

## A CORRESPONDENT AT ADRIANOPOLE

BY CYRIL CAMPBELL

FROM the siege of Troy to March 26, 1913, is a far step. We have exchanged the spear for the Mauser, the catapult or ram for the howitzer: but human nature remains unchanged. The fortunes of an invested fortress are still followed with world-wide interest, although it is now the cable or the wireless, not a flickering line of leaping fires, that announces the fall. Already in the few years of this new century, which, according to many, is destined to see the end of war, two of the greatest sieges in the world's history have taken place; living memory can recall another three. It would be an invidious task to state in which of these the investment was most severe, or the defense most heroic: one would certainly not give the palm to Adrianople, although, technically speaking, as a military achievement the Bulgarian success on that Wednesday morning surpassed that of the conquerors of Metz or Paris, Sevastopol or Port Arthur.<sup>1</sup> These four surrendered, whereas Adrianople was taken at the point of the bayonet, and we have to go back a century, to the bloody assault on San Sebastian, to find another example of European troops capturing in this way a powerful fortress designed on scientific lines. In all probability it may never occur again; yet, so trivial are the things that shape our lives, a thread

of mercury in a glass tube would have prevented the writer from seeing this unique spectacle, had it happened a day earlier.

War correspondents from all parts of Europe had collected in Sofia thick 'as leaves in Vallombrosa'; for these gentry, like the eagles, are never far from the carcass. The Bulgarians, however, were firm or refused to budge from their dictum, 'No journalist at the front after the armistice.' Bluff, entreaties, protestations, all alike were useless — to the ill-disguised delight of the hotel-keeper; and a goodly number of these latter-day adventurers had left in disgust some time before the fateful day. Fever, combined with a belief that the military authorities would not relent, had induced the writer to decide to follow their example at the end of the month. It was a thoughtful but peremptory telephone message which altered all plans and caused a waiter to come flying to his room.

'If you want to see the fall of Adrianople, you have to leave by special train this instant. All the correspondents are at the station already.'

Neither fire nor earthquake nor 'vis major' of any description could have acted with such effect as those last eight words. To be left at the post! Better starve or be dirty for weeks than miss the train: and as there was no time to buy anything to eat, or pack ought save a sponge, toothbrush, and pyjamas, starvation or dirt seemed inevitable. But the train was still there — indeed it remained a full twenty minutes

<sup>1</sup> Many will probably be surprised at the omission of Plevna, but though, strictly speaking, it was a fortress, its real strength lay in its earthworks (the two Grivitsa redoubts in particular), which were made in three days. — THE AUTHOR.

— but 'all' the correspondents had dwindled down to four, to wit: the writer who shall be known as Ananias; Sapphira, a British lady wielding both pen and cinematograph; Tartarin, a French journalist; Paillasse, an Italian ditto. The two Latins, by some occult means, must have got wind of the government's intentions regarding the press, for they were beautifully arrayed in full campaign kit. Both were prepared for all emergencies, and can have left intact few departments in the wholesale store which had guided their purchases. Ananias pointed out their readiness to Sapphira, and added that any unkind criticism could be nothing but the outcome of envy. A bulky hamper lying at their feet and contrasting painfully with Sapphira's paper bag, lent weight to his remark. He himself meanwhile had bought two bottles of dubious Chablis, brown bread, a hunk of penetrating cheese, and had 'cornered' the station chocolate.

The quartette were then ordered in, and Ananias, encouraged by the station master's assurance that they would be in the lines by midnight (or, allowing the usual latitude, 10 A.M.), proceeded to complete his interrupted nap. In the next carriage Tartarin and Paillasse could be heard selecting the Bulgarian salient.

The night must be allowed to sink into the oblivion which it failed signally to give to weary eyes and limbs. So far from being in the Bulgarian lines at midnight, or even at 10 A.M. as Ananias had charitably allowed, the quartette of sensation-seekers had not even crossed the old frontier at eleven.

Early in the morning two trainloads of wounded, the first signs of active fighting, passed at Rakoffsky. Paillasse was fired with the zeal of the novice, and throwing himself from the carriage, sprang on the footboard of the other train and questioned the men eagerly in

the French of the Midi. For the most part their wounds were of a trivial nature, scalp grazes, forearms or fingers torn by barbed wire; and the men grinned, sang, wagged bloodstained bandages in front of the inquirer's face and demanded cigarettes. Of his flow of language, however, they understood not a single word. Somewhat discomfited, but unwearied, he beat up the second train and unearthed a Serb, who spoke a little halting French. The dialogue was overheard by the remaining three, who came to the conclusion that the information gathered would scarcely assist our companion's 'copy,' since it was to the effect that the Servians had done the work so far, and that the Bulgarians were useless. Paillasse nevertheless seemed pleased and filled two sheets with notes, returning to the carriage with the air of one who had 'scooped' his party. Ananias, the only one of the four who had seen campaigns before, was too seasoned a bird for these chance stories; Sapphira, though nominally of the Fourth Estate, used her pen rather as a passport for the camera than for articles; while Tartarin had confided to her that he was really a 'literary' man, and had only accepted this work as an exception and at an exceptional fee. Paillasse had the field to himself for the moment. It was a harmonious party, luckily, since each was working for the papers of a different country, and each was bound to scoop.

