

undertaking was 'silly,' that the Salonika landing is 'futile,' that we should have gone long ago to Macedonia, that we are going to win the war but 'we are going the wrong way,' etc., we are getting not facts but merely the personal opinions of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, of no more military importance, and possibly even of less, than the views of the careful and thoughtful contributors who furnish the war notes to our own daily press. To tell us, simply and quietly, in half a dozen lines, that owing to the strength of the Turkish defences and to the fact that the enemy had had ample warning of our land attacks, the operations at the Dardanelles have reached a critical stage, necessitating a reconsideration of the whole position, is one thing; to deluge us with denunciations of the enterprise, informing us at portentous length that even if we capture Achi Baba we can never get to Constantinople, that even if we get to Constantinople we are no nearer to final success, and that the whole adventure is an appalling blunder and a useless slaughter of our men, is altogether overdoing the thing, and calls for strenuous and vigorous protest. In view of the sacrifices which have been made, such talk is cruelly and needlessly harrowing to our people; and in view of the fact that appeals are still being made for further recruits for Gallipoli, the publication of such stuff is a piece of supreme and almost inconceivable folly. If some humble newspaper in Ireland gave utterance to such sentiments, it would be promptly suppressed, as being guilty of conduct calculated to injure recruiting. The offence is none the less merely because it has the well-known name of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett to counter-sign it. As illustrating the extent to which the public are at the mercy of the cable editors and sub-editors in respect to the complexion given to the war items sent out to this country, we may direct attention to the varying form in which one of these croaking cables was served up to us in our dailies. We refer to the message from Mr. G. R. Fortescue, an American correspondent who had evidently been allowed to see things from the Turkish and German viewpoint. Precisely the same message was, of course, received in Christchurch and in Dunedin. In the Christchurch *Press*, the opening paragraph was given thus: 'Mr. Granville Fortescue, an American correspondent, who saw the fighting at the Dardanelles from the Turkish side, has published a book upon the Dardanelles campaign.' In the Christchurch *Sun* it appeared in this form: 'Mr. Granville Roland Fortescue, ex-aide de camp to Mr. Roosevelt, who saw the Turkish side, has published a book on the Dardanelles.' While the Dunedin dailies gave it to us thus: 'Colonel Charles Granville Fortescue, D.S.O., who saw the Dardanelles defences from the Turkish side, has published a book on the Dardanelles.' On the strength of this version, we were asked to receive the message with respect, as being the expert utterance of a highly-placed British officer, when in reality it was nothing better than the glib and confident *ipse dixit* of an American correspondent.

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That there have been serious blunders in the execution of the Dardanelles enterprise—just as there have been admitted blunders on the British and French and German side in France and elsewhere—may be readily acknowledged; but even Mr. Ashmead Bartlett admits that in its original design 'the scheme was a great conception.' And it is pertinent to point out that the criticism which is now being ladled out so lavishly is of the cheap and easy kind which comes after the event. In the early stages of the undertaking, not a voice was raised in protest. No one has written in more glowing and grandiloquent terms of the landing at Gabatepe and of the early land and sea operations than Mr. Ashmead Bartlett himself. The launching of the attack on the Dardanelles was received with approval and even with enthusiasm by the English press. 'The bombardment of the forts at the entrance of the Dardanelles by a powerful British and French squadron is evidently no more than the opening of a continued and determined operation,' said the London

Observer. 'Upon all the Balkan nations it will make an impression more profound than can easily be understood by most people on this side of Europe. It will be hailed, we think, both in the East and West as the brilliant beginning of events which, through both their direct and indirect effects, must go far indeed to decide in favor of the Allies the struggle in the East.' 'To force open the gate of the Dardanelles is an object of primary importance to the Allies,' said the *Pall Mall*. 'Through that gate will pass the corn and oil which Western Europe needs, and the supplies and munitions of war required by the Russians. Moreover, in the event of complete success, Constantinople itself will lie under the guns of the Allied Fleet. The consequences of such an event on the Turkish mind are incalculable. The Admiralties of the Allies have conceived a daring and original offensive. If it succeeds, we shall look to see developments in other quarters which are at present unexpected. The war has proved more than once that sea power is an element incalculable to the Germanic mind. We have good hope that it is going to prove itself capable of upsetting the calculations of our enemies in a very vital manner.' Even the careful and sober *Times* approved and blessed the undertaking. 'Consider for a moment,' it said, 'the present position of Russia. She is a vast Empire, with millions of men mobilised, and is crammed with surplus stores of wheat, yet for all practical purposes she is more cut off from the rest of the world than is Germany. The White Sea is ice-bound, and Archangel, which is indifferently served by its railway, will not be open until some time in May. The Baltic is hermetically sealed. The way to the Black Sea is closed by the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Vladivostock is too far away to be of much use. *Russia is in bonds, and it is the duty of her Allies to burst them if they can.* Immeasurable advantages would flow from the opening of a clear way to Odessa. Ships laden with wheat would stream outwards, and ships laden with the equipment and stores which Russia so greatly needs would stream inwards. A wedge would be driven into the enemy's fighting line, which still stretches, though not uninterruptedly, from the North Sea to the heart of Mesopotamia. The fall of Constantinople, should it be brought about, would probably further mean the collapse of the Turkish offensive. The Turks would never survive a blow at their heart. The bombardment of the Dardanelles, therefore, if the Allies are able to carry it to its logical conclusion, contains that touch of imagination which has of late been conspicuously lacking in the war.' The enterprise has not as yet succeeded—owing to causes that are now tolerably well known, and some of which, at least, could hardly have been foreseen—but that is a poor reason for turning and rending alike the men who conceived it and the men who have attempted to carry it through. Still less does it justify the suggestion that those who claim to represent the 'boys of the bull-dog breed' should sit down and wring their hands about it.

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The other feature of the week's events which especially concerns New Zealand is the compilation of a national war register, which is now well under way. The schedule to be filled in by all men between the ages of 17 and 60 years is commendably clear and simple, and in this respect is in marked contrast to the cumbrous and confusing forms adopted in Britain and in the Commonwealth. The census, when completed, should greatly simplify the work of the authorities in raising the further bodies of reinforcements required, but its practical value will, of course, depend upon the use which is made of it. In this connection the outstanding feature of the past few weeks has been the remarkable development—especially amongst the working classes—of the movement for compulsory service. The movement is quite unmistakable, and is daily and hourly gathering strength. It is not based on any fine-spun theoretic principles, but on considerations of common fairness and justice. 'We are quite willing,' said the Hillside workers, to the Minister of Defence the other day, 'to do our share in the war, provided every-