

"1915"—TOLD BY WINSTON CHURCHILL TROOPS WITHDRAWN FROM DARDANELLES

Serbia Destroyed, Bulgaria Joined Enemies, Rumania and Greece Neutral—British Divisions Sent to Guard Mesopotamia and Egypt From Turks—All Communication With Russia Is Cut Off.

WHISPERED ENGLAND HAD NOT TRIED TO AID

BY RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL
ARTICLE XXI.

The Consequences of 1915. On November 22, Lord Kitchener, his Army being vetted, consented to the evacuation of Gallipoli. He still hoped to save Helles, the retention of which was strongly advocated by Admiral de Robeck. The war committee, however, decided that all three lodgements should be abandoned. With this decision Admiral de Robeck expressed himself in disaccord. He deprecated the evacuation of Helles, Anzac, and when asked specifically on November 25 if he had concurred in the evacuation of Helles, he observed bluntly: "I do not understand it." The situation cannot, however, be disentangled from his attitude towards the use of the fleet. His health was temporarily impaired by his long spell of hard work. He started immediately for home on a period of leave.

The command now devolved upon Admiral Wemyss. The new naval commander-in-chief, undeterred by past events, bent himself to a last effort to retrieve the situation. In a series of telegrams, he emphasized the dangers of a winter evacuation. He dwelt upon the difficulties; he urged that one more effort should be made to convert defeat into victory. In a spirit which cannot be censured in the royal navy, he asserted that the fleet would do its part, and that even if the army could not co-operate, he would carry out the Keyes plan and force the Dardanelles by naval power alone.

These stalwart counsels threw everything again into the melting pot. The cabinet revolted against the decision of their new commander. It was resolved that no decision could be taken without a further conference with the French, and a meeting of the new allied standing council was fixed for December 5 at Calais. Lord Kitchener again took heart. In common with the British general staff, he was strongly opposed to the whole Salonika expedition.

Turks in Dire Straits. Meanwhile the activities of the British submarines in the Marmora had almost entirely severed the sea communications between the Turkish army, and were also impeding their supply by the roads along the Marmora shore. To meet this peril, which had been approaching steadily and rapidly during the last two or three months, the German staff had built a new branch railway from the main Turkish system to Kavak at the head of the gulf of Xeros. This had been finished in the nick of time, and as the sea transport failed, it became the sole line of supply, relief or reinforcement for the twenty Turkish divisions on the peninsula. From the new railroad at Kavak all transport was by bullock wagon or camel along roads across the Bulgaristana which was frequently disturbed by the fire of the fleet. On December 2, Admiral Wemyss succeeded in destroying the three central spans of the Kavak bridge by fire from the Agamemnon, Endymion, and a monitor. The road was also so badly broken by the bombardment that wheeled traffic was completely interrupted. The Turkish 5th army was now in serious straits.

That Final Veto. On August 18 the admiralty had telegraphed to Admiral de Robeck authorizing and implicitly urging him to use the old battleships of the fleet to force the Dardanelles, and Admiral de Robeck had replied. When the admiralty was willing the admiral was unwilling. Now the conditions were reversed. On December 10 the same board of admiralty replied that they were not prepared to authorize the attempt by the navy single-handed to force the narrow. This sombre veto was final.

The risks that men are prepared to run in relation to circumstances present some of the strangest manifestations of psychology. One title of the hardship they display to escape disaster, would often certainly achieve success. Contrast, for instance, the alternative hazards now presented to the British government and admiralty: on one hand, the chance, even the probability according to all expert opinion, of losing 40,000 men in an evacuation; on the other, the chance of losing a squad-

closing pages of this volume, not only to relate the immediate sequel, but to outline the vast consequences which flowed from these events.

Consequences of Evacuation.

