

The Spy Menace in Salonica

SOON after my adventures at Salonica, I said good-bye to my friends, the Navy. I had received a mission to proceed to Beshik, near the Bulgarian front, and to investigate the open area between this place and the sea coast.

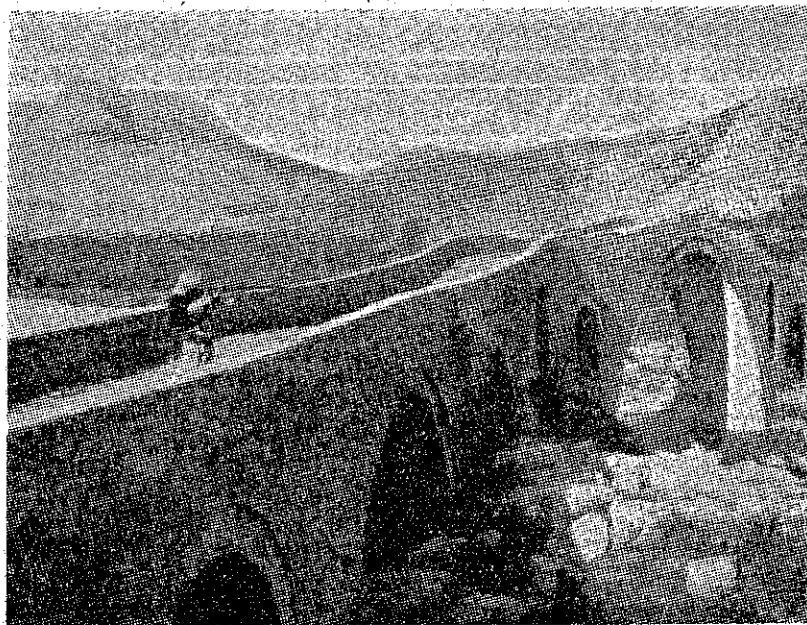
Leaving Stavros with my runner and two horses I proceeded along a valley or gorge that connected the two places—this gorge is a wonderful place, great towering hills line it on either side, and as you wind your way along through dense bush you are impressed by its peaceful, solemn loneliness. You lose all sense of the terrible carnage that is going on in the not too far-distant hills; also, you are never sure that some Greek or Turkish spy may be following the same track, and a shot from behind a rock or ledge will end matters.

Our troops had been around here at one time, but the nature of the surrounding country made fighting impossible for either side, so they moved to the Struma, higher up. The Bulgarians were aware of this, and used this area to get their spies across to Salonica—hence my mission of investigation.

At the end of the gorge one comes to a glorious lake, its water sparkling like a great jewel; here I sought some spot to make my base, and after a good look round found an ideal spot—a very large cave in which I could hide my horses, also serving as living quarters, and, better still, I could view the lake from a large rock just outside the entrance.

Lake Beshik is about 25 miles long and five miles wide, very deep in parts, with flax-like rushes running out from the bank for about 100 yards, which give a fringe to the shore. On the right bank is a tiny fishing village called Little Beshik.

I MADE myself comfortable in my new home, and then instructed my runner to return to Stavros for stores. In his absence I strolled along to the headquarters of a motor-boat patrol, about two miles east from my own. Its job was to patrol the lake for possible spies, watch the fishermen, and act as a line of communication for the likes of me. The boats were old French sardine boats, so named after their use. They were about 60 feet long, and decked over; the crews were drawn from different regiments—in fact, the Army playing at sailors. Two machine-guns were mounted on each boat. The base was very cleverly



At the end of the gorge was a glorious lake, its water sparkling like a jewel . . . it was hard to believe that a terrible war was going on among the not-far-distant hills. My duty was to keep watch for spies who infested the place.

like effect. After making myself known to the officer-in-charge, a man named Sinclair, I instructed him to keep his boats off the lake at night for the next two or three weeks, also arranging a code of signals in case I should need his assistance.

IT was a merry little crowd, consisting of about 30 men all told, but suffering badly from malaria, as the malaria mosquito thrived in these parts. I made trips along the edge of the lake toward the fishing village—my nerves tensely strung. This was new country and vastly different from France and the Navy, where one had the company of one's own fellows.

I had to thank my lucky stars that I had learnt bushcraft in my wanderings. Nearer and nearer I crawled—finally reaching a spot where I could keep the village and waterfront under observation, a dog or goat would give me away—so I had to keep myself hidden carefully. All night and into the day I kept this up for about ten days—nearly dead with mosquitoes.

Everything seemed normal in the village, but finally on a rather dark Sunday night I had crawled down to the waterfront, I spied a rowing-boat coming out of the darkness of the lake. Muffled oars were used, as sound carries far in these parts. If they were fishermen, what had they to fear? I noticed a man in the stern, and from the way they handed him ashore I gathered he was no ordinary man. They all stood on the bank talking and laughing, one of the men shook his fist in the direction of the patrol base, putting his fingers to his nose. Later they all went into a house nearby.

As nothing was to be gained by watching the house I withdrew some miles along the only roadway leading out of the village, and waited. Would my friend of the night come along this way, or was some other messenger to form contact with him? And was he a spy? If he should come, what was I going to do? All these thoughts flashed through my mind as I sat munching (Continued on page 24.)



Major Lewis.

The Final Major Lewis Story