

The War Lords

ately was vitiated by Russia's own interests and ambitions in the Balkans, but a striking military success would serve. And there was no success which would be so impressive as the fall of Constantinople. It would put the Turks out of action, open up the Black Sea, and bring the Balkan States together on the side of the Allies. It was from these considerations that the idea of the attack on the Dardanelles sprang. It was a daring military adventure, but its motive was political. It was viewed with much disfavour by the Admiralty, which I think took the view that at all events so great an enterprise should not be entered on until military support could be given to the naval operations. But the objections were over-ruled and the experiment of an exclusively naval attack was made with disastrous results.

It is probable that it would not have been made in that form and at that time had not the Allies believed that Venizelos would "win through." They were confident of large military support from Greece and perhaps gambled a little heavily for a stake so valuable as the support of all the Balkan States. That Venizelos did not consciously mislead goes without saying. He knew that he could answer for the Government of which he was the head and for the nation of which he was the trusted leader. He did not know that he could not answer for the king and that at the critical moment he would be deserted. Nor had he any ground for suspicion on the point. His scheme was, he says, endorsed by the king; but it was delayed, and in the meantime the intriguers, political and military, secured his Parliamentary overthrow. He resigned and the new Government of Gounaris set themselves to employ every device to delay an appeal to the country which they knew would result in the overwhelming return of the great Liberal leader. With