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T. Miller Maguire M.A., LL.D., F.R. Hist. S.

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THE STRATEGY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

An Historical Study.

By T. MILLER MAGUIRE, M.A., LL.D., F.R.Hist.S.

Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law.

Friday, 27th October, 1911.

Brig.-General H. H. WILSON, C.B., D.S.O., in the Chair.

LADIES and Gentlemen : I had the honour of lecturing here last March and of becoming a prophet in the course of my lecture. Yet little of what I said then, except the prophecy, applies to-day. Who would have imagined last March that war would be raging from, one might say, China to Peru? Who would imagine that Italy would to-day be announcing that she owns Tripoli and that she has suddenly and without notice linked herself to France in the old realms of Jugurtha and Hasdrubal on the Mediterranean? It must astonish the shades of the later Roman Emperors and certainly would perplex such weak Emperors as failed to hold Italy or Spain or Sicily or North Africa.

Now, whatever parts of the world you look at on these maps, they are almost overwhelmed with wars and rumours of wars; in fact that justifies the prophecy which was accepted by universal consent in this room only last March. The prophecy was this : that whatever politicians may say or think, or whatever theories philosophical humanitarians or metaphysicians may enunciate, war still continues and arbitration is spurned when nations quarrel in earnest.

I am more or less a theorist and historian, and I want to give you certain bases for the historical argument. I propose to prove that notwithstanding the fact that the weapons of war have enormously increased in power and range, that you have ironclads of monstrous proportions instead of little Viking vessels, that you can go to America in vessels of 25 knots and of 20,000 tons burden instead of vessels of 400 or 500 tons, that is the only change. On men and women, skill and courage, food and powder, and numbers, and policy, the fate of the Mediterranean still depends as it did in the days of Sylla or Blake, Byng and Vincent.

The Middle Sea has again resumed its position in the annals of mankind, a position which recent events in the Pacific had nearly eclipsed. The principles laid down with regard to the Mediterranean are precisely the principles laid down in regard

¹ This lecture was delivered *extempore*, and with the aid of large wall maps, but it can easily be followed with the aid of any good atlas.

to the Caribbean Sea by Captain Mahan. The same conditions which led to the making of the Suez Canal are precisely the same in strategy as those which led to the making of the Panama Canal. I advise my hearers to read at leisure Captain Mahan's comparison of the position and prospects of the Panama Canal and of the Suez Canal. The importance of the Mediterranean was further emphasized by Alison.

Ancient Lines of Communication in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The very same ideas as struck Napoleon, as struck Leibnitz in the time of Louis XIV., and as struck Alexander the Great, were set forth at some length in this very room by Mr. Black, in a lecture a few weeks ago. He drew a line from the Egyptian border right across the top of the gulf of the Red Sea, and he then brought the line across the north of Arabia, and along through Persia to Karachi or to Afghanistan. In other words, the problem considered here the other day was the problem of how to unite the realms of Asia with the realms of Europe by steam, just as the problem of the Phœnicians was how to unite the Eastern Mediterranean to India by overland routes. The Venetians would have made the canal, only they were afraid of the Turks who had just reached the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, and with their advance had taken Constantinople (1453). When Napoleon got to Egypt he put before himself precisely the same ideas. Now, from the time of the Israelites, from the time of the Canal of Joseph, from the time of the corn supply which brought Joseph to Egypt, Egypt has been one of the granaries of the world. It was the granary of the ancient Roman Empire. Under the Pharaohs, under the Ptolemies, under the Mamelukes, and now under the British, strange to say, the value of the Nile has been practically the same.

