

RELIGION-AND-SOCIAL-SERVICE

A CALL TO RESCUE ARMENIA

OVER TWO MILLION wretched victims of war are reported actually destitute and in need of daily food in western Asia. Of this number four hundred thousand are orphans. This is the body of people that the American

Staggering as is this burden, in view of other demands due to the war, it is declared that only America can meet it. From cable dispatches received by the committee and from a few workers returning from these fields we get such bits of information as these, the first coming from Constantinople:



WHITHER DOES THE WAY LEAD?

One of the thousand bands of deported Armenians sent out on an aimless journey through the trackless desert.

"Estimate number of deported destitute Armenians, Syrians, and Greeks, now in Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine, at one and one-half millions. Demands for help are inexorable. Bread-winners generally have perished through massacre, deportation, or in army. Practically all now destitute were self-supporting before war.

"Property taken from these people by military or destroyed in deportations totals millions of dollars. The number of destitute is increased by the deportation of Greeks from the sea-coast. Refugees from regions occupied by military are increasing the poverty. Business paralyzed. Animals requisitioned. Schools and churches generally closed. Buildings used by military. Prices of food and other necessaries of life increased several hundredfold, going higher. Needs greater, because needy people are more numerous than last year.

"Extermination or material diminution of Christian races greatly deplored, as the hope of future upbuilding lies with this progressive element, which is most useful for regenerating the empire. American and Swiss missionaries remain on the field for continuing the work for destitute as in the past. They are now imploring that we continue usual appropriations."

From F. Willoughby Smith, United States Consul at Tiflis, in the Russian Caucasus, comes this cable message:

"Estimates place the number of Armenian and Syrian refugees

Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief is undertaking to succeed by raising a fund the amount of which, measured by the need, mounts into many millions. The help is to go mainly to the Armenian nation, already depleted by massacre, famine, and deportation, and now washed up on alien shores after surging through desert lands where only inhospitality and death met them on every hand. In another part of this issue is the story of an Armenian lad, the only male survivor of the people of his native place; his narrative could be matched by those of hundreds of others from Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, and the Caucasus. Up to September of this year, the Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief has disbursed \$4,255,420.60. This amount is declared to be about \$4,000 in excess of its received gifts, the sum accruing as interest on daily book balance held against drafts sent abroad. None of the funds received have been used for expenses, as the cost of maintaining the work of the committee has been met from a private voluntary source. In various organs of the religious press where the work of this committee is reported, we gather, concerning the situation to be met in the future, that—

"The cost of sustaining life varies in different areas from three dollars to sixteen dollars, averaging throughout the entire field not less than five dollars per person per month. Many of these people are now living on the charity of their Moslem neighbors, whose scanty food-supplies are nearly exhausted. The committee is convinced that to prevent wide-spread death by starvation during the coming six months of winter, at least \$30,000,000 is needed. In addition to this, for repatriation and rehabilitation, an additional \$15,000,000 should be planned for, of which \$3,500,000 are needed at once in the Caucasus and Persia."



SIGNS OF THEIR PASSING.

The deserts of Asia Minor are strewn with heaps of bones cleaned by the wild beasts along the routes of the hopeless Armenian caravans.

in Caucasus at 250,000, Eastern Turkey, 100,000. Total slowly increasing by newcomers. Two hundred and fifty thousand of these without employment. Large proportion women and children. Minimum estimate necessary for individual, three dollars per month. In order to meet needs of situation, minimum estimate, \$500,000 per month. Conditions reported in previous telegrams now more acute. Strongly urge need of support for fatherless children in their homes, 5,000 now on our lists, about 15,000 others require immediate help, widows as well as children; thus aided, families are intact; no funds available at present for this department. Weaving of clothing material for refugees now going on in Alexandropol, Erivan, and Etehmiazin. Starting orphanage for 300 boys in Erivan, boys over ten being selected, good intelligence and sound physique with reference to quick training of leaders in industry, agriculture, and education. Will open girls' orphanage if women supervisors sent out. Other industrial work to be opened in Gamarloo, Novooobayazid, Ashdarag, and other centers. Medical relief department in Erivan now caring for many old and sick and new-born babies. Need great in other centers. Repatriation postponed on account of local conditions. Send new workers at once as follows: One doctor and nurses; two ladies for orphanage; Harry White for agriculture; one man well trained for leader of technical industrial work; three or four general workers. We urge that not less than the following sums be sent immediately for the departments indicated. Repatriation, \$1,000,000; fatherless children in homes, \$500,000; industrial relief, \$500,000; animals, \$150,000; orphanages, \$100,000; medical relief, \$100,000; seed, \$100,000; tools and implements, \$100,000; individual, \$550,000; total, \$3,100,000. If possible arrangements should be made to send out machines, looms, and engines, for weaving wool would greatly help to meet needs of coming winter and be of permanent value in establishing industry beneficial to the refugees and this country."

