

J. J. HANDSAKER WRITES OF NEAR EAST RELIEF

"Don't Blame Them, Pity Them," Are Words of Admiral Bristol, as Party Leaves Constantinople for Caucasus—More Money Needed to Carry on Work.

On the Black Sea, August 1, 1921. To the Editor:

"Don't blame these people, pity them, help them." These words of Admiral Bristol ring in my ears as we leave Constantinople for the Caucasus after a week spent in and near Constantinople, studying the work done by Americans who are attempting to heal this "open sore of the world."

I have seen poverty, so called, at home and I saw poverty of what I thought an extreme type during my residence in Kingston, Jamaica, but suffering here is so wide-spread, caused by such vast movements of great peoples, is so picturesque if you dare apply such a term to poverty. Constantinople is a regular Sargasso Sea where the boats and jetsam of the seven seas is gathered, not in individual cases as in other cities, but by ship loads, but by fleets and almost by nations. Oppressor and oppressed, capitalist and communist, Christian, Mohammedan, Jew and pagan are one in their distress.

I saw a Petrograd millionaire, now a Near East stenographer, gratefully working for a pittance keeping soul and body together. Incidentally, I may say his work was most carefully and painstakingly done. A general of the Czar's army is a watchman at the personnel house of Near East Relief and the friends of Mr. and Mrs. Burt of Bend may know that she and others are guarded by this man who takes his duties as seriously as when he commanded thousands of men. These are but the commonplaces. These are the fortunate ones. They ask and need no pity for they have what everybody in Constantinople seems to want and few can find, a job. If hitherto virtuous women are selling their bodies for a pittance openly on the street in many cases. It is the only alternative to starvation for themselves and loved ones.

Many in Oregon will remember Mrs. R. S. M. Emerich who visited Portland in 1918 at the time of the first Armenian campaign. I spent two mornings with her in investigating cases of need in the Armenian and Chaldean sections of the city.

To my unpracticed eye, every case presented was worthy of immediate and generous relief, but the care with which only the most deserving and the most desperately needy were sifted out would give pointers to welfare workers at home. In true Oriental style we were blessed by those who were to be helped and Mrs. Emerich explained that we were compared in beauty to the sun, moon and stars (to the great detriment of those luminaries) and that we and our children would live for thousands of years if their prayers were answered. Well, if somebody brought life to you, you might be excused for being over-enthusiastic.

Mrs. Emerich's work is confined exclusively to children or to widows with more than one child under 14. You have to draw the line somewhere. Those who remember Mrs. Emerich will know that she occasionally transgressed the rule. I was about to say frequently, but the amount of money at her disposal does not permit that. Still when a soldier with hands so deformed that he could do no work and a "normal" porter, in need of an operation

were in the line, she forgot the rules and gave them the cherished bits of paper. "I guess the Lord will send the money some way," she said.

To 5000 of the city's hungry children Mrs. Emerich is giving, in the name of America, two cans of milk per month and two loaves of bread per week. Recently 200 of these children were weighed and all but 15 were found to be from five to fifteen pounds underweight. The question she asked me and which I refused to answer but one which she must answer is whether to go on feeding in this way 5000 undernourished children or to concentrate on half the number and let the rest die. To you reading this 5000 miles away, the alternative rouses a certain emotion, I know. It's different when you see the kiddies and see how attractive they are.

Perhaps I'll not be giving away any secrets if I quote Mrs. Emerich who calls the rule limiting her work to children a "miserable affair." She told me of men who had committed suicide after months of vain effort to find work hoping their families would be helped if they were gone. "It's a necessary rule," says our director here. "You have to draw the line somewhere." I think Admiral Bristol's words can well apply to our relief workers. "Don't blame them, pity them, help them." They are doing much, they could do so much more with greater resources.

I am writing this en route to the Caucasus. Captain Eckman of the U. S. Army, Regulating Officer for the Near East Relief at Batoum, has been giving us suggestions as to how we are to act while in the Soviet government and of the reception we may expect. "Because America has established such a record for generous, unselfish dealing in the Near East you will be welcome by the Soviets. I doubt if a party of this size from any other country in the world would be allowed to land," said Captain Eckman.

We go at once to Tiflis, a city of a million population without banks or restaurants, where the ruble, normally worth 50c was selling a few days ago at 150,000 for \$1, and a few weeks ago for 50,000 for \$1. The total output of the mint per day is 80,000,000 rubles and one day a week the N. E. R. sends a crew of men to take over the entire output. For once in my life I'm going to be a millionaire. Unless the presence of our party sends up the price of rubles and Captain Eckman says it is almost certain to do it, \$7.00 will put me in the class of John D.!!

I can poke fun at Tiflis now, but if it affects me like Constantinople did I won't do it when I leave. We shall not be there long enough to discern whether their experiment is the birthplace of a new civilization or whether it is a vain revolt against what is true in the very nature of things. That is not our job, anyway. We are here to carry out the request of many at home to learn the actual conditions as they affect relief work. So far I've found no better words than those of Admiral Bristol, "Don't blame them, pity them."

J. J. HANDSAKER.

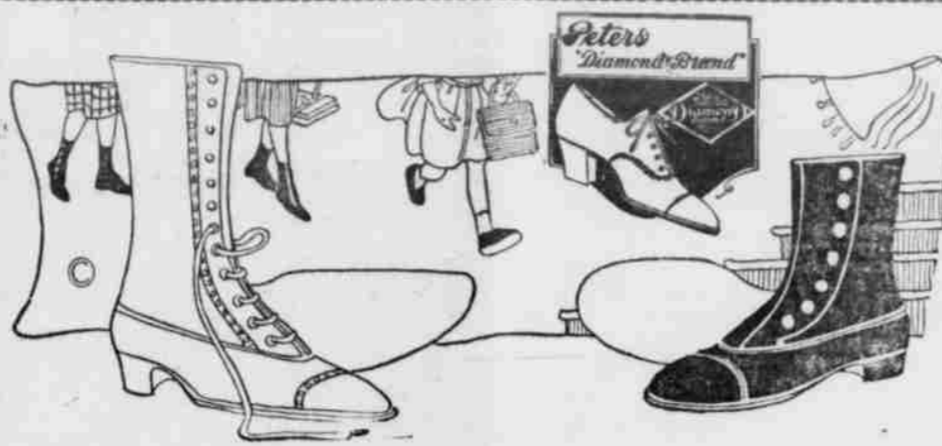
Echo Man Develops New Variety Melon.

Ora Young has developed a new variety of muskmelon after three years experimenting with crossing breeds, and the finished product is one which will make a hit with melon lovers. The new melon is of a greenish tinge outside, smooth skin and with none of the muskmelon markings. It is larger than the ordinary melon and the meat is delicious. The flavor is somewhat like a muskmelon, but sweeter. By lead pollination a cross was secured between a cucumber and a cantaloupe, and the resulting melon was again crossed with muskmelon. Young has twelve perfect melons of the new variety and they will all be saved for seed to put on the market.—Echo News.

C. H. Erwin was in the city Tuesday of property that his children may be no business. He reports that returns located close to good schools.

Stain Highway Commissioner W. B. H. and his family have returned from their summer's vacation, spent at Port-He is moving with his family to Walla land and the seashore. They drove in Walla, where he expects to buy a piece from Portland over the highway.

Though several car loads of wheat are daily going out from the warehouses and elevators at Leon, Jordan and McNish there is at present close to 20,000 bushels in storage at these three points, and it is coming at the rate of several thousand bushels per day.—Leon Independent.



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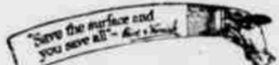
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