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Can Such Things Be?—A Persian Experience

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CAN THESE THINGS BE?

A PERSIAN EXPERIENCE

BY JESSIE LEE ELLIS

(From The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 124, July–December, 1919, pages 391-402)

Jessie Lee Ellis, the writer of the letters from which the following excerpts are taken, is the wife of Dr. Wilder Prince Ellis, a missionary physician in the American hospital at Urumia, Persia. A little over three years ago the young couple, then only a short time married, managed to reach their station in Persia. There they were associated with a group of medical and teaching missionaries who, with their predecessors on the ground, have strongly influenced the life of West Persia for more than two generations. In addition to the well-equipped hospital, there is, or was, a college, and there are also an orphanage and other centers of work in the city and on the Urumia plain.

From the very beginning of the war, all the elements of disaster were present. The native population is part Moslem and part Christian — Persians and Syrians. From the western edge of the Urumia plain rise the rugged mountains of Kurdistan, from which have issued, even in peacetimes, the savage bands of marauding Kurds. As they are not subject to any constituted authority, the conflict gave them their supreme opportunity for brigandage with all its attendant horrors.

Further, this western arm of Persia lay directly in the path of the contending Russian and Turkish armies. Three times the tides of war swept back and forth over the Urumia plain. The waves of the conflict broke all about the walls of the hospital compound; but for some reason it was never submerged until those fateful days of July and August, 1918.

In the midst of battle, murder, rapine, pestilence, and famine, this group of American missionaries all stuck to their posts. For four long years, with hardly a scrap of news from home and only rumors of how the Great War was going, they continued steadfastly caring for the sick and wounded, friend and foe alike, feeding the hungry out of their scant stores, and furnishing a refuge in their compound, now for the Syrians from the Moslems, and again for the Moslems from the Syrians, as the fortunes of war changed.

The entire story of those years, with their tragic record of heroism and devotion, is yet to come. Mrs. Ellis's letters constitute a fragment of the little that has filtered through. Her story begins on that memorable day in July, 1918, when a daring English aviator of the British forces far to the south of them landed in their midst.

I

The aeroplane visited us on July eighth. The fourth of July had been a fearful day, and we felt impending disaster, with bad news from all around. Suddenly, one morning about seven o'clock, like a white-winged messenger from heaven, that aeroplane dropped down among us and brought us the first news from the outside world in months. Can I ever describe to you the thrilling sight as that daring English airman swooped in his machine down among the hospital sycamores, after circling over Urumia! Shots had rung out from the city and from the neighboring hills, for the Syrians had thought it an enemy plane at first. But, when we saw the flag of the Allied armies of Europe, everyone went nearly wild with joy, and like a great wave rose the shouts and cheers of

the people. When the plane lighted, the aviator was worshiped like a god; his feet and hands were kissed for very joy. I do not suppose that in these days there was ever a more worshipful reception than these poor beleaguered people gave that young hero.

Later in the day he was brought to the hospital compound; and when he reached our home, we heard of his plans for the Syrians and something of what the world was doing in the war. We were greatly cheered, for we had heard nothing but terrible tales of murder, and seen nothing but rape and bloodshed and robbery, with starvation stalking at our doors. Things at that time seemed unbearable. We thought they could not go on that way, and they did not — they just got steadily worse.

The expected succor from the south did not come, because of the failure of our own Syrian armies to meet their agreements. Meanwhile, pressure from all sides kept steadily increasing until the flight occurred. I can never adequately describe the little I saw of it. We retired at ten o'clock of the night of July 30. Dr. Packard called through our bedroom windows at two o'clock the next morning that he wanted to speak to us. We slipped into dressing gowns and coats, and were soon assembled in the Packard parlor. In our house at that time were Miss Lamme, Miss Schoebel, Miss Burgess, Dr. Dodd, and Mr. and Mrs. Richards. After a brief conference, we decided the momentous question and determined not to flee. Indeed, it was impossible for us to do so. Our boy Edwin was sick, our carriage was very old, and our horse aged twenty! and I was scarcely able to walk after my recent operation. Then, too, we did not want to be mixed up with an assortment of cutthroats and robbers such as made up a part of the Syrian army. At daybreak. Dr. Packard, Dr. Ellis, and Mr. Richards went into the city to arrange for guards for our premises, fix up necessary monies for Dr. Shedd to carry, and help him to get off. I did not see Wilder until the next day.

