danger. It was easier for the Athenians to forget than to remember. The majority of Greeks remembered only to forget the divided days of

Salonica and Athens. There was the war to be fought and won. Greece was now an ally of the Entente and an associate of America. Some of the worst phases of the conflict lay ahead.

At the time that Venizelos was working for political peace among the Greeks he was also working, with notable success, to strengthen and enlarge the Army.

Greek troops acquitted themselves most admirably in action. The *élan* which characterised them seemed to spring from a desire to retrieve the past before it was too late. In the campaign which led up to the defeat of Bulgaria and Turkey in the autumn of 1918, Greek soldiery played a very creditable part.

Once Venizelos had guided all Greece into the war, there was nothing to be said against the conduct of officers or men. He had dismissed 500 suspect officers on his return to Athens. He had dismissed them for circulating pacifist ideas in the various barracks. "You can perhaps come back," he had told them, "later on."

General Franchet d'Esperey, who was in command of the Allied troops in the Near East, spoke very well of the Greek Army during the last phases of the war. "The Greek troops," he said, "guarded an extended front of great importance, and in the offensive executed brilliantly the rôle which I had assigned to them. The Greek Army is valiant, intelligent, sober, enthusiastic, and impetuous. . . . The co-operation of the mountain-formations of the Greek Army was specially admirable, aiding greatly in the rapid execution of the plan of advance. In general, I am fully satisfied with what the Greek Army accomplished in this campaign."

General d'Esperey had at an earlier date telegraphed to Venizelos his opinion of the Greeks in action.

*The Commander-in-Chief of the Armies in the East  
to M. Venizelos.*

At the moment when the success of the offensive operations which have been begun on the Macedonian front is being affirmed, I desire to express to you my entire satisfaction at the brilliant conduct of the Greek units which are taking part in the battle.

In particular, the Seres division, attacking West of Lake Doiran in very difficult country, has just covered itself with fresh glory, taking possession of extremely strong positions, which were bitterly defended, and capturing a large number of prisoners. Certain of these units have still further added to the renown which they had already won in the attack on the Skra di Legen.

Among the units which have recently arrived, the 35th Infantry Regiment has just asserted its worth by storming, in co-operation with French units, the important Preslap *massif* and the village of Zborsko. All the Greek units, moreover, are competing with one another in endurance and dash, and I am persuaded that they will soon win fresh laurels.

Before the end of the summer of 1917 the Greek Parliament was in full and efficient working order. The most important speech that Venizelos ever made, important, that is to say, as a narrative of great events, was delivered in the Chamber in the last week of August. It was a very candid exposition of his policy from the days of the Balkan wars. He asserted, among other things, that at the moment when the Powers intervened and deposed the King, the Salonica Government was in a position to overcome the Government of Athens without external aid. "At the time when our return took place," said Venizelos, "the Salonica Government had an army of 60,000 men, well organised in three divisions, with a fourth division, that of the Cyclades and Ionian Islands, ready for immediate organisation. Our 60,000 men were ready to face any sacrifice in order to attain the high aims which they had in view, whereas at that period the force at the disposal of the Athenian State could not pretend to rival them. The Athenian State had succeeded by its own faults in breaking up the army. But, above all, it had succeeded in infusing most of the troops with the idea that there is no greater misfortune for a citizen than the sacrifice of his own individuality for the sake of the more general interests of his country. Whoever, therefore, wishes to judge the matter openly must recognise that the utter defeat of the Athenian *régime*, with its Ministry, would have been the task of an ordinary route-march for the established Government of Salonica."

The name of Salonica will always be closely connected

with Venizelos and his work. The connection goes back to a period anterior to the Great War, back to one night in November, 1912, when he roused King George from his rest to induce him to compel the Crown Prince Constantine to march on the town. This incident, kept secret for years, is typical of the thoroughness of Venizelos. The accomplished fact, the prompt capture of Salonica, was all that he was concerned with: what glory there was passed to the other man. But it was upon Salonica that the military reputation of Constantine grew up.

One dark night in November 1917, Venizelos had a curious escape in the harbour of Tarento. He was on his way to London at the time. The destroyer in which he had crossed from Greece had run alongside a narrow landing-stage which projected out in the water. No lights were shown at Tarento because of the danger of Austrian air raids. Venizelos was the first to step off the destroyer. He took another step which carried him across the landing-stage and over the opposite side. An English companion, Commander Talbot, acting with promptitude and energy, was able to drag him out of the sea.

