

**DAVID CHRISTIE
MURRAY, ARCHIBALD
FORBES, CHARLES
LOWE, JOHN FREDERICK
MAURICE, FRANK
SCUDAMORE**



**THE GREAT
WAR OF 189-:
A FORECAST**

**David Christie Murray, Archibald Forbes,
Charles Lowe**

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FULL ACCOUNT OF THE MURDEROUS ASSAULT; CRITICAL
CONDITION OF THE WOUNDED PRINCE.

*(By Telegraph from our Own Correspondent, Mr. Francis
Scudamore.)*

Constantinople, *Sunday, April 3 (viâ Varna).*
Noon.

A report has been current here since a late hour last evening, to the effect that an attempt has been made to assassinate Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, at a mining town named Samakoff, about forty miles south of Sofia. It is said that the Prince, who had been shooting in the Balabancha Balkans, was driving into Samakoff towards evening yesterday, when his carriage was stopped, and he was attacked by a number of men armed with knives and pistols. The Prince's attendants succeeded in saving their master's life and in beating off some and capturing others of his assailants, but not before His Highness had been severely wounded.

Prince Ferdinand was carried into the house of an American missionary resident in Samakoff, where he now lies. His Highness's condition is serious, and is rendered the more critical from the fact that there is no very adequate surgical aid obtainable in Samakoff, and it was necessary to telegraph for doctors to Sofia and Philippopolis.

The greatest excitement reigns in Constantinople since the receipt of this intelligence, and very grave anxiety is expressed in diplomatic circles as to the possible consequences of this terrible misfortune.

Editorial Comments.

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It is impossible to overrate the grave significance of this attempted assassination at Samakoff, which in the light of our Correspondent's telegrams would seem to be the prelude to very serious complications in the East. It is, of course, too early to estimate its influence upon general European politics, but we are quite within reason in saying that the dramatic incident may prove to have endangered the peace of Europe. We have long familiarised ourselves with the thought that the Great War of which the world has been in constant dread for some years back, and which is to re-adjust the balance of the Continent, is much more likely to break out in the region of the Danube than on the banks of the Rhine, and the incident at Samakoff may well precipitate the catastrophe. The situation is most perilous, and it is to be hoped that strenuous endeavours will be made by the Powers to chain up the 'dogs of war,' and spare this dying century, at least, the spectacle of their release. Since the Treaty of Berlin patched up the last serious disturbance in Europe, there has been peace; peace, it is true; but a peace subject to perpetual menace, and weighty matter for the consideration of statesmen. Europe has lived, as it were, in armed camps, neutral and watchful; and all the time the nations have prepared against war as though

war were at their doors. The dastardly outrage at Samakoff comes at a sorry time.

For we repeat our firm conviction, based on long and close attention to the political motives at work among the nations, that it is on the Danube and not on the Rhine that the torch of war will first be kindled. To a pessimist, indeed, if not to an unbiassed observer, we may well seem of late to have been drawing nearer and nearer to a general war. The world has never been afflicted with more persistent rumours of war. No single day has passed without bringing us its perturbing crop of tremors and apprehensions about the stability of the European peace. From week to week the Jewish speculators on all the Bourses of Christendom have been robbed of their sleep, and, worse still, of their dividends, by telegrams as to the secret massing of troops on this or that frontier, and of ruinous uprisings in various subject and down-trodden countries. Now it is the Black Sea Treaty that is going to be forcibly robbed of its entire Dardanelles clauses, and again the Bargain of Berlin is about to be perforated, for the sixth time, by the sword-point of the Czar. Then the Roumanians wake up to find the Russians beginning to hem them in on three sides; while, again, newspaper readers are horrified by a revelation of the rapacious passions which some dignify by the title of 'principle of nationality,' and others denounce as criminal 'lust of land,' that are on the verge of outbreak at Athens and Sofia, at St. Petersburg, at Belgrade, at Vienna, at Paris, and even at Rome.