The fate of the Armenians in many sections may be imagined from the following account of those in one section rendered by Dr. George E. White, president of Anatolia College in Marsivan, Turkey:

"Marsivan contained a population of 30,000, of whom, as the Governor had told me, a majority were Armenians. The situation for the Armenians did not become excessively acute until the spring of 1915, when the Turks determined to eliminate the Armenian question by eliminating the Armenians on the ground of searching for deserting soldiers, concealed bombs or weapons, seditious literature or revolutionists. The Turkish officers arrested about 1,200 Armenian men and accompanied their investigations with horrible brutalities. Several were sent to Malatia and executed, altho there was no revolutionary activity in our city or region whatever. All the other men were imprisoned in the city jail or the Barracks Building and then were sent out in lots of 100 to 200 in the night 'deportations' to be placed among the mountains where trenches had been prepared before the men were sent from the city. Peasants who were employed to do what was done said it was a pity to waste bullets and they used axes. These 1,200 Armenian men met their fate.

"The Turks turned on the women and children, the old men and little boys. Every night scores of ox-carts were gathered at the Barracks Building and in the early dawn as they passed one side or another of the American premises, the squeaking of their wheels left memories that make the blood curdle even now. As they passed on their way to another quarter of the city which had been decided for 'deportation' on that day, thousands of women and children were swept away. Where? No where. No honorable destination was stated or intended. Why? Simply because they were Armenians and Christians."

From Syria the news is no more encouraging. Missionaries arriving in New York from Beirut confirm all previous reports. Deaths in one section of Syria from starvation and resultant diseases reached the rate of one thousand per day. There are at least fifty thousand orphans in Lebanon alone.

THE DRINK PROBLEM IN THE WAR

IF BOYS NOW DRAFTED INTO THE ARMY never come back from the field parents will not complain, for they have been willingly dedicated to a sacred cause. "They will complain," says Mr. Nolan R. Best, editor of *The Continent* (Chicago), "if the boys come back drunkards—drunkards taught to drink by the officers named to lead them." They will complain "with a mighty wrath," he further declares, "if those officers for excuse spread the scandal that the straight, clean young men of America did not have the grit to risk their lives for their nation's flag until they were half-crazy with doped drink." The basis for these apprehensions is to be found in the experience of Canada's troops who "sailed from our side of the Atlantic to the defense of the British Empire as strenuously protected from the drink demon as our own regiments can possibly be." The British commanders who took them in charge, so it is alleged, "introduced the Canadian lads, many of whom had never tasted liquor, to all the temptations of the regulation canteen." The results are said to be depicted in a book by Arthur Mee called "The Fiddlers," as "a sad stream of ruined youth flowing back to Canada with sodden habits of drunkenness fastened on lives that went away clean and upright." In most cases, it is added, "these abased young men bring home an even more horrid curse in disease likely to blast generation after generation to come." The writer continues:

"What the people of the United States want to know in the shadow of these portentous circumstances is what their own military authorities have to say about these things. When the American commanders get their troops across the sea do they propose to stand by the American principles which are now become a commonplace at home? Will they stoutly protect their young men from such contaminations as have befallen so doleful a share of the Canadian contingents? Are they proof against an easy compliance with the ways of Europe? What do the generals of the Army say? What does President Wilson say?"

