

The Italians had landed two divisions in Albania in December, 1915, and advanced as far as Durazzo, which they held until February. An Austrian army invaded Montenegro in the beginning of the year, and captured Cetinje, the capital, on January 13. Ten days later they took Scutari, and advanced towards Durazzo, which was evacuated by the Italians and occupied by the Austrians on February 26.

At a conference of the Allies it had been decided that Saloniki should be retained as an indispensable base for future operations, and a strong defensive position was prepared far in advance for the protection of the city. A large part of the allied armies engaged in the Gallipoli peninsula were after its evacuation transferred to Saloniki. The remnants of the Serbian army were taken to the island of Corfu for a long period of rest and recuperation after the privations and sufferings of their terrible retreat. These troops, numbering in all upwards of 100,000 effective men, were then transported to Saloniki, to reinforce the allied armies there. The Allies began a vigorous offensive early in September on a front of one hundred and twenty-five miles, and the Bulgarians were steadily driven back in the direction of Monastir. Fighting continued with little intermission until November 19, when that town was taken by the Allies and proclaimed as the temporary capital of Serbia.

THE WAR IN THE CAUCASUS AND MESOPOTAMIA, 1916.

The Russian army in the Caucasus was strongly reinforced in December, 1915, and January, 1916. Its offensive operations were considerably hastened by the evacuation of the Gallipoli peninsula by the allied British and French armies, by which a large Turkish force would be released for service elsewhere. In the midst of severe winter weather an advance was commenced upon Erzerum, the principal Turkish fortress in Armenia. The Turkish army assembled for its protection was routed on January 18, and the fortress evacuated by the Turks on February 16. Another army supported by a fleet on the Black sea took Trebizond on April 18, and the conquest of Turkish Armenia was practically completed by the end of August.

The British division commanded by General Townshend had been besieged at Kut-el-Amara since December 3, 1915. Several determined attacks were repulsed, and the Turks then decided to reduce the garrison by starvation. A relieving column commanded by General Aylmer, after advancing a considerable distance and driving a covering force from several positions, was finally checked on April 23. On April 25 Townshend's division, which was reduced to less than 9,000 troops, was obliged to surrender.

The effective defence of the Suez canal was an object of great importance to the Allies. Garrisons had been established at posts several miles east of the canal to keep hostile forces at a distance. Some of these were unsuccessfully attacked in the early part of the year and again in August. The British troops then began a systematic advance along the coast, building a railway and constructing a pipe line for the conveyance of water as they went. A commanding position was occupied in the heart of the Sinai peninsula, and British