Egypt has been one of the very central positions of the world. The very same idea that caused Alexander the Great to take his journeys through the territories from Thrace through Asia Minor and Syria to the Nile brought the other great men into the same territories. The route of the new Smyrna Railway is very similar to that of Tamerlane and of Alexander, and the lines of transit and communication which are daily discussed to-day were familiar to Canaanite and Jewish conqueror. Tyre is only fifty miles from Acre. Alexander saw the extraordinary wealth and commerce of the country, and how long Tyre was able to resist him, in spite of his military genius, and he came to the conclusion that there was not much use in merely making deserts as he went along—he would make his name more famous by founding great towns; he founded Alexandria. If you will look on the map you will see the route of one of the most celebrated naval expeditions in the history of the world. His fleets moved along the same line that our fleets move along to-day. He brought his army right away across Mesopotamia and Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf to India, into the Punjab,

and came back again, and while Nearchus skirted Africa he went up the Euphrates and died from amusing himself too much at Babylon. Now Napoleon took precisely the same idea into his head when he started on the line marked blue on the map. You can go on talking history and strategy on precisely the same lines of communication and on precisely the same position, with precisely the same objective, and with precisely the same causes of defeats, age after age, in that small district of the world, to wit: the Sicilian Strait, the routes from Malta to Syria and Egypt, and from Sicily and Spain to Africa. I think it is about 2,500 miles long and 600 miles or so across. From Malta to Tripoli is about 200 miles.

Strategic Importance of the Mediterranean during the Crusades.

Now look at the course taken by the brilliant if bad Plantagenet, Richard I. The great Norman conquerors of England were soon involved in the stupendous business of the Crusades, and followed courses and methods not unlike those of Caesar, Napoleon, Sidney Smith, and Wolseley. When you consider how Europe precipitated herself through the Mediterranean Sea against those brilliant conquerors from Arabia—against Saladin, for example—one of the greatest men who ever lived—and against Moor after Moor who used to come from Africa to Spain, one is pleased to remember that some of those families, represented here to-day, participated in this very strange adventure of the great Richard. He came down to the south of France, and went on to Sicily. If you study the history of the Mediterranean you will find that Sicily was of vital importance in the time of the Phœnicians, of vital importance in the time of the Carthaginians, the outwork of Europe against Asia, and of vital importance in the time of the Crusades—and there went Richard, and so we held it at the end of the thirteenth century, just as the Romans held it more than two thousand years before, and for similar reasons. Like many other western adventurers Richard formed a very poor opinion of the Sicilians and Greeks and really preferred the Moors. Now he wanted to hold out at Acre. Acre is just near the place where Alexander the Great had to fight the Phœnicians, and he found he must get command of the sea. He therefore wiped out Saladin's navy in the Levant, just as Nelson and Sir Sidney Smith wiped out Napoleon's navy almost on the same sea, before repulsing his forces at Acre.

Moorish Power in the Mediterranean.

We are not here, of course, to speak about any one race. It is just as dangerous, strategically, that the French should occupy this Moroccan coast, this part of old Mauretania, as if the Germans or the Italians, or the Moors occupied it. There was a time, you know, when the Moors were as dangerous to our commerce, as Confederate cruisers were to Federal commerce in 1862. Corsairs like Bar-

barossa were a positive curse. Even Charles I. was so annoyed by them that he imposed ship money on counties. Any gentleman here from the south of Ireland will know how the Moors used to sack towns even on that distant coast.

Cromwell, once he had executed the King, smashed the Scots, and mastered the Irish, thought he would do something for the future of commerce, not only by protective laws against the Dutch but also by chastising Algeric pirates and setting free their Christian slaves. He sent an expedition under Blake into the Mediterranean, in 1655. Blake obtained command of the Mediterranean and punished the Moorish Corsairs—the French under Du Quesne punished them again in 1683—but the Moorish Corsairs continued their depredations right on to the time of Lord Byron, and he celebrates their depredations in the following lines:—

“Then the pirates of Panga that dwell by the waves,
And teach the pale Franks what it is to be slaves,
Shall leave on the beach the long galley and oar,
And track to their covert the captive on shore.
Remember the moment when Previsé fell,
The shrieks of the conquered, the conqueror’s yell,
The roof that we fired, and the plunder we shared,
The wealthy we slaughtered, the lowly we spared.”

