

*War Stories*

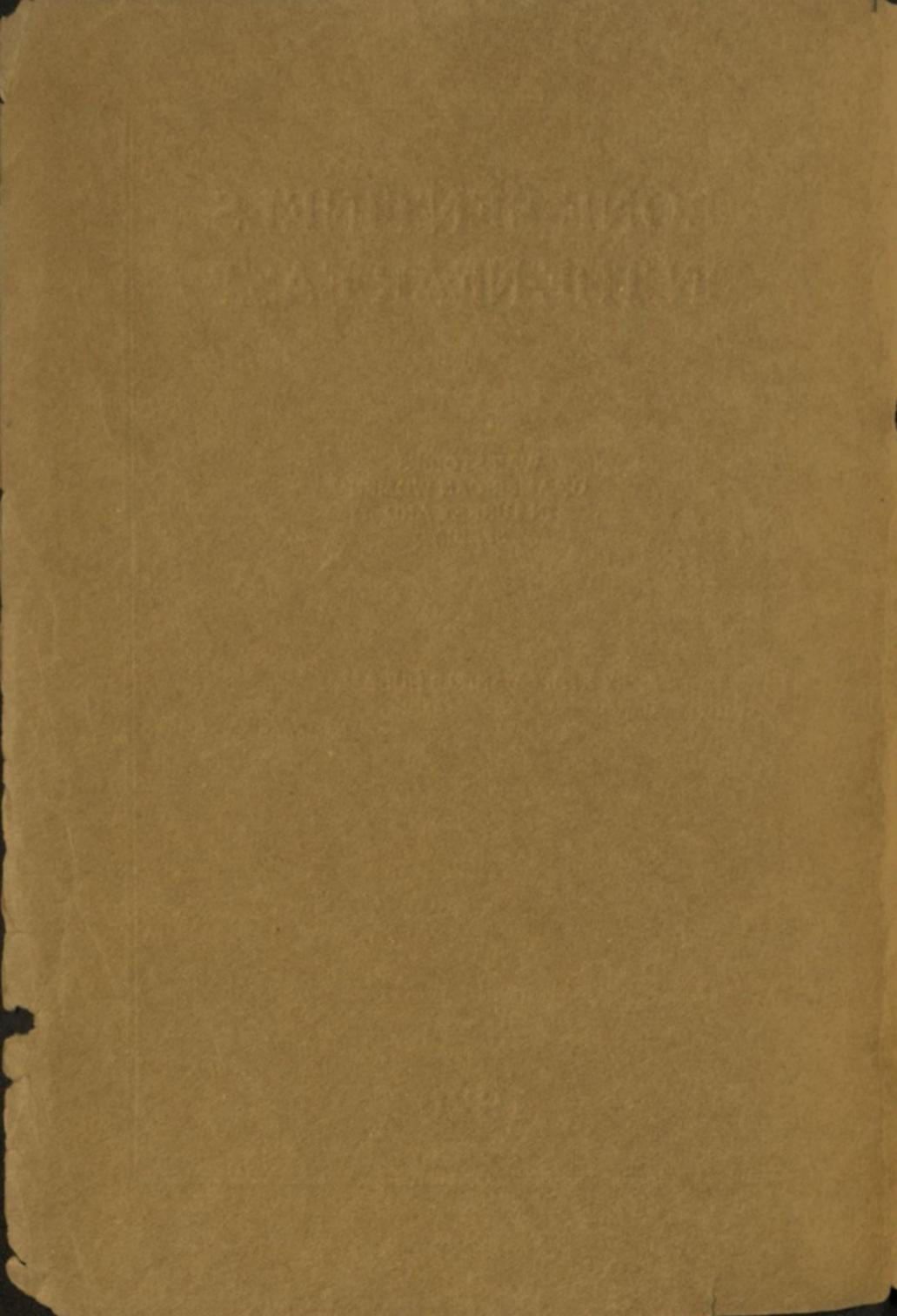
# LONE SENTINELS IN THE NEAR EAST

WAR STORIES  
OF AMERICAN WOMEN  
IN TURKEY AND  
SERBIA

BY ETHEL DANIELS HUBBARD

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1920

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# *Lone Sentinels in the Near East*

MYRTLE SHANE, BITLIS  
MARY MATTHEWS, MONASTIR  
OLIVE CRAWFORD, TREBIZOND  
MARY GRAFFAM, SIVAS

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By  
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## INTRODUCTION

**A**MERICAN women who have remained alone at their posts in the Near East, after the men connected with the mission were obliged to withdraw, may well be referred to as lone sentinels for Christianity. In Turkey we can point to seven stations which for long or short periods during war years have been staffed only by women. At times an American woman has been quite alone, as in the case of Miss Vaughan at Hadjin, Miss Graffam at Sivas and Mrs. Christie at Tarsus. Sometimes there have been two or three women who have shared the loneliness and the responsibility as in the case of Miss and Mrs. Dewey with Miss Graf at Mardin and Miss Shane with Miss McLaren at Bitlis.

It has not been possible to tell the stories of all the women who have maintained their stations and stood by the people of their adoption. These four have not been chosen because of their preëminence over others but because they may be considered typical examples of missionary achievement in Turkey and Serbia during the War. Three of them are on the field today and the fourth is now on her way to the Near East.

Acknowledgment is gladly made to Miss Grace Knapp, author of "The Tragedy in Bitlis," from which volume data for the story of Miss Shane has been largely culled; to Mrs. Olive T. Crawford for a two hours' conversation which supplied the facts of her five years in Trebizond; to Dr. James L. Barton for significant touches here and there; and to Miss Anne L. Buckley for her untiring alacrity in supplying access to all the material employed.

E. D. H.

# INTRODUCTION

THESE volumes are here published in a form which will permit the reader to connect the various parts of the work as they are written, and to see the relation of the whole to the parts. It is not intended to be a mere collection of papers, but a series of volumes which will form a complete and connected whole. The first volume is devoted to the history of the subject, and the second to the principles of the subject. The third volume is devoted to the practice of the subject, and the fourth to the application of the subject. The fifth volume is devoted to the history of the subject, and the sixth to the principles of the subject. The seventh volume is devoted to the practice of the subject, and the eighth to the application of the subject. The ninth volume is devoted to the history of the subject, and the tenth to the principles of the subject. The eleventh volume is devoted to the practice of the subject, and the twelfth to the application of the subject. 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MYRTLE SHANE  
Bitlis, Turkey

*“Self-sacrifice is not doing without something, but doing without that which is of less value than something else. A life of self-denial is one in which things that are best are put in the first place.”*

MYRTLE SHANE.

## MYRTLE SHANE, BITLIS

**B**ITLIS is a name to conjure up vivid memories. For the student of general history it suggests a line of Kurdish princes who lived in their fortress castle and gaily defied both the Shah of Persia and the Sultan of Turkey. Theirs was a long and dramatic dynasty culminating less than a century ago when the last and most famous of the princes was trapped by the Turks and carried prisoner to Constantinople. Once in the twentieth century the unvanquished Kurds tried to regain the old stronghold of their clan, a fantastic and futile attempt, foredoomed to inglorious defeat.

For the student of missionary history, Bitlis means the scene of pioneer endeavors and rugged personalities. It evokes the name of the Knapp family whose history is written into the destiny of Bitlis with as much distinctness as that of the Kurdish chieftains of old. It recalls also the oft-heard name of the Ely Sisters whose story is one of the choicest in missionary biography. Today, Bitlis connotes the diabolical deeds of the Turks during the Great War, as well as a commanding act of diplomacy and devotion performed by the young American woman whom this sketch portrays.

Miss Myrtle Shane is a teacher of the finest calibre, having the teaching faculty supplied by nature and disciplined by training and by personal educational standards of a high order. A graduate of the University of Kansas, she taught for eight years in high schools in Kansas and in South Dakota. Her department was English and in it she made an enviable record among her educational colleagues. She was succeeding unquestionably in her profession but professional success alone did not satisfy the reach of her spirit. She turned upon herself the burning question, "Am I making of my life all that I should make. Am I growing in usefulness?" And from that time the prayer of her life was that she might find *her* work and that service to the world which would demand all she was capable of giving.

At this spiritual crisis a letter reached her from one of the largest teachers' agencies, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Boston, asking if she would consider a teaching position in Turkey, probably in Bitlis. Now Bitlis was a name of compelling associations to Miss Shane for a friend of hers, Miss Mary Uline, was a teacher there in the "Mt. Holyoke Seminary" which the Ely Sisters, themselves Holyoke alumnae, had developed. It seemed as if this opportunity in Turkey and her unrest of spirit had met and answered each other. Bitlis had made the irresistible claim upon her life.

In the fall of 1915 Miss Shane reached this historic city in the heart of Kurdistan, near the western shore of the blue salt lake of Van. She took up her abode with Miss Charlotte Ely, in the house where she and her sister had lived more than forty years—a house located, unfortunately, outside the high walls and barred gate of the mission compound. The American mission was situated upon a high bluff on the eastern side of the city, looking straight down two hundred feet upon a medley of mosques, minarets and the ancient fortress of the Kurds which towered incongruously above the low-roofed bazaars. Sound and flash of water were everywhere perceptible, for a mountain torrent raced zigzag through the city, beneath arched stone bridges, under the old drawbridge of the fortress, turning primitive grindstones and irrigating the gardens of squatter Kurds on the western side. The city had twisted itself into the mountains so successfully that it could not be seen entire from any one of the surrounding heights. From Kansas to Kurdistan, from the Missouri to Lake Van, from orderly American life to the freaks and frenzies of Turks and Kurds,—surely it is a far and startling call.

In October of that sinister year, 1914, Turkey entered the war, and with her entry came the usual problems and emergencies for a nation at war. The missionaries at Bitlis felt the pinch chiefly in shortage of funds and teachers, but for the Armenians a war with a foreign foe, a war in which they were patriotically fighting, seemed, by comparison with the past,

a very tolerable burden. The governor of Bitlis vilayet was more than usually efficient and maintained a fair degree of order within his territory. The situation seemed in no way menacing and three missionaries of the Bitlis staff, Mr. and Mrs. Maynard and Miss Uline, decide to take their already belated furlough in America. On Armenian Ascension Day when the streets were gay with people in holiday mood and attire, they left the mission for the first stage of the long journey homeward.

True to their native custom, hundreds of Armenians escorted the travelers some distance out of the city. After they had turned back, Miss Ely, Miss Shane and Mr. Knapp, son of the pioneer Knapps, prepared a picnic lunch by the river and with laughter and jest tried to hide the inevitable regret. Then they separated, three returning east to Bitlis and three proceeding on their way west, little dreaming, either travelers or sojourners, that in their sister mission at Van, ninety miles away across the lake, Americans and Armenians were in a besieged city which had already held out nearly four weeks against the onslaught of the Turks, but was now at the final verge of endurance. The story of the siege of Van is one of the classics of missionary and military history, an inimitable tale of human bravery at which this sketch may no more than hint, but which may be sought in full upon some other printed page.

Scarcely was the Armenian holiday over when the reign of terror began. The first sign of its approach was the appearance of bedraggled women and children in the streets of Bitlis, looking piteously about for a place to lay their heads. They had fled from villages in the province, where already the official massacre had begun, though done under the guise of Kurdish deviltry which the government pretended to condemn. Seven hundred of these refugees appealed to the American mission for shelter and their appeal was not denied.