Where is the wisdom of highly-placed men like the German Emperor and his new Chancellor assuring the world,

in addresses from the throne and after-dinner speeches, that the peace of Europe was never more assured than at present, and that the political horizon is without a cloud even of the size of Elijah's ominous and initial speck of vapour? What is the truth or the wisdom of such assurances, when the thorn of Alsace-Lorraine is still sticking in the flesh of the unforgiving and revengeful French; when Italy still has some territory 'unredeemed;' when Denmark still harbours a deep grudge against her truculent despoiler; when even the peaceful Swedes, who are still animated by the spirit of the Great Gustavus, long to free their former subjects, the Finns, from the tyrannical mastery of the Russians; when the Spaniards would gladly profit by a European complication—even if they shrank from the thought of an audacious *coup de main*—to repossess themselves of Gibraltar; when the Portuguese, following suit, would never hesitate to kick their British rival in Africa, if they deemed him to be down; when the Cretans, egged on by the Greeks, are firmly resolved to throw off the galling yoke of the Turks; when ex-ministers like M. Tricoupis stump about the Balkan Peninsula, openly preaching Pan-hellenism and Balkan Federation against the advocates of disunited nationalities; when the Servians secretly vow to settle up old scores with their Bulgarian vanquishers, and when these Bulgarian victors themselves, with their Prime Minister more than their Prince at their head, are sternly determined to be free and independent alike of Sultan and of Czar; when Austria continues to cast longing eyes in the direction of Salonika; and when, above all things, the Colossus of the North, with his head pillowed on snow, and his feet swathed in flowers of the sunny South,

has sworn by the soul of his assassinated and sainted father that he will ever remain true to the intention of his sire in exacting a solid equivalent of power, prestige, and territorial foothold on the Balkan Peninsula for all the blood and treasure spent by Russia in the task of 'liberating' the Bulgarians; when all these things, all these slumbering passions and meditated schemes of aggression and revenge are duly considered, how is it possible for any one, be he sovereign or subject, to lull the world asleep by false assurances of peace which is sooner or later doomed to be broken?

The Triple Alliance will no more succeed in terrorising the souls of all these secret plotters and designers, and in giving them pause, than three inter-locked mountain oaks or firs could stay the downward course of an extended series of separate avalanches, which rend away with them pines, and oaks, and all, in their resistless rush. But has the avalanche, which we thus dread, really and truly at last begun to move? We sincerely trust not, but for the present at least, the omens in the East have an exceedingly ugly and alarming look, and we shall await the arrival of further telegrams with the greatest anxiety. The Triple Alliance is not an embankment that can bar the advancing flood of war, but rather a detached fortress which must itself soon incur the danger of being surrounded and even submerged by the rushing, whirling waters of European strife. Though the parties to this three-cornered pact have agreed to place their fire-engines, so to speak, at each other's disposal in the event of external danger from fire to their respective domiciles, it is beyond the reach of these Powers to prevent

the outbreak of a conflagration, from accident or arson, among the rickety, wind-swept, and thatch-roofed mansions of their neighbours; nor is there any fact better established in connection with fires than that they are used by thieves and anarchists for the purpose of sudden plunder and disorder, at once upon the persons and property of the victims and beholders of such catastrophes.

Let us suppose, for example, that as a consequence of this most alarming incident at Samakoff, hostilities should ensue between Russia and Austria, the former being the aggressor. In that case Germany—in virtue of her published Treaty with the Hapsburg Monarchy—would almost immediately have to take the field. Now, in such a contingency, is there not a grave danger that France, seizing the golden opportunity for which she has so long been waiting, would at once mobilise her army, and march the greater part of it towards the Rhine? And is it not certain that the immediate result of such a revengeful step on her part would be that Italy, true likewise to her Treaty engagement with Germany, would make haste to spring upon the flank of the Republic?

It is not well to forecast evils, but at the same time it is well to look clearly ahead. We know surely enough the real nature of the feelings with which the Bulgarians are regarded by their 'Liberators,' just as we are equally cognisant of the true character of those who profess to be the Sultan's 'friends,' and who, with the privilege of most intimate amity, have repeatedly helped themselves to disintegrating slices of his dominions. We need not remind our readers of that bitterness which still rankles in the

breasts of the Roumanians at the memory of the manner in which they were 'rewarded' for services rendered at the Gravitza Redoubt and elsewhere during the war against the Turks; a bitterness which was only equalled by the rage of the Russians when they recognised the supreme folly of their conduct in forcing Roumania to accept the Dobrudja in exchange for Bessarabia, and thus depriving themselves of a *pied à terre* and strategical base of operations south of the Danube, in the direction of the grand goal of their ultimate ambition—the Golden Horn. It is as much the desire of Russia to undo this unfortunate bargain as it is to shake herself free from the intolerable shackles that restrain her liberty of action in the Black Sea, and seal up the outlets thereof against her ships of war. Russia is only awaiting a proper opportunity for accomplishing these two other stages in what she deems to be her destiny (and does not everything come to him who can wait?) just as she continues to pursue her anti-English policy in Central Asia with steady, disdainful, unresisted strides, ever lessening the distance between her own frontiers and those of India, and thus paving the way for the execution of her policy of preventing the forces of England from being thrown into the balance should any complication arise in the East of Europe. 'And ever,' as Tennyson sang, 'upon the topmost roof the banner of England blew;' but that proud banner has now, at last, been blown away by Cossack colonels from the topmost roof of all—the 'Roof of the World' itself, thus enabling Russia to overpeer our very Indian plains, and thence despatch her Calebs and her Joshuas to spy out this other land of promise.