Those early morning hours witnessed the removal of the Syrian nation from their homes — many of them, alas! never to return. It was a pathetic sight to see the ox-carts, donkeys, Red Cross wagons of the Russians, and every conceivable kind of vehicle, bearing away our native friends. The little children were on donkeys or on foot. Slowly the creaking wagons, some drawn by oxen, moved out.

What took place in our yards was of course not a circumstance to what was to be seen on the roads. About half-past nine, from the neighboring hills, shots and wild noises began. From the roof, with Edwin in my arms, I listened, but could not believe that things were to happen so soon. By the time I got downstairs, Dr. Dodd and Miss Schoebel were desperately engaged in making a Turkish flag to hang with our American one over the gate. Hardly was it up when the shots and noises increased. Past our compound gate rushed wild horses, with mad Kurdish riders. Shots rang over our head and whizzed through our great trees. The poor frightened children, and the infirm, the old, the helpless, and the servants, — in all a company of two hundred, who had come to our yards for protection, — began to run into our houses. Some crowded into the parlor where I stood, and clung to my knees beseeching me to save them. You can never know the awful terror these people experienced. They know too well the frightful cruelty that will be meted out to them; at the mention of a Turk or a Kurd they are pallid and shaking, and fall on their knees before their torturers, imploring mercy.

A few minutes later, — I don't know how it happened, — our family found themselves all together in the parlor. Mr. Richards and Dr. Dodd had had a terrible experience with the Kurds and had nearly lost their lives while trying to save their horses. Just as I had finished bathing and nursing little Paul, there came a mad rush up our kitchen stairs. The door between the kitchen and dining-room was bolted, but it was burst in with blows before Dr. Dodd and Mr. Richards

could open it. In rushed three wild Kurds, armed, and the most terrifying men I have ever seen, with fringed turbans surmounting faces as black and evil as could be imagined. They were filled with lust and madness and came in pell-mell with guns drawn, shouting 'Pool! pool!' (money). We showed them the room where Wilder's treasury safes (recently brought from the city in an attempt to save the money) stood, and in they rushed. I shall always be thankful that Wilder was kept in the city that morning, for I fear he might have resisted the attack, and in that event he would certainly have been killed. We in the other room heard the shots and shouts and pounding, and wondered what was happening to Dr. Dodd and Mr. Richards. Not being able to find the keys, the Kurds attempted to blow open the safes by shooting into the keyholes. In the meantime those who were busy breaking open and looting Wilder's desk turned over the safe-keys without recognizing them.

Three times these men rushed out upon us and, leveling their guns, demanded our jewels and money. Each time, as we looked down the gun-barrel, we were sure our last hour had come. When we held out our hands and proceeded to give them our watches, rings, and so forth, and then said we had no money, they insisted on searching for it. It was horrible, but the perfect calm with which their handling was received I think amazed them, for they are in the habit of seeing women fall before them in an agony of terror. I shall never forget Miss Schoebel's face as a vile Kurd ran his hand into her bosom. She did not flinch, nor did the expression of calm leave her face; but she stood her ground, and he, somewhat amazed, passed on to me. Paul was asleep in my arms, but little sick Edwin, who was being held by Miss Lamme, clung to her terrified when the shots were thickest. The Kurds demanded my rings. I wore three — the little Utah turquoise that guarded my wedding-ring, and a little gold band that had been Wilder's mother's. I took off the turquoise, and then they asked for the other; but just at this minute Dr. Dodd began frantically to direct their attention to his cufflinks, in order to save me from such a loss. For the time they forgot me, and in the few moments that elapsed I drew off my wedding-ring, and, as I was standing near a big pot containing a lemon tree (my anniversary present from my husband), I pressed the ring down into the soft earth. Three days later, all danger for the time being over, I unearthed it.

