

Good copy

CHAPTER XI

BALKAN REFORM

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Evan's book, "Foreign Policy from a Back Bench", gives a good review of my Balkan activities, and here I had better record some more personal aspects of the work of the Balkan Committee. [When I first became acquainted with the pitiable condition of the Macedonian peoples I was intensely moved by their sufferings and by the fact that they were due to the action of our own country. In 1878 Disraeli preserved the Turkish Empire in Europe from being liberated by Russia.] The insurrection of 1903, with the shocking massacres and burning of villages which followed it, seemed to me an imperative call, and my holiday at Humble in August of that year was occupied in attempting to rouse pressure on the Government through the columns of "The Times".

The Balkan Committee, which C.R.B. and I had founded in 1902, was assisted to activity by Mr. Bryce, and we were intensely busy from the end of August. We secured a big room in Adelphi Terrace in the house of Bernard Shaw, and there, overlooking the river, we organised meetings and produced leaflets which secured public notice both here and abroad in a measure out of all proportion to our diminutive numbers.

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Through Canon Barnett we secured a splendid secretary in Arthur Moore, and I have a thrilling recollection of intense efforts to move our Government and the Concert of Europe towards imposing reform on Turkey. Brailsford, Nevinson, Sir Arthur Evans and C.R.B. were conspicuous workers. The exhilaration of fervent work afforded a pleasure which contrasted with the fate of the persecuted objects of our ambition. That autumn I got leave to take more time off from the brewery, and spent most of my evenings making speeches up and down the country. There was also a lot to do in seeing politicians, and especially Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, who, by a stroke of luck, was extremely sympathetic. Though by no means of a Gladstonian humanitarian type, he was anxious to see reform in order to avoid war, and in approaching the Powers who jointly could press the Sultan, he wanted to be able to point to strong public feeling in Great Britain. This was the more gratifying to us when his cousin, Bishop Gore, told us that Lansdowne was in reality quite cynical in such matters.

In the winter Hugh Law and I took Leland to the Balkans, and visited the region devastated by the Turks near the Black Sea, where in villages of which only one or two houses remained under the deep January snow, we found children starving and hiding themselves from the Turkish soldiers who escorted us.

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At Adrianople, where one left the railway, the Turks refused to let us leave the town, and we persuaded the Greek Consul to help us to give them the slip. At early dawn we set off in one of the little carriages which were then the only means of Balkan travel. We had reached the place we desired, and were getting some lunch round a tiny stove which was thawing our frozen limbs, when suddenly there burst in the Governmor's secretary, whom we had eluded, and who had pursued us on learning of our departure. The poor man had a terrible toothache and was bandaged round his swollen face. Suffering as he also was from a failure of prevent our journey which may well have led to his dismissal from office, his appearance was as pitiable as it was comic.

During the succeeding ten years I spent almost every autumn holiday in the Balkans, except when prevented by Parliamentary sessions or elections. The first five of these years saw the gradual installation of the International Gendarmerie, and our travels were assisted by the presence of officers, British, Austrian, French and Italian, according to their several districts. Having no authority except to inspect, they were mainly employed in recording outrages. These resulted not only from the habits of the Turks, but from the murderous activities of armed bands from the neighbouring states, each of whom was hoping to inherit the

< Footnote. Balkan Reform. page 150 (of duplicate)

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land on the demise of "the sick man", and wished to exterminate its rivals. The chief sufferers were the Bulgars, against whom the Greeks and Serbs were assisted by the Turks, because Bulgarian claims were naturally strongest, and the Turks only feared attack from Bulgaria; so the unfortunate Bulgarian villages were rendered powerless to resist the bloodthirsty bands, among whom the Greeks probably took the prize for atrocity.

In 1907, when at Monastir, we came on one of these typical disasters; a large and prosperous village called Smilevo had been suddenly attacked by a Greek band on a Sunday morning. Many had been killed, and we found the wounded still in the gala peasant dress which they wear on Sundays. They had no medical aid, because the Turks did not allow it to reach them. It was a pitiable scene, but nothing came of such episodes except an addition to, what was called by the foreign officers, the butcher's bill.

My companions in the Balkans on my various journeys included Charlie, Charles Masterman, Rollo Meyer, Cecil Harris, Noel Farrer, Lothar de Bunsen, Hugh Law, ~~xxx~~ Rosslyn Bruce, and Leland, who surprised us all by going with a Bulgarian band, smuggling rifles into Turkey, and should properly have met his death from a Turkish frontier guard's bullet.

In 1906 I had a specially interesting tour with the de Bunsens and Rosslyn Bruce. Rosslyn and I came back by

Berlin, and saw a good deal of Sir Frank Lascelles, who was then Ambassador. He was a delightful and sympathetic person, and believed that England could get on with Germany. He was intimate with the Kaiser, who had recently been sitting on the Ambassador's bed when the latter was laid up with a cold. I asked him if the Kaiser would be interested in putting a stop to the butchery in the Balkans. I had taken with me many photographs taken by gendarmerie officers of the dead victims, and I said the Kaiser might be stirred by these. Lascelles replied that not only would the Kaiser do nothing about it, but that such things as massacres would not concern him in the least.

In 1907 C.R.B. and I took Charlie Masterman, and on the way back we interviewed the famous Austrian Foreign Minister, Aehrenthal, in the Hofburg at Vienna. We spoke to him of Grey's concern for reform in Turkey, and he replied, "Nothing will happen. Your Sir Grey is a man of peace; he catches little fishes". It was on this journey that we first got evidence of any sign of dissatisfaction with the Sultan's régime on the part of Turkish officials. To my amazement one evening a Turkish local governor, taking all precaution against being overheard, began to talk what seemed such rank treason that I thought it was merely planned to draw us into statements which he would report to his superiors. It was, however, a genuine sign of the discontent

which suddenly revealed itself in the Young Turk Revolt of 1908. It was a movement of the active young men of Turkey to save their country from foreign domination, which they feared would result from the incompetence of Abdul Hamid. We were more than sceptical of the capacity of the Turkish mind to assimilate civilised ideas, but the Young Turks had energy, and quickly made friends with the rebel bands hitherto fighting against the Sultan. We sent out the Balkan Committee Secretary and he, deeply moved by what he saw of the Young Turks, expressed himself with an enthusiasm which almost committed us to supporting their cause. But at the same time most of us favoured caution, and Sir Arthur Evans and I went to see Sir Edward Grey to urge upon him that he should oppose the withdrawal of the Gendarmerie officers. The officers, however, were soon withdrawn, and for a time the rival forces made open friendship.

The question of reform was soon obscured by the international dangers which took its place. Grey's great concern was with German antagonism to England. With war in view, he had to cultivate Russia, and therefore, when Austria-Hungary seized the opportunity of Turkey's weakness to annex Bosnia, he came out as a bitter critic of Austrian policy. Russia protested also, and supported the indignant Serbs. Austrian troops were massed on the Serbian frontier, occupying the island in the Danube close to Belgrade. Just

at this moment, we of the Balkan Committee, having been invited by the Young Turks to send a deputation to Constantinople, were passing through Belgrade and stopping en route. Europe was full of alarms, and the Austrians persuaded themselves that we were secretly a British delegation stirring up the Serbs. The Austrian Government complained that we gave arms to the Serbs. The Serbs were afraid of Austrian spies. Linnet Howell, sketching in Belgrade, was arrested there. The publicity forced on us innocent humanitarians was embarrassing, but it was amusing to think how terrible we appeared.

We escaped from the complications of this part of European politics and hurried on to meet the Young Turks. Our time in Constantinople was highly picturesque, involving banquets, attendance and plays at the theatre where we witnessed an ovation to Enver, the chief national hero, and were entertained by the aged Grand Vizier at the instance of the Young Turks. These gentlemen, who made themselves most agreeable, were determined to use us in cultivating public opinion against the Sultan. After the Salemluk, or formal attendance at the Mosque of the Sultan, the scheme took startling forms. We were suddenly requested to meet the Red Sultan himself. It would have been difficult and rude to refuse, but before accepting I insisted on consulting the eminent leader of the British community, Sir Edwin Pears.



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He approved and came with us. This was indeed a drama when the Red-handed sultan, with his hooked nose, in a frock coat, received us as his guests, and was thus humiliated in the eyes of the Turkish public. He was compelled by the Young Turks to receive the very people who had denounced his crimes, as the Turkish public well knew. This was all part of the plan which ultimately led to the Sultan's internment at Salonika, and the triumph of the Young Turks, which lasted till after the Great War.

British diplomacy was not in sympathy with our cultivating Young Turks, but though our Ambassador, Sir Gerald Lowther, was aware of this, he was very civil, offered us the use of the Embassy pleasure boats, and entertained us in our large numbers at dinner. After the ladies had left the table a picturesque episode occurred. Sir Arthur Evans, as a world famous archaeologist concerned with the Near East, was naturally the person for Sir Gerald to pay attention to, but he devoted himself to a young man who had come out to tout for orders on behalf of one of the British armament firms. Evans was not prepared to be belittled, and to my astonishment he suddenly rose, shook the Ambassador's hand without a word, and left the house.

The only person in the Embassy who knew very much was Fitzmaurice, the dragoman (permanent expert) with whom we made great friends. His warnings against believing the Young Turks to be capable of civilisation were followed by our Foreign Office. We ourselves attempted as friendly critics to moderate the Young Turks' chauvinistic attitude to the non-Turks of Europe and also to the Armenians. In the succeeding period I tried to get Grey to see that the Young Turks had come to stay, and that we might influence them if we were friendly. The policy was partially adopted, and Sir Ernest Cassel was induced to found a British Bank, to which Henry Babbington-Smith was appointed head. But England had chilled the Young Turks in the early days when all their sympathies were British, and we had thrown them into the arms of Germany whose powerful Ambassador, Marshall von Bieberstein soon became supreme.

Things drifted on till the world was again taken by surprise in 1912. Our old friend Bouchier of "The Times" had engineered a compromise between Serbs and Bulgars, and the result was the attack on Turkey of these Powers, together with Greece in 1912. No Balkan army had proper Red Cross equipment, so we formed the Balkan Relief Fund in order to send help. Harold and I went out in October to arrange for it. (See footnote)\*

Friends of Balkan liberation lived in deep anxiety when the little states faced a great Empire. But

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\*Footnote: See my book "With the Bulgarian Staff".

Bulgaria astonished the world by beating the Turks in pitched battle at Lule Burgas. When Harold and I got out to Sofia the main danger was passed. The Commander-in-Chief, General Savoff, was moving to near the battlefield, and we were flattered by being invited to go with him. Before leaving Sofia we fixed up arrangements for the Women's Convoy Corps, an ambulance unit organised by Mrs. Stobart, whom I met in London by chance, and who was grateful for my help in getting recognition from the Bulgarian Government. We then set off to meet Savoff and found him leaving the railway. An officer met us with horses, and when we stopped for the night, he was especially useful in compelling some peasant family to take us in. At the front the villages had been burnt in the advance, and smoke was still rising from some of them. When we looked into the remains of the houses we found the household utensils, wooden spoons and rough pottery, scattered around. The unfortunate Turkish peasants had fled at short notice with their ox-carts. Starving dogs slunk off. Spent cartridges belonging to ancient forms of rifles were strewn about. You could picture the Turkish peasant who would not or could not get away with the Turkish army, using his last shot at a Bulgar before he himself was shot down. Most of the peasants had retired as best they could, losing all their belongings. These refugees finally camped outside Constantinople,

and hundreds died of cholera because nobody was efficient enough to organise sanitation.

Arriving at Kirkilisse we rode over the battlefield. The dead had been hurriedly buried, but here and there a hand or foot appeared, or a head, often with the little bullet hole in the forehead, received as the man lay firing from his trench.

At Kirkilisse the wounded began to arrive from the dressing stations at the front where the poor chaps had been loaded on to farm carts. These had no springs and as they moved across roadless country the agonies endured must have frightful. There were so few expert hospital orderlies trying to cope with the wounded, with utterly inadequate resources, that Harold and I volunteered to help. Even we, who had no experience, added certainly to the work done. The men hobbled or were carried into an intolerably stuffy room, where we did our best, hoping that some at least of our bandages would remain in position. I wrote an article about this experience, which is included in my book "With the Bulgarian Staff". I thought it an opportunity to make some people realise what war means in regard to the wounded. It is a peculiar feature of war that this ghastly side of it is wholly concealed from public thought and almost entirely forgotten. Anyhow we learnt something about bandaging and realised better the wisdom of the Duke of Wellington when he said that war is Hell.