When the British were free from the troubles with the French, after the battle of Waterloo, they sent Pellew (Exmouth) to bombard Algiers in 1816. But even that did not suppress the Moors in north Africa. The French captured Algiers in 1830, and not only did they require naval power and not only had they to effect a landing in northern Africa, but they required military power, under Clausel, Pelissier, and Bugeaud, and it took them thirty years before they could subdue the Algerians. Strategic doctrine of all times is precisely the same, in north Africa as in north Europe, and in the isles of the Mediterranean as in the isles of the Atlantic and the isles of the Pacific. If you desire peace, prosperity and wealth, a few requisites are necessary and nothing else will do; and this is the lesson that this Institution is always teaching. These things, in our case at any rate, are a sufficient Navy to guard our shores, to protect our troops going across the seas and our supplies coming across the seas; a sufficient Army, sufficient money, and brave men with fine women to cherish posterity.

The Turks as a Mediterranean Power.

Now, harking back a little to the northern shore of the Mediterranean, it has been common of recent years to sneer at the Turk. I venture to say that any man who has mixed with the Turks even as little as I have done must be impressed with them when you consider how few they are, and what they have done. Look at any map of Europe, say, two hundred years ago,

and consider all the great States they have controlled—States celebrated in ancient history and States celebrated in modern history. Consider how these Mohammedans—whether you call them Saracens or Turks or Moors I care not—were able to rival Alexander, were able to stop Tamerlane the Tartar, a general of stupendous knowledge, infinite cruelty and surpassing skill in war; they were able to go to the very gates of Vienna as late as the year 1683, and were only stopped by Sobieski and the Poles. They maintained at the same time a great marine, controlled all the islands of the Mediterranean, and beat even the splendid Knights who were celebrated by Chaucer's very ideal of a Knight, who bore the standard of the Cross throughout the Mediterranean.

"This ilke worthi knight hadde ben also
Some time with the Lord of Palatie
Agen another hethen in Turkye
In Gernade atte the siege eke hadde he be
Of Algesir and ridden in Belmarie."

Yet these Knights were beaten by the Turks, sometimes in sieges lasting ten or twelve years. Even now, in October, 1911, we should not lightly regard them. I have here a great Italian writer, Montecuculi, who was the very best writer on the Art of War of his time, and who was the only soldier in the 17th century fit to command the legions of the King of Hungary, and of the Emperor of Germany against Turenne, the great French general. He begs of Christendom under no circumstances to despise the Turk; he points out that the Turks in every respect, artillery, cavalry, infantry, and in military medicine are worthy of holding Byzantium as followers of the ancient Romans. In point of fact they anticipated the Japanese in setting examples to Christian States in the care for their soldiers.

"They were most careful to do two things: first, to see after the health of the individual man, and secondly, to promote as quickly as possible every worthy officer."

That is how the army of the Turks was praised by this extremely able Italian. The army of the Turks was distinguished for its infantry and its cavalry even as late as the 17th century. I will not read what is said about them at length, because I have not time, but one fact may interest any officers who were out in the late riots. The Spahis are of two kinds, to wit, Spahis and Spahigans—I am pronouncing them as they are spelt—"otherwise called Spaligans" (or Hooligans!) according to Montecuculi. The rioters you had to deal with only a short time ago in different parts of the United Kingdom were really the Spahigans or Spahi-Hooligans! And had the Turks command of the sea, as in the fifteenth century, Italy would not have dared to attack Tripoli any more than Scipio would have dared to attack Carthage. I remember discussing these prob-

lems with a Turkish naval officer in Salonika, when the Turkish army was returning from its easy triumph over the Greeks. If their leaders had listened to the "oracles of Time," as set forth in Gibbon, the Italians would not have much chance in Tripoli; and if, even now, they follow the lessons of history as set forth by Marshal Bugeaud and practised by Abd el Kadir, the Italians will not have planted their standard securely by 1936!

The Isles of Greece.

Take Greece again. Over and over again have the destinies of the world been decided in Greece. One of the most interesting of ancient events was the combination of Asia against Europe in Greece. I have not time to do more than refer to Byron's noble lines about a King standing "on the rocky brow that looks o'er seaborne Salamis." Off Greece, again and again, sea power has decided the fortunes of the world. So Bacon, in his essay on "True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates," says that at the Battle of Actium the world was lost for woman; lovely Cleopatra ran away and Mark Antony ran after her. Where did they go? To Egypt, of course!

