

*The Greatest Indictment*

# Seven Days

*Where the Cruelty and Cupidity of  
by the Indifference*

By Agnes Evon

**T**HURSDAY morning there was a rumor in Constantinople that the Greek Army was retreating. On the shores of the Bosphorus one quickly learns to disregard rumors; only two weeks earlier rumor had said that the Greeks were about to take Constantinople. Resting, on my way home from Red Cross work in Czecho-Slovakia, I felt the political weariness of all relief workers in Europe when they are away from the job and can forget diplomacy and wars.

I was enjoying Constantinople, that village of three and a half millions of strange peoples, with its ludicrous, bargaining fire departments, its solitary porters carrying pianos on their backs, and its hawkers of sleeping powders adding their shrieks to the all-night bedlam. I was enjoying the camel caravans on the Galata bridge, the flocks of sheep hopelessly tangling traffic amid automobiles and street cars on the Grande Rue de Pera, the tea rooms crowded with jeweled women and officers in uniforms of all the nations. Rumor of Greek defeat changed nothing of all this, and I had not thought of it twice when Mr. Jacquith, director of the Near East Relief, telephoned me to come to the American Embassy.

*At left, Greek priest in Smyrna's fire rescues a precious sewing machine. Below, a quiet spot among the debris on the quay at Smyrna. Allied warships in the distance*



*of Modern Civilization*

# in Smyrna

*Individual Turks were Matched  
of Western Statesmen*

*Illustrated with Remarkable Photographs  
Taken by Near East Relief*

Representatives of all the American organizations in Constantinople were at the meeting. The Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the Red Cross, several business men unknown to me, Admiral Bristol, Mr. Jacquith, were forming an emergency committee. The situation, they felt, was serious. The Greek defeat was a rout, and refugees were pouring toward Smyrna with the demoralized army. No other news was obtainable, but the men and women around the table spoke of massacre. They were old workers in the Near East, and their voices carried conviction, though at that time the word could not mean to me what it meant to them. They spoke, too, of prompt action, and in less than twenty-four hours the first medical unit was on its way to Smyrna.

**T**HERE were three of us: Doctor Post, who was in charge of the unit, and Miss Corning and I, nurses. We accompanied Mr. Jacquith on the American destroyer *Lawrence*. Leaving the Bosphorus late Friday afternoon, we woke on Saturday morning to see the low, barren coast of Asia Minor, just above the gulf of Smyrna. It appeared sterile

*At right, The American flag on the stern of the destroyer "Litchfield" broods over the tragic spectacle of burning Smyrna. Below, a unique guardian of abandoned household goods*





Historic photograph of the first triumphant Kemalists entering Smyrna just before the reign of terror

o'clock, the heat was already stifling. The only breeze was stirred by the automobile, and facing it was like locking into an oven.

Y. W. headquarters was in a walled compound, and perhaps two hundred Greek and Armenian women and children had taken refuge there. They were crowded into the courtyard, with bundles of bedding and food and cradles. Miss Nolan was having the gymnasium cleared to give them sleeping space on the floor. She was sheltering only women and children; their fathers, husbands and brothers must leave them at the gate.

**W**E stayed only a moment, and went on to the Greek quarter, near the northern end of the city. The Greek hospital was a large building, unwieldy because of its size and irregular shape, and the evacuation of Greek wounded had left it dirty and in great confusion. The director begged us to take the hospital and put up the American flag, but we decided that we must have a place which would waste less time in preliminary cleaning and organization. We listed supplies to be sent him, and promised to return.

To reach the Turkish hospital we were obliged to go quite to the other end of Smyrna. We drove from the Greek quarter through the Armenian quarter and down to the quay. It was like driving through a dead city: not a person was on the streets, not a window or door open. When we reached the quay we came at right angles into a line of Turkish cavalry.