It may be quite true—and, indeed, from all we know of the character of the Czar, we think it is quite true—that Alexander III. has a holy horror of war, into which he is determined not to plunge his people; and we have been assured by the greatest master of modern war, the late Count Moltke, that the period of dynastic conflicts, or struggles resulting from the personal passions and petulance of rulers, has come to an end, and been succeeded by wars between peoples and nations. This is also quite true; but it is precisely herein that the greatest danger lurks. For a ruler—as witness the case of the present Czar's own father—may prove too weak to restrain or deflect the set of the popular tide, and he plunged into a war against his own will. It is also conceivable that the French Government might find it impossible to resist the clamours of the Chamber to embrace the first opportunity—and what could be a better one than a general European conflagration? for ousting the English from Egypt—an object which all good Frenchmen deeply have at heart. But it is on the Balkan Peninsula, where there are no rulers or restraining influences to speak of, that popular passions and aspirations must enjoy most unbridled sway; and therefore it is that we look with anxiety for the further development of this tragic event at Samakoff, which has already thrown the Balkan countries into a state of wild excitement, and all Europe into a fit of ever-increasing alarm.

(By Telegraph from our Special Correspondent, Mr. Francis Scudamore.)

Philippopolis, *April 4.*

(Sunday Night.) I date this message from Philippopolis, whence indeed it will be despatched on our arrival there to-

morrow; but, as a matter of fact, it is written in the sleeping car of a special train by which I am travelling to Ichtiman *en route* for Samakoff, in company with Drs. Patterson, Stekoulis, and Lelongt, who have been invited by telegraph to meet their Bulgarian colleagues in consultation at the bedside of the wounded Prince. It is to these gentlemen's courtesy that I owe the privilege of my passage.

I am enabled, by the kindness of my friends at the United States Legation, which, as is natural in the circumstances, has received minute information as to the occurrence, to give you a fuller and more authentic account of the Samakoff tragedy of yesterday by which Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria so nearly lost his life, than is likely to have been transmitted as yet, and of which no doubt garbled first reports have already thrown consternation into every European capital. I have already stated that it is in the house of an American missionary that Prince Ferdinand is at present lying. I must now explain that Samakoff, which is nestled in the heart of a picturesque valley formed by the rough triangle of the Kilo Dagh, the Kadir Tèré, and the Demir Kapou Dagh at the head of the Balabanča range of Balkans, is not only one of the wealthiest towns in the principality,—thanks to the iron mines by which it is surrounded,—but is also famous and dear to Bulgarians by reason of the presence there of the American Mission School, whose principals rendered such devoted and signal service to the oppressed Christians throughout the terrible time of the massacres of 1876 and the war of 1877. At that time, when, as will be remembered, to be a Bulgarian was all-sufficient reason for being summarily hanged (if a man),

or foully outraged (if a woman), the principal of the school and his courageous wife snatched many victims from the gallows, and rescued from a terrible fate, by harbouring in the mission-house, numerous young girls and children, fugitives from the devastated villages of the Balkan slopes. And when brighter days dawned for Bulgaria, and it became a principality, the services of the American Mission at Samakoff were not forgotten. It became a custom, inaugurated by Prince Alexander and studiously maintained by his successor, for the Ruler of Bulgaria to visit Samakoff in an informal manner once or twice a year, for the purpose of inspecting the mission school and complimenting its directors.

The snows which have held Samakoff isolated from the rest of the world throughout the past four months, are now just melted, and thus it chanced that Prince Ferdinand, who for a week past had been shooting in the hills around Philippopolis, decided to pay his first visit of the year to the missionaries of Samakoff, and had, unfortunately as it turns out, announced his intention of so doing.

The Prince, with this purpose in view, left Philippopolis on Friday evening, passing the night in his sleeping-car, and yesterday morning started in a *calèche* from Ichtiman-i-Vakarel, formerly the boundary between Bulgaria and the province of Eastern Roumelia, to drive to the little township in the mountains.

