Royal United Services Institution. Journal

Publication details, including instructions for
authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rusi19>

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Published online: 11 Sep 2009.

To cite this article: Captain A. Trapmann (1913) The Greek Operations in
Epirus, Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 57:422, 501-517, DOI:
[10.1080/03071841309420086](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071841309420086)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071841309420086>

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THE GREEK OPERATIONS IN EPIRUS.

By CAPTAIN A. TRAPMANN, 25th (County of London)
Cyclist Battalion, The London Regiment.

On Wednesday, March 5th, 1913.¹

LIEUT.-COLONEL A. LEETHAM, F.S.A., in the Chair.

THE point which occurred to me when I first landed in Greece, and which struck me throughout the entire campaign, was the great ignorance that prevailed, and still prevails, in this country regarding not only Greece but the postbellum conditions in the Balkans in general. Though I do not propose to touch upon the causes of the war, or why the Greek Government joined with the other Allies in making war, I propose to tell you simply why the Greek nation went to war, and I think that is a distinction which you will appreciate when I have explained the case. To do this I am afraid I shall have to go back and run very speedily over the history of the Balkans for many hundreds of years, but this I shall be able to do in a very few minutes. I was under two most erroneous impressions when I arrived in Greece. One was that Turkey in Europe is inhabited by Turks. This impression I had to revise absolutely, for Turkey in Europe has something like a fraction under seven million inhabitants. Accurate statistics are lacking, but according to the "Statesman's Year Book," the total is over six millions. The population consists of three and a half million Greeks, about one million Bulgars, and one million Serbs, the remainder of the population being Albanians and Turks, who are mostly Turkish officials or form part of the garrisons. The parts where the Greeks are predominant and where Greek is spoken are Thrace and at Gallipoli, where there are 800,000 Greeks in the vilayet of Constantinople. In the Aegean littoral all is practically Greek, and in the vilayet of Epirus, which I have shown on the map,² up to Valona, the population is not only Greek by descent, but it is Greek in nature, Greek by religion, and intensely Greek in national feeling.

For roughly 500 years this Greek population, which has been under Turkish rule, has been remembering the days of the Byzantine Empire, and even now it looks to Constantinople as the capital of the Greek world, and it is at Constantinople

¹ The Lecture was delivered extempore.

² Not reproduced.

that there is the seat of the Greek Patriarch who watches over not only the religion, but to a large extent, the political interests of the Greeks who inhabit Turkey.

The second delusion I was suffering from was that Greece was a small country consisting of the Peloponnesus and Thessaly, with a population of two and a half millions, the capital being Athens. It would be as correct to say that the Jewish nation was a small nation which inhabited Palestine, with its capital at Jerusalem. There are ten million Greeks throughout the world, but there are only two and a half millions in Greece proper. All those ten million people have looked to Constantinople, and have noticed the suffering of their fellow-countrymen who have been under Turkish rule. For the last hundred years they have been trying, time and time again, either by raids of bands or by formal revolutions or rebellions, to obtain freedom. The history of the last hundred years is merely a history of rising after rising. The last one—one which was very fatal to the Greek cause—was the war of 1897. Greece was not ready then. She was not really ready now, but I hope to tell you what sort of a fight she has made of it.

THE ALBANIAN QUESTION.

The Albanian question deals with the western theatre of the war, one that will occupy your attention very closely in the near future, and I should like to touch upon it for a few minutes. The Albanians are the original inhabitants of this horseshoe of Turkey in Europe, and are very much like the Basques, the original inhabitants in the Bay of Biscay, in that they have gradually during the last couple of thousand years been driven into the mountain districts that we call Albania to-day. Albania is not a geographical term, the only thing you can say is that that part of the country which is inhabited by the Albanians may be called Albania, but that is not marked on any map. It consists of a terrible jumble of mountains, with little valleys between, and the inhabitants are formed into tribes who hate one another just a little less than they hate the outside world. The tribes again are divided into families, who also squabble, and who spend most of their time in robbing one another, when they cannot find anybody else to rob. The only schools throughout Albania are Greek schools. In the north, Servian influence has made itself felt, and they are mostly Servian-speaking Catholics up to Scutari. South of this is inhabited by Albanians who are purely Moslems. They were Pagans right up to the time that the Turks conquered them. The Turks, when they offered them the Muhammadan religion, also offered them great advantages: they offered them practical immunity from taxation and immunity from military service, so that it was very much to their interest to become Muhammadans, and during the last 500 years they have begun to believe the faith they have professed. The