Meanwhile really fine work was being done by the Women's Convoy Corps, for which I was responsible. They had taken a fortnight, in the bullock carts provided for them, to travel the distance that we had ridden in two days, and they had camped every night in the open. They were full of zeal, and got to work far quicker than the splendidly equipped units of official Red Cross forces.

When the Armistice was signed and the London Conference took place, it was delightful to bring my parents into the world of Balkan affairs. The delegates of the three States came to Christmas dinner at Princes Gate, and we rejoiced with them that at all events the Turks had ceased to persecute European populations. But King Ferdinand had spoilt the game by his ambition to be crowned at Constantinople. Wasting his forces in Thrace, far away from Bulgaria and Macedonia, he had allowed the Serbs, and still more the Greeks, to forestall him in the country which Bulgaria should have obtained. The result was grievous. The Serbs, encouraged by Russia, betrayed the agreement they had made to divide the Macedonian country with Bulgaria. The Bulgarians, conscious of their military prowess and unduly despising the Serbs, attacked them. The result was disastrous.

On the terrace of the House of Commons (in June 1913)

I had entertained the Bulgar delegate and implored him to report that Bulgaria would lose British sympathy if she used force. His confident pride alarmed me. Bulgaria was beaten; Serbs, Greeks and also Roumanians invaded her. She was deprived of more than a quarter of her population; by the settlement of the Treaty of Bucharest, Macedonia was consigned to a vindictive tyranny and the seeds of future war were sown. That settlement was partly responsible for the Great War, which began a year later. Bulgaria was ready then to ally herself with any Power which might help to recover her rights, and this gave encouragement to German hopes of securing Bulgarian friendship, thus creating the route to the East which she had so long coveted.

When the Great War began, Bulgaria was accordingly under a premier and a king who represented the Anti-Allied side. But opinion was markedly divided, traditional sympathies being with Russia, and also with England. During August it was suggested in the Cabinet by Masterman that I should be sent to Bulgaria.\*

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\* A full record was made in the notes compiled by Mother.

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The two Ministers who were keen on cultivating Bulgaria, and therefore on my being sent, were Lloyd George and Churchill. On receipt of a wire from Masterman I raced back from Scotland and found that L.G. wanted to see me at Walton Heath. C.R.B. and I had the evening there, and the end of various interviews was a letter to me, authorising me to pledge the Treasury to loans of any extent to Balkan States. It sounded informal, but it was essentially sound, because King Ferdinand wanted money for himself and we might have literally bought Bulgarian aid. But L.G. wanted me to get Grey's approval of the letter, and Grey suppressed it. He asked me to go unofficially, but co-operating with legations and wiring through them. Churchill did what he could by naval transport, and by writing an eloquent letter of appeal to the Balkan States. I told Grey that I could not impress the Bulgars without complete official authority, because it was a matter of territory which Bulgaria must have if we were to prevent her joining Germany and giving help to Germany which would make a vast difference to the war. I doubted the use of going without that, and finally agreed to do so, and I persuaded C.R.B. to come with me.

It was a highly dramatic moment. The Germans were far into France. Paris was expected to fall, and the British Embassy

was packing for Bordeaux. The Paris-Lyons station was barricaded, in case of a sudden stampede of the frightened population to get away from the enemy. The train was so crowded that to get a rest one lay on the ground in the corridor, taking it in turns to find space to do so. Our luggage was heavy, providing for a possible long spell, but there was no porter to help carry it. We got at last to Brindisi, where Churchill was to send a warship for us. The British Consul got a wireless message that H.M.S. Hussar, which was lying off the port, was unable to approach the harbour for fear of being interned. There were no signs of the ship when we set off in a launch. She lay in fact so far out, that seeing nothing of her, we despaired for a long while of finding her. However, she appeared on the horizon at last, and it was a curious contrast to the hardship of our unassisted journey to be received with formal honours by the captain and a large company of naval officers, with an entire warship at our disposal.

The Captain's orders were to go full steam ahead to Salonika, but a problem arose when one of the crew was so ill that it was desirable to put him off at the Piraeus. We strongly supported the plan, but the Captain decided to stick to his orders and pushed on. In spite of a bad storm, in which the whole ship seemed to writhe when the



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propellers were lifted above the sea and raced madly, the man survived.

How to proceed when I got to Sofia was a problem. The Government was pro-German, but the Opposition included the most prominent politicians and was strong in the country. I could see Ministers, but it was difficult to reach Public Opinion. A police commission was sent to me to tell me that any public political utterance was vetoed. I therefore had to be careful and deliver my message through the English Speaking Association. But everyone knew what I stood for; on the other hand they could not estimate quite how far I represented the British Government. The chief evidence consisted of the fact that I had been sent to the Balkans in a British war ship. It was a picturesque situation at the Diplomatic Club, where we used to lunch; the German diplomats were in evidence, their staff being far more numerous than the British. The main obstacle to British success in angling for Bulgaria was the pro-Serbian mania of our Minister, Bax Ironside, who lost no opportunity of showing anti-Bulgarian views and naturally hated my coming at all. Being ordered to send my messages to the Foreign Office by the official channels, he relieved his feelings by denouncing Bulgaria when we were dining with him, enabling the servants to make known that he alluded to Bulgarians in general as "these savages". There was more to be done with the Ministers of the two countries

which Grey had to work with, France and Russia, and it transpired long afterwards that they had sent home very sound opinions following our discussions.

When it seemed that there was no more to be done for a time at Sofia, we thought it best to make an end of our public position by going away to Bucharest; and among other things to do there I thought I might see old King Carol, as I knew Queen Elizabeth. She was a friend of our cousin, Hilda Deichman, and had entertained Leland and me at her home in the Rhineland in 1904. I wrote to her and she asked us out to the palace in the country, and we had a long talk over tea. She and the King were known to be very pro-German, but the Government was pro-Ally. We left the palace about 6 o'clock, and the next morning we heard that the King had died in the night. It has been many times stated by German writers that obviously he died because I put poison in his tea.

We went back to Bucharest, and a few days later occurred the funeral of the King. The streets were crammed with people, and a dense crowd filled the little Square outside our hotel. We were going that afternoon to see a great farm, run by a Bulgarian banker friend of ours. We had just got into the open car, I being on the right hand of the rear seat, when, above the din of the crowd, I heard C.R.B. shout to me "Look out, we are being shot".

I then saw, on my right hand about three feet off, a man blazing at me. He fired six shots, and I remember feeling how could he possibly miss. Then the driver seized him from behind and threw him down. I felt no injury but saw that I was covered with blood. Charlie said "I am hurt, let's go to the hotel". It was only a few yards off, and we went straight to our bedroom and got on to the beds. He had been shot right through the body, the bullet passing through his lungs. I had only a broken jaw, the first bullet having been diverted by my pocket-book. The room was filled in a few minutes by an interested crowd, and shortly the British Minister, who happened to be our cousin, George Barclay, appeared in the full-dress uniform that he had worn at the funeral. There seemed to be no way of clearing the room, as I could only mumble; but C.R.B.'s life was in danger and fresh air imperative. Luckily Bouchier soon appeared, but things were not much better as he was deaf, and my broken jaw prevented me shouting to him. Then I managed to write on a bit of paper "Clear the room", and this he ~~did~~ was doing when two policemen burst through the crowd, dragging along the assassin, demanding that I should identify the man. I could only nod. Later on the leading doctor of Bucharest came and we were removed that night to the hospital. When we recovered we visited

the prisoner, and had an interesting talk. He had been a student in Paris and made an intellectual defence for nationalistic violence. He was very glad to get some books which we took him on another visit. I asked him if he still wished to kill me, and handed him my revolver (carefully unloaded). He said "I meant to kill you, but not your brother", so I was flattered.\*

Returning home and stopping in Paris, we saw Delcassé and Clemenceau, afterwards so famous at the Peace Conference, where he was known as "the Tiger". He did as much as anyone to spoil the peace and produce a second war. In London I had separate talks with nearly all the Cabinet; and I brought L.G. into contact with the Bulgarian Minister in London. Twice L.G. got me to give dinners in a private room at the Savoy Hotel, and at one moment he committed himself to what was necessary in talk with the Bulgarian Minister; but Grey again intervened and the matter dragged on. L.G. was exasperated and would sometimes summon me to join in the denunciation. One day after breakfast we walked from Downing Street all round St. James's Park lake, uttering condemnation. The Cabinet were being influenced

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\* Details are in my book "Travels and Reflections".

by the opposite school of thought, which had the support of the fiery Mrs. Pankhurst of Suffrage fame. She roused sympathy for the gallant Serbs and their right to claim any Balkan territory which they wanted. This conflicted with the rational policy of angling for Bulgaria, and helped to delay a rational policy. Grey adopted this too late, seven months after I had urged it on him. Too late again he saw that I had been right about the hostile influence of our Minister at Sofia, and removed him. The die had then been cast. Bulgaria joined Germany, furnishing the gangway to Turkey, which, as military experts have held, prolonged the war by two years.

Whether my policy would have succeeded has been much debated. I may be allowed to leave the answer to Mr. Lloyd George. In his "Memoirs" (Vol. IV. page 2404.) he writes:

"As far as Serbia is concerned, the best answer to this defence of the military leaders and head of the Government of that day was given by Mr. Noel Buxton (now Lord Noel-Buxton) later in the debate. Mr. Buxton was the greatest authority on the Balkans in the House of Commons. He gave illustrations from his own knowledge of the fatal delays of 1915 in dealing with the Balkan situation, owing to the lack of co-ordination amongst the Allies.

" His view was that had the Inter-Allied Council been

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in existence at that date, these delays would not have arisen and he expressed the opinion that: "There cannot be the slightest doubt that if by hook or by crook, co-ordination could have been brought about as early as that in the War, the whole situation would have been different and obviously the War would have been over long ago'."

## BALKANS.

People have often enquired of me why I was known in connection with the Balkans. The answer is partly given in what I have said in my "Travels", and a fuller reply is provided by my book "Travels and Reflections" and "With the Bulgarian Staff". Also the book which G.R.B. and I published during the war.

I took to going to the Balkans as my normal annual holiday, partly because I felt intensely the responsibility of our country for the atrocious fact that European populations were still misgoverned by the unspeakable Turk; but perhaps I should not have done so if I had not given up shooting. I am afraid my love of that sport would have kept me at home, but the Balkans furnished a field for real rough travel, with the chance of adventure, within three days of London; and I consider that, in those days, Balkan travel was far superior to ordinary tame sport, and deserved the name of "sport" more fully.

The fact that I became publicly connected with the Balkans was due to the chance that, in forming the Balkan Committee, we happened on a problem which roused intense interest in the politicians of all Europe because of the prospect of European war arising from the rival

ambitions of Austria-Hungary and Russia. The diplomats of those countries and of Germany could not imagine that any Britisher could be active about Balkan affairs unless he were the agent of his Government, and as Lord Grey said: "It was much easier in diplomacy to tell the truth than to get people to believe it".

It so happened that my name was the one connected with the supposed activities in the Balkan world itself. I was regarded as a pro-Bulgarian and consequently held in horror by the neighbouring nations, who competed for the possession of Macedonia.

In Greece, the Times correspondent, Bouchier, was also held in execration, and burnt in effigy. The name Buxton, spelt by the Greeks "MPOUKASTONU", became a genuine title for all those who sympathized with the obvious claim of the Bulgars. Subsequently when Bryce went to Macedonia, the Greek public denounced this famous man as being a Buxton. It was all because, after the population of Macedonia had been thrust back under the Turks in 1878, nobody had taken notice of their cruel fate until the Balkan Committee was formed. Naturally, when there was a revolt against the Turks in 1903, we organized relief, so admirably carried out by Brailsford, Nevinson, Lady Thompson and others. There was keen gratitude, and I was always moved by this feeling on the



part of the Bulgars, in whom it went with an attractive reserve, as compared with the spluttering effusion of some neighbouring peoples.