As the poet sings about this sea:—

"Thy shores are Empires changed in all save thee,
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters washed them power when they were free,
And many a tyrant since; thy shores obey—
The stranger, slave, and savage."

The Italian and Spanish Peninsulas.

Now we go on a little later, and we come to the Italian Republics. We must always bear in mind the relations of these peninsulas with parallel or transverse ranges of mountains flanking or projecting into the Mediterranean with the rather monotonous and flat coast-line territory in north Africa. That topographical condition gave facility to the incursions from Europe as against Africa, and Africa has done little really against Europe compared with what Europe has done against Africa. Asia has done more in the Levant, but I suppose you would desire that I should keep a little more to the west and speak as much as possible of matters in connection with England. Let us look at these peninsulas, seriatim, shortly. You will see that Spain is upon the flank of the whole of the movements. The Phœnicians aimed at Spain, as did the Carthaginians, their children; the Romans aimed at Spain, and the English had to go to Spain if they were to retain command of the Mediterranean Sea. Whether the route to the Indies be round by the Cape of Good Hope, or overland through Egypt as in 1857—and we were very glad indeed of the Egyptian overland route in a crisis before the opening of the canal—or whether the route be through the Suez Canal I care not:

Spain commands the route in any case, and after Spain we have the Balearic Islands.

The Balearic Islands; Sicily and Malta.

We held Minorca for about eighty years. We then went on, passing Corsica, the birthplace of Napoleon, to Sicily. We maintained ourselves in Sicily all through the Napoleonic Wars, knowing that Sicily was the key of the situation, and knowing that it was the jumping-off place for Africa and for Egypt, as well as for other strategical considerations, such as our connection with the development of French or Austrian Empires. While Napoleon's brother and brother-in-law ruled Naples we held Sicily, and Napoleon took Malta on his way to Egypt against the Mamelukes. The French took it from the Knights Hospitalers, who had so brilliantly defended it against the Turks. We took it in 1800, and this must be regarded as a very happy strategic incident. Malta was regarded in all times as of the first strategic importance. The Knights of St. John were turned out of Rhodes after the tremendous siege by the Turks; they took Malta, and they kept Malta, *coule que coule*. Napoleon in going to Egypt saw that he must take Malta. He more or less deceived Nelson by ruses, but the fault was largely that of our Government, not of Nelson. If there is any naval officer here he will correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that the escape of Napoleon from Toulon and his extraordinary movements at the back of Sardinia and Corsica and then back to Crete and down to Egypt, and thence along the Syrian coast, where he was stopped by Sir Sidney Smith at Acre and Djezzar—that these movements were largely due to the fact that the Government did not supply scouting vessels to Nelson.

But Napoleon took Malta, and the first thing the English did afterwards was to re-take the isle, and indeed they hold Malta now, in spite of the agreement for its restoration at the Peace of Amiens. Malta, that minute island, as you see on the map, could itself give you a historic lesson on the strategy of the Mediterranean: So also could Sicily.

Italian Sea Power in the Mediterranean.

I want to emphasize Italy again and again in this lecture, because my subject is the strategy of the Mediterranean and the Italians are now in command of its coasts, and the Venetians commanded the Adriatic until Napoleon upset them in 1797. After 1815 we controlled the Adriatic and had command of the whole of the coast from Greece right up to Trieste and Fiume, and we owned the Ionian Islands which we took in 1809. We therefore commanded the whole right flank of Italy, looking northwards, and we commanded the whole left flank of Austria and Turkey; but we gave the Ionian Isles quietly up to Greece for nothing in 1864. Look at the map for Lepanto, 1571, where the Venetian, Don John of Austria, stopped the progress of the

Turk, otherwise this whole western part of the Mediterranean, from Greece to Tripoli, would have been overwhelmed. The Turks would have rivalled Carthage and have practically controlled the whole of the western waves, but they were stopped at Lepanto in 1571. As Lord Bacon says, "The Battle of Lepanto arrested the greatness of the Turk." The Pope then was in a somewhat nervous state of mind about Christendom, and I am not at all surprised, because if the Turks could get as far as Vienna, if they had taken the whole of the Levant, if they had seized Greece and all Asia Minor and all the Isles of Greece where "burning Sappho loved and sang"—if they could do all this they could possibly conquer Italy also. And when, just opposite Rome, the Battle of Lepanto was won by Don John of Austria, the Pope said, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John."