The Kurds then proceeded to smash up our sixty-dollar typewriter, and would have broken my desk, because it would not open immediately, had I not shown them how to get into it. They ripped the rugs off the couch and some off the floor, to see if they could discover hidden riches. Then one of them attempted to kidnap Betty Coan Richards, and this was the greatest ordeal of all. She resisted the man, and he tried to shoot her. She seized his gun and, though she is a mite, the way she wrestled with that Kurd was amazing. She must have had superhuman strength lent her for that hour. They swayed back and forth, she clinging desperately to the gun and he trying to level it. Thinking it might go off any minute and in any direction, I drew back into a corner with Paul and prayed, as I watched that terrible struggle. All that saved Betty was the hurry the men were in.

The others rushed out of the little office where the safes stood, picking up here and there a few things, including my raincoat, Wilder's winter overcoat, and Dr. Dodd's shoes, making us all rip ours off in a flash as they clicked their rifles. They snatched Wilder's medical bag (little they knew the use of the medicines contained therein), and one of them sat calmly down on the piano bench and put on Dr. Dodd's shoes. They went out in the same whirl in which they had come, passing drawers of silver and my silver tea-set, which stood before their very eyes. Their haste was understood when, a few minutes later, the regular Turkish army arrived. Of course the Turks

were robbers, too, but a little less bold about it; and the Kurds, knowing they would be sore at their getting so much loot, hurried away.

In the meantime, Mrs. Packard, learning that the Kurds were in our house, was telephoning frantically to the city to have Wilde and Dr. Packard send guards to our relief. When they heard of our plight, they were almost crazy, and tried more desperately than ever to secure men to send to us. We nearly embraced the dirty, ragged crew that finally arrived after the fray was over. How changed one can become in one's likes and dislikes! There were some high-class Kurds whom we had been protecting in our yards against the Geloo (Syrian) army for months. We had all entertained them at tea several times. One of those women was a queen! I have scarcely ever seen such a beautiful woman (Kurdish women are ahead of Moslem physically, and mentally too, I think, and they do not veil). Dressed in crimson velvet and a high-peaked velvet hat, she stood off ten wild Kurds who wanted to enter our gate to rob and kill. I heard from those who saw her that she actually disarmed them. She was no weakling, I assure you. After our experience she arrived, and was aghast at the disorder and at the story which we told. She sat down and talked with us, and we implored her to stay all day; but she had other military business to attend to in the yards, and so reluctantly we let her go. All that day we saw her about the compound with a big stick attacking marauders. (Just here I want to add that this lovely woman was later taken from her husband, whom they killed, and married to another, because of her sympathy with us.)

Before going on, I must tell you of Miss Burgess's narrow escape. She was not present during the attack on our house, and we were so excited that we did not miss her. But just at the end she came rushing in, breathless, from the home of Rabbi Yohannan (John Mooshie), who had been lying at death's door with typhus. She had gone to give some professional assistance to his faithful wife-nurse, when the Kurds arrived at their gate and rushed into the house. They shot our faithful helper three times, in the presence of his wife, Miss Burgess, and some of the children; and that too in spite of the fact that Mrs. Mooshie was pouring money before them. The Kurds tried to take Miss Burgess, but she was hastily escorted over the roof to safety by Tamar, the faithful Kurdish servant of the Packards.

The rest of the day was one of great strain, for our protection was in the hands of enemies and we knew not at what moment they might choose to turn upon us. Our ragged crew was well filled from our board at dinner-time. We stayed closely huddled together in the parlor all that day, and did not even venture into the dining-room for dinner. Outside, the shooting continued irregularly, but was often so close that I heard the singing of the bullets outside my window. Finally I moved Edwin's bed to the other end of the house, into the room occupied by Dr. Dodd, and there my little boy dropped off to sleep.

That night I talked with Wilder over the telephone and found out what to do for Edwin. I went back to my little ones with a steadier heart, but we had rather a restless night. Miss Lamme stayed with me, and I don't think we slept one wink. We could hear the constant cry of the guards, 'Kim galur?' (Who comes?) and in the morning learned that a Kurd had tried to enter one of our downstairs doors and was caught. How good the next morning's light was! I had another little telephone talk with Wilder, and the day wore on. The thing that haunted me was that Wilder and Dr. Packard might be held for ransom and not allowed to come home. Late that afternoon, however, they arrived; and though at first the escorting officer would not say whether they could remain, they were finally allowed to.