It was moving in good order, slowly. The horses were exhausted, and their riders, who were not in uniform, unless beggar's rags

may be called uniforms, were filthy. Their faces and their rags were literally caked with dirt. They had been riding twelve days and nights without rest, and looked as if they must drop from their horses. Beyond them the quay was deserted. The hundred thousand persons who had been on it an hour earlier had disappeared.

We drove through the line, with our three-inch American flag fluttering on the radiator. The Turks cursed, but did not try to stop us. We ran along the quay, parallel to them, until we came to the turning into the Jewish quarter. Those narrow, dirty, hilly streets were jammed with cheering Turks. Hundred of fezzes were

### Can the World be Made

"SMYRNA was more than a Turkish atrocity; it was a failure of civilization. If our faith in life survives we must think again of the things that were done there. They are scientific data showing what humanity is like."

Thus writes Miss Agnes Evon in this uniquely powerful article which McClure's publishes not alone for the grim and thrilling drama of the narrative, but also for the good of America's soul.

If, as Miss Evon exclaims, this world is ever to become a decent place to live in,

flying in the air. The cavalry line had gone to pieces; horses were rearing, riders shouting. Our car went into the mob and packed it tighter, for there was hardly room for us to pass between the shutters of the shops. A Turkish officer, trying to stop us, slashed at us with his sword and just missed the Red Cross band on my sleeve. We were all too much excited to be frightened, but we knew that we were in real danger. We could not stop; another car filled with Turkish officers was just behind us.

We came to a cleared space and saw a man naked to the waist, his hands tied behind him, standing against a shop front. Four Turkish soldiers, commanded by an officer, were taking aim at him from the other side of the street. We ran in front of them, and just at that moment our engine stalled. The officers in the car behind us stood up and shouted, the crowd jammed in on both sides and came up on our running boards. Our chauffeur was desperately struggling with the self-starter, every one was yelling around us, and the naked man slid down and went horribly struggling away among the legs, with his bound hands. I prayed that he would get away.

**W**E found the Turkish hospital in fair condition. The wards evacuated by the Greeks were being put in order for Turkish wounded. The Turkish doctor in charge thanked us for coming, but said that he did not need any help, so we did not stay long. The Turkish cavalry was still coming in, and the Turkish quarter was in an uproar. The rest of Smyrna was perfectly silent and motionless, but everywhere we went we felt that we were being watched by thousands of eyes that we could not see.

Relief workers will know how busy we were. We went to see Miss Mills at the American International College, and Miss Morley at the Armenian Girls' Orphanage. We had to get our supplies from the *Laurence*; we had to arrange dozens of details. Smyrna was without a government or any organization; there were no porters, no telephone, no messengers. The heat was terrific, and the atmosphere of the city was like the pause before a thunderstorm. I have always been too busy with prac-

### a Decent Place to Live?

we must make ourselves realize that it is not a decent place today. We must no longer flatter ourselves that our one race is clean and innocent amid the brutal bickerings of other nations. While such things as Smyrna are tolerated, none of us is innocent.

The Smyrna fire began on September 13, 1922 and itself lasted three days. Miss Evon's is the most vivid and really adequate eye-witness account of the entire disaster which has been published in America since the tragedy occurred.



Miss Sarah Corning, nurse mentioned by Miss Evon as one of her co-workers, on board our destroyer "Litchfield," which rescued four hundred orphans

tical work to be imaginative, and I did not then know what human beings are capable of doing to others, but the atmosphere of Smyrna on that Saturday afternoon got on my nerves. Of course we could not bother about our nerves; we had too much to do. But I caught myself glancing up at the sky, expecting to see green-black clouds in it. I had an obsession that there would be thunder.

Smyrna was beautiful when we came up from the quay late that afternoon. The sunset gave the buildings pale shades of rose and cream, and the towers of St. Jean's Cathedral were sharp against a flat gold sky. The light went quickly, as it does before a storm, and with the first darkness the shooting began. After that it never quite stopped while we were in Smyrna.