About this time came a telegram announcing that two of the Van missionaries, Miss Grisell McLaren and Fraulein Marthe Kleiss would reach Bitlis the following day. What could be

the meaning of their journey from Van to Bitlis at such a critical period? No one could surmise until the travelers arrived and told their story, a story of barricades and sharpshooting and bombardment, desperate and prolonged fighting between Turks and Armenians, then—the approach of the Russian army and the hurried flight of all Turks from the city, an exodus, which, curiously enough, carried an American and a German woman in its train.

Not long after Turkey entered the war, the governor of Van had asked the Americans to assign one of their number for service in the Turkish military hospital. They complied and Miss McLaren, though not a trained nurse, was selected for the task. Fraulein Marthe Kleiss, or Sister Martha as she was more often called, was also asked to leave the German Orphanage for Armenians and give the Turkish soldiers the benefit of her professional skill as nurse. The achievement of these two foreign women who brought cleanliness and sanitation and sensible discipline out of that dirty, ill-equipped, savagely managed Turkish institution is another of the honor records of the war.

Hence, when the migration across the lake to Bitlis took place, hospital patients and nurses were transported with the rest. At Bitlis, Sister Martha and Miss McLaren, though living at the American mission, continued to nurse wounded Turkish soldiers who were at first billeted in an old monastery outside the city, and later in evacuated Armenian houses, near the mission as well as in the mission church itself.

Meanwhile crowds of old men, women and children swarmed daily into Bitlis from the outlying villages. Eight thousand were allotted to the Americans for shelter and provision—eight thousand stupefied, abandoned human beings of all ages, sick, exhausted, some cruelly wounded, all dependent upon Miss Shane, and her two associates, Miss Ely and Mr. Knapp, for continued existence. They appealed to the governor for redress, but he continued to assert that the outrages were committed by a lawless Kurdish brigand whom he was trying to circumvent.

In early June the refugees were coralled by Turkish gendarmes and driven in droves through the street. From a bluff overlooking the valley there could be seen on the road leading south crowds and crowds of people, waiting—for what? For the order to march and for the Kurds who were in turn, waiting for them further along the road!

In the city proper an epidemic of typhus broke out, as was to be expected under the conditions. In the mission compound five or six died every day. At first they were buried in a garden across the street, but presently this was forbidden and graves were dug on the mission property, graves where the bones of Armenian victims of the massacre of 1895 lay beside the newly dead of 1915.

On the twenty-second day of June the first overt act of the government against the Armenian residents of Bitlis was committed. The pastor of the Protestant church was seized and carried off to prison. The day following, the American mission was surrounded by soldiers and every Armenian man and boy above ten years of age marched away to prison. In all sections of the city men and boys of the Armenian race were arrested and led away to jail. Any who resisted were promptly shot. Those who hid in their houses and refused to come out were burned to death and their families shared their fate—a fate preferable, had they but known, to what was to follow. In a few days the report was circulated that the men prisoners had been cast into an underground dungeon. Then, that they had been taken out on the road and killed. And finally, a well-verified tale to the effect that 700 had been led six miles out of the city, lined up on either side of trenches already dug and butchered there by the Kurds!

After that came the spoliation of Armenian women and children, the next step in the official program to ruin or efface the entire Armenian race. Turkish soldiers broke into Armenian houses and with kicks, blows and jeers forced women and children into the street and down the road. Now and then a woman or girl escaped and came back—pitiable, mutilated

beings who stood at the gate and received a morsel of food or money or a kind word, more than which the Americans were forbidden to do. Guards stood at the gate to enforce this decree.

Although government sanction was upon these outrages, nevertheless Miss Shane planned an opposition move, resolving to fight to the end for the lives of her schoolgirls and the women and children whom she had sheltered in the building. Her first step was to go to the Vali and entreat him to allow her protegee's to remain. His reply was evasive. Take your pupils to Harpoot, he said, and place them in school there. But the Harpoot buildings, she knew, had already been appropriated by the government for a hospital. Moreover, the road between Bitlis and Harpoot was covered with bodies of the dead. That fact, too, she knew.

No, was her rejoinder, if the governor were sincere in his proposal that they remove to Harpoot, why would he not allow them to remain quietly in Bitlis until travel should be safer?

But government orders could not be gainsaid, he replied. Not an Armenian was to be left in Bitlis. Thus read the proclamation from Constantinople. He, the Vali had no choice nor responsibility in the matter.

"In that case I will not give them up," retorted Miss Shane. In her mind revolved a scheme of defense, barricades about the building and resistance to the last gunshot.

Perceiving her determination the governor was moved to compromise, and finally agreed to leave the girls in the school "until the last." Not satisfied with this concession, Miss Shane inquired to whom she might apply for assurance of their final safety. The name of the military commandant at the front was given, and to him Miss Shane wrote, forwarding to the Vali a copy of the letter together with a list of her women and girls for which he had asked. Reply to that letter was never received.

It should be remembered that Myrtle Shane had been in Turkey less than two years, in which time she had learned to speak the Armenian but not the Turkish language. To man-

oeuvre one's way with Turkish officials is no simple matter for one long inured to the caprices of the Ottoman government, but for a newcomer it would seem a staggering proposition. In this young woman, however, there was a quality of personality or a strain in her Scotch-Irish and French ancestry which enabled her to carry her point even with officials of the Turkish empire.

On the fourth of July, when danger and death were on every hand and each day brought some new alarm, Miss Shane was stricken with typhus, that dreadful disease to which she had been continually exposed. With temperature soaring, she lay in her room in the school building while Sister Martha took charge of her case.

Exactly a week later Miss Charlotte Ely passed out of that doomed city of earth into the City which is above, where the terrible problem of life which had pressed so hard is resolved at last into understanding. She was seventy-six years of age, and forty-seven years of her life had been given to missionary service in Turkey, with only two visits to America in all that period. Bitlis was a home community to her and her sister who had died two years before. For Miss Ely the agony of 1915 was all the more acute since many of the victims of torture and death were old pupils or men and women she had known from their childhood. It was no wonder that bodily strength failed under the strain of so great sympathy.

By the middle of July a new menace hung over Bitlis. The Russian army was drawing steadily near, and before the Russians sped the Kurds, intent upon looting and killing and escaping to the mountains before the alien host should occupy the city. The governor's message to the missionaries bade them leave Bitlis at once. Civilians and officials were fleeing before the advancing army. But how could a typhus patient rise up and journey forth? For Miss Shane's sake they decided to remain and indeed their hands were full of work, for new refugees flocked daily to the mission, seeking protection from the Kurds who were already sacking the city and threatening even American lives and property. For a week the danger was imminent,

then came a shift in the fortunes of war and the Russian army turned in retreat. Moslems who had fled were summoned back and by the end of the month the Turkish government was again domiciled in Bitlis and the old terrorism resumed.

At this point a new personage emerges in the story of Miss Shane and her school at Bitlis, a personage who remains in the foreground until the end. It was the Turkish doctor in charge of the military hospital, Mustafa Bey by name. An Arab by birth, he had received his education in France and Germany and was a reluctant subject of the Ottoman empire. By every means in his power he aided and abetted Miss Shane in her effort to save the lives of the girls and women in her school. His was no easy rôle to play for, had his part been suspected, government wrath would have fallen upon him and upon those who had benefited by his strategy. Before Miss Shane recovered from typhus the battle for the preservation of the schoolgirls began in earnest. An exciting affair in the school building itself was the match which kindled government hostility.

Gendarmes had arrived at the mission demanding the Armenians who had taken refuge there during the brief Turkish evacuation and Kurdish pillage. With them had come a reassuring message to Miss Shane that her girls were not to be molested. Unable to endure inaction at such a crucial moment, Miss Shane rose from her sick bed, dressed hastily and crossed the hall to the room where the women and girls were assembled.

Suddenly a shot rang out above the commotion. Who had fired that unlucky shot and where was he? Mr. Knapp and two gendarmes rushed upstairs and down until a broken window in the kitchen gave the clue. The preceding week a young man, disguised in woman's clothes, had begged admission to the compound and had been received upon surrender of his firearms, and upon condition that he would not enter the girls' school. When the soldiers appeared, some of the women had allowed him refuge inside the forbidden building and in a mania of fear, he had snatched a gun and fired upon a Turkish soldier.

That shot was signal and source of unlimited trouble. It

was enough to infuriate the gendarmes and to kindle suspicion against Mr. Knapp as perpetrator of the mischief. No sort of explanation would suffice then or later. They closed around him in the small entry leading to the kitchen. Learning of his danger, Miss Shane made her way downstairs, clinging to the rail at every step. Upon seeing her, Mr. Knapp called out for her to go back, adding, by way of explanation, that they were forcing him into the kitchen to disarm the Armenian. A gendarme ordered her away but she refused to go. Then the officer in charge motioned angrily and when she did not obey, raised his gun to strike. Reluctantly she turned toward the stairs, when the officer sprang in front of her and barred the way. He muttered rapidly in Turkish some order or explanation which of course she could not understand, then called a soldier and indicated she was to follow him. At that moment another shot pierced the air and Mr. Knapp opened the kitchen door to find the young man shot dead by his own hand.

Miss Shane was helped across the street to a house which had been converted into a hospital. There she dropped into the nearest chair and waited in utter exhaustion until the turmoil was over. Later in the day permission was given for her return to the school, as the building was not to be burned now that the Armenian was dead. It had been their intention to fire the building in order to ensure the Armenian's capture, which had led the officer to insist so vigorously upon her removal.

Meanwhile an impromptu trial was being held in the Ely house outside the gate, a trial in which grave issues were at stake. Turkish officers decided it was revolution they had scented in the American camp. Mr. Knapp had secreted the Armenian on purpose to shoot them, they announced to Miss McLaren. Every American must leave the city.

At this psychological moment Mustafa Bey walked into the room and inquired the cause of the trouble. Upon being enlightened he pointed to Miss McLaren with the question, "Is she going, too? I need her in my hospital. I cannot run my hospital without her."

This threw new light upon the situation and after a whispered parley it was agreed that Miss McLaren might remain. The doctor then interceded for Miss Shane who was totally unfit for travel, and his shrewdness wrung a reluctant consent for her to wait until the fever was gone. But there was no clemency for Mr. Knapp, only distrust and hostile plotting, as the gendarmes withdrew, leaving the customary guard for the night.

In the morning Miss Shane's first concern was for her girls who had been moved to the hospital across the street. They had passed the night in safety but it was rumored they would be taken captive before the day was gone. She was permitted to spend fifteen minutes in their company, and again she struggled downstairs and across the street, accompanied by two women who supported her. No sooner had she been seated in the room when the girls crowded around, one kneeling and burying her head in her lap. Miss Shane gave them her one morsel of hope, her appeal to Mutafa Bey for intervention. If his succor failed, the old, terrible fate was in store, and that fate every girl knew.

There was an extraordinary calmness upon that group as they faced the future in the presence of their young teacher who thus far had been solely responsible for their preservation. Prayers, brief and searching in their reality, arose from girls and teacher as they knelt together. Before the allotted time had passed, three soldiers came in and urged the girls to do some work for them in another part of the building. They refused and, strangely enough, the soldiers did not press their demand.