A quite false impression of my importance was created by that sort of chance. In 1903 the Times was much on our line, owing to its famous correspondent, Bouchier, being so keen. It gave me a shock when, being not yet in Parliament, and in the stage of aspiring to get my letter about the insurrection printed at all, the Times leading article spoke of the two schools of thought, one represented by the Prime Minister, Balfour, and the other by me.

My letter about the insurrection and massacres had another valuable effect. It encouraged Phillip Howell, who wrote for the Times on the Balkans, to write in the same strain, and led to his acquisition as a great friend.

Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, was very friendly to our agitation, and his influence on the other members of the Concert of Europe was partly based on the fact that British public opinion was deeply roused. The result of his efforts was the system of International Gendarmerie, with districts allotted to the officers of different states.

A climax arrived when war began in 1914. The Cabinet, instigated by Masterman, debated whether to

send me out, and C.R.B. and I started just as Paris was expected to fall, getting into the Gare de Lyons when it was barricaded against the expected rush of refugees.

The record of this journey is provided by the black book of notes which Mother compiled from our records; and a good survey of my Balkan <sup>efforts</sup> events appears in Evans' book, "Foreign Policy from a Back Bench".

Evans' book gives a good review of my Balkan activities, and here I had better record some more personal aspects of the work of the Balkan Committee. When I first became acquainted with the pitiable condition of the Macedonian peoples I was intensely moved by this gratuitous suffering and by the fact that it was due to the action of our own country in 1878. The insurrection of 1903, when the shocking massacres and burning of villages which followed it seemed to me almost intolerable, and my holiday at Humble in August of that year was occupied in attempting to rouse a useful pressure on the Government through the columns of the Times.

The Balkan Committee was assisted to activity by Mr. Bryce, and we were intensely busy from the end of August. We secured a big room in Adelphi Terrace in the house of Bernard Shaw, and there overlooking the river we concerted measures and produced leaflets

which secured public notice both here and abroad in a measure out of proportion to our diminutive numbers.

Through Barnett we secured a splendid secretary in Arthur Moore, and I have a quite thrilling recollection of lovely days of September weather (I had never been in London in September before) in intense efforts in which Brailsford, Nevingon, and C.R.B. were conspicuous. The exhilaration of fervent work afforded a pleasure which contrasted with the melancholy objects of our ambition. That autumn I got leave to take more time off from the Brewery, and spent the most of my evenings making speeches up and down the country. There was also a lot to do in seeing politicians, and especially Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, who by a stroke of luck was extremely sympathetic; though by no means of a Gladstonian humanitarian type, he was anxious to see reform, and in approaching the Powers who jointly could press the Sultan he wanted to be able to point to strong public feeling in Great Britain. This was the more gratifying to us when his cousin, Bishop Gore, told us that Lansdowne was in reality a notable cynic in such matters.

In the winter Hugh Law and I took Leland to the Balkans, and visited the region devastated by the Turks near the Black Sea, where in villages of which only one

or two houses remained under the deep January snow, we found children cowering and hiding themselves from the Turkish soldiers who escorted us.

At Adrianople, where one left the railway, the Turks refused to let us leave the town, and we persuaded the Greek Consul to help us to give them the slip, and at early dawn set off in one of the little carriages which were then the only means of Balkan travel. We had reached the place we desired, and were getting some lunch round a tiny stove which was thawing our frozen limbs, when suddenly there burst in the Governor's Secretary, whom we had deluded, and who had pursued us on learning of our departure. The poor man had a terrible toothache and was bandaged round his swollen face, and, suffering as he was from a failure to prevent our journey which may well have led to his dismissal from office, his figure was as pitiable as it was comic. Hugh Law's Memoirs no doubt make better play with this incident than I have done. I suffer as a recounter from a lack of dramatic sense, and the most hampering inhibition in regard to truth.

During the succeeding ten years I spent almost every autumn holiday in the Balkans, except when prevented by Parliamentary Sessions or elections. The first five of these years saw the gradual installation of the International Gendarmerie, and our

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My companions in the Balkans on my various journeys included Rollo Meyer, Cecil Harris, Noel Farrar, Hugh Law,

Leland (who surpassed us all by going with a Bulgarian band smuggling rifles across the frontier, and should properly have met his death from a Turkish frontier guard's bullet.)

In 1906 I had a specially interesting tour with V. de Bunsen and Lothar, and Rosslyn Bruce. Rosslyn and I came back by Berlin, and saw a good deal of Sir Frank Lascelles, who was then Ambassador. He was a delightful and sympathetic person, and believed that England could get on with Germany. He was intimate with the Kaiser, who had recently been sitting on the Ambassador's bed when laid up with a cold. I asked him if the Kaiser would be interested in putting a stop to the butchery in the Balkans. I had with me many photographs taken by gendarmerie officers, of the dead victims, and I said the Kaiser might be stirred up by these. Lascelles replied that not only would the Kaiser do nothing about it, but such things would not interest him in the least.

In 1907 C.R.B. and I took Charlie Masterman, and on the way back we interviewed the famous Austrian Foreign Minister, Aehrenthal, in the Hofburg at Vienna. We spoke to him of Grey's concern for reform in Turkey, and he replied "Nothing will happen, your Sir Grey is a man of peace, he catches little fishes". It was on this journey that we first got evidence of any sign of

dissatisfaction with the Sultan's regime on the part of Turkish officials. To my amazement one evening a Turkish local governor, taking all precaution against being overheard, began to talk what seemed such rank treason that I thought it was merely planned to drag us into statements which he would report to his superiors. It was, however, a genuine sign of the discontent which suddenly revealed itself in the Young Turk revolt of 1908. It was a movement of the active young men of Turkey to save their country from foreign domination, which they feared would result from the incompetence of Abdul Hamid. We were more than sceptical of the capacity of the Turkish mind to assimilate civilized ideas, but the Young Turks had energy, and quickly made friends with the rebel bands hitherto fighting against the Sultan, so that the former policy of control quickly lost its authority. We sent ~~out~~ the Balkans Committee Secretary and he, deeply moved by what he saw of the Young Turks, expressed himself with an enthusiasm which almost committed us to supporting their cause. But at the same time most of us favoured caution, and Sir Arthur Evans and I went to see Sir Edward Grey, and urged upon him that he should oppose the withdrawal of the Gendarmerie officers. The officers were, however, soon withdrawn

and for a time the rival forces made open friendship.

The question of reform was soon obscured by the international dangers which took its place. Grey's great concern was with German antagonism to England. With war in view, he had to cultivate Russia, and therefore, when Austria-Hungary seized the opportunity of Turkey's weakness to annex Bosnia, he came out as a bitter critic of Austrian policy. Russia protested and supported the indignant Serbs. Austrian troops were massed on the Serbian frontier, occupying the island in the Danube close to Belgrade. Just at this moment the Balkan Committee, having been invited by the Young Turks to send a deputation to Constantinople, were passing through Belgrade and stopping en route. Europe was full of alarms, and the Austrians persuaded themselves that we were secretly a British Delegation stirring up the Serbs.

This was not merely journalistic talk, as appeared long afterwards by the Foreign Office published records, showing the alarms of Austrian diplomacy. We escaped from the unwelcome publicity of this side of European politics and hurried on to meet the Young Turks. Our time at Constantinople was highly picturesque, involving banquets and plays at the theatre when we witnessed the ovation to Enver, the chief national hero, and were



entertained by the aged Grand Vizier at the instance of the Young Turks. These gentlemen, who made themselves most agreeable, were determined to use us in cultivating public opinion against the Sultan. After the Salemlik, or formal attendance at mosque of the Sultan, the scheme took startling form. We were suddenly requested to meet the Red Sultan himself. It would have been difficult and rude to refuse, but before accepting I insisted on consulting the eminent leader of the British community, Sir Edwin Pears. He approved and came with us. The little man with his hook nose, in a frock coat, received us in the manner depicted in the "Illustrated London News" and was duly humiliated in the eyes of the Turkish Public, as the Young Turks desired, by being compelled, at their instance, to receive the very people who had denounced his crimes, as the Turkish Public well knew. This was all part of the plan which ultimately led to the Sultan's <sup>h</sup>entertainment at Salonika, and the triumph of the Young Turks which lasted till after the war.

British diplomacy was not in sympathy with cultivating Young Turks, but though our ambassador, Sir Gerald Lowther, was aware of this he was formally kind, offered us the use of the Embassy pleasure boats and entertained us in our large numbers at dinner. After the ladies had left a picturesque episode occurred.

Sir Arthur Evans, as a world famous archaeologist concerned with the Near East, was naturally the person for Sir Gerald to pay attention to, but he devoted himself to a young man who had come out to tout for orders on behalf of one of the British armament firms. Evans was not prepared to be belittled, and to my astonishment suddenly rose, shook the Ambassador's hand without a word, and left the house.

The only person ~~wh~~ the Embassy who knew very much was Fitzmaurice, the permanent expert, with whom we made great friends, and whose warnings against believing the Young Turks as capable of civilization were followed by our Foreign Office, and we ourselves attempted as friendly critics to moderate their chauvinistic attitude to non-Turks of Europe and also of Armenia. In the succeeding period I tried to get Grey to see that the Young Turks had come to stay, and that we might influence them if we were friendly. The plan was partially adopted, and Sir Ernest Cassell induced to found a British Bank, to which Henry Babbington Smith was appointed Head, but we had chilled the Young Turks in the early days when all their sympathies were British, and we had thrown them into the arms of Germany, whose powerful Ambassador soon became supreme.

Things drifted on till the world was again taken by surprise in 1912. Our old friend, Bouchier of the Times had engineered a compromise between Serbs and Bulgars, and the result was the attack of these Powers together with Greece on Turkey in 1912. Of course no Balkan army had any kind of Red Cross equipment, and we started the Macedonian Balkan Relief Fund in order to send out help. Harold and I went out in October.

Friends of Balkan liberation lived in deep anxiety when the little states faced a great empire. But Bulgaria astonished the world by beating the Turks in pitched battle at Lule and Burgas. When Harold and I got out to Sofia the main danger was passed. General Savoff was moving to near the battlefield, and we were flattered by being invited to go with him. Before we set off, we fixed up arrangements for the Women's Convoy Corps, the ambulance unit organized in London by Mrs. Stobart, and extremely keen to do practical work for the first time. A member of the Bulgarian Staff, a major, was attached to us, and when we stopped for the night he was especially useful in compelling some peasant family to take us in. At the front the villages had been burnt in the advance, and smoke was still rising from some of them. As a rule, when we looked into the remains of the houses, we found still lying about the household utensils,

wooden spoons and rough pottery. Starved dogs slunk off, and spent cartridges belonging to ancient forms of breech-loading rifles were strewn about. You could picture the Turkish peasants who would not or could not get away with the Turkish army, using his last shot at a Bulgar before he himself was shot down. Most of the peasants had retired as best they could, losing all their belongings, and hundreds died of cholera outside Constantinople, where nobody was efficient enough to organize relief.

Harold and I were called on suddenly to help the wounded, who began to arrive from the dressing-stations at the front, and the poor chaps had been loaded on to farm carts, which had no springs. so the agonies endured must have been frightful. Our job was to help the few expert hospital orderlies who were trying to cope with the wounded with utterly inadequate resources. Even we, who had no experience, added certainly to the work done. The men hobbled or were carried into the intolerably stuffy room where we did our best, hoping that some at least of our bandages would remain in position. I wrote an article about this experience, which is included in my book "with the Bulgarian Staff". I thought it an opportunity to make some people realize what war means in regard to the wounded. It is a peculiar feature

of war that this ghastly side of it is wholly concealed from public thought and almost entirely forgotten. Anyhow we learnt something about bandaging and realized better the wisdom of the Duke of Wellington when he said that war is Hell.

Meanwhile really fine work was being done by the Women's Convoy Corps, for which I was responsible. They had taken a fortnight in the bullock carts provided for them to travel the distance that we had ridden in two days, and they had camped every night in the open. They were full of zeal and got to work far quicker than the splendidly equipped unit of the British Red Cross, which was also an invariable help in the desperate situation.