The campaign of the Dardanelles had been started and crippled at every stage by the continued opposition of the French and British high commands in France to the withdrawal of troops from the main theatre of the war. The abandonment of the Dardanelles led to the diversion of the allied military forces on a scale far larger than its most ardent advocates had ever contemplated. Serbia had been destroyed; Bulgaria had joined our enemies; Rumania and Greece lay frozen in a terrorized neutrality. But still, as long as the British flag flew on the peninsula and the British fleet lay off the straits, the main power of Turkey was gripped and paralyzed. The evacuation set free twenty Turkish divisions on the peninsula, and Turkey henceforth was able to form a common front with the Bulgarians in Thrace, to attack Russia, to aid Austria, to overawe Rumania. Turkey was also placed in a position simultaneously to threaten Egypt, and to reinforce the Egyptian army against the advance of British divisions, having been retrained and refitted, were required to guard against the last two of these new dangers. The whole of the new army sent by France and Britain from the French theatre, amounting to twenty divisions, was required for the defence of Salonika. Apart from the Anzacs, scarcely any of these twenty divisions of allied troops ever fought against the Germans during the rest of the war. Scarcely one came into any direct contact with any enemy for nearly six months, and during the same period thirteen out of the twenty liberated Turkish divisions were added to the hostile strength in other theatres, and went to the Caucasus and two to Galicia, in both cases adding to the burden which Russia had to bear. Thus the evacuation of Gallipoli may be variously computed at a total loss of strength to the allies of from thirty to forty divisions; the army of a first-class power. It was evident that a very grave prolongation of the war must arise from this cause alone.

Allied Forces Disrupted. From the moment when the grip on the heart of the Turkish Empire was relaxed, and breathing space was given, its widespread limbs un-

The maintenance of these three great expeditions over long distances of sea threw a strain upon the maritime resources of Great Britain, which combined with the unlimited "U-boat" warfare, came near to compassing our complete ruin in the spring of 1917. Thus the admiral of the fleet, the grand fleet and the generals who thought only of the main army, may learn how cruel are the reverses which fortune wreaks upon those who disdain her first and golden offerings.

Wasteful and roundabout as was the method, the strategic conceptions which inspired the eastern policy were vindicated in the end; and the collapse of Bulgaria after three years war was the signal for the general catastrophe of the central powers.

There ended with the Dardanelles all hope of forming direct and continuous contact with Russia. A railway 1,200 miles long might be built to Murmansk; Vladivostok might continue to pass supplies across a twenty Turkish divisions on the peninsula, and Turkey henceforth was able to form a common front with the Bulgarians in Thrace, to attack Russia, to aid Austria, to overawe Rumania. Turkey was also placed in a position simultaneously to threaten Egypt, and to reinforce the Egyptian army against the advance of British divisions, having been retrained and refitted, were required to guard against the last two of these new dangers. The whole of the new army sent by France and Britain from the French theatre, amounting to twenty divisions, was required for the defence of Salonika. Apart from the Anzacs, scarcely any of these twenty divisions of allied troops ever fought against the Germans during the rest of the war. Scarcely one came into any direct contact with any enemy for nearly six months, and during the same period thirteen out of the twenty liberated Turkish divisions were added to the hostile strength in other theatres, and went to the Caucasus and two to Galicia, in both cases adding to the burden which Russia had to bear. Thus the evacuation of Gallipoli may be variously computed at a total loss of strength to the allies of from thirty to forty divisions; the army of a first-class power. It was evident that a very grave prolongation of the war must arise from this cause alone.

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der territory subjugated, her government driven on to foreign soil, she was forced into a separate peace of the most merciless character.