II

All the busy activity that Wilder had had for months now came suddenly to an end, and it was very hard for him. For about two months he had carried on both hospital and treasury work, doing all the operating, having general oversight of about one hundred and fifty wounded Syrians and managing an immense treasury business. Now, in an instant, all that was over. He could no longer ride in each morning to the city to business, but instead, we all sat quietly at home. The horses and cows had been taken, and the carriages too. I really thought I could not bear it when they took the cows, for to buy the dirty stuff that the Moslems called milk was unthinkable. I remember how I paced up and down the lawn with poor little sick, weak Edwin in my arms, and my heart was filled with anguish. But the Lord was truly caring for us. We had brought some condensed milk from the hospital before the occupation, and we secretly got the rest — Mrs. Cochran so managing it that the marauders did not get the keys to the supply cellar where the milk was kept. We had got it from the one-time Russian hospital. It saved the day, I truly believe; and after a while we were able to buy some two-thirds-water stuff carried on a Jew's back in an earthen jar through the dust and dirt clear from the city. Edwin was so emaciated that we greatly feared for him. We could not get him to eat the things that he should, and he cried for *bussra* (Syriac for meat) and for toast. It truly hurts me now to write of the agony of those days.

In the meantime, Mrs. Cochran and Miss Burgess were asked to vacate their rooms in the hospital, and we invited Mrs. Cochran to take our bedroom downstairs, which had a big balcony opening from it. We moved upstairs to the *ballakanna*, as they call it. Miss Burgess went in with the ladies in a large room that Dr. Dodd had occupied all summer, and he took the front balcony for his sleeping quarters and used a small back room near the kitchen for his bedroom. The Richards had the other *ballakanna* room upstairs, and with servants and dependents numbering about twenty, we sandwiched ourselves in. When the Turks came round, seeking to steal these people in the yard, they would hide themselves in our closets and pantries and lie hidden often for several days. It was truly nauseating to open one's pantry of a morning and find a whole family of six or seven, with their dirty quilts and clothes, the air so awful that one could cut it, and all huddled on the floor round the cupboards where the food was kept. It nearly finished what little appetite I had left. And yet you cannot imagine how hard it was to say, 'You cannot stay here'; for the poor frightened people were in real danger of being taken.

Our roof was a veritable village; all sorts of operations went on there for weeks. Children died on our balcony and languished at our doors; a large number died on our back lawn, and there was no place one could step where one did not see the sick, the dying, the sorrowing, and the starving. We stood it all pretty well until our servants began to get sick, and then it was terrible indeed, for they lay everywhere and there was no place I could take the children except Dr. Coan's garden. But, in spite of all the tragedy that was about us, our big family was really a happy one, and for people of so many varied tastes and dispositions we got along famously and made the most of every occasion for a little fun. If we had not done so, we could not have stood the strain. Miss Schoebel, Mrs. Richards, and I took turns at housekeeping, and it was some family to prepare for! It was a fortunate thing that we had had enough faith to plant our gardens in the spring; for after the occupation we might have been put to serious straits from lack of food.

I must not forget to tell you of the Orphanage tragedy. One afternoon, three days after the Turkish occupation, as I was wheeling Edwin down the avenue in his go-cart, I noticed a strangely familiar group approaching. As I got nearer, I saw it was the pitiful remnant of the once

flourishing Orphanage. Walking a little unsteadily, and resembling little the happy woman who had been with us the previous Sunday, was Mrs. Pflaumer. Beside her was Miss Bridges, for whom Mr. Pflaumer had laid down his life. They wore no hats, for little was left them save life. Scarfs had been given them by some Persians. Mrs. Pflaumer's face was haggard and drawn, a look of helpless anguish was in her eyes, though she was outwardly calm; Miss Bridges's face was bruised and purple. Clinging to their skirts and in their arms were the little ones, who, homeless like themselves, were seeking safety. A Red Crescent officer came out of the hospital, demanding to know who they were; and slowly and painfully, yet with infinite fortitude, those two brave women told their story. I listened with growing pity and amazement, for never was a more tragic tale wrung from human hearts.