This feeling of exhilaration, however, was destined to receive a rude shock. The first instalment came at Harmanli, where Ananias learnt that the bridge at Marash over the Maritza had been blown up. But officialdom bade the party be of good courage, for there would be motors ready at Mustapha Pasha to convey scribblers and soldiers to the lines thirty-five kilometres away. Considering that behind

the wagon holding four such valuable lives there were at least two hundred and fifty men, Ananias thought there must be as many automobiles with the Bulgarian army as at a country election in England. Still, if all the foreign correspondents with the Turkish army had possessed motor cars and had experienced the same luck as his own colleague and the representatives of the *Telegraph* and *Chronicle*, it was quite possible. For the moment Ananias kept the evil news to himself.

At Novo Lubimitz, the next halt, the outlook seemed more cheerful. The automobiles were waiting, not at Mustapha but at Hadikevi, fifteen kilometres farther on. Even if they failed, surely it would be possible to get some conveyance, a country cart, perhaps, while if the worst came to the worst, it was not too far to walk. So argued Sapphira, who was optimistic, energetic, and young. Ananias was out of condition and fond of comfort, Tartarin had the same tastes. As a matter of fact this unalluring suggestion was never put to the test. The blow fell at Mustapha Pasha, renamed Sliven since the Bulgarian occupation.

A few wounded were lying in a temporary Red Cross depot there, and Paillasse had gone out as usual, only to return a moment later with all his fire extinguished. The authorities at Sliven had received no warning as to our arrival, and took their ground on the old regulation that no journalists were to proceed to the front. Another train with all the correspondents and military attachés would arrive next morning and we were to wait and join them. Such was the verdict.

The indignation of the travelers baffles description. To have received the peremptory command which sent them — or rather two of them — off without food or change of clothes, to have been shaken and shunted, jolted

and jarred all night, to have been well-nigh starved, and to have nourished the pleasant idea of 'scoops,' only to find that they were to wait for the remainder of the correspondents plus the military attachés, who had traveled down in *wagon-lits* and divers luxuries, while the luckless four had borne the burden and heat of the day! Tartarin suddenly exclaimed that there must be some mistake and, as he rather fancied himself as a diplomat, started off to smooth things down. In a short time he returned rather ruffled, and it was decided that Sapphira should try feminine influence. Ananias left the conference meanwhile in order to commune with himself, as a result of which proceeding he wrote out two telegrams and waited the return of the lady envoy, who had done no better and had lost her temper into the bargain.

The faces of the officials fell visibly at the sight of a fourth nuisance, but finding that he merely asked to be allowed to wire the King and the Premier, they relaxed, and so two cables, the wording of which had a vague and distant resemblance to the Habeas Corpus Act, were dispatched. But a great surprise was in store for Ananias on his return. Tartarin and Paillasse had disappeared!

Sapphira said that she had gone for a short stroll and on reaching the carriage saw that the next compartment was empty. The hamper had vanished with them, and as they can hardly have eaten its contents in one night, it looked as if they must have driven. Sliven station, however, is five kilometres from the village, a carriage could not be had either for love or money, and on making inquiries it was found that not a soul had seen them leave. All around save the one dusty winding road was flat open plain with only a shepherd in sight. If the earth had swallowed them, they could not have vanished

more completely. At this point they also vanish from the narrative, and since no news was heard of them again, it was pleasant ten days later to read their messages and know that, though somewhat late, they reached their objective.

About dinner time the telegram releasing Ananias and Sapphira was handed in. The pair were to be hurried on, and an extra order was attached which will explain how a trainload of agitated correspondents and military attachés were detained for thirty-six hours at an uninteresting spot called Harmanli.

A light engine lost little time in depositing the two Anglo-Saxons close to the lines, and a staff officer was waiting to conduct them to a tent, where a cold and appetizing supper proved a pleasant prelude to slumber.