The War of Exhaustion. The end of the Dardanelles campaign closed the second great period of the struggle. There was nothing left on land now but the war of exhaustion—not only of armies but of nations. No more strategy, very little tactics; only the dull wearing down of the weaker combination by exchanging lives; only the multiplying of machinery, on both sides to exchange them quicker. The continuous front now stretched not only from the Alps to the seas, but across the Balkan peninsula, across Palestine, across Mesopotamia. The central empires had successfully defended their southern flank in the Balkans and in Turkey. Their victory quelled simultaneously all likelihood of any attempt against their northern flank upon the Baltic. All such ideas had received their quietus. Good, plain, straightforward frontal attacks by valiant flesh and blood against wire and machine guns, "killing Germans" while Germans killed Allies twice as often, calling out the men of 40, of 50, and even of 65, and the youths of 18, sending the wounded soldiers back three or four times into the shambles—such were the sole manifestations now reserved for the military art. And when at the end, three years later, the throng of functionaries who from the seclusion of their offices had with complacent logic carried this process to its conclusion presented victory to their exhausted nations, it proved only less ruinous to the victor than to the vanquished.

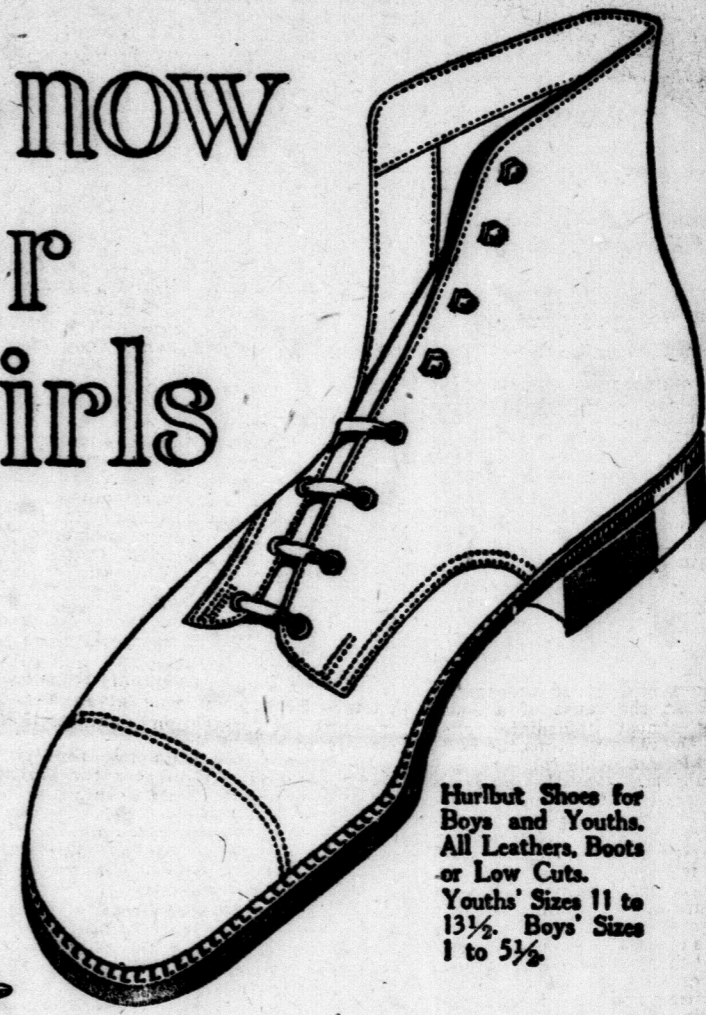
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"THE CONSEQUENCES OF 1915"—AND AFTER; NEW MAP OF EUROPE.

The above map illustrates at a glance the changes outlined by Mr. Churchill in the accompanying article.

any expression of opinion by Admiral Wemyss upon military matters. He agreed, however, with the naval and local military view that Helles could not be held in the event of a capture of Acha Baba. Thus at last, since the capture of Acha Baba was deemed impossible, the decision was reached for the total evacuation of the peninsula.

The Evacuation.

