

# Bulgars Applying Torch and Sword to People They Saved

## Reports of the Wanton Taking of Human Life, Horrible Tortures and Burning of Towns and Villages Are Almost Beyond Belief—Reverting to Savagery of Their Ancestors

Importance. It divides with Drama and Kavala the tobacco trade of the district, and on account of this fact is known and frequently visited by people interested in that trade from all over the world. Austria and Italy both maintain consulates there, and the American Tobacco Company has several great warehouses in the town.

So cosmopolitan, indeed, was the little place, for it is now scarcely more than a blood soaked ruin, that any irregularity committed there could not escape notice. But the Bulgars, according to the report of the Greek committee, seem to have disregarded every consideration of common sense or common humanity. They bombarded the town without paying the slightest attention to the foreign warehouses that were raised. The tobacco warehouses were fired and burned with a loss of \$1,000,000. The houses were sacked, and all the public buildings, the churches, mosques, hospitals, schools, &c. which had not already fallen from the bombardment were burned. The Bulgarians knew that a foreign flag might be expected to protect those under it, and therefore concentrated their fire wherever a standard was raised. The families of the Austrian and Italian consuls were submitted to dreadful indignities, and they themselves were captured and held for ransom.

But it was not in the mere destruction of property that the horror of Seres occurred. It was the wanton and pitiless taking of human life that has given the term "Bulgarian atrocity" a new and dreadful significance. The outrages against women which the Greek committee reports are beyond belief. The death that finally came to them was the least part of their sufferings. Old men and young were hideously mutilated and flung in heaps to die. Legs and arms were broken, eyes gouged out, noses and ears cut off. Every instinct of savagery implanted by barbarous ancestors, every lesson of torture learned from centuries of Turkish outrage, seems to have flared up in the Bulgarians and found outlet in the three days of blood.

When the approach of the Greek troops brought an end to the horror more than 200 mutilated dead lay in the streets, while 20,000, practically the entire population, had fled the town, homes and ruins. Nearly 5,000 houses and 1,000 stores were burned, and all that were left were sacked and robbed.

The entire story of the retreat of the Bulgarians out of these towns of southern Macedonia, which are largely peopled by Greeks, is a continuous tale of carnage and outrage. Demir Hisar seems to have been another terrible sufferer. When the allies moved into Macedonia early in the war, this town was occupied by the Bulgars. The troops were, however, needed for the assault on Adrianople and were called away, leaving only a few Bulgarian representatives to hold the place. About that time the Greeks, having captured Salonica, sent their troops into the outlying district and set up civil government in various places. Demir Hisar, among others, claiming that this was their legitimate sphere of influence. The people of the town, having suffered already from the Bulgars' occupation and being largely Greek anyway, were only too glad to welcome the new invaders and to accept their rule. But the Bulgars had not finished with the exhausted little town.

When they returned and found their representatives discredited and Greek institutions established they were furious and waited only for a chance to avenge themselves. The chance came when active hostilities broke out between the former allies. Here the committee found positive evidence that the outrages, far from being the work of undisciplined camp followers, were not only approved by Bulgarian officers and regular troops but were actually superintended by them. Capt. Dimitri Anguet and officers of the Twenty-first and Twenty-second regiments were actually seen directing their men in their hideous work.

Doxato, while not so large or prominent a place as Seres or Demir Hisar, has suffered even greater injury than they, for its entire population was practically wiped out, of the 3,500 not more than 150 being left alive. Not only the Greek committee but English officers sent back harrowing tales from this place, where the savage thirst for blood seems to have run absolute riot. Commander Cardale of the British navy counted the bodies of 120 women and children heaped in a single courtyard,

furnished dogs. In this place were indications that even crucifixion had been resorted to in order to satisfy the blood lust of the Bulgars. Not only the towns but the entire countryside has been laid waste and depopulated. All over Macedonia the peasants have the habit of living in groups in little villages as a means of protection against the marauders that have always harried the land. But these simple peasants could offer no resistance to the maddened Bulgarian soldiery, and one village after another went down before them absolutely annihilated. The conditions left behind in the larger places mentioned were repeated in every town and village through which the Greeks drove the retreating enemy. A complete list of the places that suffered from fire and sword would simply be a list of the Greek populated towns of southern Macedonia. This whole appalling chapter came as a complete surprise to civilized people, and but for the incontrovertible evidence of its truth would not have been believed.

