

The Register.

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AUSTRALIA AND THE DARDANELLES CAMPAIGN.

The momentous events of the Dardanelles campaign have once and for all committed Australians to a deep personal interest in European international politics. Practically all the military forces raised in the Commonwealth and New Zealand are being dispatched to the war front in the Gallipoli Peninsula; the "roll of honour" formed by our gallant and fearless boys is already painfully long; and, from all appearances, the completion of the task undertaken will occupy a considerable time, and make further heavy tolls upon the Allies. In his address at Dundee on Saturday Mr. Churchill, ex-First Lord of the Admiralty, vigorously defended the Imperial authorities for having assumed the offensive against Turkey, without waiting for a decisive triumph against the Germans in France and Flanders. He did not, however, attempt to demonstrate the wisdom of prosecuting naval attacks upon the Dardanelles forts, independently of the support of strong land forces. It is now evident that the early operations of the Anglo-French Fleet were prompted by unwarranted optimism, and that the Admiralty had no substantial reason to expect that an attack by warships on the Narrows could be successful apart from the backing of an army. Admittedly, Greece disappointed the Allies by failing to dispatch the military aid which M. Venizelos was willing to give; but the British Admiralty did not allow King Constantine's refusal of co-operation to interfere with its plans, and it is now intimated that the Athens Government had been asked to provide only 15,000 men. To-day 10 times that number of soldiers is deemed essential for the enormous duty in hand; and the vast expenditure of munitions will involve a serious demand upon the Allies' stores of armaments.

Yet, as Mr. Churchill observed, Earl Kitchener must have carefully studied the situation and counted the cost before he consented to the diversion of large Australasian, Indian, and British territorial forces to the Gallipoli Peninsula, with Constantinople as their goal. Victory over Turkey, and the opening of the Dardanelles to the Allies, will have far-reaching and enormously valuable effects upon the main issues of the great European struggle. The truculence of the Turks compelled England to give them no chances of success in warfare against Egypt or Britain's friends in the Persian Gulf. Strategically, it was better that the Australasians should be sent to fight the Turks in Europe than retained in the Suez Canal zone to resist an Ottoman invasion of Egypt. The invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula has obliged the Turks to withdraw their best fighting men from Syria and Asia Minor, and to abandon their hostile plans in the Caucasus. It has also diverted to Turkish soil numerous highly trained and capable German military commanders and engineers,

who would otherwise be engaged against the Allies' fronts in the west. For some years the Sultan and the corrupt Constantinople Administrations have been increasingly under the control and tutelage of the masterful Kaiser William and his military chiefs. Since the Balkan wars of 1912-13 the Ottoman army has been virtually a German-driven machine. If Germany should win in the present war, Turkey will become one of her dependencies. Teutonic interests in Asia Minor, the Bagdad Railway, Syria, and Mesopotamia represent many millions of pounds in capital alone; and the energy and enterprise which marked their acquisition clearly show that the Kaiser and his Ministers had resolved upon converting the Ottoman Empire into a sphere of German influence, to the exclusion of all

other Powers. Anglo-Indian military successes in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia, and the far more important victories to be won, with the aid of the Australlians, in European Turkey, will be disastrous to German ambitions, and should hasten the complete overthrow of Kaiserism.

The Australian troops are sharing in a task which would have commanded the whole-souled approbation of the noblest and wisest statesmen of past ages—a task which, from the standpoints of humanity and justice, has been too long delayed. "The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." The iniquities and savageries of Turkish officialdom have for generations been the crying scandal of Western civilization, and the blood and tears of the untold number of its victims have cried to heaven for vengeance. It was fitting that the terrible problem of Ottoman misrule and the attendant Balkan territorial questions should have been revived by Germany in relation to the greatest war known in history; and that, in her attitude towards them, she should play a part consistent with her character as a reactionary tyrant. Her professions of ardent attachment to Turkey induced that deluded Power to pursue headlong a path to irretrievable ruin. But the impending doom of the Turk has served as a timely warning to Roumania and Bulgaria to free themselves from Teutonic toils. There is a brightening prospect of a renewal between the Balkan States of that friendly understanding which, after it had enabled them recently to defeat their ancient enemy, was tragically shattered by Austrian intrigues. The Triple Entente are able to promise that the legitimate territorial aspirations of all the States will be satisfied, if they actively help to win for Europe a lasting peace by sharing in the duty of giving the coup de grace to their traditional foes. During the brief period which has elapsed since the Balkan war Bulgaria has much improved her army, which is now highly efficient. By joining the Allies she may after the war acquire Adrianople and Ottoman territory down to the Enos-Midia line. Roumania and Greece may similarly benefit, and confer advantages upon millions of people, by co-operating in the work of the Allies. The sufferings of poor Serbia and Montenegro entitle them to special consideration; and the terms of settlement will probably provide that they shall amalgamate and incorporate in the new dominion, the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which Austria stole in 1908, and a strip of the Dalmatian coast. It is gratifying to know that