

## In Defence of Bulgarians

The capture of my friend, Miss Ellen M. Stone, by the brigands of Macedonia, was the most notable and praiseworthy act performed in the history of my oppressed countrymen. I was once a brigand in Macedonia. I would be a brigand there now if in that way I could serve my people to better advantage than by laboring in America for their freedom from Turkish rule.

I know why Miss Stone was abducted and held for ransom. It was a desperate attempt on the part of Macedonia to raise money. Money does not make patriots, but it does provide patriots the means with which to fight. Only by fighting the Turks can the persecuted Macedonians overthrow their power and live in peace and comfort. "Liberty or death" is their agonized cry. Surely Americans, of all people, can appreciate our desire for liberty. Denied liberty, Macedonia, with its two millions of souls, will repeat the wretchedness and wrongs in the twentieth century that have cursed it for the past five hundred years.

Five centuries is a long time to wait for freedom.

Miss Stone has indirectly accomplished far more for Christianity during these months of inactive captivity than if she had been permitted to go her way unmolested, preaching the gospel. Think of the practical good that act of brigandage has done! It has been the means of providing some \$72,000 for Macedonia to buy rifles and ammunition with which to slay the worst creatures on earth—the Turks; and it has directed the attention of the entire world to the pitiable condition of the Macedonians, their sore need for help. No state of affairs could be more desirable than exists today in Macedonia. The cry which came to Paul in Bible times, "Come over to Macedonia and help us," is being repeated to the apostles of God in the present day. That they may hear and heed is my earnest hope.

The brigands love Miss Stone. They know that she secretly sympathizes with their cause. They would not have harmed her for any money, badly as they needed it. She was always treated with the kindest consideration. How different would have been her fate in the hands of Turkish brigands, for they are fiends incarnate!

The government of the Sultan is too notorious to need description, and although mutual jealousies prevent any one nation from stepping in and destroying his power, it is only a question of time till the nations will rise and do their duty by the oppressed Macedonians. In the meantime for the protection of themselves, their families and their arms the people have organized themselves into the "Macedonian Committee." All of these people are in open rebellion against the Turkish government, and many of them have long been engaged in a brigand warfare.

The Balkan mountains have been the homes and haunts of many brigands through centuries of history. In the sixteenth century a Bulgarian national movement against the oppression of Turkey fell into the hands of brigand chiefs. They became popular heroes and were known by the name of Haidutins. In legend and song their names and fames were perpetuated. They were represented as the friends of the poor, the protectors of the weak, the allies of Christianity, and the foes of the Mohammedans. Villagers often welcomed them as deliverers. Once identified with them, a brigand's safety consisted in continuing with them. The Turks blocked the way of their return to the ranks of common citizenship.

The same condition exists today in Macedonia. These brigands are honorable, virtuous men, actuated by noble motives, desirous of protecting their families from dishonor and ruin and of securing the freedom of their country.

The Macedonian Society has already been organized in this country and is doing good work. I have not been brought here, however, by the society—it is too poor to spend money for that purpose. My labors are purely voluntary, and I would cheerfully lay down my life at any moment to carry on the work of the revolutionists.

My bitterness toward the Turks has had its foundation in personal grief. I have suffered much, and yet mine is only one case among countless thousands. The rapacity of Turks drove my father to ruin financially and finally caused his death. My mother followed him years later, broken-hearted. My sister was marked for their prey, and I bear scars from their wounds that I shall carry to the grave.

Melana, my sister, a beautiful girl, narrowly escaped abduction by the Turks three times. They forced their

way into our house and nearly succeeded in carrying her off, as they did many other girls in the village.

I was born in the village of Belitza, District of Pazleg, Macedonia. My country is part of the Sultan's domains, while the neighboring country of Bulgaria was freed from the rule of Turkey during the Russo-Turkish war some twenty-five years ago. The Macedonians, who are mostly members of the orthodox Greek Church, have a race and religious feud with the Turks, and the Macedonian committee is a formidable organization which has its headquarters in Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, but whose ramifications extend into many countries. It has been our aim to enlist in our cause not only the natives of our country but those of Bulgaria, the Montenegrins, the Greeks and all others who are animated by a lively hatred for the Turks. In the United States there are a few Macedonians, but more Bulgarians and Greeks, and are being organized to work with the Macedonian committee. We have sixty thousand members, and they are scattered all over the world. We have been working since 1891. In Turkey, of course, the work is conducted in secret, but in Bulgaria the organization is public.

There are different kinds of brigands. If you Americans had been for five centuries under the misrule of Turkey you would understand that to be a brigand and a patriot might be very nearly the same thing. The Turks in those countries where there is a large Christian population live on the industrious peasantry whom they rob and murder. There is no punishment for the Turk who does any of these things to a Macedonian. These conditions have always existed, but under the present Sultan, who is a monster, they have become worse and are now unbearable.

A Greek Christian in my part of Turkey has no rights which a Turk is bound to respect. When the state of affairs is so bad that our sisters and our daughters can be taken away from us by force before our eyes and carried off by the Turks, the time has come for revolt. In 1895 we attempted a revolution, but, as usual, the great powers of Europe threw their influence with Turkey, and the rising was suppressed. This made my countrymen ten times more embittered and more determined to start a revolution. And they decided to begin it in any way they could. When the Turks suspect their Christian subject of being animated by revolutionary designs they send the young men to prison, while the old and wealthy are abducted and held for ransom.

As being the only means of retaliation in their power, my countrymen decided to adopt the tactics of the Turks. They captured many Turks and held them for ransom. A great many of the young Macedonians went to the mountains and became what you call brigands. Whenever they caught a Turk traveling through the mountains they would capture him, and sometimes they would go into the villages and carry off the leading Turkish inhabitants. This is the kind of brigands that my countrymen are, and they have been made such by the cruel oppression to which they have been subjected for centuries. But they are not robbers in the sense in which you understand the term.