When the armistice was signed and the London Conference took place, it was delightful to bring my parents into the Balkan world. The delegates of the three States came to Christmas dinner at Princes Gate, and one felt happy that the Turks at all events had ceased to persecute European populations, but King Ferdinand had spoilt the game by his ambition to be crowned at Constantinople. Wasting his forces in Thrace, and far from Bulgaria, he had allowed the Serbs, and especially the Greeks, to forestall him in the country which Bulgaria should have ruled. The result

was grievous. The Serbs, encouraged by Russia, betrayed the agreement they had made to divide the Macedonian country, and the Bulgarians finally attacked them. The Bulgars were conscious of their military prowess and unduly despised the Serbs.

On the Terrace of the House of Commons in June 1913 I entertained their delegate and implored him to report that Bulgaria would lose British sympathy if she used force. His confident pride alarmed me. Bulgaria was beaten; the Roumanians stabbed them in the back; they were deprived of more than a quarter of their population, and the seeds of future war were sown by the unjust settlement of the Treaty of Bucharest. That settlement was partly responsible for the Great war, which began a year later. Bulgaria was ready to ally herself with any power which might recover her rights, and that gave vast encouragement to German prospects of successfully creating the route to the East which she had so long coveted.

When the war began, Bulgaria was accordingly under a premier and a king who represented the Anti-Allied side. But opinion was markedly divided, traditional sympathies being with Russia, and also with England. During August it was suggested in the Cabinet that I should be sent to Bulgaria, and so came about the events which are recorded in the notes compiled by Mother.

The two Ministers who were keen on cultivating Bulgaria, and therefore on my being sent, were Lloyd George and Churchill. On receipt of a wire from Masterman I raced back from Scotland and found that L.C. wanted to see me at Walton Heath. G.R.B. and I had the evening there, and the end of various interviews was a letter to me, authorizing me to pledge the Treasury to loans of any extent to Balkan States. It sounded informal, but it was essentially sound, because Ferdinand wanted money for himself and we might have literally bought Bulgarian aid. But of course I had to show the letter to Grey, and he suppressed it. He asked me to go unofficially, but co-operating with legations and wiring through them. Churchill did what he could by naval transport, and by writing an eloquent letter of appeal to the Balkan States. I told Grey I did not believe the trick could be done without official authority, because it was a matter of territory which Bulgaria must have if we were to prevent her giving Germany the help which would make a vast difference to the war. I doubted the use of going without that, but finally agreed to go. I persuaded G.R.B. to come, but I would not have done so if I had foreseen that he would be shot through the lungs.

It was a highly dramatic moment. The Germans were far into France. Paris was expected to fall,

and the British Embassy were packing up for Bordeaux. The Paris Lyons station was barricaded, in case of a sudden stampede of the frightened population to get away from the enemy. The train was so crowded that to get a rest one lay on the ground, in the corridor, taking it in turns to find space to do so. Our luggage had to provide for a possible long spell, but there was no porter to help carry it. We got at last to Brindisi, where Churchill was to send a warship for us. The British Consul at last got a wireless message that H.M.S. Hussar, which was lying off the port, was unable to approach the harbour for fear of being interned. There were no signs of the ship. She lay in fact so far out, that seeing nothing of her, we despaired of finding her for a long while. However, she appeared on the horizon at last, and it was a curious contrast to the hardship of our unassisted journey to be received with formal honours by the large company of naval officers, and an entire warship to ourselves.

The Captain's orders were to go full steam ahead to Salonika, but a problem arose when one of the crew was so ill that it was desirable to put him off at The Pireas. We strongly supported the plan, but the Captain decided to stick to his orders



and pushed on. In spite of a bad storm, in which the whole ship seemed to writhe when the propellers were lifted above the sea and raced madly, the man happily survived.

How to proceed when I got to Sofia was a problem. The Government was pro-German, but the Opposition included the most prominent politicians and was strong in the country. I could see ministers, but it was difficult to reach Public Opinion. A police commission was sent to me, to tell me of the embargo on any political utterance. I therefore had to be careful and deliver my message through the English Speaking Association. But everyone knew what I stood for; on the other hand they could not estimate quite how far I represented the British Government. The chief evidence consisted of the fact that I had been sent to the Balkans in a British war ship. It was a picturesque situation at the Diplomatic Club, where we used to lunch; the German diplomats were in evidence, their staff being far more numerous than the British. Our minister, Max Ironside, lost no opportunity of showing anti-Bulgarian views. He hated my coming at all. Being ordered to send my messages to the Foreign Office by the official channels, he relieved his feelings by denouncing Bulgaria when we were dining

with him, enabling the servants to make known that he alluded to Bulgarians in general as "those savages". There was more to be done with the ministers of the two countries which Grey had to work with, France and Russia, and it transpired long afterwards that they had sent home very sound opinions following on our discussions. When it seemed that there was no more to be done for a time at Sofia, we thought it best to make an end of our public position by going away to Bucharest; and among other things to do there I thought I might see old King Carol, as I knew Queen Elizabeth, she being a friend of our cousin, Hilda Deighmann, and she had entertained Leland and me at home in the Rhineland in 1904. She asked us out to the palace in the country, and we had a long talk over tea. She and the King were known to be very pro-German, but the Government was opposed. We left the palace about 6 o'clock, and the next morning we heard that the King had died in the night. It has been many times stated by German writers that obviously he died because I put poison in his tea. We went back to Bucharest, and a few days later occurred the funeral of the King. The streets were crammed with people, and a dense crowd filled the Square outside our hotel. We were going that afternoon to see a great farm run by a Bulgarian banker friend. We had just got into the

open car, I being on the right hand of the rear seat, when, above the din of the crowd, I heard C.R.B. suddenly cry to me "Look out, we are being shot". I then saw on my right about three feet off a man blazing at me. He had fired about six shots, and I remember feeling how could he possibly miss, and just then the driver knocked him down. I felt no injury but saw that I was covered with blood. Charlie said "I am hurt, let us go to the hotel". It was only a few yards off, and we went straight to our bedroom and got on to the beds. He had been shot right through the body, the bullet passing through his lungs. I had only a broken jaw. The room was filled in a few minutes by an interested crowd, and shortly the British Minister, who happened to be our cousin, George Barclay, appeared in the full-dress uniform that he wore at the funeral. There seemed to be no way of clearing the room, as I could only mumble. Luckily Bouchier soon appeared, as C.R.B.'s life was in danger, and fresh air was imperative. But things were not much better as Bouchier was deaf, but I managed to write on a bit of paper "Clear the room" and this he did, only impeded by two policemen dragging in the assassin, demanding that I should identify the man. Later on the leading doctor of Bucharest came and

we were removed that night to the hospital. If further details are desired, they are in my volume "Travels and Reflections". When we recovered we visited the prisoner, and had an interesting talk. He had been a student in Paris and was very glad to get some books which we took him on another visit. I asked him if he still wished to kill me, and handed him my revolver (carefully unloaded). He said "I meant to kill you, but not your brother", so I was flattered.

Returning home and stopping in Paris, we saw Delcasse and Clemenceau, afterwards so famous at the Peace Conference, where he was known as "the Tiger". He did as much as anyone I know to spoil the peace and produce the second war. In London I had separate talks with nearly all the Cabinet; and I brought L.G. into contact with the Bulgarian Minister in London. Twice L.G. got me to give dinners at the Savoy Hotel, and at one moment he committed himself to what was necessary in talk with the Bulgarian Minister; but Grey again intervened and the matter dragged on. The Cabinet were being influenced by the opposite school of thought, which had the support of the fiery Mrs. Pankhurst of Suffrage fame, who roused sympathy for gallant little Serbia and her rights to claim as she liked for any Balkan territory. This conflicted with the rational policy of an ~~ing~~ for Bulgaria, and helped to delay a sensible policy which Grey

adopted too late, seven months after I had urged it on him. Another obstacle was the hostile influence of our Minister at Sofia, who was violently anti-Bulgarian. It was not until the summer that Grey saw that I had been right, and removed him. The die had then been cast. Bulgaria joined Germany, furnishing the gangway to Turkey, which probably prolonged the war by two years.

Balkans

Chapter XI

(Committee p 148)  
Copy put bits in later  
Welcome to the BALKANS.

Ch. XI  
Balkan Ref.

People have often enquired of me why I was known in connection with the Balkans. The answer is partly given in what I have said in my <sup>book</sup> "Travels", and a fuller reply <sup>+ reflections</sup> is provided by my book, <sup>Europe + the Turke</sup> "Travels and Reflections" and "With the Bulgarian Staff", <sup>in "the wars of the Balkans"</sup> + Also the book which C.R.B. and I published during the war.

I took to going to the **Balkans** as my normal annual holiday, partly because I felt intensely the responsibility of our country for the atrocious fact that European populations were still misgoverned by the unspeakable <sup>owing to the intervention of Disraeli in 1878.</sup> Turk; but perhaps I should not have done so if I had not given up shooting, <sup>in the autumn</sup> for I am afraid my love of that sport would have kept me at home; but the Balkans furnished a field for real rough travel, with the chance of adventure, within three days of London; and I considered that, in those days, Balkan travel was far superior to ordinary tame sport, and deserved <sup>(as it was then)</sup> the name of "sport" more fully. <sup>far more than tame shooting.</sup>

The fact that I became publicly connected with the Balkans was due to the chance that, in forming the Balkan Committee, we happened on a problem which roused intense interest in the politicians of all Europe because of the prospect of European war arising from the rival

Ch. VII  
Balkan Reform

(Committee p 148)  
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Welfare in the BALKANS.

Balkans

Chapter VII

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The fact that I became publicly connected with the Balkans was due to the chance that, in forming the Balkan Committee, we happened on a problem which roused intense interest in the politicians of all Europe because of the prospect of European war arising from the rival

ambitions of Austria-Hungary and Russia. The diplomats of those countries and of Germany could not imagine that any Britisher could be active about Balkan affairs unless he were the agent of his Government, and as Lord Grey said:

"It was much easier in diplomacy to tell the truth than <sup>(+ our own observation)</sup> to get people to believe it". <sup>Experts like Sir Arthur Evans led us to hold that the Macedonians were mainly Bulgarian & that a Macedonian state should take the place of Turkish Macedonia.</sup> It so happened that my name was the one connected with the supposed activities in the Balkan world itself.

So I was regarded as a pro-Bulgarian and consequently held in horror by the neighbouring nations, <sup>Serb. & Greek, aspired to</sup> who competed for the possession of Macedonia.

In Greece, the Times correspondent, Bouchier, <sup>for the same reason as I</sup> was also held in execration, and burnt in effigy. The name Buxton, spelt by the Greeks "MPOUKASTONU", became a <sup>genuine</sup> title for all those who sympathized with the <sup>obvious</sup> claim of the Bulgars. Subsequently when <sup>Lord</sup> Bryce went to Macedonia, the Greek public denounced this famous man as being a Buxton. It was all because, after the population of Macedonia had been thrust back under the Turks in 1878, nobody had taken notice of their cruel fate until the Balkan Committee was formed. Naturally, when there was a revolt against the Turks in 1903, we organized relief, so admirably carried out by Brailsford, Nevinson, Lady Thompson and others. There was keen gratitude, and I was always moved by this feeling on the



part of the Bulgars, in whom it went with an attractive reserve, as compared with the spluttering effusion of ~~some~~ <sup>the</sup> neighbouring peoples.

A quite false impression of my importance was created by that sort of chance. In 1903 the Times was much on our line, owing to its famous correspondent, Bouchier, being so keen. It gave me <sup>an agreeable</sup> shock when, being not yet in Parliament, and in the stage of aspiring to get my letter about the insurrection printed at all, the Times leading article spoke of the two schools of thought, one represented by the Prime Minister, Balfour, and the other by me.

My letter about the insurrection and massacres had another valuable effect. It encouraged Phillip Howell, <sup>was temporary correspondent</sup> who wrote for the Times on the Balkans, to write in the same strain, and led to his acquisition as a great friend.

Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, was very friendly to our agitation, <sup>as</sup> and his influence on the other members of the concert of Europe was partly based on the fact that British public opinion was deeply roused. The result of his efforts was the system of international Gendarmerie, with ~~districts~~ <sup>as</sup> allotted to the officers of different states.

