The Balkan Wars

The Balkan Wars: 1912-1913
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

INTRODUCTION

I. TURKEY AND THE BALKAN STATES

II. THE WAR BETWEEN THE ALLIES
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The interest in the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 has exceeded the expectations of the publishers of this volume. The first edition, which was published five months ago, is already exhausted and a second is now called for. Meanwhile there has broken out and is now in progress a war which is generally regarded as the greatest of all time—a war already involving five of the six Great Powers and three of the smaller nations of Europe as well as Japan and Turkey and likely at any time to embroil other countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, which are already embraced in the area of military operations.

This War of Many Nations had its origin in Balkan situation. It began on July 28 with the declaration of the Dual Monarchy to the effect that from that moment Austria-Hungary was in a state of war with Servia. And the fundamental reason for this declaration as given in the note or ultimatum to Servia was the charge that the Servian authorities had encouraged the Pan-Serb agitation which seriously menaced the integrity of Austria-Hungary and had already caused the assassination at Serajevo of the Heir to the Throne.

No one could have observed at close range the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 without perceiving, always in the background and occasionally in the foreground, the colossal rival figures of Russia and Austria-Hungary. Attention was called to the phenomenon at various points in this volume and especially in the concluding pages.

The issue of the Balkan struggles of 1912-1913 was undoubtedly favorable to Russia. By her constant diplomatic support she retained the friendship and earned the gratitude of Greece, Montenegro, and Servia; and through her championship, belated though it was, of the claims of Roumania to territorial compensation for benevolent neutrality during the war of the Allies against Turkey, she won the friendship of the predominant Balkan power which had hitherto been regarded as the immovable eastern outpost of the Triple Alliance. But while Russia was victorious she did not gain all that she had planned and hoped for. Her very triumph at Bukarest was a proof that she had lost her influence over Bulgaria. This Slav state after the war against Turkey came under the influence of Austria-Hungary, by whom she was undoubtedly incited to strife with Servia and her other partners in the late war against Turkey. Russia was unable to prevent the second Balkan war between the Allies. The Czar's summons to the Kings of Bulgaria and Servia on June 9, 1913, to submit, in the name of Pan-Slavism, their disputes to his decision failed to produce the desired effect, while this assumption of Russian hegemony in Balkan affairs greatly exacerbated Austro-Hungarian sentiment. That action of the Czar, however, was clear notification and proof to all the world that Russia regarded the Slav States in the Balkans as objects of her peculiar concern and protection.

The first Balkan War—the war of the Allies against Turkey—ended in a way that surprised all the world. Everybody expected a victory for the Turks. That the Turks should one day be driven out of Europe was the universal assumption, but it was the equally fixed belief that the agents of their expulsion would be the Great Powers or some of the Great Powers. That the little independent States of the Balkans should themselves be equal to the task no one imagined,—no one with the possible exception of the government of Russia. And as Russia rejoiced over the victory of the Balkan States and the defeat of her secular Mohammedan
neighbor, Austria-Hungary looked on not only with amazement but with disappointment and chagrin.

For the contemporaneous diplomacy of the Austro-Hungarian government was based on the assumption that the Balkan States would be vanquished by Turkey. And its standing policy had been on the one hand to keep the Kingdom of Servia small and weak (for the Dual Monarchy was itself an important Serb state) and on the other hand to broaden her Adriatic possessions and also to make her way through Novi Bazar and Macedonia to Saloniki and the Aegean, when the time came to secure this concession from the Sultan without provoking a European war. It seemed in 1908 as though the favorable moment had arrived to make a first move, and the Austro-Hungarian government put forward a project for connecting the Bosnian and Macedonian railway systems. But the only result was to bring to an end the cooperation which had for some years been maintained between the Austrian and Russian governments in the enforcement upon the Porte of the adoption of reforms in Macedonia.