natural frontier of Albania is the river Vojuca, which enters the sea at Valona, rising in the mountains. That is the natural and geographical boundary. It is also the ethnological boundary. Anywhere south of that river you will find an entirely Greek population, which, on two or three occasions, a hundred or two hundred years ago, the Albanians attempted to colonize; but the colonies that were founded have become entirely Greek, both in language and in national spirit, though some of them are still Moslem. The Albanian question becomes interesting to Europe inasmuch as Valona is a town which is half Albanian in population and half Greek, and it has been regarded by students of naval strategy as the Gibraltar of the Adriatic. It is the nearest point to Italy—I believe it is 38 miles across to Italy from there—and naturally Italy would like to have Valona for herself. But if she does not have it for herself she does not intend anybody else to have it, more especially she does not intend to let Austria have it. Austria, on the other hand, does not want the Adriatic made an Italian sea, and therefore she will not allow the Italians at Valona. She is said to be very anxious to have it herself, because for many years she has been making the same propaganda all down this country that she has made in Herzegovina, and doubtless hopes to see the same results. There is a treaty which is known throughout the world, I believe, existing between Italy and Austria. There is also a secret treaty, which I hope is known here, which is certainly known at Athens. But the whole point of the thing from the European point of view is that for the moment Italy and Austria cannot afford to squabble over Valona. They dare not let it go to Greece, because they know that Greece, once she gets it, with the sea power which she hopes to build up, will keep it. They are, therefore, said to be anxious to let Valona go to a country which, in due course, they can absorb, and, when there is no longer any reason for them not to fight out their own quarrel, then, perhaps, we shall have the edifying spectacle of Italy and Austria deciding who will take Valona. In the meanwhile, Valona is going to be added to Albania. That, perhaps, would not matter from an ordinary point of view, though from a political point of view it is sufficiently important. In order to make Valona secure against Greek intrusion, it is suggested—and I believe the ambassadors of the various Powers are discussing it at the present moment—that Koritza, which to-day is occupied by Greek troops, and which comprises an entirely Greek population, should be put in as a sort of buffer, so that no Greek incursions could come to disturb Valona. The importance of that is that unfortunately during the recent war, or the present war I should say, there have been massacres, and there is no reason to suppose that those massacres will cease when peace comes. These Greek villages, with their entirely unarmed population, would make a very nice prey for the Albanians, and either of their own free will they will keep on crossing

the border and destroying Greek villages, or else it has been suggested that they might even be induced to do so for a consideration, so that an excuse might be offered for the landing of troops—I need not specify of what nationalities—at Valona. From what I know of the Greeks, I am perfectly certain that the very moment these massacres begin you would have thousands of Greeks crossing the border to go to the assistance of their compatriots and co-religionists. I say that with all due weight as a warning. I am perfectly certain of it, and I know men in Greece to-day who have made up their minds exactly what they are going to do when these things happen.

That is a short explanation of the Albanian question as it stands to-day.

THE GREEK ARMY.

Now I will say a few words about the Greek Army. I have been told, since I have come back, that very little has been said in the papers about Greece, and still less about the Greek Army. The Greek Army, you will all understand, is a universal service Army. To us that means that every man in the country has gone through his time in the ranks, and that the whole of this Army that has been fighting is a trained Army. That, unfortunately, is not so. The Greek Army was only put on paper three years ago, and in three years even universal service cannot create a reserve of trained officers, non-commissioned officers and men. The Greek Army on paper only consisted of four divisions, and it was only two years ago that paper was translated into actual fact, and they started training the officers and non-commissioned officers for their Army. They were assisted by a French mission who are training the officers and men. But the extraordinary part about it is that three weeks before the war was declared, those four divisions were expanded into nine divisions, and in the stores at Athens and Epirus and Patras, guns, rifles, bayonets, equipment, uniforms, boots, underclothing—only summer underclothing, because they had not anticipated a winter campaign—were found for every one of those men in the nine divisions that took the field at the outbreak of war. That is a point I think that we should remember and appreciate.

Censorship.

Now I wish to discuss the ingredients of that Greek Army in particular. I shall go over them and touch very lightly on them. They have got one institution there which I consider a very excellent one—the whole question will doubtless come up for consideration here—the censorship. Never before, in any war, not even in the Japanese War, has a censorship been so severe, have war correspondents been kept so many miles