Although November 1917 was not a moment for exultation among the Allies, Venizelos, when he reached London, insisted that Germany would be beaten.

"When you ask me whether I am an optimist or a pessimist," he said during his visit, "I can only say that there is no doubt in my mind about the end of the war. I held the opinion at the outset that the Allied Powers of the Entente would achieve victory over the Central Empires, and nothing has occurred since to change me. Success, indeed, is doubly assured now that America has taken up arms. It is absolutely inevitable. . . . I am fully prepared to see Germany gain further victories in the field, great victories, perhaps, in appearance, but, *au fond*, they will contain no element calculated to stem the tide of Allied power. I refer especially to the immense value of America's future part in the war, a part which will prove decisive. Prussia has had very many years in which to bring her military power to a state bordering upon perfection. England, in the grand sense, has developed hers only since the war. The German

Empire of to-day is able to show spectacular military achievements as the direct outcome of long preparation. My unwavering conviction is that there will ultimately come a day when Germany will be beaten in the field. The conduct of the war must be directed, on the part of the Allies, to the final decision. There is no room for compromise with the enemy. The only road for us to follow is the road which leads to military triumph.”<sup>1</sup>

The words used by the Greek Premier were uttered a year before the Armistice. In the twelve months which formed the interval between his visit to London and the collapse of Germanic resistance, the enemy launched the most terrible attacks of the entire war, beginning with the great onset of March 21, 1918. In that year Foch was placed at the head of the Allied Armies. In July he started the offensive which ended in the defeat of Germany and the overthrow of the two Emperors, as well as all the Sovereign Princes of the Fatherland. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria was the first to fall. As Count Metternich, the German diplomatist, remarked to Dr. Solf, when the revolutionary cars, with red flags, dashed into Berlin before his gaze about the 8th of November 1918, “We have lived to see the close of an epoch.”<sup>2</sup>

Given below is a summary, from a Greek military authority, of the position before the Balkan offensive :

Up to the spring of 1918 the Allied forces were inferior to those opposed by the enemy, and were unable to contemplate any offensive operations; in fact, they were hardly able to defend the front occupied, and this so long as the enemy abstained from manifesting any serious disposition to attack.

It was extremely difficult to draw reinforcements for the Army of the Orient from the Western front during this period, because the critical situation on the Western front precluded any despatch of troops to Macedonia, and because the transport difficulties were immense, owing to the submarine warfare and the defective means of transport.

Consequently it was necessary to find reinforcements for the Army of the Orient on the spot, in order that it might achieve

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from an interview with the author.

<sup>2</sup> From Baron Wernher von Ow-Wachendorf.

superiority over the enemy, and thus be able to attack. These reinforcements arrived in the form of the mobilised Army of Greece, which had become united under the Government of Venizelos after the summer of 1917. (Venizelos had succeeded in contributing to the Army of the Orient three whole divisions, consisting mostly of volunteers, when he was in Salonica.)

The reinforcements during the interval between the spring of 1918 and July amounted to ten Greek divisions in Macedonia, so that not only was the enemy superiority neutralised, but the Allied Army of the Orient secured a numerical superiority over the enemy which enabled it to prepare and to execute offensive operations.

Among the total forces of the Allies on this front, the Greek Army, which in July 1918 amounted to 300,000 troops, occupied the first place in point of numbers; moreover, in virtue of her available forces in the interior, Greece possessed abundant reserves for the filling up of gaps, and by her harbours, means of communication, and the various resources of the country, all of which had been placed at the disposal of the Allies, she contributed a broad base of operations, while at the same time her Fleet actively co-operated with the Allies in the fight against the submarines and in the safeguarding of transport in the Mediterranean.

Under the favourable conditions thus created, the offensive on the Macedonian front was decided upon in the beginning of August 1918.

On September 30, 1918, the Bulgarian armistice was signed. "Bulgaria, in capitulating," said Venizelos on October 8, "has only followed the course clearly indicated to her by elementary self-interest: on the one hand, she was incapable of resisting the Allied Armies, and, on the other, the principles for which we and our Allies are fighting made it certain that the punishment which will be inflicted on her, and the guarantees which will be demanded of her, will not go beyond what is necessary and indispensable, and will not be in contradiction to the war aims of the Allies."

On October 1, 1918, Venizelos issued the following Order:

*To the Commander of the Army and Generals commanding  
Army Corps and Divisions.*

The signing of the military convention with the enemy crowns the battles of the National Army with complete triumph.



