

Address of American Consul
Tiflis, Russia.

Bilijan, Russia, March 1, 1916

Dear Prof. Dutton:

I inclose a report giving some items and particulars which may interest contributors.

I have written a number of letters and reports. We do not know whether any one of them has reached you, as not a line from your office has succeeded in passing along the line of delay and reaching us. I hope you have got my letters in time to be useful in making appeals.

I have not telegraphed, because we thought telegrams sent by the Consul would reach you more quickly.

Would you kindly let the Presbyterian Board of Missions as well as Dr. Barton read this and other reports and letters which may have reached you from me.

Yours sincerely

(Signed) Samuel G. Wilson

To Prof. Samuel T. Dutton
70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. U. S. A.

Report on Armenian Relief Work.

Previous reports have made plain the Committee's special work;— how we have contracted for or purchased large quantities of clothing and bedding in Tiflis and Erivan and sent them out to the refugees in the villages, by railroad and then by wagon and even ox-carts one hundred or two hundred versts from the railroad. Some further details of the distribution may be of interest to you. The distribution is made directly to the individual or families. For this purpose we use the lists which have been prepared by the Government and used in its distribution of the bread allowance. These lists need revision, for names of those who have died or removed have not always been erased. Therefore in some cases, as in the villages near Etchmiadzin, our local Committee has made a list by personal inspection. The 10,000 garments, distributed there, were made for the most part by the refugees themselves under our direction. Time did not permit this method on the large scale on which clothing was necessary.

I am now in Dilijan, a beautiful village surrounded by mountain covered by evergreens—one of the few villages with frame houses in this part of the world. It is a summer resort for the wealthy of Tiflis. On account of its fine climate and the large houses of entertainment it was a convenient place for lodging the refugees. One ~~gains~~ gets an impression of the extent of this relief work when he sees the 3 hospitals with 106 patients,— the offices of superintendence, doctors, nurses, teachers and all. It is a great and good work which the Russian and Armenian people are doing.

Yesterday we fulfilled our part, several Armenians assisting me. Notice was given to the families of the refugees. They crowded around the storeroom, a motley crowd, in tatters. At the door the name of the family was called out and a numbered coupon with their names and ages was placed in their hands, the stub with the same particulars being retained. The family passed the guard and gave over the coupon. One of us attended to the father; others to the mother and the children. A comforter was spread on the floor and the garments quickly thrown down upon it. It was a pleasure to see the smile of delight on the face of a little girl as a bright dress was handed down for her, or to hear the chuckle of a wee fellow when he realized that the red shirt was for him. Nor did they forget to thank the donors, often with a prayer, "God bless you," "God save you in his heavenly kingdom," "God remember the Americans who remember us," "God establish that nation." When the family allotment was complete, the four corners of the comforter were gathered up around all and the bundle carried out on the back, and the turn of the next came.

The ravished which disease has wrought, are noticeable in the fact that the children do not number as many as the grown people. Of the 234,000 refugees now enrolled in Caucasus and Persia, but 83,000 are children under 15 years of age. There are 81,000 women and 65,000 men. Rachel is indeed weeping for her children. The young lives could not stand the hardships of the terrible flight and weeks of more terrible suffering and disease afterwards. Even adding 4000 to 6000 orphans who are well kept now and whose lives are brightened by kindly care, the figures show a sad loss of child life. Some were lost in the flight and since then the mothers have "sought them sorrowing". It is pathetic to read in every issue of the papers advertisements with the object of finding traces of the lost Haik or Armenians. Stray children were gathered up and brought on in wagons by the kind-hearted Russian ~~pump~~ soldiers. Many of these are in the orphanages. Some are cared for by the soldiers. They tell of one soldier who was carrying home a lost child. Someone said to him, "Why do you take it, you have already ten at home?" He replied,

"What difference will one more make, I love the little one,"

Yesterday we finished with Dilihan, today with the village of Paul's church; to morrow we take Jarkhech, 8 miles away; then we move on to Kara Kallissa (Black Church) the centre of the Pambak district with 5000 refugees in 26 villages.

Besides distributing clothing, we have been trying to help in various ways, as by providing extra nourishment to convalescents, and sometimes sugar and tea for the mass. It is hard for them to live on bread and water, week after week, twenty ounces of flour or 5 cents per day is the Government allowance. It does not seem much, but it reaches an aggregate of 3 and one half million dollars a year-certainly a generous aid to the subjects of a foreign power. Besides help to the sick in Erivan I started a number of artisans in their trades, furnishing kits of tools to carpenters, cobblers, silversmiths, etc, or by enabling a tailor to buy a machine, or giving a baker an outfit. An artist was provided with paints that he might put on canvas the grand Ararat, which has a ready sale; another obtained his desire for a number of raw sheep-skins, from which he and his wife will pull the wool, selling the hide and wool separately day by day and living on the profits. This was a man who was a well to do property owner in Van. Another was set up as a book-binder, another as a bee-trainer; another was furnished with a small sum to take a journey to find work, and he came back after a few days, smiling because he had been employed as a nurse in a hospital-a work which he had followed with Dr. Usher in Van. Others were given fare to go to friends where they will be kept without further expense to anyone.

Today I received the blessing of a mother, whose ~~name~~ son in Boston had written to find out where she was. After inquiry at several points, I found her here and sent off her letter to rejoice the son in far off America. I have also written a number of letters of inquiry for this end which I hope will be successful and especially that the recipient will answer with a generous ~~sum~~ cheque for his distressed relative. In these various ways we are trying to fulfil our mission.

While I have been at work in Erivan and Dilihan, Dr. Macallum and Mr. Gracey have been doing a large work in Nor Bayazid and Akhtala districts. We will unite in Kara Kallissa. Consul Smith and Mr. Hill are attending to the banking, purchasing and shipping at Tiflis.

Respectfully,

(Signed) Samuel G. Wilson.

March 1, 1916
Dilihan, Caucasus, Russia.