behind and not allowed to see anything. I myself was extremely lucky; I was the only foreign correspondent on that side, and as such they showed me every conceivable courtesy and favour. I was allowed to go everywhere and to do everything I liked; I was only asked to give my word of honour that I would not write anything which, from a military point of view, could possibly do harm to Greece. I think the arrangement of their Censorship Bureau is worthy of consideration. It was put under a civilian, a politician. As I have told you, on this side of the theatre of war, I was the only foreigner. On the other side, all the correspondents, no matter what their nationality, had to report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on their arrival in Athens, and were sent on with papers to the Chief of the Political Bureau, who was at the same time the Censor. On our side he was a man who had been Greek Consul-General at Yanina for many years, and who knows Albania and Epirus absolutely (Epirus is that part which is neither Albania, Macedonia, nor Greece). He knows more about Albania and Epirus than almost any man living; he talks all the languages; and he was assisted by a captain of the General Staff. All messages intended to be sent were handed to him, were read through, were signed, and were handed back to the correspondents, and special arrangements were made for sending them off by telegraph. I think it was an excellent arrangement, and one that we or any other Army might well copy, because there you got both the political man and the military man together, and they knew exactly what would do harm and what would not. Whereas, in other campaigns, where there has only been a military man, he is afraid to pass anything which is political, because he does not know the political side sufficiently well to know what will do harm and what will not. Therefore, anything on political lines has usually either been cut out, or else the whole lot has been allowed to be sent and has done harm. The reason the censorship was so strict was, that in the last war several of the war correspondents were in the pay of Turkey, and gave things away.

Medical Arrangements.

The medical arrangements are very hard to talk about. They have improved lately tremendously, but I should say that at the beginning of the war, beyond the mere name, and hundreds of military doctors walking about in uniform, the medical arrangements were nil. Arta, the Greek base, which was a Greek town, and was the old capital of the dukedom of Epirus, contained a military hospital. There was room for some 400 patients in it, but there were frequently 600 there. There were not beds for 400; the usual accommodation was merely a stretcher put on the floor. There was no time for receiving patients, but the officer charged with receiving them went down whenever he felt so inclined, and

found them lying in a very draughty corridor, and when there was room they were taken out of this corridor, and either put into a ward or buried, as the case might be. The actual personnel consisted, at first, of orderlies picked haphazard out of any unit, sometimes men who could not read. They were turned on as doctors' orderlies, and wore a red cross on their sleeve. They took duty at night. The doctors did not go there at night, with the result that when the doctors left at eight o'clock, at five minutes past eight it was the custom for the orderlies to go to sleep, and the lamps would go out; and I do not think it is too strong a term to use, when I say, that at one or two o'clock in the morning, when I have been round the hospital, it was like a shambles. The patients had fallen out of bed; lights had gone out, and the room had not been washed since goodness knows when. There was no hot water in the place, and the only water which was available was from a well into which the drains ran. Later, five ladies came and assisted in the hospital, but it was rather a Herculean task to try and get any cleanliness or order into it, and the most they could do was to attend to the very worst patients, and occasionally give them something to comfort them. To give you an idea of the way it was run: no matter what was the cause of admission, whether you were suffering from enteric, or whether you were wounded or exhausted, or whatever it was, you got a cup of black coffee at six o'clock in the morning; at twelve o'clock you got the ordinary soup, which had "looked at" meat; and at six o'clock in the evening you got a vegetable stew. That was absolutely all the patients had; no matter what they were suffering from. If they did not like that they could leave it. Of course none of the patients were ever washed. As I said, there was no decent water, and only once during these six weeks that I was able to make observations was the room washed: they emptied the hospital and washed the place up then. No disinfectants were ever used, because the smell was unpleasant! Since then, through charity and patriotism, people have come forward and placed money at the disposal of various Societies. Above all, the Greek Royal Family has come forward in the most noble way. Every one of the Princesses has formed one or more hospitals, and has got surgeons and trained nurses to come over from Europe, and now there are several hospitals there run on sanitary and proper lines. But even though there are nine of them at Philippias, which is now the base, there are not enough, and, of course, at the beginning of the war there were practically none.

Supply and Transport.

As regards transport, every animal in Greece was at once commandeered, and every motor was commandeered. There are not many motor cars in Greece, only about 40 or 50, but it is an interesting point that in only one case did anybody ask

for what you would call a valuation price; the others all claimed purely nominal sums. "What is the price of your 60-h.p. Mercedes?" "Oh, ten francs." These were used for the staffs on both sides. We in Epirus had ten of them, and the Crown Prince's Army had the remainder at the beginning of the campaign. Since then some of them have been sent over to Epirus.