The Government desires to congratulate the National Army, and to express the gratitude of the nation for the work which it has completed. Reconstituted in the midst of so many difficulties, the National Army, both from Old and from New Greece, has succeeded in fighting by the side of the Allied Armies, in establishing not only the military prestige, but the honour of the country as well.

The collapse of our nearest enemy heralds a favourable ending for our struggle and for that of our Allies. We do not of course know when this end will arrive. But with such an Army, fighting by the side of such Allies, the nation looks forward to the future with full confidence. Glory and honour to the National Army.

VENIZELOS.

On October 20, 1918, Venizelos addressed a popular gathering from the balcony of his house at Athens. "All over the country," he said, "is heard the echo of the Balkan victory. One of the four accomplices in the attempt to yoke the world has acknowledged defeat. . . . This victory not only means the end of the struggle against Bulgaria ; its importance extends far beyond the limits of the Balkan Peninsula ; it constitutes the beginning of the collapse of the enemy coalition, for it will have . . . very important results on the moral of the other enemy peoples. . . . At the moment of Bulgarian intervention in the war it became evident that if Greece did not also intervene, despite her official obligations and the lively claims of her interests, the enemy coalition would be assured of a superiority on the entire Balkan front for many years. But the organisation of the Greek Army, once it was completed, upset that superiority and enabled the Commander of the Allied Armies to gain a brilliant victory, and assure supremacy for the group of democratic nations in the Balkans. . . . The nation may look forward with confidence to the future, having prevented the catastrophe of dismemberment to which the germanophil policy of the previous Governments was conducting it. Greece has recovered her territorial and her moral integrity, and is possessed of the proud feeling that she is a nation which does not hesitate to face dangers in order to remain true to her word and to her traditions. In addition to the moral satisfaction of participating in the struggle which will assure the liberty of the world and the

rights of small nationalities, Greece has the conviction that she will appear at the Peace Congress with sufficient credentials to defend effectively the national interests. . . ."

The formal opening of the Peace Conference, under the presidency of M. Clémenceau, took place in Paris on January 18, 1919. After passing through certain phases of transition, with a Council of Five and a Council of Ten, a Council of Four, composed of M. Clémenceau, President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George, and Signor Orlando, emerged as the sole human arbiters of the world's destinies. In practice the Council of Four soon became a Council of Three. The three stood for France, England, and America. The Council of Ten had previously become a Council of Foreign Ministers.

"The worthy Congress of Vienna," wrote Blücher, "is like the annual market of a little town to which every one drives his beast to sell or exchange."<sup>1</sup> So far as the small States were concerned, Paris in 1919 was like Vienna in 1815.

If fame had not already come to all the delegates, it visited some before their labours were done. The representative of Liberia returned to Africa as President of the Black Republic. The head of the Brazilian Delegation, Dr. Pessoa, an extremely able man, left Paris as President of Brazil. Dr. Vaida-Voevod, of the Rumanian Delegation, became Prime Minister of Greater Rumania. Men of every shade of thought and every shade of colour thronged the French capital. From little Prince Firuz to the Emir Feisul; from the Chinese Foreign Minister to M. Pachich; from Boghos Nubar to Essad Pasha; physiognomies in new and innumerable varieties were seen contrasted.

One day the King of the Belgians arrived by aeroplane to state his case.

Paris became an arsenal of statistics, or it may have been a powder-magazine. As the printed information accumulated, those who had to read or listen grew more furtive; instead of thinking of the Peace Treaty they thought only of new schemes to escape the importunists.

The League of Nations pursued M. Clémenceau in his dreams, and the Fourteen Points were said to be the nightmare of President Wilson.

<sup>1</sup> Treitschke.

Cabals grew up in the Babel ; cliques, combinations, or groups were formed and re-formed. Every one had something to say, but there were few who wanted to listen. There were experts on dialect, on blood, and on righteousness. There were authorities on law, on liberty, on coal, and on ships. There were the still more foolish people who quarrelled among themselves : they disputed the identity of the mysterious country which had won the war. Such was the real cause of their trouble. Each one of them claimed that his country had been victorious.

It was through a medley of argument, of protest, of counter-argument and counter-protest that Venizelos had to make his way.

It is not designed to go through a time-table of the laborious activities of Venizelos at the Peace Conference, nor to set out in detail the questions which engaged his attention. His knowledge of geography coupled with his amazing grasp of the problems of race distribution quickly established his authority among the representatives of the Great Powers. President Wilson, who appreciated his efforts, among other things, in connection with the formation of the League of Nations, placed him at the head of all the delegates in point of personal ability. Venizelos also stood on particularly satisfactory terms with Mr. Lloyd George. His personal relations with M. Clémenceau, "whose very remarkable resistance and ability" so impressed him, were of very long standing.