It seems that, on the day of the flight and of the Turkish occupation, the Orphanage was visited by Kurds and Turks, who looted and carried off all the possessions of the inmates. The Kurds killed a number of the children, then decided that Miss Bridges, who was young and good to look upon, was desirable as a wife, and proceeded to kidnap her. Mr. and Mrs. Pflaumer at once sprang to the rescue, and clung with a grip that was not relinquished till death took Mr. Pflaumer. Stripped of most of his clothing and bruised by blows from the brutal foot of a Turkish officer, he had clung to the end, undaunted, and had been cruelly shot when he refused to let go. The Kurd then took Miss Bridges and placed her on his horse outside the gate. But the Lord's hand spared a greater calamity than death; for about this time some Turkish officers arrived, saw what was going on, and ordered the Kurd to relinquish her. Mrs. Pflaumer and Miss Bridges were then taken to a camp across the river, where they were treated kindly and later taken to the home of the governor of the city. Here they were kept for three days, and at the end of that time brought to us.

The summer moved along. About the time Edwin began to mend, the rest of us became ill. Everyone in the yard took sick, either with typhus, smallpox, dysentery, typhoid, or malaria, and finally with a terrible kind of influenza which, we have since heard, swept practically the whole world. Some people died because they saw nothing further to live for; some died from fright. All the children in our yard died except Edwin, Dwight, and the little child of one of our native doctors. This includes all the small children of two and three years and under, of whom there were very many; and in the Orphanage every child under nine years of age, of whom there were twenty or thirty. Every morning a stretcher passed our house carrying three or four dead children. It was most depressing, when I felt as though I were tugging for the life of my child with all my strength.

Then, too, the continual sicknesses of ourselves and our servants became very disheartening; for we wondered if some morning might not find us all in bed with fever and no one to care for the children. The way never seemed so dark as in those days, yet always a light shone out which gave us hope. One day perhaps half of us would be in bed, and another day it happened that Miss Schoebel and I were the only ones with out fever and able to attend supper. We looked at each other rather seriously that night. The Turks had brought a very virulent kind of malaria and it infected all the mosquitoes. Wilder had several attacks, but after the one I had at Paul's birth, I never had another. No one in the house appeared to have any fatal trouble, but each day brought increased depression and weakness. Finally, Miss Schoebel was prostrated with her third attack of chills and fever. She was ill only ten days, and during a lucid time, when I went in to see her, she told me of the great suffering she had endured and of its being the most severe experience she had ever had. That was the last time I saw her till she lay freed from pain and suffering forevermore.

III

We had been in the garden about five weeks. It was October, and rapidly becoming unsettled weather. Wilder and I still had a dread of the house, but saw that it was inevitable, so decided to clean the rooms thoroughly. Wilder beat rugs for two days, for there was no help to be had at that time, every man, woman, and child either just taking the fever or recovering from it. We decided to wind up our stay in the garden by celebrating Edwin's birthday and recovery. Wilder was busy finishing up the rugs and I was setting a long table in the garden, when the sound of heavy automobile trucks came to my ears. I was so busy that I did not investigate until Dr. Dodd came running over and exclaimed, 'We are going to be deported!'

'Where?' I asked.

'Perhaps Stamboul, perhaps Kars, perhaps Tabriz.'

I simply would not believe it. If I only had! But no one did, and Wilder and Dr. Packard started on foot to the city, to try to interview a high official. They were turned back, however, because of the scheming of the Shatan doctor at the hospital. It was then dinner-time, and no one had prepared the meal, all our friends expecting to eat it with us. Consequently there was nothing ready to take on a journey. And I had planned so for this day, as one of particular gladness for us all!

We stood round the table with white faces and bated breath, while two brutal Turks ordered us to go and climb on the wagons at once. 'You have fifteen minutes,' said they.

We implored, protested, and accused, but nothing but some gold and some heaping plates of chicken and *pilau* softened the decree. We were then given five hours in which to get together as many of our possessions as possible.