The worst reports of drink administered to soldiers come from an officer who defended the custom not only of "rum ration," but "dope ration," before an attack. He is reported as saying: "Why, man, if you were sober you would no more jump out of one of those trenches and rush across No Man's Land than you would right now dip your head into a pot of molten steel." Over against this is the testimony of Capt. Leslie Vickers, formerly the Rev. Mr. Vickers, of the Presbyterian Church, in Tenafly, N. J., who enlisted and fought under the British flag. He writes:

"Of course I can not answer for the whole British Army, for I have not seen the whole of it. But I did see a good deal of it both in training-camps and in the field, and you can take my word for what you have found it to be worth. I have no hesitation in giving the straight lie to those who allege that whisky is distributed every day in generous portions in the front-line trenches or that just before a charge the men are ordered to fill themselves up with it. But I shall not indulge in denials; I think it better to tell you something of what is done in connection with liquor.

"At all the camps in Great Britain there is the same facility for getting liquor as in the rest of the country. The men can drink at their own canteen if they please or they can buy their drink outside. The canteens are well policed and drunkenness seldom occurs there. But drunkenness does occur in the Army, just as it does among civilians in a place that is not dry, and I am



AN ARMENIAN REFUGEE.

Whose extraordinary and heartrending tale will appear in our department of "Personal Glimpses" next week.

sure that my statement is conservative when I say that 90 per cent. of the men who were crimed, and brought before the colonel for punishment, committed their crimes under the influence of drink. Another 5 per cent. owed their disgrace indirectly to drink. But I do not want you to conclude from this that drinking was particularly heavy in the Army. The latter was composed of men who had just come from civilian life, and they brought their vices and virtues with them. . . .

"When we were up in the firing-line itself conditions were different. Men could not get anything to drink there. Sometimes, of course, in spite of all regulations, they did get hold of the stuff and became intoxicated. At first we used to punish them with three months' hard labor. This meant imprisonment behind the lines, and there was an epidemic of drunkenness; for men wanted to get back there for a rest away from shells. One day the order was issued that 'in future the death penalty will be inflicted for drunkenness while on duty in the trenches.' It was sad to read of that punishment having been carried out on a man, but we read the report to our men, and drunkenness ceased. Now, is it likely that they have reversed themselves—the authorities, I mean—and are inviting their men to become drunk? No man who has ever held a trench would permit for one minute the presence in that trench of anything that would rob his men of their quickness of eye and ear.

"As to the other statement—that 'it would be utterly impossible to get a regiment of men to go over the top into No Man's Land if they hadn't previously been plied with drink sufficient to deaden their sensibilities to the horrors of what they were plunging into'—it makes me almost sick to answer such a charge. You can imagine how such a criminal lie makes an older soldier feel. Did the Canadians have whisky with them when they repelled the Germans at the first gas-attack at Ypres? Did the Anzacs have whisky with them when they charged up the slopes at Gallipoli? Did my own fearless Scotchmen have it with them when they went to the charge at Neuve Chapelle and Festubert and Hooge and Loos? No, sir, I can answer for these things, and I can assure you that no officer would like to feel that the men whom he was calling on to follow him had not every faculty clear and every muscle obedient.

"What does happen is that in the cold weather rum is served to the men once, or sometimes twice, a day under the orders of the regimental doctor. The amount administered is a small dessert-spoonful. I am a temperance man, as you know, but I took my ration of rum in the trenches. You were before your fire or near a steam-radiator with plenty of outside warmth. I was in a cold trench up to my knees in water, and I took the warmth-giving medicine just as I would have taken any other medicine ordered for me. I uphold this army practise. But as for doping up men prior to a charge, this is a libel on the men, and especially on those who have gone into action with a holy purpose to right the wrong of the war.

"That certain regiments have foolish officers who allow their men to do foolish things, and who even allow them to get liquor without punishing them, I do not doubt. But I deny that that is either the system or the rule."

Even in such a statement as this the writer finds certain reservations that lead to doubts. "Are these stories of deliberate drink-doping which come wholly from the friendly side of the Allied lines utterly unfounded?" asks Mr. Best:

"What does it mean when Rev. James Black, of Edinburgh, brother of Dr. Hugh Black, so well known in this country, alludes on his return from the front to the bad effects of liquor distributed just before the big battles? What was meant by that lieutenant-colonel quoted by Arthur Mee in 'The Fiddlers' as writing from France: 'I have never been a teetotaler, but I am now changing my views as I see our success over here hampered and our progress toward victory retarded so obviously by drink'? That surely sounds as if he was trying to account for the sudden stalling of so many of the 'big drives' which start out so prosperously and stop so soon.