Later on the Turks would have again controlled the Mediterranean but for what is called the "untoward event" of Navarino in 1827, when Admiral Codrington commanded the English, Russian, and French fleets in the Mediterranean, and destroyed the Egyptian fleet, and secured the liberty of Greece.

British Interests in the Mediterranean.

But going back to the flank positions of Spain and Portugal, it must be obvious to you that if the English wish to go to the Cape of Good Hope, which they took from the Dutch, or to go to Ceylon, or reach in safety any of the various ports in Hindustan, not to speak of holding Australia—it is obvious, I say, that they could not allow Napoleon or any other rival to be on their flank in Portugal and in Spain. Indeed, they took up arms for Portugal against Napoleon, because the Portuguese maintained their commercial alliance with them, in spite of the Napoleonic Continental system; and they helped the people of Spain not altogether from altruistic or generous motives, but because Spain would be useful to their strategy. The same reason that brought Scipio to Spain brought Sir John Moore there; the same reason that brought Hannibal there brought Wellington there. The same routes were followed by all three. The same reasons that made George III. insist on having Spain in his control or as his ally, in 1808, not as his subject, caused Peterborough to go to Barcelona in the time of Queen Anne. The same reason caused Rooke to take the Rock. In age after age, therefore, it will be seen that the British have been impelled, if they were to continue a leading commercial State, if they were to be supplied from across the sea, to plant themselves firmly in that region. If you have a population that lives on bread produced in a distant land, a population that must import its necessities, its drinkables, as well as its luxuries and clothes, if you are to maintain that population you must take command of the sea, and if you are to take command of the sea you must have sea bases. Sailors want water to drink and they want

coal to propel their engines. In any case they must have a supply of food, and that they cannot secure as long as rival races, or races who may be rival, are in their way.

Positions on the Flanks of Trade Routes.

You will admit, then, that any strategic position in the Mediterranean gives a subject for a lecture in itself—the islands, the peninsulas and the flank positions. Why is Tunis, the ancient Carthage, why are Tripoli and Smyrna, Salonika and Alexandria, so important? For the same reason, because they can be made bases or command lines, strategic and commercial. Now, a flank position is far more serious than a frontal position. The historians of the American Civil War say that their half-trained troops never minded a frontal attack as long as they had a good fortification in front of them, but whenever the enemy began to make a flank attack the army dissolved like people at an open-air Prayer meeting in a gale; they all disappeared. And so with the Turks. When Osman Pacha put himself at Plevna after the Russians had crossed the Danube and were coming to the Balkans, the mere fact that Osman Pacha was in that flank position stopped Russian progress completely for months. By the mere fact that our fleet sailed up the Mediterranean and got up near to Constantinople, when the Russians were coming down to Constantinople, they occupied a flank position that stopped the Russians from getting into Constantinople in 1878. I could go on giving example after example. Napoleon said, "Why do I go to Egypt? Why do I go to Syria?—I go there because there is no greatness in Europe. All greatness comes from Asia. There are 600 millions there, and I will open a new route, and I will become immortal by going eastward." If he wished to do so, his line would be as on the map, Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, the Euphrates, Persia. If you want to hold that line you must prevent others from having flank positions on your route. I say, that under no circumstances must we forget the Mediterranean, especially the places on the route which links Europe and Asia, the basin of the Nile, where we are now. Great Britain has promised to leave it at some time, but I see no necessity for accelerating the pace. Do not leave it until every Egyptian is as good a man as yourselves, and that may take some time. Your historian Alison teaches you its value.