The feeding of the Army was carried on chiefly by carts and mules. It sounds very complicated and very difficult, but you must remember what the Greek soldier is. Of course such transport would not do for our troops. I do not think I am exaggerating at all when I say, that in Epirus only about once a week do they get any other conceivable thing to eat than bread. The man receives a 3-lb. loaf of bread every two days. If he does not happen to be there on distribution day, he goes one day hungry. About once a week, on an average, they can look forward to a vegetable stew, or possibly a meat soup, or something of that sort. On the other side of the theatre of war there were plenty of flocks, and I am told by officers who have come to us from the other side, that meat was very plentiful, and that they had rather a good time as regards the commissariat. But there is no Army Service Corps in Greece; individuals are simply taken from various units and told to look after the feeding arrangements of such and such a division; and they are given so many animals or do the best they can. The company commander receives a sum of 3½d. a day which we would call for improvement of messing; but when you were 30 or 40 miles, over a trackless mountain country, from the nearest place where food could be obtained, and sometimes 50 to 80 miles from Prevesa, where food could sometimes be obtained, you will see that there was not very much chance of company commanders supplying their troops with any improvement of messing. I can only say that the way the Greek Army has "stuck it," considering that they had five days of rain and two days of frost in every week, and lived on nothing but bread, and had to go sometimes three hours before they could get water, is absolutely marvellous. Here we have an Army which has only existed practically for two years, and which doubled itself in three weeks.

The Three Arms.

I am asked to tell you what the artillery is like. You will be surprised when I tell you that it is exceedingly good, but, of course, not being an artillery officer myself you will not believe me. I have seen it shooting, and I have also seen a good deal of a French artillery officer who is out there as the representative of the firm of Creusot, and he expressed immense admiration for the Greek Army, and even said that in his opinion they are quite as good as the French as regards actually hitting what they are shooting at, picking up the target, and disguising their positions. As regards what we would call smartness at

drill, they are hopeless. If there are any Greeks present I hope they will excuse me if I say they are beneath criticism in that respect; but for shooting—and I believe that is the principal duty of artillery—they are splendid. As regards horsemanship they are hopeless. There are few horses in Greece, and the Greeks do not know very much about looking after them, but as they are such inferior animals, perhaps it does not so very much matter!

The great drawback as regards the infantry is that they have practically no officers and no non-commissioned officers. The vast majority of officers who are turned out are officers of reserve, men who, according to the Act, have qualified to be officers because they have passed a certain standard of education, and because, perhaps, in the last war, or at the beginning of this war, they have served 30 or 50 days in the ranks, as the case may be. They were then entitled, if they had passed a certain degree of education, to put a star on their shoulder and to become officers. The non-commissioned officers were selected in much the same way. As regards actual military experience, with the exception of a very small percentage of the officers they had no actual military experience whatever—no experience in leading men or in knowing how to make their men comfortable. Luckily, the Greek is a man who does not need to be led. They have republican ideas over there, and, provided the men know what to do, they do not want to be told how to do it. Generally there was nobody there who could tell them how to do it; they merely went and did it. The infantry advances, from a military point of view, were extraordinary: the men were told to advance and they did; they went on advancing. Dozens and hundreds of them were shot, but the remainder went on. They did not do it smartly; they did not run, because the Greek is not a good hustler; but they went on solidly and doggedly, and it did not have the least effect upon them what their losses were. I think those infantry, if they were placed under officers in whom they could feel every confidence, and whom they could respect and love, would go anywhere. I know that they can stand anything. Individually the men are excellent shots, but as there is no attempt at musketry drill—I have never heard any musketry commands given during a fight—it is a case of every man shooting as best he can. The infantry fighting was mostly carried on at ranges of between 500 and 800 yards, so that there really was something to shoot at.

Of the cavalry I can say very little. The horses are very bad, but the men are particularly intelligent. They are chiefly selected for their intelligence; they mostly come of good families. But the cavalry have not had any opportunity, in the theatre of war in which I was, to do anything, and, personally, I have never seen them do any thing that was really worth mentioning.

The engineers are not engineers as we know them, but rather pioneers, and the work they have done with pickaxes in

clearing and making paths and roads up these appalling mountains has been very remarkable. You must remember that the whole place is one jumble of rocky mountains, with lean oak scrub here and there, but the engineers have made paths and roads in an incredibly short time all over these mountains in order to facilitate the transport of guns and the movement of troops.

Machine-Guns.

As regards machine-guns, we can learn a lot from the Greeks. They have got a gun which is, to my mind, the best, and I know a little about machine-guns, as I have tried, I think, every kind. The Schwartzlose is, to my mind, infinitely the best gun in every conceivable way, except for its rather limited range, but personally I do not think the fact that it is sighted up to only 1,800 yards is a very great disadvantage. I saw ten of those guns in continuous action for 17 minutes at the battle of Manallyassa; I was sitting amongst them myself, and there was not a jam during the whole time. It is an Austrian weapon—not an Austrian Army weapon, but made by a firm in Austria, and I understand it has been adopted by the German Government. The Greeks chose it from a general competition of the various machine-guns used by the different Armies of the world, and they were advised to choose it by the French experts. The curious thing is that the gunners are supplied with what we cannot get in England, or have not been able to get so far, although the question has cropped up in every Army Estimate. Every machine-gun section of two guns in the Greek Army is furnished with a Marindin's range finder. The Greek Government, which was supposed to be bankrupt, according to some of our newspapers, ordered these at a very high price—much more than we are asked for them—and every one of the sections is supplied with Marindin's range finder, and the artillery also have the same.