Next morning, Tuesday, March 25, Ananias was aroused at 3 A.M. by heavy firing. To the trained ear it was plain that this was no ordinary bombardment, but a fierce and concentrated fire to cover an assault. Hastily dressing he went to the next tent, where he found his officer-guide buckling on his sword, and the pair ran round to the batteries.

Most impressive was the scene. The dawn had not yet fully broken, but the ghostly pallor which heralds the dawn just showed the dim outline of the Turkish ridge. A grayish mist swathed slopes and interlying valley in one vast shroud,—grim augury of coming death,—and though the ceaseless concussion and bursting shells ever and anon tore great rents and fissures, the fabric was repaired next moment as if invisible hands were at work. The earth around was all a-quake with the thud and roar of the steel monsters, while overhead could be heard the shrill scream of shrapnel that racks the inexperienced nerves. A hundred

paces from the battery a Turkish shell had gouged out a monstrous hole, but otherwise their fire was concentrated on the left. Gradually the mist shredded away and the sun rose on an eventful day, tinging the giant balls of cottonwool—for no other words can describe shrapnel exploding in mid air—with exquisite hues, of rose and saffron. The cannonade increased in intensity. The ‘12 cms.’ belched forth incessant *rafales*, a practice almost unique, the dream of every gunner.

The novice would have thought that not a soul could live in the hell of steam and flame and lead upon that ridge, but ever came the responsive crash, and with increasing accuracy the shells fell thicker on the Creusot batteries, throwing up solid masses of dirt and stones which bruised the men from head to foot. Slowly but surely, however, the Turkish fire grew less, and it was evident that the storm of projectiles which had swept their position in the rear, had prevented fresh supplies of ammunition from coming up. This had been the object of a cannonade which surpassed even the inferno on 303 Metre Hill, and a broad grin relaxed the strained countenances of battery commanders. It was not known till later how much a Turkish contractor’s idea of serviceable casements had assisted the Bulgarians.

Suddenly the crackle of musketry was heard below, and the dull uniforms of infantry were seen in the valley. The sun had now fully risen and far to the left, whence came a sullen roar like the beat of billows on a shore, its rays flickered on shining bayonets. A flanking party was charging with the cry, ‘Na Prod, na nosht!’: ‘On, on, to the knife!’

The Bulgars took those words literally. Through his glasses Ananias saw them leap into a line of trenches, and so vivid was the picture that he felt he could almost hear the shock of contact,

the sickening soft noise of steel thrust home, the final gasp, could almost see the blood spurt out, the reddened blade snatched out as the quivering mass of flesh was flung aside. The rifles ceased and the centre line surged on, swarmed the first gentle slope and burst in among another set of entrenchments. The fight was short and sharp: a few minutes and a broken scattered mob, their heads twisted back to see if they outstripped their dread pursuers, stumbled on in terror. Willing hands brought up the tiny quickfirers, the pets of the Bulgarian infantry, and switched their deadly hail on those panic-stricken fugitives. And ever without pause thundered the heavy guns. So passed the Tuesday.

At nightfall Ananias was presented to General Ivanoff, destined to win undying fame fourteen hours later. There was nothing of the iron commander in his aspect. Short and stoutish in appearance, with a kindly face, broad forehead and merry twinkling eyes, he radiated pleasantness. Very quiet and slow-spoken, choosing his words carefully, he talked as if he were accomplishing an everyday bit of business, though with regard to his men, he expressed the hope that Ananias would have a higher opinion than some other journalist who, without seeing them, had said a month before that they were merely third rate. He advised an early bed for it would be necessary to rise betimes. A glass of wine was ordered and while the toasts were being drunk, the cannonade abruptly ceased. Words fail to describe the effect. We seemed to have been hurled into a world of dead: voices sounded as the faint squeak of ghosts such as Odysseus met beyond the Styx.

The Bulgarians, who had snatched but little sleep since Monday dawn, spent the night in entrenching themselves in their new positions and bring-

ing up the field guns on Mezartepe. On the right the main objective was Aivas Bebe, on the left Kavkas: they also pushed forward their salient on Ayi Yolu.

At 2.50 A.M. the bombardment was renewed, the '15 cms.' in Kavkas fort receiving special attention. The advance trenches were rushed and the 10th and 23d regiments prepared to assault the glacis by Aivas, which should have been impregnable. The whoop of exultant ferocity—a cry which would have put to shame a baseball yell—was unforgettable. The men of the 10th outran the sappers who had been detailed to cut the entanglements, and threw themselves at what was a miniature Gibraltar. It is incredible, yet true, that the Turks had placed no searchlights to play on an enemy advancing on barbed wire. Nothing is so devilish, so mockingly demoralizing, as that dazzling, blinding fugitive glare when clothes and flesh are being rent and torn and ripped while the smack of lead on bodies can be heard around. Without it, barbed wire loses half its value; yet the dreaded flash never came. The 10th swarmed up, and enfiladed the defenders as the 23d swung in upon the centre. Panic did the rest. Much the same happened at Kavkas, save that the defense was fiercer, and when Ananias rode round that evening the wire entanglements were a ghastly sight: it seemed as if some giant shrike had fitted up his larder, for mangled corpses, fragments of flesh, or mutilated limbs hung on those horrid spikes. The enclosure within was a shambles.