"How is it possible?" was the amazed query. "How is it possible for a people who have shown splendid qualities, the intelligent development, the regard for education that has marked the growth of the Bulgarian nation in the last generation to drop suddenly into the savagery of the dark ages?"

But to the close student of Balkan problems, to the analyst of Bulgarian character, the outburst has not been surprising. His point of view has revealed, unclouded by the sentimentalism aroused by the sufferings of the Bulgars at the hands of the Turks before they threw off the Moslem yoke; he has been unmoved by the wave of enthusiasm engendered by the Bulgarian military achievements in the Balkan war. The emotionalism of those people who have compared the uprising of the Bulgars to the springing into life of "mummy wheat" buried for thousands of years with a dead tharakh has left him cold. He has seen the Bulgars still as savage as the central Asiatic hordes from which he sprang, he has seen him sullen and menacing, thinly glossed by the forms of a civilization to which he was not naturally adapted, rough and ignorant; callous and bestial.

The outrages that are now holding the attention of the world are surprising to this student only that they have not occurred sooner. Savage by instinct, breeding and training, the Bulgarians have never ceased being barbarous. The very towns that are the latest victims of their ferocity are the best witnesses of the truth of this statement. Bands of Bulgarian militia, or comitadjis, have kept the people in a greater state of terror than even the Sultan's soldiery were able to inspire. As short a time ago as in 1906, when Bulgaria was supposed to be devoting herself body and soul to the cause of education and civilization, the same town of Seres fell under the ban of her displeasure and a band of comitadjis wreaked dreadful vengeance on the Greek inhabitants.

About this same time Drama, which figures largely in the reports of the past month, was a centre of outrages which were never fully reported and understood. Drama lies on the threshold of that part of Macedonia which is admittedly Greek. It is an ugly town, crushed under the savagery of the comitadjis.

"Murders were constantly committed here," says Allen Upward, an English student of Balkan affairs, "and the victims were always mutilated. The hands were masters of the country, and membership of one was regarded as a high privilege. Murders were committed by the young men as a sort of title to admission. Some of the outrages in the town of Drama had been committed with this object. A Bulgarian youth entered the town and hurled a bomb through the window of a Greek resort in order to qualify himself as a comitadjis."

Dedagatch, which is one of those towns named by the Parliamentary Committee, where one sees to-day "only blood, dishonor and ruin," was for years a similar sufferer at the hands of the Bulgars. Here the railway comes down to the sea and the town is well built, with a broad boulevard planted with trees and a little harbor crowded with sailing boats of quaint design. Left to itself it would quickly become prosperous, but it has never had a chance. Time after time the comitadjis have harried it, time after time its Greek merchants and tradespeople have been

their business wrecked and their houses burned and many have died themselves in the vain defence of their families. The town of Anchilovo, its 6,000 inhabitants mostly Greeks, suffered almost as much from the Bulgars in 1906 as Seres and Drama have to-day. In August of that year a band of more than a hundred comitadjis appeared on the streets and began firing. The inhabitants, who had committed no more serious offence than to continue to speak their own language and worship in their own churches, knew what was in store for them. They took refuge in their church while their schools and hospitals were destroyed and the shops and houses looted. Reinforcements for the Bulgars arrived and ultimately the entire Greek quarter was burned, with a shocking loss of life.