As regards scouting and intelligence, there appeared to be practically none. They seemed to do no reconnoitring at all, either for obtaining intelligence on broad lines, or by officers' patrols, or by ground scouting, or in any other way. The result is that they have lost unnecessarily large numbers of men by advancing into places which, if they had had a ground scout or a scout of any kind, they need not have gone into.

MILITARY OPERATIONS.

Grimbovo.

As regards the military operations, the first battle that took place was the battle of Grimbovo, about three miles distant from Arta. That was the place from which the Turkish artillery attempted to shell the Greeks in the last war. It is a long sloping hill, which eventually culminates in a mountain 5,000 ft. high.

The Greeks, as I explained here the other day, rushed the bridge, and occupied, amongst other places, the heights of Grimbovo. Two nights afterwards in the pelting rain—an appalling night—while there were 4,000 Greek troops holding these heights and trying to keep dry, the Turks clambered up the almost inaccessible sides and made a night attack with the bayonet. It was impossible to see a yard in front of you, but they clambered up this slope, which is about one in two, and in a very disorganized way fell upon the Greek lines. The Greeks took the alarm at once. There was no disciplined movement, but every man at once seemed to know what to do, and did the right thing instinctively. I saw practically no real disorganization. There was nobody running about shouting commands, but the men were very quietly and earnestly killing any Turk that they could see. I believe that even now there are rifles and skeletons lying all over those slopes, because the battle took place over a very wide range and in the dark. The dead fell into crevices and all sorts of places, where they will not be found until the country is given over to sheep and shepherds again, and then they will be discovered. Considering that the battle was fought by a division which had existed only for a fortnight, which consisted of irregular bands, men who had done about three weeks' drill at the most, I think it showed a very proper spirit on the part of the Greeks.

Nikopolis.

From a strategical point of view, the next battle, Nikopolis, was very important.

The old lines of communication ran to Missolonghi, on the Gulf of Corinth, just opposite Patras. There is a railway from Missolonghi for about 30 miles up to a place called Agrinion. It is a narrow-gauge single line of railway. After that there are 100 kilometres (70 miles) of road, 30 kilometres of which is very bad; the rest of it is fairly good. That brought you by road to Arta. Those were, until November 5th, the lines of communication of the Greek Army. Things came by sea to Prevesa or to Missolonghi; then up this narrow-gauge railway, and then by cart or donkey or mule, up to Arta; and then from Arta up the old coaching road, which is now an appalling mule track, so bad that one cannot ride a bicycle on it without getting off every ten yards or so. It was very important that the Gulf of Arta should be open to Greek commerce, in order that the Greeks might obtain a sea base. But Prevesa, unfortunately, was a Turkish fortress, which had six 6-in. guns, two torpedo-boats in the harbour, two petrol launches, and two mounted machine-guns. The garrison was not exactly known, but was believed to be about 800 men, strengthened with 350 Albanian bands or bandits, whichever you prefer to call them. The General commanding, who had only this very small division of 10,000 men,

