ALBANIA, PAST AND PRESENT

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ALBANIA
PAST AND PRESENT

BY

CONSTANTINE A. CHEKREZI, A.B. (Harv.)

INTRODUCTION

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WITH TWO MAPS

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TO

MISS M. E. DURHAM,
"Princess of the Albanian Highlands,

LIEUT.-COL. AUBREY HERBERT,

MR. HARRY LAMB,
H. B. M. Delegate to the International Commission
of Control for Albania,

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

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PREFACE

"Mysterious country," "Land of Miracles," "Unknown Albania," "Darker than dark Africa"; here are only a few whimsical names that are given to the country which is inhabited by the oldest people in Southeastern Europe.

It was only some time ago that a well-meaning editor of a leading newspaper of New York crowned with the additional heading "The Riddle of Albania" the caption of an article on that country written by the author. On another and more interesting occasion, a letter addressed to the British Consulate of Scutari, the principal city of Northern Albania, was shipped across the ocean to Albany, N. Y ; the humorous postmaster of the latter city returned it with the note "Try Europe."

But it must be said that this incident took place some twelve years ago, and matters have considerably changed since. During the present decade people began to be more familiar with the name of Albania, as a result of the prominence she has won in our days in the field of international politics. Barely six years ago the Albanian problem threatened twice to precipitate an European war, and the outbreak of the last general conflagration had its indirect origin in the vicissitudes of the same problem. And there are signs that the end of complications has not been reached yet.

Still, the mystery enveloping Albania has not as

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yet been resolutely pierced through. Even to-day people are entertaining the most wild fancies about the actual conditions of Albania, and very hazy notions are prevalent about her existence. This is especially true to her history, past and present. About the middle of the last century, ethnologists and historians, of the caliber and reputation of Hahn, Muller, Meyer and others, devoted much of their time to researches in the interesting field of the origin of the Albanian race. But their erudite findings were speedily forgotten, and it was not till very recently that a lively interest has been manifested in the Albanian question, owing, as it has been already said, to the preponderant rôle played by Albania in international politics.

Yet, there is no doubt to-day that the Albanian is the oldest race in the Balkans. But, as Mr. J D. Bourchier puts it in the Encyclopedia Britannica, "the determination with which this remarkable race has maintained its mountain strongholds through a long series of ages has hitherto met with scant appreciation in the outside world." When the Albanian question came up for settlement in 1912, as a result of the first Balkan war, there were people who denied even the existence of such a question. Yet that year marked the advent of Albania in the world politics with all the complications that it engendered. Even so, the problem of Albania is a closed book, not only to the general public, but also to people who are keenly interested in it.

This ignorance of the affairs of Albania is due not to any lack of interest in them, in our own days at least, but to the want of a comprehensive and handy treatise on Albania. It is true that there is a great

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number of books relating to her, but they are either written by amateur writers who are wont to speculate on things they know very little about, or they are only monographs and sketches which fail to satisfy the desire for general information. This is particularly true with regard to books on Albania in both English and French, while the German and Italian treatises on the same subject leave very little to be desired. Another serious handicap to obtaining general information about Albania is that the respective writings are scattered in a great number of books which a layman is not expected to be able to handle systematically

The idea of writing this book on Albania has been first suggested to the writer by his instructors of the Department of History at Harvard University, in especial by Prof. A. C. Coolidge, Lecturer on the Eastern Question, who deeply lamented the lack of such a treatise in the English language. In the course of his studies at the said Institution, the writer had an occasion to write a number of theses and reports on what is the *terra incognita* of the history of Albania, her contemporary history and actual conditions. It is, therefore, fair to say that this book is largely based on those theses and reports, so far as the present decade is concerned.

Chapters I to VI are based mainly on the researches of Dr. Johann Georg von Hahn, the foremost Albanologist, as set forth in his admirable "Albanische Studien," and on the excellent book "Albania" of Eugenio Barbarich. We, nevertheless, give also the original sources in the References, which cover entirely the field of discussion.

A part of Chapter VI and Chapter VII are

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founded on original work done by the writer. They constitute a part of the *terra incognita* of the Albanian history

Part II constitutes the personal experiences of the writer who was living in Albania at the time the events described therein took place. They are strongly supported by the periodical articles written on the occasion by well-known European publicists. Certain sections of this part are bitterly controverted, and the writer feels it to be his duty to recommend the reader to pay especial attention to the collateral sources as given in the References. For the angry contest in regard to Southern Albania or "Northern Epirus" and the respective Albanian and Greek claims, the writings of Messrs. H. N. Brailsford, H. Charles Woods, and M. Léon Lamouche are authoritative. The history of Albania during this period is given for the first time in a systematic way which covers the most interesting events relating to the making and unmaking of the Albanian State. They constitute the high-water mark of the pre-war European diplomacy.

Of Part III, the first three chapters are based on the references as given therein, with a good deal of personal observations resulting from inside information, while the subject-matter of Chapter XVII has never been touched upon before.

We hope that this modest book will satisfy to some extent the daily manifested desire for general information about this "mysterious" and "unknown" Albania, with special reference to the people of Great Britain among whom she is regarded as somewhat of a pet nation, according to Sir Thomas Holdich's statement in his "Boundaries in

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Europe and the Near East," despite the fact that very little is known about her.

The writer feels the necessity of excusing himself for not having produced something better and for the literary shortcomings that may be discovered in the text. But if one takes into consideration the nature of the enterprise, on the one hand, and the fact that the writer could not have possibly mastered the English language during the four years he has been in the United States, there would be ample reason for his being excused.

Acknowledgment of thanks should be made to Prof. J B. Moore for the kind assistance he has given to the writer, and to Mr. H. F Munro, Lecturer on European and American Diplomacy at Columbia University, for the helpful suggestions he has made in going over the manuscripts.

C. A. C.

Columbia University,
New York City,
January, 1919.

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INTRODUCTION

In the general readjustment of the world which constitutes the work of the Conference of Paris the problem of the future of Albania necessarily has its place. That question cannot be ignored nor can it be postponed as it is inextricably involved with questions of such commanding and insistent importance as those of the future of the Adriatic, the future of the Balkans. It is a question that cannot be evaded and that must be answered in one way or another. But apart from its connection with the interlocking elements of the politics of southeastern Europe, apart from its intimate filiation with the future of Greece and Jugoslavia and Italy, apart from the fact that the destinies of each are intertwined with the destinies of all, it also remains true that Albania has a primary set of interests of her own which must be clearly comprehended and justly appreciated by the Powers assembled in Paris for the purpose of redrawing the map of Europe. And what the rights of Albania are must be learned not through the utterances of her neighbors and rivals and possible enemies but through a more direct and authoritative medium, the voice of her own citizens.

This is the chief merit of Mr. Chekrezi's book. It enables us to see Albania through the eyes of an Albanian. For many years the world has heard much about Albanian affairs but what it has heard has come almost exclusively from outside sources,

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from Greeks and Serbs and Montenegrins, and from the Great Powers which, for reasons of their own, created in 1912 and in London the state of Albania and handed it over to an unknown German prince, William of Wied. But no people can be the safe interpreter of the needs and wishes, the rights and aspirations of any other people, just as no individual can be an authoritative spokesman for any one but himself. It is therefore a satisfaction and a distinct advantage to have, at last, an interpretation of the Albanian people, an exposition of Albanian history, a presentation of Albanian claims, straight from the mind and heart of a native of that country

For this is, as far as I know, the first book by an Albanian on Albania, that has appeared in the English language. As such it throws light upon matters not too well known to the English-reading public, and may furnish, in many particulars, a corrective to views more or less widespread. The author is, of course, alone responsible for his statements and opinions, but that he adds to our knowledge concerning a subject on which we are none too well informed, is the opinion of the one who writes this introduction.

Mr. Chekrezi graduated in 1909 from the Gymnasium of Korcha. Later he studied law for a short time at the University of Athens and then became a journalist. When Albania was made an independent state in 1912 he was appointed Interpreter and later Secretary to the International Commission of Control for Albania, created by the London Conference of Ambassadors. He came to the United States in November, 1914, and has in the meantime studied at Harvard College, from which

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he graduated in 1918, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

The Albanians first brought the claims of their nationality before Europe at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. They were roughly and summarily handled, Bismarck bluntly declaring that "There is no Albanian nationality" This was one of Bismarck's numerous errors, as he was to find out the following year at the hands of the Albanians themselves. Albanian nationalism has been as true and genuine an historic growth as Greek nationalism, or Serb, or Roumanian, or Bulgarian. Albania is merely the last of the Balkan States to emerge from the blight of five centuries of unconscionable Turkish oppression. Mr. Chekrezi's description of the evolution of this sense of nationality since the Congress of Berlin and his account of the creation in 1912 of the independent principality of Albania and of its brief and troubled history are particularly instructive and illuminating.

Whether Albania is to be restored and if so, whether she is to be completely independent or to be under the control, more or less disguised, of Italy or of other powers, whether she will include within her borders all those of Albanian nationality and race or only a part of them, are matters to be decided at Paris. But unless the decisions are right and just, it will not conduce to peace in the Balkan peninsula nor will it be likely to prove permanent, whatever may be the pronouncements or pretentions of a league of nations. Acts of injustice or unreason may destroy a league as they have destroyed in the past many an imposing empire.

CHARLES DOWNER HAZEN.

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PART I

HISTORY OF ALBANIA

(To the Year 1912)

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ALBANIA, PAST AND PRESENT

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE

I. THE EARLIEST SETTLERS OF ALBANIA

The question of the origin of the Albanians is still a matter of controversy among the ethnologists. A great many theories have been propounded in solution of the problem relative to the place from which the original settlers of Albania proceeded to their present home. The existence of another Albania in the Caucasus, the mystery in which the derivation of the name "Albania" is enshrouded, and which name, on the other hand, is unknown to her people, and the fact that history and legend afford no record of the arrival of the Albanians in the Balkan Peninsula, have rendered the question of their origin a particularly difficult one.

But, however that may be, it is generally recognized to-day that the Albanians are the most ancient race in southeastern Europe. All indications point to the fact that they are the descendants of the earliest Aryan immigrants who were represented in historical times by the kindred Illyrians, Macedonians, and Epirots. According to the opinion of Dr. Hahn, the noted German ethnologist and linguist, who has made the most extensive research on the subject of the

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origin of the Albanians, the Macedonians and Epirots formed the core of the pre-Hellenic, Tyrrheno-Pelasgian population, which inhabited the southern portion of the Peninsula and extended its limits to Thrace and Italy The Illyrians were also Pelasgians, but in a wider sense. Moreover, Hahn also thinks that of these cognate races, which are described by the ancient Greek writers as "barbarous" and "non-Hellenic," the Illyrians were the progenitors of the Ghegs, or northern Albanians, and the Epirots the progenitors of the Tosks, or southern Albanians.[1] This opinion of Dr. Hahn is borne out by the statement of Strabo [2] that the Via Egnatia or Ægitana, which he describes as forming the boundary between the Illyrians and the Epirots, practically corresponds with the course of the river Shkumbi, which now separates the Ghegs from the Tosks. The same geographer states that the Epirots were also called Pelasgians.[3] The Pelasgian Zeus, whose memory survives even to-day in the appellation of God as "Zot" by the modern Albanians, was worshiped at Dodona, where the most famous oracle of ancient times was situated. The neighborhood of the sanctuary was called Pelasgia.[4]

On a cursory examination of the terms "Gheg" and "Tosk," it would appear that the name "Tosk" is possibly identical with "Truscus, Etruscus,"

[1] See pp. 164–166 *infra*.

[2] Strabo, Book VII, Fragm. 3.

[3] *Ibid.*, Book V 2, 221. It is to be noted that the names "Epirus" and "Epirots" are of Greek origin. The meaning attached to them is purely geographical; they were attributed to the southern portion of Albania by the Greek colonists and writers in contradistinction to the insular position of the Ionian Islands. The name Epirus means simply "mainland" in Greek.

[4] Herodotus, Book II, 56.

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while the form "Tyrrhenus" perhaps survives in Tirana, the principal city of Central Albania, for which no other current explanation exists.

These findings of the ethnologists are, moreover, strengthened by the unbroken traditions of the natives, who regard themselves, and with pride, as the descendants of the aboriginal settlers of the Balkan Peninsula. They, therefore, think that they have the best claims on it. It is also on the strength of these traditions that the Albanian looks upon the other Balkan nationalities as mere intruders who have expropriated him of much that was properly his own. Hence the constant border warfare which has gone on for centuries between the Albanian and his neighbors.

II. THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

A more concrete evidence of the Illyrian-Pelasgian origin of the Albanians is supplied by the study of the Albanian language.

Notwithstanding certain points of resemblance in structure and phonetics, the Albanian language is entirely distinct from the tongues spoken by the neighboring nationalities. This language is particularly interesting as the only surviving representative of the so-called Thraco-Illyrian group of languages, which formed the primitive speech of the inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula. Its analysis presents, however, great difficulties, as, owing to the absence of early literary monuments, no certainty can be arrived at with regard to its earlier forms and later developments. The presence of a large number of foreign words makes it difficult to decide whether the mutilated and curtailed forms, now in

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use, represent adopted words or belong to the original vocabulary. Its groundwork, however, so far as it can be ascertained, and the grammar are distinctly Indo-European.

In the course of time the Albanian language has been impregnated, as it has already been said, by a large number of foreign words, mainly of ancient Greek and Latin, which are younger than the Albanian language, but there are certain indications that the primitive Illyrian language exerted a certain degree of influence on the grammatical development of the languages now spoken in the Balkan Peninsula.

There is, however, a very striking feature in this whole matter: that the Albanian language affords the only available means for a rational explanation of the meaning of the names of the ancient Greek gods as well as of the rest of the mythological creations, so as exactly to correspond with the faculties attributed to these deities by the men of those times. The explanations are so convincing as to confirm the opinion that the ancient Greek mythology had been borrowed, in its entirety, from the Illyrian-Pelasgians. We have already stated that the Zeus survives as "Zot" in the Albanian language. The invocation of his name is the common form of oath among the modern Albanians. *Athena* (the Latin Minerva), the goddess of wisdom as expressed in speech, would evidently owe its derivation to the Albanian "*E thena,*" which simply means "speech." *Thetis,* the goddess of waters and seas, would seem to be but the Albanian "Det" which means "*sea.*" It would be interesting to note that the word "Ulysses," whether in its Latin or the Greek form

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"Odysseus," means "traveler" in the Albanian language, according as the word "udhe," which stands for both "route" and "travel," is written with "d" or "l," both forms being in use in Albanian. Such examples may be supplied *ad libitum*. No such facility is, however, afforded by the ancient Greek language, unless the explanation be a forced and distorted one; but in many instances even such forced and distorted one is not available at all.

The Homeric poems, on the other hand, abound in words which survive only in the actually spoken Albanian language. Nay, entire phrases may be taken from Homer as typical Albanian expressions. It is to be regretted, indeed, that no attempt has been made as yet to interpret Homer in the light which may be thrown on the meaning of his writings with the aid of the Albanian language.[1] Such a comparative study may do much toward overcoming many difficulties of interpretation, and, as the Albanian language is much older than the Greek, a great many things may be learned as to the influence of the former on the Homeric and subsequent Greek language.

In addition, we should not forget the fact that Zeus was a Pelasgian god, *par excellence*, his original place of worship being Dodona.

Still another interesting feature is that the principal legends of ancient Greece are still alive in the popular myths of the Albanian people. The Cy-

[1] These remarks are based on personal observations made by the writer in an off-hand study of the Homeric poems with the assistance of the Albanian language. The writer has to confess, however, that he is not a linguist. He was merely struck by the peculiar resemblance of expression and phraseology which he encountered in reading Homer.

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clops are as powerful as ever in the bedtime stories of the Albanian mothers and grandmothers.

It is estimated that of the actual stock of the Albanian language, more than one third is of undisputed Illyrian origin, and the rest are disputed Illyrian-Pelasgian, ancient Greek and Latin, with a small admixture of Slavic, Italian (dating from the Venetian occupation of the seaboard), Turkish, and some Celtic words, too. Besides, the writer has discovered a number of Teutonic words which date, perhaps, from the Gothic invasion of Albania.

III. ANTIQUITIES

Albania abounds in ancient remains which as yet have been unexplored. The history of Albania cannot, therefore, be written in its proper and final form without reference to the precious relics the Albanian soil has jealously guarded for centuries. It is only when these archæological treasures come to light that a really scientific history of Albania can be written.

Fragments of Cyclopean structures, of the Cyclopean-Pelasgian period, were discovered by Hahn at Kretsunitsa, Arinishta, and other sites of the district of Arghyrocastro, which was called Pelasgia in ancient times. The walls, partly Cyclopean, of an ancient city (perhaps Bullis or Byllis) are visible at Gradishti on the picturesque Viosa River. Few traces remain of the once celebrated Dyrrhachium (the actual Durazzo, the Epidamnus of the Greeks) The most important and interesting remains, however, are those of Dodona where the celebrated oracle of ancient times was situated.

Of the mediæval ruins, those of Kroia or Croia,

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the stronghold of Scanderbeg, are the most interesting.

Central and Northern Albania abound in unexplored remains of the Illyrian period. The traces of the early Illyrian civilization lie still covered under the dust and ashes of nearly thirty centuries.

There are also abundant remains of the Roman and Greek period, but, in general, the remains of the classical epoch attest the influence of Roman rather than of Greek civilization. Greek influence may be traced only in the few Greek colonies which had been established along the coast, mainly by the Corinthians.

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CHAPTER II

ANCIENT ALBANIA

I. EARLY PERIOD

In the course of her long history, Albania has been invaded by various civilized, half-civilized, and barbarian races. The Gauls, the Romans, the Goths, the Slavs, the Normans, the Venetians, and, finally, the Turks, successively set their foot on, and obtained temporary mastery over, the Albanian territory But, in the course of time, the natives have gradually driven out or assimilated the invaders. So many invasions and influences have left hardly any appreciable traces, least of all on the national characteristics, traditions, customs, and language of the Albanian people. What the Roman and Greek writers have written about the Albanians centuries ago does singularly apply to their actual conditions in such a way as to make one imagine that the old writings are but contemporary history A series of historical events, of momentous importance and superior to his own will, confined the Albanian within his inaccessible mountain fastnesses, and constrained him to cling with tenacity to his national traditions, language, and customs, far from the touch of, and contact with, higher degrees of civilization, apart from that of his immediate enemies and neighbors.

The Albanian people present, then, the unique and imposing phenomenon of a continuous national exist-

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ence which extends from the remotest times down to our own days. Its beginnings may be traced only by going as far back as the Pelasgian and Illyrian period.

Of the early period of the Illyrians and, especially, of the Pelasgians we know almost nothing. Our history will, then, necessarily begin with the rise of the kingdoms of Illyria and Molossia which respectively represent during the historical times the Illyrians and Pelasgians.

II. THE KINGDOM OF ILLYRIA
(1225–167 B. C.)

In its beginning, the kingdom of Illyria comprised the actual territories of Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Northern and Central Albania, with a large part of modern Serbia. But in the course of its development it extended all along the eastern litoral of the Adriatic Sea. Scutari was its capital, just as she is now the capital of Northern and Central Albania.

The earliest known king of Illyria was *Hyllus* (The Star) who is recorded to have died in the year 1225 B. C.

The kingdom, however, reached the zenith of its expansion and development in the fourth century B. C., when *Bardhyllus* (White Star), one of the most prominent of the Illyrian kings, united under his scepter the kingdoms of Illyria, Molossia or Epirus and a good part of Macedonia, so that his realm extended from the port of Trieste ("market-place" in Albanian) to the Ambracic Gulf. But its decay began under the same ruler as a result of the attacks made on it by Philip of Macedon, father of Alex-

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ander the Great. On the victorious conclusion of the war against Athens, the Macedonian General Parmenion attacked and defeated the Illyrian forces between the lakes of Prespa and Ochrida, in order to recover the part of Macedonia that had been annexed by Bardhyllus.

On succeeding his father, Alexander the Great set out to pursue the war against the Illyrian kings. The Illyrian troops were entrenched at Pelion, near the present city of Koritza (Korcha, in Albanian), under the command of King *Kleitos,* the son of Bardhyllus. Alexander attacked them and won a complete victory over them. As a result, the Illyrian king agreed to follow his great kinsman in his expedition against the Persians. The Illyrian troops formed a considerable part of the forces of the conqueror of the Persian Empire and shared in his triumph.

Upon the death of Alexander the Illyrian kings regained their liberty of action within their territories. In the year 232 B. C. the Illyrian throne was occupied by the enterprising *Teuta,* the celebrated Queen whom historians have called Catherine the Great of Illyria. It was she who brought the Romans in contact with the Balkans. The depredations of her thriving navy on the rising commercial development of the Republic forced the Roman Senate to declare war against the Queen. A huge army and navy under the Roman consuls *Gaius Fulvius Santumalus* and *Lucius Postumius Alvinus* attacked Central Albania, and, after two years of protracted warfare, Teuta was induced to sue for peace (227 B. C.)

The last king of Illyria was *Gentius,* of pathetic

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memory.[1] In 165 B. C. he was defeated by the Romans and brought to Rome as a captive in order to adorn the triumph of the victor.

Henceforth, Illyria became a Roman dependency She was carved out into three independent republics the capitals of which were respectively: Scutari, Durazzo, and Dulcigno.

III. THE KINGDOM OF MOLOSSIA (1270–168 B.C.)

The Southern Albania of to-day was called "Epirus" by the ancient Greek writers, and was inhabited by the Pelasgians or Epirots.[2] Theopompus states that Epirus was inhabited by the Chaonians, the Thesprotians and the Molossians, all of them being non-Hellenic.

The kings of the last branch, i.e., the Molossians, who ultimately extended their power over all Epirus, claimed, according to Plutarch, to be descended from Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, who settled in the country after the fall of Troy, and transmitted his kingdom to his son, Molossus. The same biographer re-

1 Cassius Dio, Rome, Book 20, fragm. 24.

2 It has already been noted that the name "Epirus" means "mainland" in Greek, and was originally applied to the whole coast northward of the Corinthian Gulf, in contradistinction to the neighboring islands, Corcyra (Corfou), Leucas, etc., etc. In consequence, it has not any ethnical meaning, as modern Greeks are wont to think and proclaim. The name of Epirus, as applied to Southern Albania, is misleading, inasmuch as its Greek sound gives the idea that one is dealing with a Greek territory. This is due to the unfortunate fact that the principal sources of the history of this section of Albania are the writings of Greek historians whose mania for Hellenising foreign names is notorious. Yet, all the ancient Greek writers, including Theopompus, the veracious Thucydides, and the more modern Plutarch, are in full accord in stating that Epirus was exclusively inhabited by non-Hellenic barbarous populations.

As to the modern aspect of this question, see below pp. 94–100, 111–120.

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lates the significant fact that Achilles was known in this country under the name of "Aspetus," which in Albanian means "swift."

The interesting feature of kingship, as adopted in Molossia, is its elective form. The assembly of "wise men" elected annually the kings, in the fashion of the old German tribes.

The kingdom of Molossia shows a long record of rulers, but of all the numerous kings we shall mention only the most eminent of all, the famous Pyrrhus of Epirus (295–272), whose adventures were terminated by a brick with which a mourning old Greek woman struck him on the head. He was the first to bring the war against the Romans into Italian soil, wherein he won his celebrated "Pyrrhic victory."

Albanian tradition claims that the name "Shkypetar" (Sons of the Eagle), as the Albanians call themselves, the name Albanian being entirely unknown to them, originated with a statement made by Pyrrhus. When some one praised the swiftness of the movements of his troops, Pyrrhus proudly answered that this was natural, inasmuch as his soldiers were the Sons of the Eagle; their movements were, consequently, similar to the flight of the king of the birds.

Another important personage we should mention in connection with Epirus is the proud Olympias, sister of Alexander, the king of Molossia, and mother of Alexander the Great. When her son embarked on his campaign against the Persians, the Molossians felt constrained to join him, with the result that the united Illyrian-Molossian troops formed a considerable part of the triumphant army

Space does not allow us to go into any more lengthy

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account of the warlike enterprises and peaceful achievements of the Molossian kings, some of whom did more to render their country famous than did the Illyrians.

On the death of Alexander the Great, the rulers of Molossia were once more freed of all shackles, but the fate of the kingdom was sealed at the battle of Pydna (168 B. C.), when Paulus Emilius defeated the allied Molossian-Macedonian forces. The country was subjected to a fearful devastation on the part of the Romans, because of the insubmissive character of its population, and, after it was pacified in this fashion, it shrunk to the position of a self-governing Roman province.

IV. ALBANIA UNDER ROMAN DOMINATION

The subjection to Rome was not, however, to be consummated without intermittent hard struggles for independence. A complete submission to the conqueror has been alien to the national characteristics of the Albanian people. Rome had to pay dearly for the annexation of this indomitable race by making frequent expeditions across the Adriatic to quell the insurrections which had become chronic. But once the Romans got the upper hand the punishment inflicted on the insurgents was exemplary; witness the complete devastation of Southern Albania, a great part of whose population was deported to other lands.

Nonetheless, the subject country was able to preserve intact its ethnical characteristics, and both languages, the Roman as well as the Illyrian, were made use of in public acts.

During the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey,

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Albania served as battlefield for the contest of supremacy in Rome, and in many instances the Albanians strove to convert the situation to their own benefit. The decisive battle between Octavius and Antony for the imperial throne was also fought on the Albanian seacoast, and in commemoration of his naval victory at Actium the future Augustus built the new city of Nicopolis on the southernmost part of the Albanian seaboard. The ruins of this city may be seen even to-day, but the place does not belong any longer to Albania.[1]

Albania, moreover, became now the passageway for the Roman legions on their way to Asia. They were embarked at Brindisi, which was the terminus of the Appian Way Thence, after being transported to Durazzo, they proceeded on the Via Ægitana or Egnatia the track of which has been preserved to the present day During the greater part of Turkish domination that track has served as the only thoroughfare in Central Albania.

On the whole, Roman influence has not been of very great importance. Remains of Roman civilization and architecture may be seen throughout Albania, but their influence on the shaping of the course of her history and on her inhabitants is slight.

There are, however, two outstanding features of Roman influence:

In the first place, the Albanian language borrowed a great number of words, mostly religious and liturgical terms, owing to the fact that Albania was

[1] The Conference of London of 1912, which recognized the establishment of the independent Albanian principality, assigned to Greece the greater part of the southern seacoast of Albania, from the Bay of Ftelia to Preveza. It is in the neighborhood of the latter town that the ruins of Nicopolis are situated.

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at first attached to the See of Rome, though the religion of Jesus was preached to the Albanians by St. Paul himself during a visit he made to Durazzo.

In the second place, the Romans have left a very enduring evidence of their passage through, and domination of, the Albanian territories in the presence of a new race, the so-called Kutso-Valachians, or Albanian-Valachians as they are commonly known in the places they inhabit. They are the offspring of Roman-Albanian marriages, and they have been kept apart from the main body of the nation. Their peculiar position affords another striking proof of the pride of race among the Albanians. The Kutso-Valachians, who are first cousins to the Roumanians, number about 100,000 souls scattered throughout Albania.

In return, the domination of Rome enabled Albania to make some very important contributions to her world-empire. Emperor Diocletian, the able organizer of the Roman Empire and promoter of efficiency in centralization, was a native of Dalmatia, which had always been a part of Illyria and of the Greater Albania.

To the newly instituted Christian Empire Albania contributed the man who instituted it, Constantine the Great, his contemporary Pope Sylvester, and St. Jerome, the translator of the Holy Scriptures from Greek into Latin. Constantine was native of the town of Nish, which at that time was Albanian just as a part of the actual Serbia was.

Moreover, the Albanians had more than their share in the election of the Roman Emperors during the turbulent period of the Empire, by virtue of the fact that the notorious Prætorian Guard, the em-

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peror-making power, consisted mainly of Illyrian troops.

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CHAPTER III

MEDIÆVAL ALBANIA

I. BYZANTINE DOMINATION

When the capital of the Empire was transferred from Rome to Byzantium (395 A. D.), Albania became a province of the eastern section on its disruption. She constituted a part of the Thema of Illyricum, and remained nominally a province of the Byzantine Empire up to the time when she regained her complete liberty of action under native rulers.

In reality, however, the emperors of Constantinople were unable to defend her against the inroads of the barbarians who made their appearance in the Balkan Peninsula at this time, and, at long intervals, she was either under the sway of the invaders or else she was leading an independent life after the expulsion of the barbarian hordes.

Byzantine influence has been very scanty in Albania. Apart from a number of old churches of Byzantine style, belonging to the eastern Orthodox rite, and besides some military walls, nothing else attests that the Byzantines have ever had anything to do with Albania. Greek Byzantine influence is nil on the intellectual side. Ethnically, politically, and socially the court of Constantinople was far more remote from its Albanian provinces than actual distance accounts for. It is only the southern portion of Albania that has been, and to some extent is still,

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suffering the consequences of its attachment to the religious jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople.[1]

II. THE INVASIONS OF THE BARBARIANS

The closing days of the fourth century (A. D.) witnessed the beginning of the dark and bloody period of the invasions during which the torrents of the barbarian hordes overflooded the Balkan Peninsula. Many a time was Albania submerged under the overwhelming waves of the invaders who, in the end, succeeded in displacing the Albanians from the territories now inhabited by the Jugoslavs, the Serbians and the Montenegrins.

The first to invade and ravage Albania were the Goths, who remained masters of the country for more than a century In 535, however, the Albanians were reclaimed for the Empire by Justinian who, himself, was native of Central Albania. The Goths also have left behind a number of Teutonic words which are now in use in the Albanian language.

In 640, Emperor Heraclius called the Serb hordes into his realm in order to oppose them against the Avars, and, later on, he let them overrun Albania, from which they definitely wrenched the part that constitutes the Montenegro of to-day

In 861, Central and Southern Albania were overrun and devastated by the Bulgarians. Shortly after, another Bulgarian wave enveloped the whole of Albania under Czar Simeon (892–927). The presence of a large number of localities bearing Bulgarian names, even in places where no traces of Bulgarian population exist, bears witness to the fact

[1] See Ch. 9, pp. 94–100; also pp. 111–120.

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that the invaders did make large settlements in the invaded country In the course of time, however, the Bulgarians were driven out and those already settled were assimilated by the native population. At the present time there are very few Bulgarian settlements in Albania, scarcely a few villages.[1]

In 1081, the Normans, who had already established themselves in Southern Italy and Sicily, invaded, under Robert Guiscard, the territories of Central and Southern Albania. The invasion was undertaken as a means of reprisals against the Emperor of Constantinople with whom Robert had had a family quarrel. It is believed that the Normans are the sponsors of the name "Albania" under which the country has ever since been known to the world.

During the Crusades, Albania was a frequent thoroughfare for the Crusaders of France and Italy In his "Conquête de Constantinople," Villehardouin, the chronicler of the fourth Crusade, has to say many interesting things about the conditions prevailing in Albania at that time.

III. PERIOD OF NATIVE RULE

THE INDEPENDENT ALBANIAN PRINCIPALITIES

When the flow of the invasions subsided somewhat there arose three independent Albanian principalities ruled by foreign princes who had established their rule either at the invitation of the Albanians or with their full consent and coöperation. Inas-

[1] The vilayet of Monastir, however, is mainly inhabited by Albanians and Bulgarians in almost equal numbers, the minority consisting of Kotzo-Valachians, Asiatic Turks, Greeks, and no Serbians at all. But the easy triumph of the Balkan armies over the Turks in 1912 and the London Conference assigned to Serbia almost the whole of this vilayet.

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much as these rulers had practically merged themselves with their subjects, and, as their several dominions extended over the whole of Albania, we may safely consider this long period of independence as one of native rule.

1. *The Despotat of Epirus* (1204–1358)

On the dethronement and expulsion from Constantinople of the reigning dynasty of Comnenus by the Crusaders (1204), *Michael Comnenus,* a prince of the imperial family, rallied around him the Albanian nobility, and, with its assistance, entered upon a war against the Venetians who had brought about the downfall of his family. Eventually, he succeeded in driving them out of Southern Albania. He, thereupon, set up an independent principality in that portion of Albania, with Janina as its capital. The principality is known as *Despotat* (or Lordship) *of Epirus.* It remained under the rule of the Comneni up to the year 1318, when they were succeeded by the princes of the house of *Orsini* until 1358.

In the meantime, the Bulgarians had invaded the Albanian territories for the third time, but their onward march was checked by the rulers of the Despotat of Epirus. As soon as the fear of invasion was over, the restored imperial family of Constantinople sought to bring again the principality within the fold of the Empire, but the Despotat made good its claims of independence even as against the Emperor, and it remained an independent Albanian principality for a long time to come.

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2. *The Angevin "Albanian Kingdom"* (1271–1368)

With a view of consolidating his realm and of winning useful allies in his war against the imperial family of Constantinople, the ruler of the Despotat of Epirus entered into a family alliance with *Manfred,* the king of the Two-Sicilies, son of Emperor Frederic II, and gave him Corfou, Durazzo, Valona, Chimara, Butrinto, and Berat, as a part of the dowry of his daughter Helen, whom he married to Manfred.

Shortly after, however, Manfred got in trouble with Charles of Anjou. In 1271, Charles entered into negotiations with the principal Albanian chieftains of Central Albania. The result of these negotiations was the foundation of the so-called "Albanian Kingdom" of the Angevin princes. The kingdom lasted until 1368.

3. *The Balsha Family* (1336–1419)

But the existence of the principalities of Epirus and Central Albania was presently seriously endangered by the enormously increasing power of the Serbian dynasty of *Nemanitch* which reached its zenith of growth and expansion under *Stefan Dushan* (1331–1358), who was able to assume the title: *Imperator Romaniæ, Slavoniæ et Albaniæ* (Emperor of the Greeks, Slavs, and Albanians) But his empire was only ephemeral and lasted only during the lifetime of its founder.

On the death of Stefan Dushan his extensive territorial possessions were divided among the various governors he had placed at the head of the prov-

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inces of his empire. The governor of the province of Scutari was the scion of the family of *Balsha* which had come to Albania with Charles I of Sicily It is believed that the Balshas were natives of Provence, France, or descendants of the lords of Ballesum, near Rome. By this time, however, the Balshas had assimilated themselves with their Albanian lords and subjects.

Presently, the governor of Scutari, who now assumed the name *Balsha I,* became entirely independent, and added the southern part of Montenegro to his Albanian possessions.

With the assistance of their Albanian feudal lords, the Balshas succeeded in driving the Serbs out of the Albanian provinces, and in eventually extending their rule over the whole of Northern and Central Albania as well as over a part of Southern Albania.

Moreover, the conversion of the northern population of Albania to Catholicism dates from the Balsha rule. Hitherto all the Albanians belonged to the Eastern Church, to which they had been attached at the time of the schism between the Church of Rome and that of Constantinople. One of the main issues of the schism was precisely the disputed religious jurisdiction of the Albanian provinces which were known as *Sacrum Illyricum* (Holy Illyria).

IV THE ALBANIAN MIGRATIONS

Pressed on all sides by invaders, the Albanians started during the fourteenth century an expansive migratory movement in a southerly direction. Large numbers of emigrants moved in the direction of Greece and expanded into its northern portion. Compact Albanian settlements were established in

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Beotia and Attica, especially in the neighborhood of Athens, where they are still thriving even in our own days. In many instances, the migration assumed a militant character, and the northern provinces of Greece had to undergo a period of Albanian occupation.

The leaders of the migratory movement were *John Bua Spata* and *Peter Liosha.* The village of Spata, in the immediate neighborhood of Athens, has been named after the former leader who was a brilliant *condottiere* at the same time.

Another throng of Albanian emigrants was diverted to Peloponnesus, whither they were invited by the French despots of the region.[1]

During the Greek revolution these Albanians played the most important rôle, and rendered inestimable services toward winning the independence of Greece. This is especially true with regard to the inhabitants of the Islands Spetzai and Hydra.