One girl, more urgently entreated than the rest, turned upon the soldiers with flashing eyes: "You may kill me here," she cried, "but I will not go." Such was the spirit of Miss Shane's pupils upon this and subsequent occasions when their mettle was tried.

That evening Mustafa Bey came to Miss Shane with a message from the governor, expressing regret for her anxiety and inconvenience and avowing that he had never intended to allow her girls to be molested. But as this unfortunate shooting was

likely to bring about an investigation from Constantinople, he could now permit her girls to remain upon one condition only, that they become assistants in the hospital. It was easy to detect Mustafa Bey's shrewd hand in this well-played game.

Troubles of a different nature now befell Miss Shane and Miss McLaren. They were called upon to face the death and exile of their two colleagues, Sister Martha and Mr. Knapp. The former died of typhus after ten days of terrible delirium and suffering, with no chance of recovery from the first onset of the disease. In broken health herself she had nursed Turkish soldiers uncomplainingly and, though a German subject, hailed by Turkish officers as an ally, she had championed the cause of Armenians from first to last. When Germany's implication in the great crime was forced upon her belief the shock was too great for endurance. "I want to go home," she used to cry, "not to my home in Konigsberg but to my Father's home." On July 29, the desire of her heart was answered.

For some years Turkish officials had nursed a secret enmity for Mr. Knapp, because of his fearless championship of the Armenians. Now that hostility found vent in his abrupt dismissal from Bitlis. Late one night he came to say good-by, knowing that his departure was imminent. He was greatly cast down in spirit, fearing not so much for his own safety as for the welfare of the two women whom he must leave undefended in Bitlis. They had prayers together and then he went out into the darkness of the night and the darker dealings of the Turks. After midnight Miss Shane heard the soft tread of camels in the street below and knew that Mr. Knapp had begun his lonely, perilous journey.

As Miss McLaren rightfully belonged in Van, Miss Shane was now the only member of the Bitlis staff left on duty, and upon her devolved the entire responsibility for the station. After Sister Martha's death, Miss McLaren resumed her care of the wounded soldiers, visiting ten or twelve hospitals daily until in September she took her turn as a typhus patient and Miss Shane, her turn as nurse.

With Miss McLaren disabled, Miss Shane lost her only medium of communication with the Turks, as Miss McLaren could speak Turkish and always acted as interpreter. But inability to use the language did not silence Miss Shane's attempts to preserve her girls from capture. Again and again during that summer and autumn the Turks tried to snatch Miss Shane's prize from her resolute grasp. That her schoolgirls were a prize, no one would dispute. Military officers stationed in Bitlis urged their deportation that they might choose the fairest among them. They were an especially comely group of girls, well educated and with a dignity of deportment the Turks recognized and valued.

Mustafa Bey was made the butt of censure and ridicule because he kept these girls so securely beyond the clutch of the greedy Turks. At times he was so sorely pressed that he questioned Miss Shane's judgment in refusing to allow the girls to become wives of officers. She argued by way of reply that there was not a girl in the school who was not free to marry a Turk if she chose, but that she herself was staying in Bitlis for the express purpose of preventing forced marriages into Turkish homes.

Finally, in desperation, he asked for seven girls to assist in the operating room of the hospital and Miss Shane was obliged to yield. Hitherto the girls had sewed, washed and cooked for the soldiers under her supervision in the school building. She had many fears for their safety if removed to this exposed position in the Turkish hospital.

"The real test has now come to you," she said to the seven she had chosen. "If you cannot make the Turk realize there is a vital difference between your religion and his, your principles and his; that there is something in you which makes it impossible for you to descend to his plane of living and thinking, and that you do not shrink from death when the question of principle and loyalty to your religion is at stake, your only means of protection is gone, and any breaking down of barriers means danger for yourselves and all the others."

The outcome reflected credit on both sides, for the girls in the hospital received fair and respectful treatment from the Turks, and incidentally secured some valuable training.

In November of that year Miss Shane was compelled to leave Bitlis, an exile as loath to depart as was Mr. Knapp, though under circumstances quite divergent. In Constantinople, in American official and family circles, there was deepening anxiety for her fate in that remote Turkish city which for a long time had been cut off from communication with the outside world, and which was rumored to have been partially destroyed by fire. When at last a telegram came through from Bitlis, its authenticity was doubted. Inquiry was made through the State Department and Ambassador Morgenthau which elicited a reply telegram from Miss Shane unmistakable in its genuineness. Despite her assurance of safety and desire to remain, the ambassador deemed it unwise for two women to be left alone in Bitlis and instructed the consul at Harpoot to send his kavass (consular servant) to escort them to that city.

Unwelcome injunctions from the Turkish government might be evaded, if possible, but who would choose to disregard the mandate of one's home government? Though revolting bitterly against the decree which wrenched her from her girls when their fate was still unsettled, Miss Shane had no recourse but to journey forth with Miss McLaren and their escort over the death-labelled highway to Harpoot. There they remained, hard at work, until the summer of 1917, when diplomatic relations were severed with the United States and they were obliged to leave Turkey for America.

Home could not solace Miss Shane for the loss of her cherished work at Bitlis. It was *her* work and nothing could really detach her from it, though they might enforce her bodily removal. Grief over the separation from her girls was unceasing and was not to be silenced by home associations or interesting opportunities for study, only by the summons to return to Turkey which came early in 1919. She joined the first expedition of the American Commission for Relief in the Near East, volun-

teering for the most difficult and dangerous post, the Caucasus. There she is at the present time, near Alexandropol, known officially as orphanage director, with 5,000 orphans under her care. Ten of her assistants are Bitlis women, who shared with her the tremendous joy of reunion after the unforgettable experiences of the past.

From the Caucasus Miss Shane writes in jubilant strain: "Oh, this missionary work pays. These Armenians who have been under missionary influence are looked up to by others because of their honesty and reliability."

Of course it pays, and of course life pays for one of Miss Shane's motive and temper.

But what of Bitlis and the sixty or more girls and women left without their teacher and champion in the fall of 1915? Thrown upon his honor by the absence of his American co-worker, Mustafa Bey rallied all his resources to save the girls entrusted to his care. But the time came when strategy and perseverance failed and they faced the usual doom of Armenian women. At just this desperate crisis, the tide of war turned again and the Russians advanced victoriously toward Bitlis, occupying the city in January, 1916. It was then that Moslems became victims of the fate they had themselves so long imposed upon others. Those who failed to escape were put to death by the Russians, but when Mustafa Bey's turn came, the school girls whom he had defended sprang to his rescue and by their intercession saved his life.

In all the dramatic history of the old Kurdish city of Bitlis no more dramatic or vital events have marked its course than those which centred about Miss Myrtle Shane, her school girls and the Arab doctor, Mustafa Bey, in the summer of 1915.

The fate of Miss Shane and her Armenian orphans hangs at this moment in a balance as crucial as in the summer of 1915 in Bitlis. Under date of May 10, 1920, the Associated Press gives out the news that women workers of the Near East Relief have been withdrawn because overthrow and starvation threaten the new-born Armenian republic. On one side are the fighting

Turks and on the other the Georgian republic, the latter of which refuses to transport foodstuffs to Armenians, and there is no other ingress. Only one American woman refuses to leave Armenia, Miss Myrtle Shane, once of Bitlis, now of Alexandropol. She has resigned from the Commission rather than obey its order to depart. "I shall stay here and face starvation with the Armenians." This is the latest challenge of Myrtle Shane to the republic of America and its Christian citizens. What shall the answer be?

*"We are in the place of duty and that is always the safest  
place for any one."*

MARY MATTHEWS.

## MARY MATTHEWS, MONASTIR

**A**NOTHER and different challenge comes from the career of Mary Matthews of Monastir, Serbia. Her life demonstrates how a quiet, unobtrusive, matter-of-fact personality may possess elements of greatness more secure than the brilliant and imaginative attain in their more spectacular flights.

To begin with, she had a Christian mother, the almost invariable "first cause" of men and women who have given vital Christian service to the world. Then she was a student in Mount Holyoke Seminary in the early eighties when the stress upon missionary service was especially direct and convincing. Subsequently she taught two years in Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, a school which was in itself a practical embodiment of democratic ideals. From that environment she applied to the American Board for appointment in one of the missionary outposts of the world. And in 1888 she left her home in New York State for the journey to Monastir, Macedonia, where she was to become a teacher in the American School for Girls, founded exactly ten years before and comprising in its registration pupils from five or more nationalities.

In 1908 it was said of this school that it never graduated a girl who was not a member of the Protestant Christian Church at the time of leaving school. Presumably this record has been kept intact to the present time and unquestionably its maintenance has been largely due to Miss Matthews who has been teacher and principal for more than thirty years. It is a school of strategic importance for, though disavowing all political aims, it has been set in an environment of political ferment and race friction which only Christian education can hope to transform.

The city of Monastir has the usual assets and trials of a frontier town magnified by the inflammable temper of the changing nationalities involved. Situated in the mountains, fifteen miles from the boundary between what is now known as Serbia and Greece, 115 miles from Salonica, it has long been the

coveted booty of Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians. Besides its direct access to Salonica by rail and motor road, it has railroad communication with Albania and Western Serbia and, via Gidia and Larissa, through connections with Athens. In the center of this populous and strategic city is located the American Mission, comprising three buildings, the Essery Orphanage, a dwelling house and the American School for Girls.

One can easily conjecture the routine and eventfulness of those school years between 1888 when Miss Matthews first arrived and 1908 when came the thrill and expectancy aroused by the Turkish revolution. One can catch in imagination the stir of those days when the constitution of New Turkey was read from the military barracks of Monastir in the hearing of thousands of people, when prisoners were released from long confinement and Turks and Christians embraced and kissed one another, talking ecstatically of freedom, equality and brotherhood.

In disillusionment one spans the next three years of history when the indiscretion of the Young Turk party, backed by ages of tyranny, brought about the Balkan Alliance against Turkey, the united offensive of Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Bulgaria against Turkish domination. This conflict is known in history as the first Balkan War and, as usual, Monastir was in the thick of the fight. In November, 1912, Serbians and Turks fought a four days' battle ending in the rout of the Turkish army and the occupation of Monastir by Serbian troops.

In a home letter Miss Matthews described the triumphal procession of Serbian soldiers through the city, which for four and a half hours passed the spot where she sat and watched. She was spectator and participant in these dramatic scenes, catching the spasm of rejoicing which swept over Monastir because a Christian nation had come to govern the city, and sharing the labor of providing clothes and food for hospital patients and refugees from buildings destroyed by fire. Her girls' school maintained an unbroken session through the upheaval, increasing its enrollment to eighty or more because other schools in the city were closed for lack of supplies. Roumanians, Bulgarians

and Greeks came as pupils to the American school. It was during this first Balkan War that Miss Matthews manufactured with her own hands a United States flag, using Turkey red, white and blue cotton for the purpose. Hoisted upon the mission buildings, the home-made flag proclaimed the identity of the nation represented and gave definite protection from attack.

