

work, all had their little homes, neat as those of the famed Holland housewives, and all, even the humblest, were fairly comfortable. Their women were never allowed to go out as wage-earners; but as their fingers were rarely idle, and as they were remarkably expert both with the loom and the embroidery needle, the fruits of their industry were often sold to satisfy some specially rapacious claim of the tax gatherer or to provide for their children's education.

When, however, the long threatened blow fell, and the massacre at Sassoun was speedily followed at regular intervals by the Sultan's butcheries in one village after another, culminating in the fearful slaughter of Constantinople, Aug. 26 and 27, the country was left with fifty thousand orphans and thirty thousand widows and helpless women, entirely homeless, or with ruined, ravaged homes, from which everything had been carried even to the nails in the walls.

The situation was a desperate one. Broken in spirit, shattered in health, bereft of all their earthly possessions, and with no protectors left to wage the unequal battle for them many succumbed at once to the terrors of the situation, while others struggled back to the greater horrors of an almost living death. When in Constantinople, by the combined intervention of the ambassadors, the massacres had been stopped; the first relief to the impoverished people in the villages along the Golden Horn came from the French Consulate. Among other gifts in kind they distributed to them rice; but so completely had their homes been ravaged, that they had no vessels to cook it in, no fuel to make a fire. They received a change of linen, and at once wished to wash the blood stained clothes they had taken off; but they had no wash tub, no soap. Many had escaped clad only in their night clothes; and to these remnants of calico were distributed, but they had no thimbles, no needles, no thread. There was utter destitution such as no pen can describe, and into this breach stepped the devoted missionaries and self-sacrificing ladies among the European residents. The quarters of the city where the massacres had occurred were districted, and as funds came in from Europe and America; food, clothing, bedding and the most necessary cooking utensils were bought and distributed under the name of the "Local Relief Committee." Sad and pitiful, indeed, were the scenes witnessed by these ladies—during their visits—experiences of which, we, in America, had little idea.

Among a host of the incidents told me by visitors, I give just a few, as instancing the condition of the people that made the organized relief work as carried on later, a necessity. "Amidst the rows of empty and devastated houses," said one of these heroic women, "we found now and then one in which all the survivors were huddled together for safety, sitting crouched down upon the bare floor, and living upon a ration of bread dealt out by the government. We gave each a small coin and also a card with her name written on it, and a list of such things as she specially required, and told them to come and present their card on Friday at the mission gate, when they would get what they most urgently needed. Many shook their heads incredulously, thinking it another trap. When we had visited about twenty houses the Turkish police tried to inter-

fere. An officer offered to conduct me to the houses of the most destitute, which offer I declined. They also arrested the Armenian youth who accompanied me and threw him into prison. On the two days intervening before Friday I managed to get together a store of rice, cheese, cooking pots, bed covers, etc., and hired an Italian to come and keep order during the distribution. I expected the women at 8 o'clock, but when I threw up my bedroom window soon after 6 o'clock, I found a crowd of women already waiting at the doors. I began the distribution at once, but in a few moments the Turks and police were on hand examining the bundle of each woman as she left the door. Soon the Italian came; but in a quarter of an hour came in pale as death and saying he would on no account stay, as the Turks had threatened to arrest him, and that their curses as they passed were too awful for human ears to hear. After an hour a man came to tell me that I had been cursed in the mosque; but I could not send away empty the hungry women who had trudged so far for a little food."

"Oh, the scenes of horror we came upon in doing the relief work," said another lady who has devoted herself heart and soul to the cause. "Sometimes we came upon lonely old men, passed 70 and 80 years; their sons and grandsons slain, their relatives fled unable to burden themselves with such old men in the flight; without food or bed, and we wondered how soon the angel who comes silently and unbidden would mercifully put a gentle hand upon these lonely and forgotten ones. In a snug, sweet little house, newly built for a newly married couple, I found a lovely young woman lying with a new-born baby in an utterly barren room, but for the mattress on which they lay. A well-to-do couple had lived there with their servant in perfect happiness up to the day of the massacre."

"On Thursday the young husband stayed home with his wife, who was near her first confinement. In fear and trembling they awaited the development of results. Soon the mob appeared and their house was one of the first to be attacked. The man servant was killed before their eyes and then the mob rushed upon the husband. The young wife seeing this, cast herself at their feet embraced their knees, pulled her diamond rings from her fingers and took off the brilliant eardrops, offering them and entreating them to spare her husband. As if inflamed by her desperate entreaties, they first hacked off his hands, then knocked him down, but without quite killing him. Then they began to plunder kicking his body each time he moved, and under these circumstances her child was born. Ichabod! Her father and brother were likewise killed, and she was left with her baby dependant on the kindness of the remaining women, who were as kind to her as they were able to be in their own utter misery." In another quarter, a visitor told of a family well known to her, who, before the massacres, lived in ease and comfort. The father was killed the night of the 26th; one son succeeded in escaping to Van, while the other, who was employed by a large German firm, was dismissed along with all the other Armenian employees, by order of the government. There was no chance of his finding work, and he was in constant dread of being arrested. The mother and daughter lived in

their large and devastated house because it was theirs and they had no rent to pay, but all their earthly possessions consisted of one stewpan, a little charcoal, two pillows, two bedcovers and a change of linen each—all of which articles were given them. And this was the condition of hundreds of families in their immediate vicinity. A venerable Gregorian priest who died last year, had left behind him a family of two fine sons and three daughters. One son was killed the night of the massacre, and the sight of it made the other son go out of his mind; so the widow and three daughters were left with the care of the brother, who was once the pride of the family, and is now an idiot. And these instances were but solitary ones among the thousands of others equally harrowing. As the relief work went on, some people were found quite willing to continue to accept the weekly dole; but many others of good family and formerly well to do, felt a delicacy about subsisting on public charity longer than was necessary, and began to ask if it were possible in any way to find them employment. This idea commended itself to the ladies in charge of the relief funds, and various schemes were at once proposed as to the best furtherance of this project.

Upon inquiry it was found that many of the women were already experts in Oriental embroidery; the style of work, material employed, and stitch used vary, however, in various quarters of the city, as well as sections of the country. Acting upon this suggestion, work was begun in a small way in several different centres, the methods employed being varied according to the ideas of the different ladies in charge, and the materials at hand. While all of these have been successful in affording self-respecting employment to large numbers of women, I will give the details of but one with whose workings I was privileged to have especial acquaintance. The head of this branch, is a Swiss lady of rare accomplishments and marvelous executive ability, whose home is up on the Golden Horn close to the old Byzantine Palace Hebdomen; lies just across from the scene of the frightful massacres of Haskoin. Where 600 men were cut down in two days. Responding to an invitation to see the usual Saturday giving out of work, I took a caïque early in the morning and arrived to find that the distribution had already commenced, and that crowds of sad-faced women were patiently awaiting their turn.

In the little office to which each applicant was admitted in rotation, were great piles of stamped satin and gauze squares for cushions and footstools, each with its own skeins of embroidery silk and gold thread laid ready. There were long strips for borders to curtains, tiny silk squares for handkerchiefs, round pieces for tea cosies, and fronts for the pretty Bolero jackets. All these had been cut, designed and stamped under the personal supervision of the lady in charge; a work of no small magnitude in itself alone. As each woman came in with her completed work and the silks left over, they were weighed to see that all was right, and she was paid according to her work. New pieces were then given her after weighing and setting down the amounts; special instructions, or if necessary, corrections were also given—a few helpful words of sympathy, a scripture passage in Armenian on a pretty picture card added, and she was dismissed to give room to the next.