and possibly 5,000 irregulars, and was holding a tremendously wide front, felt that he could not detail a strong enough column to go and capture Prevesa. It was not until November 4th that, after listening to the pleadings of his staff officers, he detached a column consisting of one battalion, 300 Cretan irregulars under Constantine Milas—who is a B.A. of Balliol, Oxford—and 200 Epirot irregulars. They marched down and engaged the Turks at nine o'clock in the morning. The neck of land which leads down to Prevesa is two miles wide, and is entirely occupied at the narrowest place by the ruins of the old city of Nikopolis, the old walls, the ditches and ramparts of which form a natural series of entrenchments at about 50 yards distance. The Turks could have held line after line, and gradually fallen back on the next; it was a splendid position. The old masonry walls were about 30 feet thick, and covered the whole flank. Besides that, on the inner flank there were two Turkish torpedo-boats and two petrol launches. The Greeks sent up two batteries of field artillery (eight guns). Within six hours the Greeks charged, and the Turks, instead of remaining there and firing up to the last minute, gave way. As a matter of fact, the Greeks started charging too soon; they had not established any superiority of fire to enable them to charge over 100 yards, but the Turks, instead of firing at them, got up and ran too. The Greeks merely took possession of the Turkish lines and followed them up a little way, but the Turks and Albanians retreated with considerable haste into the walled city of Prevesa, shut the gates, and turned on the moat. They then proceeded to sink their two torpedo-boats in the harbour. The Greeks have already salvaged one of them, and the other, I believe, they are going to salvage when the war is over. The launches which were co-operating inside the Gulf of Arta, turned their Maxim guns on to the only four mounted officers present. They killed all their horses, but luckily did not hit the officers. I there saw one of the most splendid bits of quickly picking up a target I have ever seen. These officers came over the hill, and they stayed there foolishly exposing themselves. Suddenly these two Maxims started on them. Immediately the horses fell; and, almost as soon as one could see it, the Greek guns, which were 4,000 yards to the rear, opened fire, and the first shot sunk the Turkish launch. The other Turkish launch was lying covered from artillery fire, and it immediately scuttled itself. The British Consul at Prevesa—who, by the way, cannot talk English—told me that it was owing to the representations of the Consular body that Prevesa surrendered instead of fighting it out. I saw the letter of the Turkish Governor, which said, "We will accept your terms."

Pentepigadia.

About the battle of Pentepigadia I do not want to speak, because I was not there, and I can only say that it need never

have been fought. If General Sapounzaki, the Greek Commander, had been familiar with Stonewall Jackson's campaign in the Valley, he would never have fought the battle of Pentepigadia, and he would have saved the Greek Army some 1,000 killed, and a great number of wounded. There are two valleys running up from the coast to Yanina, and they converge at a point some 15 miles on the south side of Yanina. He chose to move his Army up the right-hand valley, the old road, which was a mere mule track. The valley at no place is much wider than 50 yards. He chose to move up this route, but he did not at the same time move up the good coach road that the Austrian mails had been travelling over, which was only over the next range of mountains on his left. If he had he could have got to the rear of the Pentepigadia position by this good road, and there would have been no fight at Pentepigadia at all. The Turks would have been obliged to retire, but as I was not at Pentepigadia, I cannot speak of the battle there.

Pesta.

The battle of Pesta has, I think, from a military point of view, many lessons to teach us. Pesta is just where the Pentepigadia valley comes into the other valley. It is about two miles within the valley and cannot be seen from the main road. The advance was made up the Pentepigadia road by a column of all arms some 4,000 strong—when I say "all arms," there were no cavalry, or only possibly a troop. On the main road we had three battalions, four heavy guns and 12 field guns; and on our left, on the lap of the range of mountains that formed our left, marched the 2nd Division, which had newly arrived from Salonica. The idea was a timed advance. The officer who was then chief of staff to the General was Colonel Yuani, a man who does not know what fear is—his officers called him extremely foolhardy, and they had to spend all their time in trying to restrain his daring; he walks about under fire in the most casual way, but he is a man who is absolutely adored by his troops, and whom they would follow anywhere, a man with a tremendous amount of dash. No sooner did he get the word to go forward than he cleared the Turks out of Pesta at the bayonet's point. I was on the main road myself, so I cannot tell you anything about that particular advance; but on the main road we had the General and the motor cars; unfortunately the motor car with the General in it had not arrived, and so we did not go forward when we should have done. When the General did arrive he appeared rather undecided. Although he got a message from his right that the Turks were in full flight, although with my field glasses I could see the Turkish columns retiring—and I know that some of the staff officers there could see them too—we did not move forward. He sent out his half squadron of cavalry, who went forward about one and a half miles, stayed there for a long time and then

came back and said they could not find any Turks. Nothing was done that day in the centre or on the left. The next day we had to wait until 11 o'clock before an advance was made. It appeared obvious that the Turks had left only a small rearguard to hold us, and it was then that the General at midday ordered the 2nd Division to move up on the left. The 2nd Division moved off, and we know now the Turks did not know that they had arrived from Salonica. The advance was carried out absolutely invisibly, but one officer made a mistake. He was not an officer of the 2nd Division; he belonged to one of the mountain batteries of the old division of Epirus. He saw a Turkish battery, and seeing what he thought was a chance, he opened fire with his mountain gun. Immediately the Turkish batteries opened on the division, and they lost very heavily, and were unable to advance any further that day. The next day the Turkish rearguard fell back. It was a lost opportunity. We know from prisoners who have been captured that, had we at that time, when our right had made this dashing attack, had someone in the centre, who would have said "The General has not arrived, but on you go," the Greeks would not only have won that victory, but could have pressed right on. The Turks would not have had time to turn round and defend the immensely strong fortress of Bizani, but the flight would have continued right up to Yanina, and I, personally, have not the least doubt that Yanina would have been in Greek hands now.¹

The Siege of Yanina.

