THE LOG OF A WOULD-BE WAR CORRESPONDENT, PP. 1-195

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The Log of a Would-Be War Correspondent, pp. 1-195 by Henry W. Farnsworth

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HENRY W. FARNSWORTH

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BY HENRY W. FARNSWORTH



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INTRODUCTION

EARLY in October, the papers began to rumour of "Trouble in the Balkans," and soon it became evident that some sort of a war was about to take place between the Balkan peoples and the Turks. This news seemed to be received with calm interest by the public, but in me it started a veritable fire. The summer before I had travelled through Bulgaria and Servia on my way to Constantinople, and those two names brought a host of memories to my mind. Servia I thought of as a land of grey, rocky hills, of gorges and swift, reddish rivers. I could taste again the strongly flavoured wine of the country and see with startling exactness the flocks of goats climbing the hillsides. At night when the train stopped at a station, the air was warm, fresh and clear; and splendid, wildlooking men strutted up and down on the

platform, wearing peasant costumes and puffing long thin cigarettes. Young girls ran about with baskets of fruit and cried out laughingly to each other. Everybody carried themselves with an indescribable freedom and pride. Something in the feline poise of the men, and their bristling mustachios made me think of Dumas' stories of the Tartars of Derbend.

Bulgaria was a more complex reminiscence. I remembered a very pretty woman who came to meet a friend getting off at Sophia. The hills were more wooded and the landscape seemed larger. At that time I had written home that I wanted to go shooting in the Bulgarian Mountains. We passed many villages, dirty and crowded together. There seemed to be more cultivation; but yet the same atmosphere of health and pride and wildness prevailed. I saw several goatherds carrying guns; all wore the national costume.

Early in the morning we passed the Turkish frontier at Mustapha Pasha. Some troops were drilling in a field beside the tracks. Two men on camels provided the music. One gave the time with a kettledrum, and the other on a shrill fife played endless variations of an eastern theme, always marking the time with emphasis and swaying about on his camel. The landscape was big, with undulating lines of green hills. There were few trees and little or no cultivation. The villages were even more dirty and crowded, with an atmosphere of picturesque calm. Just before reaching Constantinople we passed some old Byzantine fortifications, crumbling and grand.

These impressions of the different countries, although hazy, were yet very strong in my mind. They were all wide of the actual facts in many ways. Indeed, I never saw any other camels in European Turkey. But in the time that I began to read of the coming war in those regions, I was ignorant of this. One morning, going in to Boston on the train, I read that Montenegro had