Scarcely had the war against Turkey been concluded when the flimsy league of Balkan states split into its natural warring elements and the allies of one year became the enemies of the next. Bulgaria was arrayed against Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, with Roumania making incursions into Bulgarian territory. The treaty of Bucharest, signed in August 1913, secured only an artificial peace, leaving the Balkan States in a situation described by the historian as "more unnatural and more beset by dangers than had been the case even during the worst years of the reign of Abdul Hamid."

At the termination of the second Balkan War, Miss Matthews came to the United States, remaining two years for necessary recuperation of strength, a Providential provision for the supreme strain to come. From a safe but unwelcome distance she knew of the increasing jealousy between Austria and Serbia and of that notorious ultimatum which enlisted, in rapid succession, almost every nation of Europe in combat.

In August, 1915, she was allowed to return to the inflammable war district where her school was located. At that time Miss Delpha Davis was her American associate in the school and Rev. and Mrs. W. P. Clarke were members of the mission. There were some seventy girls, sixty boys and eight teachers to greet their "much loved directorka," as she had been called. "How much she means to us," wrote one of her teachers at the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of her connection with the school, an occasion aptly celebrated by pupils and teachers. The schoolgirls in Monastir would be the pride of any teacher—wide-awake, attractive girls with their musical names, Vasilka, Magda, Didovitza. The fall term of school opened auspiciously despite the unsettled and ominous condition of the country.

When Miss Matthews arrived in September, the Serbian flag waved over Monastir, but it was only two months before the flag of another nation was raised over the disputed city.

By Thanksgiving Day every school in the city, including the Jewish and French, was closed except the American School for Girls. Every day and hour brought fresh evidences of the Bulgarian approach toward Monastir, until the army was reported only four hours removed. Refugees arrived from Nish which had been seized by the northern division of the Bulgarian army. On November 25 a contingent of British doctors and nurses staggered into the city, having walked fifty miles and lost all their baggage. Tired as they were, they had to take train next morning for Salonica, as the English and Bulgarians were diplomatic enemies. The Italian consul and British vice-consul had already deposited their personal belongings with Miss Matthews in expectation of hurried exit from the scene. Five hundred residents were demanding passports to leave the city.

In the midst of this excitement, on that snowy evening when the Bulgarians were almost at the gate, Miss Matthews sat at her desk writing to a friend at home. At the close of the letter she says: "The city seems quiet and I think I will go to rest, but I sleep in such clothing that I can be ready quickly in an emergency. I am glad I am here. There is much satisfaction in being where one is needed. Address, care of the American Mission, Salonica, Greece, unless this is Bulgaria soon, then Monastir, Bulgaria."

The city fell into the hands of the Bulgarians and their allies in November, 1915, just three years after the Serbian occupation in 1912. Three wars in three years and the end not in sight! A year later, again in the eventful month of November, Miss Matthews writes to her brother of the impending crisis in Monastir. Another government was about to fall and a new one to be established. In the United States it was facetiously remarked that the fall and rise of Monastir was reported in every issue of the daily paper, and that a really live paper would print two conflicting stories in the same issue.

On the nineteenth of November, 1916, four years to a day since the Serbian entry in 1912, the last of the Bulgarian and German armies withdrew and Serbia returned with her allies. This return was heralded by the thunder of artillery from the mountains, and the flight of aeroplanes above the city, dropping shells which sent people scurrying into underground shelter. Monastir continued in possession of the Allies, with the French in actual command, until, by decree of the Allied Council, the city was allotted finally to Serbia. In that fateful interim between Allied occupation and the end of the war Monastir was in a perpetual state of bombardment, shelled for two years by German batteries stationed in the mountains surrounding the city. It was during these two years that Miss Matthews' experiences ran almost into the fabulous, so marvellous seemed her deliverances from injury or death.

In December, 1916, by order of the French military command, the Clarke family was removed to Salonica, and Miss Matthews was the only American left in Monastir, Miss Davis having returned to America to recuperate from a long illness. In many missions in the Near East American women were permitted to remain when the men were forced to leave. With school discontinued, church services abandoned, save for a French Protestant service for soldiers, with seventeen orphan girls in her care and three families living in the compound, thirty-eight persons in all counting upon her leadership, besides valuable American property to defend, Miss Matthews began to adjust life to the tormenting, nerve-racking conditions of daily bombardment.

Usually the batteries did not begin fire until late forenoon, and during that brief morning respite she would hurry forth on errands and rush back to shelter before the first shells fell. Once a week she had to go to the Nachalnik for orders for flour, a bag a week for her family of thirty-eight. The official in charge as well as all others with whom Miss Matthews had to deal, treated her with a degree of consideration which was notable. Often in early forenoon or at night when the thunder

of the day was spent she would visit the sick and needy in their homes, bestowing gifts of hope and encouragement as well as material succor. Within the compound she was always busy, organizing work and directing its execution at safe times and places, raising vegetables on the school grounds, planning housework and needlework and keeping the financial accounts of the station with minute accuracy. She was an expert manager, thrifty, far-sighted, sagacious.

Once during the bombardment, the French military commander requested the mission house for personal occupancy. Miss Matthews demurred on the ground that if he came there to live the premises would be shelled immediately. The general replied that he should come anyway and come he did and as promptly began the attack. Underground telephone wires were supposed to connect the enemy lines with the city and an officer's change of residence was reported instantly. Miss Matthews' judgment was vindicated and the general withdrew.

To minimize the peril, all occupants of the school building moved their sleeping quarters to the first floor and basement. In the latter place they were fairly immune, as shells seldom break through more than two floors, and the lower walls were solidly built of stone, thanks to the pioneer missionary who planned the structure. At first, Miss Matthews slept in a corner of the schoolroom, the teachers occupying the reading-room and meals being served to all in the cellar. "That is a nice little dining-room," she remarked in a letter, "and I do not have to jump and run when we hear the shells."

One Sunday, early in the siege, a German shell fell in the garden, shattering the wall of the printing house and smashing nine window panes. A fragment shot across the street into an alley opposite the gate and wounded a boy. Five minutes before the shell struck, the orphan children had left the yard and gone indoors! On another day a shell landed near the school annex, and a portion tore through window and shade and dropped beside Miss Matthews' desk. One afternoon, while taking tea with Mrs. Hartley, sister of Sir John French, a piece of

shrapnel struck her hostess, killing her instantly. Under falling shells Miss Matthews ran out of the house, seeking for help.

In all, thirteen high explosive shells fell upon the mission, all but one exploding and tearing great jagged holes in the walls. That one ineffectual shell buried itself in the garden where it lies to this day too deeply imbedded to respond to rake or hoe. Beside the gaping shell holes there were thousands of smaller rents here and there, the work of shell fragments and shrapnel. At the end of the siege Miss Matthews had collected more than a hundred pounds of pieces of shell and shrapnel, extracted from walls and picked up in garden or house. Yet under this daily deluge of explosives not one of her girls or women, nor any of the Protestant community received the slightest injury, though escapes were petrifying by their narrow margin. "There is no way to account for it," said Miss Matthews, "except that it is a special Providence watching over us."

Her next experience was a bad case of articular rheumatism which kept her in bed in the cellar six weeks and off the streets eleven weeks. Sometimes, in quiet intervals, two people would carry her outdoors to lie in the sunshine in the garden, but this was a luxury too hazardous to be frequently secured. On one occasion she had scarcely been borne indoors when a shell struck the precise spot where she had been sitting. Incendiary shells were often fired upon the city, starting fires which sometimes came perilously close to the mission. In her helpless condition Miss Matthews was reassured by the promise of the British doctor who had offered to provide means for her removal, if fire threatened the school. Ordinarily her underground chamber was too dark for reading, but by a clever device, she arranged a mirror so that it reflected sufficient light into her corner for a few hours a day. By contriving an exit for the pipe through the floor above and out the front hall window, a stove had been set up to heat the cellar bedroom. Miss Matthews used to insist that her "little basement den was as cosy a place as could be found in the city," but Dr. Barton received a contrary impression when he visited Monastir in 1919, for he afterwards remarked

that his "basement at home was a sun parlor compared with her cellar."

Yet in all these grizzly experiences Miss Matthews was often heard to express satisfaction with her lot. "I should not be contented to be anywhere else than in Monastir in these times." And again, "I am thankful to belong to a Board that does not call its missionaries away from their work when they are most needed."

Late in the year 1917, after recovering from her illness, she had a fortnight's respite from shell and shrapnel, when Mr. Grey, director of the Serbian Relief Fund, carried her to Salonica in his car for a visit and needed dentistry. Upon her return she became engrossed in a new form of relief work quite unique in character, and "really satisfactory" in results, according to her own verdict.

It seems that in years past many Bulgarians had emigrated to the United States to escape Turkish or Greek oppression. By industry and thrift they had accumulated income sufficient to aid families and friends left behind in the Balkans, but in process of transmission these funds had palpably diminished. Unscrupulous agents had charged commissions as high as twenty per cent and by other devices had defrauded the recipients of thousands of dollars. In conjunction with the United States consul in Salonica, Miss Matthews became trustee for Bulgarian families of Monastir and vicinity who received money from America. Her list registered 238 families in the first few months, 553 before the end of the first year, and over 800 by the next summer. Frequently the women were unable to write and endorsed the checks with a mark which Miss Matthews validated with her own signature and sent to the bank in Salonica for collection. By breakfast time she would find her piazza packed with women waiting for the business transaction which meant such incalculable relief to them.

In this employment she was acting as United States consul for Monastir, as Mr. Crawford did for Trebizond, and as other American missionaries in other cities took up the diplomatic

task which official representatives had been obliged to lay down. When in 1919 it was proposed that she return to America, the consul in Salonica declared he did not see how he could get along without her. But no consul's protest was needed to keep this missionary-diplomat in Monastir for she had no intention of leaving until the tangled Balkan puzzle should show signs of solution and re-enforcements should arrive from America to take up the loosened threads and weave them into a straightforward pattern.

After the Armistice was signed and the batteries were silenced in the mountains of Monastir, and the problem of readjustment was the immediate issue, then Miss Matthews paused from her tasks to welcome no less a guest than Dr. James L. Barton, known to the Christian world as one of its potent leaders, and to Miss Matthews as an honored and cherished friend. He had accompanied the first relief commission to the Near East and had taken time for the trip over the motor road from Salonica to Monastir, to behold Miss Matthews in the midst of her battered environment and to spend one day in the city of such checkered history and of such unique promise for the future of Christian work. The day's engagements included a call upon the mayor, who received them with marked courtesy, placing Miss Matthews at once in the place of honor and deferring to her judgment at every turn of the conversation, offering at the end of the interview to escort them to the house of the governor-general.

Both mayor and governor gave unstinted praise to Miss Matthews' work for women, and were urgent in their plea that the missionary work in Serbia be enlarged to include other and more central places than Monastir. "Serbia needs what your missionaries and their institutions bring," they affirmed with conviction. And so the American Board in Boston received confirmation in official circles in Serbia of the constructive work its missionary had been doing in Monastir, work which government leaders desired to perpetuate and extend in their newly organized nation.

Upon Dr. Barton's insistence, Miss Matthews was induced to take a vacation of two months in England and France, a substitute for the longer vacation in the United States which he had proposed and she had declined. "Of course I couldn't go away so long," she had answered emphatically. In the fall of 1919 she was back in Monastir, confronting an entirely new set of problems, but with a new associate from America to help interpret the signs of the times, Miss Beatrice Mann of Illinois.

