

## Youths' Department.

### LITTLE GIRLS OF TURKEY.

**W**HO has heard of that far-off country? Look it up in your geography. Turkey in Europe has about seven millions of people, and Turkey in Asia more than twice that number. Little girls have a good time until they are eight years old. Then they are made to wear long veils, with only their eyes peeping out. They must not play with their little brothers any more, but be shut up in the house of the women called a "harem." Many of them are worshippers of Mohammed, and seven times a day make long prayers to him. They study the Koran as earnestly as you do your Bible, for it is their sacred book. I am sorry to tell you that these little girls learn to smoke cigarettes as they see their mothers do. You may have seen beautiful embroidery which has been made in the Turkish harems by little fingers. Books would not be of use to these little girls, for their fathers think they are not worth educating. There is great need of medical missionaries in Turkey, and many a little girl dies whose life might have been saved if a lady doctor had seen her. The Sultan who rules Turkey in a very cruel way, has refused to let a woman doctor practise medicine in that land. Both boys and girls daily ask for money to buy sweets and cakes. Even the very poorest parents expect this request from their little ones. You will remember how many Christians were put to death in Turkey in 1896 because they would not give up their trust in Christ. Thousands of orphan children were left uncared for until some good missionaries gathered them in to homes built for them. Now there are large schools where these orphan girls may be educated. One young lady from Ottawa is a teacher in the school at Marash. She wrote to me about her work. I will copy part of her letter for you. "Education in Turkey is at a very low ebb, only about 10 per cent. of Turkish children attend school at all, and such schools! I passed one during study hours, and the noise was like passing a saw mill in full operation. The boys recite and study at the top of their voices. There are no girls in Turkish schools, as boys and girls are kept separate. A great work is being done by Christian missionaries in educating the natives to go out and tell about Jesus to their poor, ignorant countrymen. The heat is so great in the summer that

the grass is all burnt up, so the people take their flocks and go up into the mountains to get pasture for them. The whole family come and camp here until the heat is over. It makes me think of Bible stories of long ago to see them moving about this way. We try to hold a Sunday school among those near to us. Think of a people who call themselves Christians never having heard the Lord's prayer, for the Gregorian Church keeps its people in complete ignorance. Some of our best girls in the College came from these little mountain camps. We have to ride on horseback for two or three days before we get to our school, as there are no railroads or boats near us. A great deal of rice is grown in Turkey, and the people cook it with finely chopped meat and spices. The little girls here never see a doll unless they are sent in Christmas boxes from England and America. The parents think dolls very curious, as well as their children. A grown man sometimes takes up one and examines it carefully. He thinks all it needs is a soul!"

The houses have flat mud roofs, and many of them are walled around with mud and stone. There are no windows to the poor homes, and only one door. A laboring man only gets ten or fifteen cents for a day's work, so he cannot afford a big house. A missionary tells of a sick child sitting by the door, who was so thin that the bones almost came through the skin. No doctor tries to cure this little one, but a priest comes and reads over the couch. He tells the parents to kill a dove or a sheep at the church as a sacrifice. The priests burn candles before pictures and say prayers for the sick child, but it does not get well under such treatment. Sometimes little girls are sold by their fathers as wives when they are only two or three years old. They are taken from their mother's home and sent to the harem where their new owner lives. They are taught to spin and knit and bake bread. This bread is made in thin sheets, a little thicker than blotting paper, two feet long and one foot wide. It is all piled away in a dry place, and when taken out for a meal the mother sprinkles it as we do clothes for ironing. Then she holds it near the fire for a few minutes, and it is ready to be eaten. This bread is often six months old before they eat it. The churches have mats on low stools in-