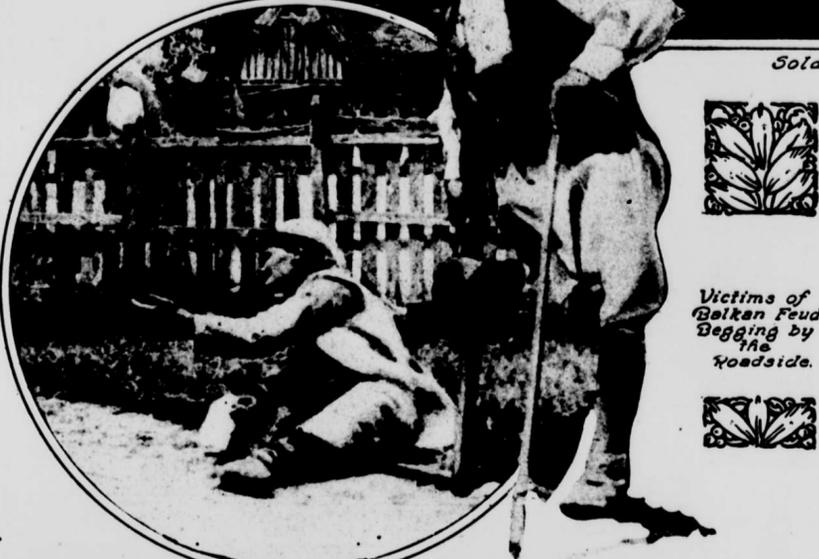
The official reports published by the Patriarchate at Constantinople gives details of 643 murders of Greeks by Bulgarian hands during the years between 1903 and 1906, all of a character to sadly blacken the proclaimed civilization of the Bulgarian people. The method of execution in each case is set forth in the following restrained fashion: "Cut to small pieces," "by tortures," "by thrashing," "burned alive," "drowned," &c.

As has been said, the history of the Bulgar people is a history of savagery.



Soldiers in Act of Burning a Peasant's Home.

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Victims of Balkan Feuds Begging by the Roadside.

Photo Copyrighted by International News Service.



Refugees Watching the Burning of Their Village.

Photo Copyrighted by International News Service.



Burning Peasant Homes in Thrace.

All had died at the point of the bayonet and all had suffered fearful mutilation. When the commander arrived at the place most of the dead had been buried, but he counted more than 600 still lying in the ruined walls of buildings, all being fed upon by carrion birds and gaunt

They have many fine qualities of endurance, but with them are qualities of brutality that have never been controlled. It cannot be denied that as a nation Bulgaria has potentialities of greatness. But the events of the past month, the lapse into ancestral barbarism, have put her back many, many

years. Theoretically and materially Bulgaria has made gigantic strides forward in the thirty years since she escaped from the Turkish control. In that time she has built 4,500 primary schools, she has developed a well organized and equipped army, she has brought 70 per cent. of her total area under cultivation and she has built up her annual exports until they reach the creditable total of \$250,000,000. The intelligent men of Bulgaria have always seen in education the hope of their race. They have consistently and energetically worked to that end and have succeeded in impressing the people with their ideas, though they have not succeeded in conveying an idea of just what education is.

"What is civilization?" queried a Bulgarian youth of Frederick Moore, the American correspondent. "Is it a man's education? It is not our fault if we have not education. We are learning as fast as we can. It cannot be that clothes make the man. It may be the result of your religion, but I wonder if England is more religious on the

whole than Bulgaria. We hear of horrible social crimes there that never occur here. And our politics is not more corrupt than that of America, that sends us missionaries. What is civilization and why are we not civilized?" But the youth had no thought of the noble traditions and noble ideals on which all civilization must rest and of which Bulgaria has none. Between the third and seventh centuries the Bulgarians appear in history as "a horde of Asiatic of Turkish strain," but Bulgarian history proper does not begin until late in the ninth century with the nation's conversion to Christianity. But conversion to Christianity at this period of history was not calculated to soften savage traditions. From their Christian captors the Bulgars learned some of the delicate arts of barbarity which they have never forgotten. It was Emperor Basil II, the ruthless "Bulgar killer" of the Greek and Slavonian chroniclers, who gave them their lesson in eye gouging, still a favorite form of punishment, as the reports from Doiran and