Together they face a work which must be largely pioneer in character for the mission has to be newly nationalized to become truly Serbian. Native teachers have to be trained, for hitherto Serbia has not admitted missionaries, and no leaders are in readiness. Some of the former teachers of the school cannot be re-employed because their nationality is unacceptable to the present government. Additional American teachers are immediately needed to widen this opening in a nation which, for the first time in its history, welcomes the Christian missionary. Eventually mission stations should be located at the capital and other places, where it will be easier to prove our real friendliness with Serbia than it is on the edge of the country where the population is so mixed. This is Miss Matthews' forecast of the type of enterprise to be developed in the new Serbia.

It was once said of Mary Matthews that *she understands how to serve without notice*. A discerning person made that comment for it is a trait too rare for casual recognition. There are many persons who serve their generation constructively, but there are only a few who escape the insidious craving for notice. It is with those few, however, that the finest fruitage of Christian living is found, the clearest demonstration of the efficacy of the Christian principle. If there is any group of workers which merits the characterization awarded Miss Matthews, it is the group to which she belongs, the Christian missionaries, for willingness to serve without notice might be considered the passport of their order.

MRS. OLIVE T. CRAWFORD  
Trebizond, Turkey

*"All hope but that great hope of prayer had been given up."*

OLIVE T. CRAWFORD.

## MRS. OLIVE T. CRAWFORD, TREBIZOND

TREBIZOND was one of the first Turkish cities to be drawn within the actual fighting zone of the war. Situated upon the Black Sea, not far from the Russian frontier, she was inviting prey for Russian battleships, whose assaults began in November, 1914. From that day until the Russian occupation in the spring of 1916, there was a series of bombardments, two of which were especially furious. In every instance the damage to life and property was enormous. Thus early in the war, the people of Trebizond shared the terror which fell upon so many non-combatant populations in the widespread war area.

Panic-stricken by the first burst of shells, Armenians, Greeks, Turks, the varied nationalities the city contained, fled for refuge to the American mission. The prevailing temper was so inflammable that the merest streak of smoke upon the horizon was enough to assure battleships and bombardments and to send people flying out of shops and houses to the shelter of the American property. Sometimes these false alarms occurred as often as three times a week, and proved almost as demoralizing to community life and personal equilibrium as genuine attacks.

Behind the outward fluster caused by daily dread of enemy ships, there was a grim problem of holding life together which every one had to face and the missionaries, in particular, to solve. From the time the soldiers were mobilized, business in Trebizond came to a standstill. Relief work in Turkey began almost simultaneously with the beginning of war. That first year relief funds were used for the babies of Armenian soldiers, those very youngsters who a few months later were seized by the Turks and their precious lives thrown away. In the year 1914 the missionary staff comprised only Mr. and Mrs. Lyndon S. Crawford, as their associate, Miss Nellie Cole, had returned to the United States. Both husband and wife were experienced missionaries having given more than thirty years to the service.

Mrs. Crawford's maiden name, Olive Twitchell, affords a clue to her splendid New England heritage and perhaps suggests that interesting older brother, Dr. Joseph Twitchell, who was known as the beloved pastor of Hartford and intimate friend of Mark Twain. Olive Twitchell was a graduate of Abbot Academy who began her missionary career in the Brousa school in 1881 and was later transferred to city mission work in Gedik Pasha, Constantinople. In 1890 she married, later with her husband returned to Brousa and finally was assigned to Trebizond. In this city their distinctive work has been a large and effective school for day pupils, and that school they were able to keep in operation during the first deranged year after war began, even through successive bombardments and the consequent removal of many families to interior villages.

In the spring of 1915, the new terror, more ghastly than all the battleships of the Russian fleet, began to take shape in the minds of Armenian residents. Rumors of the horrible fate of Armenians in inland cities began to drift north to Trebizond. The Armenian population was unnerved by suspicion and fright, but the Americans could not credit the tales they heard. They were tales past belief save for those whose nation had already experienced the ferocious enmity of the Turk. Even when the official proclamation was received and Armenians were ordered to make ready for departure a week hence, the missionaries still believed they were to be removed only to an inland town some three days' journey distant and in course of time would return. But the Armenians themselves knew they were marked for death.

Before the fatal day set for deportation, July first, Mr. and Mrs. Crawford and the American consul, who was then living in the mission house, took counsel together. The edict had already gone forth that he who harbored Armenians or the property of Armenians should be guilty of treason. Yet these three Americans decided they would try to save the schoolboys and girls and, if possible, all others who naturally came to them for protection. The two hundred pupils were summoned to

the school and with them came former students, relatives and friends until 450 were crowded into the one mission building. Sleeping arrangements and food supply became at once an acute problem for Mrs. Crawford, since the building was unadapted for dormitory purposes.

As she lay awake at night trying to shape plans, signs and sounds of the great distress broke the stillness. One Armenian girl under her roof had gone mad and kept reiterating in a sing-song the Armenian words, "God will help us, God will help us, He will come and save us." One day during that week of consternation, Mrs. Crawford was in an Armenian house where, two or three hours later, a man threw himself from the balcony to his death. In the American consulate, an Armenian shot himself. There were suicides on every hand. Girls in the school building talked of securing poison to end their lives.

Meanwhile, Mr. Crawford contrived an interview with the Vali and begged permission to keep the boys and girls who had come to them for shelter. When asked how many the mission house could accommodate, he replied 200, an overestimate of the capacity of the building. The Vali answered that he might choose 200 and the rest would be placed in nearby houses. Upon his return to the mission, Mrs. Crawford was given the task of deciding who should stay and who should go. The soldiers were to come at two o'clock to remove the 250 whom she should reject.

It was a cruel question to settle. Mrs. Crawford was adapted by nature and the discipline of a missionary career to meet emergencies, but this was the most discomposing task ever inflicted upon a human being. How could that list be reduced? All the forenoon she sat with the names before her, and was still struggling with the bitter problem when her husband burst in to the room with the news that the soldiers had come and all Armenians were ordered to go. Not one could remain. In the intervening hours the Vali had reversed his decision and his command was now irrevocable.

The scene which followed was indescribable. Women

tried to secrete themselves in the house, boys clung to Mr. Crawford with all their bodily strength. It was agony to unfasten those clinging hands and refuse those pleading voices. Little children, even babies, were driven away with the rest. That night they were crowded into the largest of the houses from which Armenian occupants had been ejected.

In the mission house, which they had abandoned, desolation and disorder prevailed. One sole remnant of the Armenian group remained, a six-months' baby, child of a former teacher who, two years before, had left school to be married. Among the memories of the first Russian bombardment Mrs. Crawford carried in mind the pale face of that young woman who came in fright to the mission because her own house had been damaged by shells. Six weeks later her baby was born. Once or twice during that spring of apprehension, she had asked Mrs. Crawford to keep her child in case she herself should be sent away or killed. There were near relatives in America who would provide for the baby if only she could be saved and taken to them. At the very last, when her own deportation was imminent, the mother came to the mission gate, asked for Mr. Crawford, placed the child in his arms and went away. It was this baby girl whom the missionaries were resolved to save. Knowing that concealment was impossible, Mrs. Crawford went herself to the Vali and asked permission to keep the baby. Her insistent plea, enforced by the sweet graciousness of her bearing, led the Vali to give an unqualified consent and that consent was never withdrawn.

After the Armenians had gone, the loneliness of the neighborhood was appalling. Houses were empty and a sinister spirit seemed to haunt the place. Across the street a secret policeman in civilian clothes had been stationed to watch the American premises. Sometimes a returning Armenian would be permitted to enter and sometimes forbidden. From that very first night Armenians began to come stealthily back, only to be driven away again later. Continually they came and went, those pitiful refugees whose only haven, even temporarily,

was the American mission. Sometimes a group of schoolgirls, escorted by soldiers, would be allowed twenty minutes to collect their belongings left in the mission house. They would rush around, snatching up their possessions and trying to circumvent the guard and secure a few words in private with Mrs. Crawford, always their teacher beloved, but now in adversity appraised at her true value. Almost every day Turks came with motor trucks and carried away loads and loads of Armenian property deposited with the missionaries—property which they had received without being able to guarantee its security.

The days were hectic with their varied demands and problems. Soon they became ghastly with the knowledge of what was happening out on the road whither Armenians were being driven, and upon the Black Sea where boats, laden with human cargo, went out to sea and returned empty. Later there were eye-witnesses who told of babies dropped overboard while the boat sailed ruthlessly on. Down the road where Armenian girls and women were driven by Turkish gendarmes, a halt would be made for the night, a certain number chosen from the group and led away to a spot beyond sight but within hearing distance. By this means those who were left discovered the fate that was in store for themselves. Gunpowder was accounted too precious for such waste, and the sword the only weapon to be used. Tales like these came perpetually to the ears of Mr. and Mrs. Crawford, as refugees, one by one, stole warily back.

In the woods, not many miles away, a hundred or more Armenians were in hiding. In the nearest village lived a German woman, wife of a Greek who had formerly kept a hotel in Trebizond but had moved inland after the first bombardment. Knowing her to be friendly and reliable, an Armenian came to her by night and told of the desperate plight of his companions in the forest. It is said that she fainted upon hearing the story, but quickly rallied and resolved upon action. She summoned Mr. Crawford who went up and spent a night in her house, during which time the messenger came with his tale of need.

There in the night they worked out a plan of relief. All the refugees asked was a supply of cornbread upon which they could sustain life. Mr. Crawford had relief funds to dispense, but how to transport such quantities of cornbread without detection? That was the question. It was the German woman who saved the situation by her ingenuity and pluck. She received the money from Mr. Crawford, went to the Greek farmers in the village, all of whom were sympathetic with the Armenians, and assigned to each the portion of cornbread he must supply, furnishing small sums of money at a time that suspicion might not be aroused by unusual expenditures. All that winter the Armenians in the forest were kept alive by the efforts of this intrepid German woman.

Appeals for help from other Armenians in hiding came by surreptitious means to the missionaries. Greek women would come to the mission, glance furtively about, and produce a slip of paper from shoe or girdle. Upon this paper would be written in Armenian a desperate cry for succor. Throughout that year relief was administered in secret to many Armenians who had managed to elude the Turks.

In the spring of 1916 the Russians captured Trebizond and the Russian regime began. This was the signal for the Armenians to emerge from hiding and to piece together the broken threads of existence. But in less than two years the comparative freedom under Russian rule came to an end. The revolution took place in Petrograd, spread through the armies until, with the breakdown of military discipline, the Russian forces retreated from Trebizond and the Turks re-entered the city.

With the return of the Turk, most of the foreigners took their departure. The American consul withdrew and the vice-consul transferred the archives of the consulate to Russia. Only the Belgian consul remained, as consul for Denmark, but he was an old man and feeble and quite unequal to the tangled situation in diplomacy. Although not officially appointed, Mr. Crawford was compelled to assume many responsibilities not only for the American consulate but for the English, French and

Italian as well. Relief work had grown to enormous dimensions and there were almost none to share the burden. Throughout that summer of 1918 the husband and wife were overwhelmed with work and anxiety which in early autumn brought one of the twain to the final boundary of human endurance.