His Highness has usually been accompanied on these visits by one or other of the ministers, but on this occasion, owing partly, no doubt, to his hurriedly-formed plans, he had with him only one of the aides-de-camp who had been of

the shooting-party. The Prince's carriage was preceded by half-a-dozen mounted guards, and followed by a like number, as an escort. This is a precaution which Prince Ferdinand's advisers have prevailed with him, much against his will, to adopt of late, in view of the renewed activity of Russian agents and sedition-mongers throughout the Principality and the neighbouring States, where, indeed, a great anti-Bulgarian and anti-Turkish propaganda has been actively carried on for the past year; and in view also of the growing apprehension of his advisers that the recent success in this city of assassins in Russian pay, coupled with the immunity from punishment which the Czar's representatives have shown their ability and readiness to secure for them, would prompt the conspirators, soon or late, to fly at higher game than either M. Stambuloff or the late Dr. Vulkovitch. That his Highness's advisers were in the right has been proved by the attempt of yesterday. The event, however, may be said to offer encouragement at once to would-be regicides and to their intended victims, inasmuch as it has been shown yet once again to the former, how useless as a protection against assassins is the presence of an armed escort, and to the latter, how apt is a well-matured plot to be frustrated by a commonplace accident.

The Prince's carriage was expected to reach Samakoff about noon, and shortly before that hour a considerable number of persons had collected in the main street, while small crowds had gathered round the gates of the Prefecture and about the door of the American Mission-house, which is situated in a side street leading off the high road, and where

the usual modest preparations had been made for the princely visit.

His Highness, on arrival, after halting for a moment or two at the gate of the Prefecture where he did not alight, drove on through the town towards the Mission-house. At the moment when the carriage turned the corner into the narrower street, a man wearing the long black gown and brimless stovepipe hat of a priest of the orthodox church stood forward from the crowd, in which were several other persons dressed as he was, and, raising a revolver, took deliberate aim at his Highness. And then occurred the accident to which, in all probability, Prince Ferdinand owes his life. The cartridge did not explode. The sham priest lowered his weapon slightly, raised it once more, and again pulled the trigger; but as he did so the pistol barrel was struck up—the ball burying itself in the wall of a house across the street—and the assassin was seized and firmly held by many willing hands.

The whole occurrence had taken but a moment. The Prince, when he saw the pistol levelled at him, had leapt to his feet, with the evident intention of throwing himself upon his murderer. As it was, his Highness's intervention seemed very necessary on behalf of the baffled assassin, who stood in no small danger of being lynched incontinently by his furious captors.

The carriage had stopped; the escort was hastily dismounting, and the Prince, shouting orders to the people to spare their prisoner's life, had alighted, and turning, was in the act of throwing his heavy pelisse to his companion, when sudden as thought a second ruffian sprang from amid

the vociferating mob, hurled himself upon the Prince, and thrusting a great, broad-bladed Circassian *khanga* into his bosom, was away and out of sight almost before any of the bystanders had recovered from this second shock of horror and surprise.

His Highness, who had sunk to the ground under the blow, though he did not lose consciousness, was at once carried into the Mission-house, distant a few yards only, and very speedily all the best medical advice obtainable in Samakoff was at hand, while telegrams for further assistance were at once despatched to Sofia and to Philippopolis, the latter place being perhaps more rapidly accessible than the capital. The first examination of the wound showed that the broad knife had turned on the point of a rib—very fortunately—and had therefore missed, by a hair's-breadth the envelope of the heart. It was not till to-day that a persistent recurrence of internal hæmorrhage aroused the gravest fears of the Prince's surgeons, and prompted them to appeal to Constantinople for further advice.



THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF PRINCE FERDINAND OF BULGARIA.

