

Letter from H. Cowan - Douglas.

About Piraeus & Athens illustrated by photos  
65, 67, 68.

21<sup>st</sup> July 1917.

We have been on the move... I am now allowed to tell you where I have been lately though you have probably guessed already. Our detachment was in Piraeus, my company occupying the Customs Buildings. At first there were a good many restrictions as the attitude of the inhabitants was uncertain. We did street patrols etc. After a few days with the arrival of Venizelos things became perfectly quiet & we could get passes when we liked in Piraeus & for the last fortnight in Athens as well. There were of course lots of inspections & shows etc. The detachment was inspected by the French General Regnault soon after we got there. He is a perfectly delightful man. There were also great celebrations on the Eve and the Day of the French Fête Day (14<sup>th</sup> Fall of the Bastille). There was a torchlight procession in Piraeus on the Eve. I represented the British Army at the Town Hall that night. Then on the 14<sup>th</sup> there was a review in the Stadium in Athens. We had a representative detachment there. I went as a spectator & it really was a wonderful sight. There were a lot of French troops there, & they were inspected by Regnault who presented medals & made a speech etc. The chief item though, was the presence of Venizelos. There was a huge crowd of spectators there, & they gave him a really colossal reception. It was all the more

astonishing as anyone would have considered it suicide for him to have gone to Athens three weeks before. All the celebrities in Greece were there. Besides these shows I went to two theatrical performances by the French troops which were quite good. I dined one night at Phaleron, (the Society place of Athens) with Handy & the British General in Control work in Athens - Phillips - & his assistant Lovison - Goues. I also played tennis at the Phaleron Club. Of course I saw all the sights of Athens - Acropolis etc. etc. Altogether we had far & away the best time we have had since being on active service. The troops also had a splendid time & became wonderfully popular in the town. Their behaviour in the town especially compared to the troops of the Allies was extraordinarily good. The Russians were only there a few days with us. The Revolution had made a great change for the worse in their behavior discipline which is practically nil at present. We left Athens on Wednesday & had a 36 hours train journey. We saw some wonderful scenery on the way. We got back to the base yesterday morning.