And now the result of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 was the practical expulsion of Turkey from Europe and the territorial aggrandizement of Servia and the sister state of Montenegro through the annexation of those very Turkish domains which lay between the Austro-Hungarian frontier and the Aegean. At every point Austro-Hungarian policies had met with reverses.

Only one success could possibly be attributed to the diplomacy of the Ballplatz. The exclusion of Servia from the Adriatic Sea and the establishment of the independent State of Albania was the achievement of Count Berchtold, the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The new State has been a powder magazine from the beginning, and since the withdrawal of Prince William of Wied, the government, always powerless, has fallen into chaos. Intervention on the part of neighboring states is inevitable. And only last month the southern part of Albania—that is, Northern Epirus—was occupied by a Greek army for the purpose of ending the sanguinary anarchy which has hitherto prevailed. This action will be no surprise to the readers of this volume. The occupation, or rather re-occupation, is declared by the Greek Government to be provisional and it is apparently approved by all the Great Powers. Throughout the rest of Albania similar intervention will be necessary to establish order, and to protect the life and property of the inhabitants without distinction of race, tribe, or creed. Servia might perhaps have governed the country, had she not been compelled by the Great Powers, at the instigation of Austria-Hungary, to withdraw her forces. And her extrusion from the Adriatic threw her back toward the Aegean, with the result of shutting Bulgaria out of Central Macedonia, which was annexed by Greece and Servia presumably under arrangements satisfactory to the latter for an outlet to the sea at Saloniki. The war declared by Austria-Hungary against Servia may be regarded to some extent as an effort to nullify in the interests of the former the enormous advantages which accrued directly to Servia and indirectly to Russia from the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. That Russia should have come to the support of Servia was as easy to foresee as any future political event whatever. And the action of Germany and France once war had broken out between their respective allies followed as a matter of course. If the Austro-German Alliance wins in the War of Many Nations it will doubtless control the eastern Adriatic and open up a way for itself to the Aegean. Indeed, in that event, German trade and German political influence would spread unchallenged across the continents from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Turkey is a friend and ally; but even if Turkey were hostile she would have no strength to resist such victorious powers. And the Balkan States, with the defeat of Russia, would be compelled to recognize Germanic supremacy.
If on the other hand the Allies come out victorious in the War of Many Nations, Servia and perhaps Roumania would be permitted to annex the provinces occupied by their brethren in the Dual Monarchy and Servian expansion to the Adriatic would be assured. The Balkan States would almost inevitably fall under the controlling influence of Russia, who would become mistress of Constantinople and gain an unrestricted outlet to the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, and the Dardanelles.

In spite of themselves the destiny of the peoples of the Balkans is once more set on the issue of war. It is not inconceivable, therefore, that some or all of those States may be drawn into the present colossal conflict. In 1912-1913 the first war showed Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Servia allied against Turkey; and in the second war Greece, Montenegro, and Servia were joined by Roumania in the war against Bulgaria, who was also independently attacked by Turkey. What may happen in 1914 or 1915 no one can predict. But if this terrible conflagration, which is already devastating Europe and convulsing all the continents and vexing all the oceans of the globe, spreads to the Balkans, one may hazard the guess that Greece, Montenegro, Servia, and Roumania will stand together on the side of the Allies and that Bulgaria if she is not carried away by marked Austro-German victories will remain neutral,—unless indeed the other Balkan States win her over, as they not inconceivably might do, if they rose to the heights of unwonted statesmanship by recognizing her claim to that part of Macedonia in which the Bulgarian element predominates but which was ceded to her rivals by the Treaty of Bukarest.

But I have said enough to indicate that as in its origin so also in its results this awful cataclysm under which the civilized world is now reeling will be found to be vitally connected with the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. And I conclude with the hope that the present volume, which devotes indeed but little space to military matters and none at all to atrocities and massacres, may prove helpful to readers who seek light on the underlying conditions, the causes, and the consequences of those historic struggles. The favor already accorded to the work and the rapid exhaustion of the first edition* seem to furnish some justification of this hope.

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