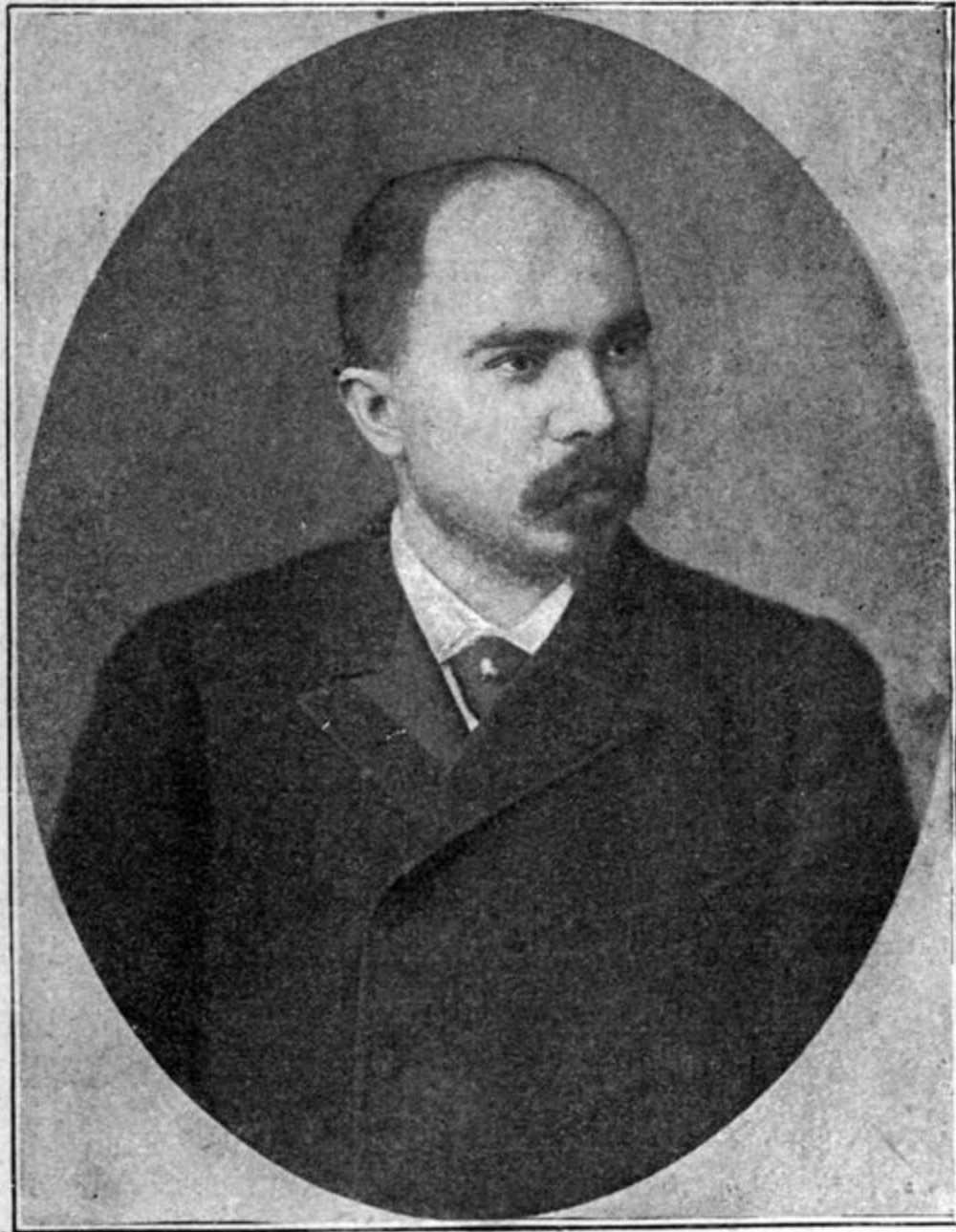
The pretended priest, when searched, was found to be costumed beneath his robes in the ordinary dress of the petty trader of the towns here. His long flowing locks proved a wig, and his thick unkempt beard was also false. Upon him, among other papers said to be of great importance, but as to which I know nothing, was found a passport issued by the Russian Consulate at Odessa no less recently than last month, and bearing the *visé* of the Russian Chancellor at Sofia. The passport is made out in the name of Ivan Bendukdjeff, and belongs, the fellow avows, to a man, a stranger to him, who left it with him by mistake a week ago. But the authorities entertain few doubts as to the scoundrel's identity with one of the men implicated with Shishmanoff in the recent murder of Dr. Vulkovitch.

I have said that the news of this dastardly attempt on Prince Ferdinand's life caused the greatest excitement in Constantinople. There is indeed no doubt that both the Palace and the Porte are very seriously alarmed, as, in view of the Sultan's disgraceful action in the Vulkovitch affair, it is only just they should be. It is significant of his Majesty's state of mind that, when early this (Sunday) morning, first the French and then the Russian Ambassador drove to the residence of the Grand Vizier, they were unable to see him, orders having been sent from Yildiz ordering the Pasha not to receive them. Sir Clare Ford, on the other hand, had a long interview with the Sultan this morning.