My heart failed me at the thought of the journey, particularly as the wet nurse I had for my baby was having the most severe of her numerous attacks of fever, and I felt that I could not take her with me. I sent word to another Syrian woman in our yards, the wife of a wealthy native doctor who had been forced to flee and had come to us. I had been letting her have some of our very insufficient supply of milk for her little child, who was just Edwin's age. She was a lovely woman, and I was anxious to save her, for her own sake as well as Paul's. But more of her later. Meanwhile I hurriedly got together all our silver which had been brought over for the dinner, collected the children's clothes which were in the garden, and some bedding, and then tried desperately to find an able-bodied person to carry it over to the avenue. It was some time before I could manage this, and meanwhile Wilder was in the basement, working away at packing our clothing in the big trunk. I packed the steamer trunk with all the condensed milk, Nestlé's and Mellin's Food that I had, and the rest of the semolena (a sort of Russian cream of wheat). The remainder of the dinner and what little food-stuffs we could carry were also packed, but all my lovely canned fruit, catsup, gallons of beans, which we had put in brine for the winter, parsnips, squash and so forth, had to be left behind.

As I look back on it now, it seemed as if I should have done more than I did: but really you cannot conceive our plight. Our house was filled with Syrians who were weeping over our departure and begging for things. Honestly, it was hard to move about, let alone collect one's scattered goods and wits. We did not know whither we were bound, and so could not tell whether to take winter or summer clothes. Oh, the agony of that departure! I left all my pictures, all my trousseau linen, my trinkets, — precious because of wedding associations and of memories of friends from whom we were so widely separated, — and took only what I thought was necessary' to sustain the lives of my children and Wilder. If it had not been for Wilder, I myself

would have had nothing. As Mrs. Packard said, so say I: 'I shall certainly go crazy if I think of my things that were left behind'; and the only way of stopping regret and grief over them is to think of the hour of our departure, and how we prayed, and vowed that, if God would only spare the lives of our precious ones and bring us to a haven of safety, we would praise Him all our days.

Some Turkish officers stood waiting to seize loot as soon as they could decently do so, and the thought of those men makes me wild even yet. Some rough springless wagons were waiting for us outside, piled so high that I could not possibly find a place to sit with my baby. Finally, however, I found a seat on top of some traveling-bags, a most uncomfortable one even for a short trip. Edwin was quite excited at the idea of having a ride behind the mule Teddy, and Paul soon went off to sleep.

The scene we left was heartrending. Our poor Syrian folk whom we had been protecting and the young girls whom we had been hiding clung to us, and their weeping and wailing was terrible. I felt as if I had become numbed. I could scarcely utter a syllable, and Mrs. Packard afterwards told me that she felt the same way. The Shatan doctor was a vile, vile beast (whenever I think of the unspeakable Turk I think of him in particular), and I cannot write on paper his bestiality to the innocent girls in the yards. We hid a mother, who was trying to preserve the innocence of her two daughters, in our bedroom closet for three days, then in a cellar-room; but when we left they had to walk out, and he met them and laughed like a fiend. We hear that he took one of them to grace his harem in Stamboul. When he saw the Syrian woman, whom I had brought as a nurse, sitting beside me with her little one, he shrieked, 'Bin!' (down), and with a face like an angry bull seized her and dragged her off.

We were again counted, and finally out we drove, and the wail that rose from those left in the yards was the wail of lost souls. At the compound gate were several additional wagons filled with some Kurdish and Moslem prisoners. We bumped over the roads to the city and round to the lake road. My arms soon began to ache, and my whole body also, from the uncomfortable seat, and when we went over a ditch or down a hole I nearly rolled out with the baby, as did Wilder with Edwin. Finally, I seized the rough coat of the Turkish muleteer, who was very pleasant and willing to have me do so, and the servants behind held on to Wilder. And so we proceeded. One of our servants hid a little girl called Shaker (sugar), who had been a refugee in our house all summer, in some rugs under Miss Lamme, who knew nothing of it. After we had gone half a mile, what was our amazement and consternation to hear an order given for all the wagons to halt, and this little weeping girl was set down on the roadside. Wilder stepped down and claimed the poor little thing, and everyone held his breath, for it looked as if the Ellises were in for trouble. But the man with the iron crescent round his neck laughed roughly, though not unpleasantly, and set her back on the wagon and made no fuss. She is with us still, but might have been left to an awful fate on that road.