I am afraid time is getting very short, and perhaps I had better not speak about the other battles. But I must say something about the siege operations around Yanina, and at any-rate tell you what the position there is. Yanina itself is an undefended town, but it is surrounded by huge mountains, and each of these mountains has got a large number of very heavy guns on it. There are 130 big guns in position round Yanina, and one of those places, Bizani, I can only liken in appearance and general strength to Gibraltar, so that you will see it is not extraordinary that it has not fallen yet. There are, we know, some 30,000 to 40,000 Turkish troops there, of whom 15,000 are either ill or wounded in the town of Yanina. There are a large number of Albanians who have been set free, and now they know their own country is perfectly safe, as it has been guaranteed by the great Powers, and they will find everything comfortable when they go home, they have come down to join in the fun, and there are some 20,000 or 30,000 of them who are burning all the villages and killing any inhabitants they can find. I have with me here a list, which I can show to anybody who is interested, of, roughly speaking, about 100

¹ Yanina fell the day after this lecture was given.

villages that have been absolutely destroyed. I may tell you that I have not seen a house with a roof on it. Thousands of unarmed inhabitants, men, women and children have been not only massacred, but have been treated in ways which will not bear thinking about, much less talking about. I have here, if anybody is interested in the subject, some photographs which were taken actually a few minutes after the Turks left some of these places. If you will bear with me for five minutes there is one little incident I should like to tell you, because it is rather pathetic. I saw it myself. While I was cycling along the main road I came across two little children. One was a little girl of about six, and the other a boy of five. She was a bright little girl, but, of course, she had no smile on her face. There is no smile on the face of the people of Epirus; they have had 500 years of subjection. You never see them smile. But, as I say, she had a bright face. They both asked for bread—bread is the only thing one asks for in that country. I had not any myself, but the orderly, who was placed at my disposal, and was riding about 300 or 400 yards behind me, came over; and I tried to ask the little girl in my best Greek what was the matter. She immediately understood that I was a foreigner, and it occurred to her that I could not be anything but a Turk. I do not think I shall ever forget the change of expression that came across her face; it was like a heavy cloud going across the light; and a sort of skeleton face looking at me through it. At the same time the little boy, aged five, yelled to her to "Run," and seized me by the leg!

GREEK PATRIOTISM.

I want to speak to you for a few moments—because time is so very short—about Greek patriotism. Every man who is there at the war is an example of wonderful patriotism. The patriotism of the Greek nation throughout the world is quite as great as that courage which we admire so much in the Japanese. I will give you only two instances. In the United States of America there are—or rather there were—213,000 Greek men, women and children; 57,000 Greeks have come from the United States of America, and are at the present minute wearing the Greek uniform and fighting, if they are not dead. If they can send 57,000 fighting men out of 213,000 what ought London to do—London who cannot raise her 38,000 Territorials? Still another point about that is that I have it on excellent authority that although every one of those 57,000 men was entitled to a free passage only two of them claimed it. One other thing will show you to what extent the Greeks will go. I met a man on board a troopship going back. He was quoting Byron to me. He was a Greek who had spent five years, all but a few months, out in Australia, studying for the Bar. His qualification to get admitted to the Australian Bar was five years' residence, but he was going back to the war, and of course that meant wasting

his previous five years out in Australia. He told me that when war was declared he called a meeting of all the Greeks in his little part of Queensland, and that thirty of them turned up. They were mostly people who kept fried fish shops, or some little store, or some little business of that sort, very poor people, but they immediately volunteered to subscribe, and collected £700. One of those present came to him and said, "I want you to take all my money, £60. I want you to take it all. I know what I am going to do. I was horribly seasick the whole of the time I was on the boat while coming here; I very nearly died; and I have now got this money with which I could buy myself a second-class ticket home. There is nothing I should love better than to go home that way, but I do not think it is playing the game. There are people who want this money more than I do, and I know that I can, through influence, work my passage home. I shall not be able to do any work, but I can get on board free." And he did that! From what I have seen of Greece, of the Greek people and their character, in spite of having lived for 500 years under alien rule, they have still been able to preserve everything that is essentially Greek in them. I see a great future for the Greek people. They are industrious; they can live on next to nothing; they do not care for luxuries; they are totally unselfish; they are immensely patriotic, and they have got a fixed determination that they are going through with this war to the bitter end. I can tell you—I know it is so from the people I have spoken to, from the meanest soldier upwards—that the Greeks have come at tremendous sacrifice from every part of the world in order to fight in the war; they have drawn the sword, and they are not going to put that sword up until they have got what they want, whether they do it with their Allies or whether they do it alone. I know officers in the Greek Navy who are perfectly capable, if necessary, of seeing their boats sunk under them by the international navies of the world rather than put up the sword, unless they get this thing that they are fighting for. With that character I do not think it can be doubted that there is a future for Greece; and her future most certainly lies on the sea. She has got a greater coastline than any other country in the world, not even excluding Japan. Every Greek is by nature a mariner. Greece is also a commercial nation. Her interests lie over the sea. If you will refer to the history of the Boer War you will find that at the moment in our history when every other country in the world was saying nasty things about us, little Greece did her very utmost for us; she even backed our cause in Egypt, and she did that out of gratitude for what we had done for her in the past. Gratitude in individuals is a rare enough quality, but in nations this is the only instance that I know of. I see the time when Greece will build a Navy, and it is not very far off. The day she took Salonica she gave an order for a "Dreadnought"; the day this war ceases she is going to have two more. It is not perhaps known