It was with melancholy but intense relief that I learned in France of the successful and bloodless execution of this critical operation, which was accomplished on the night of Dec. 19. The utmost credit belongs to the naval and military officers who planned and executed the arrangements, and to the admirals and generals by whom they were so successfully carried out. The weather, on which all depended, was favorable for exactly the vital forty-eight hours, and the Turks were utterly unsuspecting. Indeed, when dawn broke on empty trenches and famous positions, bought at so terrible a cost, now silent as the graves with which they were surrounded, the haggard Turkish soldiers and their undaunted chiefs could hardly believe their eyes. Their position, their high command, had brought them to a point of utter despair, and that they had defended with soldierly tenacity, were now translated at a stroke from extreme jeopardy into renewed and resuscitated power, conviction, determination and the will to win, steadfastly maintained by their high command, had brought victory to the defense in spite of their inferiority in numbers and in resources of all kinds and of the inherent strategic perils of their position. The lack of these qualities on our side at the summit of power had defeated the attackers of the rearward, pregnant in its consequences to the whole world, which their overwhelming potential strength and resources, their actual numbers and apparatus, their daring, their devotion and their fearful sacrifices had given them the right.

The evacuation of Helles was performed with equal skill, and with equal good fortune on Jan. 8, and the story of the Dardanelles came finally to an end. This consummation was acclaimed by the shallow and the uneducated as if it had been a victory.

It is necessary, however, in the

der German stimulation regained and developed their power. The three campaigns which had either begun or were imminent from Salonika, from Egypt, or in Mesopotamia, all grew rapidly into very great undertakings, and all continued until the last day of the war to make enormous strains upon the British resources, and to a lesser degree upon those of France. By 1918, seven British and Indian divisions, comprising an army of two hundred and seventy thousand men (exclusive of followers), were operating in Mesopotamia. The defense of the Suez Canal and subsequently the attack upon Turkey by the invasion of Palestine grew into a separate war, which, in any other period, would have absorbed the attention of the world. Instead of thrusting at Constantinople, the heart of Turkey, or striking at her arm pit at Alexandria, or her elbow at Haifa, we began our attack from her fingertips upwards. Slowly, painfully, in astonishing feats of arms and organization, we made our way across the desert, drawing artificial rivers with us through hundreds of miles of scorching sand.

We toiled and fought our way mile by mile, and even yard by yard, from Gaza to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to Damascus, never at any moment exacting from the enemy more than one-third of our own war effort. At the armistice, twelve British divisions, comprising an army of nearly two hundred and eighty thousand men (exclusive of followers), were engaged in Palestine and Syria. The campaign from Salonika expanded not less formidably. At the end of 1917 twelve British and French divisions, and two Italian divisions were in line against Turkish forces, which perseverance at the Dardanelles might long ago have forced out of the war, and against the Bulgarian army, which a timely and prudent policy might have ranged upon our side. The sole addition gained by this great development of allied force was six Serbian divisions brought by sea from the wreck of their country, and four Greek divisions raised by Monastirli Venizelos after his revolt against King Constantine. In the end six hundred and thirty thousand allied soldiers stood on the Salonika front.

of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and France once more in possession of Alsace-Lorraine—to mention the more important changes.

upon herself a tide of ruin in which perhaps a score of millions of human beings have been engulfed. The consequences of these events abide with us today. They will darken the world for our children's children.

Another disaster supreme in its character was escaped by the breadth of a hair. It was only by the margin of a few weeks in 1917 that the German decision to begin the unlimited "U-boat" warfare anticipated the Russian collapse. Had the Russian revolution broken out earlier, the desperate folly of quarrelling with America, which never have been perpetrated by the German government, and while Russia would inevitably have fallen, no ground would have been denied to the United States to enter the war.

Rumania. Compared to these gigantic issues the fate of Rumania was but an incident. Yet that fate at the end of 1918, cruel and heart-rending in every circumstance, was the direct outcome of the failure to force the Dardanelles. This small country was at length at the end of 1916 persuaded to enter the war while still completely cut off from the western allies. Caught in the combined grip of German, Austrian, Bulgarian and Turkish troops, she was crushed with astonishing celerity; and her armies broken, her capital pillaged, her en-

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