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EDITORIAL.

WHO WILL HELP?

All those who have watched the stream of sad faced refugees who are flocking to this country to find protection behind the iron walls of the English Navy must realize with thankfulness that they have been spared the horrors of war which have swept over the fair country of France, and devastated the smiling plains of Belgium. But emotion is vain if it does not result in concentration and action, and those who thrill with sympathy when faced with the tragedy which has befallen the families of many of our brave allies should feel it a debt of honour to help to show these stricken people a warmth of welcome which will help to mitigate the sorrows which have befallen them; moreover the increasing number of refugees makes it incumbent upon every patriot to assist the Government in its enormous task of finding suitable homes for the nation's guests.

The general work of organization is in the hands of the Local Government Board, with which the War Refugees Committee, located in the General Buildings, Aldwych, is working in close touch. This Committee meets the refugees at the boats and trains, registers their names, addresses, and descriptions, and then sends them to the various depôts, such as the Alexandra Palace, the Earl's Court Exhibition Buildings, the workhouse infirmaries, such as those of Kensington, Marylebone, and Chelsea, until the Allocation Committee can pass them on in families or larger groups to homes in the country.

At first the Central Committee dealt with individuals, but the work is of such magnitude that it now asks committees in the Provinces to take a considerable number of refugees, and themselves undertake the work of allocation.

The more widely this is known the better, for we believe that there are many people in provincial towns and villages desirous of doing their share in helping the refugees, who would be willing to form committees, to arrange to receive a certain number, and to allocate them to local residents willing to receive them.

Those who are ready to assist in this way are asked to say the number of persons who could be accommodated, the class preferred (a) working class (b) tradesmen (c) educated class, whether provision would be made for (a) lodging (b) food (c) clothing (if necessary) (d) travelling expenses.

The Government is prepared to pay the railway fares of refugees from London to the local centres, and requires that on arrival at the station arranged they shall be met by a representative of the Local Committee. The guard of the train by which the refugees travel is provided with a list of the party, and each individual bears a label on which is written his name and the name of the station to which he is travelling. It says much for the care exercised by the War Refugees Committee, and the co-operating committee that out of all the parties sent from London in only one instance has the party not been met at its destination.

If the number arriving by a particular train is large, arrangements should be made to house and feed them temporarily at a local depôt pending allocation.

It will be realized that this is work which can be undertaken by any body of persons who will bring common sense, method and practical ability to bear upon it. It does not need special training, or special heroism; only the sympathetic hand held out to the suffering and sorrowful, and the sympathetic heart which entering into the sorrows of others is able in some degree to comfort and console.

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