"Placed in the centre of Europe and Asia, on the confines of east and west, amid the western force of civilization, at the extremity of the African continent, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, the Basin of the Nile and its adjuncts in Syria are certain to become a central point of communication for the varied productions of every part of the globe. The waters of the Mediterranean bring thither all the fabrics and all the ironwork of the western looms and forges. The Red Sea wafts to its shores the riches of India and China. The Nile floats down on its bosom the products of vast and unknown regions."

The Command of the Mediterranean in 1796.

That was written some time ago, and now of course those regions remain as vast, but are no longer unknown. Once you lost command of the Mediterranean and you were almost ruined. "Great Britain in the year 1796, immediately before the Battle of St. Vincent, gave Napoleon a chance of conquering Italy which he was very quick to use." The English navy for once was not in command of the Mediterranean. The Battle of Trafalgar, mark you, was not fought in the Mediterranean, but at the gates of the Mediterranean. But let me read to you what Admiral Mahan, our nation's greatest friend with regard to naval power—and I am proud to call him my friend too—says:—

"Great Britain during the time following St. Vincent's retreat from the Mediterranean was in the position of a nation struggling for existence, and so she felt it."

She had been reduced to the very verge of ruin. Napoleon Buonaparte was able to capture Egypt, he was able to threaten communications with Asia, or the Dutch were able to threaten our communications off Camperdown for a time, and even so moderate a man as Admiral Collingwood wrote:—

"The question is not merely who should be conqueror, but whether we shall be any longer a people, whether Britain is to be enrolled in the list of European nations."

Now, gentlemen, that is a very serious passage to read out before an assembly such as this. But there are folk going about now who would try to persuade you to limit your military resources; to drop relatively—and that is quite enough—your naval resources.

Our Corn Supply from the Mediterranean.

You are here in the greatest city of the world, but in a city the inhabitants of which would be howling for bread by this day week, or last week even, if the Turks had construed literally that most preposterous document, the Declaration of London. Suppose they had construed that document to mean that contra-band of war included any corn that might go to Italy, what would be the position now with our poor people? Sixty per cent. of the corn—notwithstanding the great Argentine and the great Canadian supplies which are valuable too, I admit—comes through those Straits and through the Mediterranean. Lose that and you are ruined. If the present belligerents please to close Mediterranean Straits against us in 1911, our plight will be far worse than it was in 1797. You must command by sea Gibraltar, the Sicilian Straits, the Levant, and, above all, if you want corn, the exits from Constantinople. A fortnight ago we were in this predicament, that if the Turks had construed the Declaration of London in the way I have suggested, the people of England would now be paying famine

prices for bread. England is the only country of forty million people who cannot get either luxuries or bread or meat at home, or who are not even able to live for half a year on the produce of their own land. I beg of you, therefore, from every conceivable consideration, looking at the history of empire after empire and the fall of commercial centre after commercial centre, to be wise in time. I could speak of the Adriatic again from the German point of view and from the Austrian point of view, but that would take a lecture by itself. I wish to direct your attention to the subject from the peninsular and the insular point of view in this lecture, not to go too far into the Continent.

Conclusion.

But to recapitulate. From every consideration, having regard to the history of these peninsulas and of all these islands from the Battle of Marathon until now, are you not taught the absolute necessity, if you want to convey troops across the sea and to have your sea communications free, to have your Navy always sufficient for the purpose as against all comers? There is not a politician who would not have sworn to you, when I was present at that assembly about Arbitration, which the last Lord Mayor held in the Guildhall—there was not one who would not have told you that the notion of Italy within a few months' fighting a winning battle and having command of the Mediterranean Sea and being able to make it inconvenient to all western Europe as between Sicily and Gibraltar—not alone to Mahomedan Europe—was a matter for laughter—they would have laughed you in the face. The same kind of persons would have laughed at us if we had told them that the Germans would have beaten France in 1870-71, yet the Germans invested Paris in seven weeks. The moral of all human stories is that the unexpected *does* occur, and therefore you must be ready for the unexpected as well as for the expected. All through your history from Richard I. till now the importance of your playing a part in the Mediterranean has been obvious to the learned and to the wise, to the warrior and to the poet.