Kilkish show. On one occasion Basil put out the eyes of 15,000 prisoners, but spared one eye to every hundredth man so that the 150 one-eyed men might see their way to lead the totally blind rabble back to *Czar Samuel*. From that time forward eye gouging was a popular subject for bards and minstrels who sang of jilted lovers who tore out their *lovers' eyes* and dropped them into the bosoms of their dresses, of jealous husbands and irritated sons who casually *plucked* out the eyes of wives or mothers before beheading them or dragging them about by the hair. The Bulgars invariably blame the Turks for the deeply implanted brutality of their instincts. Any comment on the natural cruelty of the people is met by the vague retort that nothing better could be expected after 500 years of the Turk. But every tradition and legend of the people shows that they knew a few tracks of their own long before the Turks came to teach them.

Unquestionably the 500 years of oppression and outrage after the battle of Kossovo were not calculated to ameliorate the roughness of the Bulgarian character, and unquestionably the native savagery of the people deepened and hardened during all these years of outrage, of oppression and of bloodshed. Absolutely illiterate and isolated from civilization, their only knowledge of life were the legends perpetrated on them by the Turks, their only knowledge of history were the blood-curdling tales and songs of the minstrels. The children were fed on stories of bitter, bloody vengeance for real or imaginary wrongs. Says John MacDonald in his recently published book, "Czar Ferdinand and His People": "The rank and file naturally are not morally superior to the heroes they admire and celebrate in their village songs. A British wife kicked in mildness itself in comparison with many an atrocious offender painted in ballads of Bulgar domestic interiors. The professional stroller with a crowd about him beside the village well or under the village tree, sings—sing, remember—how a model husband devised a hideous, unmentionable form of death for his wife because she bore no children and how he invited the neighbors to call for the occasion."

From all this has developed a race of people devoid of humanitarian ideals. The killing of men means no more to the Bulgarian peasant than the killing of pigs. The spilling of human blood, the infliction of torture, is no horror to him. He is used to it. The suffering of animals never occurs to him as suffering. A gayly dressed peasant girl will tramp over the country roads for three hours on her way to market. Over one shoulder are slung half a dozen chickens, suspended head downward by one leg. Over the other is a pig, likewise suspended by one leg, the lash so tight that long before the market is reached it has cut clear through to the bone. The animals the girls carry thus are only little ones, but huge hogs slung at the side of pack horses are transported in the same way. When this cruelty is pointed out to intelligent Bulgarians who are proudest of their country's reputed civilization they have no response but the usual vague one about 500 years of Turkish rule. But Bulgarians of the educated class are not without a realization of what this racial trait means in the development of their nation and, however much they may belittle it to foreigners, they themselves recognize how deep are its well springs. It is the Bulgarian poet Bazoff who has written:

O my folk, I look on your face, that suffering has rendered ferocious and inhuman, and I tremble! Enslaved mothers have given thee birth. The voice of pity is strange to thee, for cruelty is the deep element of thy life.

With a people of this severe nature, bent on dominating the situation in the Balkans, it will readily be seen that the trouble of those harried States are far from being over. Bulgaria unquestionably suffered from the Turks, but so also have the other Balkan States suffered from the Bulgarians. Although the most sensational stories have come from Greece concerning the wreck and ruin of the southern part of the country, it must not be thought that the western part of the Balkans has escaped. Indeed, nothing could be more pitiable than the desolation in the Servian sphere of influence. It was bad enough after the rout of the Turks, but the more recent hostilities between the Vardar Valley and the Bulgarians along the Vardar Valley has left the land utterly prostrated.