**T**HERE were only four American women at the Y. W., and one of us had to be on watch all the time. That first night we had no guards. The refugee women and children gave very little trouble; they were usually quite still, especially the children. We would go around among them, and then walk about the dark courtyard and go up on the roof and come down again. From the roof the city was quite dark; only little lights went about stealthily through the darkness. Two or three lights would come together and stop, and then there was a noise of doors smashing, and screams, and shots. Then you saw the lights going from window to window, up through the house, and you heard women shrieking and shrieking, and children screaming. All the time hundreds of dogs were barking, in sharp, hysterical yelps. When the screaming stopped in one house you heard it in others. The dogs never stopped barking.





Miss Agnes Evon, Nurse

THE author of this article, Miss Agnes Evon of Detroit, a nurse who served the Red Cross in Czechoslovakia, then went to Smyrna, and is now with the American Women's Hospitals doing refugee work in Athens among the victims of the Smyrna disaster.

An extraordinary photograph of some of the three hundred human wall three miles long, with the blazing

not one wore shoes. Sometimes they had been stripped of clothes; always the shoes had been taken, and beside every body was either a pair of shoes worn beyond all wearing, or two dirty heaps of rags in which feet had been wrapped.

THAT day we unloaded medical supplies and started a clinic at the Y. W. We took over little Dutch hospital, in the adjoining compound of the Netherlands consulate, and began the bread distribution. We also called at the konak to see the Turkish authorities and insist that the bodies be removed from the streets. The weather was so hot that there was immediate danger of epidemics.

Nothing was done with the bodies that day or the next day, and every morning there were hundreds more. We were all so busy and so exhausted in the heat and the stench that we talked very little when we met. But Doctor Post told us one thing that I remember. He remonstrated with the Turkish commandant, Nuridin Pasha, about the killing, and Nuridin Pasha answered, "You have a saying in your country, 'America for the Americans.' We say, 'Turkey for the Turks.' You have another saying, 'The good Indian is a dead Indian.' Well, we believe that the good Armenian is a dead Armenian."

Numbers of women in premature childbirth were coming in, and many wounded as well. Then there was the task of feeding all the women and children who were taking refuge at the Y. W. Every morning I went to the Y. M. to take some of the Armenians from there in search of food. Eight or ten of them would come out, and I would march at the head of the little column through the Armenian quarter. When we came to a shop belonging to one of them, if it had not yet been looted and if no Turks were in sight, he went in and lowered the shutter again behind him. We went on, dropping them one at a time, and then came back picking them up.

They brought sacks of beans, flour, and canned milk

It seemed impossible that we could do nothing. When no one could see me, sometimes I clenched my hands over my ears and stood there hanging on to self-control. I said to myself, isn't there enough decency in all humanity, is it possible that the decency of the world isn't strong enough, to keep such things from being done on this earth in this century?

WE were told that there would be only three days of looting and killing. It is the rule of war in Asia Minor; it is the way the soldiers are paid. For three days and nights the victors collect the spoils. The worst of the firing ceased at dawn, and even that day and the next there were Turkish soldiers begging on the streets. I remember the piteously famished and gentle face of one who asked me for five piasters. Perhaps he had been too tired, or too sick, to do any looting in the night. There were others who looked like one's most horrible nightmare of brigands. Many of the shops had been broken open and robbed bare. Scores of bodies were lying in the streets.

At first we stopped to make sure that they were not merely wounded, but they were all dead. Of all the thousands of bodies that we saw in Smyrna before we left,



thousand people who fled for refuge to the quay, forming a city behind them and the Aegean Sea in front

to the Y. W. and were rewarded by seeing for a few minutes their wives and children. Then I marched the men back to safety at the Y. M. These were, I think, the only living Armenians on the streets from Saturday to Wednesday, and the only Greek men I saw were gangs of prisoners, bound together, being driven through Turkish crowds that cursed and struck them. The Greek officers had abandoned hundreds of their men in the last panic of getting away.