I therefore appeal to you, if you do not wish to read anything else on the matter, to read the admirable verses of Lord Byron, which are full of the essence of wisdom in regard to this very Mediterranean. Especially do I recommend to you Books 2 and 4 of "Childe Harold." In the meantime I thank you for the patience with which you have heard the tale of the wonderful romances of history, from Gibraltar to Constantinople, and from the Pyrenees to the source of the Nile, and the strategic lessons for us who, like the Greeks and Venetians of old, now "hold the gorgeous East in fee."

DISCUSSION.

Major C. Macquoid, D.S.O., Indian Army, said that he imagined he had only been called upon to say anything at all because he was one of the few officers now serving on the active list who had been with a Turkish Army "in being"; who had seen Turkish troops in action; who, as a spectator, not officially, had had an opportunity of judging of the staff work of the Turkish Army, and of the leading of the regimental officers of that army in the present day. He had lived for some weeks in Constantinople; he was there during the rising of the soldiery to upset the Constitution; and was with the advanced guard of the young Turk army of Salonika when it entered Constantinople to re-establish the Constitution. About 2,000 men were killed and wounded that day, and some 600 were killed and wounded outside and near the Turkish boarding-house in which he was lodging. He could speak from close observation of the maintenance of the well-known courage of the Turkish soldiery; he could testify to their discipline, not only in battle, but afterwards during the whole time he was in Constantinople. During that time of very great excitement he heard of no outrages and he saw no intoxication amongst the troops. They were always ready and willing to carry out the orders of their officers. He thought, too, that for the Young Turks, unexpectedly and rapidly to organize the army of Salonika, put that corps on the move to Constantinople, surround and simultaneously enter that large city, to overcome the resistance made there, and afterwards hold in check a cosmopolitan population inspired by various religious beliefs, was an operation of war of which any army and any nation might indeed be proud. It was scarcely necessary for him to say—least of all here in this Hall—that an army whose troops possessed such high courage, who were well led, well disciplined and well armed, was a very great factor and a very great asset in strategy; and any considerations of the strategy of the Mediterranean and more especially of the Near East, which did not pay due attention to, and did not recognize at its proper worth the value of the Turkish Army of the present day were considerations based on wrong assumptions, and grounded on sand.

DISADVANTAGES OF LOSING COMMAND OF THE SEA.

His only reason for saying this was that it was impossible to judge of what the Turkish Army could do and what it could not do from what was now going on in North Africa. As the Lecturer had already pointed out, the Turks at one time did possess command of the Mediterranean Sea, and could move their troops practically where they wished. At the present day they did not possess command of the sea, and, therefore, they could not move one man to help their comrades who were labouring under such disadvantages at Tripoli. If—he admitted it was a big if—but if the Turks could move even a few troops to Tripoli, he fancied the campaign which was now going on there would have very different results from what they read in the daily papers. He merely rose to impress upon them the fact that—so far as he had personally been able to judge—and he did not think perhaps, Dr. Maguire had laid sufficient stress upon this point—the Turkish Army was indeed a very good army. It was well led, and the officers, with many of whom (including some who were playing a leading part in the present condition of affairs) he had had the opportunity of talking, were very efficient, and quite up to the standard of any other nation.

Mr. O'Donnell of O'Donnell said that he could only approach this subject from the point of view of a writer on public affairs, who had been specially concerned with the study of foreign policy for thirty or forty years. He did not know exactly how far he might deal with the present strategical questions arising in the Mediterranean, but he should like to say, without going into political considerations and without expressing any opinion upon the rights or the wrongs of anybody concerned in pending events, that, even if everybody on the shores of the Mediterranean was their dearest friend, still they were entitled to consider the possibility of a change taking place in the distant future in the dispositions of those beloved friends. Down to the present one of the reasons why the Mediterranean had been such an open, royal route for England to the East had been due not only to their possession of Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus and Egypt, but also to the fact that the Southern shores of the Mediterranean had not been occupied by any Powers capable of joining hands with the occupants of its Northern shores in operations which might block the Mediterranean to the passage of British fleets.