The Turks have kept their heels upon the necks of the Macedonians, but they have not succeeded in crushing our spirit. They are cowards, all of them. We have bravery, and many other virtues that they never possessed. A great Turkish general said a few years ago: "If our people were as brave as the Macedonians, we could conquer all the world."

Their religion is a very queer one. It teaches that if a Turk gives a man of any nationality three chances to become a Mohammedan and he refuses, he can cut off his head. Turks look upon all other people as their natural slaves, with no right to become rich or even comfortable. In the Turkish heaven a man who has forced another by acts of cruelty to embrace Mohammedanism is rewarded by having 80,000 slaves to wait on him.

My father was an honest, industrious man, tending his flocks and herds his hand raised against none. But the Turks claimed that he was giving aid to the Macedonian brigands in the mountains. They flung him into prison and would not let him out until they had robbed him of his possessions. He died soon after, and my mother, left with four little children, became very, very poor, yet the Turks continued to invade our miserable home and demand an outrageous tax. I had to go to work before I was seven years old. I worked all one summer on a farm for \$2. The Turkish children used to

set upon me with knives and stones, and nearly killed me. I bade my mother good-by when I was nine years old, and went into Bulgaria. There I became a brigand and worked zealously for my country's cause.

In Samokav I attended the school of the "American Board," where Miss Stone taught. We had many long talks on the subject of Christianity. I told her that the bodies of my countrymen needed protection before the welfare of their souls, for they were, and are, hungry, harassed and desperate. And it seems to me terribly cruel that the missionaries, who ought to be the connecting link between the Christians of Turkey and the people of Europe and America, show indifference to everything except the success of their particular mission in making converts and conducting schools. Is it not natural that the Macedonians should feel that these missionaries love their positions and their salaries more than they love humanity?

In the thirteen years of my devotion to my country's cause I have not received one cent of pay. My chief unhappiness is that people here sometimes doubt the sincerity of my motives, but I realize that things which are great and precious are always purchased through suffering.

We Macedonians have read the congratulations which the people of other countries exchanged when they entered upon the new century. We have read the boastful speeches of statesmen who rejoiced that tyranny had vanished from the earth and that there would be no slavery in the twentieth century. But our people lift their bleeding hands to heaven and protest to the Christian nations of the world that slavery and tyranny are a reality in the twentieth century, and they call upon these nations to do their duty and help sweep the Turks out of Europe and free their miserable Christian subjects.—By Veltcho Madloff.

### Domestic Go-sip.

The woman who had had a fire in her flat building met a friend on the car and began to tell her all about it. "That was a simply awful experience," she began. "The fire wasn't in our end of the building, but of course we couldn't know that at the time. The alarm came at 6 o'clock Sunday morning. Henry grabbed a few clothes and so did I and we made a hasty toilet. He put on his dress suit trousers that he

had worn the night before to a dance, a house coat and a black satin muffler. I found his shoes on the sideboard hours afterward, but he couldn't tell how they got there. I wish you had seen those dress trousers after the fire was over!

"I found myself wearing an old kimono, my best silk petticoat and some worsted bed slippers. I took an empty pillowcase, filled it with valuables and started for a neighbor's. When I got to the front door I met a fireman.

"Are we on fire?" I screamed, excitedly, meaning our flat of course.

"Well, if you are I guess you'll find it out," the brute replied, dragging the hose on up stairs.

"Just then a woman came down from an upper flat carrying a bird cage. That reminded me of my beloved Angela, Victoria, and I forgot the pillowcase and hurried back to find her.

"Where is she?" I asked, as I rushed through the flat, frantic about my pet.

"Where's who?" growled Henry, who was trying to find the insurance policies.

"The cat," I sobbed.

"Locked up in the bathroom," he answered.

"Why, Henry!" I cried, "do you want Victoria to be roasted alive?"

"Don't you let her out," he said, savagely. "The infernal beast will get under people's feet; she's got no sense."

"By this time I was unlocking the bathroom door. Victoria was mewling piteously, scared by the excitement. I seized her and rushed out. Just outside the front door I met Mrs. Dutton carrying her baby.

"Will you hold my cat a minute?" I asked, trying to put Victoria into her arms.

"If I live to be 100 years old, I'll never forget the look that woman gave me."

"I've got my child to save, madam," she snapped. "I think you'll have to look out for your own cat."

"Fancy any one being so spiteful at such a time! I put my poor Victoria down on the front steps and I never saw her again for three days. You may know how crazy I must have been at that moment to have expected a cat to stay there with firemen dragging in hose and people carrying out their things and all that excitement."

"How did you find her afterwards?" asked the sympathetic friend.

"Advertised for her and paid \$5 reward to the boy who brought her home," answered Victoria's mistress. And the pillowcase full of valuables—did you find that?"

"Yes, we found it after hours of searching down behind the couch in the library. I must have put it there, though goodness only knows why. And what do you suppose I had put into it? First my white lace waist; then on top of that the salad fork, which I pushed clear through the lace; next the hot water bag, and last, on top of all, a cut-glass bowl—one of my wedding presents."—Ex.

### Played Jesse James.

Sedalia, Mo., March 23.—Will Martin, aged 13, was fatally shot today in East Sedalia by Edgar Allen, a playmate of his own age. A Jesse James company was in Sedalia last

week, and a number of young boys were reproducing the play in a barn, having an audience of about fifty boys.

Allen was playing the part of Jesse James and Martin that of a Pinkerton detective. When the latter attempted to capture the bandit, Allen took a shot at Martin with a 38-caliber revolver, the ball entering Martin's head near the right ear and passing out on the opposite side.

### A Lucky Place.

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