

Armenian Refugees.

By Faith Fenton.

THE arrival of a score of Armenian refugees in Canada has given a keener edge to our interest in their cause, and brought us into closer realization of the sufferings of these inoffensive people.

Our hearts were hot within us during those past months of massacre, our patriotic pride stood humbled before the inaction of Christian empires, yet here and now, as we look upon these refugees, both indignation and humility are increased tenfold. That such a people as this, intelligent, refined, self-respecting, the equals in feature, form and intellect, of any who walk our city streets to-day—that these gentle-mannered men and women should be thus treated—we stand appalled before the magnitude of the outrage, and the horror of it, aye, and we pale before the magnitude of our own criminal inaction.

Ah, well, of what use are words! The mightiest of Avengers has surely marked our delay, and the time of retribution's all come.

In a recent visit to Boston, as delegate to the executive meeting of the National Council, Mrs. Willoughby Cummings visited the Armenian refugees in that city, and her account of them, given in an informal chat with the writer, will be of interest to our readers.

"I had no thought of visiting them," said the lady, "indeed I was hardly aware of their presence in the city, but my attention was drawn to the fact in an interesting manner.

"The last evening of executive meetings had come and nearly passed. Our Council work was finished, and those of us who were guests at the hotel had returned there, feeling relieved from responsibility and inclined to be merry. Some one in the group of ladies proposed supper, and we went down into the dining room.

"Presently a waiter came to me with a calling-card bearing a name I did not recognize.

"It was eleven o'clock, and a little surprised at so late a caller I went up into the drawing room. A sweet-faced woman stepped forward to meet me."

"I shall not apologize for coming at so late an hour," she said, "since I am a Canadian you will grant me the privilege. I want you to come with me to-morrow to see our Armenian refugees, I know you will be interested, and you will tell what you see on returning to Canada. They are such splendid people, and I do so want our country to have some of them. We need agriculturalists, we need, Oh, such a lot of people out in that big North-West, and these Armenians are so fine a class, and there are thousands there who are starving—the sweet-faced woman was almost breathless with her eager utterance."

"Of course I promised to go; I was only too pleased to have the opportunity. Afterward I discovered and was proud of the fact—that the three ladies who have chiefly interested themselves in the Armenian refugees in Boston are Canadians. Mrs. Tynan of New Brunswick, and Mesdames Todd and Heard both from Prince Edward Island.

"These three ladies are wintering in Boston, and they have given time, thought, and money to the cause of these poor refugees, giving them daily lessons in English, and surrounding them with the warmth of human care and kindness. I was proud to hear of their work.

"We visited the Armenians not once, but several times before leaving Boston, and I only wish all Canada could have seen them also. It was a visit to remember.

"There was some difficulty concerning their standing, as perhaps you read. They were un-

fortunately shipped from Marseilles as 'assisted emigrants,' and upon arriving at Ellis Isle were detained, and came very nearly being sent back.

"Finally a guarantee bond of \$25,000 was demanded by the American government before permitting them to land. The W.C.T.U. offered to guarantee the amount, so also I believe did one of the New York papers, *Herald* or *Tribune*. But societies or companies would not or could not be recognized, and then an individual bondsman came forward—Mr. Gulesian, a native of Armenia.

"Mr. Gulesian came to Boston some thirteen years ago, and soon acquired wealth. There were four hundred refugees in all, and he brought one hundred of them to Boston, and gave them temporary accommodation in a flat in his large warehouse, which was fitted up for the purpose. The W.C.T.U. became responsible for fifty, and at the time of my visit in December, there were only thirty-five remaining, who had not found employment."

"What was your impression of them" queried her listener.

"Look at this, and this" answered the lady, picking up some photographs, "and tell me what your own impression of such faces would be. See, here they are gathered for Thanksgiving dinner in the

and Italian. It was pathetic to see these refined, intelligent men bending each day over their primers, and reading their lessons in English, spelling out the words as docile as a child.

"Looking at them thus in the heart of a Christian city amid the peace of a sunny morning hour, and realizing the outrages they had endured for their faith's—our faith's sake, made our hearts thrill, and blurred our vision.

"I have spoken of their gentleness, but I think also these refugees seemed a little dazed. They moved and spoke at times like men dreaming. Is it much wonder, in view of what they have passed through. The wonder is that they have retained their senses in any degree.

"Yet they rouse always to respond to our questions, and talk not only intelligently, but with evidence of culture. Their confidence in England, yet unshaken, is most touching. 'She will surely interfere, she will help,' they say, their dark meet eyes looking trustfully into ours.

"Oh, the pity of it that such a trust should with so tardy response!

"Of the refugees brought to Boston—farmers, merchants, high class artisans, such as book binder, rug weaver, silversmith, etc., and a number of students and college professors constituted the chief



ARMENIAN REFUGEES AT THANKSGIVING DINNER.

big warehouse flat. Do you note the fine features and gentle expressions."

"They might be college students, or business men of our own city," was the prompt answer.

"Yet that young man saw his father beheaded; and that one witnessed both sister and mother killed. This gentle-faced man told me he did not know whether one of his family remained alive; and this one saw two sisters, father and brother all massacred; and this bright little boy in the foreground was rolled on board ship in a barrel to escape detection. He was badly bruised, poor little chap, but thankful to escape with his life.

"All of these refugees left directly after the massacre in Constantinople. Not openly, of course, but by stealth. There were no women with them; they could not get away, a few have arrived since, however.

"One man I talked with escaped by floating down a stream, keeping well under water and using a little pipe-stem to breathe through.

"They are so gentle and attractive in speech; there is nothing fierce or revengeful about them. One was showing me some Eastern pictures and came to one of the Sultan. He passed it quickly over, saying only 'no good.'

"They seemed to be nearly all educated men and good linguists, many of them spoke both French

and Italian—all are industrious and eager for work, so that many went out to domestic work and house service. Yet a large number of them are gentlemen in the best sense of the word.

"Do you notice in the photograph a motto stretched across the rear of the flat? Can you read it? 'We thank God for a land of freedom.' The refugees put that up themselves on the eve of Thanksgiving day. Think what it must have meant to them.

"But, perhaps, the finest trait of these brave people—martyrs for their faith, was shown in an incident that occurred during one of my morning visits.

"Mr. Gulesian wanted an Armenian Bible for reference concerning some little point of our conversation. 'Perhaps some of these men will have one' he said. He asked for one, and *eighteen* were instantly produced.

"These men had escaped by stealth, barely with their lives, and with no clothing, save that they wore upon their persons—destitute, robbed of every possession, fleeing by night and darkness, yet eighteen out of thirty five brought every man his Bible across the sea."

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