

OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

THE BRITISH RED CRESCENT SOCIETY'S INDUSTRIES FOR THE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS AMONGST REFUGEES AND SOLDIERS' FAMILIES AT BROUSSA.

(Concluded from page 434.)

Each woman is paid by the amount of work she does; she can live with her children in the house if she likes; we send the children to school, and she earns enough to keep her family. Every week on a certain day the work is cut and measured, the quantity entered in a book, and the woman receives her wages according to what she has done. Some earn five piastres, some seven, some twelve per day.

There is a great deal of work in connection with a big industry that is not actual weaving; the cotton passes through several processes before it reaches the looms. There is the winding of the big "dolab" on which each strand of cotton is arranged for the warp, and the winding of the shuttles on a kind of spinning wheel. This is mostly done by women too old for other work, and by some of the children. Sometimes a woman wanders in for the day and begs to be allowed to work for *etmek parassi*—bread money.

The women are supervised by a master weaver, or *ousta*, a Turk of much repute and standing, with the air of a judge and a twinkle in his eye, and who is slowly learning and smiling at "European ways."

Nearly all the women who came to us first have returned to their country. I met many of them "homeward bound," divided between the joy of returning and sorrow at leaving us. Moreover, the poor things had been three days without bread waiting for a boat. Luckily the weather was fine, as they were without shelter also. I was able to give them bread, and one amongst them sent me word that they had arrived in Kirk Kilisse safely. I hope to meet many old friends in Thrace this winter.

But scarcely had they left us than 1,500 arrived from Salonika, Uskub, and Kavalla, and have come to stay. To as many of the women as possible we give work.

They are a contented and happy party. The sound of the shuttles and the creaking of the looms is lost in laughter and song. Of course, sometimes there is a squabble, or the wail of one of the smaller infants, whom I allow to be with their mothers during working hours, with an older child in charge, so that every corner is occupied by the little carpet hammocks that constitute a Turkish cradle.

They greet one with warm smiles and *hosh geldin* (welcome).

When I think of our first quarters and the house as I saw it first, I wish I could reproduce before you the difference of to-day. The occasion of my first visit was a wet day, crowds of half-naked

children ran out to meet us, we could hardly see for smoke, twenty-three families were crowded into the biggest room, some were sick, wood fires of damp, smouldering wood, sometimes lit on the bare floor, rendered the atmosphere unbearable; the windows were paneless and mostly boarded up with door, odd bits of paper and rag, till there was no light at all. All were in rags; there was no water, and the smells and dirt were indescribable. Imagine a room with twenty-three families—roughly 115 people—living, cooking, eating, sleeping in it. In another room a man was slowly coughing his life away; in another a mad woman raved over the murder of her baby, while her husband lay sick in an outhouse on the earth, without pillow or cover. In a cupboard underneath the stairs were two little children and their mother.

Such I found; and now that we are leaving the house for a bigger building to accommodate our increasing needs, what a difference we leave behind! A well scrubbed house, a water-tight roof, rooms airy and light, the upper floor entirely devoted to work, and the lower floor to the women, who live in decency and order. The Turkish flag floating over the gate, and the garden bright with flowers, the work of our *behji*, or watchman.

We are going to a very commodious house, a factory built on the side of Mount Olympus, and therefore healthy, and also very centrally situated in the Muhajin quarter.

We make many things—native bez, marash cloths, fine lawns from Rizeh, cloth from Oofa, cottons from Egypt, curtains woven in many colours and designs, and our last achievement, the Turkish flag!

We receive orders from all over the world; none are too small for us. I hope a depot will be started in London at the offices of the British Red Crescent Society, 41, Sloane Street, where everyone will be welcomed.

Everything we sell enables us to help more women to support themselves and their children, and to rescue them from starvation.

I would like to end with a word of thanks to the Turkish officials who have welcomed us and helped us so greatly, from those who hold high positions in the Government, to the valis, kaimakams and muktars, and even to our faithful gendarme, Hussein. Also to those in authority in kindred countries, especially Egypt. As far as lay in their power, each has helped us, and with my many friends in Turkey lies the credit for the pleasure that my work amongst them has been.

I have read articles in contemporary magazines in which English people coming out to help complain of sitting daily for two weeks in an office, getting no nearer the work they came to do. Such has not been my experience, for I have never been kept waiting by the busiest Ministers, and have received the heartiest support from all concerned.

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