On Tuesday afternoon we drove to the Armenian hospital with Doctor Post. Bad as it was to walk, it was worse to take the car, for by this time the streets of the Armenian quarter were so covered with things thrown from the houses—tableclothes, curtains, clothing—that we could not see the dead. I walked in front of the car, poking with my cane, and when a body was in the middle of the street Doctor Post and I lifted it to one side. We did not want to run over it.

THE hospital gate was at the end of a passage between buildings, and twenty-five Turkish soldiers and an officer were watching it. The hospital guard at first refused to open the gate. But there was an old cart near by, and when we had put it on end, to hide the opening of the gate from the Turks, we were allowed to squeeze through. In the courtyard of the hospital were more than three thousand Armenians—men, women and children. When they saw that we were Americans—but I am not going to remember what it sounded like. They had been there twenty-four hours without food or water, and they were ordered to go out into the streets at eight o'clock that night.

It is a horrible fact that I felt something like angry impatience with that crowd. They were so cringing. Their faces were a greenish white, like faces in the light of a mercury tube. Fear had generated a poison that colored their skin. How could they sit there and endure it? I do not know. Rather than submissively suffer such terror,

ONE of the Orphan Asylums rescued by Americans in the Smyrna disaster that horrified the entire world. Miss Evon writes that during all the madness of the elders not a child made any noise or shed a tear, but stoically bore indescribable hardships.



A little Armenian Refugee

rather even than stay there and see them suffer it, I would have smashed that gate and gone out and fought with my hands until I was killed. But there was no resistance in them. The only energy was in the women, who fought each other to reach us and try to force their babies into our arms.

The director of the hospital asked us only to try to persuade the Turks to withdraw the order to evacuate that night. Miss Corning and I went through the maternity ward, doing what we could, while Doctor Post went to the konak. I suppose he threatened publicity in America; they say that the Turks are concerned about American public opinion. Whatever he did, he was successful in getting an order postponing the evacuation of the hospital until the next morning. It was at least a commutation of the death sentence. There was so little that any of us could do.

THAT afternoon there was another result from our persistent nagging. The Turks began cleaning the streets and removed ten wagonloads of dead. Mustapha Kemal Pasha had arrived, and we hoped that the killing and looting would end. All the large Armenian and Greek shops were being systematically emptied of goods;





A courageous mother leads her little child and crippled grandmother into exile on some fever-racked Aegean island

we were told that they were for the Turkish officers. But on Tuesday night, the fourth night, the shooting was worse than before.

At two o'clock Wednesday afternoon I had stopped for a few minutes to take a shower and change my clothes, when Doctor Post knocked on the door and called me to dress and come at once. There was a serious fire in the Armenian quarter, and we must get the children out of the Armenian orphanage. It had to be done at once.

There had been several alarms of fire, but only a few houses had burned. Smyrna was built of stone

and plaster, but there was a great deal of woodwork in balconies, outside stairways, and even cross-timbers in walls. Some second stories were entirely of wood. I suppose an accidental fire might have gained headway without assistance. On the other hand, we had been pounding at the authorities with threats of an epidemic, and perhaps fire seemed to them the simplest way of cleaning the Armenian quarter. I do not know how the fire started; I know only that it was beyond control when we reached the Armenian Girls' Orphanage. The streets and the courtyard were almost unbearably hot and filling with smoke and cinders.

The hundred and fifty little girls, all in black-and-white checked aprons, were perfectly quiet and obedient. There was no time to save anything but their lives. We sent them out two by two, following Jean Christie and Miss Morley, who carried an American flag. Miss Corning was to guard the middle of the column, and Doctor Post and I were to bring up the rear. A hundred of the black and white aprons had been counted out of the gate, when suddenly the whole back of the courtyard was trampled down. Some one had seen that the Orphanage was evacuating, and hundreds of men and women came

straight through the mud-brick wall and down upon us, mad with hope of getting away under our flag.