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[1] Dr. Hahn estimated, in 1854, that there were 200,000 Albanians of a total of one million inhabitants of Greece. These Albanians are scattered in compact colonies throughout the Greek lands. The Islands of Spetzai, Hydra, and Poros are exclusively inhabited by Albanians.

In regard to these Albanian settlements in Greece, Mr. J. D. Bourchier says in the *Encyclopædia Britannica:*

"Not less noticeable is the tenacity with which isolated fragments of the nation have preserved their peculiar characteristics, language, customs and traditions. The Albanians in Greece and Italy, though separated for six centuries from the parent stock, have not yet been absorbed by the surrounding populations."

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CHAPTER IV

THE RULE OF THE CASTRIOTAS

I. FEUDAL GOVERNMENT

The Balsha family was extinguished in 1419 with the death of Balsha III. Its territorial possessions presently passed into the hands of the numerous Albanian feudal lords and petty native princes.

Many of these lords, such as *Charles Topia,* the overlord of Croia, and the native princes *Duke John* (Dukaghin) and *Sofi,* had been previously dispossessed by the Balshas, in the latters' attempt to centralize their power, and were now simply reinstated into their fiefs.

The family of Duke John, from which came the lawgiver *Alexander Duke John,* whose laws are still governing the northern population of Albania, was by far the most important of all, on account of its extensive possessions comprising a large part of Northern and Eastern Albania, the region around Ipek. The rest of the mountainous region of Northern Albania fell to the right of the feudal lords *Spani* and *Dushmani.*

Central and Southern Albania was partitioned among the *Zaccaria,* the *Gropa,* the *Musaki,* the *Bua Spata,* the latter being lords of Arghyrocastro.

The interesting feature of Albania at this time is her feudal character, inasmuch as she is the only country of the Balkan Peninsula into which feudal-

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ism, in its western European form, was introduced and maintained for a long time. Traces of the feudal régime are still surviving in certain parts of Northern Albania. Feudalism was transplanted in Albania by the Normans and the Crusaders.

On the extinction of the family of Topia, the fief of Croia, the lord of which exercised the right of suzerainty over the other feudal lords and princes, passed into the possession of the house of *Castriota,* which was destined to give to Albania her chief national hero of the Middle Ages.

II. GEORGE CASTRIOTA SCANDERBEG (1404–1467)

1. *The Hostage*

The century-long desperate struggles of the Albanians against the overwhelming numbers of the Slav invaders had now subsided to routine border warfare, after Albania had lost all her northern and inland provinces which now bear the names of Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. The aboriginal settlers of the Peninsula were presently confined within the mountain fastnesses of what was left of their ancient patrimony

But in the year 1412, a new and formidable invader knocked at their doors: the unspeakable Turk. In that year, *Murad II,* Sultan of the Ottoman hordes, who had already become master of Thrace and had moved his capital to Adrianople, invaded Albania. The disorganized Albanian lords took to their inaccessible mountains at the approach of the enemy

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John Castriota, the overlord of Croia, however, resolved to resist, but the Sultan forced him to submission. John had to become the vassal of the Sultan to whom he gave for surety his four sons as hostages. The youngest of these, George, was to become the celebrated Scanderbeg.

Shortly after, the elder three hostages were poisoned by the Sultan. George, however, was allowed to live because he had won the goodwill of the Sultan by his precocious intelligence and strength—he was only nine years old. Against the solemn promises he had given to John, the Sultan raised the young prince in the Mohammedan religion, and gave him a position in his army When scarcely eighteen years old, George was already commander of an army in Asia Minor. It is during this campaign that the Turks gave him the surname of *Iskender-beg* or *Scanderbeg* for his valor and masterful strategy, and in complimentary reference to Alexander the Great.

But despite the lavish favors bestowed upon him by the Sultan, Scanderbeg could not be made to forget either his real position or the country and religion from which he had been so insidiously taken away Inwardly, he cherished the hope of resuming his rightful position as defender of his own country, and he was merely waiting for the opportune moment. His latent indignation was still more aroused by the action of the Sultan in conferring the principality of Croia on one of his favorites, *Sabel Pasha,* on the death of John Castriota, instead of giving it to its lawful and deserving heir, Scanderbeg. This injustice estranged him entirely from the Sultan, and decided him on his course of action.

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2. *The Liberator*

In 1443, Scanderbeg was sent by the Sultan, in company with another Turkish general, at the head of a large Turkish army against the king of Hungary, *John Hunyady.* In the battle, which took place at Nish, the Moslem army was routed, and, during its precipitate retreat, Scanderbeg extorted from the Sultan's secretary an imperial order to the governor of Croia, Sabel Pasha, to the effect that he should surrender the fortress and governorship to Scanderbeg. With a handful of loyal Albanian soldiers he arrived at Croia after seven days of forced march, and handed the presumed imperial order to the Moslem governor. The unsuspecting Pasha surrendered readily both his office and the fortress.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow depicts most dramatically and graphically this thrilling episode of the history of Albania in his poem "Scanderbeg,"[1] from which we reproduce here only the part relating to his return to Croia and reinstatement in his patrimony

Then onward he rode and afar,
With scarce three hundred men,
Through river and forest and fen,
O'er the mountains of Argentar;[2]
And his heart was merry within
When he crossed the river Drin
And saw in the gleam of the morn
The White Castle Ak-Hissar[3]
The city Croia called,

[1] "Tales of a Wayside Inn."
[2] Shar Dag, in Kossova-plain.
[3] The fortress of Croia was called "Ak-Hissar" (White Castle) by the Turks.

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The city moated and walled,
The city where he was born,
And above it the morning star.

Then his trumpeters in the van
On their silver bugles blew,
And in crowds about him ran,
Albanian and Turkoman,
That the sound together drew.
And when they were warm with wine
He said: "O friends of mine,
"Behold what fortune sends
"And what the fates design!
"King Amurath [1] commands
"That my father's wide domain
"This city and all its lands,
"Shall be given to me again."

Then to the Castle White
He rode in regal state,
And entered in at the gate
In all his arms bedight
And gave to the Pasha
Who ruled in Croia
The writing of the King,
Sealed with his signet ring.
And the Pasha bowed his head
And after a silence said:
"Allah is just and great!
"I yield to the will divine,
"The city and lands are thine,
"Who shall contend with fate?"

Anon from the castle walls
The crescent banner falls
And the crowd beholds instead,
Like a portent in the sky,
Iskander's banner fly,
The Black Eagle with double head.

[1] Sultan Murad II.

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And a shout ascends on high,
For men's souls are tired of the Turks,
And their wicked ways and works,
That have made of Ak-Hissar
A city of the plague;
And the loud exultant cry
That echoes wide and far
Is: "Long live Scanderbeg!"

The sovereignty of the Sultan came thus to an end, and the Turkish garrison of Croia was destroyed. Thereupon, Scanderbeg solemnly abjured the Moslem religion in the cathedral of his capital in the presence of the Catholic Primate, who bestowed upon the future defender of the faith of Jesus and of his country the benedictions of the Church.

3. *The Defender*

On March 1 of the following year, a stately gathering of the Albanian feudal lords took place in the cathedral of Alessio. The assembly was also attended by the prince of Montenegro, *Stefan Czernowitz,* and by delegates from the Republic of Venice. In it, Scanderbeg was proclaimed *"Chief of the League of the Albanian Peoples."*

This Congress is of great historical importance, inasmuch as this was the last time that a similar accord against the Turks was manifested.

As it was to be foreseen, the defection of Scanderbeg enraged the Sultan, who now entered upon a ruthless war of extermination against Albania. Apart from occasional short truces and armistices, this war lasted during the whole lifetime of Scanderbeg.

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The successes and triumphs won in these glorious wars by Scanderbeg form the most enviable record for the commander as well as for the small army he led from victory to victory Without any assistance of any kind from the other Christian princes, and with an army of scarcely 30,000 men, the celebrated hero resolutely withstood for a quarter of a century the ten times as numerous hordes of the Moslem ruler. Formidable Ottoman armies invaded, time after time, the tiny kingdom of Albania, which presently remained the only bulwark of Christianity and of western civilization in the Balkans. And each time the Turks had to retire decimated. The capital of Scanderbeg was besieged twice, the first time by Murad II and the second by no other man than the powerful *Mohammed II, the Conqueror of Constantinople,* but with no avail. Constantinople had already fallen, twelve years previously, but Croia was still defended by Scanderbeg against the attacks of the besieging army which was under the personal command of the conqueror of the Byzantine capital. In 1466 the all-powerful Sultan had to renounce all plans of conquest of Albania and retire to his capital.

The brilliant resistance of the Albanian prince to the inroads of the Moslems attracted widespread attention and excited the admiration of the other European rulers. It also revived the hopes for the organization of crusades. Pope *Eugene IV* and *Pius II* made each, in 1444 and 1464 respectively, an attempt for such a crusade, of which the second was to be placed under the high command of Scanderbeg. But the Middle Ages were past and the zeal for crusades had consumed itself.

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On the other hand, Scanderbeg had to undertake, during one of the relays of the war against the Turks, an expedition into Italy (1461) in order to protect his friend *Ferdinand,* the king of Naples, against the encroachments of the Angevin kings of Sicily

Upon the definitive retirement from Albania of the hopeless Mohammed II, in the fall of 1466, Scanderbeg set out to organize his free kingdom. His administrative genius proved as lucid as his military ability; but he had not gone very far in his work when death overtook him at Alessio (1467), and Albania was left without a guiding hand.

He was buried in the cathedral of Alessio, and when the Turks took that place in 1478, his tomb became a place of superstitious veneration on their part. The bones of the Albanian hero were distributed among the Turks as so many prodigious talismans.

The Albanians, on their side, have never ceased to mourn the death of their celebrated mediæval king who united them against the common enemy and added so many glorious pages in the book of their nation. The name of Scanderbeg is one to conjure with among all the Albanians. Many of them did afterwards embrace the religion of Mohammed, which he had abjured, but the memory of the hero is nevertheless stronger in their hearts.

III. THE LAST CAMPAIGNS

On his deathbed Scanderbeg bequeathed his realm to the Venetian Republic. The transfer of sovereignty to the Venetians was inevitable on account of the lack of means for the prosecution of the war against the common enemy, and because the infant

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heir of Scanderbeg would have been unable to hold together the Albanian princes.

Under the high command of Venice, the Albanian lords continued the struggle against the Turks who had invaded Albania upon hearing the news of the death of Scanderbeg. The conflict lasted eleven more years, and it was only when Scutari, Croia, and Alessio capitulated in 1478 that the Sultan could claim Albania as one of the provinces of his vast empire.

The second siege of Scutari, in 1477, is very remarkable not only because the 1700 defenders of the fortress withstood the attacks of 40,000 Turks for fifteen months, and because women played a rôle equal to that of men in defending the city, but also because it was during this siege that use was made, for the first time, of incendiary shells of startling weight and efficacy for that epoch.

Apart from the city of Durazzo which the Venetians lost to the Turks in 1499, the whole of Albania was already in the possession of the Moslems. In 1501, Venice, the suzerain of Albania, signed a formal treaty of peace by which she renounced her claims on the latter country in favor of the Sultan.

Peace formally reigned also in the interior of Albania, the peace of despair and shattered hopes. Apart from the mountainous districts of Mirdita, Mati, Luma, in Northern Albania, and of Chimara, in Southern Albania, which retained their internal independence up to 1912, the rest of the country was practically under the sway of the Sultan. Changes of far-reaching importance in the conditions of the whole of Albania were, however, to take place shortly after, as we shall presently see.

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CHAPTER V

UNDER TURKISH DOMINATION

(1478–1912)

I. THE EFFECTS OF THE CONQUEST

ALBANIA was the last Balkan nationality to fall under the domination of the Sultan. Constantinople and its empire had capitulated twenty-five years before the fall of Scutari, Croia, and Alessio. But, after all, the country was now in the possession of the Turkish troops, and fate had decreed that this occupation bring about some very important changes.

Though the domination of the Sultan was to be more nominal than real in the time to come, the Albanian nation is still laboring under the pernicious effects of the Turkish conquest.

Ethnically and racially the Albanians have been affected in no way by their submission to the Ottoman rule, because the despised Turk has been utterly incapable of exercising any kind of influence on their national characteristics, language, customs and traditions.

But the Turk did exercise an ominous influence in other directions.

In the first place, a great number of the Albanians, who were unwilling to reconcile themselves to the conditions created by the imposition of a hated rule, chose to bid farewell to their native country and migrate into other lands, especially into Italy. What is still worse is that the emigrants represented the

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élite of the nation, so that Albania was deprived of their leadership and guidance in the darkest hours of her national existence. The Albanian colonies of Italy might well thrive and prosper, as they did, in full consciousness of their nationality from whose traditions, customs, language, and worship they have never departed, but they could not be of any help to the bulk of the nation which remained under the Turkish rule.[1]

In the second place, the Turkish conquest brought about a new division among the Albanians. Just as in every country in their possession, the Turks employed a great deal of pressure in order to procure the conversion of the Albanians to the Moslem religion. Though the pressure was weaker in Albania, because of the weaker control they were able to command therein, one-half of the whole Albanian nation was induced to embrace Islamism. But in so doing, the Albanians were actuated by practical considerations rather than by any religious or moral motives. The fact is that they resolved to sacrifice their religion on the altar of liberty Realizing the loathsome disabilities the other subject Christians were laboring under in their dealings with the Turkish government, they sought to improve their standing by propitiating the fanatical officials through their conversion to the religion of Mohammed. In many instances the conversion was only outwardly and a mere travesty Yet, by their action they came to be treated as allies by the Turks, and rose to prominent posts in all the branches of the Turkish government. But, unlike the other Christians who, by their conversion

[1] For further details on the Albanian colonies in Italy see Ch. XVI, VI. ALBANIANS IN FOREIGN LANDS—*The Albanians of Italy.*

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to Islamism, assimilated themselves completely with the Turks, the Moslem Albanians never forgot their nationality, and their allegiance to the Mohammedan faith did not in any way supersede or weaken the allegiance to their own nation.[1] In this respect, they present the most striking and unique exception to the rule that "in the Balkans nationality means religion, and religion is nationality"

Nevertheless, the position of the Albanian nationality has been considerably weakened, more so in the eyes of the outside world which has not learned to completely dissociate, as it should, the Moslem Albanian, who is primarily an Albanian, from the fanatical Moslem Turk who is above all a blind follower of Mohammed.

Thirdly, the Turkish occupation isolated Albania entirely from the outside world and kept her out of touch with higher civilization, inasmuch as the Turkish control has been mainly exerted on the seacoast. Consequently, the Albanians fell into a state of political languor and stagnation which enfeebled still more their position as a nationality

And lastly, as a result of their fretting and continuous convulsions against the Sultan, the Albanians became more bellicose, more nervous, and more restless than ever. The obvious necessity of bearing arms at all times and places against the lurking enemy, made them a "nation-in-arms" and gave them a fierce appearance. This latter feature has been so construed as to give birth to the imaginary tales of "Albanian brigands" who, in reality, have never existed in Albania.

[1] A more detailed discussion on the position of the Moslem Albanians is given in Ch. XVI, v. THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION.

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II. CONVULSIONS AND UPRISINGS

The Albanian has always been noteworthy for his dogged endurance in resisting the consummation of foreign conquest and occupation of his native soil. The blow dealt to the Albanians by the Turks in 1478 was a very hard one, but it was not long before the vanquished sought to shake off the foreign rule, and a period of chronic convulsions and uprisings set in.

On hearing the report of the Turkish defeat in the battle of Lepanto (1571), the Albanians made a series of desperate attempts to get rid of the Turks and, at the same time, to draw the attention of the Christian States to their sufferings and their cause. They offered the crown of Scanderbeg to *Charles Emmanuel* of Savoy and to the *Prince of Parma.* Both Italian princes refused the risky crown, and the Albanians had to resign themselves once more to their cruel fate. They had even been forsaken by their former ally, Venice, who was presently in the throes of conflict with the German Emperor.

In 1689, the troops of the Holy Roman Empire entered Albania from the north under *General Piccolomini,* and on his retirement, under the *Duke of Holstein.* The Albanians made again a new attempt to regain independence, but the Duke was so arrogant in his dealings with his Albanian allies that the latter forced him to retire into Hungary They thus exposed themselves to the merciless revenge of the Turks.

Forty years later (1737), the Austro-Russian armies invaded the Albanian possessions of the Sultan. The native population thought that the solemn

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moment of their liberation had come. They, thereupon, rose against the Turks, in anticipation of the assistance on the part of the coming Austro-Russian troops. But the Austrian commander proved incapable of taking advantage of the situation; he retreated toward Novi-Bazar, leaving his Albanian confederates to the mercy of the Turks. Nevertheless, the Albanians held out by themselves for three more years. The Turks succeeded in putting down the insurrection only after two sanguinary repressions in 1740.

These uprisings, especially the two last mentioned ones, have had two important consequences:

In the first place, the religion of Mohammed was presently spread on a larger scale, inasmuch as the Albanians sought to escape punishment at the hands of the enraged Turks by embracing the Moslem religion. This is especially true with regard to the chiefs of the insurgents, who thus set the example to their followers.

In the second place, the Turkish government was made to learn, through the instructive lessons afforded by these uprisings, that there was but one safe way of keeping the Albanians in submission, namely, by allowing them to retain their internal independence and by applying the maxim *Divide et impera*. On the one hand, then, the Turkish government relaxed its grip on those parts of the population which it had under its control and allowed them to retain the same degree of independence as that enjoyed by the mountain districts (see p. 34) It therefore permitted, and even encouraged, the establishment of a number of tiny independent principalities. On the other hand, it adopted the policy

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of fostering jealousy among the various clans and of sowing the seeds of discord and rivalry among the petty rulers. This ingenious scheme of playing one chieftain against the other worked, on the whole, pretty well for a long time; but in two notable instances, to be presently referred to, it nearly proved fatal to its sponsors. It did, however, serve its purpose, for the civil strife among the Albanians was consuming all the energy they otherwise would have collectively employed against their nominal sovereign.

III. THE INDEPENDENT GOVERNORS

During the eighteenth century, in the midst of the turbulence of the declining Turkish Empire, the Albanians became again increasingly prominent, and the two notable instances to which allusion has already been made, occurred at the close of this century when the governors of Scutari and Janina, who had been appointed by the Sultan, attempted to free themselves altogether of the control of the Turkish government and establish independent principalities. It is only fair to treat them under separate headings.

1. *Mahmud Pasha of Scutari*

During the middle part of the eighteenth century, there lived in the village of *Bushatli*, in the neighborhood of Scutari, an influential Albanian nobleman, named *Mehmed*. His reputation proved so shocking to the Sublime Porte that it eventually decided to get rid of him by sending an army against the pretentious subject. But the wily Albanian showed so much ability in fooling the emissary of the Sultan that he was able to obtain, through his

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agency, the title of Hereditary Pasha of Scutari.

Hardly in the saddle, Mehmed set to work out his program with grim determination. And he began by the systematic undoing of the Turkish scheme of "divide and reign." By hook and crook, he suppressed, one after the other, the numerous petty rulers of Northern Albania. Shortly after he extended his control over the whole of Central Albania, and became practically independent of the Sultan. But the Turks avenged their wrath by bringing about his assassination, because of his refusal to join them against Russia.

He was succeeded by his son, Kara Mahmud (Mahmud the Black), who proved to be more enterprising and audacious than his father. In 1785, Mahmud attacked and defeated the forces of the Prince of Montenegro, whose capital he occupied. Growing in boldness, he invaded at the same time the territories Venice was holding in Albania. The Republic appealed to the Sultan for help. The Sublime Porte set on foot an expedition, but Mahmud encountered the Turks and gave them battle in the Kossova-Plain in which the troops of the Sultan were routed. Mahmud was now able to annex the Kossova district to his possessions. Presently he opened negotiations with *Joseph II* of Austria with the view of concluding an alliance against the Sultan. The Porte dispatched another formidable army against Mahmud, to which it succeeded in adding the Albanian forces of *Ali Pasha of Janina*. The Turkish troops invested Scutari, but Mahmud was so successful in sowing discord in his enemies' camp that the Albanian contingent of Ali Pasha deserted to his side with all the artillery of the Turks. A third

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Turkish army was destroyed in the province of Mirdita.

Joseph II sent his ambassadors to Mahmud for the conclusion of the alliance. But the star of Mahmud was now on the wane, and the Austrian emissaries were captured and murdered by the Turks. Nevertheless, the independent governorship of Scutari did not disappear before the year 1829, when *Reshid Pasha* was sent to destroy the last vestiges of the ambitious enterprises of the Scutarian Pashas.

2. *Ali Pasha of Janina*

Ali Pasha of Janina was native of Tepelen, Southern Albania. He was the contemporary of Mahmud Pasha of Scutari. He had first shown his ability to deal with the unruly subjects of the Sultan in his position of *Provost-Marshal of the Highways* when he established and maintained public order in the hitherto anarchy-ridden provinces of Thessaly and Southern Albania.

In 1788 he received his investiture as Pasha of Janina, the capital of Southern Albania. His only ambition was now to become entirely independent of the Sultan. Moreover, he conceived the fiery project of building for himself an Albanian Empire which would have included the whole of Greece as well as the Ionian Islands, then in the occupation of France and later a British protectorate. And he set out to do it in the most cold-blooded and matter-of-course way, having no scruples whatsoever in his choice of means, provided they served his ambitious purposes. Hardly Pasha of Janina, he began bribing the ministers of the Sultan in order to insure their indifference in his activities, acting on his oft-

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quoted maxim "the waters sleep, but not envy" He set to flatter all the world and all the religions; he offered oblations to the Holy Virgin of his Christian subjects and allies with as much false devotion as to the Moslem saints. His main characteristics were: hypocrisy, unscrupulousness, cruelty, and unprincipled as well as unlimited ambition.

With the obstacles he met to the carrying out of his design he dealt in a summary way There were two main handicaps to his projects: the Christian Albanian Republic of Suli, which was as loath to part with its independence as Ali was desirous of asserting his own domination, and the powerful native Moslem Beys among whom Southern Albania was divided. He first set to curb the power of the Beys by allying himself with the Christian Albanians of Suli. When that end was reached he turned against his former allies, the Suliots. Twice the Suliots and the Beys allied themselves against the common enemy; but each time Ali Pasha was able to divide them by the use of his inexhaustible Machiavelian stratagems. Eventually, he succeeded in destroying the power of the Beys, and after three campaigns, which immortalized the incomparable gallantry and brave resistance of the Suliots, the independent communities of the latter were destroyed from their foundations. His cruelty in dealing with the Christian Suliots was as atrocious as the treatment he meted out to the Moslem Beys and their followers. Ali was not a man to be swayed by religious preferences.

The dawn of the nineteenth century found Ali Pasha practically independent and flirting succes-

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sively with the Powers engaged in the Napoleonic wars, first with Russia, the hereditary enemy of his enemy, the Sultan, then with France, Great Britain and Austria.[1] To the rising Republic of France he sent his best wishes, and proudly wore the cockade of liberty which General Roze was commissioned to deliver to him. Moreover, he ordered that the "Carmagnolle" be sung in the streets of Janina in honor of the envoy of the Revolution. But, on hearing of the French disaster at Aboukir (1798), to which he had contributed by supplying provisions to the fleet of Admiral Nelson, Ali imprisoned Roze and sent him handcuffed to Constantinople. As soon, however, as the star of Napoleon began to shine brilliantly on the horizon, the Pasha of Janina steered away from his friendship with England, and began to court the envoys of the Emperor with as much assiduity and as many protestations of loyalty as he had shown in supplying the ships of Nelson. At the time of the conclusion of the peace of Tilsit, Ali Pasha sent his own Secretary of State to the latter place to remind Napoleon of the services he had rendered to him and to seek a compensation for his loyalty

But at the close of the Napoleonic wars and on the termination of the Russo-Turkish conflicts, the Sultan resolved to get rid of Ali Pasha. In 1820, an imperial firman declared Ali an enemy of the Empire and of the Mohammedan religion. Two Turk-

[1] Prince Metternich records in his *Mémoires* that one day he was called upon by an envoy of Ali Pasha. The envoy explained that he was sent by the Pasha to obtain from Prince Metternich a "Constitution," a thing which his master did not know what it was like, except that he had heard that it was quite necessary for the foundation of an Empire!

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ish armies invaded Albania, and, after two years of siege in his fortresses of Janina, Ali Pasha was taken by ruse and beheaded immediately [1]

After the fall of Ali Pasha and the decay of the independent governorship of Scutari,[2] the Porte undertook another campaign in Albania in order to wipe off all traces of their existence. The result was that the domination of the Sultan got a stronger hold on the country, especially as the two Pashas had previously suppressed all the petty rulers on whose jealousy and rivalry the Porte relied for the maintenance of the sovereign rights in Albania.

A period of comparative calmness ensued, but new insurrectionary outbreaks took place again in 1835 and 1847 respectively in Northern and Southern Albania, without, however, bringing about any appreciable changes in the conditions of the country In 1865, the Turkish government took advantage of the

[1] The tragical death of Ali Pasha is made use of as a part of the plot of Alexandre Dumas Père's *Le Comte de Monte Cristo*, in which the villain of his story, Fernand de Morcerf, is represented as the man who betrayed the aged Pasha to the Turks.

[2] At the time when Ali Pasha and Mahmud Pasha were striving to consolidate their rule in their respective possessions, a third Pasha of Albanian origin and nationality was quietly building a State for himself as well as for his successors and heirs. We are referring to the famous Mehmed Ali Pasha, the founder of the reigning Khedivial dynasty of Egypt. He was native of a small village of Southern Albania and was the contemporary of the two other Pashas.

This Albanian adventurer has been far more successful in his endeavors than either Mahmud Pasha or Ali Pasha, for while the independent governorships created by the former two disappeared in a a comparatively short time without leaving any traces, the State Mehmed Ali Pasha built is still existing and is being ruled by his descendants. He, moreover, enjoyed a more lasting fame because of the important rôle he played in international politics, in his quality as the reigning Hereditary Pasha of Egypt, when he nearly overthrew the whole tottering structure of the Ottoman Empire which was only saved by the timely intervention of Great Britain, Russia, and Austria who allied themselves with the Sultan in order to protect him against Mehmed Ali Pasha, his vassal (1840)

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situation in order to apply the new administrative organization which it had drawn especially for Albania. By the new arrangement, Northern Albania, whose compact population was a constant source of anxiety to the Sublime Porte, was now carved out into three separate provinces.

IV ALBANIANS IN THE GREEK REVOLUTION

Acting in his own interests and in furtherance of his own objects, Ali Pasha had assiduously labored to stir up discontent against the Sultan among the Greek population of the outlying provinces. Under a secret understanding with *Catherine II* of Russia, he had undertaken to weaken the power of the Turkish Beys ruling over the Greek provinces, thus hoping to facilitate the activities of the *Filiki Etairia,* which was operating under the protection and in the interests of the Russian Empress as well as in those of the Greek nation. It was obvious, on the other hand, that the existence of a state of disturbance in Greece was more than gratifying in many ways to Ali Pasha.

In so far, then, the Pasha not only encouraged the Greek movement, while trying to keep it within the limits that suited him and under his control, but he also was the avowed protector of the future leaders of the Greek revolution. The cause of the Greek insurrection was still more furthered by the fact that the uprising took place exactly at the time when the bulk of the Turkish army was employed in besieging the fortresses of Ali Pasha.

The most important feature of this whole matter, however, is the momentous rôle played directly by the Albanians in the course of the revolution. The

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principal personages of the Greek revolution, such as *Marco Bochari, Djavella, Andrucho* and others, had at first figured as military commanders in the court of Ali Pasha. Many of them had been estranged from the Pasha on account of his ruthless treatment of the Suliots, their compatriots, and now joined the Greeks out of spite of Ali, while others did not forsake the cause of Ali Pasha till after the fall of Janina and his execution, and presently embraced the cause of the Greek Revolution as a means of revenge against the common enemy, the Turk. Among these was Marco Bochari, whom Ali endearingly called his "beloved son."[1] Another reason why these heroic Albanians, whose names are to be conjured with among the Greeks, went over to the side of the latter is that Greece was a Christian nation fighting against the Sultan.

Not less important, however, was the rôle played by the Albanians of Greece (see pp. 24–25) It is on them that fell the main burden for the prosecution of the war of the Greek independence. But for the astonishing feats and exploits in naval warfare of the commercial fleet of the Albanian Islands Hydra and Spetsai, which was under the command of the devil-daring Admiral Miauli, the Greek revolution was doomed to a disastrous failure. The admiral, his sailors, and the celebrated female naval commander Bubulina were the direct descendants of the Albanian emigrants John Bua Spata led to Greece.[2]

[1] Marco Bochari is the author also of an Albanian-Greek dictionary.

[2] The world has grown with the idea, propagated by the Greeks, that all the men referred to above were Greeks, and the fact that has conspired to rob the Albanian nation of the luster of these celebrated names is the circumstance that all these men were Christian Al-

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In conclusion, we may say with Mr. Wadham Peacock that it was not likely that the independence of Greece would have been obtained but for the invaluable services rendered to the revolution by the Albanians, both of Albania and Greece, who supplied the best fighting material.[1]

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banians of the Eastern or "Greek" Orthodox rite. The name "Greek" has both a religious and a national meaning. In its religious sense it applies generally to Russians, Roumanians, Serbians, Albanians, and Greeks. In its national sense it can but apply only to the proper Greeks. But the modern Greeks have not been slow in taking advantage of the misleading meaning of this word. This is especially seen in their contention that the population of Southern Albania or Epirus is Greek, for no other plausible reason than the fact that this population belongs to the "Greek" Orthodox Church, although the inhabitants are Albanians.

[1] "Albania, the Foundling State of Europe," p. 178.

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CHAPTER VI

REGENERATION

I. THE ALBANIAN LEAGUE

It would seem extremely curious and, at the same time, inconsistent with their national character that the Albanians did not stir during the great Balkan upheaval which was occasioned by the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878, although they had been invited to join the Montenegrins. This attitude of theirs, the reasons of which will be explained elsewhere,[1] would appear all the more puzzling in view of the events that took place at the very termination of that war.

Yet, among the various petitions sent to the Congress of Berlin on the part of the oppressed nationalities there was also one transmitted by the Albanians claiming recognition of their nationality But the Iron Chancellor of Germany, who had impatiently exclaimed "another one!" when Lord Salisbury purposed that the Congress should discuss the Armenian question,[2] brushed aside the Albanian petition with the remark "There is no Albanian nationality!" But he was shortly made to reconsider his statement in a manner that was derogatory to his professed omniscience.

Acting on the premises laid down by Prince Bismarck, who was presiding over it, the Congress pro-

[1] See below, p. 176.
[2] Hanotaux, G., "Contemporary France," Vol. IV, p. 349.

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ceeded to its business without much regard for national and local considerations, save those that were meant to patch up the shattered balance of power in the Balkans. In the new arrangement of the Balkan affairs, Albania was to suffer a curtailment of her territory for the benefit of her neighbors. *Kurshumli-Vrania* was assigned to Serbia, *Antivari* and its seacoast, and the highlands of *Gussigne-Plava* and *Triepshi* were to be ceded to Montenegro, and Greece was to get *Janina,* the very capital of Ali Pasha, *Preveza,* and *Arta* with their respective districts.

The Albanians protested against this partition of their national patrimony, but, as there was no Albanian nationality in the opinion of Bismarck, the Congress of Berlin took no heed of their protest. In the face of such a manifest injustice, the Albanians resolved to take matters into their own hands. Thereupon, "*the Albanian League for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian Nationality*" was formed at Prisrend. The headquarters of the League were at Elbasan, in the heart of Albania, with two branches at Prisrend and Arghyrocastro.

The formation of the League is a landmark in the modern development of the Albanian nation. Properly speaking, it is the dawn of the national awakening of Albania. Hitherto the movements toward independence had been made by individuals, such as the Pashas of Scutari and Janina, or by unorganized popular commotions. The formation of the League marks the awakening of the Albanians to the realization of their own position, under a properly organized national body None could deny, of course, that its formation was at first instigated and encouraged by the Porte, which expected to avoid in this way

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the execution of the decisions of the Congress of Berlin with regard to the transfer of the Albanian territories to the respective Balkan States. But, as the coming events were to prove, the subsequent activities of the League caused more uneasiness to the Turkish government than to Montenegro or Greece.

The first act of the League was formally to protest against the alienation of the Albanian territories. This warning was repeated in a second protest which the League sent to the International Commission for the delimitation of the boundary of Montenegro in which it said that "no transfer of territory could be effected without the consent of Albania." Europe went on being deaf to the Albanian protests, and in the month of December, 1879, the Montenegrin troops proceeded to seize the territories assigned to them. But as soon as they crossed the frontier they came face to face with the armed forces of the League. A lively engagement took place, and the Montenegrins were compelled to stop their advance. The Prince of Montenegro appealed, then, to the Porte, which sent *Mukhtar Pasha* at the head of an army in order to reënforce the Montenegrin forces. The allied Turko-Montenegrin troops attacked the Albanians without being able to dislodge them. The League was giving to Bismarck and his august diplomatic colleagues the tangible proof that Albania was not a mere geographical expression, as he wanted her to be, any more than Italy was a geographical name in 1815 because Metternich had said so.

In view of the resolute resistance of the Albanians, the great European Powers, signatories of the treaty of Berlin, were forced to modify their original deci-

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sions. They now resolved that, instead of the highlands of Gussigne-Plava, Montenegro was to receive in exchange the seaport of Dulcigno with a strip of territory The Albanians opposed again this trade of their national territories. As a result, the great European Powers resorted to the only effective measure at their disposal: they sent their fleet to bombard the Albanians defending Dulcigno. The small garrison of the city was forced to surrender under the shells of the European warships (1880).

As to Greece, she was unable to get any of the Albanian territories assigned to her by the Congress of Berlin, the Powers having dropped the matter, "in consideration of the complications which the well-known resistance of the Albanians would produce."

The resistance of the forces organized by the Albanian League to the carrying out of the decisions of Europe, accompanied as it was by many heroic deeds on the part of the defenders of the national soil, produced a thrill of nation-wide enthusiasm. This armed opposition came to be known as "the war against Europe," and forms one of the celebrated episodes in the annals of the Albanian nation.

II. THE AFTERMATH OF THE LEAGUE

As a result of the termination of disputes over the Albanian-Montenegrin frontier, through the armed intervention of the European Powers, and of the deferred cession of a part of Southern Albania to Greece, the diplomatic bickering of the Porte with Europe relative to these questions was over. Consequently, the Turkish government thought that the Albanian League had already outlived its useful-

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ness. The reasoning of the Sublime Porte was that the League should disappear with the disappearance of the causes that necessitated its formation. In reality, the Porte never looked upon it otherwise than as a filibustering expedient which might be good enough to be utilized for its own purposes in order to avert the necessity of the evacuation and the transfer of the Albanian territories on the ground that they were Albanian. It was the first, as well as the last, occasion on which the Turkish government embraced the principle of nationalities.

But the men who had formed the League did not share in the Turkish viewpoint. Once they got started, they thought they should go on with their work. And when the Sultan resorted to the use of armed force against it, the League brought its organized forces against the Sultan himself. The Leaguers set out, presently, to make plans for the further prosecution of the national work by way of preparing the people to look after their own interests. Eventually, they issued a proclamation to the Albanians whereby they advocated the necessity of the establishment of an autonomous régime for the whole of Albania.

The Porte grew uneasy over these activities and hastened to take the necessary measures. *Dervish Pasha* was, therefore, commissioned to suppress the League altogether. At the head of a large army, he invaded the territories under the rule of the League, the Turkish government having had previously surrendered the northern part of Albania to the authorities established by the Leaguers. The Alba-

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nian forces arrayed themselves against the invaders; but, after a series of bloody engagements, their desperate resistance was crushed down by the more numerous Turks. The Leaguers were dispersed, and the leaders of the insurrectionary movement were either imprisoned, or executed or exiled. Among the latter was *Prenk Bib Doda Pasha,* the hereditary Prince of the Catholic district of Mirdita, and he did not return to his country till after the promulgation of the Turkish Constitution in 1908.