In September, Mr. Crawford was taken sick and grew rapidly worse. At the last an operation was performed by the Greek surgeon as the only hope of prolonging life. Two hours after the operation he died, one of the twenty-eight American missionaries who gave their life blood for Armenia during the Great War. His death left Mrs. Crawford in a situation of loneliness such as only foreign missionaries are likely to experience. No Protestants were left in the city, only Moslems and Catholics. It was the bishop of the Greek Church who conducted the funeral service. One single foreign family—Italians, who were Austrian subjects and could thus remain—lived in the neighborhood and befriended Mrs. Crawford in her affliction. But for human solace she turned principally to the little Armenian girl named Grace, who had been with them since babyhood and had crept irresistibly into their lives. They had not meant to love this little child so well for there were grandchildren with prior rights, but inevitably her baby confidence had brought its return of affection. Some months later Mrs. Crawford alluded to this period of exigency in her life and the manifest power that had sustained her:

“It was an unspeakable blessing when the ‘last enemy’ came close as it did, that I was overwhelmed with responsibilities which I could not escape. There was an immediate and absolute necessity of doing the ‘nexte thyng,’ and so, from hour to hour, the familiar promises that came to me over and over, were fulfilled. So, while I would not boast concerning the future, fear has gone. There has been such an upholding power at every step that I cannot be afraid.”

In the desolate and problematic months which followed her husband's death, the Armenian child was a literal Godsend to Mrs. Crawford. During the winter her strength failed com-

pletely and she was sick with fever, attended by her Greek wash-woman. For some weeks she managed the financial accounts from her sick bed, while the wife of their Armenian pastor, who with her family had returned to the city, administered the relief funds. The financial accounts had been a bugbear to Mrs. Crawford, for she was unused to bookkeeping and difficulties were multiplied by the currency situation, Russian and Turkish money both in circulation, gold, silver, paper, and values constantly shifting. In November Mr. Getchell came, at great sacrifice, from Marsovan and stayed two weeks clearing away many difficulties as well as teaching Mrs. Crawford a simple system of bookkeeping which was an incalculable help.

All this while communication with the outside world was almost nil. One or two messages were received from Constantinople, but from beyond no word came. Repeatedly Mrs. Crawford tried to send dispatches to her children in the United States, telling them of their father's death, but there was no assurance that the information had been received. In point of fact they obtained their first knowledge of what had happened in the newspaper the night before Thanksgiving. Two months after the missionary's death in Turkey the Associated Press had been able to give the news to his relatives in America.

Besides the complicated money matters connected with relief work, the consulates, and Armenian funds entrusted to their keeping, Mrs. Crawford struggled with domestic problems of no ordinary pattern. Armenian refugees, girls and women, were all the time returning and seeking shelter at the mission. The household was always expanding in size and varying in demands and naturally the servants, especially the Greek orphan girl who did the cooking, rebelled at such irregularities in their daily schedule. To keep everybody in good temper and the domestic machinery in running order was no light or enviable task. Only a person of Mrs. Crawford's good sense and forbearance could cope with so tangled a situation in human contacts. It was remarked by one of her associates that her sweet spirit brought out the best in every life she touched.

As the problems thickened, premonition of relief to come grew correspondingly. As early as November there was definite official news that a large relief party would be soon on its way, but only meagre reports followed. For six months (except for the visit from Mr. Getchell already referred to), Mrs. Crawford remained at her post alone, isolated from the outside world. In March came some mail, brought as far as Constantinople, and forwarded from there by an American consul en route for Odessa. Soon after, a friend from Samsoun, a Black Sea port farther west, called to say that he had seen American travelers, with Rev. Mr. Pye (a missionary) passing through Samsoun on their way to Marsovan. This was reassuring news for it meant that American help would come in time to Trebizond also. Still no message to confirm her expectation and to set a date for the arrival of reinforcements!

One day, later in the month, Mrs. Crawford was busy upstairs in the mission house when there was a sudden commotion below and voices were heard calling her name. She hurried down and there in the hall stood two travelers just arrived, Mr. and Mrs. Stapleton, formerly missionaries in Erzroom, but now freshly dispatched from America to relieve the critical situation at Trebizond.

They were the first contingent of relief workers from that company of volunteers who were never more welcome in any land, the American Commission for Relief in the Near East, which sailed for Turkey in January, 1919. A week later seven more arrived in Trebizond, making a staff of nine who had been assigned to do the work one woman had carried six months alone. The work was, of course, rapidly enlarged, for they were a group of experts with equipment to correspond. A soup kitchen and medical clinic were established, garden work and street cleaning organized and assigned, cloth distributed among the women for sewing, and other industrial work developed.

After remaining six weeks to help initiate the new workers, Mrs. Crawford and little Grace left for Constantinople and the United States, reaching New York in early summer. There the

two parted company, for Grace was to make her home with her own mother's sister who had lived for some years in this country. It was a difficult separation for the little four-year-old, as well as for the older woman who had mothered her through such peculiar circumstances of isolation.

Mrs. Crawford made only a brief stay here, visiting her children and quickening the lives of scores of people in public meeting and personal contact by the sweetness and fine restraint of her Christian character. Before 1920 is past she will probably again climb the hill to the mission house in Trebizond, and look out of the window across the Black Sea to the Caucasus, those lofty mountains where only the summer mists dissolve the perennial snows. Her former co-worker, Miss Nellie B. Cole, awaits her coming with lively expectancy, almost counting the days and hours until her arrival.

"It seems as if with her return," she writes, "I should have double the courage and strength to work, for we have the same interests and purposes, and co-operate with whole heart and hand, for she is like a mother and elder sister to me. Her broad interests, level judgment and beautiful living out of the true Christian principles, make her a great blessing to all. There seem so many lines of work into which Mrs. Crawford could enter so well, that I'll want her everywhere!"

MARY LOUISE GRAFFAM  
Sivas, Turkey

*"Who knows but this tragedy to the Armenians will be the one thing which will change their fate! Perhaps this tragedy of today will mean the beginning of a new future."*

MARY LOUISE GRAFFAM.

## MARY LOUISE GRAFFAM, SIVAS

**A**N official of the American Relief Commission was traveling across Turkey in the spring of 1919, when an Armenian came running toward his automobile as if with intent to deliver a message. The car halted while Armenian refugee and American official entered into conversation, the one eager to relate the grievances of his people, and the other solicitous for fresh facts concerning the Armenian situation in different localities.

"And how are the Armenians of Sivas?" asked the American. "What is their plight?"

"Oh, the Armenians are safe at Sivas," was the unexpected rejoinder.

"How so?" queried the American with quickened interest.

"Why, Miss Graffam is in Sivas," came the reply. "The Turks are all afraid of Miss Graffam."

A sufficient explanation for the American official, for he had known Mary Graffam in the past, but for those of us who have had no personal knowledge, how shall we account for the staggering statement of the Armenian talebearer? An American woman, unmarried, without official prestige, her nation at war with Turkey's allies, a simple school teacher by profession, what could she have done to check the flaming race hatred of Turk against Armenian? What could one solitary human being do "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness?" Read this tale and you will find revealed a psychology of action and reaction significant in its implications.

The city of Sivas has long been reckoned a strategic site in Asia Minor and accordingly pioneer missionaries chose it for settlement some seventy years ago. Not far from the mosque, the pulsating center of every Turkish city, in the best section of the Armenian quarter, was located the American compound, covering less than an acre of ground, enclosed by walls. Within this small compass are three buildings, hospital, dwelling house

and girls' school, with garden and playground dividing the remaining space. This is the original mission property of Sivas, which has been extended gradually to comprise houses outside the walled area and a splendid new site for college and schools on Hoktar Hill in the outskirts of the city. In the moving panorama of daily life within the compound, doctors, nurses, patients, missionaries, teachers, tradesmen, visitors coming and going, the school for girls is a lively and significant feature. Two hundred Armenian girls pass in and out of that building every day, or rather were wont to pass before the War, were wont also to practise on their one piano, sing their school songs, romp and sport on the playground and, in the High School grade, study their curriculum of science, mathematics, history and English.

Of this live and interesting school Mary Louise Graffam became principal in 1901, as well as supervisor of all schools for girls in the Sivas mission, comprising a total of 700 pupils. She was a graduate of Oberlin in the class of '94, and a teacher of mathematics in high and private schools before she went to Sivas, where her sister, Mrs. Ernest C. Partridge and husband, were already established.

Acquisition of new languages was sport for Miss Graffam. Less than a year gave her ease and pungency in the Armenian speech, a summer in Geneva mobilized her French, and four months of another year—a decisive, terrible year—gave her an opportune knowledge of Turkish. Regular teacher of algebra, geometry and Bible in the girls' school, of trigonometry in Teachers' College, substitute teacher of any and all subjects no one else happened to want, church organist, mission treasurer, director of Y. M. C. A. relief work for widows, itinerant missionary, traveling on horseback—a mode of travel she detested—to distant villages, sometimes through mountain blizzards and deep snows, frequent visitor in Turkish harems, a leading figure in social, musical and literary events, this intrepid, dominating, irrepressible personality was Mary Graffam in the years before the War.

It was not long after Turkey declared war, that a cry for help came from the fighting front at Erzroom. Russian and Turkish armies were clashing furiously, typhus was running wild in the camp, and hospitals and doctors were insufficient to care for the sick and wounded. Turkish officials urged the foreigners in Sivas to send a contingent of doctors and nurses to the rescue. Dr. Clark, Miss Graffam and Mrs. Sewny of the American colony and Miss Zenger, superintendent of the Swiss orphanage, responded to the call and started at once for Erzroom. It was not altogether humanitarian feeling that prompted Miss Graffam to go, but rather a long look ahead. As she herself acknowledged, she went not particularly to work for the Turks but to work with the Turks to gain the good will and confidence of the pashas against the day of calamity whose coming she foresaw.

It took three weeks to cross the three high mountains and intervening country between Sivas and Erzroom and no sooner had they arrived before another and more difficult journey had to be undertaken. Dr. Levon Sewny was reported to be dying of typhus in a village near the front and his wife, accompanied by Miss Graffam, sprang at once into the saddle and hastened away to his bedside. With the roar of cannon to direct their course, they forded unfamiliar rivers in the darkness of night, plodded through deep snow and reached the little village at midnight of the second day, too late to check the receding tide of life. Two days later he died and the two women improvised a coffin out of the door of the house and transported his body on horseback to Erzroom. This was characteristic activity for Miss Graffam, adventure, danger and a dilemma which called for inspired ingenuity!

Back in Erzroom she was promptly assigned to a task of unexpected magnitude. With no professional training and only an incipient knowledge of Turkish, she was appointed matron and head nurse of a Red Crescent Hospital for wounded officers. Her management of this institution would have afforded entertainment to a shrewd spectator, for she gathered the

reins into her own hands until her authority was absolute and Turkish officials became nimble subjects of her will. If there was a protest in the kitchen against giving milk to patients, she would cajole the doctor into writing "milk" upon every chart, so that she could administer it at her discretion. If she decided a beefsteak was required for a hungry newcomer, and the cook demurred, she would cook the steak herself. An unsalaried, unofficial foreign woman at the head of a Turkish military institution, an absolute autocrat in method, yet respected and trusted by all her colleagues, and to this day the recipient of grateful letters from former patients! The paradoxes of Miss Graffam's life are indeed an interesting study. It was in the hospital at Erzroom that she deliberately acquired the Turkish language, realizing it would be a handy weapon to possess before the war was over.

