

Gasmead Mann

St Neots

July 10.

Dear Mr Burton

I was very sorry that I could not
come to your Balkan dinner but
was pledged to my friend down
here whom I am helping to
wind up the estate of a deceased
relative. And as there was so much
to do here I did not have my

letters forwarded at first.

I have now a letter from Mehmed
Koultja, the Albanian delegate, who
writes me he is coming over to
London shortly for a change. We

Shall then I hope get first hand views
as to Albania's future.

So far as I can learn Italy has
behaved so idiotically that the Albs:
won't stand her at any price.

She has been land grabbing, monopolizing
& prohibiting Albanian schools. The
people say "worse than the Turks!"

The Serbs as you have perhaps
noted in the papers have exhumed the
bodies of the Sarajewo murderers &
apparently considered them as national
heroes. Min Christitch in a letter to the
press makes out that the Serb gov^t could
not prevent it! could not prevent or
punish the murderers herself either.
Very unapt sort of government!

Sincerely yours
M. S. Durham

with a Zadrjetac
Montenegro

June 11. 1911

To the President & Members of the Balkan Committee

Gentlemen

I am writing in a cottage on the Montenegrin frontier, within sight of the land which the Serbian army is devastating - to tell you of the dire need of the Albanians & to call on you in the name of humanity - to do all you can to relieve their misery.

As is known to some of you I have personal experience of the results of the rising in Macedonia in 1903. I am aware you that the need now is even greater than then.

For the whole villages left unburnt - also the rising took

place after the corn was in & there was a certain amount of good stuff available. But now the Serbian army has been trained to a high pitch of efficiency & it is destroying not only every house - but cutting down & destroying every vine & fruit tree - every hay stack. Macedonia is a fertile land able to support a

high Albania was not poor before. It is now a desolate wilderness. All the women & children with a few exceptions - who have been burnt in their houses being too infirm to escape - are refugees here from the tribes of Koscovitch, Hosh, Gruda & Skerch. They have thus escaped outrage but are now

faced with starvation. In this district are 2,144 persons - in all Montenegro some 20,000.

Numbers here are scattered in caves & holes in the mountain side - the best concealed but any possible food. Some succeeded in bringing away their flocks - having fled

early but foot & mouth disease has broken out among them & is infecting also the Muntengyos flocks. The bulk of the refugees have nothing whatever - many of them are in rags that hardly could be kept together.

Where it is not for the charity of Muntengyos they would not now be alive. Returns of mango are dealt out at Pochongia which the refugees go to fetch.

But Muntengyos is a very poor land - the people have given most generously. The persons without complaint allow whole families of strangers - whose language they do not know in many cases - to be quartered on them. But Muntengyos resources are

almost at an end. As it is the returns for a month are hardly as much as the Macedonian relief committee gave per head for a week.

I am giving all I can afford but it is a mere drop in the ocean of want.

A child died of starvation a few days ago - a woman came in last night weeping & praying a scrap of bread for her child. All we saw & drew. Unless help be forthcoming quickly the mortality will soon be terrible.

Great terror & dread reigns, for the Turkish army has after two months hard fighting - cut its way through the mountains & the tribes of Shahr Shohin Dabekyan & Pabek are thus cut off from all help before their women have had time to escape.

All believe they will be visited for this has been the fate of the very few young women who so far have fallen into the hands of the troops.

In the wounded of the enemy the Turks have so usual done nothing they burnt a wounded man in a house at Kasabat in spite of his cries for help. Turned a machine gun on a band of his friends who attempted rescue.

Turkish vengeance is wreaked on the churches which are desecrated in every possible way. The object of the army seems to be to exterminate the Catholics from the land.

When I was in Scutari - Albania last year the young Turkish officers were already boasting that in a few years time all Christians would be forced to keep Ramazan & shut their shops on Friday. They appear to be keeping their words.