But the victory of Dervish Pasha over the forces of the League did not put an end to the agitation or to its momentous effects. The serious situation of the Albanian affairs attracted the attention of Europe, and Great Britain proposed the establishment of an administrative autonomy in that part of Albania which had been immediately in the possession and under the control of the forces and authorities of the League.[1]

[1] In a long despatch from Earl Granville, Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to G. J. Goschen, British ambassador to Constantinople, under date of October 2, 1880, the whole question of the complications that arose between the Albanians and Montenegro, as well as the situation created by the activities of the League, is reviewed and discussed. The attitude of the Powers toward the League will be seen from the few condensed paragraphs we reproduce herein below:

"Her Majesty's Consul-General at Scutari, together with the Austrian Consul-General, had suggested some time previously that an alternative plan might be proposed with greater prospect of success for bringing about a peaceful solution of the difficulty, if the Porte would consent to the surrender of the district of Dulcigno, together with a small strip of territory between the Lake of Scutari and Podgoritza, and the Kuci Kraina, but excluding the Hotti district and the Grudi and Clementi mountains.

"Her Majesty's Government were informed that the scheme had been mentioned to some of the leaders of the North Albanians, who intimated that they may not be unwilling to agree to it if the Powers would guarantee to them some form of local self-government.

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To all appearances, the League was suppressed. But, in reality, it only changed its outward form, and, from a public political association it became

"Her Majesty's Government have always had in view the importance of establishing a better system of administration for the various clans which occupy the highlands of Albania. ."

"The result of the communications between the Powers, the Prince of Montenegro and the Albanians was that the following joint proposals of Mr. Green (the British Consul-General) and Mr. Lippich (the Austrian Consul-General) were telegraphed to Your Excellency:

"The Consuls to be enabled to assure the North Albanians that their legitimate aspirations will not be disregarded.

"These administrative reforms should, in the opinion of Mr. Green and the Austrian Consul-General, be limited for the present to the vilayet of Scutari.

"The Governor-General of Scutari Vilayet to be an Albanian Mohammedan, to be chosen, if possible, in the Vilayet, the Vice-Governor to be a Roman Catholic.

"The proposed form of administration to be submitted for consideration to the North Albanians.

"Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Her Majesty's Commissioner on the Eastern Roumelian frontier was informed of the recommendation of the British and Austrian Consuls-General, and a scheme for the administration of the sandjak of Scutari, in the sense of these recomendations, was prepared and presented to the Commission by the Austrian and French Commissioners But the Russian Commissioner, for the reasons stated by him at the time, was unable to accept this scheme without instructions. The other Commissioners adopted it, and recommended it to the Porte, adding that they would wish that regard should be equally had to the immunities of the mountainous districts beyond the limit of the sandjak of Scutari, and especially to the immunities of the Chimara.[1] The Commissioners also saw no objection to the Albanian districts being united in a single Vilayet.

"In supporting these proposals, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, with the concurrence of all the Commissioners, stated that the Commission ought not to separate without having given this tangible proof to the Albanians that the Powers were concerned in their welfare.

"It would be desirable that some opportunity should be taken to make the Albanians acquainted with the interest that has been taken by the Powers in the improvement of their local administration, and in securing to them their ancient privileges and immunities. "

But, despite this solemn show of interest, the Powers did nothing for the Albanians, whom they forgot as soon as the League was suppressed.

[1] See page 34.

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a secret national society, a sort of *Carbonari.* Under its latter form, the League made some manifestations of its underground activities in 1897, at the time of the Greek-Turkish War, and in 1903, conjointly with the Bulgarian uprising in Macedonia.

The avowed program of the League consisted in awakening the national spirit among the Albanian masses, and in the effort to rally the various religious groups around the ideal of an independent Albania where each group would assume and play its moral rôle, instead of mingling in politics, as it had been allowed to do under the theocratical Turkish régime.

III. THE NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The seeds sown by the Albanian League during its shortlived existence had fallen on fertile ground. Its initial work was now taken up by a number of national societies which sprang up clandestinely in Albania, but mainly in foreign lands, such as Roumania, Bulgaria, Egypt, and, in more recent time, in the United States. The common aim of these popular organizations has been to stimulate the national sentiment and to strengthen the bonds of unity among the Albanians by the destruction of the religious barriers which the Turkish government had erected in order to keep the Albanians disunited; for, despite the astonishing religious toleration of the Albanian people, which at times amounts to indifference and which cannot be found elsewhere in the Balkans, the religious differences had been heightened by the sinister influence of the Turkish authorities.

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There were three almost insurmountable obstacles the Albanian national societies set out to overcome, besides the religious question.

In the first place, the almost complete lack of Albanian literature rendered the spread of education among the Albanians in their native language almost impossible. The oldest book in the Albanian language was published only in the fifteenth century, and, after it, practically no serviceable books made their appearance.

In the second place, even if there were any Albanian books they could not be of any use, inasmuch as the Turkish government had definitively barred the Albanian language from the few schools that existed in Albania. The Sultan had taken great care that his Moslem Albanian subjects be educated in nothing else but in the Turkish schools and in the Turkish language. As to the Christian Albanians he let them make use of any other language but Albanian, so that the Orthodox Albanians, adherents of the Greek Church of Constantinople, were brought to adopt the Greek tongue as their educational, religious, and business language.[1]

In the third place, the Albanian language was interdicted by a decree of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople who threatened with excommunication and eternal damnation any Orthodox Albanian who would use the "accursed" Albanian language either in schools or in the churches.

[1] This use of the Greek language in the schools of the Orthodox Albanians of Southern Albania or Epirus has been employed by the Greeks as one of their strongest arguments in support of their claim that Southern Albania is inhabited by Greeks, in addition to the willful distortion of the meaning of the word "Greek," which has been already explained in a note under pages 48–49.

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As a result of the disturbances which took place during the years 1878–1880, the Turkish government relaxed the rigid interdiction on the use of the native language. There sprang up, immediately, a number of national Albanian schools, and books, newspapers and periodicals began their publication. Shortly after, however, the Turkish government hastened to renew the interdiction, having been frightened by the success of popular education in the Albanian language. It was also on this occasion that the decree of the Greek Patriarch for the excommunication of the users of the Albanian language was issued, as a supplement to the imperial interdiction.[1]

Consequently, the Albanian schools were shut down, and the Albanian publications were driven to find refuge in foreign lands. Thanks to the connivance of the Moslem Albanians in the service of the Sublime Porte, the publications were smuggled into Albania, to find their way into the hands of eager readers.

How the national societies managed to overcome these difficulties will be explained in another part of this book.[2] Suffice it to say here that their achievements are nothing short of miraculous; they constitute a unique feature in the intellectual development of the nation. This is precisely the part of the Albanian history which has never been written and is totally unknown even to those who profess to be well acquainted with the Albanian question.

[1] Brailsford, H. N., "Macedonia," pp. 248–262.
[2] See Ch. 17

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CHAPTER VII

THE STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY

I. THE ALBANIAN POLICY

The work that was being accomplished by the energetic action of the Albanian organizations in the way of stimulating the dormant national spirit was highly commendable, and its salutary effects were to be seen a little later. The earlier scanty productions of Albanian literature were now being multiplied every day through the untiring efforts of unknown but ardent pioneers who were constrained to write under fictitious names in order to escape the vigilance of the Turkish authorities. And in this laudable race for the intellectual development of the nation Christians vied with Moslems and Northerners with Southerners.

The struggle for regeneration was in full swing, but the fear of the future of Albania was always haunting the minds of the Albanian patriots, nevertheless. It was perfectly evident to them that Albania was far behind in the requirements that were absolutely necessary for her independent existence. The Albanian masses offered a passive resistance to the propagation of the national ideal in that they lacked education and a clear understanding of their situation. It would certainly require some time in order to recruit and organize the forces of the nation to its full capacity Nations cannot be built or formed overnight, and in the life of nations dec-

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ades and even centuries are only as so many hours and days. During more than half of the time of their independent life, the other Balkan States were simply in a condition of vegetation. Albania, on the other hand, was only regaining her national consciousness at that time and could not well afford to think so prematurely of an independent existence.

A period of preparation and transition was, therefore, obviously needed. And it was still more necessary not because the national ideal was only in its infancy, but because, by a premature winning of her independence, she would be exposed to the intrigues and attacks of her neighbors whose ill-concealed designs were clearly manifested in the demands they formulated before the Congress of Berlin. It was a common secret that her Slav neighbors eyed with avidity her northern provinces, and Greece her southern districts.

These weighty considerations made the Albanian patriots strike on the sole rational policy they could adopt with assured benefit for their defenseless country: the policy of endeavoring to win the independence of Albania step by step, the first step thereto being to obtain the sèverance of her administrative bonds from the Turkish empire. This is why the Albanian League issued the proclamation by which it advocated the necessity of the establishment of an administrative autonomy for Albania. Its lead was taken up by the organizations which succeeded to it.

Coupled with this national policy there was the *sine qua non* condition of the preservation of the Ottoman Empire, within which Albania was to hold a privileged position of an ally or confederate rather than of a subject nationality A premature disrup-

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tion of Turkey would have brought about, in the opinion of the Albanian patriots, the dismemberment of Albania herself. To what degree they were correct in their previsions, it was to be plainly seen in 1912.

Summing up, the policy of the Albanians had two distinct objects:

1. To preserve the Ottoman Empire as a means to their national end, so as to gain time for the preparation of Albania.

2. To secure an autonomous administration for Albania which would serve as the stepping-stone to complete independence.

This has been the keynote of the whole attitude of the Albanians toward Turkey, although this policy was exposed to very dangerous misunderstandings on the part of the rest of the world which has been at all times wont to mistake it for a religious attachment of the majority of the Albanians to the Caliph of the Moslems. Professor J. H. Rose believes, for instance, that the Albanians were willing to remain loyal to the Sultan not because they cared for him or for his despised Turks, but because they were free to follow their whims and to prey upon their neighbors.

We have thought it necessary to lay so much stress on this introduction to the present chapter because it affords the only key of the attitude of the Albanians in their dealings with Abdul Hamid and the Young Turks.

II. THE REIGN OF ABDUL HAMID

The events we have sketched in the preceding chapter took place during the sinister reign of Abdul

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Hamid, the Red Sultan of Turkey Their occurrence at such an untoward occasion lends still greater importance to those events, for the suffocating rule of the worst ruler Turkey has ever had was not calculated to give satisfaction to national aspirations.

The most curious part of it, however, is the contradictory policy of the Sultan in regard to the Albanians, for, on the one hand, Abdul Hamid was persecuting with barbarous harshness the national Albanian movement, while, on the other hand, he treated them as his most trusted supporters. He was surrounded almost exclusively by Albanians, and he put faith in none else more than in the Albanians. His trusted Grand Vizir was *Ferid Pasha Vlora* of Valona, who, curiously enough, was at the same time President of the *National Albanian Association* of Constantinople. The numerous imperial guard was likewise composed of the gorgeously dressed Albanian mountaineers. It is a little hard to understand such inconsistencies, but the fact is that Abdul Hamid II favored the Albanians as individuals, and loaded them with honors and emoluments; as a nation, however, he attacked them with the rage and bitterness that characterized his criminal propensities.

None the less, the exalted position held by individual Albanians under the Sultan could but redound to the benefit of the whole nation, for, on many occasions they found it necessary to place the loyalty to their nation above that they owed to their master. The woeful sufferings of the Christians of the Turkish Empire under the Hamidian régime did not extend to the Christian Albanians in any perceptible and direct way, because of the protection accorded to

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them by government officials of Albanian nationality It was the same Moslem Albanian officials who winked at, and often encouraged, the smuggling in of Albanian literature published in foreign lands.

During the late period of the reign of Abdul Hamid the work of the national societies was still more intensified in proportion to the rigorous measures the government of the Sultan took in the effort of stifling it. It is useless to say, however, that the carrying out of the policy of securing to Albania an autonomous administrative régime was entirely out of the question. Its execution was, on the other hand, prevented by the Sultan's hiring the services of the most influential Albanian leaders. Still, there took place now and then some not very important insurrectionary outbreaks in several parts of Albania, but the Sultan knew how to quell them in his own way

On the whole, the Albanians managed to get pretty well along under the Hamidian régime and to have a free hand in their internal affairs without departing from the policy sanctioned by Abdul Hamid. But when the insane policy of the Sultan brought the empire to the brink of the precipice, and the Young Turks rose to save it, the Albanians veered to the side of the latter in order to preserve the empire which offered the only guarantee of protection against their greedy neighbors, in full accordance with their established policy, as explained above. It was only when the assembly of the Albanian chieftains wired to Abdul Hamid that they could not any longer follow his disastrous lead, that the Red Sultan bowed to the inevitable and promulgated the Turkish Constitution (July 10, 1908) The *coup d'état* Abdul Hamid strove to effect on March

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31 of the following year, in his effort to overthrow the Constitution, was again frustrated by the Albanians, and Essad Pasha was commissioned to inform the Sultan that he had been dethroned.

III. ALBANIANS AND YOUNG TURKS

In embracing the cause of the Turkish Constitution and in allying themselves with the Young Turks, the Albanians were simply abiding by the dictates of their traditional policy Their way of reasoning was that under the Constitution Albania would have the amplest chance of self-development and of securing a privileged position within the empire, until her international position would have been consolidated. In becoming the allies of the Young Turks against the Sultan the Albanians had not failed to make the point clear that, if the revolution was to be successful, Albania was to have a privileged position. The Young Turks assented to it, as a matter of course.

The game had not gone very far, however, when the Young Turks threw their masks off and betrayed their real intentions. According to the interpretation which the "Union and Progress" Committee put on its brand-new Turkish Constitution, Ottomanization was the price to be paid for a share in the enjoyment of liberties granted by it. The attitude of the Committee marked the parting of the ways for the Albanians and the Young Turks. The Albanian schools, which had just recently been able to open their doors through private contributions, were again closed, the Albanian newspapers were again forced to migrate to foreign lands, and the national movement was stopped. Far from showing

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any concern in the threatening attitude of the Albanians, the Young Turks considered the situation as very gratifying to them. They presently conceived the idea of turning the wheel of the Albanian movement the other way; they decreed that henceforth the Albanian language should be written with Turkish instead of Latin characters. They published a series of school books with Turkish characters, only to see them ridiculed and burned in heaps in the marketplaces by the Albanians. But in spite of this they did not lose their pluck.

On the contrary, the incorrigible Young Turks set to carry the matter to the extreme; they thought to finish the whole matter by simply denying the existence of any separate Albanian nationality During a debate in the Turkish Chamber of Deputies on the projected abolition of the privileges and immunities enjoyed before the promulgation of the Constitution by some of the subject nationalities, among which Albania held the first place, the then Turkish Minister of the Interior rose from his seat and declared in a matter-of-fact way that there was no separate Albanian nationality, the majority of the Albanians being Moslem (the Christian Albanians did not count, of course!). This impudent remark was met by the simultaneous repartee of the Albanian Deputies, all of whom were Moslem: *"Var, efendem, var!"* (There is, Sir, there is!) The phrase "Var, efendem, var" was immediately made use of by the Albanians as a national slogan.

IV. THE WINNING OF AUTONOMY

Eventually, the Young Turks proceeded to carry words into deeds. They began with the attempt

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to disarm the Northern Albanians to whom they were especially indebted for the hand they had lent in overthrowing Abdul Hamid. But the Albanians did not wait for the Turks to come. In the month of July, 1910, the Albanian chieftains met at Ferizovitch and resolved upon the necessity of securing the autonomous administration of Albania. As the Young Turks did not accede to the demands they formulated in their ultimatum, insurrection broke out. The Turkish government made two successive expeditions against the insurgents. After a long-drawn and cruel war during which the ferociousness of the Turk had full play, the brave resistance of the Albanians was crushed.

To all appearances, Albania had been pacified, but no sooner were the Turkish troops withdrawn than the Albanians entered upon their second war for autonomy This time the insurgents marched from success to success. In May, 1912, they were in the possession of the vilayet of Kossovo as well as of Uskub, its capital. Monastir was already threatened and the Turks were on the point of evacuating it. Southern Albania joined the insurgents who were now clamoring for complete independence. The Turkish government saw no other way but meeting half-way the demands of the insurgents.

The concessions granted to the Albanians were of momentous importance. By the terms of the cessation of hostilities, Albania was recognized by the Turkish government as an autonomous administrative province comprising the four Albanian vilayets, namely: The vilayets of *Scutari, Kossovo, Janina* and *Monastir* The country was to be governed by native governors, and in accordance with the local

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laws. The Albanians were exempted from military service outside of the confines of their country, except in time of war. Education was to be given in the Albanian language.

Of all these concessions, however, by far the most important was the recognition on the part of Turkey that Albania extended to the four vilayets. This was the first official delimitation of the frontiers of Albania.

The result of the Albanian victory over the Young Turks was that the "Albanian Policy" was carried out to its minutest details, and an atmosphere of hopefulness for the future succeeded the gloomy outlook of the previous years. The process of regeneration would have been completed within a very short time by the establishment of a purely national system of education and of a native paternal administration. It was true that this privilege of self-government was obtained a little late, but it was rightly thought that it was better late than never. The complete independence of Albania was not very far off now Yet, none of the Albanian patriots ever dreamed of the ominous way in which that independence was to come on the very morrow of Albania's winning her administrative autonomy Merciless Fate had decreed that next day the tables be turned on the Albanians, through the instrumentality of their neighbors who had outwardly applauded the successes of the Albanian insurgents over the Young Turks. A glorious chapter of the history of Albania was closed in order to make way to the sordid workings of the European and Balkan diplomacy

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PART II

THE PRINCIPALITY OF ALBANIA

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CHAPTER VIII

THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

I. THE BALKAN ALLIANCE

The forcible grant of autonomy to Albania dealt a mortal blow to the policy of the Young Turks. The "Union and Progress" Committee was humiliated for the first time. The chauvinist ministry which brought about the clash with the Albanians was ousted in disgrace, and the sinister Mahmud Shefket Pasha, the Turkish dictator, was forced to retire into the background. A more moderate Cabinet was formed under the presidency of Gazi Mukhtar Pasha.[1]

But the triumph of the Albanian cause was destined to have some far more important consequences than the ministerial changes at Constantinople.

The brilliant successes won by the Albanians over the Turkish army and its German instructors made the most profound impression throughout the Balkan Peninsula and beyond it as well. This was a highly profitable lesson set for the Balkan States. The second important lesson the latter learned from the successful issues of the Albanian insurrection was that Turkey could not be made to yield to any sane reasoning but only to the force of arms, and it was only through the use of the latter means that the policy of Ottomanization could be stayed.

1 "American Year Book," 1912, p. 90.

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But the momentous event which deeply stirred the Balkan States was the recognition of the autonomous status of Albania, involving, as it did, the advent of a new political factor in the Balkan Peninsula.

The main consequences of the rise of Albania as a separate nationality were two:

In the first place, the balance of power in the Balkans was irrevocably disturbed. The day when Albania would become an independent State was not remote.

In the second place, the establishment of the autonomous Albanian régime in the four western vilayets of Turkey was meant to operate as a bar to the expansionist aspirations of the several Balkan States.[1] Montenegro coveted a part of the vilayet of Scutari, and its capital as well. Serbia's dream was to get possession of the vilayet of Kossova which she claimed as a part of "Old Serbia";[2] she also wanted an access to the Adriatic Sea through the Albanian territories. Bulgaria claimed the vilayet of Monastir, and Greece that of Janina. But now all these territories were recognized as part and parcel of Albania. What would have become of their imperialistic claims in case they allowed the Albanians to consolidate their power over these provinces? It mattered very little, if at all, to the Balkan States that these territories belonged, by every divine and human right and title, to the Albanians who have had them in their actual possession from time immemorial.

The net result of these reflections and apprehen-

[1] Gueshoff, Iv. Eustratiev, "L'Alliance Balkanique" (Paris, 1915), pp. 73–87.

[2] Brailsford, H. N., "Macedonia," p. 273.

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sions of the Balkan nations was the conclusion of the Balkan alliance which took place, very significantly, immediately after the recognition of the autonomy of Albania. By the provisions of the treaties which confirmed this alliance, the whole of Albania was partitioned among its several partners, in accordance with their wishes, and with no more regard for the rights of the Albanian nationality than for international morality. This dastardly plot of the so-called Christian States of the Balkans is all the more sordid because it was resolved upon when the echo of the frenzied acclamations of their respective peoples on the occasion of the Albanian victories over the Young Turks was still resounding in the Balkan Peninsula.

II. THE INVASION OF ALBANIA

When the right time for common action arrived, the Balkan Allies addressed to the Sublime Porte a joint demand whereby they claimed that an autonomous administration, similar to that granted to Albania, be accorded to the populations of Macedonia. It is said that imitation is the best eulogy, but in this instance it was not eulogy but jealousy The Turkish government rejected their demands, as it was expected that it would, and war was declared. But as there were many serious misgivings as to the sincerity and good faith among the allies, the tiny Montenegro was made use of as an *agent provocateur:* before the Porte had responded to the allied ultimatum, the Montenegrin army attacked the Turkish troops without any formal declaration of war. Hostilities began officially on October 8, 1912, although Greece did not enter the war till ten days later.

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The war took the Albanians by surprise, as it did the rest of the world. From the very beginning, the war operations went wholly in favor of the Balkan allies, and the Turks were beating their retreat everywhere. The Albanians were driven to the wall; the day of the final test of their traditional policy had come. Instinctively, if not deliberately, they had always abstained from adding to the worries and difficulties of Turkey whenever she was in the throes with their immediate neighbors whose designs in regard to the Albanian territories they well knew This is why they did not attack the Turks during the great Balkan upheaval of the year 1878. The same fateful question was now before them. What were they going to do? Would it have been more advisable to abide by their previous policy or to join the Balkan States? It was on the answer of this question that their fate depended.

As circumstances were becoming more pressing and the successes of the Balkan armies were growing, the answer to that vital question was more dif ficult. Eventually, they decided to refrain from aiding either party to the war by following a policy of neutrality Apart from the defense of the two fortresses of Janina and Scutari, the safety of which was considered as a vital point to the life of Albania, the Albanians left the Turks alone in their struggle. In the great battle of Kumanovo (October 22), in which the Serbians gained their first decisive victory, the Albanians refused to take part in the fight, and the Turks were consequently routed. To that extent, then, the Albanians facilitated the cause of the Balkan allies.

But, regardless of the attitude of the Albanians,

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the Balkan allies proceeded along the lines established in the treaties of alliance, and, within a few weeks from the beginning of the war, the whole of Albania, apart from the fortresses of Janina and Scutari, and the district of Valona was in the hands of the Balkan armies. During the month of November the greater part of Northern and Central Albania was invaded by the Serbians and Montenegrins, and the southern portion of Southern Albania was in the possession of the Greeks.

III. NOVEMBER 28

On entering the Albanian territories, the Balkan commanders did not at all conceal their purposes as expressed in the stipulations of the secret treaties which had been previously concluded among their governments. The Albanian land was treated as a conquered one. The idea of its being Albanian was considered as preposterous, nay ridiculous, by the Balkan governments themselves, and the occupation was openly deemed to be a permanent one. When the Serbians entered Durazzo, the cavalry corps of King Peter rushed into the shallow waters of the seaport shouting: "Long live the Serbian sea!"

Albania seemed lost. Century-long struggles for the rights of the Albanian nationality seemed at once to have been wasted. The dream of an independent Albania was swiftly fading in the smoke and dust of the foreign invasion. A miracle could only save the situation now

There presently appeared on the scene the man who undertook to work that miracle: he was Ismail Kemal Bey of Valona, an old Albanian leader of wide fame and reputation, the implacable enemy

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of Abdul Hamid and of his régime and of the Young Turks as well. At the outbreak of the conflagration, he was at Constantinople, where he was offered a seat in the Turkish Ministry in order to attach the Albanians to the Turkish cause. He declined the offer, however, in order to devote his time and services to the cause of his own nation.

On hearing the news of the invasion of Albania, he struck upon the idea of saving his country by an audacious *coup de main*. He hurriedly left the Turkish capital, caused a meeting of prominent Albanians to be held at Bucharest, and, after consulting with them on what ought to be done in those critical circumstances, proceeded on his way to Albania with a small suite. At Trieste the party embarked on an Austrian steamer which sailed away in the direction of Durazzo. But when they landed at the latter place, information was received that the Serbians were swiftly marching toward that city, and, as the Greek blockading squadron was cruising in the vicinity of Valona, Ismail Kemal Bey and his party were forced to cover the remainder of the distance to the latter city by crossing on horseback the dangerously swampy plain of Muzakia.

On November 26, the party arrived safely at Valona, which they found crowded with refugees from all the invaded Albanian territories. Nevertheless, Ismail Kemal Bey entered immediately upon the task of carrying out his project, which had previously been sanctioned by the assembly of Bucharest. A circular telegraphic message was transmitted to all the uninvaded parts of Albania to send delegates to Valona to take part in the solemn act which would resuscitate the old kingdom of Scanderbeg. On No-

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vember 28, 1912, the historic day of modern Albania, the national flag, the black double-headed eagle of Scanderbeg, was hoisted among the tearful acclamations of a population which was too well aware that it was passing the most serious crisis in the history of the nation. A formal proclamation of independence was issued together with a declaration of neutrality in the struggle impending between Turkey and the Balkan States. Thereupon, a Provisional Government was formed under the presidency of Ismail Kemal Bey, as well as a provisional national assembly An official notification of the proclamation of independence and of the constitution of the new government was also transmitted to the Powers.

This was the scheme by which Ismail Kemal Bey sought to change the course of events by taking away from the theater of war operations the Albanian territory and by presenting Albania as an independent neutral nation in the eyes of the world. The act was all right as far as the Albanians themselves were concerned who unreservedly placed their persons and property at the disposal of the Provisional Government. But it remained to be seen how the proclamation of independence would be received by the concert of European Powers, and, most important of all, by the belligerents.

IV AUSTRIA AND ITALY

The attitude of the belligerents was made known very shortly after. The Balkan allies paid no heed whatsoever to the action of the Albanians; they went on with their military operations in occupying the Albanian territories as though nothing had hap-

BIBLIOTEKA QENDRORE "MARIN BARLETI" SHKODER (QPTU)

pened, and were now approaching the gates of Valona herself. The Greek troops came almost within cannon range from the provisional capital of Albania; an engagement took place on the heights of Logora, some fifteen miles south of Valona, between them and the improvised army of the new government. The next day, the Greek monitors entered the bay and bombarded the city of Valona, although unfortified. A shot struck the flagpole on which flew the ensign of Scanderbeg. Nor did the Turkish government take notice of the change in the status of Albania; the Turkish military commanders were instructed to go on with their military operations without troubling themselves about the independent neutral policy of the government of Ismail Kemal Bey

Contrary to the common expectations, the proclamation of the independence incensed still more the Balkan governments, who now gave a more vigorous impulse to the war operations of their armies in their determination to occupy the rest of Albania and confront Europe with a *fait accompli.* They presently felt more eager than ever to settle once for all the Albanian question in their own way, before the Powers would be able to act.

Again the fate of Albania hung in the balance. The Albanian people lay panting and trembling for their very life as an individual nation. It seemed as though nothing could stop the current of events and the torrential invasion of the Albanian territory People began to think that the diplomacy of Ismail Kemal Bey had miscarried.

But the old and experienced diplomat had evidently not counted merely on the benevolence of the

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Balkan States to respect the rights of the Albanian nationality Before he had proceeded to the proclamation of independence he had first sounded the governments of the two great Powers that were directly concerned in the fate of Albania.

These two Powers were Austria and Italy And now, when he was confronted with the most momentous situation, it was the turn of these Powers to take their stand in the Albanian question. It was only their intervention that could save Albania.

The grounds on which the Austro-Italian intervention rested may be best explained by referring to a secret agreement entered into between the two governments as early as the year 1900. By virtue of that agreement, the two Powers engaged themselves to guarantee the integrity of Albania in case of the Turkish Empire being dismembered, so that Albania was to be made an independent State.[1] Why the two Powers felt it to be necessary to make such a provision is tersely explained by a declaration of Count Tittoni, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, on May 14, 1904:

"The proper value of Albania," said the Italian Minister, "resides in her ports and in her seacoast, the possession of which would mean, for either Italy or Austria, the incontestable supremacy over the Adriatic Sea. This is what Italy would never allow

[1] The existence of such a secret Austro-Italian agreement in regard to Albania transpired only in the midst of the interchange of notes between Austria and Italy on the eve of the latter's joining the Entente against the Central Powers. Reference to this accord is made in the 71st document of the Italian Green Book of 1914–1915. The text has never been published but the contents of the accord substantially tally with what has been said above. It is not known whether Ismail Kemal Bey had any knowledge of the existence of this accord.

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Austria to obtain, nor Austria Italy; in the event that either one of these States should seek to appropriate for itself that region, the other ought to oppose it by all available means." [1]

The logical corollary of this necessity of antagonizing each other is that Austria and Italy would make common cause in opposing a third State which might seek an expansion on the Albanian coast.

Ever since the beginning of hostilities, the governments of Austria and Italy, especially Austria, were watching with the deepest concern the progress of the Balkan armies into the interior of Albania. Obviously, the Cabinet of Vienna was more deeply concerned because Austria had her special interests in the Balkans, as a member of the Teutonic alliance with its paraphernalia of the *Bagdad Railway* project and the *Drang Nach Osten* policy When it appeared then that the Balkan allies would not stop their advance, the Austro-Hungarian government mobilized a large part of the Austrian army, with the evident intention of attacking Serbia and Montenegro. Italy, though not disposed to go as far as that, felt it necessary to join her ally, Austria, in the effort to prevent the descent of the Slavs and Greeks to the shores of the Adriatic Sea, and incidentally of saving Albania.

V. THE MENACE OF EUROPEAN WAR

The echo of the rattling sword of Austria found its reverberation in the armaments of the Power which was suspected of being the benevolent chaperon of the Balkan States: Russia. The government of the Czar showed that it was ready to take up

[1] F. Gilbert, "Les Pays d'Albanie," pp. 299–300.

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the gauntlet Austria intended to throw in the face of the two small Slav States. There was talk of mobilizing the Russian army. The Russian press became utterly angry, bitter, and bellicose. France and the French press naturally took the side of Russia, Germany and her newspapers were pouring invectives on the curse of Pan-Slavism. Great Britain only was able to guard her *sangfroid,* and the British press was preserving a conciliatory attitude in the matter.

The danger of a general European conflagration loomed ominous on the horizon. The atmosphere was overcharged with electricity, and Europe stood watching in breathless anxiety the dreadful situation. Still, the conciliatory attitude of Sir Edward Grey did much to allay the fear of a conflagration; after all, the danger of general war was not so imminent as when Sir Edward Grey confessed, later in March, that the Albanian question almost brought about the dreaded European war.[1]

Yet, that very question was to suffer the penalty of its becoming so notorious within a fortnight. In fact, the cause of Albania was completely overshadowed by the effects of the bitter rivalry that broke out between the two gigantic political blocs, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente; the issue of the Albanian question was treated merely as a means of testing the comparative strength and solidity of the two great coalitions. The intrinsic merits of the Albanian question were forgotten; nobody cared for Albania, as a nation. During the Albanian revolt of 1912, which ended with the granting of administrative autonomy and which preceded the Balkan war

[1] "American Year Book," 1913, p. 102.

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by a few months only, the press of all Europe sang the high praises of the Albanian victories over the Young Turks. Now, however, the Albanian aspirations were regarded only as "a very clever Austrian scheme" by which the government of Vienna was seeking to rob the Balkan allies of their laurels and lawful acquisitions. It was openly declared that Russia and France would never tolerate the creation of a "new little Turkey" under the protection of Austria and for the benefit of the Italian imperialist policy

The result was that the Albanian question was relegated into the background in order to make place for the spectacular diplomatic and press battles which were fought daily between the two European blocs. The rights of the Albanian nationality were utterly discredited by the bellicose attitude of Austria which gave to the world the impression that the cause of Albania was merely an Austrian issue which should be fought with every available weapon in order to cut short the extravagant pretensions of the Dual Monarchy This ominous feeling pervaded all the actual and future discussions regarding Albania, and the upshot was that the Albanian nation was designated, from the very beginning, as the scapegoat for all the troubles and complications that befell Europe. Even after the reluctant recognition of the independence and the creation of the Albanian principality, the new State was looked upon with holy horror as the illegitimate child of Austrian diplomacy, with Italy figuring as the mid-wife.

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CHAPTER IX

THE LONDON CONFERENCE

I. SIR EDWARD GREY

As time went on, war feelings were running wild, and the European peoples were shuddering at the prospect of seeing the flare of the spark which was to set fire to the heaps of inflammable material the great European Powers had been accumulating and storing for a quarter of a century. Every hour, every minute that passed by was adding to the general anxiety It was evident that, unless the Balkan allies suspended their advance into the Albanian territory, Austria would draw her sword against Serbia and Montenegro, Italy against Greece, Russia would rush to the assistance of the Slav nations by attacking Austria, Germany would make common cause with her allies, Austria and Italy, and France would naturally join her own ally, Russia. Everything depended now on the attitude of Great Britain, and especially on that of the man who directed her foreign policy: Sir Edward Grey

And Sir Edward Grey acted at the right moment. In the midst of the unbearable international tensity, "Le Temps" of Paris announced, on November 27, that England was contemplating tendering her good offices for the peaceful settlement of the Albanian question by means of an international conference. The tensity was somewhat relieved, but

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not to any great extent till after Sir Edward Grey himself came forward with the official proposal that the ambassadors of the Great Powers accredited to the Court of St. James should form a Conference which should decide the Albanian question as well as that of granting to Serbia a commercial outlet to the Adriatic Sea. After the customary exchange of notes and reservations, the proposal was accepted, and the ambassadors of the six great Powers sat around the green table to determine the fate of Albania, and, thereby, to put an end to the conflict. Thus, the thorny dispute was taken out of the hands of the Provisional Albanian Government and the Balkan States.

This Conference is known as the *Conference of Ambassadors,* in contra-distinction to the Conference which was likewise held in London by the belligerents, Turkey and the Balkan States, with the view of terminating the armed conflict.

II. THE CREATION OF THE ALBANIAN STATE

The first formal meeting of the Conference took place on December 17, 1912, at the British Foreign Office. Three days later, the world at large was notified, through the issuing to the press of the following communiqué from the Foreign office, that an armed conflict between the great Powers was averted:

"The ambassadors have recommended to their governments and the latter have accepted in principle Albanian autonomy, together with a provision guaranteeing to Serbia commercial access to the Adriatic Sea. All six governments have agreed in principle on these points."

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This was the beginning of the official existence of independent Albania. Apart from this, however, the communiqué bears witness to the fact that a compromise had been effected: Austria and Italy carried their point with regard to the acceptance of the principle of Albanian autonomy, which was later interpreted to mean complete independence, while to Russia was conceded the point of granting to Serbia an outlet on the Adriatic, which Serbia was, in the end, unable to secure.

Despite the apparent accord, however, it was clear that Russia and France went to the Conference quite reluctantly and recognized the principle of independence with very bad humor. Their point of view was that the Balkan States be allowed to retain all their actual and future territorial acquisitions. This had been clearly shown by the earlier proposal of M. Poincaré to the effect that the great Powers make a joint declaration "of disinterestedness" in the Balkan conflict. Russia and France would concede nothing to Albania, unless they were forced to do so by the angry attitude of Austria and Italy The deliberations of the Conference had the appearance of a continuous wrangle which was occasionally ended by a compromise or a bargain. The ambassadors would sit for hours and days to resolve upon commonplace matters; the Russian or French envoy would bitterly oppose the cession of an inch of territory to Albania, although he knew that it belonged to her. On many occasions systematic obstruction of the deliberations was resorted to.

