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EDITORIAL.

THE HORROR OF THE ALBANIAN TRAILS.

The reports published by Mr. William G. Shepherd, the New York correspondent of the United Press at Salonika, concerning the sufferings of the Serbian people, now fleeing through Albania, are so appalling that we can but accept his statement "the entire world must prepare to shudder when all that is happening on the Albanian refugee trails finally comes to light." He tells us that—

"The horrors of the flight of the hapless Serbian people are growing with the arrival at Salonika of each new contingent from the devastated district. They say that nearly the whole route from Prizrend to Monastir is lined with corpses of human beings, and the carcasses of horses and mules, dead of starvation, while thousands of old men, women, and children are lying on the rocks and in the thickets beside the trail, exhausted and foodless, awaiting the end.

In this country removed from the seat of hostilities we see little of the horrors which war brings in its trail. We have it is true in our midst wounded and mutilated soldiers, but the cheery, optimistic men from the front in no way convey to us the pain and sorrow which they have felt and seen. The former they bear stoically, on the latter they maintain silence.

Again although the histories of the refugees who reached these shores at the beginning of the war, were in many instances most tragic, they were brought here too quickly to have suffered greatly from privation.

We are apt to put from us things which are painful; but it is a duty to try to realize what is happening on the Albanian trails, where one of our allies—a nation whose

splendid courage and patriotism have commanded the admiration of the world—is now in agony.

Serbians and Albanians, as well as Austrian prisoners, of whom there are 30,000 in Serbia, have been moving through the scenes of desolation described above, reduced to such straits that in some places they have even stripped the flesh from dead animals to appease their hunger.

And the women and children, who always suffer so terribly. Huddled around meagre fires on the trail, ill-clad and numb, they wait for morning to resume their march to Monastir, where they hope to find safety. But should Monastir be occupied by the enemy the terrible alternative confronts them of remaining on the mountains where an awful blizzard has been raging, or of falling into the hands of the Bulgarians.

"Amongst those who after experiencing the terrors of the trail have arrived safely in Salonika are," we are told, "Dr. G. Landsborough Findlay, and his wife, Lady Blanche Sybil Findlay. They travelled with a party of 8 English doctors, and 16 English nurses; all of whom trudged for seven days through the Albanian mountains along paths buried in snow and mud." Their food on the way was only a little bread, and fifteen of their pack mules died of hunger. The whole situation is one of unparalleled horror.

Can we then consider any sacrifice too great to make for the gallant people who perish from cold, hunger, and starvation on the ghastly trail, or on the frozen mountain side—more especially remembering that the Serbian people trusted to their Allies for aid too long delayed to avert the disaster in which Serbia is now engulfed.

No one with a drop of ardent British blood can consider these things without a sense not only of bitter grief but of shame.

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