



THE ZORYAN INSTITUTE

AMERICAN RED CROSS



COMMISSION TO PALESTINE

AND THE NEAR EAST

Aleppo, Turkey.

Nov. 23, 1919.

Dear Folks:

By the time this reaches you it will be time to say "Merry Xmas" - so I'll say it now and hope it gets there by Dec. 25th. Sorry I can't help fill up the row of stockings and help eat the family Turkey.

You probably got my letters written from Damascus and Beirut before this. I found several waiting for me at Aleppo when I got back. As usual the train from Beirut missed the Aleppo train, so we had to sleep on a bench in the car another night. The trip across the Lebanon Mts. from Beirut to Rayak was wonderful. The engine runs on a cog-rail, narrow gage, & broke down on a steep grade. At one point we passed thru a cloud, & then went above it. The scene towards the Mediterranean is great. Duraway & I were taking \$25,000 in gold in our trunk to Aleppo, so were not overjoyed when they told us at Rayak that Bedouins had held up the Aleppo train three nights in succession between Baalbek & Homs. However, I stayed over night at Baalbek & saw the wonderful ruins there, dating from the second century, while Duraway went on to Aleppo. I'll enclose the pictures I took & some of Duraway's. (The big ones are Duraway's negatives, so don't give them away, but I have negatives for all the small ones & can replace them if you want to give them to anyone.) Duraway reached Aleppo without being robbed, & my trip from Baalbek to Aleppo wasn't

at all exciting, except that near Homs rocks were thrown by Arabs at the train. One struck about a foot from my head. A British officer next to me had been on the train a few nights before when the Bedouins got on. The one who boarded his car however was "finished", as the officer let him have the contents of his automatic. A sergeant from Rayak was sent up in charge of a patrol of Indians & returned with nine prisoners and the head of the Bedouin chief.

When I got back to Aleppo Lambert sent me on up to Aintab on an errand, & I just got back a couple of days ago. Things are fairly quiet there now, & in Marash, but the country is very unsettled & dangerous since the British left. Even here in Aleppo the Arabs are apparently hostile to all foreigners, & the Americans have had a series of unpleasant experiences with them. The very day the British evacuated Aleppo Miss Van Dyke went around to the A.C.R.M.C. medical supply store and found an Arab colonel had broken in and was helping himself, while his orderly was holding a bag for the loot. One of the American boys grabbed the bag & the colonel "beat it". Dr. Lambert decided to move all the supplies to another place, & the Arab officers at the building told him he could remove nothing. Lambert got "peeced" and told them where to get off & went ahead with the moving. The next night a party of Arab soldiers visited our gasoline dump at headquarters & were helping themselves to it when the A.C.R.M.C. boys heard about it. I wish I had been around! Our fellows opened fire on them and wounded one man, who died a few days later. One of our chaps didn't have a gun, so chased the Arabs until he caught one. The Arab drew his bayonet, but Bryan punched him so nice he

3/ AMERICAN RED CROSS  COMMISSION TO PALESTINE

AND THE NEAR EAST

forgot he had a bayonet. More Arab soldiers came around the next two nights for gasoline & were met each time with bullets, but no more casualties. It looks as if they had been sent from higher up.

The Armenians are mostly all out of Aleppo now - only 100 left out of the 5000 who used to be at the Barracks, & the Arabs have taken over the place so we are moving our hospital out. The industrial work such as rug making & cloth weaving has stopped too. Diter, our quartermaster, a Mennonite boy, went with a truck to take the looms out of the cloth factory & found an Arab soldier guarding them. The Arab wouldn't let Diter's men take the stuff, so Diter got peeved also and being a Mennonite didn't strike the sentry, but merely grabbed him by the throat and pinned him against the wall until his truck was loaded. When they came back for a second load the sentry had reinforcements & Diter couldn't get anything. Our consul protested to the Arab military governor, who finally gave permission to move the rest of the looms. One of our interpreters heard the Arab captain bawling out the sentry for letting the Americans get away with that first load, & he said "But there were too many for me." - Too many being one Mennonite. We have about eight Mennonites in the A.C.R.N.E. & they are about the best & hardest working

4

in the outfit.