The Powers were acting under the stress of the dire necessity of averting a general conflagration.

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Justice and equity had to give place to expediency. They were constrained to reach some kind of decision, be it a temporary one or one that would in the end prove fatal to the constitution of the new State and to the peace of the Balkans. What the diplomats had in view was the establishment of a *modus vivendi* and not the making of a sound Albanian principality This is plainly emphasized by the declaration of Sir Edward Grey, who presided over the Conference. In replying to the question put by a member of the House of Commons relative to the results of the Conference in connection with the settlement of the Albanian question, the eminent diplomat plainly confessed that one could not demand too much from the Conference. "It is to be borne in mind that in making that agreement," Sir Edward Grey said, "the primary essential was to preserve agreement between the Powers themselves."[1] The essential rights of Albania were sacrificed for the sake of the general peace of Europe.

Eventually, the ambassadors succeeded in reaching an agreement as to the future status of Albania, and in making some general provisions about the new State.

Albania was recognized as an independent sovereign State to be governed by a European Prince to be elected by the Powers.[2]

[1] Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 56, p. 2285.

[2] An evident proof of Russia's design to discredit the new State is supplied by the proposal of the Russian Ambassador that Albania be placed under the sovereignty of the Sultan.

Great Britain proposed the appointment of a High Commissioner of the Powers who would govern Albania in their collective name. The proposal was rejected by Austria and Italy.

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The new State would enjoy perpetual neutrality, under the collective protection of the six Great Powers.

The six Great Powers would be represented in Albania by an International Commission of Control composed of one delegate from each Power and of an Albanian representative. This Commission was empowered to control the finances of the new State and to check the Albanian government when acting beyond the limits of its jurisdiction.

Dutch officers were commissioned for the organization of the Albanian gendarmerie.

Time was to prove whether artificial arrangements made with a view of reconciling hopelessly conflicting views and interests could stand the test of actual application. The arrangements made in regard to the new State bore the mark of the selfish interests that actuated the ambassadors of the Powers which were mainly interested in Albania.

III. THE QUESTION OF THE FRONTIERS

I. Northeastern Boundary

The question of paramount importance, on the successful or unsuccessful settlement of which depended the very life of the new State, was unquestionably that of the frontiers. A State is liable to vegetate or to live and thrive according as its frontiers are drawn. If large compact populations be left outside of its boundary line, the vitality of the new political entity may be spent in fretful watching of the pathetic struggles of the fellow-population across the border; besides, it will add so many worries and cares to the new-born State as to incapacitate it for

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life, in case it is utterly impotent in its efforts to improve their lot. The history of the Balkan States, Greece, Serbia, Roumania, and Bulgaria, is very instructive on that point. When these States included only a small fraction of the actual strength of the respective race, they were merely living from day to day, being the prey of dreams that were entirely out of proportion to their actual power, and falling into a condition of epilepsy from time to time, with the result that foreign observers were convinced that their political death would have been preferable to the miserable life they had been condemned to live. It was only the increase of their population and territory that saved them from this condition.

No such considerations could, however, find place in the deliberations of the Conference of Ambassadors. If it was such a difficult matter to reach an agreement on the bare principle of the independence of Albania, it would be immensely more difficult to agree on the frontiers within which the reluctantly granted independence should be exercised.

The question of the delimitation of the frontiers was still more complicated by the exorbitant claims of the Balkan States. The governments of the Balkan allies speedily unearthed old and new deeds which would entitle them to the various Albanian territories. In a spirit of ill-chosen chivalry they advanced their claims on sundry historical, geographical, strategical, political, cultural, and archeological grounds, carefully avoiding claims based on the right of conquest. The government of Athens was still more ingenious; it claimed Southern Albania because it had bestowed on her the great benefit of liberating her inhabitants from the Turkish

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yoke. Within the hall of the deliberations of the Conference, the discussion about the frontiers of the new State became a disgraceful contest in the production of the most irrelevant and flimsy arguments for the possession of Albanian territory. Montenegro, the spoiled child of the diplomacy of the Entente, claimed the city of Scutari, because there the tombs of the ancestors of King Nicholas were situated, although the King of Montenegro himself recognized that the city was Albanian.[1]

These are the words of an Englishman, who has spent much of his time in Albania and is conversant with questions concerning her, in regard to the claims of the Balkan States:

"Confident in the ignorance and heedlessness of Western Europe, the Allies proposed to deprive Albania of all that was distinctly Albanian. Even the birthplace of George Castriota, Scanderbeg, was not to be left to the people at whose head he defeated Pashas and Sultans for years, unaided and unsupported by Christian Europe; even the ruined castle of Lek Dukaghin, the prince who codified the ancient laws and customs of the mountains; even the homes of Ali Pasha of Janina and Kara Mahmud Pasha of Scodra (Scutari), were not to be included in the official Albania if the Allies could have their own way. All were to be handed to Slavs and Greeks, and Albania was to be made into a State in name only, shorn of everything which could enable it to live as an independent and self-governing principality The frontier which the united intellect or cunning of the four (Balkan) kingdoms devised will not take long to delimit. Hitherto the Black Drin

[1] *Le Temps*, April 6, 1913.

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has been considered by the most Slavophil boundary-monger to be the meanest limit of Albania to the north, and the river Kalamas to the south by the Philhellenes. But even those poor boundaries were not considered too generous by the ambitious allies. The Montenegrins desired to have Scodra (Scutari), the capital of Northern Albania, which is inhabited solely by Shkypetars, and all the plain surrounding it with the Malissori Mountains which are inhabited by Albanian Roman Catholics and half Moslem and other purely Albanian territories. Albania was thus to be deprived of the river Drin which is its principal river, and of lands in which there were but few Slavs of any sort.'' [1]

After three months' deliberations, the Ambassadors finally agreed on some kind of boundary in the north and east. The heroic Roman Catholic clans of Hoti and Gruda and a part of the Clementi were ceded to Montenegro. But King Nicholas has never been able to get possession of their territories; the history of the year 1879 was repeated once more, and as there were no great Powers to bombard them this time, the gallant clans successfully resisted every attempt of Montenegro to occupy their territories. Many a time they begged Europe to unite them with their mother country, but the Powers could not afford to remind the King of Montenegro of his failure to annex territories which he claimed were inhabited by Slavs.

In the east, the London Conference drew the most absurd frontier. It assigned to Serbia the whole vilayet of Kossova which is inhabited by nearly a million Albanians with very few Slavs. But the

[1] W Peacock, "Albania, the Foundling State of Europe," pp. 168–9.

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absurdity of the delimitation is to be seen not in the cession of this compact Albanian territory to Serbia, but in placing the boundary line in such a way that the principal Albanian cities of the vilayet are just right on the border line, so that the market-places and the pastures passed to Serbia, while the commerce and the flocks remained within Albanian territory.

The assignment to Serbia of the vilayet of Kossova and of the districts of Dibra and Ochrida was the greatest and the most iniquitous injustice to Albania.[1] Not less, however, was the harm done to Serbia herself, for, as it happens, these Albanians are more bellicose and insubmissive than the rest of their co-nationals. Ever since their incorporation in the Serbian kingdom they have been in a state of rebellion which the Serbian government has tried in vain to quell by wholesale massacres and executions.

The Serbians claimed these territories mainly on historical grounds, such as the ephemeral empire of Stefan Dushan, their temporary occupation by them up to the seventeenth century, and so on.[2]

The discussions about the Albanian-Serbo-Montenegrin frontier came finally to an end by the middle of March, 1913, and an International Boundary Commission was appointed for its determination on the spot.

2. *Southeastern Boundary*

Yet, despite all that, the Albanians should have been cheered, inasmuch as a more serious situation was to develop with the discussion of the question of the southeastern or Albanian-Greek frontier.

[1] Brailsford, H. N., "Macedonia," p. 273.
[2] F. Gilbert, "Les Pays d'Albanie," pp. 287–296.

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The Conference had to deal now with no less cunning a nation than the Greeks. The British Foreign Office was literally deluged with "Greek" documents which purported to show that Southern Albania, or Northern Epirus, as the Greek Government styled it, was "Greek by religion, Greek by language, Greek by sentiment"—thus runs the eternal refrain. To add conviction to their arugments, which they badly needed, the Greek military authorities who were in occupation of the Albanian territories, employed every kind of pressure in order to force the inhabitants to sign declarations to the effect that they were Greeks and that they would rather die than be subjected to the inhuman yoke of the Albanians! The procedure employed in this matter by the Greeks is strikingly similar to that resorted to by the officials of Abdul Hamid II., the Red Sultan of Turkey Whenever His Imperial Majesty was afflicted by any of his ordinary diseases, his authorities would gather together the unfortunate population, Christian and Moslem, and drive it to the mosques and churches to pray to the Almighty that their sinister master and executioner be speedily cured of his illness in order to be able to massacre more of his innocent subjects.

The Conference was bombarded daily by such declarations of loyalty to King Constantine. Another ingenious way of making the inhabitants make their confessions of Greek faith was to gather them together in mass meetings to the attendance of which the Greek authorities invited correspondents of foreign newspapers, in order that they might be convinced of the Greek sentiments of the population.[1]

[1] We regret to say that so able a man as M. René Puaux, author

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The resolutions of these mass meetings, which were usually prepared beforehand by Greek officials and read to the population, very few of which could understand them because of their being written in the Greek language, were then sent to the Conference of the Ambassadors in London, with the seal of veracity appended to them by the unsophisticated foreign correspondents.[1]

The success of these execrable proceedings was immensely aided by the following three factors:

In the first place, the ignorance of Europe in regard to the real conditions of Albania. People did not know generally that in Southern Albania the population is Moslem and Christian Albanian of the "Greek" Orthodox rite.[2] The Greeks drew their most misleading argument from the mere fact that these Christian Albanians happened to belong to the "Greek" Orthodox Church. It is highly characteristic of the foul methods employed by the Government of Athens, in its attempt to disfigure the national character of the population of Southern Albania, the fact that it resorted to quoting Turkish statistics of population. In its Memorandum of January 13, 1913, which it delivered to the Conference of London, the Greek government states, in quoting the Turkish statistics, that the entire population

of "La Malheureuse Épire," was also impressed by these Greek farcical comedies, under the impression of which he wrote the above mentioned book. We are certain, however, that he could get the right impression if he were to visit Southern Albania while under Italian occupation.

[1] Those who have any doubts about the foul play employed by the Balkan governments will be convinced of the truthfulness of these statements by reading the Report of the International Commission of Inquiry into the Causes of the Balkan Wars, Carnegie Endowment, Washington, D. C., 1914.

[2] See pp. 13, 148 (note), 57–58 and note.

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of the vilayet of Janina is 477,833 inhabitants, of whom 316,561 are Greeks, 154,413 Moslems, and 5,104 Jews. Common sense revolts against such a classification of the population on the basis of religion instead of on that of race or nationality "Moslem," which is a religious condition, is opposed to "Greek" which adds still more to the confusion.[1] Even so, in view of the fact that the Greek Government itself admits that one-third of the so-called "Greeks" speak Albanian,[2] the number of the Albanian population would then amount to about 260,000 souls, as against 210,000 doubtful Greeks—doubtful because the Greek Government includes in that number all the Christian Albanians of the "Greek" Orthodox rite,[3] just as it includes all the Valachs of the Pindus Mountains. Moreover, if these figures be applied only to the contested provinces of the vilayet of Janina, it will appear then that the number of the Greeks dwindles away, inasmuch as the Greek and Jewish elements are to be found in the region south of the city of Janina, which was not very much in question before the Ambassadors.

In addition to this, the Ambassadors ought to have recalled the ancient kingdom of Molossia, the mediæval Despotat of Epirus, the principality of Ali Pasha whose capital was none else than Janina, the successful opposition of the Albanians in 1879 to the incorporation of Janina in Greece, and the inclusion of the whole vilayet within the confines of

[1] See note, p. 46.

[2] Léon Lamouche, "La naissance de l'Etat albanais," Révue Politique et Parlementaire," Vol. 80, pp. 220–239. See also H. Ch. Woods, "The Danger Zone of Europe," Ch. III.

[3] Wadham Peacock, "Albania, the Founding State of Europe," pp. 209–212.

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the autonomous Albania, an event which had taken place just a few months before the Balkan war. To those more or less familiar with the conditions of the country it was known that the vilayet of Janina is inhabited by a crushing majority of Christian Albanians of the "Greek" Orthodox rite and of Moslem Albanians.

In the second place, the existence of Greek schools for the Christian Albanians, the origin of which has already been explained,[1] supplied another powerful argument for the thesis of the Greek government. The Greek military authorities paraded the foreign correspondents from place to place showing them the schools of Southern Albania.

In the third place, the presence of a large number of Greek priests, appointed by the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, under whose jurisdiction Southern Albania has been ever since the whole of Albania became a province of the Eastern Empire of the Romans,[2] was the best form of advertisement for the Greek authorities. In every picture, issued by the Greek government for propaganda purposes with the view of showing that Southern Albania is Greek, the foreground is occupied by these militant priests of Hellenism. And yet, it is a commonplace fact that the Pope of Rome, too, has always maintained his religious emissaries in every place under his jurisdiction. But it required the ingenuity of the government of Athens, and the ignorance of Europe, to draw a powerful argument from the presence of a foreign clergy.

[1] Brailsford, H. N., "Macedonia," note on "Greek Statistics," p. 219.

[2] *Supra*, p. 20.

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In reality, it seemed as though everything was conspiring against the Albanians, who have never taken the pains of making their country known to the world. In their self-blinding obstinacy, the ambassadors of the Powers were not willing even to attach credit to the reports of their own consular authorities at Janina. In vain did the free Albanians of the United States, all of whom were natives of Southern Albania, send to the Conference by cable daily protests against the Greek machinations. In vain did the refugees of Southern Albania, assembled at Valona, make ardent appeals to the Conference to confirm them in their rights. The ambassadors remained heedless. From the middle of March to the middle of August (Aug. 11, 1913), when the Conference put an end to its inglorious work, the discussions about the southeastern frontier went on in the fashion of Byzantine theological disputes. To make matters still worse, the question of this part of the boundary of the new State was inextricably linked with the question of Dodecanese (the twelve Greek Islands of the Ægean Sea which Italy had occupied since the Italo-Turkish war of 1911) France and Russia were willing to assign Southern Albania to the new principality, on the condition that Italy should hand over to Greece the Dodecanese. But Italy, seconded by her ally, Austria, wanted both to keep the islands and to obtain the evacuation of Southern Albania by the Greeks.

Finally, it appeared that no decision could be reached with regard to the southeastern boundary All the Conference was able to do was to fix the two extreme points of the frontier, the Province of Koritza or Korcha, in the east, and the Bay of

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Ftelia, in the south. An international Commission was appointed to go to the spot and determine the ethnical character of the disputed territory, taking the spoken language as the criterion of nationality

A little later, we shall follow this Commission on its interesting and instructive, but utterly ungrateful, journey.

IV THE SCUTARI CRISIS

The Conference of Ambassadors had hardly drawn the northeastern boundary line, i. e., the Albanian-Serbian-Montenegrin frontier, when there occurred a new war crisis which brought still nearer a general conflagration than that of the preceding November.

On March 26, the Conference had already decided that Scutari, the capital of Northern Albania, was to be included within the territory of the new principality Two days later, a collective note of the Great Powers brought this decision to the knowledge of the Serbian and Montenegrin governments, which were invited, at the same time, to suspend the siege of the city and withdraw their troops. Serbia complied immediately with the request of the Powers, but the King of Montenegro had set his heart upon occupying the city As he persisted in besieging and bombarding the city, despite the remonstrances addressed to him by the European governments, the latter resolved to make a naval demonstration against the Montenegrin coast. By the 4th of April, the combined fleet blockaded the coast of Montenegro, but King Nicholas, presuming on his weakness, did not suspend his military operations against Scutari.

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Presently, the European governments were negotiating among themselves with the view of landing marines and occupying the Albanian city, when, all of a sudden Scutari fell mysteriously into the hands of the Montenegrins, on April 23. Public opinion in Albania ascribes the fall of the city to the treacherous dealings of Essad Pasha, the military commander of the fortress, who was allowed by the Montenegrins to get out of the city with all his troops and their military equipment, leaving in it provisions which would have been sufficient for three weeks. Yet, none may say with certainty as yet why Scutari surrendered.

The fall of Scutari seemed to unmake all the calculations of the great Powers towards a peaceful settlement of the Albanian question. Austria assumed a threatening tone again; the divisions of the Dual Monarchy were being moved toward the Montenegrin frontier, and the danger of European war, which seemed to have been averted by the convocation of the Conference of Ambassadors, now appeared to be more than imminent. The world was watching with the deepest anxiety the next move of Russia. Wiser counsels, however, prevailed at Petrograd, and Czar Nicholas addressed a telegram to the King of Montenegro apprising him of his displeasure at his action in occupying Scutari, and cutting short every hope of Russia's assistance in case King Nicholas insisted upon retaining possession of Scutari.

Eventually, the Powers agreed to occupy the city with an international contingent of marines, and on May 13, the retiring Montenegrin troops were replaced by the international army. The government

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of Scutari was given to Vice-Admiral Sir Cecil Burney, commander of the European fleets which had been blockading the Montenegrin coast.

NOTE

ALBANIA AND PRINCE LICHNOWSKI

In view of the great importance attached to the revelations of Prince Lichnowski, Germany's ambassador in the Conference of London, about the causes of the outbreak of the great European war in their relation to the Albanian question, it is worth while to devote a few lines to the salient points of his statements in regard to Albania.

Prince Lichnowski's knowledge of Albanian affairs, which he had been called upon to consider as a member of the Conference of Ambassadors, is summarized by himself in the paragraph he devotes to "The Albanian Problem" (Die Albanische Frage):

"In the greater part of Albania the civilization is Greek. The southern towns are entirely Greek, and when the Conference of Ambassadors was in session, deputations from the larger towns came to London for the purpose of securing annexation to Greece. In Greece there are still Albanian groups, and the so-called Greek national dress itself is of Albanian origin. The incorporation of the Albanians, of whom the great majority are either Orthodox Christians or Moslems, in the Greek State was, therefore, the best solution. It was also the most natural, if, let us say, Skutari and the northern part had been assigned to the Serbs and Montene-

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grins. His Majesty also was in favor of this solution on dynastic grounds."[1]

From this short paragraph, which is produced here *verbatim,* one may form an opinion for oneself relative to the knowledge of Prince Lichnowski about Albanian affairs.[2] Of all these confused and incoherent phrases the one which goes to the point is that "His Majesty also was in favor of this solution *on dynastic grounds.*" This is the only clear statement Prince Lichnowski advances as an argument for the dismemberment of Albania among her neighbors; all the rest is sheer nonsense. In the clouded mind of the Prince Albania is Greek and Greece is Albania. Yet the most sagacious argument in favor of the annexation of Albania to Greece seems to be that "the so-called Greek national dress itself is of Albanian origin," and that "in Greece there are still Albanian groups." One has to thank him, however, for recognizing that Albania is inhabited by Orthodox Albanians and by Moslems, although the Prince is in doubt whether the Moslems

[1] This part is quoted from pamphlet No. 127 of International Conciliation, entitled "Prince Lichnowski's Revelations," as they have been translated from the German by Professor Munroe Smith of Columbia University.

[2] The impression made by Prince Lichnowski's knowledge of the Albanian question on the official representative of the Provisional Albanian Government, Mehmed Bey Konitsa, is thus described by himself:

"In January of that year (1913), I and my colleagues went to visit Prince Lichnowski in order to explain Albania's just claims to him. He gave me the impression that he knew much more about the planet Mars than he did of Albania. Later on, Greece sent a group of its agents to Sir Edward Grey and the Conference to say that they were delegates of South Albania and desired its annexation to Greece. Among the members of the Conference, the only one who took this grotesque comedy seriously was Prince Lichnowski. But even he does not appear to have been able to grasp the argument of these so-called delegates and he has reproduced it in the bizarre phrases quoted above." *The Adriatic Review,* Sept., 1918.

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or the Christians are in majority, and although he superimposes on Albania the Greek civilization. Still one naturally fails to see why "The incorporation of the Albanians, of whom the majority is *either* Orthodox Christian or Moslem, in the Greek State, is the best solution" or "that it was also most natural, *if, let us say,* Skutari and the northern part had been assigned to the Serbs and Montenegrins."

As to the deputations from the larger towns of Southern Albania, who went to the Conference for the purpose of securing annexation to Greece, one has to admit that there are in Southern Albania enough Greeks to make up not only one deputation or two but half a dozen deputations, if the Greek military authorities had only set their hearts upon creating such agencies of annexation.

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CHAPTER X

THE NEW STATE

I. THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

By virtue of the proclamation of independence, which took place at Valona on November 28, 1912, as has already been said, the country became independent of its former sovereign, the Sultan of Turkey, under whose nominal control she had been for nearly four hundred and fifty years. But the recognition of the independent status was not completed till December 20, when the Conference of Ambassadors officially took cognizance of the fact.

On the day of the proclamation of independence, the National Convention, which was composed of representatives from all the free as well as the invaded parts of Albania, proceeded to form a central government. The *Provisional Albanian Government* —this was its official title—was placed under the presidency of Ismail Kemal Bey, and the vice-presidency was given to the Catholic Prelate of Durazzo, Monsignor Nicholas Kachori. The Cabinet was made up of seven Ministers, Christian and Moslem, all of whom had been named by the National Convention.

Although the area of the territory over which the jurisdiction of the Provisional government extended was only a small part, just within cannon range around the city of Valona, owing to the fact that the

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rest of the territory was in the occupation either of the Balkan allies or the Turkish troops, the questions which confronted the government were entirely out of proportion with the means at its disposal. The only sources of revenue the new government could rely upon were the customs duties of the export and import trade of the seaport of Valona. But the port was blockaded by the Greek monitors, and the blockade was not lifted till the month of April, 1913. To make matters still worse, the Greeks cut the cable connecting Valona, and through it Albania, with Europe. The provisional capital and its government were thus cut entirely off from the rest of the world, and disheartening gloom now reigned within and around Valona.

The principal function of the government was to defend the rights of the Albanian nationality in the eyes of the world which knew almost nothing about them and which was being bombarded by the memoranda and propaganda leaflets of the Balkan allies asserting their "incontestable" titles to the Albanian territories which they occupied or intended to occupy But the luckless government was virtually a prisoner within the walls of Valona, and the field was free for the customary machinations and intrigues of the Balkan States. North of the provisional capital were the Serbian armies, in the south were the Greeks, and in the east there was camping at Farkolla, barely 20 miles away, the army of Djavid Pasha, the devastator of Albania; the sea was blockaded by the Greek squadron. The Provisional Government was a government in name only. The gloomy tensity of Valona was only partially relieved late in December, when the yacht of the Duke of

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Montpensier, Ferdinand François, of the House Bourbon-Orléans, ran the blockade and entered the port of Valona. The Duke was willing to figure as a candidate for the throne of Albania; but he was speedily forgotten, his candidacy being distasteful to the Powers, which were mainly interested in Albanian affairs. Yet, the Duke did contribute something to the cause of Albania, for a few days later, his yacht eluded again the vigilance of the blockading ships, and safely landed on Italian soil Ismail Kemal Bey, together with Louis Gurakuki, Minister of Public Instruction, and Isa Bolatin, the foremost chief of the Albanian insurrection of 1912 against the Turks, who had barely escaped assassination at the hands of the Serbians with whom he had been coöperating against the Turks at the beginning of the Balkan war.[1] All three Albanian leaders proceeded to visit the various capitals of Europe in the effort to win the sympathies of the European governments and peoples in favor of Albanian independence. Their mission was, however, a failure, for public opinion in Europe had been already incensed by the scandalous attitude of Austria, and the indignation felt towards the latter power was transferred in equal degree to the cause of Albania herself.

II. INTERNAL REFORMS

While the Conference of London was merely wast-

[1] The brave, but utterly unfortunate, military leader was later assassinated by the Montenegrins, in April, 1916, when the latter were hastily evacuating Scutari in view of the approaching Austrian army. Up to the time of his death, Isa Bolatin was being held a prisoner by the Montenegrins as a result of the invasion of Northern Albania the King of Montenegro and the Serbians had foolishly undertaken during the Spring of 1916.

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ing time in fruitless discussions, the Provisional Government was confronted by pressing needs. But as everything depended from the decisions of the diplomats assembled at the British Foreign Office, the Provisional Government was also condemned to inactivity and to watching the growing despondency of the Albanian people. But the Powers had no care for that.

By the month of April, 1913, the area over which the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government extended was considerably increased through the addition of the territories evacuated by the Serbians in Central, and in a part of Northern, Albania. The government proceeded now to establish local authorities in those territories by the application of a uniform administrative system, founded on the French pattern, which was later superseded, but not changed to any great extent, by the new administrative division contained in the Organic Law of Albania, which was drafted by the International Commission of Control.

But the most interesting feature in all these attempts was that governmental authority rested exclusively on the patriotic inclination of the people to help the national government in its efforts toward establishing authority in the country President A. L. Lowell of Harvard University very judiciously states in his excellent treatise on the "Government of England" that "government means not action by universal consent, but compulsory obedience to an ultimate authority" Yet, the Albanian people were not obeying their government out of compulsion, for the Provisional Government had no means of compulsion, none whatsoever. The government had no

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funds to maintain even a police force within the city of Valona itself; least of all could it provide itself with any military force, for the Dutch organizers of the Albanian gendarmerie were merely confined to making plans for a future organization, owing to the complete lack of financial resources. It was, therefore, quite interesting and instructive, at the same time, to see the people who were the terror of the Turks voluntarily obeying a government which was not even formally recognized by the Powers.[1] This was the answer of the Albanians to the generally prevailing opinion that they were lawless and ungovernable.[2]

Acting on this exemplary attitude of the people, the government proceeded to carry out some fundamental reforms. One of the all-important questions was that of the separation of Church and State. There were in Albania three officially recognized religions: the Moslem religion, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Roman Catholic Church. The most powerful of the three was, unquestionably,

[1] The consuls of the European States refused to renew their exequaturs, as the Provisional Government requested them to do, and the government was so weak and helpless as to drop the matter altogether.

[2] In her "High Albania" (London, 1909), Miss M. E. Durham gives another striking illustration of the Albanian's respect for peace and order in the following words:

"During the festivities on the occasion of the promulgation of the Turkish Constitution (1908), the Catholic and Moslem mountaineers came down to Scutari to participate in the festivities. They numbered about two thousand heavily armed men, and, without there being either military or police force to cope with an outbreak, not one incident occurred. Even the representatives of two consulates, who frankly detested the Albanians, said: '*Mon Dieu*, under a decent government, what a people would this be?' "

But that decent government was to be denied to the Albanians, for after the powerless government of Ismail Kemal Bey there came the government of the Prince of Wied which was anything but decent.

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the Moslem religion, not so much because of the numerical superiority of the Moslem Albanians over the rest, as because the Moslem clergy had enjoyed under the Turkish régime the highest political prerogatives; questions of marriage, of divorce, of inheritance, and, above all, of loyalty to the State, resided entirely into the hands of the Moslem clergy. Besides, the Moslem ministers composed the highest judicial court for the interpretation and application of the Sacred Law (the Sheriat) of the Mohammedans, whose supreme fountain-head is the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* of Constantinople, who is just one degree below the Sultan in authority. How to unravel such an ungodly tangle in view of the lack of any military force, and, what was more important, as against the majority of the Albanian people?

Assuredly, it was not an easy task when one looks at the theocratical régime of the Moslem world, and when one realizes what a strong hold religion, be it Christian, has over the Balkan peoples. Nevertheless, Ismail Kemal Bey, who had, in the meantime, returned from his trip to Europe, proceeded to free the country from Moslem religious domination. To begin with, he cut the bond of religious allegiance to the Sheikh-ul-Islam of Constantinople by the institution of an independent Mohammedan Church in Albania, through the appointment of a supreme head of the Moslem religion in the person of a patriotic Moslem *Mufti* (equivalent to archbishop), of Albanian nationality Shortly after, the jurisdiction of the Moslem religious officials over civil cases was transferred to the civil courts.[1] This was done

[1] There is a saying among the Turks to the effect that "when you are injured by the Kadi (the religious Moslem judge) you can lodge

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without any protest on the part of the Moslem population which has been reputed to be superfanatical in regard to the Moslem religion.

But the work of religious reform had to stop at that point. The prerogatives of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches could not at present be touched upon, on account of the Catholic districts being outside the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government, and of the pending question of the evacuation of Southern Albania, which was still occupied by the Greeks.

Still, in its desire to improve the administration of justice, the government of Valona introduced the jury system in criminal cases with notable success.

III. THE SOUTHEASTERN BOUNDARY COMMISSION

While the Provisional Government was striving to consolidate the new principality and set it afoot for the arrival of the Sovereign Prince who was to be elected by the six Great Powers, the governments of the latter were slowly and half-heartedly proceeding to designate the members of the International Com-

no complaint," because the decision of the Kadi is final. But during the first months of the Albanian independence this famous saying, which had been currently repeated in Albania, was shorn of its meaning. In a legal case, which is unique in the annals of Islamism, the defendant who appeared before the civil tribunal of Valona was none other than the hitherto all-powerful Mufti (Moslem religious official holding the rank of archbishop and performing the highest judicial function in the province during the Turkish régime). The Mufti, who could not be legally cited before any civil court, was compelled by the pressure of public opinion to appear as defendant before the Civil Tribunal of Valona. The court was crowded on that day by spectators who gloated over the spectacle of seeing for the first time a Mufti-Kadi arraigned. The majority of the spectators were Albanians who had recently returned from the United States. The Mufti was condemned and had to swallow in silence the bitter pill. The presiding judge was none other than the writer.

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mission which was to assign and delimit the south-eastern boundary of the Albanian State. It took several months for the European governments to find the proper persons who would act in strict conformity with their orders in delimiting the frontier, or rather the proper persons who would be most averse to assigning to Albania what was hers by lending themselves to the farcical comedies of the Greek military authorities who were occupying these territories. As evidence of this, the fact may be cited that the French Government selected its consul at Volos, Greece, as a member of the Commission. In reality, it seemed as if the Powers were already tired of the comedy of professing that they were interested in the welfare of the future principality, once the menace of a general conflagration had been averted.

After several months of sheer procrastination, the Powers appointed finally the Commissioners, at the urgent entreaties of the Provisional Government which had repeatedly warned the Powers in regard to the ever-growing agitation among the Albanian people in consequence of the inhuman treatment inflicted by the Greeks on the conquered population, reports of which were coming in daily through the arrival at Valona of refugees from Southern Albania.

Late in September, 1913, the International Commission proceeded to Salonica and thence to Monastir, where it spent another month in idleness, in order to enable the Powers to blackmail the Albanian government with a view to securing some very coveted concessions through the fear they inspired of suspending the operations of the Boundary

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Commission unless the contracts were signed on time.[1] When the contracts were finally signed, the Commissioners repaired to the city of Korcha (Koritza).

The journey of the International Commission through the part of Albania which it was able to visit is quite interesting and instructive, for it gave to the Greek military authorities the opportunity to make a full display of their ingeniousness in trying to baffle and mislead the Commission by sidetracking it. It also shows to what extremities of scandalous unscrupulousness the Balkan States may go in order to obtain what they want. The experiences of the Commission are fortunately preserved in the Official Proceedings of the Conference of Florence, as the Commission was officially called when it assembled at Florence, Italy, to put the finishing touches to its draft of the southeastern boundary.[2] We necessarily confine ourselves to referring only to some of the more important incidents.

1. *The Camouflage of Southern Albania*

The procrastination of the Powers in appointing the members of the Boundary Commission gave to the Greek military authorities ample opportunity to set the stage properly for the reception of the Commission throughout Southern Albania. The material for the construction of the stage was near at hand and the actors were more than eager to make the performance a great success. Unfortunately for

[1] See below, p. 197

[2] *Procés-verbaux de la Conférence de Florence*, 1913.
The publication is confidential and intended only for the use of the respective governments. The copy we consulted was in the archives of the Albanian Foreign Office.

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Greece, however, they proved to be more zealous than was necessary and thus they spoiled the whole farce at the very end.

Let us say first a few words about the material and then about the actors.

According to the decision of the Ambassadors, the Boundary Commission had to determine the ethnical character of the people and of the territory they occupied on the basis of the spoken language. It may not be admitted that language is a safe criterion of nationality, but, in view of the military occupation of the country by the troops of the very government which claimed those territories, no other criterion could be resorted to. What is still more important, however, is the fact that the Albanian is known as such primarily because he speaks Albanian, the tongue which he has preserved from immemorial times. Moreover, the Albanians have never been able to impose their language on any of their neighbors, so that no mistake can be made in that respect.

As a matter of fact, it was universally known that the language spoken in Southern Albania is Albanian. But the point that was not so well known was that the Christian Orthodox Albanians of this region, as well as those of Central Albania, had to send their children to Greek schools because of the ban which weighed on the Albanian language.[1] Consequently the part of the male population which had had some kind of education in the Greek schools was able to understand or, in some instances, to mumble the Greek language. There were, of course, a number of persons who had received a higher edu-

[1] See above, p. 58.

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cation in the Greek language, such as was given in the Gymnasia of Janina and Korcha,[1] who were able to speak fairly well in Greek. It was natural, on the other hand, that these Greek schools turned out a number of spell-bound victims of the memories of Pericles, of the giants of Marathon, and of all the glory that ancient Hellas had seen. But the romantic enthusiasm of these Greek-stricken graduates would usually cool off at their maturity, or as a result of a journey to Greece, wherein they had an opportunity of gauging the distance and the racial and moral qualifications which differentiate the ages of Pericles and Socrates from the modern Greek. But as the annual output of these two Gymnasia never exceeded a dozen the number of these ancient-Greek-phantoms was infinitesimal in proportion to the people who were gravely shaking their heads in regard to the mental sanity of these admirers of bygone days.[2]

Such was the material with which the Greek military authorities had to build the stage. Let it be said, to their credit, that they did very well to a certain extent.

What they did was this:

In their zeal to present to the International Commission an entirely Greek-speaking population, the Greek authorities saw to it that only Greek-speaking people be allowed to circulate in the streets during the passage of, or to come into contact with, the Commission. In places where no Greek-speaking persons could be had, Greek colonists and refugees from Asia Minor imported *ad hoc* were to figure as

[1] The writer is a graduate of the Gymnasium of Korcha.
[2] Brailsford, "Macedonia," p. 252.

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natives. The rest of the population, all the women, children, and men who could not speak Greek, as well as the Moslem population, were confined within their premises under guard.

After disposing of the linguistic question, the Greek authorities proceeded to the real setting of the stage. An ordinance was issued whereby people were ordered to camouflage their cities, towns, and houses, through the application on the walls of blue-and-white painting, i. e., the Greek national colors. All signs of stores and shops had also to undergo this curious treatment, in all cases under the heaviest penalties, of which beating to death was the usual constitutional penalty in case of non-conformity with the ordinance. As a complement to the above mentioned prescription, people were, likewise, earnestly recommended to wear as much blue-and-white as was possible. Imprisonment and exile were the punishments inflicted on the unfortunate one who inadvertently wore any black-and-red colored garment or necktie (the Albanian national colors)

The third move of the Greek authorities was to terrorize and cow the population. The prisons of Korcha, Janina, Florina, Salonica and of other Greek cities were crowded with prisoners from the places which were to be visited by the Commission. The avowed Albanian patriots had earlier found places in the damp dungeons of the former Turkish prisons which were now honored by Greek guards.

2. *The Incident of Borova*

All this was done with the purpose of impressing the Commission with the Greek character of the

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provinces of Southern Albania which Europe was intending to deliver to the Albanian butchers.