By 6 o'clock the troops posted in the centre, who up to then had acted as a screen, had advanced upon the heights, and fighting was general along the line. From this point it is regrettable to state that words cannot describe the cowardice of the defenders. Whether there



is some sinister story, apart from the disgusting behavior of the Young Turks to Shukri Pasha, in the background, it is impossible to say, but certainly the Aivas glacis should never have been taken, while it is strange that the most stalwart troops were concentrated on the W which the Bulgarians had abandoned as an objective a week before. Moreover with a spark of that gallant Plevna spirit, the Turks would have contested every inch of the ground in falling back, and it should have taken forty-eight hours for the Bulgarians to enter the town. Yet at 8 o'clock the troops were breaking their rifles before the famous mosque of Sultan Selim.

The Bulgars raced into the town, the Shipka men (the 23d) winning by a short head, for at 9.30 they were on the Arrnautkeui road and had entered the suburbs. The white flag was run up on the fire-station tower at 9.35, and at 9.45 the allied cavalry galloped into the town and took Shukri prisoner in his headquarters at Haiderlir fort. The Vali, Ismail Pasha, tried to parley and obtain conditions, but was told that a captured town cannot make terms. There remained nothing but the whipping in of the 20,000 missing prisoners which entailed the house-to-house search that Ivanoff so dreaded. Fortunately in only three or four cases did fanatics, harbored by friends in the low quarters, attempt street fighting, or kill the searchers. A couple ensconced in a mosque accounted for fourteen Bulgarians.

Adrianople had fallen. Fourteen other generals, in past times, had entered her gates victorious.

The tale of the siege from within lacks the romance which surrounded Paris, but it is full of quaint details, and a full account from the pen of a Western resident will, it is hoped, appear. Few places can boast a more

useless or unreliable civil population. Low-class Greeks, cringing and treacherous Armenians, usurious, unwarlike Spanish Jews, the sweepings of the Levant, — where could one look for a spark of patriotism, the makings of a single volunteer? One fact alone was a certainty: it would be necessary to use force to extract the truth as to hidden resources in case of need.

Sublime over-confidence reigned from the outset, and the citizens were ordered to provision themselves for two months only. Grain was even turned away from the gates.

The first shrapnel was a grievous experience for Levant nerves, and for two days all shops were closed and the streets deserted save for foreigners. Even quite late, no matter in what quarter of the town there fell a shell, up went the shutters and away went the people, and the philosophic calm of the Oriental must have been a most valuable asset in those days. Matters were not improved by the existence of a feud between Shukri and Ismail, so that the civil and military authorities were in constant collision.

Important news was rigorously withheld from the garrison, so that for some weeks it was firmly believed in the town that the Turkish army was smashing the allies all along the line. To prevent complete absence of information from arousing suspicions, occasional bulletins detailing skirmishes and outpost affairs were distributed, and at other times general notices remarkable merely for the platitudinous nature of their contents, were issued. One posted on the wall of the Konak on November 21 contained the following paragraph:

'IV. The death foreordained by God is impossible to avoid.'

One wonders what comfort or encouragement a soldier could extract from that! Its efficacy was soon to be tested anyhow, for that very evening the first

regular bombardment, extending over thirteen days, was opened. An awful panic at once seized the foreign colony, and the consuls were obliged to hold a consultation and decide where their timid flock could be bestowed in safety—a difficulty finally solved by sending them to the school of the Sœurs d'Agram.

The first hint of Ottoman disaster was conveyed in a notice, printed in French and Turkish, which was dropped from an aeroplane on November 24. This was easily countered by an official denial, telling the soldiers to place no confidence in the Bulgarian version, and all went well until the armistice. The soldiers had been assured that this had been expressly desired by the Bulgarians, and naturally accepted this as confirmation of Turkish successes. Their disgust can therefore be imagined when they saw the trains running down to Tchataldja and picked up the European papers with details of Lule Burgas and Kumanovo which the Bulgarians studiously dropped from the window. To the majority of the garrison and civilians, this period was intensely dull and trying, though the Turkish and Servian outposts were on friendly terms.

