

II.—AN IMPRESSION OF GALLIPOLI.

BY W. J. STEPHENS, R.A.M.C.

GALLIPOLI is a mass of rocky ridges rising to a height of over 700 feet from the sea. The hills are so steep and sharply cut that to reach their tops in many places is a matter of sheer climbing. Most of the land is covered with a dense scrub from three to six feet high, with stunted forests in the hollows. . . .

JOHN BUCHAN.

(*"Nelson's History of the War."*)

. . . Further inland lie in a tangled knot the under features of Sari Bair, separated by deep ravines, which take a most confusing diversity of direction. Sharp spurs, covered with dense scrub, and falling away in many places in precipitous sandy cliffs, radiate from the principal mass of the mountain.

SIR IAN HAMILTON.

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"BUG-HUNTING" is an exciting recreation, but after stalking the agile flea along the seams and furrows of a regulation "greyback" for something like half-an-hour, I heaved a thankful sigh, yanked out my battered briar, and, gathering the remnants of my carcass into an attitude of comparative repose, inhaled the fragrant smoke, and sank into communion with the spirit of Gallipoli.

A strange, a moody being. His rugged, scarred, but mobile visage mirrors all the depths and shadows of his soul. I catch glimpses of dark dreariness and melancholy lightened by a spark of laughter; of rugged bitterness and strife softened by a touch of tenderness and repose; of rank ugliness, despair, and disappointment relieved by noble fortitude and hope.

To me, where I sit smoking, Gallipoli rises steeply from a narrow shingle beach. He does not, sprawling on his belly, stretch out his limbs reposefully to a slumbrous sea, but coldly, proudly, lifts his patchy head. Behind me, tier on tier, in irregular scrubby terraces, rise our cunningly constructed bivouacs—a mottled

wound on the bluff's steep, ragged flanks, alive with busy insects. Away to the left, through a gap in the rifted ridge, I gaze on broken undulations—large, irregular hard white patches glinting through a mangy coat of densely matted scrub. Here, old Gallipoli vainly aspires to attain a noble height; there, disappointed and disheartened, he sinks in depths of desolation, choked with arid sand or strangled with dense, patchy vegetation. Yet up he struggles again, stripping his glistening sides in dogged endeavour, proudly, steeply, defiantly flinging up his battered head.

Away on the right, with a melancholy sprawl, he creeps slowly from the strip of rubble beach away on and over into the purple-grey oblivion of the distant scarps and ridges. Sometimes, across his threadbare garment, run shoddy, long-drawn seams of lonely trees. Here and there the drabness and the dreariness of his cracked and furrowed mantle are relieved by pleasant splashes of bright colour. A many-tinted vineyard trails affectionately along a sunny wrinkle; laughing poppies float their merry heads above a waving sea of short-stalked corn; and the ragged bramble straggles along the meagre overflow of a quaint old well.

On the hither side, a vast escarpment, gouged and scored with deepening gullies, lifts its irregular, cliff-like face, and thrusts steep bluffs out on the barren plain—grim headlands jutting out into a sea of desolation. 'Tis here we glimpse the grand defiance of Gallipoli. Bludgeoned and battered, slashed with deep gashes, and jagged with lacerated wounds, but unbowed and unconquerable, he rises grandly from the rock-strewn, scrub-choked sand of rift and gully. Throwing out great rough spurs, piling up sheer craggy cliffs, invincible, he rises to the ridge.

The setting sun accentuates the hard-bitten sternness of his grand old features, touches with harsh light the points and spurs, deepens the shades and shadows of crag and fell, and throws sombre-pencilled patches on the plains. It intensifies the melancholy desolation

of barren stretches, and the pathetic struggle of the grim peninsula to push his stubborn heights above the mediocre.

Here is a scored and furrowed soul, seared with bitter struggles and disappointed aspirations, drooping here and there in sad and unkempt desolation, yet ever breaking forth in new endeavour—to toss his scraggy mane in grand defiance.

As the sun drops lower, remorsefully it spreads a garb of awesome splendour over the soul it has laid bare. Its rosy fingers steal softly through the tangled flora, spreading delicate tints with subtle skill; then, creeping slowly up the cold grey heights, soften and warm them with a purple glow. And with a last endearing caress it smoothes the wrinkles from the shaggy brow and gilds the ridges with a Midas touch before it sinks into the dancing Main.

Softly tapping the cold ashes from my pipe, I crawled into my dug-out.