On the way to Kolonia, whence the real work of the Commission was to begin, the Commission passed through the city of Korcha. The latter city, with all its province, had been formally incorporated in the new State by the direct action of the London Conference, so that the Commission had nothing to perform in that region, except to pass through. But the Greek authorities had taken the necessary measures, nevertheless, in order to impress the Commission with the great injustice done by the Conference in assigning the city to Albania.[1]

The camouflage left nothing to be desired; even the hen-houses and the trees had been painted in blue-and-white, and the city had the appearance of a foaming sea. The illusion of the Greeks was, however, spoiled by the Italian delegate, to the merriment of his colleagues. A number of school children had been ostentatiously sent to play before the house occupied by the Commission, on the understanding that they should speak in Greek while playing. Signor Labia, the Italian Commissioner, went to the balcony, accompanied by some of his credulous colleagues, and threw to the children a handful of copper coins. In their eagerness to pick up as many coins as they could, the poor children forgot all about the restraint on the use of the Albanian language, and the fight over the coins went on in their mother tongue, the Albanian language. The amused Commissioners roared with laughter.

The exposure of the trick, the effect of which was,

[1] Durham, M. E., "The Struggle for Scutari," p. 307.

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in addition, still further increased by the excessive use of the blue-and-white painting, infuriated the Greeks and made them change their tactics. As it proved impossible to shut the mouths of the whole people, many of whom found a way of communicating with the members of the Commission to whom they denounced the masquerade, the Greek authorities had recourse to violence. They let loose on the trails of the Commission a wild band of the notorious Greek irregulars, professional *desperadoes,* to shadow the Commission everywhere, and to shout *à tue-tête,* "Union or death!" The glorious achievements of this band are fortunately recorded in the Official Proceedings of the Commission.

It was thus that the Greeks tried to get rid of the Commission altogether, when they realized that their farce was too grotesque not to have made a distasteful impression on the European delegates. Consequently, when the Commission arrived at Borova, in the province of Kolonia, the new Greek plan was put into operation. On reaching the latter locality, the Commissioners, who had already began to feel weary of the comedy, sought to get in direct touch with the inhabitants. One of them knocked at the door of a house, which had been designated at random as the place from which the investigation was to begin. Unfortunately for the Greeks, that particular house happened to be the one in which they had interned all the inhabitants who could not speak Greek. The Greeks realized that the moment had come for the entire upsetting of their organization. When the delegate again repeated the knocks, the inseparable band which had been watching the movements of the Commission, threatened to shoot the

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delegate, unless he desisted from his intention of entering the house.

The scandalous interference of the band with the work of the Commission convinced the delegates that there was nothing to be done but to suspend altogether their operations. So they did, and informed their respective governments of the impossibility of carrying out their mission. As a result, the British government proposed that the Commission should proceed to delimit the frontiers with the aid of the map, taking into consideration only economical and geographical reasons. The Greeks threatened to boycott British commerce, but the Powers accepted the proposal.

The Commission proceeded then to Florence, Italy, and finished its work in December, 1913, with the assistance of the Geographical Institute of that city. It assigned to Albania the two disputed provinces or sandjaks of *Korcha* and *Arghyrocastro,* in accordance with the original expectation of the Conference of the Ambassadors. But in order to cripple the only line of communication of Southern Albania between the sea and the mainland, a small part of the road was left within the territory assigned to Greece. The boundary line left also outside of Albania the district of *Tchamouria,* which is inhabited by a compact Albanian population of the Moslem creed, though this was the fault of the Conference rather than of the Commission.

The matter was ended, nevertheless, so far as the Commission was concerned. But the question of Southern Albania had yet to go through many vicissitudes, and had finally to become the gangrene which poisoned the whole life of the frail principality

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and which brought it to an untimely and inglorious end, as will be seen a little later.

IV. DISINTEGRATION

Meanwhile, some very important events had taken place within the free territory of Albania, to which we now turn our attention.

More than a year had elapsed since the declaration of independence and the recognition of the autonomous principality of Albania. But, as yet, none of the vital questions on the settlement of which depended the existence of the new State had been resolved. People began to grow restless and agitated. They now accused the government of Ismail Kemal Bey of being utterly incompetent to grapple with those questions.

Two occurrences had particularly exasperated the people. At the time when the International Commission for the delimitation of the southeastern frontier was spending a month at Monastir, in idleness, various financial groups were exercising a powerful influence over the government of Valona with the view of securing concessions. They had particularly set their hearts upon obtaining a concession to found the *National Albanian Bank*. It was intimated to the government that the Commission would not start on its mission before the signing of the contract. It is not surprising, then, that the government had to yield to this pressure by granting the concession to a group of Austrian and Italian bankers who were respectively representing the *Wiener Bank Verein* and the *Banca Commerciale d'Italia*. The most obnoxious privilege included in the concession was the right given to the so-called

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National Albanian Bank to deal in real estate. The signing of the contract was a source of mortification to the Albanians, who were working under the apprehension that, owing to the poverty of the people, the Bank would finally be able to buy up all available territory, which would thus pass into the hands of Austrian and Italian capitalists. Naturally enough, popular indignation turned against the government of Ismail Kemal Bey, which now lost the confidence of the people.

Agitation was resorted to, moreover, by the radical nationalists, whose ranks were mainly filled by the Albanians who were returning from the United States. The government of Valona was looked upon by them as hopelessly conservative; they desired to modernize the government as well as the country over night. The reforms which had been carried out were considered as trifling by these fire-eaters who wished to see Albania reformed from the ground up.

The other occurrence was the new turn of affairs in Southern Albania. On December 13, the Powers informed the Greek government that its troops should be withdrawn within a month from the territories assigned to Albania. Eventually, however, a further extension was granted, and the 1st of March, 1914, was designated as the day of the evacuation.

But the Greek authorities had not lost their hopes of avoiding the issue of the evacuation. They were presently setting the stage for a new *coup de théâtre*. Greece was about to play her trump card. The refugees, who were daily flocking into Valona, were bringing awful stories of persecution and repression. They had heard the Greek officers say that they would never give up Southern Albania, never.

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And if they were forced to by the Powers, they would leave behind only ruins and devastation. They would take along with them the Christian population, in order to show to Europe that these poor people preferred to leave their hearths rather than submit themselves to the Albanian government. As for the Moslems, the Greek officials openly declared that it would be better for them to migrate before it was too late.

These reports caused consternation among the people. But Europe was indolent, even sarcastic, and the government of Valona powerless.

There appeared now on the stage, for the second time, the figure of Essad Pasha, to whom public opinion ascribed the mysterious surrender of Scutari(pp. 100–102). This time he stepped forward as the savior of Albania. Taking advantage of the popular discontent against the government of Ismail Kemal Bey, he rallied around him the discontented, especially a group of nationalists, and set up a new government at Durazzo, with the avowed aim of overthrowing the "rotten" government of Valona and placing in its stead a strong national government.

But, no sooner had he strengthened his position than he expelled his unwelcome collaborators, the nationalists, and made his government a base instrument of hideous intrigues, by enlisting the support of the worst reactionaries.

In view of these conditions, the government of Ismail Kemal Bey notified the Powers that he was no longer able to master the situation, owing to the lack of means necessary to enforce the authority of the government, and to the popular exasperation resulting from the dilatoriness of the Powers relative

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to the realization of the legitimate wishes of the Albanian people, who had by this time become very restless. He also earnestly urged the Powers to provide Albania with her Prince whose timely ar rival could only restore the confidence of the people in the benevolence of Europe.

V. THE ELECTION OF THE PRINCE

The European governments entered, therefore, into negotiations with the view to electing the ruler of the new principality, in accordance with the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors which had provided that the Prince of Albania was to be a European elected by the great Powers.

A long list of candidates was already before the European governments, and more than one of these candidates would have proved an able ruler for the distressed principality But the Powers were unable to agree on any one of them; they, therefore, left the matter of the election exclusively in the hands of Austria and Italy, the two States which were mainly interested in Albania. Inasmuch, however, as a bitter rivalry of the most acute form had in the meantime developed between them, it appeared that they were holding diametrically opposed views as to the person of the would-be Prince. Each Power was stubbornly supporting its own candidate.

There was some talk, for a while, of advocating the candidacy of a Moslem Prince, Ahmed Fuad Pasha of Egypt, a distant descendant of Mehmed Ali Pasha (p. 46, note). But his candidacy was early set aside by the government of Valona, the President of which, Ismail Kemal Bey, formally declared that Albania meant to be a European State, and that the

BIBLOTEKA AUTORE "MARIN BREGU" SHKODER (2013)

Albanians, particularly the Mohammedans, would be shocked by the establishment of a polygamous harem in the Palace which was to receive the successor of George Castriota Scanderbeg.

As Austria and Italy were unable to come to an agreement on any of the advertised candidates, the matter was ended by an arrangement which proved in the end to be the worst of compromises. When the Albanians were speculating on the election of the better known candidates, such as the Duke of Montpensier of the House of Bourbon-Orléans and others, a report was suddenly spread that a hitherto unknown Prince, William of Wied, was considered as the most likely candidate, and before the Albanian people were given a chance to learn anything about his personality, it was officially announced, on December 3, 1913, that the Prince of Wied had been already elected to the Albanian throne. A few days later, his aunt, Queen Elisabeth of Roumania, the lamented poetess Carmen Sylva, launched the candidacy of the unknown Prince by the publication of a high-strung eulogy bearing the title "Who is He?" which was spread broadcast in an effective Albanian translation.

It was learned now that the Prince was a captain in the Prussian army, that his estates were situated at Neuwied, Rhenish Prussia, that he was 35 years old at that time, and that some five years ago he had married a very intelligent and ambitious Princess, Sophia of Waldemburg, Saxony.

It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on the proposition that, owing to the critical conditions of Albania, to the inherent weakness which was imparted to her by the irreconcilable views of the

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European Powers, and to the hostility of her neighbors, the question of the election of the Prince was a matter of life or death for the new principality It was plainly evident that a wise ruler, such as Charles of Roumania, would have saved her from her precarious position. As it was, however, the Prince of Wied had neither the necessary experience or knowledge of government, nor had he the prestige of being the scion of any well-known family.

From the very beginning the outlook of his future rule was as somber as the question of his origin and of his election. But the Albanians had to accept him, nevertheless, though the fear of the future began to haunt their tormented minds.

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CHAPTER XI

INTERNATIONAL INTERREGNUM

I. THE COMMISSION OF CONTROL

One of the main provisions which the Conference of the Ambassadors had made in regard to Albania was that the Albanian government be associated for a period of ten years with a body representing the six Great Powers. This body was to be an *International Commission of Control* which should consist of a delegate, of the grade of Consul-General, from each of the Powers and of an Albanian representative.

The main functions of the Commission were: to assist, on the one hand, the Albanian government in organizing the country, and to control, on the other hand, the financial operations of the new State, so as to check any unnecessary expenditures, and, in general, to supervise the administration. The idea of the establishment of such a control was probably suggested by the already existing International Commission of Financial Control which had been operating in Greece since the latter's unfortunate war of 1897 and her ensuing financial difficulties.

Very sanguine expectations were entertained by the action of the *International Commission of Control for Albania*—such was its full official title,—but all of them were doomed to bitter disappoint-

BIBLIOTEKA QENDRORE "MARIN BARLETI" SHKODËR (2018)

ment. Instead of assisting the Albanian government, the Commission, in many ways, hampered its actions. It must be said, however, that the fault was not inherent to the nature of the institution, but to the fact that its members acted, on almost every occasion, in strict accordance with the orders of their respective governments, the views of which were known to be hopelessly conflicting. Moreover, in the meetings of the Commission nearly every question had to be decided, so to speak, on party lines: on the one side stood the delegates of the Powers of the Triple Alliance, and on the other those of Triple Entente. In justice to Great Britain and to her delegate, Mr. Harry Lamb, it must be said, however, that the attitude of the latter was an exception to the rule, and that Mr. Lamb always exercised beneficial influence in favor of the new State, to which he rendered the most invaluable services.

Still, the Commission played a very important rôle in Albanian politics.

II. THE RETIREMENT OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF ALBANIA

With the establishment of the government of Essad Pasha at Durazzo, the number of the governments that were ruling over the several provinces of Albania were three. First in priority was the *Provisional Government of Valona.* The second was the *International Administration of Scutari,* with the British Vice-Admiral Sir Cecil Burney at the head. The third was the *Government of Essad Pasha,* which was set up, as explained above, in consequence of the popular disaffection towards the government of Ismail Kemal Bey and of the agita-

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tion of the nationalists for the establishment of a more progressive and modernized system.

In view of this process of disintegration, Ismail Kemal Bey informed the International Commission of Control that he wished to retire, with his whole Ministry, in case the Commission was disposed to assume the administration of the whole of Albania by bringing about her unification under a single government.

As a matter of fact, the situation had already become untenable. The country was in feverish excitement on account of the events taking place in Southern Albania (see infra, III), foreign agents and propagandists were exasperating the population still more, and general nervousness everywhere prevailed. But the government had no means, either financial or military; its police force consisted of only 200 poorly equipped and poorly supported gendarmes who were expected to preserve order over an area of approximately 7,000 square miles, and over a population of nearly a million souls.

Another startling event shattered to pieces the miserable remnants of governmental authority On January 9, 1914, there was discovered at Valona a Turkish plot, which had been hatched at Constantinople. A Major of the Turkish army, *Bekir Agha Grebenaly,* native of Southern Macedonia, arrived at Valona with the avowed purpose of returning to his native region. A retinue of fifty men, who represented themselves as refugees desiring to return to their homes, was to follow the Major. But, as it was suspected that there was something more important behind that innocent intention, Bekir Agha and his companions were arrested and brought be-

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fore a Court Martial, which was presided over by *General de Weer,* head of the Dutch Mission for the organization of the Albanian gendarmerie. During the trial, which constituted one of the most sensational events of those days, it was discovered that the real mission of the Turkish Major was to make the Albanian territory a base of hostile operations against Greece. The object of the plot was to foment an insurrectionary movement among the fanatical Moslems of Southern Macedonia against the Greek authorities, in the chimerical hope that the Young Turks might thus recover their lost European provinces. What was more important, however, was the provision that, if circumstances were favorable, the plotters should begin their operations by overthrowing by the force of arms the Albanian government. Provision was also made for the sending of reënforcements from Constantinople under the command of Izzet Pasha, former Turkish Minister of War, who was to become, eventually, a dictator in Albania. Bekir Agha was condemned to death, and his companions to more or less severe penalties. But the incident shows beyond any cavil to what degree the Young Turks were emboldened by the indifference which Europe was showing in regard to Albania, and by the weakness of the Albanian government.

The discomfiture of the people was indescribable, and at the renewed request of Ismail Kemal Bey, the International Commission of Control finally decided, with the concurrence of the Powers, to assume the administration of Albania until the arrival of the Prince.

The government of Valona was, consequently, dis-

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solved by the end of January A few days later, the Commission requested Essad Pasha to imitate the action of Ismail Kemal Bey He refused to do so, at first, but eventually was persuaded to resign on the condition that he should preside over the Albanian deputation, which went to Neuwied, at the end of February, to offer the crown of Albania to the Prince-elect.

Albania was now united under a single administrative body, for, through the assumption of the governmental power by the Commission of Control, the International Administration of Scutari came to an end, and Vice-Admiral Burney handed his authority over to the Albanian governor who was appointed by the Commission.

The International Interregnum lasted from the end of January to March 7, of the same year (1914).

III. AUTONOMOUS EPIRUS

The main reason why the Albanians acquiesced quietly in the matter of the election of the Prince of Wied was the expectation that the future ruler would force the hand of the Powers regarding the settlement of the evacuation of Southern Albania on the part of the Greek troops. It was rightly thought that the Prince would have the elementary wisdom to request Europe to compel the retirement of the foreign armies from his realm, by refusing to accept the Crown or to go to Albania in the midst of such unsettled conditions. As a matter of fact, this was the only way of ending the dispute, in view of the evasions and exceptions which the Greek government was clearly intending to make in the matter.

The eventual exertion of such an influence on the

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part of the Prince was foreseen by the government of King Constantine which hastened to prepare and execute the new *coup de théâtre,* alluded to above (p. 121). The government of Athens found also another source of anxiety in the assumption of the governmental authority in Albania by the International Commission of Control which, in the opinion of the Greek Cabinet, might eventually mean a collective action on the part of the Powers to eject the Greek troops from Southern Albania.

When the Albanian deputation was on its way to Neuwied, the Greek government shifted the responsibility of the evacuation to an irresponsible—irresponsible as far as the Powers were concerned, but strictly responsible in regard to the Cabinet of Athens—*clique* of former Greek officials which assumed the name of *"Provisional Government of Autonomous Epirus."* The head of this so-called government was M. Christaki Zographos, former Minister of Foreign Affairs for Greece, whose family happened to have migrated from Southern Albania to Greece several decades before.[1] The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the same body was M. Karapanos, member of the Greek Chamber of Deputies from Arta, and M. Doulis, Colonel of the Royal Greek Army, was Minister of War.

This camarilla now assumed the entire administration of the territories which had been assigned to Albania. A part of the Greek army was withdrawn, as a make-believe, by the government of Athens, but the bulk of it was left under the command of Colonel

[1] In 1915, following the expulsion of M. Venizelos by King Constantine, M. Zographos became again Minister of Foreign Affairs for Greece.

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Doulis, with all its ammunitions and war material, after the royal insignia had been removed from the uniforms of the soldiers and officers. The army thus metamorphosed was now baptized with the name of "Epirots." It was also reënforced by the addition of a number of savage Cretan bands,[1] professional *desperadoes* and looters, whose duty was to terrify the population into abject submission. Later on, this army was further increased through the forcible incorporation of the native Christian Albanians.

When these preparations were completed,[2] the government of Athens informed the European Cabinets that, out of deference to the decision of the Powers, the royal troops were being withdrawn from "Northern Epirus"—this is the official name the Greeks made use of henceforth to designate Southern Albania. But even that small fraction of the troops was not withdrawn till after the Greek authorities had performed an archæological ceremony which shows to what ridiculous excesses the cabal of Greek Epirus was carried. On the eve of the sham evacuation, the Greek authorities planted deep into the soil a number of stones on which they wrote Greek inscriptions—in ancient Greek, of course,—so that they may create a new title to their claims on Southern Albania, when these twentieth-century antiquities come to light, either by the direct action of the Greeks in case they should return, as they hoped to, or through excavations carried on by some credulous archæologist.

1 Parl. Debates (House of Commons), Vol. 65, pp. 5–6, 613.
2 The frame-up of "Autonomous Epirus" is duly explained in M. L. Lamouche's article (see reference at the end of this chapter).

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At any rate, on the 1st of March, the city of Koritsa or Korcha was evacuated and handed over to the Dutch officer commanding the 50 Albanian gendarmes who served as the troop of occupation. A large number of Greek soldiers were left, however, in the hospitals of the city on the pretext that they needed further treatment before they could be removed. The real reason of their being left in the city will be seen a little later, for the evacuation of Koritsa proved to be a masterpiece of Greek duplicity

The great importance of the events sketched above lies in the fact that they took place at the time when Albania was governed by the International Commission of Control in the name of the six Great Powers, and that neither the former nor the latter moved a finger to put an end to the masquerade and prevent the catastrophe which resulted from it.

Questions were put in the House of Commons by several members relative to these Greek proceedings, some time later, when the disaster was approaching, but the British Secretary and Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs ostensibly avoided the issue of answering them directly, by fortifying themselves behind the usual plea "We don't know," and "We have no official information," which really meant, "We don't care."

We reproduce here a few of the questions and the answers given to them.

Sir Mark Sykes asks the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can inform the House, in view of Great Britain's partial responsibility for the integrity of Albania, through what channel the soldiers in the employ of the provisional government of

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Epirus are armed with machine guns and modern rifles; and whether this is against the wishes of the Hellenic Government?

Sir Edward Grey.—I have no information as to the exact nature or source of the arms in the possession of the Provisional Government of Epirus. The Greek Government have disclaimed all responsibility in the matter.[1]

Mr. Stewart asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether in view of the admission of the Greek Minister at Durazzo that the Cretan criminals are now in Epirus, he can say who is responsible for the release of these prisoners; and if he can make representations to the Hellenic Government to ask them to withdraw these criminals from Albania.

Mr. Gibbs asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he has any official or unofficial information of the number of Cretans landed in the last month at Aya Saranda (Santi Quaranta)?

Sir Edward Grey.—I have no information on the subject from any source.[2]

Mr. Shirley Benn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will ascertain if the Greek Government propose to hold Mr. Doulis, commander of the Epirote forces, responsible for past massacres of Albanians?

Mr. Acland (Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs).—I have been informed by the Greek Government that Colonel Doulis has been struck off the list of officers of the Greek army He is therefore no longer responsible to them.[3]

[1] Parl. Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 63, p. 1961.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. 65, p. 613.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. 65, p. 7

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CHAPTER XII

THE REIGN OF PRINCE WILLIAM

I. THE FIRST STEPS

On March 7, 1914, the Prince of Wied and his consort, *Hereditary Sovereign Prince of Albania,* landed at Durazzo from the Austrian yacht *Taurus,* which was surrounded by the battleships of the Great Powers, amidst the thundering gunfire of the warships and of the fortresses of the provisional capital, which sounded wide and far the advent of the little nation to the rank of a sovereign independent State, and amidst the frenzied acclamations of the Albanian people. During that supreme moment of delirious happiness, the past, present and future misfortunes of the people and of the country were entirely lost sight of. In the person of the Prince the Albanians hailed, with sobs and tears, the successor of Scanderbeg, no matter who he was and how obscure his origin and manner of election. Correspondents of foreign newspapers witnessed with astonishment the expansion of this patriotism—for it was patriotism and not blind royalism—which the Albanians had treasured in their hearts during the four and a half centuries of foreign domination. The Prince was given the native title of "Mbret" (King) by the people, in defiance of Europe which had recognized him only as Prince, and he was saluted as the savior of Albania.

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The festivities for the arrival of the Prince lasted for a week in the artistically garlanded and arched Durazzo. Deputations and delegations arrived at the provisional capital from the Albanian colonies of the United States, Egypt, Russia, Italy, Austria, Roumania, Bulgaria, and from every corner of the free as well as the unfree Albanian territories, to swear homage and fealty to the Sovereign of the Albanians.

Yet, only a few days later, the illusion of the peaceful glittering lights of the fireworks was to give way to the bitter reality of the smoke and ruins of war. Hitherto Albania had been wronged either through the action of her enemies or the ill-treatment she had received at the hands of Europe. But now there began the reign of blunders which was destined to make the name of the Albanian State synonymous with fiasco.

Very soon it appeared that it was an insidious farce to send the Prince to Albania on board of an Austrian yacht, after the scandalous attitude of Austria in Albanian affairs which had made Albania appear to be a mere creation of the Dual Monarchy

It now became clear that it was criminal for the Powers to send, and for the Prince to agree to go to Albania, with the southern provinces still in the hands of an irresponsible *brigandesque* camarilla. This egregious blunder was to cost the lives and happiness of hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings.

The reign of the Prince was initiated with another great blunder. When the International Commission of Control deposed into his hands the governmental authority it had wielded in Albania up to

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that moment, the Prince dismissed the Commission with the recommendation that it should not remain any longer at Durazzo, but at Valona, away from the court of the Prince. The result of this act was the estrangement of the Commission of Control, and the violation of the stipulations of the Conference of the Ambassadors which had deputed the Commission to coöperate with the Albanian government.

The Prince might have had the best intentions, but he was utterly ignorant either as regards the condition of Albania, internal and external, or the science of politics and government.

Following the summary dismissal of the Commission of Control, the Prince proceeded to form his own Cabinet, which was composed of not less than eight Ministers, under the presidency of *Turkhan Pasha,* erstwhile Turkish ambassador at the court of the Czar of Russia, with Essad Pasha as Minister of both War and the Interior. The appointment of Essad Pasha was another distinct mortification to the Albanian patriots and nationalists, for the conduct of the Pasha had been more than questionable. To entrust him with such important offices was to breed trouble.

Besides, the Prince surrounded himself with an "inner council," composed of an Austrian and an Italian agent, with a young Briton, Armstrong, as his private Secretary

With the arrival of the diplomatic envoys and Ministers accredited to the Prince on the part of the several European governments, prominent among whom were the Ministers of the Great Powers and the envoys of the friendly nations, such as Roumania and Bulgaria, the Palace of the Prince assumed the

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appearance of a busy court, in which the silver and gold laced uniforms of the officers of the Dutch Mission gave a rather military aspect, without, however, the corresponding military force which was so badly needed by the new State.

II. WAR AND NEGOTIATIONS

A month had hardly passed since his accession to the throne, when the clatter of firearms in the city of Korcha awoke the Prince to the realization of the fact that Southern Albania was still in the hands of the enemy, and that he had committed an irreparable injury to his people by not having asked from the Powers any guarantees for its evacuation.

To understand the nature of the outbreak of Korcha a few preliminary explanations must be given.

As has been said above (p. 133), the city was evacuated and handed over to the Albanians on the first of March. It has also been stated that a large number of Greek soldiers were left in the hospitals of the city It should also be borne in mind that Korcha is the cradle of the Albanian regeneration. It was the only Albanian city that was privileged to have a school for girls. The toleration of this school on the part of the Turkish authorities must be attributed to a kind of shadowy protection of the United States, inasmuch as an American missionary, Rev Phileas Kennedy, was a member of the teaching staff. Yet the school was immediately shut down on the occupation of the city by the Greeks, and Mr. Kennedy was compelled to leave the city

Besides, Korcha is the very center of Albanian nationalism. Only a few months before it fell into

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the hands of the Greeks, a series of national uprisings against the Turks had taken place. No more ardent Albanian patriots could be found in any part of Albania than in Korcha. But, on the other hand, the city had also within its walls the noisiest faction of Greek sympathizers, owing to the existence of the Greek Gymnasium (p. 115) which naturally graduated now and then a number of hotheaded admirers of the glories of ancient Greece. This faction was under the leadership of the Orthodox Bishop, the only Greek by nationality in the city, who acted, naturally enough, in the interests of Hellenism.

Following the occupation of the city by the Albanians, this faction played the part of an *agent provocateur* by continuous insults addressed to the Albanian authorities, intended to force the Albanians to resort to some kind of summary retribution, and thus to open the door for a Greek intervention on the ground that the Albanians were molesting, or still worse, massacring the unexisting Greeks of Korcha. It is not too much to say, however, that the conduct of the Albanian authorities, whose strength rested not upon the fifty gendarmes of occupation but on the great majority of the population of the city, was admirable, and that they succeeded in restraining the natural indignation of the majority from inflicting a well-deserved punishment upon their brethren, the Greek sympathizers, for their treasonable acts.

In the meantime, the Greek Bishop had formed a conspiracy with the Greek soldiers of the hospitals and the Greek sympathizers, and, towards the middle of the night of April 11, the Greek soldiers and their associates broke loose in the streets. Simultane-

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ously, the irregular Greek bands attacked the city from the positions they had taken during the night in its outskirts, where they had placed their machine-guns.

Within the space of a few hours the public buildings were in the hands of the conspirators, and the city was almost lost. But very soon the civilian population joined in the fight, and after four days of furious and savage street-fighting, the Greeks were routed, and several Greek soldiers of the regular army of King Constantine were captured. So great, indeed, was the confidence of the Greeks in the outcome of their plans that the report of the fall of Korcha was circulated by them throughout Europe—reaching even the United States—before the first short-lived success of the assailants had taken place.

The outbreak of Korcha now made the Prince realize his mistake in having come to Albania before the question of the southern provinces had been settled. Even so, instead of calling the attention of the Powers to the duplicity of the Greek government and laying on them the responsibility of a speedy settlement, the government of the Prince made an unsuccessful attempt to adjust matters directly with the so-called Epirots.

In the meantime, moreover, hostilities had opened between the Albanians and the Epirots. The odds were overwhelmingly against the former, on account of their lack of organization, but nevertheless they were successful almost along the whole battleline. The Greeks now tried to avenge their defeats by committing the most fearful atrocities. Terrified by the persecution of the savage Cretan criminals,

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218 persons, old men, women, and children, sought refuge in the Orthodox Convent of Kodra. The Greeks tore off a part of the roof of the Convent and began shooting the unlucky refugees within. When, finally, the Greeks gained entrance into the Convent, they butchered the survivors with hatchets. Such an atrocious crime is hardly imaginable in our days, but the official report of the massacre, written down by *General de Weer* of the Dutch Mission and confirmed as it is through other sources, stands as the authoritative account of the most revolting massacre in modern history [1]

These barbarous atrocities doubled the courage of the Albanians who realized now that this was a war to the knife. The heroism of the women of Suli was repeated once more, the Albanian women having borne a large part of the burden of the war. What is more characteristic of the chivalry of the Albanian is that although the Albanian fighting forces consisted of irregulars, owing to the lack of any organized army, not a single instance of excess may be charged against them. This statement is borne out by the foreign correspondents who accompanied them.

The Greeks continuously retreated, occasionally putting themselves under the protection of the artillery of the official Greek army which was always in contact with the so-called Epirots. On May 12, the Albanians closed in upon Arghyrocastro, the center of the nefarious Epirot government. The city was almost within their grasp, when, at the critical mo-

[1] A vivid account of the massacre was given before the House of Commons by the Hon. Aubrey Herbert, M.P See Parl. Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 64, pp. 97–101. Also pp. 1413–14. For other massacres, see *Ibid.*, Vol. 65, pp. 5–6.

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ment, General Papoulias, of the royal Greek army, hurled his infantry and artillery against the advancing Albanians, forcing them to stop. Yet, the Greek government disclaimed all responsibility in the matter, and the European governments did not question its good faith.

At this moment Europe thought it advisable to intervene and the Commission of Control was commissioned to go to Corfou and enter into negotiations with the Government of Autonomous Epirus. Yet, even during these negotiations the Greeks burned the cities of Tepelen and Liaskoviki. Under the very eyes of the Commission of Control, about three thousand men were shipped from Corfou to reënforce the Epirots.

Finally, a compromise was made between the Commission of Control and the Autonomous Government, which is known as the *Disposition of Corfou.* Southern Albania was to be handed over to the Albanians in exchange for a guarantee of immunity and a grant of privileges to the so-called Epirots, which, according to the stipulations of the Disposition, was to go into effect after its ratification by the European and Albanian governments and the Epirots.

We shall see, a little later, how the Disposition was carried out.

III. THE OVERTHROW OF ESSAD PASHA

In the meantime, things were going from bad to worse in the capital of Albania. During the war against the Epirots there was a great scarcity of ammunition among the Albanians, although the military depots were overloaded with war material. It

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was likewise noticed that, whereas cargoes of ammunition were daily leaving Durazzo, none of them reached the combatants. This made people think that the Minister of War, Essad Pasha, was diverting the ammunition to other localities, in furtherance of his own designs. There was much truth in this popular belief. It was no secret that Essad Pasha was not overzealous in winning back the southern provinces, for the simple reason that he had left behind him an evil reputation in that region in his former capacity as commander of the Turkish *gendarmerie* at Janina. It was also evident that as soon as Southern Albania should be joined to the main body of the State, the career of Essad Pasha would be cut short, because of the relentless opposition of the southerners to his rule.

During the month of May, there was much agitation in Durazzo against the Minister of War and of the Interior, and on one occasion the attacks against him were so deliberate that he thought it necessary to imprison the leaders of the movement. He was accused of plotting against his sovereign, and whatever blunders and mistakes had been made—and there were a great many—were rightly or wrongly attributed to the intrigues of Essad Pasha. It was generally believed that the Prince was the victim of his machinations.

The popular discontent against the Pasha was also insidiously kindled by Austrian agents, for Austria had to settle old and actual scores with him, inasmuch as the powerful Minister had defeated and eliminated Austrian influence in Albania.

The Austrian agents sought and secured the alliance of the nationalists, the irreconcilable opponents

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of Essad. As a result, during the night of May 19th, a group of armed Albanian nationalists surrounded the house of Essad Pasha. In addition, the newly-bought Austrian guns, which were temporarily operated by Austrian officers, were trained against the house from the yard of the Palace of the Prince. Two or three shots were fired against Essad Pasha, accompanied by the furious yells: "Down with Essad Pasha! Down with the tyrant!"

In view of this bombardment, Essad Pasha gave himself up into the hands of the Dutch officer who was commanding the nationalists and who succeeded in saving his prisoner from stray bullets by leading him out through a back door. The powerful Minister was now a prisoner in the Palace of the Prince. A little later, however, he was carried aboard the Austrian battleship *Szigetvar,* for the sake of greater safety. The *Szigetvar* and a number of other Austrian and Italian warships had been mooring in the Bay of Durazzo ever since the arrival of the Prince.

Hitherto, Austria and Italy had been fighting each other through diplomatic encounters, at the expense of Albania, of course. But now they had to come to close quarters. In the face of the aggressive action of Austria, Italy felt it to be her duty to intervene, lest the balance of influence be tipped on the side of her ally and rival. The Italian Minister peremptorily demanded the surrender of Essad Pasha to the commander of the Italian squadron. The Austrians refused. An incident now occurred which is still known only to a few persons. On the refusal of the commander of the *Szigetvar* to comply with the Italian demand, the two rival squadrons cleared for action and arrayed themselves for battle in the

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port of Durazzo, which had been neutralized by the Powers along with the whole of the Albanian coast. During the twenty-four hours that followed the overthrow of Essad Pasha, the wireless of the respective flagships were continuously flashing, feverishly transmitting communications to, and receiving orders from, the respective capitals, Vienna and Rome. For a moment it seemed as though Albania was to become the Schleswig-Holstein of Austria and Italy.

If the naval battle did not take place, the cause did not lie in any disinclination to fight. The real reason was that the Austrians wavered at the last moment, because of their inferiority in naval units and armaments. On the mediation, therefore, of the Prince of Albania, Essad Pasha was surrendered to the Italians with the understanding that he was to be condemned to perpetual banishment.

And yet, the world expected to see a prosperous and thriving Albania, in spite of all the shackles and handicaps which the bitter rivalry of her two protectors put in her narrow pathway

IV THE UPRISING OF CENTRAL ALBANIA

The report of the forcible dismissal of Essad Pasha brought about an agitation in his native city, Tirana; but no sign of unrest was reported from any other place.

Even the agitation of Tirana had the character of a not very serious disturbance, inasmuch as the commotion was confined to the numerous family of Toptani, to which Essad Pasha belongs, and to its dependencies and estates. To quell the agitation, the government of Durazzo dispatched against Tirana

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an expeditionary force of about eighty gendarmes and nationalists, with two machine-guns.

On its way to Tirana, the small contingent had to pass through the neighboring town of Sh. Jak (St. James), which is mainly inhabited by fanatical Moslem refugees from Bosnia. No stir was noticed in the town, but the passage through it was to be accompanied by the most momentous consequences, which confirm the fact that a trifling cause may have tremendous results. In order to clear the way for his troop, the commanding officer, Captain Saar, another Dutch officer, in complete ignorance of the deep-rooted customs of the country, had issued the fatal order to his soldiers to shoot any armed man they might encounter. In fact, the gendarmes did fire against a group of three men, one of whom escaped and sounded the alarm to the effect that the soldiers of the Prince had come to massacre the inhabitants of Sh. Jak. The peasants rose immediately, and the contingent of Captain Saar was disarmed and imprisoned. In so doing, the Bosnian refugees of Sh. Jak were acting under the apprehension which was caused by a report that the government of Durazzo was contemplating shipping them to Turkey on account of their fanaticism in religious matters.

Instead of trying to calm the frightened inhabitants of Sh. Jak, the government of Durazzo committed the gravest of all blunders. An order was given to the batteries of the fortress of Durazzo to bombard the mistaken insurgents who had, in the meantime, occupied the hills of Rashbull, which separate their town from Durazzo. This was the most flagrant violation of one of the most sacred institu-

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tions of the country, the famous "Bessa" or "pledge of good faith," a breach of which is never pardoned by Albanians. The Bessa had naturally been adopted, in its entirety, even by the Moslem Bosnian refugees.