Philippopolis, *April 4.*

When the train steamed into the station here, I learned in the restaurant, where every one was eagerly discussing the events of the past two days, that the second assassin was captured yesterday afternoon at Banja, as the result of an order widely circulated by both telegraph and horse messengers throughout the country, calling upon all Tchorbadjis, or headmen of villages, to detain any stranger found within their jurisdiction, and at once communicate with the nearest central authority. The man has been identified as one Nicholi Nāoum, a very well-known character who, besides being suspected of participation in the murder, last spring, of M. Beltcheff, is known to have been acting for the past six months as a revolutionary agent on the Macedonian frontier. Nāoum, who, as leader of a gang of border brigands, has gained a bloody notoriety in connection with various dastardly outrages against society, is believed to have been recently engaged in distributing arms and ammunition among Macedonian villages, and in

inciting the Macedonians to molest the Bulgarians dwelling among them. Nāoum, when arrested, was found to be provided, like his accomplice, with a Russian passport executed in regular form. He was immediately carried back to Samakoff and confronted with Bendukdjeff, against whom he at once began to rail as a bungler, making no attempt to exonerate himself, or to deny his share in the tragedy. In this course, perhaps, he was guided by the knowledge that his life was already forfeited for many atrocious crimes before he set his hand against Prince Ferdinand. As a consequence of his last admission of guilt, a very brief trial was necessary, and the two wretches were hanged this morning outside the house in which they had lodged on Friday night in Samakoff.



M. STAMBULOFF

Prime Minister of Bulgaria, appointed Regent after the attempted assassination of Prince Ferdinand.

The Prince is apparently doing well. M. Stambuloff, who, on receipt of news of the disaster, hurried to his master's bedside, remained but one hour in Samakoff, during which

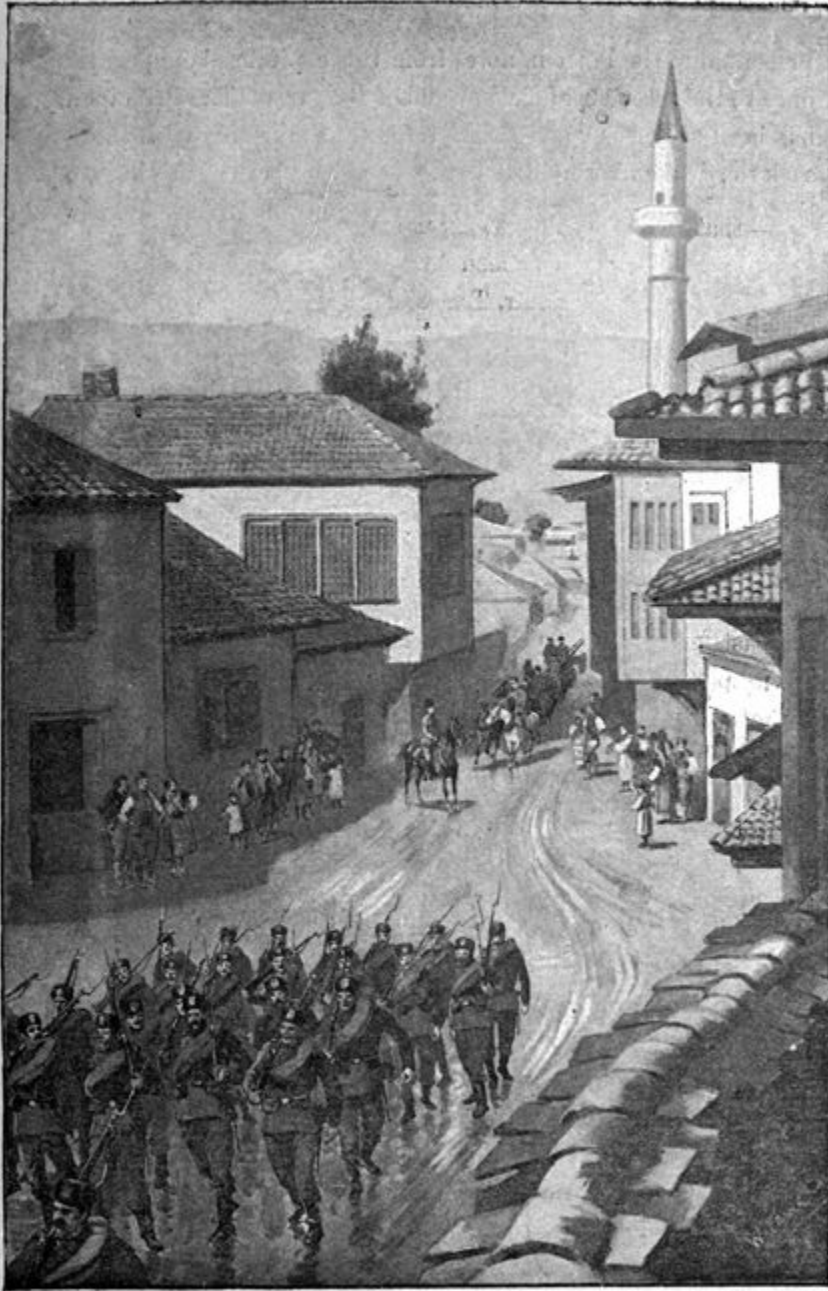
time, despite the doctors, the Prince insisted on seeing him, and returned direct to Sofia. Late on Saturday night, at a meeting attended by most of the Ministers, hurriedly convened, he was declared Regent during the serious illness of the Prince, and for such time as might be necessary, and the formal proclamation in accordance with this decision was issued yesterday morning.