Of Venizelos *The Times* has said, "His was perhaps the personal triumph of the Conference."

He seems to have measured it with one illuminating glance. "The small Powers," he said, "could not be expected to have the same weight bestowed upon them as the Great Powers. It was for the individual delegate to make his personality felt, to gain an ascendancy irrespective of the size of the Power he represented, in proportion to his own calibre. There were always the means to be found for the delegate to insinuate himself." <sup>1</sup>

It was, perhaps, as the French proverb suggests : *il y a des accommodements avec le ciel, à plus forte raison avec le diable !*

<sup>1</sup> In a conversation with the writer, March 10, 1919.

M. Caclamanos has described how the eyes, the smile, and the spectacles of Venizelos impressed him when he first encountered the Cretan revolutionary, nearly twenty-five years ago. The eyes and the smile leave a vivid impression on everyone to-day. Activity of mind, vitality, a charm of manner, which would be more feminine than masculine if it were not unique, and a powerful will held in reserve, go to make up the personality of Venizelos. He thinks swiftly; he speaks with the greatest lucidity. Prince Lichnowsky saw in him the qualities of a man of the world. In the sense that he is at home in any society and in all the capitals he is worldly. But his habits are simple. He apparently never smokes, and Vittel or Vichy or Evian would probably appeal to him in preference to Veuve Clicquot or Clos de Vougeot or Château Yquem. And he prefers plain Greek dishes to restaurant food. Indoors he generally wears a skull-cap, and out of doors he wears a hat of soft, black felt. Although it would be hard to imagine him enjoying a horse-race, he has been known to play bridge and tennis.

His literary tastes are varied. He reads few novels. When he wanted some reading matter to take his mind off work at odd moments during the Peace Conference, he asked for the *Odes of Pindar* and for a book on the life of the monks of Mount Athos. By disposition he is patient and kindly. On inspecting a large school on one of his English visits, he was asked for copies of his signature by the scholars. The headmaster limited the number to one hundred in order to spare him a trial, but Venizelos refused to disappoint a single applicant.

In an unofficial capacity Venizelos was sometimes induced to act as umpire between other nations during the Paris Congress. The delegates of certain small Powers hoped that, in presenting a united front to the great world, they would gain more than by divided efforts: M. Vaida-Voevod, the Rumanian, formed a *bloc*,<sup>1</sup> composed of Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, and Yugo-Slavia, in December 1919.

From the Salonica revolt in 1917 to the elections of November 1920 there was no man in Europe between whose

<sup>1</sup> The delegates went so far as to sign all letters to the Conference on behalf of the three States. This information comes from a Rumanian source.

public and private life it was more difficult to draw a line than Venizelos. He found in work—in achievement—everything that he required of life. He was left a widower, with two sons, in the days when Crete was still a storm centre. His elder son, Kyriakos, who is twenty-eight years of age, was First Secretary of the Foreign Ministry during the Paris Conference, and served with the Peace Delegation as well as at the London and Paris Legations. The younger son, Sophocles, now aged twenty-six, whose mother died at his birth, was a major in the Greek Army. He distinguished himself in the Macedonian campaign, and in 1920 his artillery played a decisive part in the battle of Brussa (Asia Minor).

The Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919. The Austrian Treaty, the Treaty of St. Germain, was signed on September 4.

By the Treaty of Neuilly, which was signed on November 27, Bulgaria was cut off from the Ægean. Stambouliiski, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, on November 22, made a direct application to Venizelos to modify the penalties imposed by this instrument upon Bulgaria. "Bulgarian Thrace," read one of Stambouliiski's appeals, "is not necessary to Greece either from a political point of view or from a geographical standpoint. If Bulgaria is permitted to retain her hold on Thrace a sound basis for reconciliation and understanding between the two nations would be provided, thus facilitating the solution of all other problems pending between these countries. . . . Is it too much to expect that the statesman who in 1913 gave proof of his political calibre by offering to cede the towns of Serres, Drama, and Kavalla to Bulgaria, should to-day adopt a still nobler attitude by refusing to demand lands which are already incorporated within the frontiers of Bulgaria?"