Nothing more exciting has happened in Aleppo except that there are young battles fought almost every night if rifle shots mean anything. I suppose if there were a daily paper in Aleppo we would have more news, but as it is all we know is from hearing the shots & seeing the Arab soldiers dash up the dark alleys at night.

Dr. Kennedy came from Alexandretta a few days ago for medical supplies & money for the relief work there. He stayed in my room while here & said he knew the road was dangerous, but had to go back in a carriage - a two day trip. It was on this road that the Indian troops had a battle with Arabs a couple of weeks ago. Kennedy finally started back, & we heard two days ago that he had been held up & everything taken - relief money, medicines, personal stuff & even had received two knife wounds. We haven't had word from Dr. Kennedy himself yet, except a short telegram. He was well armed, so must have been taken by surprise. We may all be on a peace expedition, but all the men of our party are prepared to shoot first, then ask questions.

The appropriations of money have been cut down to such an extent that the Armenians are going to suffer terribly this winter. It isn't their fault that they aren't ready for self support yet. They have been held in refuge camps for so long that they haven't time now to make homes for the winter - the Turks have their business homes, stoves,

AND THE NEAR EAST

everything - when they do get back to their homes. Even our A.C.R.N.E. orphanages & rescue homes are going to be terrible places to live this winter - with not enough money to buy food, no heat at all, & the clothing of every orphan being one summer undershirt, one pr. summer drawers, one dress (both boys & girls wear a sort of dress) - no shoes. For the winter they will be given woolen socks & a sweater. We seem to have plenty of socks & sweaters - but I don't see how people live in places like Marash without stoves. The houses aren't built for heaters. Out in the villages thousands will die this winter. It can't be prevented. Where the A.C.R.N.E. is working the suffering will be much less, but even there can't be eliminated.

I had a letter from Mrs. Melkonian saying he had received the money you sent. I was certainly glad to get all the mail that came last week - a letter from Grubbe - full of pep, & one from Daddy & Marion, & one from Stuart at Lancaster. Stuart must have enjoyed his vacation from the experiences he had on the trip. I'm much obliged for the films, & have at last got the camera working fine. The lens was much faster than I had imagined, so I continually overexposed my pictures. This printing paper doesn't do it justice, but gives an idea of what the camera does. I want Stuart's Cincinnati address. I'll write to the Harrison lot crowd soon if I get a chance. It seems as if most of my spare time was taken up with letter writing

6/ and picture making.

At Aintab I photographed 960 orphans and had a record made of each child's name, its parents' names, & a story of each one's experiences during the war. These will be copied and the copies, with photos, sent to America with an appeal for individuals to support or "adopt" orphans. It was lots of fun doing this work as all the kids like to be photoed. At Marash I'm to do the same thing. I forgot to tell you about my new job. Before Dunaway & I went on our little pleasure trip to Damascus I told Dr. Lambert to find something for me to do on my return besides the little "odd jobs" I've been doing for a month or more. So now he is sending me to Marash for the winter. The Director there is leaving, & I believe Dr. Wilson may be director in his place, with me as assistant, so that Wilson can put most of his time on medical work. Wilson is coming down to Aleppo soon and I expect to go back with him the last of the month. The arrangements haven't been completed, so this may not be carried out, but at least I'm to go to Marash. The roads are bad already (the rains have begun) so you may hear very seldom from me during the winter - perhaps not at all - as there is no railroad, & our cars may not be able to get there all winter. So this may be the last letter for several months. I'll write often, but don't know whether they will ever get even to Aleppo. My mail address will still be Aleppo. I sent some photos home last week in an envelope without a letter. You might see if the Sledge wants to use the photos of the British evacuation. Someday write Dunaway they saw an account of our "joint" letter in the Sledge. If you can mail me a copy. Rec'd the 2nd. August & the 1st. together. Many thanks. Love, Fred