At the same time, the government of Durazzo gathered together all the available men of the capital and sent them to occupy the hills, which, however, they found in the possession of the insurgents, with whom they now came into armed conflict. While the battle was going on, some interested foreign agents sounded at Durazzo the alarm of the approach of the rebels to its gates. The panic-stricken population rushed to the ships in port, and the Prince, himself, and his family, victims of a false report, sought refuge on board an Italian man-of-war.

The flight of the Prince, though he returned soon afterwards to his Palace, compromised both his dignity and the confidence which people had reposed in him.[1] The consternation of the Albanians was pathetic. It was now plainly seen that the Prince was not the ruler whom a brave people, like the Albanian, would wish to have, no matter if he had been misled by insidious enemies, and if he tried to make up for it the next day, when he rode all alone along the battleline.

Aside from the general demoralization, the loyal forces failed to occupy the hills, though they saved Durazzo, which was, however, in no real danger. Moreover, the agitators obtained, in the meantime, complete mastery over the city of Tirana, owing to

[1] On hearing of the flight of the Prince, the Military Club of Potsdam expunged his name from the record of its members.

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the diversion offered by the insurgents of Sh. Jak. Within a few days the whole of Central Albania was in arms against the government of Durazzo.

On the 15th of June, the rebels took the offensive by attacking Durazzo which was now protected by the Moslems and Catholics of Northern Albania. In this furious battle, Colonel Thomson, sub-head of the Dutch Mission, the beloved idol of the Albanians, rendered the supreme sacrifice to Albania, which he had learned to love during his short residence there as dearly as his own native land, by giving his life on the battlefield.

Foreign correspondents have spread the report that Central Albania revolted because its Moslem population resented the rule of a Christian Prince. Others have asserted that the uprising was due to the resentment which people felt on account of the summary dismissal of Essad Pasha. Neither assertion is borne out by the facts, for not only did the rebels first seize and distribute among themselves the estates of Essad Pasha, but the same rebels transmitted a humble plea to the Prince, after his departure, to return to Albania, when Essad Pasha had established his rule in Durazzo, as we shall see a little later.

The underlying cause of the revolution was agrarian. The land of Central Albania belongs mostly to the native noblemen, Beys and Pashas, who own very large estates. The land was usually leased to tenants on very onerous terms, such as the giving to the owner of one-third of the total production. The tenants expected that the new government of the Prince of Wied would improve their lot, and, when they saw that the Prince was still sur-

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rounded by the Beys and Pashas, they took the matter into their own hands at the first opportunity, which happened to be that offered by the events that occurred after the dismissal of Essad Pasha.

What helped the rebels the most was the impotence of the government of Durazzo, the existence of a state of war in Southern Albania, and the demoralization which followed the first outbreak as a result of foreign interference and intrigue.

The immediate cause of the uprising and of its swift expansion was the violation of the *Bessa*. The government of Durazzo entered into negotiations with the insurgents, but it could not possibly achieve anything, because it had broken the *Bessa*, by attacking the town of Sh. Jak without any previous warning.[1]

V THE END OF THE REIGN

Despite the daily reënforcement of the garrison of Durazzo, through the addition of more Moslem and Catholic defenders, the position of the besieged capital could not be improved. The bitter rivalry of Austria and Italy, which ended in constant interference with the defense of the capital as well as with the rest of the military operations, had completely disorganized the whole governmental system. What one of the two Powers was trying to do to help the

[1] The writer was sent by the International Commission of Control, in his quality as Secretary to that body, to negotiate with the rebels in many contingencies. He was, therefore, able to ascertain that the principal reason why the rebels were unwilling to reconcile themselves with the Government of the Prince was because the plighted faith had been broken. The reasoning of the rebels was that the Prince had come to Albania on the pledge of good faith, which was naturally meant to be mutual, and now that he had broken it, they, the rebels, could not recognize him as their lawful ruler.

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Albanian government was negatived by the rival action of the other Power. Each of these governments was trying to pull the rope to its side, and the result was standstill and deadlock, while the revolution was spreading through Central Albania.

In the meantime, the Greeks or Epirots, took advantage of the situation. Emboldened by the disturbances of Central Albania, they tore to pieces the *Disposition of Corfou* (p. 143), and completed the devastation of Southern Albania, according to their original program. They burned down three hundred towns and villages, and drove from their hearths 150,000 men, women and children, in order to prove the attachment of that unfortunate population to the criminal Government of Autonomous Epirus and to its sponsor, the government of Athens. Most of the refugees died the terrible death of starvation at Valona and in its suburbs.[1]

The European Powers were finally moved by this inhuman treatment inflicted on the Albanians by the Christian Greek nation. The devastation of Southern Albania became a matter of serious discussion in the British Parliament, and the hitherto evasive Sir Edward Grey openly condemned the Greek atrocities.

Mr. Aubrey Herbert asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any information as to massacres committed in Epirus; and whether he has any information showing that definite steps will be taken by the Greek government to put an end to this state of affairs:

[1] See *The Christian Work*, October, 1914. Special number published by the Albanian Relief Committee of New York. Photographs inserted.

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Sir Edward Grey.—I have little to add to what I have already told the House on this subject. The accounts of what has occurred in Southern Albania are very distressing, but I have received no details in regard to actual excesses or massacres and such reports as have reached me as to the numbers that have been rendered homeless are from unofficial sources, which cannot all be considered as quite reliable. In Valona itself, I hear from a private source that there are now some 12,000 refugees, but I fear that it cannot be doubted that in the country round thousands more are destitute and in urgent need of the necessities of life. Some proposals have been made for their immediate relief. The Italian Government informed me that they were prepared to send maize and other necessaries at once, and His Majesty's Government are ready to bear their share of the cost, if the other Powers do likewise. Furthermore, the Powers are considering the dispatch from Durazzo of an international mission who will endeavor to elucidate past occurrences, and I trust contribute to the restoration of some sort of order and confidence. Such information as I have received that seemed trustworthy respecting excesses in Epirus I have brought to the knowledge of the Greek Government, pointing out that though I am convinced that M. Venizelos earnestly desires to prevent these occurrences, the fact of their being due to Greeks, however irresponsible, must produce a very unfavorable impression.[1]

In consequence, the Powers entered into negotiations with the view to providing the necessary means

[1] Parl. Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 65, pp. 1091-92.

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for the expulsion of the Greeks from Southern Albania and to strengthening the Government of Durazzo. But at the moment when the result of these negotiations was to be carried into effect, there occurred the assassination of the Austrian Archduke, Francis Ferdinand, with its too well-known consequences, and the Powers had to forget Albania.[1]

Even after the outbreak of the European war, there were, nevertheless, many sanguine Albanian patriots who earnestly believed that the situation was not entirely hopeless. Their idea was to transfer the capital to Scutari, around which there stood the whole of the loyal Northern Albania, or to Valona, which also remained loyal to the government to the very last moment.

But, a few days only after the beginning of hostilities in Europe, it was rendered evident that the situation was quite untenable, on account of the financial distress of the government.

The death knell of the reign of Prince William of Wied, Hereditary Mbret of Albania, had sounded, and on September 3rd, 1914, after six months of troublesome and disheartening rule, the Prince embarked, with his family, on board the Italian yacht *Misurata* and sailed away to Europe. Prior to his departure, however, he issued a proclamation to the Albanian people wherein he stated that, owing to the unsettled conditions of Europe, he deemed it necessary to absent himself temporarily from his beloved people, in order to return when conditions should be more propitious.

Contrary, then, to the generally prevailing opin-

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 63, p. 1961.

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ion, he has not abdicated as yet, though the chances of his coming back to Albania are nil from every point of view

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CHAPTER XIII

ALBANIA IN THE GREAT WAR

I. INTERNATIONAL POST-REGNUM

By a singular turn of the wheel of fate, the Prince had to delegate his sovereign authority to the same body from the hands of which he had received it when he first set foot on the Albanian soil.

On leaving Albania, the unlucky ruler handed over the government to the International Commission of Control whose high prerogatives he had at first disregarded. But, in the present circumstances, even the Commission of Control could not fare any better than the Prince, although it was cloaked with the prestige of acting in the name of the European Powers. The outbreak of the great war had caused the breaking up of the Commission. From the first days of the hostilities in Europe, the British, German and Russian delegates had been withdrawn by the action of their respective governments; there remained only the representatives of Austria, Italy and France. There was no Albanian delegate. Moreover, it could not be rationally expected that the delegate of France would coöperate, for the sake of Albania, with that of Austria while their governments were at war. Furthermore, the absence of funds and the lack of any means for the enforcement of their authority rendered the task of the remainder of the delegates a well-nigh hopeless one.

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It was, therefore, not at all surprising that even the other members of the International Commission of Control soon dispersed, only a few weeks after the occupation of Durazzo by the insurgents, who hastened to inform the Commission that they had had enough of Europe, and that they meant to govern themselves according to their own notions.

The country was thus left without any government at a critical moment when international morals had relaxed—after the violation of Belgian neutrality by Germany—and when each State was watching with eagerness its neighbor to discover any slackening in its power of resistance. The only exception to this state of anarchy which prevailed in Albania was afforded by Northern Albania, which relapsed again into its peculiar system of local self-government, and by the city of Scutari which was governed by a council of its notables under the supervision of the consuls of the Entente Allies.

II. THE GOVERNMENT OF ESSAD PASHA

One month after the departure of the Prince, Essad Pasha hastily returned to Durazzo. Taking advantage of the situation, he now came back to Albania with a collection of hirelings recruited from among the Albanians assigned to Serbia. This was done, of course, with the authorization of the Serbian government, which even provided the funds for their equipment.

Essad Pasha now set up the so-called "Government of Central Albania," which was made up of ignorant peasants and of some vagabond Old Turks. His constant effort was to set up, by any means available, a government under his presidency, so

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as to figure later before the world as an unjustly dispossessed ruler.

The Government of the Pasha had hardly been formed when the rebels of Central Albania, the same people who had previously attacked the government of the Prince, now turned their arms against the alien government of Essad Pasha. They attacked Durazzo, in the same old way, but the Pasha found shelter under the protecting fire of the Italian Navy, which rushed to his aid, and which alone was able to check the advance of the rebels and to save Essad Pasha and his capital. Thenceforth, the dominion over which the "Government of Central Albania" ruled was confined to the small peninsula which is occupied by the city of Durazzo. The rebels remained encamped at the gates of the besieged city, and the Italian squadron was constantly moored in the Bay of Durazzo, ready for action against them. It was at this time that the insurgents transmitted by telegram a humble plea to the Prince of Wied, begging his forgiveness and asking him to return to Albania! Assuredly, these Central Albanians are *les enfants terribles.*

This curious situation around the capital lasted up to the day when the Serbian and Montenegrin troops came to the relief of Essad Pasha. Meanwhile, the Pasha persisted in speaking and acting on behalf of Albania, which stood in arms against him and his alien Ministry.

III. THE INVASION OF ALBANIA

In the meantime (end of November, 1914), the troops of King Constantine had made their official reëntrance into the southern provinces of Albania,

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which they had devastated some three months before in their unofficial capacity, the Government of Athens having now declared that the occupation was intended to be only temporary This was also the official beginning of the undoing of the decisions of the Conference of the Ambassadors.

On December 25th, of the same year, Italian marines and soldiers landed at Valona and occupied the city The Government of Rome declared that the occupation of Valona by Italian troops was necessary in order to safeguard the interests of the Albanian State, which had been jeopardized by the Greek occupation of the territories adjoining Valona.

At the beginning of the following year, 1915, the Serbians and Montenegrins felt tempted by the action of the neighbors of Albania. They, therefore, began an invasion of Northern and Central Albania, in spite of the angry protests of Italy and of the remonstrances of the Entente Allies, who advised the governments of Nish and Cettinje not to scatter their forces in unfruitful enterprises, as they were all sorely needed in the war against Austria-Hungary But the Serbians and Montenegrins, taking no heed, overcame the desperate resistance of the Albanians in a series of sanguinary battles, and occupied Northern and Central Albania. Scutari was taken only after a bitter engagement in which 9,000 Albanians were killed. The consuls of the Powers did nothing to prevent the seizure of the city which was entrusted to their supervisory administration.

Essad Pasha and his capital were relieved, for the moment, but in the Spring of 1916 the Teuton-Bulgarian armies entered on their decisive campaign

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against the Serbians and the Montenegrins, and the latter were forced to withdraw their troops from Albania. Into this country, however, their decimated armies fell back again, shortly afterwards, in their retreat toward the Adriatic Sea. The Austrians occupied Northern and Central Albania, and Essad Pasha, who in the meantime had declared war against the Central Powers, was forced to transfer his government and his army to Salonica, where he now posed as a dispossessed ruler of the same class as King Peter of Serbia and Nicholas of Montenegro. It was only very late that the Entente Allies began to realize that his influence and authority in Albania did not extend beyond his immediate followers in Salonica. Had they understood this while it was yet time, the Albanians who were struggling against Essad Pasha would have been on the side of the Entente Allies against the Central Powers, and the Serbian retreat through the mountains of Albania would not have proved so disastrous.

During the late summer of 1916 the Italian expeditionary forces in Albania began their southward march, and gradually drove the troops of King Constantine from Southern Albania. The process of the occupation of the southern provinces by the Italians was brought to an end in the month of December, 1916.

IV THE REPUBLIC OF KORCHA

In the same month, a French detachment of the army of Salonica, under the command of *Colonel Descoins,* reached the outskirts of the city of Korcha, about the ethnical character of which the

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Greeks had made so much trouble during and after the delimitation of the southeastern frontier of Albania.

The French detachment entered the city after an official protocol had been signed to the effect that the city and its neighboring localities should be allowed to establish Albanian authorities. On the 11th of December, Colonel Descoins read to the population a proclamation in which he acknowledged the independence of the *"Autonomous Albanian Province of Koritsa,"* and thereupon the Albanian flag was hoisted, while the French army presented arms in its honor.

A provisional government of fourteen Christians and Moslems, was formed, a Post Office was instituted, and stamps and paper money were issued. In the meantime, owing to the various advances of the Allies whom the tiny republic heartily joined as a faithful ally, it gained several extensions of territory, and, in later days, it attained a population of about 200,000 souls.

It is plainly evident that when the question arises of the genuine application of the right of self-determination, there will remain no room for chicanes and cabals like that of the Autonomous Epirus.

When Greece joined later the Entente Allies in the war, the Greek agents were allowed one more chance for intrigue in Korcha. They began agitating on the school question, the city authorities having shut down the Greek schools as soon as the Republic was established. The question was put to a plebiscite and the overwhelming verdict of the people was that they needed no Greek schools any longer once the Albanian ones were opened.

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V. THE ITALIANS IN ALBANIA

On Italy's entering the war against the Central Powers, the Government of Rome officially stated that one of the war aims of the Italian people was to be the reëstablishment of the independence and integrity of the Albanian State.

When, therefore, the occupation of Southern Albania on the part of the Italian troops was completed, the Italian Government proceeded to act in pursuance of that policy On June 3, 1917, General Ferrero, commander of the Italian troops in Southern Albania, read a formal proclamation at Arghyrocastro, the erstwhile seat of the Government of Autonomous Epirus, before a crowded assembly of Albanian notables. The text of this historic document reads as follows:

"To the whole people of Albania:

"To-day, June 3rd, 1917, which is the memorable anniversary of the establishment of Italian constitutional liberties, I, General Giacinto Ferrero, commander of the Italian expeditionary forces in Albania, do solemnly proclaim, in accordance with the orders of His Majesty, King Victor Emmanuel, the unity and independence of the whole of Albania, under the shield and protection of the Italian Kingdom.

"By virtue of this proclamation, you, Albanians, have a free government, an army, tribunals, all composed of Albanians, and are free to use as you wish your property and the products of your labor, for your own benefit, and for the enrichment of your country

"Albanians!

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"Wherever you are, whether free in the land of your birth, or in exile in other countries and under foreign domination, we are bringing back to you the civilization of the Romans and of the Venetians.

"You know the bonds that unite the Italian and Albanian interests. The sea divides them, and, at the same time, the sea binds them together. Let all good citizens, then, stand unitedly, having faith in the future of your beloved nation. Come, all of you, under the flags of Albania and Italy, and pledge yourselves to Albania, which is to-day proclaimed independent, in the name of the Italian Government and under its friendly protection."

The question of how far this "shield and protection" goes has often been raised, but no definite answer has yet been given.[1]

Since the issuing of that proclamation, almost the whole of Albania has come into the possession of the Italian troops, as a result of the expulsion of the Austro-Bulgarian armies from the Balkans. In the meantime, the Italian occupation has greatly benefited the territories of Southern Albania which were devastated by the Greeks. Albanian local authorities have been established, schools opened, agricultural improvements carried out, assistance has been given to those rendered homeless by the devastation, roads constructed, and the country is in process of swift development.

The main question now is that of satisfying the Albanians' craving for independence and for a decent form of national government. This is, of course, in the hands of the Peace Conference and

[1] For a discussion of this question, see *Current History Magazine*, August, 1917, pp. 284–286.

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it must settle once for all this apparently troublesome and difficult, but in reality very simple, problem, if simplicity be desired instead of the complications which were involved in the first attempt to settle the Albanian question at the Conference of the Ambassadors.

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PART III

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

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CHAPTER XIV

GENERAL GEOGRAPHY

From the dark barriers of that rugged clime,
Ev'n to the center of Illyria's vales,
Childe Harold passed o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce noticed in historic tales;
Yet in famed Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; loved Parnassus fails
Though classic ground and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.
"Childe Harold," Canto II, Stanza XLVI.

I. AREA AND FRONTIERS

The term "Albania" has been geographically used with very varying signification, which has been expanded or restricted in its meaning according to political exigencies. The Turkish Government always avoided paying any attention to the natural or ethnical frontiers of Albania in the administrative division of its European provinces.

Some thirty years ago, the Greek Consul at Scutari, M. Mavromatis, in a statement published in the newspaper *Akropolis* of Athens, made the pertinent remark that the word "Albania" is more comprehensive in its ethnographical than in its geographical meaning.

In fact, the Greek Consul proceeded to indicate five ethnographical zones, to-wit:

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1. *Southern Albania,* from the Greek boundary (as it stood before the Balkan war of 1912) to the river Shkumbi.

2. *Central Albania,* from Shkumbi to the River Mati.

3. *Northern Albania,* from Mati to the frontier of Montenegro before 1912.

4. *Northeastern Albania,* which includes Novi-Bazar, Prisrend, Prishtina, etc., etc.

5. *Macedonian Albania,* from the lakes of Orchida and Prespa to Prilep and Monastir.[1]

To these must also be added the important Albanian colonies in Greece, Italy, Montenegro, etc.

The first attempt to delimit the Albanian territory was made, as we have already seen, at the close of the Albanian insurrection of 1912, when the Turkish Government recognized that the frontiers of the administratively autonomous Albania extended to the four western European vilayets, namely, the vilayets of Scutari, Kossova, Monastir and Janina. This delimitation corresponds to a very great extent to the five zones of M. Mavromatis.

The region inhabited by a compact and mostly homogeneous Albanian population may be roughly marked out by a line drawn from the Montenegrin frontier at Berana (before 1912) to Mitrovitza and the Serbian frontier (again before 1912) near Vrania; thence to Uskub, Prilep, Monastir, Florina, Kastoria, Janina and Parga.[2] Serving as natural boundaries, there are, in the northeast, the mountains of Shar Dag—though they cut off compact Albanian populations, in the east and southeast the

[1] F. Gibert, "Les Pays d'Albanie," p. 120.
[2] J. D. Bourchier in the Encyclopedia Britannica: Albania.

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mountains Grammos and Pindus, and in the west the Adriatic Sea.

But the Conference of Ambassadors took into consideration neither the delimitation made by M. Mavromatis, nor that which the Albanians won at the point of the bayonet in 1912, nor the line indicated by Mr. Bourchier, nor even the most restricted and most expedient of all, the boundary indicated by nature itself. The net result of the artificial delimitation which was adopted by the Conference was to abandon to the Slavs and Greeks about a half of the Albanian territory, and to thus leave the new State a miserable wreck which became the plaything of circumstances.

Another point of interest in the matter of the frontiers is that the Government of Athens reversed the statement of its consul, M. Mavromatis, by claiming as a Greek territory the country which he had included in the first zone, i. e., Southern Albania to the River Shkumbi, which Greece has been claiming under the whimsical brand-new names of "Northern Epirus" to the Viosa River, and "Northernmost Epirus" to the Shkumbi River.

The present area of official Albania is estimated to be about 11,000 square miles, although the Albanian race covers a territory more than double that size.

II. PHYSICAL FEATURES

Taken as a whole, Albania is rather a mountainous country But her mountains are of the "sublime" nature, intercepted by "vales" and "lovely dales" similar to those which that connoisseur of natural beauties, Lord Byron, had seen only in a

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small portion of Albania, the southern. He missed the spectacle of the valleys of Central Albania and of the northern graphic ranges of mountains, which proudly compare in beauty and picturesqueness with the landscapes of Switzerland.

Physically, the territory of Albania seems to be divided by nature into three regions:

1. The northern region is very mountainous, with occasional lowlands. Its mountains form a part of the Dinaric Alpine system of Dalmatia and Bosnia. It is richly covered by fine forests, the "virgin" forests of Albania.

The summits of Shar Dag (the Argentar Mountain) reach a height of about 3,000 meters, and those of Liuma are nearly as high.

2. The central region, which lies between the rivers Mati and Viosa, is fairly open, especially in the direction of the seacoast. It includes the two large and fertile plains, those of Kavaja and Muzakia. The eternally snow-covered Mount Tomori stands in the middle like a giganic marble-white statue, clearly visible to those who navigate the Adriatic Sea. Its summit, Tomoritsa, reaches the height of 2,500 meters; from its sources flow the crystal waters of the region round about.

3. The southern region is again more or less mountainous, and it is this part which Byron describes in the stanza reproduced at the head of this chapter. It is intercepted by plains and valleys, and traversed by beautiful rivers. The modest Acroceraunian Mountains, which stand as a sentinel over the narrow Strait of Otranto, are hardly 1,500 in height, but the mountains of Chimara, which face southwardly the fair island of Corfou, reach 2,000.

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The *climate* of Albania is generally very healthy both in the uplands and the lowlands, except in the valleys and plains close to, and on the seacoast, where the presence of marshes and swamps is a frequent cause of malaria. A system of drainage may, however, remedy this evil, and considerable work has lately been done in that direction.

Winters are short, but at times unusually cold in comparison with the moderate climate of the country The seacoast, however, is rarely visited by snow, and at Valona one may spend the wintertime without any appreciable coal bills. Some of the summits of the mountains are, however, snow-covered during the greater part of the year. Tomori keeps its snow-mantle the year round.

The summer temperature in the plains is that of southern Italy; in the mountains it is rather cool and changeable.

Albania is traversed in all directions by a system of splendid rivers. The most important of these are: The Bojana, the Drin, Black and White, the Shkumbi, the Semani or Devol, the silvery-white Viosa, and the Southern Drin. The course of the Semani or Devol is majestic, with its many falls and cataracts, which sacrilegious science is intending to use for waterpower. The most picturesque is, however, the noble Viosa, and its tributary, the Shushitsa, the bed of which is made up of brilliantly shining white pebbles.

These river courses, rich in beautiful scenery, may provide the easiest and cheapest means of communication, if they be properly regulated and deepened, as they can be at a comparatively small expense.

The great lakes of Scutari and Ochrida are among

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the most beautiful in Europe, and furnish excellent fish. The waters of the lake of Ochrida are of marvelous limpidity; they are drained into the Adriatic Sea by the river Devol.

The configuration of the Albanian coast is deeply indented and presents many inlets, bays, and creeks. The principal seaports on this coast are four: San Giovanni di Medua (so named by the Venetians), Durazzo, Valona, and Santi Quaranta or, more plainly, Saranda. With the exception of Valona, they are not particularly good, but are capable of improvement.

Durazzo might be made the best harbor on the Adriatic, if the marshy isthmus which connects the small peninsula of Durazzo with the mainland were opened, as it could be at a moderate expense.

Up to the present time, Albania has been a derelict country and its immense natural resources have remained totally undeveloped. This is also true with regard to her general economic conditions, as we shall presently see.

Everything remains to be done. No great effort or expenditure will be required and success is assured.

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CHAPTER XV

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

I. AGRICULTURE

Albania is, primarily, an agricultural country. But her isolation from the outside world under the long Turkish rule, her unsettled conditions, arising from the constant strain of war, the notorious indifference of the Turkish government in such matters, and, most of all, the complete lack of means of communication, are responsible for the backward and primitive state of agriculture in Albania.

Yet the soil of Albania is very good and fertile. It is estimated that, with a proper cultivation of only the plains of Kavaja and Muzakia, the agricultural products will not only supply the actual population of Albania but will also furnish a surplus for exportation. According to Dr. Steinmetz, the agricultural development of Albania is highly promising, her natural resources having predestined the country to the first place along the entire coast of the Adriatic. Inasmuch as the greater part of the plain of Muzakia is public property, it may easily become a magnificent model farm, with a proper system of drainage and irrigation which is rendered easy by the presence of the rivers traversing it.

The climatic conditions and the quality of the soil are favorable for raising any kinds of crops, while the dryness of the summers may be remedied by irrigation.

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The basis of land ownership is the freehold, and the class of independent yeomen is very numerous. Most of the land belongs, however, to the great landowners, Beys and Pashas, who have received it as fiefs from the Sultan, especially for meritorious services rendered in war and peace. The land is leased by them to the peasantry, in the form of perpetual leases. The right of eviction has become obsolete, but the exactions of the landowners have proved disastrous to any agricultural development. Usually, the lessee is required to turn over to the landlord one-third of the produce; the result is that the peasant does not care to grow more crops, when he knows that his landlord will become richer and greedier thereby

When Southern Albania was occupied by the Greek troops, during the war of 1912, the Greek authorities purposely allowed the tenants to expropriate their landlords, in order to render more difficult the restitution of that region to Albania.

We have already stated that the first act of the insurgents of Central Albania, who rose against the Government of the Prince of Wied, was to distribute among themselves the estates of the landowners, the most important of which are the extensive lands of Essad Pasha.

The solution of this land question is a matter which will confront the future government of Albania. Yet, the undeniable truth is that the condition of the agricultural laborers of Albania is more favorable than that of the peasantry of Bulgaria and Roumania.

Owing to the primitive agricultural implements and to other circumstances as well, vast tracts of

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arable land are lying fallow. Their improvement and reclamation would become a source of wealth to the population and of revenue to the public treasury.

A great obstacle to the development of agriculture is the absence of credit facilities.

The Turkish Farmer's Bank (Banque Agricole), which had a few branches in the cities of Albania, was the only bank that gave agricultural credit. But its bad management and questionable dealings had discredited it in the eyes of the people, and in the last days of the Turkish domination was steadily losing ground. The Provisional Government of Valona tried to revive it by reforming it, but its previous reputation militated against the success of the measures of reform.

II. CROPS AND STOCK RAISING

As has already been said, the character of the soil is favorable for the raising of a great variety of crops.

Many kinds of fruit are grown in great quantities, and their quality is renowned.

The apples and peaches of Kavaja and Sh. Jak are famous in Southeastern Europe, and the apples of Ochrida even more famous. But the lack of means of transportation has prevented their cultivation in very considerable quantities; they are often allowed to rot, because there are no ways of shipping them to the markets.

Two other important products are olives and tobacco.

There are plentiful forests of olive trees at Valona and Elbasan, but the lack of scientific management

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has rendered them slightly productive. The olives are usually exported to Italy and Austria, where the famed Valona oil is extracted.

The future of tobacco is, on the other hand, most promising. The fine blond tobaccoes of Elbasan and Scutari are renowned throughout the Balkans.

Nothing could do more to increase the production of tobacco and olive oil than the erection of a number of factories which might utilize the splendid water-power of the rivers which traverse the country in all directions.

Cotton and rice raising have shown very good results.

The principal kinds of livestock raised in Albania are, in the order of their importance, horses, which are exported mainly to Italy, sheep, of which only the wool and hides are exported, and some species of domesticated cattle.

During the Middle Ages, the horses of Muzakia were used in great numbers in all the armies of Europe, and the light Albanian cavalry enjoyed a most enviable reputation. Many a battle won by Scanderbeg was due to this light cavalry But since his time, the equine race has deteriorated, though the small horse of Muzakia retains some highly valued qualities.

Under present conditions, and unless the Albanian-Serbian frontier be rectified, there is not much hope for stock raising, because the most convenient pastures are across the boundary line.

Poultry and eggs are raised in immense quantities, and owing to the great demand for them in Italy and Austria there is a bright chance for the future of poultry raising.

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Game and fish are plentiful, too, and likely to become sources of wealth.

III. COMMERCE

From the day of the completion of the railway net of Macedonia, connecting Western and Central Europe with the Balkan Peninsula and the eastern territories, Albania lost the commercial position she had previously enjoyed in the Balkans. Isolated entirely from the continent, with no railways or other means of communication, with only a few naturally good harbors, which remained just in their natural state, the country was constrained to be self-sufficient, importing very few articles of commerce, and exporting fewer still.

Up to the year 1913, the total amount of foreign exchange was estimated to be only 20,000,000 francs, of which two-thirds consisted of imports. With the winning of independence, the commercial movement showed a quick upward tendency, the increase being one-third in nine months only And yet, Albania's natural situation on the eastern shore of the Adriatic has predestined her to a privileged commercial position.

The exported articles range as follows, according to the order of their importance: Olives and olive oil, poultry and eggs, live-stock, mainly horses, wool, hides, salted and fresh fish, fruit, wood, etc.

Imports: Cotton and cotton-goods, flour, sugar, coffee, timber for construction, paper, manufactured goods, liquors, etc.

It is idle to speculate as to the value and amount of each of these imported and exported articles, because there are no exact and reliable statistics.

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Those furnished by the Turkish Custom authorities are simply Turkish. It is to be borne in mind, however, that the above estimate of 20,000,000 francs represents only a fraction of the commercial movement, inasmuch as the larger part of commercial business was done with the adjacent inland European province of Turkey as well as with Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro. It is not, therefore, right to think that the commerce of Albania is as small as that sum would seem to imply

The construction of the projected railway lines, which will connect Albania with the rest of the Balkans and with Europe, will surely revive the formerly flourishing commerce of the Albanian coast.

The sordid little town of Durazzo, with her natural harbor, which is none too safe as compared with the splendid bay of Valona, holds the first place in the commercial life of Albania, and is likely to become once more what it was in ancient times, the first port on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, when the projected Durazzo-Monastir railway is constructed.

In her scanty commercial dealings, Albania has hitherto had very little to do with the rest of the world, outside of her immediate neighbors.

Austria has been the heaviest importer and exporter. She took about 40% of all the Albanian articles of export, especially olives and olive oil, hides, poultry and eggs.

Italy comes second, but in the independent Albania her merchants competed very successfully with the Austrians.

There are no reliable statistics to indicate the trend of commerce along the entire Albanian coast.

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The *Balkan Revue* gives, however, an account of the commercial movement of the various nations in the port of Durazzo, which is as follows:

	Year 1913		Year 1912	
	FRANCS	PER CENT.	FRANCS	PER CENT.
Austria	4,451,200	47.3	3,186,180	56
Hungary	276,010	2.9	84,780	1
Italy ..	2,478,108	26.3	876,430	15
Turkey	174,370	.4	243,620	3
Greece	333,800	3.6		
England	1,140,680	12	619,190	11
Other States	502,240	5.3	721,040	13

The above statement may be incomplete in many respects, but still it constitutes a good illustration of the upward tendency of the commercial movement in 1913, i. e., the first year of Albanian independence, and that only in the port of Durazzo, a port not very much frequented in that year.

Again, it should be noted that no account is given of the commerce by land.

Before bringing this topic to an end, let us add a few words in regard to industry and manufactures, as there is very little to be said about them.

There are few manufacturing industries in Albania, and those that exist are in a state of infancy

Valona produces some oil from her olives, but the best Valona olive oil is extracted abroad, mainly in Italy and Austria, to which countries the olives are exported.

There are a few flour and saw mills, but flour and timber are mainly articles of importation. There is a thriving soap factory at Elbasan, and there are two or three unimportant tanneries at Korcha.

Yet, the natural resources of the country and its magnificent water-power mark out Albania as an important industrial center in the near future.

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IV. MINERAL RESOURCES AND FORESTS

The general belief is that Albania is very rich in mineral resources. It is reported that the Romans extracted from the Albanian soil large quantities of gold, but in our day little is known of the location of those mines. Mirdita, however, is believed to be rich in gold.

French and German engineers have discovered gold, lead, iron, petroleum, copper, chomium, antimonium, and cinnabar, and one of them has reported that in each ton of mineral ore there may be found from 4 to 6 kilos of silver.[1]

One thing is certain; that Albania is very rich in coal of high quality The coal mines of Korcha are now being exploited, on a very limited scale, by the authorities of that independent Albanian province.

The same thing may be said in regard to petroleum.

Moreover, at Selenitsa, in the province of Valona, there are mines of mineral pitch, which are being exploited by a French company The boulevards and chaussées of Paris are mainly paved with this Albanian pitch.

There are also numerous salt-works along the coast.

Another important item of national wealth is the forests, some of which exist in their virgin state. This is true of the forests of Northern Albania, and especially of Mirdita. But the area covered by forests has never been measured, although, according to one estimate a quarter of the soil is wooded.[2] Many of the forests of Central and Southern Albania

[1] F. Gibert, "Les Pays d'Albanie," p. 155.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

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have been destroyed through sheer neglect on the part of the Turkish authorities, as has also happened in other parts of Turkey.

The principal trees are the oak, the Valona oak, the beech, ash, elm, plane, celtis, poplar, walnut, pine, fir, and sumach.

Because of the want of systematic exploitation of native timber, construction timber is imported from Trieste.

In conclusion, it may be said with certainty that the future of Albania lies in her undeveloped mineral and forest resources, especially the former.

V. FINANCES

The finances of Albania are a matter largely of speculation and of guesswork, because her government did not last long enough to make any valuation and organization of the financial resources of the new State. Consequently, very little may be said about the amount and eventual balance of its revenues and expenditures. There has been very little chance for making official estimates relative to the budget.

Dr. Hans von Strahlheimb estimates the revenues of the Albanian Government as being about twenty million Austrian crowns, but as any guess is as good as another, no definite pronouncement may be made on this matter. The estimates of the Austrian writer are, moreover, based on fallacious premises, i. e., on the Turkish system of taxation, which was never, as a fact, applied to Albania. Northern Albania was virtually exempt from any contributions to the Turkish treasury, and the officials of the Sultan were but too glad to get only what they could from the rest of the country, without pushing things to ex-

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tremes, so that many an Albanian tax-payer managed to go scot free. If a proof is required, a very instructive one is supplied by the management of the stringent Tobacco Monopoly Tobacco, in all its forms and kinds, was a government monopoly throughout the Turkish Empire. But when we say "Turkish Empire," we should not necessarily think that Albania was included in it, so far as the Tobacco Monopoly was concerned, at least, for in the latter country every smoker availed himself of the native tobacco, the fine blond tobacco of Elbasan and Scutari in particular, without paying a farthing either to the Monopoly or to the tobacco tax collectors. Furthermore, native officials were too jealous to allow money to travel as far as Constantinople.

But we must add that the Albanian Government found no difficulties in collecting taxes, and the privileged Albanians had to forego their time-honored immunity from taxation.

In conclusion, it may be said that there will be no serious trouble in making both ends meet, even during the first stage of development. Although the country has been impoverished still more during the great war, as a consequence of the ravages wrought by the various invasions, still, as the chief sources of public revenue are the customs dues of the Albanian ports, whose commercial activity will be greatly increased with the restoration of peace, the amount of revenues will not be affected to any considerable extent.