A climax arrived when war began in 1914. The Cabinet, instigated by Masterman, debated whether to

1903-08  
1914  
p148-187  
is better

*The war gave Germany access to Turkey as to the East. Lloyd George & Churchill were strong advocates. Knowing that if Bulgaria joined Germany the war would be decided to be prolonged. 148 We felt that she we need Macedonia as a condition of alliance but Grey would not agree to this.*

send me out, and C.R.B. and I started just as Paris was expected to fall, getting into the Gare de Lyons when it was barricaded against the expected rush of refugees.

The record of this journey is provided by the black book of notes which mother compiled from our records; and a good survey of my Balkan <sup>efforts</sup> events appears in Evans' book, "Foreign Policy from a Back Bench".

*(Begin here)*

Evans' book gives a good review of my Balkan activities, and here I had better record some more personal aspects of the work of the Balkan Committee.

When I first became acquainted with the pitiable condition of the Macedonian peoples I was intensely moved by <sup>their</sup> this gratuitous sufferings and by the fact that <sup>these were</sup> it was due to the action of our own country, in 1878, when Disraeli preserved the Turkish empire in being by Russia.

the insurrection of 1903, <sup>with</sup> the shocking massacres and burning of villages which followed it, seemed to me <sup>an imperative call</sup> almost intolerable, and my holiday at Humber in August of that year was occupied in attempting to rouse a useful pressure on the Government through the columns of the Times.

*which C.R.B. had founded in 1902*

The Balkan Committee was assisted to activity by Mr. Bryce, and we were intensely busy from the end of August. We secured a big room in Adelphi Terrace in the house of Bernard Shaw, and there, overlooking the river, we <sup>organised meetings</sup> concerted measures and produced leaflets

which secured public notice both here and abroad in a measure out of <sup>all</sup> proportion to our diminutive numbers.

Through <sup>Carson</sup> Barnett we secured a splendid secretary in Arthur Moore, and I have a <sup>quite</sup> thrilling recollection ~~of lovely days of September weather (I had never been~~

~~in London in September before)~~ <sup>of</sup> in intense efforts ~~in~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~move our Forum, & the Council of Europe,~~ <sup>towards imposing reform on Turkey</sup> which Brailsford, Nevington, and C.R.B. were conspicuous. <sup>workers</sup>

The exhilaration <sup>in</sup> of fervent work afforded a pleasure which contrasted with the <sup>in</sup> melancholy objects of our ambition. That autumn I got leave to take more time off from the Brewery, and spent ~~the~~ most of my evenings making speeches up and down the country. There was also a lot to do in seeing politicians, and especially Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, who by a stroke of luck was extremely sympathetic, <sup>in</sup> though by no means of a Gladstonian humanitarian type, he was anxious to see <sup>in order to avoid war</sup> reform, and in approaching the Powers who jointly could press the Sultan he wanted to be able to point to strong public feeling in Great Britain. This was the more gratifying to us when his cousin, Bishop Gore, told us that Lansdowne was in reality <sup>quite</sup> a notable cynic in such matters.

In the winter Hugh Law and I took Leland to the Balkans, and visited the region devastated by the Turks near the Black sea, where in villages of which only one

or two houses remained under the deep January snow, we found children <sup>starving</sup> cowering, and hiding themselves from the Turkish soldiers who escorted us.

At Adrianople, where one left the railway, the turks refused to let us leave the town, and we persuaded the Greek consul to help us to give them the slip, and ~~at~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>we</sup> early dawn set off in one of the little carriages which were then the only means of Balkan travel. We had reached the place we desired, and were ~~getting some lunch round a tiny store~~ <sup>some lunch round a tiny store</sup> which was thawing our frozen limbs, when suddenly there burst in the Governor's secretary, whom we had ~~deluded~~, and who had pursued us on learning of our departure. The poor man had a terrible toothache and was bandaged round his swollen face, and, <sup>also</sup> suffering as he was from a failure to prevent our journey which may well have led to his dismissal from office, his <sup>appearance</sup> figure was as pitiable as it was comic. [Hugh Law's Memoirs no doubt make better play with this incident than I have done. I suffer as a recounter from a lack of dramatic sense, and the most hampering inhibition in regard to truth.]

During the succeeding ten years I spent almost every autumn holiday in the Balkans, except when prevented by Parliamentary Sessions or elections. The first five of these years saw the gradual installation of the International Gendarmerie, and our

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travels were assisted by the presence of officers, British, Austrian, French and Italian, according to their several districts, ~~who~~ <sup>except to inspect, they</sup> having no authority, were mainly employed in recording <sup>these</sup> the outrages, which resulted not only from the habits of the Turks, but from the murderous activities of armed bands from the neighbouring states, each of whom was hoping to inherit the land on the demise of "the sick man" <sup>+ wished to exterminate its rival.</sup> The chief sufferers were the Bulgarians, against whom the Greeks and Serbs were assisted by the Turks, because Bulgarian claims were naturally strongest, and the Turks only feared attack from Bulgaria; so the unfortunate Bulgarian villages were rendered powerless to resist the bloodthirsty bands, among whom the Greeks probably took the prize for atrocity.

~~On one occasion,~~ <sup>In 1907</sup> when at Monastir, we came on one of these typical disasters; a large and prosperous village called Smilevo had been suddenly attacked by a Greek band on a Sunday morning. Many had been killed, and we found the wounded still in the gala peasant dress which they wear on Sundays. They had no medical aid, because the Turks did not allow it to reach them. It was a pitiable scene, but nothing came of such episodes except an addition <sup>what was called by the foreign officers</sup> to the butcher's bill.

My companions in the Balkans on my various journeys included Rollo Meyer, Cecil Harris, Noel Farrer, Hugh Law, + Charlie, Charles Masterman, + + Loman de Brunsen, Rowlyn Bruce,

Leland, who surpassed us all by going with a Bulgarian band, smuggling rifles <sup>into Turkey</sup> across the frontier, and should properly have met his death from a Turkish frontier guard's bullet.

In 1906 I had a specially interesting tour with <sup>the</sup> de Bunsen ~~and Lothar~~, and Rosslyn Bruce. Rosslyn and I came back by Berlin, and saw a good deal of Sir Frank Lascelles, who was then Ambassador. He was a delightful and sympathetic person, and believed that England could get on with Germany. He was intimate with the Kaiser, who had recently been sitting on the Ambassador's bed when <sup>the latter was</sup> laid up with a cold. I asked him if the Kaiser would be interested in putting a stop to the butchery in the Balkans. I had with me many photographs taken by gendarmerie officers, of the dead victims, and I said the Kaiser might be stirred up by these. Lascelles replied that not only would the Kaiser do nothing about it, but <sup>that</sup> such things <sup>as massacres would not concern</sup> would not interest him in the least.

In 1907 C.R.B. and I took Charlie Masterman, and on the way back we interviewed the famous Austrian Foreign Minister, Aehrenthal, in the Hofburg at Vienna. We spoke to him of Grey's concern for reform in Turkey, and he replied "Nothing will happen, your Sir Grey is a man of peace, he catches little fishes". It was on this journey that we first got evidence of any sign of

dissatisfaction with the Sultan's regime on the part of Turkish officials. To my amazement one evening a Turkish local governor, taking all precaution against being overheard, began to talk what seemed such rank treason that I thought it was merely planned to <sup>draw</sup> drag us into statements which he would report to his superiors. It was, however, a genuine sign of the discontent which suddenly revealed itself in the Young Turk revolt of 1908. It was a movement of the active young men of Turkey to save their country from foreign domination, which they feared would result from the incompetence of Abdul Hamid. We were more than sceptical of the capacity of the Turkish mind to assimilate civilized ideas, but the Young Turks had energy, and quickly made friends with the rebel bands hitherto fighting against the Sultan, so that the former policy of control quickly lost its authority. We sent out the Balkans Committee secretary and he, deeply moved by what he saw of the young Turks, expressed himself with an enthusiasm which almost committed us to supporting their cause. But at the same time most of us favoured caution, and Sir Arthur Evans and I went to see Sir Edward Grey, and <sup>to</sup> urged upon him that he should oppose the withdrawal of the Gendarmerie officers. The officers were, however, soon withdrawn

and for a time the rival forces made open friendship.

The question of reform was soon obscured by the international dangers which took its place. Grey's great concern was with German antagonism to England. With war in view, he had to cultivate Russia, and therefore, when Austria-Hungary seized the opportunity of Turkey's weakness to annex Bosnia, he came out as a bitter critic of Austrian policy. Russia protested *also,* and supported the indignant Serbs. Austrian troops were massed on the Serbian frontier, occupying the

island in the Danube close to Belgrade. <sup>we 2</sup> Just at this moment the Balkan Committee, having been invited by the Young Turks to send a deputation to Constantinople, were passing through Belgrade and stopping en route. Europe was full of alarms, and the Austrians persuaded themselves

that we were secretly a British Delegation stirring up the Serbs. *The Austrian government complained that we gave arms to the Serbs. The Serbs were afraid of Austrian spies.*

*Linnet Howell, sketching in Belgrade, was there. This was not merely journalistic talk, as appeared long afterwards by the Foreign Office published records, the publicity forced on us of innocent humanitarianism was embarrassing, but it was amusing to think of how terrible we appeared.*

showing the alarms of Austrian diplomacy. *Complications* We escaped from the unwelcome publicity of this *part* side of European

politics and hurried on to meet the Young Turks. Our time at Constantinople was highly picturesque, involving *attendance* banquets, and plays at the theatre when we witnessed the an

ovation to Enver, the chief national hero, and were



entertained by the aged Grand Vizier at the instance of the Young Turks. These gentlemen, who made themselves most agreeable, were determined to use us in cultivating public opinion against the Sultan. After the ~~Salemlik~~, or formal attendance at mosque of the Sultan, the scheme took startling form. We were suddenly requested to meet the Red Sultan himself. It would have been difficult and rude to refuse, but before accepting I insisted on consulting the eminent leader of the British community, Sir Edwin Pears. He approved and came with us. *It was indeed a drama when the Red-handed Sultan*  
~~little man with his hook nose, in a frock coat, received~~ *Abdul the Damned,*  
~~us in the manner depicted in the "Illustrated London News"~~ *as his guests,*  
~~and was duly humiliated in the eyes of the Turkish Public,~~ *thus*  
~~as the Young Turks desired, by being compelled,~~ *He was by the Young Turks*  
~~instance, to receive the very people who had denounced~~  
~~his crimes, as the Turkish Public well knew. This was~~  
~~all part of the plan which ultimately led to the Sultan's~~  
~~entertainment at Salonika, and the triumph of the Young Turks,~~ *inferment*  
~~which lasted till after the war.~~ *Great*

British diplomacy was not in sympathy with *our* cultivating young Turks, but though our Ambassador, Sir Gerald Lowther, was aware of this he was *very civil,* formally kind, offered us the use of the Embassy pleasure boats, and entertained us in our large numbers at dinner. After the ladies had left *the table* a picturesque episode occurred.

*Boothman*

Sir Arthur Evans, as a world famous archaeologist concerned with the Near East, was naturally the person for Sir Gerald to pay attention to, but he devoted himself to a young man who had come out to tout for orders on behalf of one of the British armament firms. Evans was not prepared to be belittled, and to my astonishment <sup>he</sup> suddenly rose, shook the Ambassador's hand without a word, and left the house.

The only person ~~in~~ the Embassy who knew very much was Fitzmaurice, <sup>the dragoman</sup> the permanent expert, with whom we made great friends, and <sup>his</sup> whose warnings against believing the Young Turks <sup>to be</sup> as capable of civilization were followed by our Foreign Office, and we ourselves attempted as friendly critics to moderate <sup>the Young Turks'</sup> their chauvinistic attitude to <sup>the</sup> non-Turks of Europe and also <sup>to the</sup> of Armenians. In the succeeding period I tried to get Grey to see that the young Turks had come to stay, and that we might influence them if we were friendly. <sup>policy</sup> The plan was partially adopted, and Sir Ernest Cassel <sup>was</sup> induced to found a British Bank, to which Henry Babbington-Smith was appointed head, <sup>England</sup> but we had chilled the Young Turks in the early days when all their sympathies were British, and we had thrown them into the arms of Germany, whose powerful Ambassador <sup>Marrhall von Bismarck</sup> soon became supreme.