Sofia, *April 6.*

Instead of accompanying Dr. Patterson and his colleagues on a, to me, fruitless expedition to Samakoff, I bid them good-bye at Ichtiman, where they left the train, and came on here. As might be expected, I have found this city boiling with tumultuous emotions, and not only—though that were sufficient cause—on account of the outrageous attempt on Prince Ferdinand's life.

It appears that the Cabinet has received news of the greatest importance from the Macedonian frontier. The assiduous efforts of Russian agents, who have been actively engaged for the past six months or more not only in the provinces itself, but also in the Greek and Montenegrin borders, in fomenting an anti-Bulgarian rising, are now on the eve of being crowned with success. Already reports have reached the capital of disturbances, caused apparently by raids made across the border at Petrovich and Melnik. That there is a great shifting of troops at present in progress as a result of this intelligence, is not denied. It is said, indeed, though I cannot as yet tell with what truth, that a half division has been ordered to Petrovich, and another like force to Strumnitza. The latest rumour here is to the effect that the movement in Macedonia is as much anti-Turkish as anti-Bulgarian, and that Turkey is also despatching a large

military force to Salonika. If this report be true, it is surely an instance of the irony of fate. In this country it is a matter of common talk that any anti-Bulgarian movement in Macedonia is mainly due to the attitude of Zuknir Pasha, the Vali of Salonika, towards the large Bulgarian element of the population of the province under his control. This functionary's persistent ill-treatment of Bulgarians has been very frequently represented to the Porte in notes from this capital as being contrary at once to the interests of Turkey and of Bulgaria. The Principality, it has been said, has consistently refused to take side with those who seek the dismemberment of Turkey, and has claimed a right to expect that the development of the Bulgarian element in Macedonia would not be crushed by Pashas who, by their arbitrary actions, paralyse the intentions of the central government, and prepare the way for events which had better, in the common interest, be avoided. It is needless to say these sensible warnings have been altogether disregarded by the Porte, with the present inevitable result.



THE BULGARIAN MOBILISATION—TROOPS MARCHING THROUGH THE STREETS OF PHILIPPOLIS.

