

troops were assembling in the vicinity of Sabanja and Ismid. Difficulties, however, soon arose; Ada Bazar was lost on 23rd May, the Government troops showed no inclination to fight and fell back in disorder to the vicinity of Ismid, which had been entrenched and was held by a British garrison.

As in my opinion the presence of these Turkish troops constituted a source of weakness to the defence of Constantinople against the Nationalist forces I decided to disarm and disband them, and issued orders accordingly on 10th June. As is usual in Turkey considerable delay arose in the carrying out of these orders, and on the 14th the Nationalist forces attacked the Government troops in the vicinity of Ismid before their withdrawal had even commenced. As a result the greater part of the Turkish forces, which I had instructed to retire by the military road to the north of Ismid, fell back on the town itself, where they were disarmed and shipped to Constantinople. At the same time the Nationalist forces, which had begun to surround Ismid, were informed of the action taken and of the fact that they would not be permitted to occupy the town. A truculent reply was received. Final preparations for defence were then made. A party of seamen landed from H.M.S. "Ramillies" and the 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders were ordered up as a reinforcement. My instructions were to the effect that British troops were not to commence hostilities with the Nationalists. During the night of 14/15th June, however, the first Nationalist attacks on the Ismid garrison commenced. They met with no success.

As the enemy appeared to be increasing in strength, and were rapidly surrounding the town, it was decided to withdraw a company of the 24th Punjabis, which had been detailed to guard the road junction some four miles to the north. During this retirement, which it was hoped to conduct without opposition, the company was suddenly attacked and suffered severe losses; it succeeded, however, in reaching the Ismid main defences, whence two companies of the Gordon Highlanders had been despatched to its assistance.

Meanwhile H.M.S. "Revenge," the flagship of the 1st Battle Squadron, Atlantic Fleet, had arrived in the Gulf, and further detachments of seamen and marines had been landed. As the Nationalist forces were now threatening the railway from Constantinople I decided to withdraw all posts east of Tuzlan and to rely solely on communication by sea. At the same time the depôt at Derindje was evacuated, and all Turkish munitions of war stored there were destroyed. Undoubtedly the attack on Ismid was organised with a view to securing possession of this large depôt, from which I had, however, previously removed all small-arm ammunition.

The attacks on Ismid, which took place during the next few days, were easily repulsed by the garrison, supported by the fire of His Majesty's ships, and it would appear that the Nationalist forces received a severe lesson, as all formed bodies were withdrawn towards Eskishehr.

Since about the middle of June irregular bands of so-called Nationalists have been roaming about the Ismid Peninsula, threatening the railway and intimidating the population. The arrival of British and Greek re-

inforcements enabled me to take drastic action against these, by the employment of small mobile columns, under the command of Major-General H. L. Croker, C.B., C.M.G., and Major-General Sir W. E. Ironside, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., in the western and eastern areas of the peninsula respectively. Mounted infantry had been formed locally from infantry personnel for this purpose; the timely arrival of the 20th Hussars was, nevertheless, most welcome. The bands have suffered severely; several hundred rifles have been collected, and order has been practically restored in the peninsula.

## II.—EVENTS IN THE CAUCASUS AND TRANS-CASPIA.

### (1) Introduction.

In the summer of 1918, in consequence of the disintegration of the Russian armies, caused by the revolution, the Turks had invaded the Caucasus, at the instigation of their fellow Mahomedans, and were in process of establishing the independent states of Azerbaijan in the eastern and of Dagestan in the northern Caucasus. They succeeded in compelling the small British force which was in Baku to evacuate that town on 15th September, 1918, and a two days' massacre of Armenians followed, as a reprisal for the Armenian massacre of Tartars in March, 1918. In continuation of their policy of forming the Mahomedan State of Dagestan, their troops had advanced northwards, and invested a Russo-Armenian force at Petrovsk, where, despite the recently concluded Armistice, fighting continued, the Turks hoping to complete their conquest of the Caucasus before withdrawal was forced on them. Petrovsk was defended by General Bicherakov, in command of a Russian-Armenian force. This General had in the past assisted the British in North-West Persia, and was now employed in opposing the Turkish plans for the conquest of the Caucasus. Though President of the so-called Central Caspian Government at Petrovsk, he acknowledged only the authority of the Russian Central Government at Omsk. The policy of the Central Caspian Government was to establish democratic Russian rule in the Caucasus and Russian predominance in northern Persia. The Central Caspian Government was in possession of the warships of the Russian Caspian Fleet, the crews of which were tainted with Bolshevik ideas, and, although it recognised General Bicherakov's authority, it did not carry out his orders. The power possessing this fleet controlled the mercantile shipping in the Caspian Sea.

At this time relations between the Azerbaijan and Georgian Governments were strained, and railway communication between these two states was interrupted. Hostilities between Georgia and Armenia were reported to be imminent. On the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, Krasnovodsk was held by a weak battalion of the 39th British Infantry Brigade, which had up to that time prevented the occupation of this town by either Turks or Bolsheviks. The possession of Krasnovodsk was of importance, as it was not only ice-free all the year round, but was also the terminus of the central Asian railway. By its aid communication was maintained with two British forces, one in Persia, under Brigadier-General H. F. Bateman-Champain, C.M.G., the other in the Askhabad