



The Little Book of the War

Eva March Tappan

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WHEN the grandfathers of the present school-children were studying geography and came to the map of Europe, they found just north of Greece a broad band of country extending from the Black Sea to the Adriatic which was called Turkey. It was bounded on the north by the Save River, but at the northeast it stretched far up along the east side of the Carpathian Mountains. This was "Turkey in Europe," but the Turks ruled a much larger territory in Asia, just across the Straits of Bosphorus. The original home of the Turks was in Persia. They had gradually pushed on to the westward, until they held Asia Minor, Constantinople, and much of what is now known as the Balkan States. They had forced their way to the north and had even besieged Vienna. Then came struggles with Russia. Russia was successful, but the other European countries feared that she might become so powerful as to threaten them, and so made her give up most of her Turkish conquests. Europe wanted the Turks driven back into Asia, but no state was willing that any other state should become heir to their territory. An attack upon them would be likely to bring on a general European war. That is why no one ventured to interfere in 1895, when the Turks, who are Mohammedans, massacred tens of thousands of Armenian Christians. In Turkey in Europe there were several small nations. They were inclined to quarrel among themselves, but on one point they agreed, namely, they all hated their ruler and meant to get free. Greece had freed herself long before Germany began the present war, and one by one most of the other little nations had declared their independence. Bosnia and Herzegovina had fallen into the hands of Austria-Hungary and were helpless. In 1878, after a war between Russia and Turkey, the Treaty of Berlin had been signed, which allowed Austria-Hungary to "occupy" and rule these two countries. In 1908, she announced that she should retain them as permanent parts of her empire. This was not according to the treaty, but for one reason or another nothing was done to prevent it. The Balkan peoples—for the district took its name from the Balkan Mountains—were all excellent fighters, and if they had held together and been willing to yield a point to one another now and then, they could have driven the Turks out of Macedonia and Albania, and perhaps even across the Bosphorus. "Those peoples will never unite," said the wiseheads of Europe; but in 1912 the unexpected happened, the little countries did unite, and they drove the Turks so far toward the Bosphorus that they had nothing left in Europe but Constantinople and a little of the country west of that city. But now the Balkan countries began to quarrel again. Bulgaria did not think there had been a fair division of the land that she had won in the struggle. The result was that they had a little war of a few weeks among themselves, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, and Rumania lining up against Bulgaria, and winning the day.

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