On the other hand, the public debt of Albania will not add greatly to the expenditures of the State. In accordance with the provisions made by the Lon-

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don Conference, the Powers subscribed, in equal quotas, to an Albanian loan of 75,000,000 francs, the first loan contracted by independent Albania. Out of this loan, the Albanian Government drew a sum not exceeding 10,000,000 francs, which represents the actual public indebtedness of the new State.

There are also certain other items of public indebtedness; but as they are of doubtful nature and origin, one cannot readily add them to the official figures representing the Public Debt of Albania, as just stated.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

Since the Romans constructed, some two thousand years ago, the Imperial Road, via Egnatia or Ægitana, leading from Durazzo to Constantinople, only three more short highways have been constructed during the long Turkish occupation. No wonder, then, that Albania is so backward.

The following are these three highways:

1. From San Giovanni di Medua to Scutari.
2. From Durazzo to Tirana.
3. From Santi Quaranta to Janina and Korcha.

All three roads have, however, never been kept in a tolerable condition, and the country has had to manage to get along with mules and donkeys.

As for railways, there are many on paper.

Lately, during the Austrian and Italian occupation of Albania, a net of military roads has been constructed, but this kind of roads cannot be durable, with the exception of those opened by the Italian military authorities in Southern Albania, which have been constructed with a view to permanency and

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constitute one of the greatest benefits Italy has bestowed on Albania. Moreover, it is reported that the Italians have also constructed a narrow railway line along a part of the coast of Southern Albania, the first the country has ever seen.

At the present time, there are three projected railroad lines for the Albanian territories.

1. From Prishtina to Durazzo, which would connect Albania with Serbia and Central Europe.

2. From either Durazzo or Valona to Monastir, and then to Salonica and the rest of the Balkans as well as to Asia Minor.

3. A purely internal line from Scutari to Arghyrocastro, which may in a near future, be connected with the railway system of Northern Greece.

It is evident that these three lines, or at least the last two, are indispensable for the development of the country

Still, another and more available means of communication is afforded by the possible navigation of the rivers, especially of Viosa, Drin, Shkumbi, Devol, and Bojana.

In ancient times, Viosa was open to navigation by small craft, and if its channel were deepened and its course regulated, communications might be established between Valona and the mainland of Southern Albania. The same is true with regard to the other rivers.

The Bojana is already navigable to a certain extent, and provision has been made for deepening the channel under the auspices of the two riparian States, Albania and Montenegro.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE

I. POPULATION—GHEGS AND TOSKS

The exact numerical strength of the Albanian race and people is unknown, on account of the lack of specific statistics. Those furnished by the Turkish authorities are not only unreliable, but, what is more, they are based on religious and not on ethnical classification. The standard classification used by the Turks is that of "Moslem" and "non-Moslem" (Myslim and Gair-i-Myslim). Even when the census has been taken by provinces, the statistics are again misleading, because entire localities failed to register in order to avoid military conscription.

The nearest estimate of the number of people of Albanian race is between three and three and a half millions, of which nearly two millions inhabit the Albania of the London Conference.[1] Taking, however, into account the ravages of the recent wars and especially the losses in human lives resulting from the devastation of Southern Albania by the Greeks in the summer of 1914, it will be nearer the truth to say that Albania has now a population of about 1,500,000, while the rest of the race is dispersed throughout the territories assigned to Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro and the Albanian colonies of Italy, Greece and elsewhere.

[1] Whitaker's Almanack, 1918.

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The Albanian people is divided into two ethnical groups: the Ghegs, in the North, and the Tosks (the Toskidi of Strabo), in the South, the dividing line being the river Shkumbi.[1]

Some very fanciful ideas are current about the importance of this division. A number of writers on Albanian affairs have made the statement that not only are the Ghegs and Tosks unlike, but that the members of the two groups speak entirely different languages, so different that they are unable to understand each other.

The main differences that are found between the two groups, however, are only differences of dialects and temperament.

The difference in the spoken dialects is to be found not in the rules of grammar and construction but in the pronunciation. Both Ghegs and Tosks speak the same language, with the exceptions of certain provincialisms, but pronounce it with some differences. The Gheg speech is nasal, full of inflections, short-cut phrases and words, with an accent akin to Anglo-Saxon speech, whereas the Tosk speech is plain, smooth, and more or less colorless. The principal difference would seem to be in the use and pronunciation of a peculiar Albanian sound, very similar but not identical with the letter "a" as it is pronounced in the English words fat, sad, lad and which the Ghegs pronounce at times as in the English "father," at times as in fat and sad, etc., and which at times they suppress altogether, while the Tosks pronounce it uniformly as in the words fat and sad. It is to be noted that this sound is quite frequent, perhaps the most frequent of all; if to this be added

[1] See above, p. 4.

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the varying inflections of the Gheg speech, it will be easily seen that two illiterate representatives of the two groups cannot find it very easy to converse, although the difference is not as great as that which separates the dialect of Naples from that of Rome, as far as the low classes are concerned.

Be that as it may, the two dialects meet and fuse into each other in the localities situated on both banks of the River Shkumbi, producing thus the finest specimen of Albanian speech which all Albanians find no difficulty in understanding.

The difference in temperament consists in the rough and warlike temper of the Northerners (Ghegs), as contrasted with the more sober and polished temper of the Southerners (Tosks).

Another difference between the two groups is to be found in their physical appearance. The Ghegs are the tallest men in the Balkans, the Cyclops of Homer,[1] while the Tosks are, as a rule, with many exceptions, of medium stature.

II. NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

In a seeming consciousness of the insidious efforts of his numerous enemies to undermine his reputation abroad by the circulation of wild stories, the Albanian, not the educated one, but the man of the people, retorts by the epigram "the devil is not as wicked as people believe, neither is the Albanian," which is reported by Von Strahlheimb.[2]

[1] "Odyssey," I, 106–8. It is, moreover, very striking to compare the word "Gheg" with the Greek word "gigas" which means "giant." There would seem to be little doubt that the two words are identical.

[2] *Balkan Revue*, 1914–1915, p. 403. The saying is quoted in Albanian as follows: "Dreqi nuk asht ach i keq sa kujton njerezia, as Shqypetari jo."

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The opinion, on the other hand, which Lord Byron formed about the Albanian or Albanese, as he calls him, is as follows:

"The Arnaouts [1] or Albanese struck me forcibly by their resemblance to the Highlanders of Scotland, in dress, figure, and manner of living. Their mountains seemed Caledonian, with a kinder climate. The kilt, though white; the spare, active form; their dialect, Celtic in its sound; and their hardy habits, all carried me back to Morven. . .

"The Albanese, in general, have a fine cast of countenance; and the most beautiful women I ever beheld, in stature and in features, we saw leveling the road broken down by the torrents between Delvinachi and Libohova." [2]

In fact, very little can be added, in regard to the national characteristics of the Albanian, to Byron's forceful description which holds good even to-day in its general features. The much-talked-about and so-called "tribes" of Northern Albania amount but to the similar clan organization of the Scotch people.

Let it be added also that another Briton, Mr. Wadham Peacock, was also forcibly struck by the English-looking appearance of the Mirdites, with their fine blond complexion.[3]

In reviewing the historical development of the Albanian people we noticed the existence as well as the rise of some national defects, such as a warlike spirit

[1] Arnaout is the Turkish word for Albanian; it seems to have been taken from the Greek "Arvanites."

[2] Byron's Notes to Canto II, Childe Harold.

His story of his two Albanian servants, one of whom was a Christian and the other a Moslem, is not only amusing but very instructive with regard to the religious feelings of the Albanians.

[3] "Albania, the Foundling State of Europe," p. 199.

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—if it can properly be held to be a defect, in view of the fact that it is only owing to the existence of that spirit that Albania has not disappeared as a nationality—and nervousness and restlessness, the cause of which has also been explained.[1] In general, it may be said that whatever deficiencies are discovered in the character of the Albanian, they are the outgrowth of the circumstances through which he has had to preserve his national entity, and bear the stamp of the momentous crises he has had to go through in his fight for life and liberty during the centuries since his first appearance in the Balkan Peninsula.

At any rate, whatever bad habits and defects he may have contracted, they are made good by his well known sterling qualities, such as his celebrated loyalty when he has once plighted his faith, his untarnished chivalry, his courage and bravery, which is sung and praised in the popular ballads of his neighbors, his practical sense, his eager appreciation of progress and civilization, and his ready adaptability to it.

Countless examples may be given as illustrations of these high qualities of the Albanian. A few only will suffice.

Von Strahlheimb relates that during the revolution of Dibra against the Serbian rule, in 1913, the rebels, ignorant and deeply exasperated Albanian peasants, captured the Serbian garrison. The prisoners were treated in such a chivalrous manner, according to the confession of the Serbian commander himself, that this Austrian writer offers this example for imitation to the European belligerents in the great war.[2] And it should not be forgotten that the

[1] See above, p. 38.

[2] *Balkan Revue*, 1914–15, p. 405.

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Dibrans had revolted on account of the cruel treatment they had received at the hands of the Serbians.

The intelligence of the Albanian made a deep impression on the French officers of the army occupying the Ionian Islands, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, when they taught with the greatest facility the new metric system to the Albanian peasants.[1]

Pouqueville, a man by no means friendly to the Albanians, wrote thus concerning them, a hundred years ago:

"Anything which is exact and useful is singularly welcomed by these people who hastened to adopt vaccination (which is even to-day (1825) forbidden in the Papal States), and who, being devoid of prejudices, would welcome anything likely to improve their condition."[2]

These innate qualities more than neutralize the acquired defects which have always been so exaggerated in the fanciful tales about Albania. The stories about the "Albanian brigands" are stories, because brigandage, such as has existed in the Balkans and especially in Greece, has been practically unknown in Albania.

Yet, if by "Albanian brigands" are meant the border raids, such raids are not infrequent throughout the Balkans, and, taking into consideration that the Turkish Government allowed the Albanians full liberty to do as they pleased with their neighbors, the raids were a kind of warfare. Such raids were chronic along the Greek-Turkish border-line, and the

1 F. Gibert, "Les Pays d'Albanie," p. 2. See also p. 307.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

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authorities felt that it was their duty to promote this kind of retribution. One has but to remember the occurrences in Macedonia during the last decade, the wholesale massacres, assassinations, and destruction of private property, in order to appreciate this point. A number of writers are wont to forget that Albania is a Balkan country and that the Balkans should be judged by their own and not by European standards.

The fables of the Albanian's disregard of the value of human life owe their origin to the inability of the Porte to provide safe-conducts to travelers and tourists intending to visit the interior of Albania, where Turkish authority was unknown. One, however, must recognize that the Porte was right in doing so, because persons furnished with Turkish recommendations were usually regarded with suspicion and mistrust in those parts of the country which had been able to preserve their independence only by being very careful in regard to Turkish emissaries and agents. Yet, travelers could get into the regions unconquered by the Turks, under the protection of the "Bessa," the plighted faith of some Albanian who would defend them even as against the Sultan. Baron Nopcsa is, therefore, right when he states that "a travel in Albania corresponds to a nocturnal walk in the suburbs of a great European city" That it should be so, despite the absence of any supervision from a higher authority, is to the credit of the Albanian.

The Bessa, which means simply "good faith," is a peculiar institution of the country It survives today only in Northern Albania where the Turkish Government has never exercised real authority When

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any one, whoever he may be, puts himself under the protection of the Bessa, in other words, is allowed to enter the country on good faith under the protection of an individual or under that of a clan, or what is still more sacred, is accompanied by a woman, he can go to any place he chooses without being interfered with in any way. This institution may seem a primitive one, but it has been the only possible substitute for the lack of a higher governmental authority, among a people freed from any general restraints and not allowed to form a central administration, as has been the case of the Albanians under the Turkish Government, whose authority and power have sufficed to prohibit the establishment of a central authority for the independent clans.

III. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Social conditions differ somewhat in the three regions into which Albania is usually divided. It is best to treat each region separately

1. Northern Albania.—As has already been said, Albania is the only country in the Balkans into which feudalism was introduced during the Middle Ages by the Normans. Its lingering traces may be found in the social conditions of the people of a part of Northern Albania, especially among the Catholic population. The reason why it has survived in that part of the country is to be found in the fact that, in the course of time, feudalism was blended with the peculiar clan organization of the people of this region.

Its existence is evidenced by the aristocratic government which is in full sway even at the present time. The country is ruled by an aristocratic oli-

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garchy composed of the representatives of the leading hereditary families, which claim the right of leadership in war. The most important of these is the ruling family of the Dodas, which is virtually the reigning dynasty of Mirdita. We have already seen the part played by the governor of this region in the activities of the Albanian League. It is these hereditary families that the Porte used constantly to play one against the other, in order to keep the country in subjection.

As a counterpart to this distasteful relic of past times, the population of Northern Albania is distinguished for its high ideals of liberty and independence as well as of genuine patriotism. It is this handful of people which has been able to keep the Turks in check, as a result of epic struggles. In fact, there are in this region some localities which the Turk has never been able to enter. The Moslem territories of Mati and Liuma, and the Catholic districts of Mirdita and Kethella were averse even to the appearance on their borders of a Turkish soldier in uniform, and many a time these Moslems and Catholics fought jointly against the Turks.

The Catholic clergy has rendered invaluable services toward keeping alive the spirit of patriotism,[11] while among the Moslems national traditions have been perpetuated by the patrician families. The heroic element of Albania finds its stronghold in this part of the country

The city of Scutari, the population of which is estimated to be about 50,000 souls, and its suburbs,

11 Foremost among these clergymen is Father George Fishta, the most original poet and writer not only of Albania but of all the Balkan Peninsula. He is rightly called the "Tyrtæus of Albania," but there is no doubt that he is more than that.

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are not, however, included in the description of Northern Albania, as they are more modern in their social organization.

2. Central Albania.—Generally speaking, the people of this region enjoy a democratic independence, as a result of the freehold system of land ownership, despite the fact that the largest landed estates, the principal of which are those belonging to the Toptani and Vrioni families, are situated in this region, inasmuch as even on those estates the land is held in the form of perpetual leases, the right of evictment having become obsolete. This region is one of country squires, forming the kernel of a robust middle class of landowners and cultivators. Moreover, as we have already noticed, the extensive landed estates were seized by the peasantry during the insurrection of the Summer of 1914 against the Government of the Prince of Wied.

The serious disadvantages in the condition of the population of this region are to be found in the lack of education and in the existence of a number of settlements of Bosnian refugees which are nests of religious fanaticism. Early in the rule of the Prince, the Government of Durazzo seriously intended to expel these refugees whom the Turkish Government had planted among the Albanian population for obvious reasons of state.

3. Southern Albania.—Curiously enough, writers on Albania have paid but the scantiest attention to this portion of the country, which is the most progressive, the most educated and civilized, and most likely to exert a high degree of moral influence over the rest of the Albanian people. If it be true, as some are wont to believe and say, that the people

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of Northern and Central Albania are not as fully developed as the average inhabitant of the Balkans, the people of Southern Albania stand assuredly above that average. With all the political harm the foreign schools, Turkish and Greek, have done to the population, it must, in fairness, be recognized that they have rendered some great services to the intellectual development of the inhabitants. The fact that these Southerners chose to attend foreign schools instead of remaining in ignorance is entirely to their credit, for, without there being any law of compulsory education, the parents of Southern Albania, Christians and Moslems alike, have sent their children to these schools although knowing that they were maintained by foreign propaganda. The founders of the splendid educational establishments of the city of Korcha felt it to be their duty to maintain such schools, even if the Greek language was to be taught in them, after they had in vain tried to get from the Turkish Government permission to open Albanian schools, and it was not their fault that the trustees, who were either the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople or the Greek Government, employed those beneficiary funds for political rather than educational purposes.

At any rate, the most pronounced democracy of the country is to be found in Southern Albania. It is also the center of the nationalistic movement. Here is to be found also the enlightened *bourgeoisie*, merchants, businessmen, independent freeholders and landed gentry, as well as the class which will be called upon to govern Albania.

The progressive, and thoroughly European, city of Korcha, and the towns of Valona, Arghyrocastro,

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Fieri, Permeti, Erseka, Tepelen, Frasheri, Liaskoviki and others will bear comparison with any city and town of their class in the Balkans. The palatial mansions of Korcha are not to be found except in the Balkan capitals. Many of these mansions have been erected by the fortunes acquired by the emigrants of Korcha in the United States, Roumania, and Egypt.

The once privileged great landowners are no longer privileged; they are being daily displaced in influence and prestige by the middle and educated classes. Nowhere has the spirit of regeneration and modernization imbued so thoroughly the people as in the region which has had to combat poverty through sobriety Nowhere have the nationalistic efforts been more ardent than among the Christian Albanians of Korcha, and the Moslems of Valona and Arghyrocastro, with the possible exception of the city of Scutari. In the province of Korcha there is, moreover, the highly interesting little town of Katundi, which is superior to any other city or town in educational accomplishments. In it, the efforts of a single person, an ardent nationalist, have succeeded in spreading national education not only among the male but also among the female population, with the result that the inhabitants, all of whom are Christians, are able to read and write their national language. Many of the Beys of this region have become, by their own accord, leaders of opinion instead of being simply leaders of men, by clandestinely maintaining Albanian schools on their estates, in defiance of the Turkish authorities.

It has been rightly said that if Southern Albania were to be cut off from the main body of the country,

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the Albania which would thus be constituted would be a state of splendid fighters, which, however, would be able to attain the high ideals of a free commonwealth only by bringing about the incorporation of Southern Albania in it. This is undoubtedly known to those who have tried to separate the southern region from the rest of the country

In general, the Southerners are not only more fully developed and progressive, but they are also endowed by nature with a keener intelligence than their co-nationals of the center and the north.

IV. THE POSITION OF WOMEN

A very characteristic feature of the Albanian community, which deserves special notice, is the high position the Albanian women enjoy in the consideration of men.

Nowhere in the Balkans is woman the recipient of so much respect and of so much honor. In almost all modern states women have been granted a standing in private law by legislative action only; the Albanian women have had those rights from time immemorial by the force of the customs of the nation. As daughter of the family she enjoys the right of holding property, being under paternal authority only during the period of her minority As a wife, she is entitled to hold property in her own right and to manage it according to her wishes; her legal standing is not at all affected by marital authority As a widowed mother she retains the guardianship of her minor children and manages their inheritance, through the automatic operation of the customary law. In the family she is the venerated matron of the house, and her jurisdiction is co-ex-

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tensive with that of her husband, to whom she is an invaluable helper and companion.

The family organization in Albania is very strong by virtue of the innate affection which exists among its members. Grand-parents and grand-children live in perfect harmony within the same house without any legal or customary constraint; on the contrary, the children are free to withdraw, if they choose to do so, from the paternal family, at their maturity Mothers-in-law have not such a bad reputation in Albania as elsewhere.

The Albanian women are renowned for their virtue, as they are for their beauty and charms. Immorality is practically unknown in the country, though it is said that the fair and robust women of the mountain districts of Scutari are inclined to be innocent free-thinkers.

Despite the introduction of Islamism, polygamy has never taken any roots among the Moslem Albanians, a fact which is in itself very suggestive and characteristic. The lax rules of the Sacred Law of Mohammedanism in regard to divorce are neutralized in Albania by the dictates of moral law and public opinion. The low percentage of divorces among both the Christians and the Moslems is undoubtedly due to the high standard of morality which is current throughout the country

We have already noticed that the company of a woman in traveling in the hitherto so-called inaccessible parts of Northern Albania affords better protection than a host of soldiers. A man who would injure, offend or kill a woman, or any member of the rest of the company under her protection, is

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treated as the vilest coward, and there is no possible expiation for his crime. Among the hardy mountaineers of that district it is held that the hand of the man who shot a woman is not good for anything in this world. The rule protecting women against intentional injuries is so stringent throughout the country that there is practically no record of any intentional murder of a woman.

V THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION

On the religious side, the Albanians are divided into three principal and two secondary groups.

The three principal groups are the following:

1. *Roman Catholics,* forming the majority of the population of Northern Albania.

2. *Moslems,* with strong majorities in Central and Southern Albania, and in the minority in Northern Albania. Eastern Albania, which has been assigned to Serbia, is inhabited almost exclusively by Moslem Albanians.

3. *Orthodox Greek Catholics,* constituting strong minorities in Southern and Central Albania.

The numerical strength of each group is a matter of rough guesswork, owing to the want of accurate statistics. It is certain, however, that the Moslems are in incontestable majority over the Christians.

The existence of such a Moslem majority has perplexed some misinformed friends of Albania who have always asked the question: "Will not Albania be a Mohammedan, and in consequence, a fanatical State, a 'little Turkey in the Balkans'?" And again: "Will not this crushing Moslem majority tyrannize over the Christian minority?" The enemies of Albania, on the other hand, have made use

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of this fact of a Moslem majority as the deadliest argument against the principle of an independent Albania. By the force of circumstances, a Moslem generally implies a Turk, and the Turk is rightly considered a beast, a pitiless persecutor and butcher of Christians.

Yet, those who know the real condition of the country and the relations existing between its various religious groups, will agree with us that the religious question is not in itself of great importance, inasmuch as the weakest point of the Albanian is his religion.

The truth is that the Albanian is not fanatical; on the contrary, it may be said that, *au fonds,* he is indifferent in religious matters. Toleration exists in Albania as nowhere in the Balkans and as it does not exist even in some more advanced sections of Europe.

Tracing historically the question of the conversion of the majority of the Albanian people to Islamism, it will be found that it was due to the deliberate desire of trading religion for freedom. Following the occupation of their country by the fanatical Asiatic hordes, the Albanians found themselves facing the dilemma of being treated as subject slaves by the Turks or becoming equal to, and allies of, their conquerors by renouncing the religion which caused them to be treated as slaves. They chose the latter. This is emphasized by the fact that conversions of Albanians took place after every unsuccessful revolt against the Turks, when their treatment at the hands of the latter was likely to be harsher and more barbarous. Conversions continued to occur even during the first quarter of the nineteenth century;

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whenever life became intolerable under the Turkish régime, the Albanians found a way of escaping their miserable lot by an outward adoption of the religion of the conqueror. The Albanian is too zealous in the cause of liberty and independence to be a fanatic in religion.

But though he became a Mohammedan, he never became a Turk, whom he loathed and despised. Nothing can be more instructive in religious matters than a comparison of the attitude of the Moslem Albanian toward his Christian brethren with that of the Greek and Bulgarian renegades toward their own Christian brethren. From the very day of their conversion to Islamism, the *Pomaks,* Moslemized Bulgarians of the region of Rhodope Mountains, and the Islamized Greeks of the Island of Crete, assimilated themselves completely with the Turks; and from that day to the present they have considered it their sacred duty to either forcibly convert or slaughter their former co-religionists. Even to this day it is impossible to convince a Pomak or a Moslem Cretan that once he was a Christian, or that nationality is not identical with religion.

In striking contrast with this, the Albanian Moslem has never forgotten his nationality or considered himself a Turk, even for a single moment; nor has he forgotten his former religion to some of the saints of which he still pays tribute, such as St. George, in memory of George Castriota Scanderbeg, and to St. Demeter. Moreover, he has always protected his weaker brethren, the Christian Albanians, against the brutalities of the Turk. It is a remarkable phenomenon that no religious war has ever taken place in Albania; nor have Albanians ever been converted

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to Islamism through coercion exercised on them by Moslem Albanians. Another remarkable phenomenon is that there are even to-day Albanian families the members of which belong to different beliefs, Christian and Moslem, which manage to get along far better than Catholics and Protestants have ever been able to do in the heart of civilized Europe.

Moreover, in Northern Albania, Moslem clans are ruled over by Christian hereditary families, and vice-versa. During the short reign of the Christian Prince, William of Wied, his most loyal subjects were the Moslem Albanians of Northern and Southern Albania who unsparingly spent their blood against the rebels of Central Albania in order to keep him on the throne. And mark this: the guard of the Palace of the Prince consisted of 200 Moslems under the command of a Christian chief. Is there a parallel to this example anywhere?

In the course of the history of Albania, we have seen the Moslem Albanians rise against the Sultan time after time, and the Christians follow their lead. We have seen the Christian Suliots ally themselves with Ali Pasha against the powerful Beys, and with the latter against the former.

That there is some animosity among the various religious groups cannot be denied, for such animosity has always existed between diverse beliefs. We are here concerned only with the general current of religious life. The opposition which exists between the members of the various faiths is, moreover, of political rather than religious character; it is the outcome of the disturbance of the state of things which followed the change in political preponderance resulting from the conversion to Moham-

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medanism of the majority of the Albanians. This opposition is to be found only among the ignorant masses which are wont to measure the harmful effects of the conversion by the profits accruing to the converts.

If a more conclusive proof of the religious toleration of the Albanians is wanted, the existence of the two secondary groups, already alluded to, will supply it.

The first group is that of *Bektashis,* or Reformed Moslems. This interesting sect, the members of which include the larger part of the Moslem population of Albania, constitutes the Protestant element of Islamism. Its rise marks a liberal reaction against the fanaticism and the rigorous rules of the faith of Mohammed. The Bektashis are free thinkers and skeptics in religious matters; their belief is imbued with a pure humanitarian philosophy, and they lead a life of religious contemplation. Their doctrines are mainly borrowed from the Stoics, and they have cast off every ritual of the Moslem faith. Many Christian Albanians are affiliated with, and initiated in, the mysteries of this sect.

The second group is still more interesting. There is in the province of Elbasan, Central Albania, as well as in other parts of the country, a pseudo-Moslem group of people, who are both Christians and Moslems at the same time. During the Turkish domination, they had two sets of names, Christian and Moslem, and employed both corresponding religious rites. Inwardly they were Christians, but outwardly they professed to be Moslems. This peculiar religious situation was, of course, due to the fear of persecution on the part of the Turks. When

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Albania regained her independence, in 1912, they openly avowed their Christianity That they did so in the presence of the Moslem majority of the country is a more eloquent proof of the real religious condition of Albania than any argument could afford.

VI. ALBANIANS IN FOREIGN LANDS

By the force of circumstances the Albanians saw the necessity of migrating from their native land to foreign countries where they founded a number of notable colonial settlements which retain their original character to the present day The most important of these colonies are those in Greece and Italy

THE ALBANIANS IN GREECE.—How the Albanian colonies of Greece came to be formed has already been explained in the historical section of this book when dealing with the Albanian migratory movement during the fourteenth century,[1] and little needs to be added to what was stated there.

There are no recent statistics showing the exact size of the Albanian population of Greece, because the Greek Government does not differentiate the Albanians from the rest of the people, but Dr. Hahn estimated in 1854 that there were 200,000 out of a total of one million inhabitants, and no changes have occurred in the meantime to alter their position. They still retain their national characteristics, language, customs and traditions; but their sense of nationality has been considerably dimmed in the course of time, although they differentiate themselves from the Greeks, whom they call, curiously enough, "Shkleh," i. e., Scythians or Slavs.

1 See above, pp. 24–25.

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The only national Albanian figure they have produced in recent times is *Anastas Kullurioti,* a native of the island of Salamis, whose efforts have greatly contributed to the intellectual awakening of Albania.

They have, however, given a considerable number of prominent leaders and statesmen to modern Greece. *M. Emm. Repoulis,* the able Minister of the Interior in the Cabinet of M. Venizelos, is their most eminent man at the present time. The Greek Navy is, on the other hand, largely made up of the renowned seamen of the Albanian Islands, Hydra, Spetsai, Poros, Salamis and others, who use their native language even aboard the warships, as the population of the suburbs uses it in the streets of Athens. The same may be said also in regard to the Greek army The commanders, both of the sea and land forces, have repeatedly issued rigorous orders against the use of the Albanian language by their men.[1]

[1] The monthly magazine, *Parnassos,* of Athens, of February, 1916, makes the following interesting statement in connection with the mobilization of the Greek army in that month:

"Among the other disorders that are to be seen in our army, we noticed one of the most shocking which ought to have attracted the attention of the High Command of our military forces. The majority of our soldiers speak to one another in the Albanian language in such a way that the listener may imagine himself in the presence of soldiers of the King of Albania (the Prince of Wied), and not of the King of Greece, Constantine. This is a very deplorable habit which has furnished many arguments to our enemies who calumniate us by saying that our race is not homogeneous. It is, therefore, necessary that this habit be destroyed by all necessary and vigorous means.

"The Commander of the 1st Infantry Regiment, Colonel Kurevelis, who is an accomplished soldier and perfectly understands the kind of education the Greek soldier should have, has punished very severely a great number of soldiers because of their using the Albanian language, but this is a thing that should not be done only by the Commander of a single regiment; on the contrary, all the commanders should unite their efforts and take the most effective measures for the suppression of this discordant note in our army."

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The presence of these men in the service of the Greek State has been very dexterously utilized by the Government of Athens in support of its claims relative to Southern Albania. In all probability, one of the principal reasons why the politicians of Greece have attacked with such rage the idea of an independent Albania is the fear that the Albanians of Greece may sooner or later awaken to the realization of their nationality, a contingency which forebodes trouble for the Greek state.

THE ALBANIANS OF ITALY.—The next important colonial settlement is that of the Albanians in Southern Italy, mainly in the provinces of Calabria and Apulia, and in Sicily

According to the census of 1901, as reported by Barbarich, there are 208,410 Albanians in Italy. As usual, they retain unaltered their language, which is richer in vocabulary than that spoken in Albania, their national characteristics, customs and traditions. What is more, the proximity of their cherished motherland has kept alive among them the sense of Albanian nationality to a remarkable degree. In justice to the Government of Rome, it must in fairness be said that the latter feature owes much to the liberal policy of Italy

The presence of the Albanian colonies in Italy dates from the fifteenth century; the migratory movement took place immediately after the death of Scanderbeg and the occupation of Albania by the Turks. Almost all the prominent families of Albania moved to Italy, where they were welcomed by the grateful king of Naples, to whose crown Scanderbeg had rendered great services.[1]

[1] See above, p. 33.

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These Albanians, too, have given a number of prominent men to their adopted country, of whom the most eminent was Francesco Crispi, twice Premier of Italy. On the other hand, they have contributed to their own nation a generous number of men of letters and cultivators of the national language, such as the late Girolamo da Rada, a prolific and studious writer on Albanian literature; Demetrio Camarda, Anselmo Lorecchio, able writer and publisher, and many others.

Of the living writers who honor the Albanian name in Italy, we should mention, besides Anselmo Lorecchio, editor of the monthly *La Nazione Albanese,* the distinguished poet and writer, Prof. Giuseppe Schiro, whose writings are masterpieces of Albanian literature.

In general, it may be said that in the early stages of the development of Albanian literature the place of honor belongs to the Albanians of Italy

On Easter day of every year, the Albanians of Italy hold a solemn ceremony, accompanied by the so-called "dance of Scanderbeg," in commemoration of the bonds that unite them to their motherland across the Adriatic.

It is interesting to note at this point that the Albanians, both of Italy and Greece, are known among themselves as "Arbresh," the generic name in lieu of the more restricted appellation "Albanian" or "Shkypetar," as the natives of Albania proper call themselves. The colonists call their motherland "Arberia" or "Arbenia," the name "Albania" and "Shkypnia" not being in use among them. It is a very difficult matter to decide why these terms are current.

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ALBANIANS IN MONTENEGRO.—The number of the Albanians living in Montenegro is considerable, but no available statistics are to be had. Their presence dates mainly from the year 1879, when the Powers forcibly assigned to Montenegro the provinces of Dulcigno and Antivari, in exchange for Gussigne-Plava.[1] Moreover, the Conference of Ambassadors assigned in 1913 approximately 150,000 Albanians to the dominion of King Nicholas. The armed resistance of the majority of them, however, nullified this decision of the Powers.[2]

The interesting feature in regard to the Albanians who were incorporated in Montenegro in 1879, is that they have remained Albanians in all respects. When Czar Nicholas of Russia advised the King of Montenegro, in 1913, to desist from his project of occupying Scutari, the Emperor argued that it was in the interest of Montenegro not to have any more Albanians, in view of the fact that she has been unable to assimilate even those who were assigned to her in 1879.

It need not be again repeated here that in Serbia there are nearly a million Albanians who were incorporated in the Serbian Kingdom in 1912, and who have ever since been in a state of rebellion against the foreign rule.[3]

MINOR ALBANIAN COLONIES.—Besides the above mentioned compact Albanian colonies, there are also a number of lesser colonial settlements in various countries. One of them is the small colony of Zara, Istria, which was founded in 1478 by a part of the

1 See above, pp. 51–53.
2 See above, p. 93.
3 See above, pp. 93–94.

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garrison of Scutari, after the fall of the latter.[1] This colony sent a delegate to Durazzo, in 1914, to convey to the Prince its sentiments of loyalty to Albania.

There are several thriving business colonies in Egypt, Roumania, Bulgaria and elsewhere. In Thrace and in the neighborhood of Constantinople there are a number of typical Albanian villages, scattered throughout the territory and unconnected with each other.

In the province of Odessa, South Russia, there are a number of settlements made by Albanian soldiers in the employ of the Russian Government to whom crown lands were given as a compensation for their services.

A highly important colony is that in the United States, which may better be described in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE GROWTH OF NATIONALISM

I. THE INITIAL STEPS

In sketching in the first part of this book the formation and the activities of the Albanian League it was stated that the year 1878 marked the beginning of Albanian nationalism.

In the hope of circumventing the decision of the representatives of the Great Powers assembled in the Congress of Berlin relative to the evacuation of the territories assigned to Montenegro and Greece, the Sublime Porte took the momentous step of adopting the dangerous principle of nationalities, for the first and last time. Instead of complying with the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin, which it had signed, the Turkish Government sought to exploit the discontent which was manifested among the Albanians as a result of the decision of the Powers to hand over Albanian territories to Montenegro and Greece. The discontent and agitation were undoubtedly genuine and quite in line with the essential unity of the Albanians. What the Porte did was to arouse the indignation of the Albanian people against the Powers, by allowing them, at the same time, a degree of freedom of action as an individual nationality which Turkey was later to regret very deeply

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In pursuance of its policy, the Government of the Sultan permitted the Albanians to protest separately to the Congress of Berlin against the cession of any Albanian territory to their neighbors, and, when it saw that the protest was brushed aside without being given any consideration, the Porte encouraged, and even instigated, the attempt of the Albanians to substantiate their protest. On the first of July, 1879, delegates from the various provinces of Albania assembled at Prisrend to form the celebrated *"League for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian Nationality."* The League thus constituted was the first national Albanian organization in modern times, and it is impossible to minimize its importance. The management of Albanian affairs was presently taken over by the League, which succeeded even in establishing Albanian authorities in Northern Albania. In the course of its activities, this national organization issued a series of proclamations which were addressed to the Albanians only as an individual nationality They were a bugle call for the nation.

The meeting of the delegates at Prisrend and the measures they took for the preservation of the territorial integrity of Albania, which were spread broadcast for the information of the people, constituted the first spark which electrified the nation.

The successes of the armed forces of the League, which have been referred to in a preceding chapter, against the Montenegrins and a little later against the combined forces of Mukhtar Pasha and of the Prince of Montenegro, thrilled the Albanians whose enthusiasm was intensified by the heroism of the small garrison of Dulcigno, which withstood even the

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bombardment of the warships of the great European Powers.

How dangerous, for the Porte, was the resentment of the Albanians against the Turkish Government and the Powers on account of their action in assigning Albanian territories to their neighbors was ominously demonstrated in the treatment of Mehmed Ali Pasha, one of the representatives of Turkey at the Congress of Berlin. The said Pasha arrived at Djakova to witness the evacuation of the Albanian territories; angry Albanian mobs massacred the unlucky Mehmed Ali Pasha and the soldiers who accompanied him.

Then followed, as has already been said, a clash between the forces of the League and the troops of the Sultan that came to reclaim the districts which were under the authority of the League, the battles with the army of Dervish Pasha, and the eventual sanguinary suppression of the League.

All these events could but have the most momentous effects in awakening the dormant national spirit and in exerting a powerful influence on the overexcited imagination of the people. In fact, the struggles which characterized the stern suppression of the League made a deeper impression than the successes which had been won by it.