"Undoubtedly Captain Vickers will clear up the uncertainty which he has left about that death penalty for being drunk in the trenches—whether it was a general order from headquarters in London or the order simply of the commander on his own sector of the front. In his present statement, however, our good captain is constrained to admit not only that there are foolish soldiers on the firing-line who drink more than they ought, but even that 'certain regiments have foolish officers who allow "unwarrantable liberties" in regard to liquor. Is it in the regiments of these 'foolish officers' that Great Britain's battle-colors are stained with the truth behind these frightful rumors?

What does seem quite apparent from the explanation we have here—taking that alone without reference to anything extraneous—is that the military establishment of Great Britain has no clear-cut and positive policy against drink. Otherwise an officer of the experience of Captain Vickers, familiar with army regulations, would not have to qualify his testimony with a reservation to his personal observation only. One remembers in this connection how faltering even Kitchener was on this subject—fierce enemy of alcohol tho he was. For it appeared that even in the moment when he was the supreme dictator of all British arms, he did not quite dare to put into an order his conviction that for the sake of their flag British soldiers ought not to drink. For some mysterious reason he had to send out his judgment on that point not as an order but as an exhortation and appeal.

"At all events, as Captain Vickers directly testifies, the standard of British Army sentiment and practise in regard to drink is nowhere up to the point which the American Army has reached. The 'wet canteen,' which he describes in connection with the training-camps in England, has been crowded far beyond the limits of toleration in this country. The American army officer, tho he complained uproariously when Congress, forced by civilian opinion, cleared alcohol out of his regimental canteen, has at length been soundly converted to the dry policy. The improved morale of the enlisted men became in a few years so unmistakable that only a blind fool could longer deny it. And American army officers are not blind fools. To-day they are no longer merely acquiescent but enthusiastically in favor of the rigidest no-drinking discipline.

"The quick passage in Congress, almost immediately after war was declared, of the law forbidding any drink sold anywhere to soldiers in uniform, was largely due to the pressure of Army and Navy leaders for such an effective aid to their control over their men. Not even the teaspoonful to warm the men up in cold weather, which Captain Vickers thinks justifiable, can obtain any apology from the present attitude of the medical staff of either Army or Navy in this country. Backed by the official opinion of the American Medical Association, the consensus of judgment among American army surgeons holds whisky not only useless but harmful for men exposed to cold and wet. The stuff is nowadays on this side the Atlantic denied even the virtues of a good stimulant in cases of shock and collapse. There is nothing dubious here. No American officer would need to hesitate about answering for the whole of our Army.

"But the real American concern with this matter is not to point out in any pharisaic way how much further America has progressed than Great Britain in apprehending the moral and scientific reasons for an 'alcohol-free' army. This nation, tho deeply dependent now on the military efficiency of its ally, can not assume of course to dictate military policy to British chiefs. But seeing how backward and irresolute those chiefs are before the drink enemy, which Premier Lloyd George once declared a direr foe than either Germany or Austria, Americans would only by crass indifference be able to neglect the strictly domestic question whether the lower standards of the British organization are to demoralize the habits of American troops when the two flags at last are flying side by side over the parapets in France."

BEER VERSUS WAR PREPARATIONS—If beer is allowed to prolong this war, causing the useless loss of many hundreds of thousands of men and many billions of money, somebody is going to pay the price once before paid by Judas Iscariot. So strongly is put the problem of civil life by publications of the Methodist Church, where we see it stated:

"It will not do for us to be sixty days late or thirty days late. If we are, it will mean that the war can not be won in 1918 and that we must stand another twelve months of agony, waste \$20,000,000,000, and needlessly sacrifice the lives of 1,000,000 Americans while we are waiting for the fighting weather of 1919. . . .

"A department superintendent of one of the big tire factories in Akron, Ohio, uses sixty men in each shift. They are making gas masks, miners' respirators, and other vital war material.

"That department is working only two shifts a day instead of three because of the scarcity of labor. They pay off on Friday. On one Saturday only six of the sixty men in one shift reported for work.

"Ninety per cent. of our labor troubles are due to booze," says this superintendent. If the Government would shut down on the liquor traffic we could increase our output enormously. There is no lack of labor. The only trouble is to keep it working full time."