In March the fighting ceased in the neighborhood of Erzroom and the relief party disbanded, Miss Graffam and Miss Zenger starting together for Sivas. They had traveled not quite half the distance when Miss Zenger contracted malignant typhus and died in a German hospital at Erzingan. After the burial Miss Graffam resumed her journey, walking much of the way to relieve the sick or dying horses who could barely pull an empty wagon, and making but a few miles' progress a day. It was a heavily handicapped race with the disease she had good reason to expect might overtake her any moment. The inns were reeking with it, and the roads were scarred with bodies of dead or dying people and horses. She would not ask for escort to be sent from Sivas because of the danger of travel, but wrote to her sister, Mrs. Partridge, saying that in case she was taken sick there would be two days of consciousness and during that interval she would wire for help.

When her arrival was delayed, two Armenian teachers volunteered to go to her relief, an incomprehensible act to the people of Sivas, who conceived of coercion as the only possible motive for such an errand. They went four days' journey along the pestilential road before they found her, horses spent, wagon

demolished, and her plight so extreme that even Miss Graffam could hardly find a way out. Four days more and she was safe within the familiar, enclosed area in Sivas, over which waved the flag of the United States!

It was almost time for Commencement when the absent principal returned to her school, but there was no Commencement for the class of 1915 in the girls' school at Sivas. Instead there was the Deportation Decree! The usual program was followed, first the seizure and imprisonment of leading Armenian men, then the expulsion of women and children from their homes and the forced march. When the date of departure was proclaimed, Miss Graffam went at once to the Vali to see what could be done. Previously she had secured permission from the Chief of Police to visit the men in prison, some of whom had been teachers in the mission college and schools. Now she was to obtain another concession from a Turkish official as unexpected to herself as it was to him. When other expedients had failed, she entreated the Vali that at least a few Armenians might be left behind in Sivas.

"Why keep any behind?" parried the Vali. "They are going safely, why separate families?"

A sudden resolve formed in Miss Graffam's mind.

"If the Armenians are going to be safely cared for, I intend to accompany them on deportation."

The Vali was evidently nonplussed by this announcement but made no comment. Miss Graffam went out from his presence to make preparation for the journey—another inexplicable, voluntary journey into dangers unimaginable!

Nominally the government provided an ox-cart per family, but no such provision was made for the pupils and teachers of the mission schools and Miss Graffam furnished the equipment herself. She procured two ox-carts, two horse arabas, five or six donkeys and a supply of medicine, food and money. On the seventh day of July the exodus took place, the Armenians connected with the mission forming a section by themselves, about three thousand in all. In her wagon Miss Graffam placed the

aged and feeble women, while she herself set out on foot, leading a reluctant cow, the property of a poor woman, which otherwise must have been left behind. And so the odd, pitiful procession passed out of the city which should have been a "city of refuge" into the "valley of the shadow of death!"

The first day's journey brought them to the summit of a mountain where they spread their blankets and dropped down in exhaustion to sleep. That night the gendarmes protected them and they received no harm. At dusk of the next day they approached a settlement, and the guards made a suspicious reconnoiter ahead of the party. Presently the Kurdish villagers came trooping out and robbed and plundered at will, while the guards stood by and watched. This was the regular procedure at every village, each depredation being more thorough than the last. Blankets, rugs, donkeys, cows, anything the pirates happened to want they secured on threat of death.

"We got accustomed to being robbed," said Miss Graffam, but the next terror never could become familiar. As a special concession to the Sivas Armenians because no revolutionary movements had been detected among them, the men not already imprisoned were allowed to begin the journey with their families. A doubtful boon since it only deferred the hour of parting! In the fields outside a large village the company, as yet unbroken, sat and waited the anticipated doom. Life was stripped to the essentials in those awful hours. The sense of eternity, without its illumination, had fallen upon the group. And yet there was something unconquerably hopeful in the Armenian nature for on the march a man came to Miss Graffam and said:

"When we come to our last place you will open a school, won't you? We do not want our children to be without schools."

But now separation was impending, and as they faced its advent, Miss Graffam turned to one of the teachers with a question:

"How does it feel when death is approaching you?"

"It is nothing," he replied, "but when I think of this whole nation, I cannot stand it or see the right and justice in it all."

"How old are you?" she asked.

"Thirty-three," came the answer.

"Ah," said Miss Graffam, "nineteen hundred years ago a Man was sacrificed at that age, and who knows but this tragedy to the Armenians will be the one thing which will change their fate; perhaps this tragedy of today will mean the beginning of a new future."

Toward sunset, the gendarmes came and singled out the men, two hundred of them, marching them away to the near-by village. The last person to be seen in that vanishing group was the aged deacon of the Protestant church, who slowly climbed the hill behind the others. Only the very old or very young were left, with one man, a teacher in the college, who chanced to be small of stature. He was standing near a schoolgirl at the crucial moment when the gendarmes appeared and, in a flash of inspiration, she reached out and drew him under the folds of her big sheet where he remained until the soldiers had gone and darkness had fallen. Then he disguised himself and, by shaving every night, passed off as a small boy. This rôle he carried successfully as long as Miss Graffam was with the party and for how long after she did not know.

At noon of the next day, not knowing what fate had befallen their husbands and fathers, the women and children were driven on, those who could not keep up with the prescribed speed being killed or left to die. Miss Graffam counted fifty who dropped from the ranks in one day, and many more escaped her count. She saw them crazed and dying with thirst, she saw them shot down if they went to the river to drink; she saw young girls taken captive by the Kurds; and as far as her eye could reach over the plain, she watched that endless, slow-moving line of ox-carts, toiling along under the July sun. Whenever any disaster befell it was reported to Miss Graffam who was kept running to and fro from one end of the procession to the other, the entire time. Upon her wagon she piled as many women and

children as possible to save them from the incessant attacks of Kurds working in the fields along the way. Her pupils followed her lead and worked undauntedly, one girl lifting a baby from its dead mother and carrying it until evening, another carrying a dying woman until she breathed her last. Like all the rest, Miss Graffam's clothes were torn into rags, and nerves were equally rent with the strain. At the river called the Tokma Su she ran ahead and stood upon the bridge in the midst of a crowd of Kurds, pleading, protesting, until her strength was spent. From the hills along the way they had been flinging stones upon the Armenians as they plodded along in the valley below, helpless victims of any devilish sport Turks and Kurds chose to invent.

Once across the river and the American's progress was challenged! Gendarmes intervened with orders for her to go to Malatia and report to the governor. She was placed in a wagon with an aged Armenian woman as servant and borne away to the town where pleas and protests were unavailing and she must needs sit in the window of the German Orphanage and watch the girls and women whom she had so eagerly befriended file past without her, as restive a captive as was ever thwarted in her dearest plans.

For three weeks she was detained in Malatia and, in Miss Graffam's own words, the place was a counterpart of the worst description of hell. She always kept carbolic acid on her window sill to stifle the odor of dead bodies. Birds and dogs gathered in ravenous hordes at the scene of massacre. Miss Graffam made one trip to the market place but never went a second time. Every afternoon at two o'clock the procession of doomed Armenians, two or three thousand in number, passed her window. Sometimes it took a full hour for them to pass! At the end of the third week in this human inferno she was permitted to go home to Sivas.

On the way back occurred the one and only event of her career when Mary Graffam acknowledged fear. She was passing through a village which bore a particularly unsavory repu-

tation. The Armenian men were already dead and the Kurdish inhabitants were "seeing red." A crowd collected about her araba mocking and jeering. The mob spirit was gathering force to spring upon its victim. One stone flung and the demon would be let loose! In the confusion her driver had made a timely disappearance and Miss Graffam was left alone with the aged woman she had retained as servant. Jumping into the driver's seat she gave the Turks' call to their horses, lashed them with the whip and galloped out of the astounded crowd who stood gaping after her, crying "Aman, Aman Inshalla" and thinking, "What manner of woman is this!"

Another exciting journey was finished and Miss Graffam was safe in her familiar quarters in Sivas—familiar indeed in external aspect but how distorted in spirit! Exciting journeys and deranged homecomings seemed to be her common lot. Upon arrival she was promptly informed of the latest official edict, that the girls of the Swiss Orphanage were to be deported the following day. Proceeding at once to the Vali she begged that if the orphans were not wanted in Sivas, the missionaries might be allowed to take them to America, Switzerland or some other neutral country. To her surprise he replied with brusque finality, "Let them stay and you stay with them."

Her next move was to establish connection with the Armenian men in prison awaiting the death sentence. By some shrewd trick of argument she circumvented the official and procured a visitor's permit. There were about a thousand men in prison and one or two hundred were being removed each night to their mysterious doom. Every day Miss Graffam went to the prison to say good-by, sometimes to give reassuring news about their families, and once to share the terrific struggle of one of her teachers who had been offered his freedom and a chance to teach in a Turkish school if he would become Moslem. In the end he decided he must face death as a Christian, since his life represented a principle which he had taught for years and could not abjure at will. There were others who decided differently and, by pretence or outward conformity to Islam, managed

to save hundreds of their race from death. Thus it was an intricate question to settle.

On the third morning after her return Miss Graffam entered the prison to find its inmates vanished and the empty wagon returning, empty save for the Greek driver and the tell-tale heap of clothes! By this time she herself was worn to a skeleton, resembling a refugee in appearance, and with nerves so lacerated that she was often afraid to be left alone. But there was no time to give way to nerves or depression, for refugees from Marsovan and other places came streaming in and their need was immediate. Fifty girls from Marsovan College arrived in one night, having escaped deportation because of a belated decree exempting Protestants and Catholics.

The Orphanage with capacity for fifty-five, usually housed twice that number. Turkish officials never discovered the exact number of refugees harbored in the mission, for Miss Graffam and her helpers always contrived to conceal them. Large numbers of people came from the Black Sea district and their condition was particularly destitute. Two of them Miss Graffam purchased from the Turks for the sum of three liras.

The American orphanages were a refuge also for Armenian girls who, by some miracle of deliverance, escaped from Turkish harems. There were little girls of eight, older girls of twelve and fourteen, children in years, who had lived through adventure enough for a dozen lifetimes. To conceal these girls from recapture was another chance for the missionary's courage and ingenuity. Once a twelve-year-old girl was hidden in a barrel in the attic, then disguised in a nurse's uniform and sent to a doctor's house to elude the Turkish officer who was in pursuit.

Although 20,000 were sent into exile from Sivas, and there were no Armenian residents left except a few hundred who had become Moslems, yet in this city depopulated by Armenians there was always work to be done for members of the afflicted race. Miss Graffam's presence was like a magnet to draw the unfortunate from any race group. Besides the orphan girls there were regiments of Armenian soldiers stationed near Sivas,

mostly in construction camps, whose plight was desperate. They were without uniforms, arms, and sufficient food and clothing. Their suffering from cold, hunger and homesickness was acute. Miss Graffam bought cloth and wool and her orphan girls sewed and knitted until several hundred under-garments and stockings were ready for distribution. She also knew personally every man in every regiment and they came to see her in such numbers, sometimes 200 in a day, that the Turks were resentful and posted a prohibitory notice outside her house, finally, as a punitive measure, killing twenty who tried to secure access to her. Yet after their liberty was curtailed Miss Graffam still found means of helping the soldiers through the connivance of one of the doctors.