It was dusk when we left the compound, and darkness soon settled down. Then we all began to sing, and it sounded pretty cheery as we rolled along, and we forgot some of our discomfort in the unity of spirit with which we sang. Finally, long after ten, our wagons drew into Gumrichkanna, the Urumia lake port. Orders were given for us to keep our seats, and again we were counted. After a long pause we were allowed to descend under careful guard, and the first night's orgy began. All of us, sixteen people, with our trunks, hand-baggage, boxes of condensed milk, pots and kettles, and jars of cooking grease, were packed into one small room, with enough dirty Kurds and Moslems to bring the number up to forty-five. You can't even imagine what it was like. Fleas, lice, and other creeping things were so thick that our misery was sufficient from

them alone; but we had no room to stretch in, and those Kurds and Moslems talked and laughed and coughed and spat all night. My darling Paul was under the very spray of one of the guards seated in the window, and the thing that saved him was the little go-cart in which he lay comfortably, shielded by its hood. Fortunately my wits were working when I packed the baby's things; for I had not forgotten the net that protected him from flies and other insects all the way. His splendid constitution and regular habits, kept up as nearly as possible throughout the journey, helped greatly. I bathed him every day but one, I think, and Edwin too, although I had only a small bowl. The Kurds were greatly impressed by this performance and thought it wonderful to give a baby such care. They frankly told me that it made little difference to them if their babies died: they could always get some more. They marveled that Paul did not cry, and especially that he was not nursed every five minutes.

Three days later our boat steamed in to take us on the next unknown stage of our journey. We were not allowed on the little steamer, but were packed down into the deep black hole of the towed barge. There was a small, square hole over the section where we were, which afforded some air when the boat was in motion. The rest of the captive crew, Kurds and Moslems, were packed into our small corner, too. The remainder of the hold was crowded with the worst mess of sick people returning to Stamboul. The barge's deck was packed with Turkish soldiers and German rapid-fire guns. It was nearly evening before they got the engines running, and the sickening movement of the boat upset our Moslem and Kurdish neighbors completely. Dr. Packard said that the best aid against sea-sickness was a full stomach, and not one of our mission party was ill; but a crack in the floor all too near us was the serve-all of our friends, who kept it busy all night. And such a night! But there was even worse to follow, for the sleeping quarters were even more abbreviated the next night. All the fleas and other vermin had acquired families, and were working hard for a living, and our only consolation was that the children were able to sleep peacefully, notwithstanding the deafening music, the jests, and stomach-evacuations of our companion Kurds.

It was noon before we had anything to eat the day we arrived in Sherifkhana, and we were all nearly starved. The Turks escorted us from the boat to a very decent bungalow, built by the Russians, with a high board-fence round it. Dr. Dodd, Hubert, and Wilder stayed on the dock with the things, and had such a hard time getting them moved to where we were that we did not eat till noon.

We spent one night at this very clean and pleasant spot, and had a chance to stretch out, for each family had a place of its own. To our surprise, the next morning the Turks told us that the train which, since the Russian evacuation, had run only occasionally, had arrived and would leave in a few hours. We still did not know where we would be sent, for again Kars, Stamboul, and Tabriz were mentioned. The uncertainty was rather depressing to us all, but let me tell you that for cheerfulness this crowd could not be beaten. There was no grumbling or glumness, even though we had to carry a large portion of our own baggage, including some trunks, to the track. Dr. Packard, not long up from a very hard sickness, came along with a heavy trunk on his back, and Wilder helped a Moslem carry our big four-hundred-pounder. We were all placed in a box-car, quite a little smaller than the American kind. Fortunately for us, the Kurds and Moslems were put somewhere else.

It now looked as if we were bound for Tabriz, though we could not be certain, and we hoped to reach there by night. But alas! When we were only a little way from Dofian, the first stop out of Tabriz, the oil fuel ran out and they started men on foot to bring some back. These latter must have been so glad to arrive that they quite forgot us who were perched out on the Persian desert.