Had a tenth of the money now being spent on devastating the land been expended on making a road, a reign of peace & prosperity would already have begun. Roads were the one thing the people hoped for - they have hitherto spent most of their lives toiling painfully over rocky tracks to Scutari to sell a few bundles of sticks - goats - or prods, in exchange for the maize on which they live. But "constitutions" of which they hoped so much has done nothing but betray them from the beginning. A long series of imprisonments without trial - & of foolish & tyrannical measures - has destroyed all hope & faith.

As things now stand the desperate band of insurgents declares that death is preferable to further life under the Turk. They have fought & are fighting against terrible odds with the greatest courage - the courage of despair.

If the ^{civilized} world could but see the way in which the Turks are introducing "reform" into their Empire it would stand aghast. It is the reform of Attila & his heirs - a disgrace to Europe - a disgrace to the world. A "reform" which creates a wilderness & calls it peace.

If you cannot at once organize a large fund I call on you in the name of humanity to send at once some

small contributions that may relieve the present suffering of a few. But I must remind you that no corn has been sown or can be sown in the whole of the devastated district this year - that little has been sown in Montenegro as a large proportion of the able-bodied men of the country are on duty as frontier guards - & that every day the process of destruction is going on & the want increasing. In a short time unless prompt help be forthcoming a large part of the Albanian nation must perish. It is a Balkan nation & as such appeals to the Balkan Committee.

I propose staying on at Podgorica where I shall return in a day or two after this visit to the mountains & where the hospital & headquarters of relief work are situated.

Please reply to me there. Money can be paid through the Bank of Montenegro which is in connection with the Credit Lyonnais. There is a branch at Podgorica.

And send help quickly in God's name. In the case of the Macedonian insurrection European protests were made & the destruction checked. If you have any political influence get a protest made now - & remember to drive into anyone who is ignorant of the present situation, that "the Young Turk is the son of the Old Turk."

I am gentlemen

Faithfully yours

Mr. Edith Tusham

P.S. June 12. Have just returned from seeing refugees. They are reduced to chopping asphalted leaves & stinging nettles & boiling them in petroleum cans. Starvation has set in & disease. There are 500 families on the ^{in mountain} mountain side - tormented rains pour every few days. The soaked & miserable creatures are crying for food. Be quick or you will be too late.

The Sultan sent a decoration (3rd. degree order) to the Archbishop for the New Year. He refused it on the grounds that he had already received a higher Austrian one so couldn't wear them together! He is a capable man and has great influence.

A lot of the heads went to the Austrian Cs'ite some weeks back and demanded a reply as to whether they would be supported in case of rising. They were told to wait two years and were promised "freedom" then. They say they won't wait and if Austria goes on deceiving them they don't want any more of Austria. The Austrian Consulate is very much annoyed with my work as it reckons Albania its own "Tom Tiddler's " ground. I fancy that there can be little doubt but that Austria egged Italy on to the Tripoli expedition to clear her out of Albania.

The Hungarian attaché of the Austrian Consulate lives in this Hotel and he gasses most undiplomatically and eternally on this subject. That Italy's hands are tied and "we are rid of her". Austria and Germany together, he always tells us, are going to sweep the board. The counter-shove to this is of course Russian interest - or rather Slav interest. Whether Montenegro is now shoving I can't quite make up my mind. At any rate, I don't see how Montenegro can act unless someone backs her. Last summer there were constant rumours of entente between Nikola and Ferdinand. So long as the Turk remains in Europe there can be no quiet and no solution of the problems here. And the only way of keeping out the Austro-German combine is by strengthening and backing the Balkan people

To give the Devil his due - the Government has kept the promises to the revolted tribes. Has paid more compensation than one would

have expected, and has given the maize - (rather irregularly - but one can't expect exactness of the Turks). Also begun road making. Christian ~~Governors~~ in the mountains (~~manis~~ are not yet appointed nor are the five schools yet built - but it is too soon to expect that. The people, however, sieze on everything as an excuse for rising. The one thing they are fixed on is that noty under any circumstances will they remain under the Turks.