We had been standing by the gate, counting out the pairs of little checked aprons, and suddenly there were no more of them. The gateway jammed with the crowd that hung there an instant, struggling to get through. Then the crush broke, and the mob struck us, and the gateway jammed again.

The fire was almost on us, and after all they had endured one can't blame those Armenians for being

crazy with terror as they were. They did not care who was trampled under their feet; they wanted only to get away. We went at them and fought. When a black-and-white apron came into sight we all went for it, kicking and striking and dragging the child to her feet somehow. Miss Corning had a little fat Bible in her hand—I don't know where it had come from—and she was beating at a big Armenian man who was trampling on a child, when suddenly a Turkish soldier yelled and lunged at the Armenian with his bayonet. Miss Corning struck the Turk between the eyes with the Bible, and he went down in a heap. I don't know what became of him; we were

dragging out the child. The strange thing was that in all the madness not one of those little girls made any noise or shed a tear.

We saved the whole fifty of them, and got them through the crowd to join the others. They went on to the quay with Miss Morley and Miss Christie, and we went back to the Y. W. The fire was near, and Miss Nolan was taking our refugees to the quay. The streets of the Armenian and Greek quarters were pouring

out streams of people. All the patients that could be moved had gone from our little Dutch hospital. The doctor and the Greek attendants would not leave the others; they felt that it was their duty to stay. The hospital was stone, in a large courtyard, and there was a chance that they could live through the fire.

We had done all that could be done, and Doctor Post ordered us to meet him at the American consulate. He was going to the Y. M. Miss Corning and I were in the entrance hall at the Consulate, when a big marine from the *Lawrence* came in and ordered us to go with him. I sat on a table, swinging my feet, and said that I could not leave without orders from Doctor Post. The marine did not stop to argue; he swooped up my bag with one hand, grabbed my wrist with the other, and went.



The quaint Smyrna fire department resting on its laurels after the conflagration had done its worst

He chose a short cut to the quay, through alleys and courtyards and over five water buffalo lying in a puddle. That long-legged marine jumped over them, dragging me, slipping and sliding over their backs. That frightened me. I don't like water buffaloes; they seem more sub-human than any other animals, except snakes.

On the quay the marine fought through the mob, jerked me into a boat, and went back to help Miss Corning. The crowd on the quay was an enormous madhouse ward, and the heat of the fire was already a torture. We were rowed away from it to the *Lawrence*. The whole northern third of the city's arc was hidden in black smoke reddened by flames.

There were nearly two hundred thousand human beings packed on the quay, between the flames and the water. The destroyers and cruisers of Italy, France, England and America lay there, watching them. There were only a few rowboats. These few were already filled with refugees, rowing around and around the ships.

They were not permitted to get on board. Many persons, especially women, were drowned in swimming from one ship to another. Now and then, against orders, a crew would fish some one out of the water. There had been only two boats that could take refugees; the *Hog Island*, a U. S. Shipping Board ship, and the *Winona*, an American freighter. The *Hog Island* left without taking a refugee. The *Winona* was anchored not far from the quay. Some thousands of refugees had got on to several lighters, and pushed out from shore to escape the heat.

A message came from the *Winona*, asking for nurses. Miss Corning and I went over. The crew had taken on board about two hundred men and women, who were crowded aft on deck. There were many bayonet and bullet wounds. We had only first aid kits with which to work, on the open deck, and the difficulties of sterilization and proper dressings were heart-breaking. The captain of the *Winona* was in a violent temper, swearing about his loss of cargo. I asked him how many refugees he could take, and he became more violent, exclaiming, "Refugees! Refugees! Who's going to pay me for carrying — — — refugees?"

We told him that the Near East Relief would pay him.