Moreover, to these thrilling national emotions was added another important factor. Hitherto, the use of the Albanian language had been rigorously prohibited. Apart from a few religious books published now and then by the Catholic clergy of Northern Albania and a translation of the Bible made under the auspices of the *British Biblical Society* for the use of the Orthodox Albanians but which could

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not be read without danger, no other books had been published in the Albanian language during the long Turkish domination. The Moslems had to send their children to the wretched Turkish schools which were in charge of stupid instructors. The Orthodox Albanians were forced to send theirs to the Greek schools which were maintained under the auspices of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople. Albanian schools could not be had at any price.

But with the formation of the League, the Sublime Porte was prevailed upon to allow the opening of Albanian schools and the use of the Albanian language in writing.

The result of the lifting of the prohibition was the opening by private contributions of a number of Albanian schools which marked a revolution in the conception of religious matters. The new national schools were attended by both Christian and Moslem children sitting side by side! Their teaching staff was also as mixed as their student bodies.

Simultaneously, there began the publication of a series of school books and newspapers in the native language. The first school book was a "Spelling Book," which appeared at Constantinople, in 1879, under the patronage of the celebrated Albanian patriots, Sami Bey Frasheri, a Moslem, John Vreto, a "Greek" Orthodox, both natives of Southern Albania, and Wassa Pasha, a Catholic, the latter being a high dignitary of the Turkish Government, and also a distinguished national poet. At the same time, there was founded at Constantinople the "*Society for the Publication of Albanian Books.*" This was the beginning of Albanian national education, and it was soon followed by a period of lively activity

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in the publication of more substantial books, such as manuals of history, physical science, Readers and poetry for the use of the schools, the most important of which was a treatise of *General History* by Sami Bey Frasheri. But the book which attracted the widest attention and had the greatest circulation was a small treatise, written by the same writer, under the caption "Albania, Her Past, Her Present, Her Future." This little book, which is not of any great literary value, has been translated into Turkish, Greek and German,[1] and has been considered for a long time as the Bible of the Albanian patriot. The fact that it was written by a Moslem Bey recommended it instantly to every Albanian, without distinction of creed. On the other hand, his brother, Naim Bey Frasheri, devoted his time to writing patriotic poems, which so inflamed the imagination of the people that early in 1879 a revolutionary outbreak took place at *Frasheri* against the Turks, an outbreak wholly due to the influence of his poems.

Very soon, however, reaction set in. The Turkish Government and the *Greek Patriarch* felt very uneasy in view of the progress of popular Albanian education, for it was seen that the two religious groups, Christian and Moslem, which each of them was trying to keep apart, were now being cemented into one national body through the influence of the schools and books. Consequently, in 1886, the Albanian schools were closed by order of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and publications in the Albanian language were suppressed. A supplementary decree was is-

[1] Fraschery, Ch. Samy, Was war Albanien, was ist es, was wird es werden, Vienna, 1913.

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sued by the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople by which Orthodox Albanians were threatened with excommunication in case they used the "accursed" Albanian language in the schools and churches.

The Albanian movement was apparently nipped in the bud.

II. IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

But the movement was not killed. Nothing could be done, of course, in Albania in the face of the rigorous measures which the Turkish authorities adopted in their determination to extirpate even the tender roots of the national propaganda. But once the wheel was set in motion it could not be easily stopped. One phase of the development of the Albanian literature, which is too closely connected with the idea of nationalism to be separated from it, was brought to an end in order to make place for another one which was destined to immortalize the untiring efforts of the Albanian patriots.

The literary movement was presently transferred to foreign lands. *Roumania, Bulgaria, Egypt,* and in more recent times the *United States,* offered their generous hospitality to the Albanian publishers and national workers. In each of these states national societies were founded with a mixed political-national-literary program, publishing companies were established, and the publication of books and newspapers was carried on with great enthusiasm. Thanks to the clandestine assistance of Moslem Albanians in the employ of the Turkish Government, the literary products of the exiled publishers and writers were smuggled into Albania without serious inconvenience, except for severe penalties inflicted

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on smugglers and their accessories, in case of detection. Usually, the writers resided in Turkey or Albania and had their books and articles published abroad under fictitious names.

From the year 1880 to 1908, there were published in foreign countries upward of thirty different periodicals and newspapers, besides a great number of books.

The more important of these are divided as follows:

Bulgaria	7	Belgium	3
Egypt	4	Greece	1
Austria	1	Roumania	4
Italy	7	United States	1

Out of the seven published in Italy, five or six were published by native Albanians of Italy, so that it would appear that so far no encouragement was being given to the national movement by any Power. Unlike the other nationalities of the Balkan Peninsula, the Albanians have had no European Capital to support in their endeavors; nor have they had any financial assistance from any Power. It is universally known that the protectors of the other Balkan peoples have spent millions in order to make them figure as separate nationalities and later as States. Russia had subsidized the Greek national movement ever since the reign of Catherine II; later on, she turned her attention to the Slav peoples of the Balkans. Instead of seeking the assistance of either Austria or Italy, the Powers which later capitalized the protection of nascent Albania, the Albanians looked with the deepest mistrust on these

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Powers. There was a saying among them that "the man who goes to Austria must be one without honor or dignity" This is true, of course, as far as the nationalists were concerned, for it was known that certain influential men were drawing generous subsidies from Vienna, and it was this that gave rise to the saying.

Another important illustration of the spirit of the Albanian nationalists is afforded by the table of publications given above. It will be seen that the greater number of publications had their headquarters in those of the Balkan States which were reputed to be "neutral" towards Albania, such as Bulgaria and Roumania. The one that was issued in Greece was soon discredited, because it transpired that it was being published with the authorization of the Greek Government, and "authorization" was taken to mean more than a mere "permission." It was a patent fact that Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro were openly hostile to the Albanian movement, and such publications as made their appearance in any of these countries were immediately boycotted.

Very little is known in the outside world about the activities and remarkable achievements of the national societies. The fact that the work was being done in foreign countries prevented even those who professed to be familiar with Albanian affairs from getting an inside view of the progress, at any rate not until very recently The main work for the regeneration of the Albanian people was done in silence and without advertising. Without funds or any protection from any great Power, the national worker of the Albanian cause, who was in the majority of cases a plain man of the people, with no

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education corresponding to his high mission, has done what foreigners had declared to be impossible under the circumstances: he has attained his goal of arousing a genuine sense of patriotism in the hearts of thousands of ignorant and uneducated people though personally separated from them by long distances, and in the face of the combined efforts of the Sultan and of the Greek Patriarch to keep the people ignorant and disunited. No doubt, not all the Albanian masses could be easily made to absorb the new spirit, because that is impossible in any nation.

With the scanty means at his disposal, the Albanian nationalist has succeeded, moreover, in leveling the religious barriers which foreign propaganda had raised up. Among the nationalist legions there is no religious question at all, and search as you may, it will be impossible to find in the Balkans, and even in some countries situated in the heart of Europe, more liberal men than among the rank and file of the Albanian nationalists, among whom there is but one ideal: liberty and independence. Mohammedans and Christians, Catholics and Orthodox have but one object: the subordination of every other consideration to the principle of a free, progressive, and liberal Albania. You will find among them artisans and mechanics—to use the expression of Aristotle—and plain factory workers and land cultivators who would discuss religious matters as dispassionately as the most positivist philosopher.

Among the Albanian masses the national language was a meager instrument of conversation, adulterated with a medley of foreign words. The Albanian nationalist has laboriously set to work to enrich the vocabulary by reclaiming the words which had fallen

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into desuetude in the course of time. This he did through the method Martin Luther had employed four centuries earlier for the development of the German language so that he might be able to translate the Scriptures into the vernacular, i.e., by going among the people, and especially among the women, and digging up the native words which had been replaced by foreign ones in the commonly spoken tongue. From the raw elements of an unliterary language, the nationalist has constructed a fluent, polished, and lively language which is now capable of expressing much higher thoughts. He has translated the Bible and many religious books of the Mohammedan religion, with the close coöperation of Christian and Moslem writers who would indiscriminately take part in the translation of both sets of books, something that surpasses the imagination. He has, moreover, built on the new linguistic elements a literature which deserves all praise, not for its voluminousness but for certain revolutionary features which characterize it. And consider that all this was done during the reign of the Red Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II, and under the most disheartening disabilities.

The net result of these efforts of the national societies quartered in foreign lands is that not only the migratory population is now able to read and write the national language, without having ever received any kind of regular education in schools, but also that thousands and thousands of people in Albania herself have been instructed in the native language by sheer perseverance in self-teaching. It was a spectacle rarely, if ever, witnessed, to see individuals, who are past middle age and have never

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attended any kind of school, fumbling with the Albanian alphabet in their determination to learn by themselves the language which a barbarous régime had put under the ban. And the next day you might have seen the same individuals behind the iron bars of the Turkish prison for no other reason than that they had been found with the Albanian alphabet in their hands.

It is highly improbable that there could be found such instances in the history of any other nation, at least not on the large-scale self-teaching system of the Albanians. Yet, the outside world has never duly appreciated this achievement. It has never reflected upon the question as to why the bulk of Albanian books and newspapers have been published at Bucharest, Sophia, Cairo, Brussels, etc.; it has never inquired how it is possible to have legions of people who read and write their national language without there being any Albanian schools, and what is more wonderful, without their having attended any school of any kind.

There is, moreover, a highly interesting feature which entirely differentiates Albanian from any other Balkan nationalism. Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian nationalism is founded on an universal sentiment which may be aroused very easily among otherwise inanimate masses, namely, the religious sentiment. It was easy enough to speak to the Greek, or Bulgarian, or Serbian peasant about the wrath of the Christian God in case he would not rise to vindicate his faith against the enemies of Jesus Christ, the Turks, and thereby to arouse in his heart the strongest feeling of unity with his fellow-believers against the Sultan. But such a thing could

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not possibly be done among the Albanians, divided as they were among three rival religions. It was out of the question to excite a Moslem against another Moslem, and then the Christian Albanian against his Moslem brethren. Necessarily, then, the basis on which Albanian nationalism had to be founded was a secular one, and it is difficult to arouse a secular sentiment among the inert masses.

The warlike refrain of Greek nationalism has been the fight

> "For the Holy religion of Christ
> And for the country's freedom,"

while the equivalent patriotic song of the Albanian nationalist has been

> "Come all ye Albanians, Moslem and Christian;
> Let not Churches and Mosques divide us,
> The true religion of the Albanian is the worship of his nation!"

or as the lofty patriot Wassa Pasha, to whom we have already referred, puts it:

> "Wake up, ye Albanians, wake up,
> And get united in a single faith;
> Priests and Hodjas[1] are trying to fool you
> So as to keep you divided and enslaved;
> Let not Mosques and Churches keep you apart,
> The true religion of the Albanian is his national ideal!"

It is highly gratifying to say that the preaching of Wassa Pasha has not fallen on sterile ground. It is a well-deserved praise to the idealist patriot, leader and statesman, that his sublime admonitions are sung to-day far and wide throughout Albanian

[1] Moslem priest.

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lands and colonies. The opposition against the fanatical Moslem, Catholic and Orthodox clergy of Albania, which Wassa Pasha recommends, has given way to the impulse of establishing a liberal and patriotic clergy which is now giving precedence to the rights of the nation rather than to those of religion. The ranks of the Albanian nationalists are filled today with men who are most broad-minded in religious matters, and the ministers of the churches are more national-minded than the average nationalist.

This is what a handful of Albanian patriots has accomplished in such a short time. It is, moreover, likely to reveal Albania, in the very near future, as a model nation and State in liberal self-development, for the seeds it has sown are daily bearing bountiful fruit.

III. CONSTITUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

It has already been stated that the main reason why the Albanians espoused the cause of the Young Turks and gave them unqualified support for the restoration of the Turkish Constitution was the idea that, under a constitutional régime, Albania would have the amplest opportunity for self-development as a separate nationality, which was expected to hold a privileged position within the reformed and invigorated Turkish Empire. Hitherto the Albanians had often ruled Turkey as individuals; now they wanted to have a preponderant position as a nation, their ideal being to exert on Turkey as powerful an influence as the Hungarian minority was exerting within the Austrian Empire. Recalling the important contributions they had made to the Ottoman

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Empire, such as the Albanian dynasty of the *Koprulu Grand Vizirs* of the seventeenth century, the able architect of the beautiful mosque of *Valide Djamissi Mimaz Sindu,* the great philosopher and man of letters *Namyk Kemal Bey,* the only lexicographer of the Turkish language *Sami Bey Frasheri,*[1] and a host of other statesmen, generals, admirals, and diplomats, the Albanians hoped now to do even better under a liberal constitution.

With the promulgation of the Constitution, therefore, a powerful impulse was given to the national Albanian movement. Albanian schools were opened, books began to be printed daily, and a great number of newspapers appeared at Constantinople, Salonica, Monastir, Korcha, Janina, Scutari and other places. Simultaneously, a Normal School was established at Elbasan which attracted in the very first days of its existence more than fifty pupils, Christian and Moslem. The Director of the School was M. Louis Gurakuki, a Catholic, and the other members of the teaching staff were indiscriminately Moslems and Orthodox Christians.

When the reaction of the Young Turks set in, the Turkish Government, being fully aware of the overwhelming current of the Albanian movement in the educational field, made no attempt to stop it; on the contrary it struck on the idea of diverting it to its own use. This it tried to do by the childish method of substituting Arabic characters for the Latin characters of the Albanian alphabet, in the vain effort to arouse the religious susceptibilities of the masses, to whom the Young Turks represented the Latin characters as an invention of the "Giaur" whereby

[1] The above mentioned Albanian patriot, see p. 215.

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the Moslem Albanians were to be made Christians by the use of Christian characters. In pursuance of their policy, the Young Turks printed a number of Albanian books with Arabic characters. The unfortunate books became the object of the most witty attacks on the part of the Albanians. Inasmuch as the Arabic characters are unable to give the varying Albanian sounds, the Albanians felt a particular pleasure in ridiculing them by drawing from a particular word a burlesque meaning which happened to be the reverse of what was meant. The result was that the new books were publicly burned in heaps in the market-places by the exasperated population. How great the resentment was of the Albanian masses against these machinations of the Young Turks can be gathered from the fact that one of the principal demands of the Albanian insurgents of 1910 and 1911 was that education should be given in Albanian and in Albanian schools. The successful outcome of the rebellion of 1911–2 secured the full realization of this demand.[1]

With the proclamation of the independence of Albania, the Provisional Government undertook to carry out a systematic educational program. Two Normal Schools were opened at Berat and Elbasan, and a model Primary School was established at Valona. This last named institution was very interesting in its composition. The majority of the children were *Moslem,* corresponding to the Moslem majority of Valona, while the principal was an *Orthodox Christian,* with just one Moslem teacher, and he a priest! Similar mixed schools were opened shortly after at *Kavaja* and elsewhere, and it was

[1] "American Year Book," 1912, p. 142.

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a singular and noteworthy event when these little children paraded, clad in neat uniforms, before the Prince of Wied on the day of his arrival at Durazzo. It is very seldom, if ever, that such highly instructive spectacles are offered in any part of the world, for there is nothing more remarkable than to see Christian and Moslem boys sitting side by side and being instructed by Christian teachers and by a Moslem priest.[1] As to the Normal Schools there was no question that they had to be coeducational. That was assumed as a matter-of-course, the main purpose being to bring small children together. And that was attained by the voluntary coöperation of the patriotic population and not by any compulsion from the Provisional Government which, moreover, was in no position to exercise compulsion.

It is right to repeat, then, once more, that there is no religious question in Albania, and the animosity that has existed among certain classes of Albania will be easily dissipated when all classes have the same rights within the Albanian State.

[1] In the New York *World* of December 15, 1918, there was published the second part of the "Story of Italy in the War," in a separate supplement, compiled by the Official Italian Bureau of Information of New York City. Referring to Italy's beneficent work in Albania, the following statement is made by the compilers:

" The Italian teachers of the Provisional Schools have succeeded in doing something that experts of the country had proclaimed impossible; they have now Mohammedan and Christian boys sitting together. Whoever is in position to know the hatred that exists between these two elements in Albania will fully appreciate this accomplishment."

Evidently, the compilers of this account of Italy's work in Albania are very much behind the time, and they know nothing of what has been accomplished as early as 1885, 1908, and 1912–1914, or otherwise they would not have made such an unfounded statement.

As to the statement that "whoever is in position to know the hatred that exists between these elements in Albania ," no comment need be made.

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III. THE ALBANIANS OF AMERICA

The Albanian colony in the United States is by far the most interesting of all, for it is the Albanians of America that have made the largest contributions to the growth of nationalism and to the intellectual development of their native country.

The exact number of Albanians living in the United States is unknown, owing to the fact that most of these came to this country before the independence of Albania was recognized and have, consequently, been listed by the immigration authorities as Ottoman subjects. According to the best estimate, there are more than 40,000 in the United States, about a thousand in Canada and as many in Latin America.

The more important settlements are to be found in the New England states, Vermont excepted, and in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan and Washington. In Massachusetts there must be at least 10,000.

All of these have come to the United States since 1900; their number has been increased lately by the throng of refugees who were left homeless as a result of the devastation of Southern Albania by the Greeks in the summer of 1914.

To these Albanians the United States afforded the choicest field for the propagation of the national ideal. The beginnings of this work seem almost like a fairy tale, considering the tremendous progress which has been made during these last twelve years.

The cornerstone of the national movement in the United States was laid in 1906 by Mr. Sotir Petsi, an Orthodox Christian, native of the province of

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Korcha, and a graduate of the University of Athens. In a dark basement of the dingy Hudson Street, Boston, Mr. Petsi started in that year the publication of a weekly newspaper *Kombi,* with the proceeds of his own manual labor—he was a factory worker at that time because of his ignorance of the English language,—and with some voluntary contributions made by a handful of Albanians. The people to whom he sent the newspaper, gratis at the beginning, wondered what it was for; they not only had never seen any Albanian newspaper, but also they were entirely illiterate. Consequently, Mr. Petsi, who was at the same time editor, publisher, manager, and printer, was obliged to go and explain in person what that shabby sheet of paper was meant to be. Out of 5,000 Albanians who are estimated to have been in the United States at the time not twenty persons could read or write. This is the humble beginning of the Albanian national movement in the United States.

In the meantime, there had come to Jamestown, N Y., a small group of more or less enlightened Albanians, who had detached themselves from the thriving Albanian colony of Roumania. They now founded the first Albanian society in the United States under the name "Motherland," thus laying another cornerstone for the national edifice.

Soon it was perceived, however, that no progress could be made among the Orthodox Albanians who constituted the bulk of the emigrant population, on account of the interference of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople who, as we know, had interdicted the use of the Albanian language by a decree of excommunication. If those Christians who were living

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in the United States dared to ignore the decree of the Patriarch, their families in Albania would suffer the direful consequences of the excommunication. As a result, the leaders of the movement hit upon the idea of cutting once for all the religious ties that bound the Orthodox Albanians to the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople. Consequently, in 1908 a peaceful religious revolution took place. A Convention was held in Boston, which proclaimed the religious independence of the Orthodox Christian Albanians, and instituted an independent *Albanian Orthodox Church* under the headship of *Reverend Fan S. Noli,* a native of the Albanian colonial settlement of Kyteza, in the neighborhood of Adrianople. Mr. Noli received his investiture as Albanian priest at the hands of the Russian Bishop of New York. A church was improvised in a hall in Boston, and the *National Church Association* was founded.

This peaceful revolution had momentous consequences. The dread of excommunication was done away with, and the Christian Albanians flocked into the ranks of the nationalists. Shortly after, throngs of Moslem Albanians arrived in the United States; they felt so pleased at the action of their Christian brethren that they not only separated themselves from the religious head of Islamism, the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* of Constantinople, but they also made liberal contributions to the Christian Albanian Church. Among the members of the National Church Association of the Orthodox one may find hundreds of Moslem members. So far as the Albanians of America are concerned the religious question was settled long ago. An era of complete assimilation of the two religious groups set in. The perfect harmony which

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reigns among the Christian and Moslem Albanians of the United States is one of the most striking features of the nationalistic movement.

The progress made from that date among the Albanians of this country has been stupendous. In 1906 there were hardly more than ten or twenty persons who could read and write their native language. To-day their number exceeds 15,000; most of them have never attended any school, and have learned to read and write with the help of the spelling-book and the newspapers which they set to studying during the hours of rest following their hard daily work. The rest of the Albanians are in process of doing the same, taking advantage of the recently established evening Albanian schools.

No more instructive illustration of the progress made in the United States can be supplied than by the publication of the list of newspapers and periodicals which have made their appearance in this country from 1906 to the present time.

YEAR	NAME	TIME	LANGUAGE	PLACE
1906	Kombi ..	Weekly	Albanian...	Boston, Mass.
1909	Dielli	Weekly ... (now daily)	Albanian..	Boston, Mass.
1910	Trumbeta e Krujes	Weekly	Albanian...	St. Louis, Mo.
1912	Zeri i Popullit.	Weekly	Albanian.	New York, N. Y.
1915	Koha	Weekly	Albanian.	Jamestown, N. Y. (formerly of Korcha, Albania)
1915	Albanian Era ...	Monthly	English-Albanian.	Denver, Colo., and later Chicago, Ill.
1916	Mprojtia Shqipetare ..	Weekly	Albanian.	St. Louis, Mo.
1916	Illyria	Monthly.	English-Albanian.	Boston, Mass.
1916	Perlindja ..	Weekly	Albanian.	Framingham, Mass.
1917	Perparimi	Monthly	Albanian.	New York, N. Y.
1917	Yll'i Mengjezit	Monthly.	English-Albanian.	Boston, Mass.
1918	Albania (Religious Moslem)	Monthly	Albanian.	Waterbury, Conn.
1918	Albania	Weekly.	Albanian.	New York, N. Y. and Worcester, Mass.
1918	The Adriatic Review	Monthly	English-Albanian.	Boston, Mass.

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Of these newspapers, the daily *Dielli* (*The Sun*) is considered as the authoritative organ of the nationalist Albanians of America. It is published by the largest Albanian society, the Pan-Albanian Federation *Vatra* (*The Hearth*), Inc., of Boston, Mass.

Along with this literary-political movement has gone the corresponding movement for the formation of societies.

The example of the foundation of the "Motherland" was imitated by other Albanian colonies, and local societies sprang up wherever there was a sufficient number of Albanians to form one.

In 1912, following the arrival of *Faik Bey Konitza*, the foremost nationalist leader and the ablest Albanian writer,[1] steps were taken for the fusion of the great number of local societies into a single national association. The result was the formation of the Pan-Albanian Federation "Vatra," which has just been mentioned, as a popular national organization. At the present time, the "Vatra" has nearly 80 branches, scattered throughout the United States and Canada.

Even after this consolidation, new societies were formed for various allied purposes, educational, religious, beneficiary, musical, and athletic.

Among these the more important are the following:

[1] Mr. Konitza is a graduate of three Universities: Université de France, Oxford, and Harvard. In London and Brussels he published the important monthly *Albania*, review of folklore, literature, politics, history, etc., etc., in French and Albanian, which contains a voluminous mass of historical documents of the utmost importance, the result of scrupulous researches. The pen of Mr. Konitza is that of a master-writer; his keen caustic irony caused much uneasiness among the Turks, Old and Young, with whom he has never been able to reconcile himself.

Barring the notorious Essad Pasha, Faik Bey Konitza is the most striking figure of modern Albania.

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The *Orthodox Church National Association,* which has charge of the Church organization in the United States. The Association maintains five well-established churches respectively in Boston, Worcester, Southbridge, Mass., Philadelphia, Pa., and St. Louis, Mo., besides a large number of secondary ones. There are now eight well educated priests under the spiritual headship of the first Albanian priest, Right Reverend Monsignor Fan S. Noli, who has lately been promoted to the post of Mitrate Primate of the Orthodox Albanian Church in America.

It is very interesting to note that in the establishment of the above mentioned five churches the Moslem Albanians made almost as many pecuniary contributions as the Christian Albanians.

The second in importance is the *Moslem National Alliance,* which has charge of the Moslem religious services in the Albanian language and of the education of the illiterate Moslem Albanians. The Alliance now maintains a regular school at Waterbury, Conn., which has so far rendered invaluable services.

The *Educational Society of Korcha* has for its object the spread of national education in the city of Korcha.

There are also a number of clubs in the larger centers, such as Boston, Worcester, Waterbury, Conn., Manchester, N. H., East Pittsburgh, Pa., Akron, Ohio, etc., a baseball team at Manchester, N. H., and four musical societies with two complete brass bands and two mandolin orchestras.

The Albanian of America is liberal in his donations. It is estimated that he pays regularly every year more than $50, in addition to special contributions. The collective budget of the various Albanian

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societies is estimated to be $100,000 every year, and this money comes from the pockets of factory workers and small shopkeepers, the number of big businessmen being very small, owing to the fact that the Albanian has been the last of the European peoples to turn their attention to the United States.

Upon the conclusion of the armistice of the European war, an appeal was made for the raising of a *National Fund*. It was quite spectacular to see the factory workmen and small shopkeepers offering two and three months' wages and profits for the national cause. Fifty workingmen of the Westinghouse Electric Company of East Pittsburgh, Pa., subscribed for $5,125.50, and one of them donated $210. Two workingmen of the Fore River Shipyards of Quincy, Mass., gave $360 each, and two other workmen of Biddeford, Me., gave $650 each. A penny-goods seller of Boston offered $550.

The Albanians of America are equally generous toward their adopted country In the list of the sums contributed by the various races to the Third Liberty Loan, published by the Treasury Department, the Albanians come ahead of thirteen other races in the United States.

This is what the spirit of nationalism has achieved among the rank and file of a people whom the barbarous domination of the Turk had forced to become only an unrivaled fighter.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE FUTURE OF ALBANIA

"If ever an autonomous Albania comes into being the educated Albanians now dispersed in Roumania and Egypt, or kept in a sort of official imprisonment in the Turkish Army and Civil Service, will undoubtedly return to lead their countrymen. There are men among them who would be a credit to any race. I cannot do better than translate some passages from a letter which has reached me the other day from an Albanian friend, a nominal Mohammedan, who holds a high place in the Turkish army As a military commandant in a certain garrison in Asia Minor during the Armenian massacres, wielding large powers, he earned golden opinions by his tolerance and humanity The letter seems to prove how little these men, even when they are Turkish officials, share the attitude of the average Turk. It also shows to what level of culture these Albanians often manage to attain in Turkey, cut off though they are from European schools, and rarely able to obtain any book which treats of serious topics in a modern spirit."

H. N. Brailsford in "Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future," 1906, p. 288.

At the time when this book makes its appearance, the Peace Conference will have probably settled some of the pressing peace conditions looking to a definite termination of the great conflagration, in order to enable itself to grapple with the question of readjusting the new territorial system. It is under this last head that the problem of Albania will come up for discussion, and this raises the question:

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What is the present international status of Albania?

On February 20, 1917, Mr. A. J Balfour, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, declared in the House of Commons that the decisions of the Conference of Ambassadors at London, relating to the recognition and establishment of the Principality of Albania, are no longer in force, having been abrogated by the outbreak of the European war.

Whether such solemn international decisions may be abrogated is a question that goes beyond the scope of this book. In all probability, Mr. Balfour was influenced, in making this statement, by the existing secret treaty which was concluded between Great Britain, France and Russia, on the one hand, and Italy on the other, on April 26, 1915, and which was first divulged by the Russian Bolsheviki in November, 1917. By that treaty, Albania was partitioned among her neighbors in the most cold-blooded fashion by the Entente Allies.

Yet, so far as Albania is concerned, the treaty seems to have been superseded by the proclamation of General Ferrero (see pp. 161–163) by which the independence and unity of Albania were declared in the name of the Italian Government, on June 3, 1917, more than two years after the signing of the secret treaty of London. The proclamation states also that Albania is declared independent "under the shield and protection of the Italian Kingdom." Besides, the Italian Government has repeatedly avowed its determination to make good the claims of the Albanians, and it will undoubtedly do so. The main question is to clearly define what is meant by "shield and protection."

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It is needless to say that the Albanians will be satisfied with nothing less than complete independence, and, unless they be exterminated to the last man, they will never cease struggling to obtain that degree of independence. This much may be learned at least from the long history of Albania. The situation is rendered more critical to-day because of the spread of the national ideal even among the Albanian masses. From the outbreak of the European war a complete transformation has taken place in the psychological condition of the Albanian people. Old Albania has given place to a new Albania which is craving liberty and independence from end to end. If that be now denied to the Albanians it will only mean that an infectious sore wound is left open in the Balkan Peninsula, liable to breed new convulsions and troubles.

We have placed *en vedette* at the head of this chapter the opinion of Mr. H. N. Brailsford about the latent possibilities of the Albanian race, which opinion he formed as early as 1906. Since that day, two political revolutions have taken place in the country The first occurred during the independent life of Albania (1912–14), when the Albanians got the first taste of national liberty, although it was given to them in the form of a bitter pill, which made them long for a more genuine freedom. The second revolution took place during the four and a half years of the European war which battered Albania against the overwhelming waves of the belligerents as a rudderless ship. The result was that the war shook the Albanian masses out of their somnolence.

The downfall of the Principality of Albania cannot in fairness be charged against the Albanians, for

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they could do no better, under the circumstances. The new State was looked upon with suspicion by Europe as being the creature of Austrian diplomacy, and there was considerable rejoicing at the downfall of the short-lived principality which represented only a Teutonic diplomatic victory. The Powers which had guaranteed its independence, territorial integrity, and neutrality did nothing except append their signatures to paper guarantees. They allowed the Greeks to play havoc in Southern Albania without being moved by any sentiment of pity or indignation at the inhuman treatment inflicted on a whole people. It was not at all surprising, then, that Mr. Wadham Peacock foresaw the crumbling away of the new State before it was even created. These are the words he wrote when the great Powers were delimiting the frontiers of Albania:

"From the cynical way in which large populations of Albanians are ignored and handed over to their hereditary enemies, it is obvious that the Powers are not overanxious to form an Albanian principality which could have a reasonable chance of success. The nascent Albania is cut down to a minimum, and if Europe had wished to make the new State dependent on Austria and Italy, she could hardly have set about it more effectually."

And what the Powers failed to do collectively for the destruction of Albania, the bitter rivalry of Austria and Italy eventually did. For these two Powers Albania was only a football with which to play their diplomatic games. The Albanian State of the Conference of the Ambassadors was only a mockery and a farce. It was not the Prince of Wied who was the ruler of Albania, but the Austrian or Italian Min-

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ister, according as one or the other was able to control and manipulate the Prince. It was for this purpose that Albania was given such a pitiful sovereign as the Prince of Wied.

The time has come for the reparation of the wrongs which were done to Albania. If she is to be restored to her previous condition, with more than half her territory and her population handed over to Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, she cannot be more prosperous or contented than before. Rebellions and uprisings all along the frontier will be the sure accompaniment of her future.

The districts of Hoti and Gruda, the populations of which successfully withstood every attempt of King Nicholas to incorporate their territory in his realm, must be given back to Albania. This is one of the simplest and most elementary acts of reparation.

But by far the most important reparation to be made is on the Serbian frontier. If there is to be any such thing as self-determination for subject peoples, there is no reason, human or divine, why a million Albanians should shed their blood in vain attempts to shake off foreign rule. During the two years of Serbian domination, the million Albanians of Kossova, Dibra, and Ochrida have made three sanguinary rebellions in order to free themselves of the Serbian rule. In 1912, there might have been some reason for Serbia's seeking to expand at the expense of Albania, because she was barred from her natural field of expansion in view of the fact that Austria then possessed Slavic provinces, but today when the Slavs have been freed, there is no excuse whatsoever for holding in bondage a million

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Albanians. There can be no friendly relations between Albania and Serbia so long as the unwilling Albanians are held in subjection; when hard pressed by the Serbians they will cross the frontier and put the Albanian Government in the most embarrassing situation. And there is nothing, save extermination, which will prevent these Albanians from revolting against Serbia.

In the name of justice, then, and in the interest of the peace of the Balkans, the former vilayet of Kossovo, and the provinces of Dibra and Ochrida must be restored to Albania.

On the Albanian-Greek frontier, a new delimitation must be made so as to include in Albania the district of Tchamouria, which is inhabited by Moslem Albanians, and the region of the Pindus Mountains where the Roumanian-Vallachian population as well as the Albanians of Konitsa are clamoring for union with Albania.

The avowed desire of all these populations to be united with the mother-country is so patent that there is no need for any plebiscite, but if it is necessary there is no reason why it should not be resorted to; the Albanians will be the last ones to oppose it.

Moreover, inasmuch as Greece is still deliriously raving over her absurd claims with regard to that part of Southern Albania which she styles "Northern Epirus" and which is now occupied by the Italian troops, the Albanians are again prepared, despite the decrease of the population as a result of the devastation wrought to the country by the Greeks, to accept the results of a plebiscite in order to put an end to the Greek wailings and yellings, provided, however, that the plebiscite be conducted in such a

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way as to insure the free expression of the sentiments of the population, after previous occupation of the territory by the troops of a neutral Power. Provision also should be made to avoid any scheme of gerrymandering.

The Albanians are not appealing to charity but to principles of justice and fair play. The liberal ideas which pervade the intellectual classes of Albania are averse to having any foreign elements within the boundaries of their State, and if, by the force of circumstances such minorities be included within it there should not be the slightest apprehension that their rights would be disregarded. The Albanians are neither barbarously chauvinistic like the Greeks nor brutal like the Serbians and Bulgarians who began to baptize in masses the Moslems they annexed along with the territories acquired as a result of the Balkan wars and to change the names of their dissenting subjects. No such thing will ever happen in Albania, where tolerance, religious and political, is a recognized principle.

Coming to the question whether the Albanians are able to govern themselves, we need only refer once more to the opinion so tersely expressed by Mr. H. N. Brailsford as early as 1906, i.e., at the time when the national spirit was only beginning to make the astounding progress which it has accomplished during the last twelve years even among the masses of Albania.

The country which has given so many prominent statesmen, generals, admirals, diplomats, and men of science and letters to Turkey, Greece and Italy, such as the Koprulu Vizirs who ruled Turkey during the entire seventeenth century, Ferid Pasha

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Vlora in our own days, Namyk Kemal Bey the philosopher, Admiral Miaulis, the illustrious commanders Marko Bochari, Odysseus Andrucho, the female Admiral Bubulina, Francesco Crispi, Prime Minister of Italy, and a host of other celebrated men whose names would fill entire pages of this book, not to mention the earlier contributions to Rome, such as Diocletian, the great organizer of the Roman Empire, Constantine the Great, Julian the Philosopher who attempted to revive the worship of the Pelasgic Gods of his native country in the new capital of the Roman Empire, Constantinople, St. Jerome, the translator of the Scriptures, Pope Sylvester, and Pope Clement XI (1700–1721) who put an end to Jansenism by the famous bull Unigenitus, the country and the people, we say, who have given so many illustrious names to the history of the world will not surely fail to provide for their own national needs. It is impossible to suppose that the people among whom the memory of George Castriota Scanderbeg is as alive as ever will languish for any considerable length of time.

It is undeniable that Albania is to-day only a desolate and devastated country; and this is exactly what is expected to spur the enterprise and activity of the ruling class of the land. It is likewise undeniable that in her present condition Albania needs some kind of assistance and protection against the aggressive dispositions of her neighbors. Divided as these neighbors are, the only thing that unites them is the desire, common to them all, to do injury to Albania.

Testing psychologically the mentality of the Al-

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banian people it will be found that there is no orderly and decent way to govern Albania save through the Albanians themselves. The moral influence of the acknowledged leaders of the people is likely to prove more potent and efficacious than the physical force of an alien government, foisted on pugnacious and unwilling subjects. In this case, martial law and wholesale executions would be the chief weapons which the alien government would be obliged to resort to in moments of crises. *La belle affaire!* as M. Gabriel Hanotaux exclaims, having in mind this prospect.

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