As they talk continually of rising, troops are being sent in and as the strongest points are all fortified and garrisoned now and the Turkish Officers know the land and the routes, a new rising can only end in disaster - unless some Power helps. Austria's chief pull is to explain through the priests to the people how fatal, it would be to fall into orthodox hands - Montenegro. But the Maltiori have lively recollections of the weapons and maize given last year by Montenegro and are by no means sure that Orthodox hands are not the best. When I went up to the mountains a lot of people cried "Long Live King Nikola and the English Queen, (myself)!"

Extracts from Miss Durham's letter of 21. January to Mr. Christian.

"I fear that another ill organised revolution will take place and if so one cannot expect the Government to do otherwise than suppress it with severity.

I do my best to persuade the people that such action would be suicidal but they seem bent on it. Tales of ^{the} usual Eastern wildness spread through the land and nothing is too wild for the people to believe. They are quite certain that Italy's attack on Tripoli was arranged by the Powers and that it is a preliminary to their rescue also, by one or all of the Powers. It is useless to tell them that the Powers do not approve of Italy's conduct. They reply "that is ashes in eyes" A few days ago was a tale that England & Austria had arranged a joint occupation of Albania!

It is not merely the tribes who revolted last year, but a mass of others who talk of revolt. They say "the five large tribes have got permission to carry arms by revolting and we shall too". So far Mirdita holds back. The Turks have piled all possible concessions on Mirdita - exempted it from all tax - given it maize and given it weapons - and it therefore doesn't care what happens - it is left to its own devices. It protested against troops and they were at once withdrawn. The Government having had its fingers bitten last year by the Maltzia & Medhi tribes now is "letting sleeping dogs lie" in the case of Mirdita. All the other Maltzori tribes (Puleti, Puka, Buhagrin,) now of course demand similar privileges. The people on the Zadrina ^{and} Bojana plains, keep demanding & protesting. The more the Government concede the more they demand. Austria does not want revolt this year. Is clapping on the brake for all she's worth.

Forward letter letter

Confidential

Platinum LMS

Please note

71 Belsize Park Gardens. N2V3

change of address.

Nov 17/17

Dear Mr Buxton

I was amused at seeing Mackellar's handwriting again. He used to bombard me with letters equally long during, and just after, the Montenegrin war. When however I returned ~~to~~ King Nikola the decoration he had given me, Mackellar informed ^{me} that as it was evident I was out of my mind, he would cease to correspond. He is a funny character. He first wrote to me when I was doing Albanian relief ^{in 1911} and gave money to my fund and ~~at first~~ seemed quite normal. Then he wrote an amazing letter saying that for once and once only in his life he had fallen hopelessly and utterly in love-- not with an individual but with a land MONTENEGR0. And wrote a most extraordinary yarn about it. When the war broke out in 1912 he sent the King £1000 and a heap of most expensive things for sick and wounded. So good in fact that the S and W never saw them I believe, and common report was that the nobility and gentry had shared the lovely furlined coats and elegant shirts. He also sent a doctor and paid all his expenses. The Montes: were so anxious however at the beginning of the war not to let any foreign doctors see what was going on (nose cutting etc) that no post was found for the doctor who merely travelled around a bit and formed a low opinion of the Montes and went back home. Then came Mackellar himself. On the strength of the £1000 he was of course given "special facilities" and an officer showed him around

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and naturally ^{he} saw no atrocities. So when I denounced the brutal way the Turkish prisoners were being treated and the atrocities which were being committed and the hideous corruption on all sides Mackellar was furious with me and accused me of lying.

He was a thorn in the side of our minister, deSalis, for he went to the palace and encouraged the Powers there, to act contrary to de Salis' instructions re Scutari. Even presented the princess with a Union jack and said the great heart of England was with Monte.

So much for Mackellar. He is cracked on Monte:.

As for his letter, it is certainly true that there is intense jealousy between a certain section of Monte: and Serbia. I first discovered it when in Serbia in 1902. I then found Monte: was plotting to put Mirko (Nikola's 2nd son) on the Serb throne. The Serb police were fools enough to imagine I was in the plot--and so gave it away to me! The Petrovitch dynasty meant to rule over Great Serbia, and was undoubtedly mixed up in the murder of Alexander. King Nikola gave himself away to me badly in a private interview.