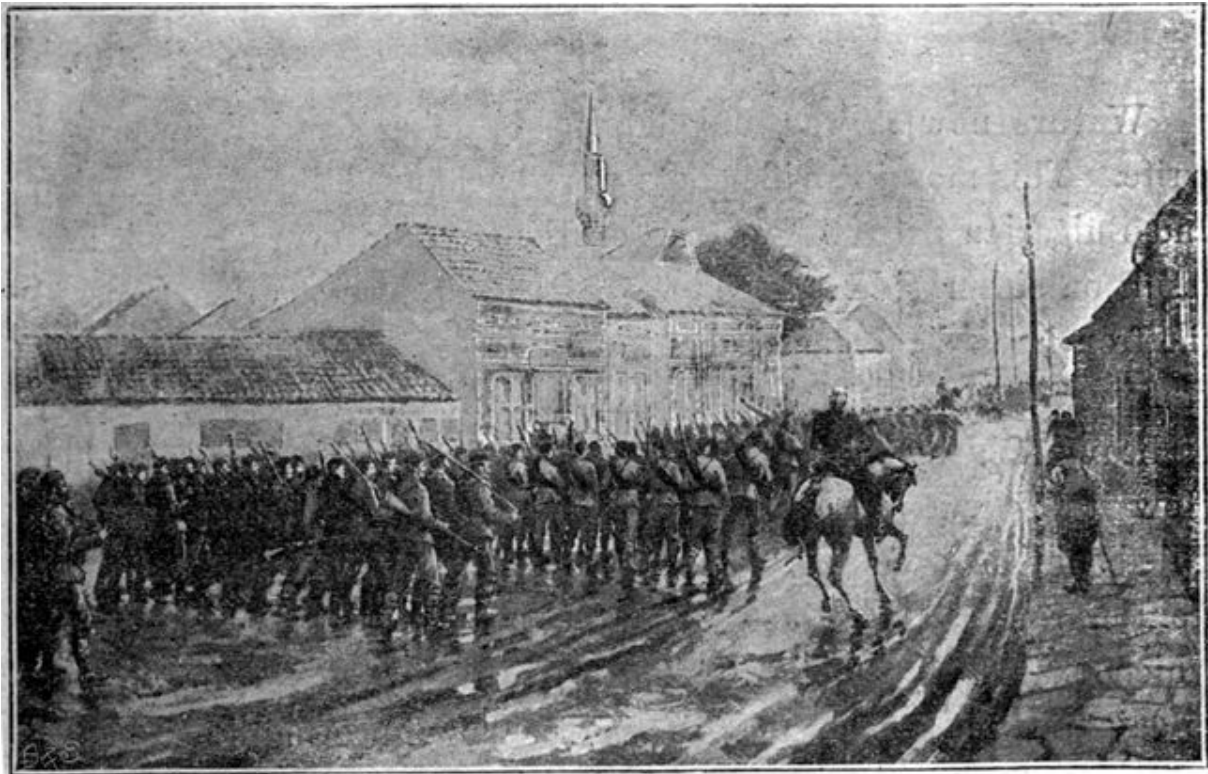
It is further rumoured here—for the place is full of suspicion—that in view of certain movements of Servian troops, a large Bulgarian force has been hurriedly thrown forward to strengthen the troops at Radomir, Trn, and Zaribrod.

Sofia, April 8.

The latest reports as to Prince Ferdinand are more favourable than could have been hoped for. The dangerous symptoms have subsided. Internal hæmorrhage has been checked. The Prince sleeps and takes nourishment, and his pulse and temperature are satisfactory. Hopes are held out that in a week's time His Highness may be moved from Samakoff. Meanwhile, during the past few days, events have marched so rapidly that people here are prepared for almost any eventuality. There is no longer any attempt to conceal the movements of Servian troops. Great numbers of men are already massed at Nisch and Vranja, and at points on the line of railway between Nisch and Pirot. The main body of the Servian army has its headquarters at Knuzevatz. From Belgrade, we learn of the steady despatch of war material and siege-train to Negotin on the frontier against Widdin, and a telegram from the same source announces the arrival at Nisch of a train of the Red Cross Society, consisting of eighteen carriages furnished with all the necessary equipment for active service.

News from Constantinople is to the effect that the Porte, alarmed at the aspect of affairs in Macedonia, has, in addition to the calling out of the last class of rediffs, decided on the formation of five new Army Corps. Fresh levies are to be made in order to form a strong reserve. The transport of rediffs, mainly from Smyrna, Skanderoun, and the Tripolitaine, is being carried on on a large scale. Over 27,000 reservists have already passed through Smyrna. Many of the Austrian Lloyd vessels being engaged in the transport of troops to Salonika to guard the frontier line and to reinforce the Bitolia garrison, the Seraskierate is negotiating with

some English shipping companies for additional transport. More than fifty thousand troops are to be employed on the Macedonian border in a line stretching from Mitrovitza on the north, all round to Raslok on the south-east. Their chief stations will be Palanka, with Uskub as base, and Djuma and Neurokoy with Strumdja as base. No further disturbances are reported from the frontier.



THE SERVO-BULGARIAN CAMPAIGN—THROUGH PIROT TO THE FRONT.

M. Stambuloff left here last night to inspect the troops on the frontier. I am, of course, unable to give any information as to their numbers or disposition, but it may be said that Bulgaria is well prepared to resist any attack. It is infringing no rule to say that the Prince's army possesses no fewer than 400 pieces of ordnance of all calibres. The report that his appointment as Regent has met with disapprobation