The Turks in their retreat before the advancing Servian forces left a trail of ruin behind them. Metrovitza, Prishtina and Kumanova were among those that suffered, the Christian population suffering and the principal buildings fired. Even more than the towns was the countryside laid waste after the traditionally thorough manner of the Turks. Villages were literally swept out of existence, and all stores that could possibly furnish supplies for the Servians were destroyed. Growing crops were laid waste, and fruit trees cut down, the last a cardinal offense in the Balkans, an offence considerably lower in the category of crime than the taking of human life. Until the end of the Turkish war the Servians were pretty successful in keeping the dreaded Bulgars out of their sphere of influence. But with the fall of Adrianople large bodies of Bulgarian troops, released from that service, were sent back across the Bulgarian border from Kustendil into the Vardar Valley. The Servians well knew what to expect and hastened to save their newly won possessions from fresh depredations. The people of the country fled for protection to Uskub, and hence there was not so much indiscriminate slaughter as occurred in the south. But before the Servian troops could prevent every Servian village in the neighborhood was laid in ruins. At Uskub the Servians stopped them, and hence drove them slowly back over the border at Egro Palania. But the retreat was accompanied by atrocities such as have even the Turks had left behind them. The desolation of the country cannot be exaggerated, while there was ample and convincing evidence that every Servian that had fallen into the Bulgars' hands, whether male or female, had suffered a frightful death. Mutilated bodies were found all along the route, while on hilltops were the high hanging corpses of Servian officers who had met death by crucifixion.

To-day the Balkans, freed at last from Turkey, are in a more pitiable condition than they ever were under the Moslem rule. Never has the land been so desolate, never have its problems seemed so hopeless of a satisfactory solution. Never in all their troubled history have the Balkans presented more distressing problem alike to politicians and humanitarians than they do to-day. Never before have the racial hatreds and the religious strife that have always beset them been as bitter and virulent as they are now; never before has the land been more of a battleground of conflicting ambitions. Servians will never cease to smart over her disappointment over failing to gain a free seaport of her own, and a desolated barren lands as she may be awarded will be of poor recompense.

Greece may succeed in keeping possession of Salonica, Drama and Kavala, but up in Thrace, in the part of the country that will undoubtedly go to Bulgaria, are hundreds of thousands of Greeks representing perhaps the richest and most prosperous element of the country. Never have Greeks been so happily under Bulgar domination, and the events of the last month have not been calculated to establish the confidence of the Greeks in Thrace in their new rulers. Everywhere are heard the ominous words, "If Seres is an example..."

Uncompromising as these people are in all their relations with each other, it is perfectly certain that the Greek population of Thrace will always be a source of discord and bitterness against Bulgaria.

None of the striking and sensational events of the last year has abated in the slightest degree the warring ambition of which the Balkans are the hotbed. The Balkan States themselves are more jealous of one another's gains than they ever to checkmate each other's advances at whatever cost to themselves. The great European Powers, no matter what their diplomatic protestations may be, have not relaxed their watchfulness or their determination to profit if the possibility should present itself. To-day has her warships cruising among the *Egean Islands*, strengthening her tenuous hold on them. Russia in the north is on guard, watchful for the chance to further her well known designs. Austria has not abandoned her long time dream of a port on the *Egean* and still has a covetous hand stretched out toward Salonica.

What will the solution be? What will the politicians do with it? They have had more than fifty years in which to dispose of it, and what is the result? To-day the Balkans lie gasping, drenched in their own blood.

### Safe Movers Use Motors

THE motor has caused a change in methods of crating and hoisting safes," remarked the superintendent of an office building on Broadway as he watched a two-ton safe which was being raised to the tenth floor. "When the auto trucks made its appearance the safe manufacturers soon realized its usefulness in their business. They were not content that the power should be used for hauling purposes only. The weight of the truck was hooked up to a motor and man power was eliminated. 'Nowadays when a safe is hoisted on to a truck the hauling is done with a motor windlass. When it is hoisted to the tenth or other floors of a building the motor windlass does the hoisting. All the men have to do is guide the course to see that it does not bump against the building.'