He hoped, I fancy, at first to have equal influence over Petar Karageorge: his son-in-law. But Petar has always been a mere puppet in the hands of the "Praetorian guard" which put him on the throne. Their aim has been to make Serbia topdog of Great Serbia. The jealousy culminated in the bomb affair of 1907. The depths of that I have never been able to plumb. But the bombs undoubtedly came from the royal arsenal of Serbia (as ~~odd~~ these which were found in Sarajevo in 1914) and Nikola certainly believed they had been prepared for the destruction of himself

(He is Crown Prince in particular)

and family by his royal relatives in Serbia. There were wholesale imprisonments in consequence. One curious fact was that it was clear to me that the Petrovitches believed Russia to be mixed in it for the anti-Russian feeling began ^{then} to grow in Monte. One of the "conspirators" who got a very long sentence was a doctor, one who had but recently come from ~~MANNNNNNNNN~~ (Marushitch) a long residence in Russia. The Russian consul at Scutari ^(Lobachoff) spoke to me a good deal on the subject and was angry at the way things were going. The Russian girls-school ^{at Beltrije} which had been the centre of Panslav propaganda in the West Balkans and was subsidised by the Dowager Tsaritsa was wholly boycotted by the Royal Fan: The girls were accused of having torn up and trampled on a portrait of Nikola! And there was a regular howdy-dow. The head mistress confided to me that Nikola was going Austrian. At this time there was a rapprochement between Monte and Bulgaria. When Nikola was made King, Ferdinand of Bulgaria came in person. It was discussed as to what Petar of Serbia would do. Monte: looked on the King-making as a sign that Nikola was to be topdog after all. Petar perhaps did so too. At any rate he did not come but only sent his son. I believe myself that Nikola and Ferdinand made infernal agreements then about the future partition of the Balkans. There was a great deal of talk about Monte: getting Bulgar support for her plans. This went on up to the outbreak of the Balkan war. The Montes began a full week before anyone else, meaning to sweep up all the desired territory before the Serbs were ready. They gave me to understand that

They told me this. →

the Serb army was only " a lot of pigdrivers". They failed most
dismally in their plans and this has never ceased to rankle.
A certain number of Montes are pro-Serb^{probably but}. And there is a party
which is pro-Great Serbia ~~and~~ says (with truth?) that it cannot
be made till the Petrovitches and the Karageorges have been send~~d~~
after the Obrenovitches. These want a republic. That the Montes
rejoiced much when the Serbs were being beaten by Austria is a
fact which I have on quite unimpeachable authority. And they
made a treaty with Austria so soon as they believed Austria was
winning. Nikola came to France as "the exiled King" and Mirko
stayed behind to keep the throne warm. There can be no doubt of
the truth of this . My authority is too good. And I had the
same from a Montenegrin official but a few months after the
"surrender". He enlarged upon the great benefits of Austrian
rule and hoped the petrovitches would never more wring money for
Monte Carlo and motor cars out of the wretched country!
As for the accusations Mackellar brings against the Serbs it is
probable there is a good deal of truth in them. I saw enough
to realise that under their varnish of elegant manners the Serb
officers are foul brutes. The laws which the Serb government
enacted for the annexed lands are quite enough to damn the whole
nation. I suppose our govt thinks so for I am told that the
Carnegie report which gives them can no longer be get out of
the Brit: Mus: library!!

I had heard tales that the Montes were refusing to fight under the Serb flag. My own experience is that the one thing a South Slav hates most in the world is--another South Slav.

I cannot believe in a successful Yugoslavia as things stand.

Are you aware that Rizoff, the Bulgar minister in Berlin, is son-in-law to Vuletitch, a leading Montenegrin and that ~~the~~ Vuletitch was made governor of Gettinje so soon as the Austrians took possession. The female Vuletitches were (and perhaps ^{still} are) in Switzerland where they received visits from Madame Rizoff. I knew her. She is a very clever young woman. And a beauty!

Have you seen Mr Buckler's nephew, recently back from Monastir and Valona? He told me that the luckless survivors at Monastir still stoutly assert that they are Bulgars.