Things drifted on till the world was again taken by surprise in 1912. Our old friend, Bouchier of the Times had engineered a compromise between Serbs and Bulgars, and the result was the attack <sup>on Turkey</sup> of these Powers, together with Greece, ~~on Turkey~~ in 1912. ~~Of course~~ <sup>no</sup> Balkan army had any kind of Red Cross equipment, ~~and we~~ <sup>so</sup> started the Macedonian Balkan Relief Fund in order to send out help. Harold and I went out in October, <sup>to arrange for it. X (footnote)</sup>

Friends of Balkan liberation lived in deep anxiety when the little states faced a great Empire. But Bulgaria astonished the world by beating the Turks in pitched battle at Lule ~~and~~ Burgas. When Harold and I got out to Sofia the main danger was passed. <sup>The Commander in chief</sup> General Savoff was moving to near the battlefield, and we were flattered by being invited to go with him. <sup>leaving Sofia,</sup> Before ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> set off, we fixed up arrangements for the women's Convoy Corps, <sup>an</sup> the ambulance unit organized in London by Mrs. Stobart, <sup>whom I met in London by chance, & who was grateful for my help in getting recognition from the Bulgarian government.</sup> and extremely keen to do practical work for the first time. <sup>We then set off to meet Savoff, & found him leaving the railway.</sup> A member of the Bulgarian Staff, a major, <sup>An officer met us with horses</sup> was attached to us, and when we stopped for the night he was especially useful in compelling some peasant family to take us in. At the front the villages had been burnt in the advance, and smoke was still rising from some of them. ~~As a rule,~~ <sup>When</sup> we looked into the remains of the houses, we found ~~still lying about~~ the household utensils,

<sup>Footnote.</sup>  
X See my book 'With the Bulgarian Staff'

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scattered <sup>around</sup> ~~about~~. The <sup>Turkish</sup> ~~unfortunate~~ peasants <sup>158</sup> fled with  
wooden spoons and rough pottery. <sup>at short notice with their own carts.</sup> Starved dogs slunk  
off, and spent cartridges belonging to ancient forms  
of breech-loading rifles were strewn about. You could  
picture the Turkish peasants who would not or could not  
get away with the Turkish army, using his last shot at  
a Bulgar before he himself was shot down. Most of the  
peasants had retired as best they could, losing all  
their belongings, <sup>These refugees finally camped</sup> and hundreds died of cholera <sup>there</sup> outside  
Constantinople, <sup>because</sup> where nobody was efficient enough to  
organize relief. <sup>sanitation.</sup>

<sup>at Kirk Kilisse</sup>  
~~Harold and I were called on suddenly to help the~~  
wounded, who began to arrive from the dressing-stations  
at the front, <sup>where</sup> and the poor chaps had been loaded on to  
farm carts, <sup>These had no springs, + they moved across roadless country</sup> which had no springs. so the agonies endured  
must have been frightful. <sup>They had been Harold + I volunteered to help</sup> Our job was to help <sup>the few</sup>  
<sup>There were so few</sup> expert hospital orderlies who were trying to cope with  
the wounded, <sup>that Harold + I volunteered to help.</sup> with utterly inadequate resources. Even we,  
who had no experience, added certainly to the work done.  
The men hobbled or were carried into <sup>an</sup> the intolerably  
stuffy room, where we did our best, hoping that some at  
least of our bandages would remain in position. I wrote  
an article about this experience, which is included in  
my book "with the Bulgarian Staff". I thought it an  
opportunity to make some people realize what war means  
in regard to the wounded. It is a peculiar feature

of war that this ghastly side of it is wholly concealed from public thought and almost entirely forgotten. Anyhow we learnt something about bandaging and realized better the wisdom of the Duke of Wellington when he said that war is Hell.

Meanwhile really fine work was being done by the Women's Convoy Corps, for which I was responsible. They had taken a fortnight, in the bullock carts provided for them, to travel the distance that we had ridden in two days, and they had camped every night in the open. They were full of zeal, and got to work far quicker than the splendidly equipped units of the <sup>Official</sup> British Red Cross ~~forces~~ <sup>of Russia</sup> which was also an invariable help in the desperate situation.

When the armistice was signed and the London Conference took place, it was delightful to bring my parents into the Balkan world, <sup>of Balkan affairs</sup> the delegates of the three States came to Christmas dinner at Princes Gate, <sup>we rejoiced with them</sup> and one felt happy that the turks at all events had ceased to persecute European populations, But king Ferdinand had spoilt the game by his ambition to be crowned at Constantinople. Wasting his forces in Thrace, and far from Bulgaria, <sup>in Macedonia</sup> he had allowed the serbs, and <sup>still more</sup> especially the Greeks, to forestall him in the country which Bulgaria should have <sup>obtained</sup> ruled. The result

(Page 15 B is good copy)

was grievous. The Serbs, encouraged by Russia, betrayed the agreement they had made to divide the Macedonian country <sup>with Bulgaria.</sup> and the Bulgarians <sup>with disastrous results.</sup> finally attacked them. The Bulgars were conscious of their military prowess and unduly despised the Serbs. *The result was disastrous.*

On the Terrace of the House of Commons (in June 1913) I <sup>had</sup> entertained <sup>the Bulgarian</sup> their delegate and implored him to report that Bulgaria would lose British sympathy if she used force. His confident pride alarmed me. Bulgaria was beaten; <sup>Serbs, Greeks & also Rumanians invaded her.</sup> ~~the Rumanians stabbed them in the back;~~ <sup>they</sup> were deprived of more than a quarter of their population; <sup>was</sup> ~~Macedonia was consigned to a vindictive tyranny;~~ and the seeds of future war were sown by the unjust

settlement of the Treaty of Bucharest. That settlement was partly responsible for the Great war, which began a year later. Bulgaria was ready <sup>then</sup> to ally herself with any <sup>help to</sup> power which might recover her rights, and that gave <sup>this</sup> vast encouragement to <sup>German hopes of securing Bulgarian friendship.</sup> ~~German prospects of successfully~~ <sup>thus</sup> creating the route to the East which she had so long coveted.

When the <sup>great</sup> war began, Bulgaria was accordingly under a premier and a king who represented the Anti-Allied side. But opinion was markedly divided, traditional sympathies being with Russia, and also with England. During August it was suggested in the <sup>by masterman</sup> Cabinet that I should be sent to Bulgaria, ~~and so came about the~~ events which are recorded <sup>V</sup> in the notes compiled by Mother.

x Footnote. a full record was made in that

The two Ministers who were keen on cultivating Bulgaria, and therefore on my being sent, were Lloyd George and Churchill. On receipt of a wire from Masterman I raced back from Scotland and found that L.G. wanted to see me at Walton Heath. C.R.B. and I had the evening there, and the end of various interviews was a letter to me, authorizing me to pledge the

treasury to loans of any extent to Balkan States. It sounded informal, but it was essentially sound,

because <sup>King</sup> Ferdinand wanted money for himself and we might have literally bought Bulgarian aid. <sup>But I wanted me</sup> But of course I <sup>to get Grey's approval of the letter</sup> had to show the letter to Grey, and he suppressed it.

He asked me to go unofficially, but co-operating with legations and wiring through them. Churchill did what he could by naval transport, and by writing an eloquent letter of appeal to the Balkan States. I told Grey I

<sup>that I could not impress the Bulgars without</sup> ~~did not believe the trick could be done without official~~ <sup>complete official</sup> authority, because it was a matter of territory which

Bulgaria must have if we were to prevent her <sup>joining</sup> giving Germany, <sup>+ giving to Germany</sup> the help which would make a vast difference to the war. I doubted the use of going without that, but

finally agreed to go, <sup>with me.</sup> I persuaded C.R.B. to come, but

I would not have done so if I had foreseen that he would be <sup>wish his life was doing so.</sup> shot through the lungs.

It was a highly dramatic moment. The Germans were far into France. Paris was expected to fall,

and the British Embassy <sup>was</sup> were packing up for Bordeaux. The Paris-Lyons station was barricaded, in case of a sudden stampede of the frightened population to get away from the enemy. The train was so crowded that to get a rest one lay on the ground, in the corridor, taking it in turns to find space to do so. Our luggage <sup>was heavy,</sup> had to provide <sup>ing</sup> for a possible long spell, but there was no porter to help carry it. We got at last to Brindisi, where Churchill was to send a warship for us. The British Consul ~~at last~~ got a wireless message that H.M.S. Hussar, which was lying off the port, was unable to approach the harbour for fear of being interned. There were no signs of the ship. <sup>when we set off in a launch.</sup> She lay in fact so far out, that seeing nothing of her, we despaired of finding her for a long while. However, she appeared on the horizon at last, and it was a curious contrast to the hardship of our unassisted journey to be received with formal honours by the <sup>captain & a</sup> large company of naval officers, <sup>with</sup> and an entire warship to <sup>at our disposal.</sup> ourselves.

The Captain's orders were to go full steam ahead to Salonika, but a problem arose when one of the crew was so ill that it was desirable to put him off at <sup>Ciracene</sup> the Pireas. We strongly supported the plan, but the Captain decided to stick to his orders



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and pushed on. In spite of a bad storm, in which the whole ship seemed to writhe when the propellers were lifted above the sea and raced madly, the man happily survived.

How to proceed when I got to Sofia was a problem. The Government was pro-German, but the Opposition included the most prominent politicians and was strong in the country. I could see ministers, but it was difficult to reach public opinion. A police commission was sent to me, to tell me <sup>that</sup> of the embargo on any <sup>was vetoed</sup> public political utterance. I therefore had to be careful and deliver my message through the English Speaking Association. But everyone knew what I stood for; on the other hand they could not estimate quite how far I represented the British Government. The chief evidence consisted of the fact that I had been sent to the Balkans in a British war ship. It was a picturesque situation at the Diplomatic Club, where we used to lunch; the German diplomats were in evidence, their staff being far more numerous than the British. Our minister, <sup>The main obstacle to British success in anything for Bulgaria by was</sup> ~~Max~~ Ironside, <sup>who naturally</sup> lost no opportunity of showing anti-Bulgarian views. ~~He~~ hated my coming at all. Being ordered to send my messages to the Foreign office by the official channels, he relieved his feelings by denouncing Bulgaria when we were dining

The perfect  
manic

with him, enabling the servants to make known that he alluded to Bulgarians in general as "these savages". There was more to be done with the ministers of the two countries which Grey had to work with, France and Russia, and it transpired long afterwards that they had sent home very sound opinions following on our discussions. [when it seemed that there was no more to be done for a time at Sofia, we thought it best to make an end of our public position by going away to Bucharest; and among other things to do there I thought I might see old King Carol, as I knew Queen Elizabeth, <sup>she was</sup> ~~she being~~ a friend of our cousin, Hilda Deighmann, and ~~she~~ <sup>her</sup> had entertained Leland and me at home in the Rhineland in 1904. <sup>I wrote to her +</sup> She asked us out to the palace in the country, and we had a long talk over tea. She and the King were known to be very pro-German, but the Government was <sup>really</sup> ~~opposed~~. We left the palace about 6 o'clock, and the next morning we heard that the King had died in the night. It has been many times stated by German writers that obviously he died because I put poison in his tea. [We went back to Bucharest, and a few days later occurred the funeral of the King. The streets were crammed with people, and a dense crowd filled the square outside our hotel. We were going that afternoon to see a great farm, run by a Bulgarian banker friend. <sup>of ours</sup> We had just got into the

<sup>this</sup> adopted too late, seven months after I had urged it  
 on him. <sup>Too late again he</sup> Another obstacle was the hostile influence of  
 our minister at Sofia, who was violently anti-Bulgarian.

~~It was not until the summer that Grey saw that I had~~  
 been right <sup>about</sup> and removed him. The die had then been  
 cast. Bulgaria joined Germany, furnishing the gangway  
 to Turkey, which <sup>perhaps as many military experts might have held,</sup> probably prolonged the war by two years.