that she gave an order for a "Dreadnought," and found the money, but she could find money by private subscription for as many "Dreadnoughts" as she can man. When we look at the Mediterranean, especially the Eastern Mediterranean, and at the naval position which is rapidly cropping up there, with Austria and Italy building "Dreadnoughts," nominally to maintain the Triple Alliance, but actually so that they will be able to have it out when the question of Valona eventually comes on the tapis, that is an important point to bear in mind. We have lately had to drag back our squadron in the Mediterranean, and place it at Gibraltar, so that we might use it in the North Sea. But if Greece is a grateful and patriotic nation; if Greece loves us as she says she does, for, in spite of the fact that she looks upon us as pro-Turkish at the present moment, there is nobody that the Greeks admire more than Englishmen and English women; if this is so, would not it be worth while to hold out the hand of friendship and stir ourselves a little, because a friendly nation with a fleet in the Near East might be our salvation in the near future?

The two lessons that I think England can learn from this war are: first of all, the lesson of patriotism; and secondly, the lesson that once a Government like the Greek Government has put its hand to the plough it should refuse to turn back on any question of compromise. The Greek Government knows where it wants to get to, it believes in the justice and right of its cause, and advice from without or from within will not turn it back, and it would regard it as an awful thing if, in the midst of the war, it wavered in its determination and bowed its head to compromise.

DISCUSSION.

Major H. H. Wade, late R.A.: I should like to ask whether the Lecturer can tell us something about the use the Greeks have made of their sea power on the western coast. I understand they have lately transferred some of their troops from Salonica round to the western coast and landed them at Santa Quaranta. It would be of interest to know if the Greeks have used that port in any way for supplying the left flank of their Army or for making diversions.

The Lecturer: That is a most important point. The Greeks have made enormous use of their sea power; in fact, if it had not been for the Greek fleet, the Turkish centre of mobilization at Smyrna would have been able to send all the best Turkish troops from Asia Minor—and there are 700,000 of them ready to come. But owing to the Greek fleet they were unable to come into the Aegean Sea at all. As regards the transport of troops, the whole of the reinforcements which have come to the Army of Epirus, the First and Second Divisions, and then the Fourth Division and the Sixth Division, came by sea from Salonica. They came in all sorts of ships. Some of them in the bigger ships had to go right round the Peloponnesus; others went through the Canal at Corinth. I might tell you that they transferred the Fourth and Fifth Divisions within three days. It was quick work. As regards landing expeditions, there

have been two. One was a column of 1,500 men, which was sent to Santa Quaranta, just opposite Corfu. It landed and went inland some little way. It obtained knowledge that there were 8,000 Albanians and Turkish Regulars within three miles or less, and when 600 Albanians who had got round on their flank started firing on them, the Greeks retired. I was not there, so that I cannot tell you whether it was in good order or bad order, but anyway they retired, got on board their ships and loaded up their guns—they had four field guns—before the Albanians could do them any particular damage. I presume, therefore, it was a fairly orderly retreat.

In the portion of this country, which is called Chimarra, and is inhabited by a totally Greek population, on about November 20th, a Major of Gendarmerie, who comes from that part of the world—because a lot of the best brains of the Greek world come from Epirot families—landed there with 350 men, the majority of them gendarmes. As an example of the friendliness of the inhabitants, he merely took possession of the country, set up a gendarmerie station, and is carrying it on to this day. There have been consequently no outbreaks in this area, but when it is handed over to Albania, if it is handed over to her, that perhaps will be the time when the Albanians—to use a vulgar expression—will “get a bit of their own back.”