OCCUPATION OF THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN SHORE.

But let them suppose that the changes which were now spoken of had become facts, and that the French had built up a vast Empire, including not only Tunis and Algiers, but the whole of Morocco. It seemed to him that the importance of Gibraltar would be singularly diminished in the face of Morocco, held as the strong domain of one of the greatest and bravest military and naval nations in the world.

Again let them suppose that the Italians had consolidated their position in Tripoli, and were not only in possession of naval ports in Southern Italy and a naval port in Sicily—such as that admirable harbour of Augusta, from which the main body of the expedition had sailed to Tripoli—but had also developed those important harbours of Bomba Bay and Marsa Tobruk, which—so long as they were mere fishing stations in the hands of the indolent Tripolitans—were no danger whatever to British transports; suppose that in twenty or thirty years' time a quarrel *did* arise in which England and Italy took opposite sides—could England send a single transport bearing reinforcements to India through the central Mediterranean if both shores were to be held in the future by a mighty Power like the developed Italy?

Dr. Miller Maguire, in reply said: I was very glad to hear Major Macquoid say that, in his opinion, there are some very good points about the Turkish soldier, because I am here as a kind of historian, and not to tell my own experiences. All I can say is that I was extremely kindly treated by Turkish officers, by Turkish plain, humble folk, all kinds of folk. As for the manhood of the nation, I was greatly impressed by their resolution and their readiness to meet death. You all remember how they conquered Greece in a very short time. I heartily support what the gallant officer said in that respect, although I do not speak the Turkish language as he does, and I have not had his opportunities. I regret very much that no naval officer has taken part in the discussion. I will tell you what a very celebrated naval officer said to me the other day when I was talking about the canals from the point of view of geography and strategy. One of the leading officers of the navy—I must not mention his name—absolutely urged on me not to make too much of the strategy of canals as he who has command of the sea has command

of the canals at both ends, but they may be traps for commerce. The real thing is to have a sufficient and efficient navy and army, even if you have to go round about the whole of Africa and the tail end of America, like your forefathers.

DIPLOMATIC FIDDLING.

You remember what the ancient orator and general Themistocles said: "Some there be that can fiddle very cunningly, but turn great States into feeble failures," and Lord Bacon says there will be many orators and statesmen whose fiddling is magnificent, but so far from making a small town like Athens great, their skill lies the other way—to bring a great city to ignominy and decay. It was against such a condition of things I take it that Mr. O'Donnell gave his warning. If all these strategical points of significance, which I have indicated on the maps, fall into the hands of great rival Powers, Powers of the old kind, or Powers of a new species, then you will be sorry indeed if by any chance it be the case, as Mr. O'Donnell suggests, that you are governed by any party of diplomatic fiddlers who cannot sow greatness for posterity.

The Chairman: Ladies and gentlemen, it rests with me just to wind up the meeting. It is about thirty years ago this year that I first made Dr. Maguire's acquaintance. He tried very hard to get something into my head to let me pass into Woolwich; I failed. I think I am one of his only failures, and for that reason he has been very fond of me ever since. Hence my being in the chair to-day: I cannot think of any other reason. Dr. Miller Maguire said that the wind has been taken out of his sails by a lecture given here three or four days ago. I am not quite sure that that was not rather lucky for us, seeing how much was still left there. There is just one other side of this lecture that Mr. O'Donnell did not refer to that I should like to mention. It is this. If what Earl Grey said two or three days ago is possible, *i.e.*, that the centre of the British Empire is going to pass from England to Canada during the present century, if Russia enters more into the European field, and if China (which is also possible) awakes from her long sleep, I wonder whether the Mediterranean will still remain of the enormous importance that it has been for the last 2,000 years. Probably yes, but anyhow, it opens out another field of thought. The chief point for us to bear in mind, apart from the historical survey which Dr. Miller Maguire laid before us, is the necessity for this country being ready for war both by sea and by land, the one equally with the other. Ladies and gentlemen, that is all I have to say, except that I am sure you will allow me to convey your thanks to the Doctor for his very interesting and admirable lecture.