Curiously enough, toward the end a great activity was noticeable among the Young Turk officers, whom Shukri had hitherto checked. In ones and twos they were closeted with Ismail, and the news of the *coup d'état* and Nazim's death surprised no one in Adrianople. Though the majority of officers of either party were glad that the fortress was not to be surrendered without striking a blow, the place was doomed. Shukri was no longer master<sup>1</sup>; for a Young Turk officer told a foreign consul that if he did not do what they said, he would be killed like Nazim. The

<sup>1</sup> He was compelled by the Young Turks to order the disastrous sortie of February 9.

great error of not taking all the mills and grain under military control had been committed, and it was now plain that the bread-supply could not last long. A victualling commission was formed to requisition eatables, draw up a fixed tariff, and decide on the daily quantity, but it was not a success. First, one of the principal members was found concealing grain in his own cellars, and after obeying the regulations for a day or two, the Greeks and Jews found it more profitable to say that their stock was exhausted, and then sell the goods privately at a high price, if a rich man entered the premises.

Meanwhile the renewal of the bombardment on February 3 had caused a fresh outbreak of panic, especially as a number of shells fell in the new quarter where the better-class residents had their quarters. A small hospital of fifty beds which the British and American colony, nine strong, had founded had to be moved farther out, while the French and Italian citizens took refuge in the cellars of the Resurrectionist Fathers. The conduct of the Sœurs d'Agram at this period was wonderful. They remained at their posts, tending the sick and wounded, a smile of encouragement ever on their lips, although their hospital was in an exposed place and shells were falling all around. They put the men to shame.

Early in March the pinch was sorely felt. Grease and butter had given out completely; petroleum was \$8 a tin, sugar and salt \$2 a pound, charcoal and coal unobtainable, also dry wood, for the Turks had deforested the slopes around the town, giving it a desolate, woebegone appearance, especially as all the fine villas on the outskirts were heaps of ruins. Fodder was finished, and the oxen were pitifully thin, while a heavy fall of snow just as the sheep were lambing threatened them with annihilation, until luckily a thaw set

in and freed the green shoots which had been forced on by the snow. Tobacco of an inferior quality was plentiful, but cigarette papers could not be purchased for gold, and the Jews, mindful of their forefathers' skill in making bricks without straw, came to the rescue with fragments of schoolboys' copybooks, with 'Balbus built a wall' and the 'Pons Asinorum' still legible. These masterpieces cost 2 and 3 piastres (10 and 15 cents) a packet of 20. Bread, however, was the greatest need. The

last sacks of grain were kept for the garrison, and when that was exhausted, a horrid mess of bran, barley husks, broomseed or canary seed, of hideous hue, with red and yellow patches, and of revolting texture, was served out at fifty cents a loaf. Yet, as is always the case in places that have gone through a siege, Ananias was given a better meal on the Wednesday night at the consulate than he had eaten for six weeks. It was just the same at Ladysmith and Port Arthur.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB

### THE POETRY OF SYNDICALISM

THE rhapsody in this issue of *The Atlantic*, entitled 'The Cage,' will not pass without challenge. A rebel wrote it, and thought and form alike proclaim rebellion. There will be a few to sympathize and many to condemn, while to some it will seem clear that if there is a poetry of anarchy, this is it. 'The Cage' will call out plenty of literary criticism, plenty of expressions of social sympathy or lack of it, but the simple point which needs emphasis is that whether the poem repels or attracts the reader, he will find in it, if he cares to look, more of the heart and soul of the Syndicalist movement than all the papers of all the economists can teach him. It is ever wise to listen to the serious voices of mankind, and the sinister mutterings of our own day make the farsighted pause to think. Some details concerning author and poem will give point to these remarks.

Arturo M. Giovannitti was born in the Abruzzi, Italy, in 1883. His father

was a physician and chemist, and he himself received the fundamentals of a literary education in the public schools. At eighteen Giovannitti emigrated to America, and, after encountering many varied experiences of an immigrant in search of a livelihood, he entered the Union Theological Seminary in New York, with the purpose of becoming a minister of the Presbyterian Church. Although he never graduated, Giovannitti saw actual service in conducting Presbyterian missions in more than one city, and interested himself in the work of the Church, until socialism came to impersonate religion in his life and led him through the vanishing stages of unbelief into atheism.

During the Lawrence strike, Giovannitti preached with missionary intensity the doctrine of Syndicalism. On June 20, on the charge of inciting a riot, which resulted in the death of a woman, he was arrested with Joseph Ettor and another leader, and held without bail for trial under a statute which had not been invoked since the