Whether my policy would have succeeded  
 has been much debated. I may be  
 allowed to leave the answer to  
 Mr. Thompson. In his Memoirs (Vol IV)  
 p 2404  
 - - - he writes

167A

167 A B To the X. Cause (Balkans)  
19 Nov. 1917

Lloyd George's Memoirs.

Vol. IV.

Page 2404.

The Inter-Allied Council.

In the Debate Mr. Asquith was critical, but not as censorious as those who supplied his brief would have wished. He defended the action of the High Commands over Serbia, Roumania and Russia by saying:-

" The experts may have been wrong. I do not claim infallibility for them. I myself think they were right. That is a point that only history can decide."

As far as Serbia is concerned, the best answer to this defence of the military leaders and the head of the Government of that day was given by Mr. Noel Buxton (now Lord Noel Buxton) later in the debate. Mr. Buxton was the greatest authority on the Balkans in the House of Commons. He gave illustrations from his own knowledge of the fatal delays of 1915 in dealing with the Balkan situation, owing to the lack of co-ordination amongst the Allies.

His view was that had the Inter-Allied Council been in existence at that date, these delays would not have arisen and he expressed the opinion that:-

" There cannot be the slightest doubt that if by hook or by crook, co-ordination could have been brought about as early as that in the War, the whole situation would have been different and obviously the War would have been over long ago."

## BALKANS.

People have often enquired of me why I was known in connection with the Balkans. The answer is partly given in what I have said in my "Travels", and a fuller reply is provided by my book "Travels and Reflections" and "With the Bulgarian Staff". Also the book which G.R.B. and I published during the war.

I took to going to the Balkans as my normal annual holiday, partly because I felt intensely the responsibility of our country for the atrocious fact that European populations were still misgoverned by the unspeakable Turk; but perhaps I should not have done so if I had not given up shooting. I am afraid my love of that sport would have kept me at home, but the Balkans furnished a field for real rough travel, with the chance of adventure, within three days of London; and I consider that, in those days, Balkan travel was far superior to ordinary tame sport, and deserved the name of "sport" more fully.

The fact that I became publicly connected with the Balkans was due to the chance that, in forming the Balkan Committee, we happened on a problem which roused intense interest in the politicians of all Europe because of the prospect of European war arising from the rival

ambitions of Austria-Hungary and Russia. The diplomats of those countries and of Germany could not imagine that any Britisher could be active about Balkan affairs unless he were the agent of his Government, and as Lord Grey said: "It was much easier in diplomacy to tell the truth than to get people to believe it".

It so happened that my name was the one connected with the supposed activities in the Balkan world itself. I was regarded as a pro-Bulgarian and consequently held in horror by the neighbouring nations, who competed for the possession of Macedonia.

In Greece, the Times correspondent, Bourchier, was also held in execration, and burnt in effigy. The name Buxton, spelt by the Greeks "MPOUKASTONU", became a genuine title for all those who sympathized with the obvious claim of the Bulgars. Subsequently when Bryce went to Macedonia, the Greek public denounced this famous man as being a Buxton. It was all because, after the population of Macedonia had been thrust back under the Turks in 1878, nobody had taken notice of their cruel fate until the Balkan Committee was formed. Naturally, when there was a revolt against the Turks in 1903, we organized relief, so admirably carried out by Brailsford, Nevinson, Lady Thompson and others. There was keen gratitude, and I was always moved by this feeling on the

part of the Bulgars, in whom it went with an attractive reserve, as compared with the spluttering effusion of some neighbouring peoples.

A quite false impression of my importance was created by that sort of chance. In 1903 the Times was much on our line, owing to its famous correspondent, Bouchier, being so keen. It gave me a shock when, being not yet in Parliament, and in the stage of aspiring to get my letter about the insurrection printed at all, the Times leading article spoke of the two schools of thought, one represented by the Prime Minister, Balfour, and the other by me.

My letter about the insurrection and massacres had another valuable effect. It encouraged Phillip Howell, who wrote for the Times on the Balkans, to write in the same strain, and led to his acquisition as a great friend.

Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, was very friendly to our agitation, and his influence on the other members of the Concert of Europe was partly based on the fact that British public opinion was deeply roused. The result of his efforts was the system of International Gendarmerie, with districts allotted to the officers of different states.

A climax arrived when war began in 1914. The Cabinet, instigated by Masterman, debated whether to

send me out, and C.R.B. and I started just as Paris was expected to fall, getting into the Gare de Lyons when it was barricaded against the expected rush of refugees.

The record of this journey is provided by the black book of notes which Mother compiled from our records; and a good survey of my Balkan events appears in Evans' book, "Foreign Policy from a Back Bench".

Evans' book gives a good review of my Balkan activities, and here I had better record some more personal aspects of the work of the Balkan Committee. When I first became acquainted with the pitiable condition of the Macedonian peoples I was intensely moved by this gratuitous suffering and by the fact that it was due to the action of our own country in 1878. The insurrection of 1903, when the shocking massacres and burning of villages which followed it seemed to me almost intolerable, and my holiday at Humber in August of that year was occupied in attempting to rouse a useful pressure on the Government through the columns of the Times.

The Balkan Committee was assisted to activity by Mr. Bryce, and we were intensely busy from the end of August. We secured a big room in Adelphi Terrace in the house of Bernard Shaw, and there overlooking the river we concerted measures and produced leaflets



which secured public notice both here and abroad in a measure out of proportion to our diminutive numbers.

Through Barnett we secured a splendid secretary in Arthur Moore, and I have a quite thrilling recollection of lovely days of September weather (I had never been in London in September before) in intense efforts in which Brailsford, Nevington, and C.R.B. were conspicuous. The exhilaration of fervent work afforded a pleasure which contrasted with the melancholy objects of our ambition. That autumn I got leave to take more time off from the Brewery, and spent the most of my evenings making speeches up and down the country. There was also a lot to do in seeing politicians, and especially Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, who by a stroke of luck was extremely sympathetic; though by no means of a Gladstonian humanitarian type, he was anxious to see reform, and in approaching the Powers who jointly could press the Sultan he wanted to be able to point to strong public feeling in Great Britain. This was the more gratifying to us when his cousin, Bishop Gore, told us that Lansdowne was in reality a notable cynic in such matters.

In the winter Hugh Law and I took Leland to the Balkans, and visited the region devastated by the Turks near the Black Sea, where in villages of which only one

or two houses remained under the deep January snow, we found children cowering and hiding themselves from the Turkish soldiers who escorted us.

At Adrianople, where one left the railway, the Turks refused to let us leave the town, and we persuaded the Greek Consul to help us to give them the slip, and at early dawn set off in one of the little carriages which were then the only means of Balkan travel. We had reached the place we desired, and were getting some lunch round a tiny stove which was thawing our frozen limbs, when suddenly there burst in the Governor's Secretary, whom we had deluded, and who had pursued us on learning of our departure. The poor man had a terrible toothache and was bandaged round his swollen face, and, suffering as he was from a failure to prevent our journey which may well have led to his dismissal from office, his figure was as pitiable as it was comic. Hugh Low's Memoirs no doubt make better play with this incident than I have done. I suffer as a recounter from a lack of dramatic sense, and the most hampering inhibition in regard to truth.

During the succeeding ten years I spent almost every autumn holiday in the Balkans, except when prevented by Parliamentary Sessions or elections. The first five of these years saw the gradual installation of the International Gendarmerie, and our

travels were assisted by the presence of officers, British, Austrian, French and Italian, according to their several districts, who, having no authority, were mainly employed in recording the outrages, which resulted not only from the habits of the Turks, but from the murderous activities of armed bands from the neighbouring states, each of whom was hoping to inherit the land on the demise of the sick man. The chief sufferers were the Bulgarians, against whom the Greeks and Serbs were assisted by the Turks, because Bulgarian claims were naturally strongest, and the Turks only feared attack from Bulgaria; so the unfortunate Bulgarian villages were rendered powerless to resist the bloodthirsty bands, among whom the Greeks probably took the prize for atrocity. On one occasion, when at Monastir, we came on one of these typical disasters; a large and prosperous village called Smilevo had been suddenly attacked by a Greek band on a Sunday morning. Many had been killed, and we found the wounded still in the gala peasant dress which they wear on Sundays. They had no medical aid, because the Turks did not allow it to reach them. It was a pitiable scene, but nothing came of such episodes except an addition to the butcher's bill.

My companions in the Balkans on my various journeys included Rollo Meyer, Cecil Harris, Noel Farrar, Hugh Law,

Leland (who surpassed us all by going with a Bulgarian band smuggling rifles across the frontier, and should properly have met his death from a Turkish frontier guard's bullet.)

In 1906 I had a specially interesting tour with V. de Bunsen and Lothar, and Rosslyn Bruce. Rosslyn and I came back by Berlin, and saw a good deal of Sir Frank Lascelles, who was then Ambassador. He was a delightful and sympathetic person, and believed that England could get on with Germany. He was intimate with the Kaiser, who had recently been sitting on the Ambassador's bed when laid up with a cold. I asked him if the Kaiser would be interested in putting a stop to the butchery in the Balkans. I had with me many photographs taken by gendarmerie officers, of the dead victims, and I said the Kaiser might be stirred up by these. Lascelles replied that not only would the Kaiser do nothing about it, but such things would not interest him in the least.

In 1907 C.H.B. and I took Charlie Masterman, and on the way back we interviewed the famous Austrian Foreign Minister, Aehrenthal, in the Hofburg at Vienna. We spoke to him of Grey's concern for reform in Turkey, and he replied "Nothing will happen, your Sir Grey is a man of peace, he catches little fishes". It was on this journey that we first got evidence of any sign of

dissatisfaction with the Sultan's regime on the part of Turkish officials. To my amazement one evening a Turkish local governor, taking all precaution against being overheard, began to talk what seemed such rank treason that I thought it was merely planned to drag us into statements which he would report to his superiors. It was, however, a genuine sign of the discontent which suddenly revealed itself in the Young Turk revolt of 1908. It was a movement of the active young men of Turkey to save their country from foreign domination, which they feared would result from the incompetence of Abdul Hamid. We were more than sceptical of the capacity of the Turkish mind to assimilate civilized ideas, but the Young Turks had energy, and quickly made friends with the rebel bands hitherto fighting against the Sultan, so that the former policy of control quickly lost its authority. We sent ~~out~~ the Balkans Committee secretary and he, deeply moved by what he saw of the Young Turks, expressed himself with an enthusiasm which almost committed us to supporting their cause. But at the same time most of us favoured caution, and Sir Arthur Evans and I went to see Sir Edward Grey, and urged upon him that he should oppose the withdrawal of the Gendarmerie officers. The officers were, however, soon withdrawn

and for a time the rival forces made open friendship.

The question of reform was soon obscured by the international dangers which took its place. Grey's great concern was with German antagonism to England. With war in view, he had to cultivate Russia, and therefore, when Austria-Hungary seized the opportunity of Turkey's weakness to annex Bosnia, he came out as a bitter critic of Austrian policy. Russia protested and supported the indignant Serbs. Austrian troops were massed on the Serbian frontier, occupying the island in the Danube close to Belgrade. Just at this moment the Balkan Committee, having been invited by the Young Turks to send a deputation to Constantinople, were passing through Belgrade and stopping en route. Europe was full of alarms, and the Austrians persuaded themselves that we were secretly a British Delegation stirring up the Serbs.

This was not merely journalistic talk, as appeared long afterwards by the Foreign Office published records, showing the alarms of Austrian diplomacy. We escaped from the unwelcome publicity of this side of European politics and hurried on to meet the Young Turks. Our time at Constantinople was highly picturesque, involving banquets and plays at the theatre when we witnessed the ovation to Enver, the chief national hero, and were

entertained by the aged Grand Vizier at the instance of the Young Turks. These gentlemen, who made themselves most agreeable, were determined to use us in cultivating public opinion against the Sultan. After the Salemlik, or formal attendance at mosque of the Sultan, the scheme took startling form. We were suddenly requested to meet the Red Sultan himself. It would have been difficult and rude to refuse, but before accepting I insisted on consulting the eminent leader of the British community, Sir Edwin Pears. He approved and came with us. The little man with his hook nose, in a frock coat, received us in the manner depicted in the "Illustrated London News" and was duly humiliated in the eyes of the Turkish Public, as the Young Turks desired, by being compelled, at their instance, to receive the very people who had denounced his crimes, as the Turkish Public well knew. This was all part of the plan which ultimately led to the Sultan's entombment at Salonika, and the triumph of the Young Turks which lasted till after the war.