Finally, the engineer, tired of waiting and having enough oil to run the engine alone, disconnected and went off. Meanwhile we got down and strolled up and down the track, and, as evening approached, the men built a fire. Here we could heat water to warm up some semolena for the children, and they were fed and put to bed.

Edwin had fever all night and asked for water regularly every fifteen minutes. We were in pitch blackness, for our small candle was nearly exhausted. This was the crowning experience in point of discomfort. I had a terrible place to sleep, directly before the door, which was shut, to be sure, but a perfect gale was blowing outside and the wind sifted in everywhere. My head reposed on a samovar, and my feet stuck out somewhere in mid-air. I was still quite wide awake when a big Russian samovar came tumbling down on my head. That was the one and only time I really felt like crying. But it was not worth weeping over, for everyone else was too miserable to be bothered with sympathizing over such a simple matter.

I had just got uncomfortably settled once more when Edwin from his perch, about as unattainable as Pike's Peak in A.D. 1700, began his water-wagon ride. To climb up in the darkness over fifteen pairs of tired legs mingled with heads, to change places with Wilder, was the feat of an acrobat. I finally got there, leaving Paul in charge of Laya down below. I had to have Paul hoisted up to me several times; and when the two of them had a short concert over having my sole attention at one and the same time, I was nearly desperate, for Mrs. Packard was having chills and fever and the servants were almost out of reach in the darkness! During the night we reached Tabriz, and wished for the day.

Next morning we were unloaded about eight o'clock and set down beside the track under guard. It was some time before we were removed from the heat and dust of the road; then we were carefully counted once more and packed into comfortable carriages, the bills for which we had to pay ourselves. Our servants and baggage followed in some wagons, and we were driven eight miles into the city. We were certainly curious about our destination, and each one in his heart was praying about it. On reaching the city, we drove through the great bazaars and passed the high walled-in gardens and residences of European and Persians, and still on and on we went.

Finally we halted before some high, fine gates, and were told that this was our destination. It was the home of the Russian bank people, now gone, and we were ushered up into big, clean, empty rooms. It was good to know that at least the first stage of our journey was over, and that we should have two or three days' rest before going on; for we still thought we were to go to either Stamboul or Kars. The common comforts of civilization — beds, ticks, washbowls, and chairs — were lacking here, but our tired bodies could at least stretch out, and we found sweet repose. After the second night, the Turks furnished us with two meals a day: black bread with sticks and stones in it, and sometimes soup or beans or *lawash* soaked in a greasy stew. One of the first things that we heard after our arrival was that Dr. Vanneman and Mr. Jessup had been in jail for forty days.

After a week of this life, suddenly and most unexpectedly we were set free. No reasons were given for our having been brought to Tabriz, and of course, as we see it now, it was only an underhanded trick of the Turks, a mild sample of what had happened all over Turkey and everywhere their armies went, as taught them by their leaders the Huns. They have looted and carried off all we had. Records of years and priceless manuscripts are lost. Soon after our release, we and the Packards moved down to the girls' school, where Dr. Jessup had fixed up four very comfortable rooms for us and a suite for the Packards. Later, we decided that we would open up the hospital here, which had been entirely looted, together with the residences and property; and soon masons, carpenters, glaziers, and other workmen had the place in a habitable condition.

Dr. Dodd and Wilder have opened the hospital and already have as much work as they can handle with their limited supplies. We are living in the beautiful residence of Dr. Lamme, who as you know has returned permanently to America. We enjoy this big, lovely, sunny house, especially after coming from our unsanitary one in Urumia. All our station are hoping that it will tumble down this winter, for it is not fit to live in, and after the war we hope a new one can be built. Our compound in Urumia is in a sad state of filth. It is like a great cemetery, and the whole surface of the ground should be turned over after the residence there of so many sick and filthy people who knew little, and cared less, about sanitation. The very ground stunk so that we could not draw a wholesome breath for months. Here the sunlight pours into the rooms of the house nearly every day, and the whole building is planned so beautifully. The compound is out from the city, or rather on its edge, and away from all charcoal fumes. Edwin and Paul have both thriven since coming.