In his reply Venizelos mentioned that in the second Balkan war Greece occupied the whole of Western Thrace up to the Maritza, throwing Bulgaria back to the frontiers which she held before the first Balkan war. "Nevertheless," he continued, "by the Treaty of Bucharest, Greece consented to re-cede Western Thrace to Bulgaria although the Bulgarians were in the minority and more than one flourish-

ing Greek town existed, as well as a large and wealthy rural Greek population. . . . It is difficult to conceive a more conciliatory attitude on the part of a victor towards a vanquished State. . . . Your Excellency must admit that this conciliatory spirit proved in vain. . . . During the Great War the Entente Powers tried by every means at their disposal to re-establish the Balkan alliance, even offering to Bulgaria concessions which would have permitted her to regain all she had lost during the second Balkan war. . . . But all these advances were useless. Bulgaria preferred to ally herself with Turkey against Russia and the other Allied Powers ; it was not her ambition to secure a just territorial re-partition between the Balkan nations based on their respective national preponderance in the various districts of the peninsula, but to impose Bulgarian hegemony upon the Balkan peoples, even in districts where formerly other Balkan nationalities held sway."

*Detailed Gains of Greece under Bulgarian Treaty, 1919.*

Between Dibikli, almost due North of Kavalla, and Arda-bashi there is a new bulge northwards ; then the old frontier is resumed and followed southwards, until, on a line, approximately, with Demirjik, it is left, and a new undulating line, which cuts Bulgaria off from the sea, begins. The new frontier sweeps round between Daridere and Memkova, and advances, via the Kartal Dagh and Tokatjik Dagh, to a point about four kilometres North of Kutchuk-Derbend. The 1913 Turco-Bulgarian frontier then becomes the Greek frontier as far as the Maritza. The river then serves as a frontier as far as a point situated about three kilometres below the Kadikoj railway station, when the Turco-Bulgarian frontier of 1915 (Treaty of Sofia) is taken up, to be displaced later by the 1913 frontier. Either the 1915 or 1913 frontier applies until the Black Sea is reached, near Ave Stefano.

On February 12, 1920, the Peace Conference, under the name of the Supreme Council, opened its sittings in London. President Millerand, at that time French Prime Minister, a firm man with a charming personality, was, of course, the most important visitor during the London proceedings. Signor Nitti represented Italy on the Supreme Council,

whose other members were M. Millerand and Mr. Lloyd George. Before this body, the representatives of the smaller Allied Powers came to state their claims. Various questions, from the details of German reparation to the Turkish and Hungarian partitions, were dealt with. M. Venizelos completed his arguments on behalf of Greece. M. Delacroix, the Belgian Premier, earnest and practical, came over from Brussels for a short stay. M. Vaida-Voevod, the Rumanian Premier, M. Marsal, M. Millerand's Finance Minister, a *mondain*, M. Thoumyre, of the French Food Ministry, who lost his arm in the war, and Signor Scialoja, the Italian Foreign Minister, were among the official persons present in London. The most dramatic incident connected with the deliberations was the arrival of President Wilson's Note, which interrupted the application of the Treaty of London respecting the Adriatic.

The struggle that Venizelos had waged all his life with the Osmanli reached its climax in the Turkish Treaty of 1920. This Treaty embodied immense concessions which he was able to gain for Greece at the hands of the British and French Premiers. He resembled an expert witness called in to give evidence before Mr. Lloyd George and M. Millerand on the Turkish question. The work, however, was complicated by various considerations and obstructed by the Mahommedan interest.

There were anxious days for Venizelos during the conferences of the Supreme Council in London where the Treaty was shaped. There were moments when some people thought that Constantinople was almost within his grasp. But this goal was beyond the realm of practical politics. He himself had hoped that the Turkish capital would be converted into a small State and administered by a mandatory of the League of Nations. The proposed expulsion of the Sultan from his last foothold in Europe was abandoned, partly owing to a powerful Mahommedan propaganda.

The majority of persons in authority in England and France believed that the transcendent abilities and deep patriotism of Venizelos had secured for him the loyal, unstinted support of all but a fraction of the Greek public. It was generally believed that the iniquitous incidents of the

Constantinist *régime* belonged to an unnatural past, that there was no danger in the future of having the clock set back either by an unconstitutional King or by turbulent politicians. It was assumed by the outside world that the Greece of Venizelos was Venizelist. There was no reason to suppose that the ideas for which he stood, ideas which had been so fruitful for his country, would be repudiated by more than a small reactionary minority. Greece was ranked as an ambitious State genuinely identified with the interests of England and France, and faithful to the man who directed its own destinies.

During the period which preceded the final decisions of the Supreme Council, Venizelos maintained a fearless attitude although great issues were in the balance.