We could not leave our

patients, and spent the night on the *Winona*, doing all that we could. In any case, we could not have slept. We were quite near the shore; we could hear the fire and feel its heat. The crowd moaned on the quay, and women shrieked. When the screams became unbearable, one of the Italian cruisers would swing a searchlight slowly across the quay to frighten away the Turks, and then the shrieks would stop for awhile. At intervals, all night, we heard volleys of shooting, which seemed to come from the fire. We did not know what they were.

Refugees told us later that the Turks, going through the crowd on the quay and taking away the men and boys, were driving them into the burning quarters and shooting them. I do not know that this was true. I know only that the Turks did drive away the men, and that we heard the shooting.

We left the *Winona* early in the morning. The hundred and fifty little girls of the Armenian orphanage were somewhere in that agony on the quay, and we must get

them out of it. Before I left the *Winona* I begged the captain to wait, to let us load the ship with refugees. He asked again, who would pay him? I assured him that he would be paid.

The water between the quay and the ships was full of bodies of men and women, drowned while swimming. The destroyers were war ships; it was against regulations for them to take on board any one save citizens of the countries they represented. The two hundred thousand human beings on the quay in the heat of the fire and the



American sailors rescue an aged Greek priest who had been badly beaten during the looting of the city



One of the many pathetic family groups stranded on the Smyrna quay during the evacuation of the city

sun had no water. Turks were going among them, taking away the men and boys and some of the girls. It was against orders for us to land, but we landed, and found the hundred and fifty little girls in their black and white checked aprons huddled together. Miss Morley and the American flag were with them.

GETTING them off to the *Winona* was a long, difficult task. The water was rough and full of bodies, and we had to drop the children into the rowboat one by one, and when it was filled wait for it to come back. I say nothing of the scenes on the quay, where women had gone mad and were laughing, where hundreds of babies were being born. We had got seventy of the little girls off to the *Winona*, when the *Winona* lifted anchor and left. It could have taken at least a thousand more of the people on the quay who watched it go.

By this time they had learned that, while



Above, "Gobs" from the American destroyers in the harbor played a heroic rôle in the rescue work after the great fire. At left, British sailors come to the aid of agonized and bewildered refugees on the Smyrna railroad pier



the Italian and French destroyers could not take on board any one who was not a French or Italian citizen, those citizenships could be bought. Those who had been able to reach the quay with some money, and who had not yet been robbed by the Turks, paid five hundred and a thousand liras each for these so-called citizenships, which meant life. The destroyers carried them as far as Mytilene and dumped them on that island, penniless.

Is there any value in telling these things? One can bear suffering, but Smyrna shakes the fundamental

faith that keeps us alive. The concerted greed and cruelty of nations and of thousands of individuals created the horror on the quay of Smyrna; the combined forces of decency in the world produced us, the handful of men and women who were there to fight that horror, and were helpless against it. Smyrna was more than a Turkish atrocity; it was, rather, a failure of humanity.

But if our faith in life survives, then there is a value in knowing the things that were done at Smyrna. They are scientific

data showing what humanity is. If, somehow, through the ages, this world is to be made a decent place, then we must know clearly, now, that it is not a decent place. We must not any longer deceive ourselves by thinking that one race, one nation, one group—the group to which we happen to belong—is clean and innocent. None of us are innocent. The atrocity of Smyrna was the crime of the organized politics of the world, and the cruelty and cupidity of individual Turks were matched by the cupidity and indifference of Western men.

### In McCLURE'S MAGAZINE Next Month

ONE NIGHT OVER THE LINES—By MAJOR "TOM" VIGORS

THROUGHOUT America there has been of late a tremendous increase of interest in aviation. The non-stop transcontinental flight caught the public fancy; the attempted sunrise-to-sunset coast-to-coast flight stirred the interest still further; and current news of the contest in aviation development between France, Great Britain and Japan has awakened us to our own deficiency in air power.

As an extraordinarily fascinating sidelight on military aviation do not miss next month Major "Tom" Vigors' amazing aerial adventures during the World War.