For a year and a half Armenian soldiers were employed for the military benefit of Turkey, then seized and imprisoned. Again Miss Graffam tried to save them through an appeal to the German consul, but her efforts were unavailing and they were led out of the city and killed along the road. Two thousand Armenian soldiers were sacrificed, in the midst of a war when fighting men were at a premium, the only survivors being converts to Islam or those few who eluded the guard and fled to the mountains and caves of the earth. Even in their elusive hiding places Miss Graffam contrived to reach them with food and clothing.

The story of the "crazy bride" belongs to this period, the Armenian woman who feigned insanity and, with the liberty accorded in Turkey to the mentally unsound, went about unmolested carrying messages and material aid to the men in hiding. After the Armistice was signed she abandoned her rôle, and the Turks, upon perceiving themselves the victims of her clever craft, became so enraged they seized and beat her almost to death.

Even before the Armenian soldiers had been removed from prison, the American missionaries had received an eviction decree of their own, issued by the military authorities in Sivas. In May, 1916, the mission buildings were commandeered for

military usage and every American ordered to leave the city, except Miss Graffam and Miss Fowle who were assigned to small quarters in the city compound. The orphans were crowded into a house near by and left unmolested to the guardianship of the two women. Miss Fowle, as well as Miss Graffam, was a past master in dealing with Turkish officials, having perfect familiarity with the language and understanding of Turkish character. Together they made an invincible team and the work they accomplished that summer and fall was stupendous.

Grief for the murdered soldiers was still fresh when thousands of refugees from the East, Moslems and Greeks among them, came staggering into Sivas, their cry for help expressed in their pinched faces and scantily clad bodies. With no mission property to utilize, Miss Graffam undertook to hire quarters for these refugees, sheltering them as best she could in houses, stables and woodsheds. Every day and all day she sat in her office receiving applicants, hearing their stories, instructing her helpers, investigating every appeal, calculating expenditures, always cool-headed, sane but nerve-racked by the strain of refusing such elemental needs. She could have spent four times the money at her disposal. In the midst of labors like these Miss Fowle fell at her post, the victim of typhus fever, and Miss Graffam was left alone in the tortured city of Sivas.

The tale of Mary Graffam's achievement in Turkey reaches its climax in the relief work she organized for the destitute refugees. Originally school principal, then head nurse of the Turkish military hospital, orphanage director, advocate of the helpless, shepherd of an uncounted flock, she became finally the promoter of an industrial undertaking which developed into a many-sided and productive enterprise. She started a factory which employed 200 women in the manufacture of flannels and sweaters for the Turkish army. When the presence of Armenian workers in the factory was challenged she was ready with the reply, "They are working for the government," in this instance a conclusive argument.

She leased a farm in the hills above the city and secured an

option on its purchase, valuable land not because it is supposed to have belonged to the former German emperor, but because it controls all the water power in the vicinity, enough to operate five grist mills, and vastly more when it shall be further developed. It was Miss Graffam's linguistic skill that enabled her to secure this prize land, for she was on easy terms of intercourse with the German agents in the city through whom she made the transaction. She cultivated extensive crops upon her farm, and in vision projected an agricultural college upon the former crown property.

"I could make everybody here in Sivas work," wrote Miss Graffam, "if I could only get them clothed and in shape to work, for there is a great demand for sweaters and we can get wool."

The task which Miss Graffam undertook in the chaos of war was carried on and extended after the Armistice was signed and the seventeen relief workers arrived in Sivas. Her war orphanage expanded into several large institutions, harboring more than 1100 boys and girls. The industries she created grew into an elaborate project, comprising shops for carpentry, tailoring, weaving, a foundry, blacksmith's shop and shoe shop. Miss Graffam was appointed director of the American relief unit, and with a more elastic treasury plus a corps of trained workers, the enterprise promptly assumed new dimensions.

In the summer of 1919 Major-General Harbord and his staff spent two days in Sivas, and the head of the American Mission to the Near East had interesting contact with the woman missionary whom he described as the "outstanding figure in this part of Asia." In *The World's Work* for June, 1920, in his article on Turkish Nationalists, General Harbord gives two columns to the narration of Miss Graffam's achievement.

"Her experiences," he asserts, "have never been duplicated in the history of womankind. Her knowledge of Turkish, Armenian and German enabled her to play a part in the stirring events of the last six years which has probably never been equalled by any other woman in the chronicles of missionary effort."

This is the estimate of the American official upon the work of the missionary. What then is the verdict of that contradictory country of Turkey upon her ability and value?

That verdict had already been pronounced for, in 1917, the decoration of the Red Crescent was awarded Mary Louise Graffam, with the imperial *irade*, "as a reward for her self-devotion in the cause of the sick and ill-fated ones."

About the same time prisoners of war interned in Sivas sent a letter to the International Red Cross, commending the "noble and unflinching devotion of Miss Graffam to the cause of the destitute and to the prisoners of war without distinction of race or religion. Prodigious her benefactions," the letter reads, "to the sick French, English and Russians, clothing some, giving pecuniary aid to others; no unfortunate one knocks at the door in vain."

But despite the official tribute of recognition Miss Graffam received, the annoyances she suffered at the hands of the Turkish government form no trifling episode in the history of her career. Repeatedly she was ejected from her living quarters; five times her orphanage was moved; her financial accounts had to be buried first in one place then another to escape the coveted possession of the Turks; jewelry which Armenians had left in her keeping was stealthily transferred from one impromptu safety vault to another. Twice the order was issued that her house should be searched, and once she was tried in court for treason. She was wont to remark that if ever she was in a place where the police did not visit her every day she should be content!

After Miss Fowle's death the Turks became so menacing that Miss Graffam made up her mind that she should sooner or later die at their hands. She reached this conclusion deliberately and, having reached it, resolved to sell her life as dearly as possible. With death as a definite expectation she became completely emancipated from fear. Willingness to die brought release from bondage unto life's restraints. In their own language she remonstrated freely with the Turks, appealing to

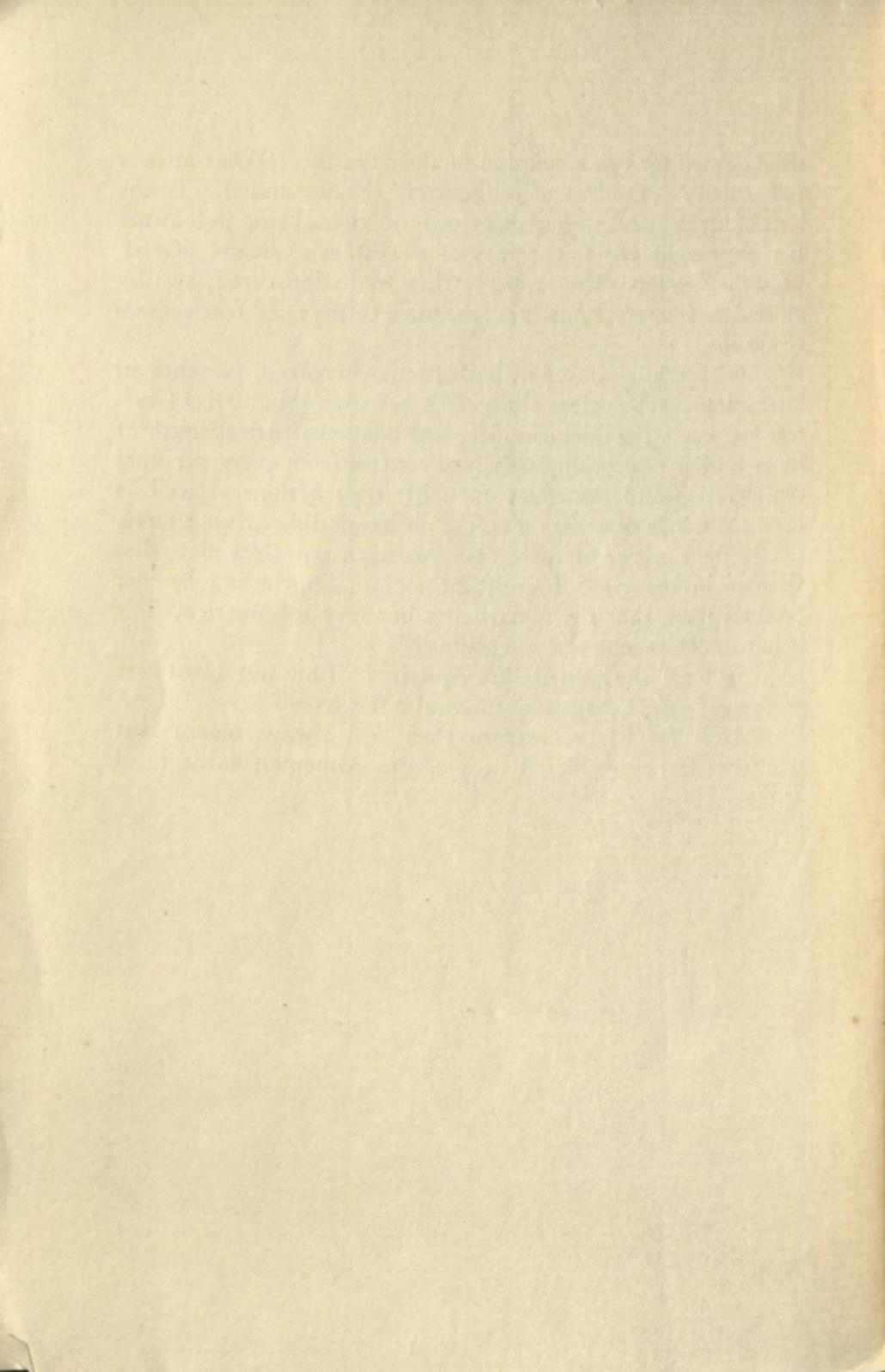
their religion for condemnation of their deeds. "What answer will you give at the Day of Judgment?" she demanded. To the logic of her demand they began slowly to yield, being well aware that their conduct was contrary to the ethics of Islam. Gradually they restored the property they had confiscated, and by other signs showed themselves amenable to the regal fearlessness of her life.

The mental situation of both parties involved, presents an interesting psychological study. In her own mind Miss Graffam had made the final sacrifice, had gone the entire length of consecration. Accordingly she was set free from every personal consideration and the effect upon her own actions as well as upon the minds of others was like an irresistible driving force.

In the summer of 1919, two American travelers met Miss Graffam in the city of Constantinople. Concluding by her presence there that she must be on her way to America, they inquired, "How soon are you sailing?"

"Sailing?" she replied, "for America? I am not down here now to go *home*; I just came to grind a few axes!"

"Axes" for Mary Graffam then and always meant just treatment for her afflicted people, the Armenian subjects of Turkey.



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Hubbard, Ethel Daniels.  
LONE SENTINELS IN THE NEAR  
EAST