Some months after the Treaty had been framed, but before the ceremony of signature, both Thrace and Asia Minor threatened piece-work wars. Venizelos was resolute. He volunteered to enforce the work of peace. His offer was accepted by the Powers. The Thracian trouble was swiftly suppressed by the Greek Army. In Asia Minor Greek troops at first made a rapid advance against Turkish bands directed by Mustapha Kemal; the fighting later presented some of the elements of a protracted campaign.

The Treaty with Turkey was signed at Sèvres on August 10, 1920.<sup>1</sup> By it Thrace, excluding only the sanjak of Chatalja and the Derkos reservoir area, was ceded to Greece. This advanced the Greek frontiers in one direction to a point well within twenty miles of Constantinople, and in another direction to the coast of the Black Sea. The North shore of the Sea of Marmora, including the whole of the Gallipoli Peninsula, as well as the town and part of the vilayet of Adrianople, passed under Greek sovereignty. The islands of Tenedos and Imbros, together with all the Ægean Islands in Greek occupation, also went to Greece. Turkey further abandoned to Greece the administration of an important region in Asia Minor, comprising Smyrna, Tireh, Odemish, Magnisa, Akhissar, Berghama, and Aivali. This Asiatic territory, by the terms of the Treaty, could after five years be definitely incorporated in the Hellenic Kingdom on the

<sup>1</sup> The Hungarian Treaty was signed in June 1920.



application of a local Parliament. Italian sovereignty over the Dodecanese and the small island of Castellorizo was recognised by Turkey. Following upon the signature of the Sèvres Treaty, the Dodecanese, with the exception of Rhodes, the principal island of the group, were transferred by Italy to Greece.

Two days after he had signed the Treaty of Sèvres, Venizelos was about to set out from Paris for Greece when he was attacked at the Gare de Lyon almost at the moment of his departure. His assailants, two Constantinists, both Greeks, wounded him twice during a fusillade.

In 1913, by the Treaties of London and Bucharest, Venizelos pushed the frontiers of Greece far into Macedonia and Epirus, and confirmed Hellenic sovereignty in Crete. Next the Treaty of Neuilly, 1919, flung Bulgaria back from the Ægean. The Sèvres Treaty, 1920, which reduced the Ottoman world to a microcosm, bestowed upon Greece Thrace, the Gallipoli Peninsula, and the sovereignty of the Ægean Islands in addition to great rights in Asia Minor. Under all these Treaties Greece was the chief beneficiary, if we omit the rights acquired by the Powers under the Treaty of 1920.

Whether Venizelos appeared as a delegate fighting out his claims among equals, or whether his work was that of a special pleader in the presence of superior authority, his were phenomenal achievements in the name of Greece. His own prestige was reflected upon the country which he re-created rather than represented. His work in 1919 and 1920 during the protracted negotiations connected with peace of necessity led to his absence from Athens. It may be that this tended to have disadvantageous reactions upon the conduct of internal affairs. Perhaps the prolonged mobilisation of the Army, high taxation, and the ceaseless intrigues of political malcontents also imperceptibly developed opposition to the Venizelists. Whatever the cause, the effect was singularly dramatic.

In October 1920 King Alexander died. As his father had been deposed, and as his elder brother had been excluded from the throne, the next heir was Prince Paul, a younger brother, who was living in Lucerne with the ex-King

Constantine. Venizelos at once called upon Prince Paul to assume the Crown. Admiral Coundouriotis was meanwhile appointed Regent. The first general election to be held in Greece after the war took place on November 14, 1920. It was the first general election since June 1915, if the war shufflings of the Constantinists are excepted.

On the day of the election the throne was still without an occupant. Throbbing with excitement, the Opposition parties, the old and disgraced political groups, clamoured for ex-King Constantine.

In the face of victory in the field and triumph in the Peace Conference, Venizelos, who possessed the confidence of Europe, was defeated at the polls. No national election result in living memory has so completely surprised both partisans and opponents. The fickleness of the electorate, its blindness in the presence of great issues, was manifested in the amazing somersault which thrust from office the maker of Modern Greece and replaced at the head of the State a King identified with the former enemy movement.

Napoleon thought that in a country of large population a man would always be found to meet any national emergency. Since 1914 all the principal nations have been passing through a series of upheavals, but few leaders have come to light, either in the council chamber or in the field, for posterity to rank with the great. In Venizelos the Greeks had at their head one who has given new colour to the principle *de la carrière ouverte aux talents*, or, as Carlyle paraphrased it, "the tools to him who can wield them."