The Serbs had no business to annex at Corfu all the South Slav lands--it was moreover counting many unhatched chicks. At the same time, as the Montes, if topdogs, would treat the Serbs equally badly, we need not weep for them now. Personally I think we made a huge

OH | mistake in not letting Austria quietly exercise control over the lot. Fifty years of discipline would have been the making of them,

I think Mackellar is mistaken in thinking that Albania would join Montenegro. The Montes behave too badly there for that to be possible. Only of course he "saw no atrocities" and won't believe in them. *from an alb. source I hear that the Montes have been chased out of Ipek & Djakovica.*

sincerely yours

M. S. Durham

P.T.O

I had heard tales that the Montez were refusing to fight under the

His account of how the Regicide was fited at Winchester is funny.

I fear his account of the regicides conduct with regard to the wretched Draga may be true. The reports current at the time were bad. Also Belgrade told me that Serb

Officers when a bit drunk had given him most filthy details & had even shown him bits of Draga's skin in their pocket-books. He was formerly pro-Serb & a friend of Muntenegro & dropped both - having seen & heard enough.

I believe it is true that Pasitch was offered peace by Austria, when Monte: surrendered but refused because the terms were not good enough. Possibly because those terms made

Monte: top dog. It is all a sordid vested business &

I can only feel sorrow & anger that any of our poor boys should have been sacrificed in such a cause.

mistake in not letting Austria quietly exercise control over the

I think Mackellar is mistaken in thinking that Albanians would join Muntenegro. The Montez behave too badly there for that

to be possible. Only of course he "saw no atrocities" and won't believe in them.

sincerely yours

Handwritten signature

P.T.O

4, ROSSLYN HILL,
N.W.3.

Oct 1/22

JWT

Dear Mr Evans

I am sorry I cannot come to the Balkan Committee meeting on Oct 2. I have been for some time in bad health and am just now under treatment for blood poisoning which pulls me down so that I cannot manage the fatigue of meetings.

I presume the Turkish situation is the one to be considered. If so

I can only say that I have all along considered that our policy with regard to the Turks has been idiotic ever since the Balkan war of 1912-13. By insisting on some sort of protection then, for the

Moslems we might have regained some of the confidence which we had

lost by our entente with Russia. We however left the protection of the Moslems to Germany. Nor have we ever protested against the wholesale massacres and expulsions of Moslems which took place.

The out cry about Turkish treachery in turning against us in 1914 is too silly for words. For it was Russia's avowed intention to get Constantinople and undoubtedly the reason she made an entente with us. ~~REBBERREBBERRE~~ And by way of making ourselves

as unpopular as possible we commandeered the two Turkish warships and so gave the Turks every encouragement to admit the Breslau & Goeben to replace them.

As for the Greeks---I do not know which were the stupider, our people who promised them the bear's hide before the bear was kill

ed--eu

or the swelled-headed Greeks who imagined they were going to get it.

The Greek occupation of Smyrna was absurd from the beginning.

As for the yell of "freedom of the straits" I suppose "freedom" is

to mean that the British navy is to command them and they will then be about as "free" to neutral shipping as was the channel and

North sea, during the war. I am tired of all this palaver.

Moreover the people who originally closed the straits to warships

were ourselves when at loggerheads with Russia. They were always

free to other shipping in time of peace.

I was always against the taking of Thrace from the Turks. It is only

right that there should be some corner where the European Moslems,

Serb, Bulgar or Greek can be **BBB** safe. I also favour a port for

Bulgaria. The Greeks have had their innings and have shown what

they can and can't do. To please themselves they bit off an absurdly

large chunk. I remember General Gondeulis at Keritza saying to me as

an excuse for annexing half Albania "A French proverb says l'appetit

vient en mangeant. We have eaten. We must go on eating." I said

"Monsieur he that eats too much gets belly ache." Well they've got

it. They had better go to bed and keep quiet. I have no chloredyne

for them. You might read this to the committee. It will do as well

as coming myself,

sincerely yours

M. L. G. G. G.

our people who promised them the bear's hide before the bear was killed