British diplomacy was not in sympathy with cultivating Young Turks, but though our ambassador, Sir Gerald Lowther, was aware of this he was formally kind, offered us the use of the Embassy pleasure boats and entertained us in our large numbers at dinner. After the ladies had left a picturesque episode occurred.

Sir Arthur Evans, as a world famous archaeologist concerned with the Near East, was naturally the person for Sir Gerald to pay attention to, but he devoted himself to a young man who had come out to tout for orders on behalf of one of the British armament firms. Evans was not prepared to be belittled, and to my astonishment suddenly rose, shook the Ambassador's hand without a word, and left the house.

The only person in the Embassy who knew very much was Fitzmaurice, the permanent expert, with whom we made great friends, and whose warnings against believing the Young Turks as capable of civilization were followed by our Foreign Office, and we ourselves attempted as friendly critics to moderate their chauvinistic attitude to non-Turks of Europe and also of Armenia. In the succeeding period I tried to get Grey to see that the Young Turks had come to stay, and that we might influence them if we were friendly. The plan was partially adopted, and Sir Ernest Cassell induced to found a British Bank, to which Henry Babbington Smith was appointed Head, but we had chilled the Young Turks in the early days when all their sympathies were British, and we had thrown them into the arms of Germany, whose powerful Ambassador soon became supreme.



Things drifted on till the world was again taken by surprise in 1912. Our old friend, Bouchier of the Times had engineered a compromise between Serbs and Bulgars, and the result was the attack of these Powers together with Greece on Turkey in 1912. Of course no Balkan army had any kind of Red Cross equipment, and we started the macedonian Balkan Relief Fund in order to send out help. Harold and I went out in October.

Friends of Balkan liberation lived in deep anxiety when the little states faced a great empire. But Bulgaria astonished the world by beating the Turks in pitched battle at Lule and Burgas. When Harold and I got out to Sofia the main danger was passed. General Savoff was moving to near the battlefield, and we were flattered by being invited to go with him. Before we set off, we fixed up arrangements for the women's Convoy Corps, the ambulance unit organized in London by Mrs. Stobart, and extremely keen to do practical work for the first time. A member of the Bulgarian staff, a major, was attached to us, and when we stopped for the night he was especially useful in compelling some peasant family to take us in. At the front the villages had been burnt in the advance, and smoke was still rising from some of them. As a rule, when we looked into the remains of the houses, we found still lying about the household utensils,

wooden spoons and rough pottery. Starved dogs slunk off, and spent cartridges belonging to ancient forms of breech-loading rifles were strewn about. You could picture the Turkish peasants who would not or could not get away with the Turkish army, using his last shot at a Bulgar before he himself was shot down. Most of the peasants had retired as best they could, losing all their belongings, and hundreds died of cholera outside Constantinople, where nobody was efficient enough to organize relief.

Harold and I were called on suddenly to help the wounded, who began to arrive from the dressing-stations at the front, and the poor chaps had been loaded on to farm carts, which had no springs, so the agonies endured must have been frightful. Our job was to help the few expert hospital orderlies who were trying to cope with the wounded with utterly inadequate resources. Even we, who had no experience, added certainly to the work done. The men hobbled or were carried into the intolerably stuffy room where we did our best, hoping that some at least of our bandages would remain in position. I wrote an article about this experience, which is included in my book "With the Bulgarian Staff". I thought it an opportunity to make some people realize what war means in regard to the wounded. It is a peculiar feature

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of war that this ghastly side of it is wholly concealed from public thought and almost entirely forgotten. Anyhow we learnt something about bandaging and realized better the wisdom of the Duke of Wellington when he said that war is Hell.

Meanwhile really fine work was being done by the Women's Convoy Corps, for which I was responsible. They had taken a fortnight in the bullock carts provided for them to travel the distance that we had ridden in two days, and they had camped every night in the open. They were full of zeal and got to work far quicker than the splendidly equipped unit of the British Red Cross, which was also an invariable help in the desperate situation.

When the armistice was signed and the London Conference took place, it was delightful to bring my parents into the Balkan world. The delegates of the three States came to Christmas dinner at Princes Gate, and one felt happy that the Turks at all events had ceased to persecute European populations, but King Ferdinand had spoilt the game by his ambition to be crowned at Constantinople. Wasting his forces in Thrace, and far from Bulgaria, he had allowed the Serbs, and especially the Greeks, to forestall him in the country which Bulgaria should have ruled. The result

was grievous. The Serbs, encouraged by Russia, betrayed the agreement they had made to divide the Macedonian country, and the Bulgarians finally attacked them. The Bulgars were conscious of their military prowess and unduly despised the Serbs.

On the Terrace of the House of Commons in June 1913 I entertained their delegate and implored him to report that Bulgaria would lose British sympathy if she used force. His confident pride alarmed me. Bulgaria was beaten; the Roumanians stabbed them in the back; they were deprived of more than a quarter of their population, and the seeds of future war were sown by the unjust settlement of the Treaty of Bucharest. That settlement was partly responsible for the Great war, which began a year later. Bulgaria was ready to ally herself with any power which might recover her rights, and that gave vast encouragement to German prospects of successfully creating the route to the East which she had so long coveted.

When the war began, Bulgaria was accordingly under a premier and a king who represented the Anti-Allied side. But opinion was markedly divided, traditional sympathies being with Russia, and also with England. During August it was suggested in the cabinet that I should be sent to Bulgaria, and so came about the events which are recorded in the notes compiled by Mother.

The two Ministers who were keen on cultivating Bulgaria, and therefore on my being sent, were Lloyd George and Churchill. On receipt of a wire from Masterman I raced back from Scotland and found that L.G. wanted to see me at Walton Heath. C.R.B. and I had the evening there, and the end of various interviews was a letter to me, authorizing me to pledge the Treasury to loans of any extent to Balkan States. It sounded informal, but it was essentially sound, because Ferdinand wanted money for himself and we might have literally bought Bulgarian aid. But of course I had to show the letter to Grey, and he suppressed it. He asked me to go unofficially, but co-operating with legations and wiring through them. Churchill did what he could by naval transport, and by writing an eloquent letter of appeal to the Balkan States. I told Grey I did not believe the trick could be done without official authority, because it was a matter of territory which Bulgaria must have if we were to prevent her giving Germany the help which would make a vast difference to the war. I doubted the use of going without that, but finally agreed to go. I persuaded C.R.B. to come, but I would not have done so if I had foreseen that he would be shot through the lungs.

It was a highly dramatic moment. The Germans were far into France. Paris was expected to fall,

and the British Embassy were packing up for Bordeaux. The Paris Lyons station was barricaded, in case of a sudden stampede of the frightened population to get away from the enemy. The train was so crowded that to get a rest one lay on the ground, in the corridor, taking it in turns to find space to do so. Our luggage had to provide for a possible long spell, but there was no porter to help carry it. We got at last to Brindisi, where Churchill was to send a warship for us. The British Consul at last got a wireless message that H.M.S. Hussar, which was lying off the port, was unable to approach the harbour for fear of being interned. There were no signs of the ship. She lay in fact so far out, that seeing nothing of her, we despaired of finding her for a long while. However, she appeared on the horizon at last, and it was a curious contrast to the hardship of our unassisted journey to be received with formal honours by the large company of naval officers, and an entire warship to ourselves.

The Captain's orders were to go full steam ahead to Salonika, but a problem arose when one of the crew was so ill that it was desirable to put him off at the Pireas. We strongly supported the plan, but the Captain decided to stick to his orders



and pushed on. In spite of a bad storm, in which the whole ship seemed to writhe when the propellers were lifted above the sea and raced madly, the man happily survived.

How to proceed when I got to Sofia was a problem. The Government was pro-German, but the Opposition included the most prominent politicians and was strong in the country. I could see ministers, but it was difficult to reach Public Opinion. A police commission was sent to me, to tell me of the embargo on any political utterance. I therefore had to be careful and deliver my message through the English Speaking Association. But everyone knew what I stood for; on the other hand they could not estimate quite how far I represented the British Government. The chief evidence consisted of the fact that I had been sent to the Balkans in a British war ship. It was a picturesque situation at the Diplomatic Club, where we used to lunch; the German diplomats were in evidence, their staff being far more numerous than the British. Our minister, Max Ironside, lost no opportunity of showing anti-Bulgarian views. He hated my coming at all. Being ordered to send my messages to the Foreign office by the official channels, he relieved his feelings by denouncing Bulgaria when we were dining

with him, enabling the servants to make known that he alluded to Bulgarians in general as "those savages". There was more to be done with the ministers of the two countries which Grey had to work with, France and Russia, and it transpired long afterwards that they had sent home very sound opinions following on our discussions. When it seemed that there was no more to be done for a time at Sofia, we thought it best to make an end of our public position by going away to Bucharest; and among other things to do there I thought I might see old King Carol, as I knew Queen Elizabeth, she being a friend of our cousin, Hilda Deighmann, and she had entertained Leland and me at home in the Rhineland in 1904. She asked us out to the palace in the country, and we had a long talk over tea. She and the King were known to be very pro-German, but the Government was opposed. We left the palace about 6 o'clock, and the next morning we heard that the King had died in the night. It has been many times stated by German writers that obviously he died because I put poison in his tea. We went back to Bucharest, and a few days later occurred the funeral of the King. The streets were crammed with people, and a dense crowd filled the square outside our hotel. We were going that afternoon to see a great farm run by a Bulgarian banker friend. We had just got into the

open car, I being on the right hand of the rear seat, when, above the din of the crowd, I heard C.R.B. suddenly cry to me "Look out, we are being shot". I then saw on my right about three feet off a man blazing at me. He had fired about six shots, and I remember feeling how could he possibly miss, and just then the driver knocked him down. I felt no injury but saw that I was covered with blood. Charlie said "I am hurt, let us go to the hotel". It was only a few yards off, and we went straight to our bedroom and got on to the beds. He had been shot right through the body, the bullet passing through his lungs. I had only a broken jaw. The room was filled in a few minutes by an interested crowd, and shortly the British Minister, who happened to be our cousin, George Barclay, appeared in the full-dress uniform that he wore at the funeral. There seemed to be no way of clearing the room, as I could only mumble. Luckily Bouchier soon appeared, as C.R.B.'s life was in danger, and fresh air was imperative. But things were not much better as Bouchier was deaf, but I managed to write on a bit of paper "Clear the room" and this he did, only impeded by two policemen dragging in the assassin, demanding that I should identify the man. Later on the leading doctor of Bucharest came and

we were removed that night to the hospital. If further details are desired, they are in my volume "Travels and Reflections". When we recovered we visited the prisoner, and had an interesting talk. He had been a student in Paris and was very glad to get some books which we took him on another visit. I asked him if he still wished to kill me, and handed him my revolver (carefully unloaded). He said "I meant to kill you, but not your brother", so I was flattered.

Returning home and stopping in Paris, we saw Delcasse and Clemenceau, afterwards so famous at the Peace Conference, where he was known as "the Tiger". He did as much as anyone I know to spoil the peace and produce the second war. In London I had separate talks with nearly all the Cabinet; and I brought L.G. into contact with the Bulgarian Minister in London. Twice L.G. got me to give dinners at the Savoy Hotel, and at one moment he committed himself to what was necessary in talk with the Bulgarian Minister; but Grey again intervened and the matter dragged on. The Cabinet were being influenced by the opposite school of thought, which had the support of the fiery Mrs. Pankhurst of Suffrage fame, who roused sympathy for gallant little Serbia and her rights to claim as she liked for any Balkan territory. This conflicted with the rational policy of angling for Bulgaria, and helped to delay a sensible policy which Grey

adopted too late, seven months after I had urged it on him. Another obstacle was the hostile influence of our minister at Sofia, who was violently anti-Bulgarian. It was not until the summer that Groy saw that I had been right, and removed him. The die had then been cast. Bulgaria joined Germany, furnishing the gangway to Turkey, which probably prolonged the war by two years.