

PAP-74

OUR RURAL WORK IN



A VILLAGE HOME IN TURKEY

THE NEAR EAST



FAMILY IN EVERYDAY COSTUME IN BOORDGE, NEAR GAZIANTEP

Our Rural Work in the Near East



TURKEY is essentially agricultural, for eighty per cent of her population is found in villages of not over 1,000 people.

The people who live in the villages have commendable characteristics. In a land where for generations the mixed races of the coast cities have borne a none too savory reputation, especially as regards business integrity, the Turkish peasant from Anatolia has been almost universally praised by those who have known him. Honest, dependable, hard-working, hospitable, his outer life reflects his simple Moslem piety.

Today, however, the reputation of the villagers is in some measure changing. The advent of more civilized customs, the multiplied contacts with the outer world and the ways of the west, have made him less dependable; the increase of his wants has not made him more industrious.

In a village of Anatolia there is much to discourage and little to help one in the struggle of life. Houses are small and crowded; domestic animals are kept in the same buildings with people, partly to prevent their being stolen, partly for warmth in winter. Flies are everywhere; fleas and other vermin are common; there are no sanitary arrangements, so soil and vegetables are often polluted. Good springs are common, but dysentery and typhoid germs are apt to lurk in their waters, as clothes are washed in them as well as in the nearby streams.

Mothers are completely ignorant of the proper care that should be given their babies, who are never bathed, are often swaddled in dirty rags, and have no regular times for feeding or sleeping; cucumbers form part of their diet, and opium is often placed in the pacifiers that are very common and usually unclean. No wonder the deathrate is high—from 60 to 70 per cent of all children under two years. In one region only one child out of six or seven survives.

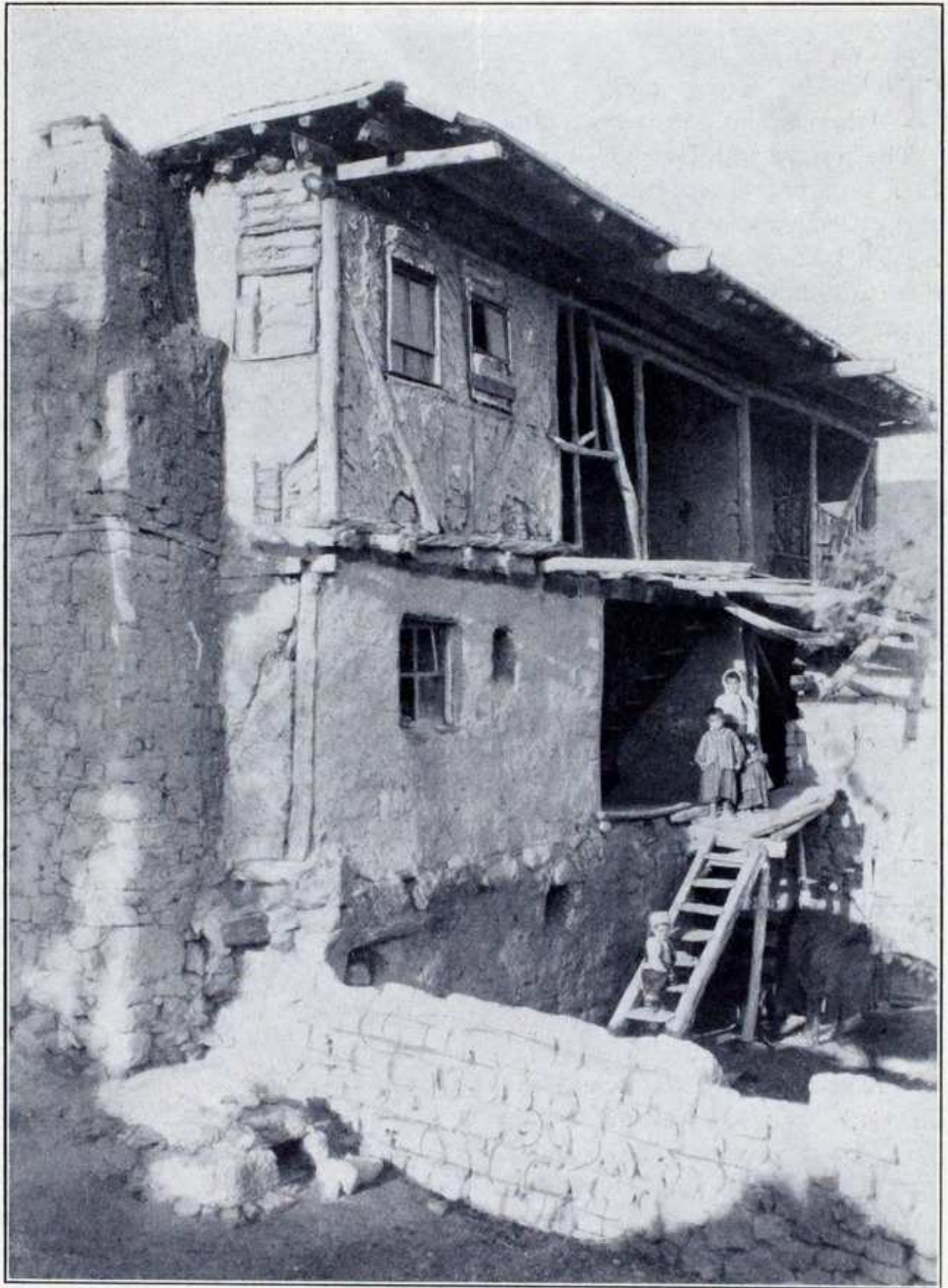
"I've buried three or four children. Oh, what can I do to keep this one?" pleads many a mother.

There are many destructive factors in the home: husbands and wives have little in common; children are not taught respect for their mothers; boys disobey and even beat them; boys and girls hear much filth in their homes and are often taught to swear.

"*Adam oldu* (he has become a man)," say the delighted parents of the son who curses for the first time.

There are few games, for there are no recreational facilities, and gambling is readily learned. Music is largely limited to sex songs and war songs.

If the village life is to be redeemed people must have something to do and something new and wholesome to talk about. The Government is doing what it can by opening People's Reading Rooms and club rooms for young men.



TYPICAL VILLAGE HOME OF THE BETTER CLASS IN NORTH TURKEY

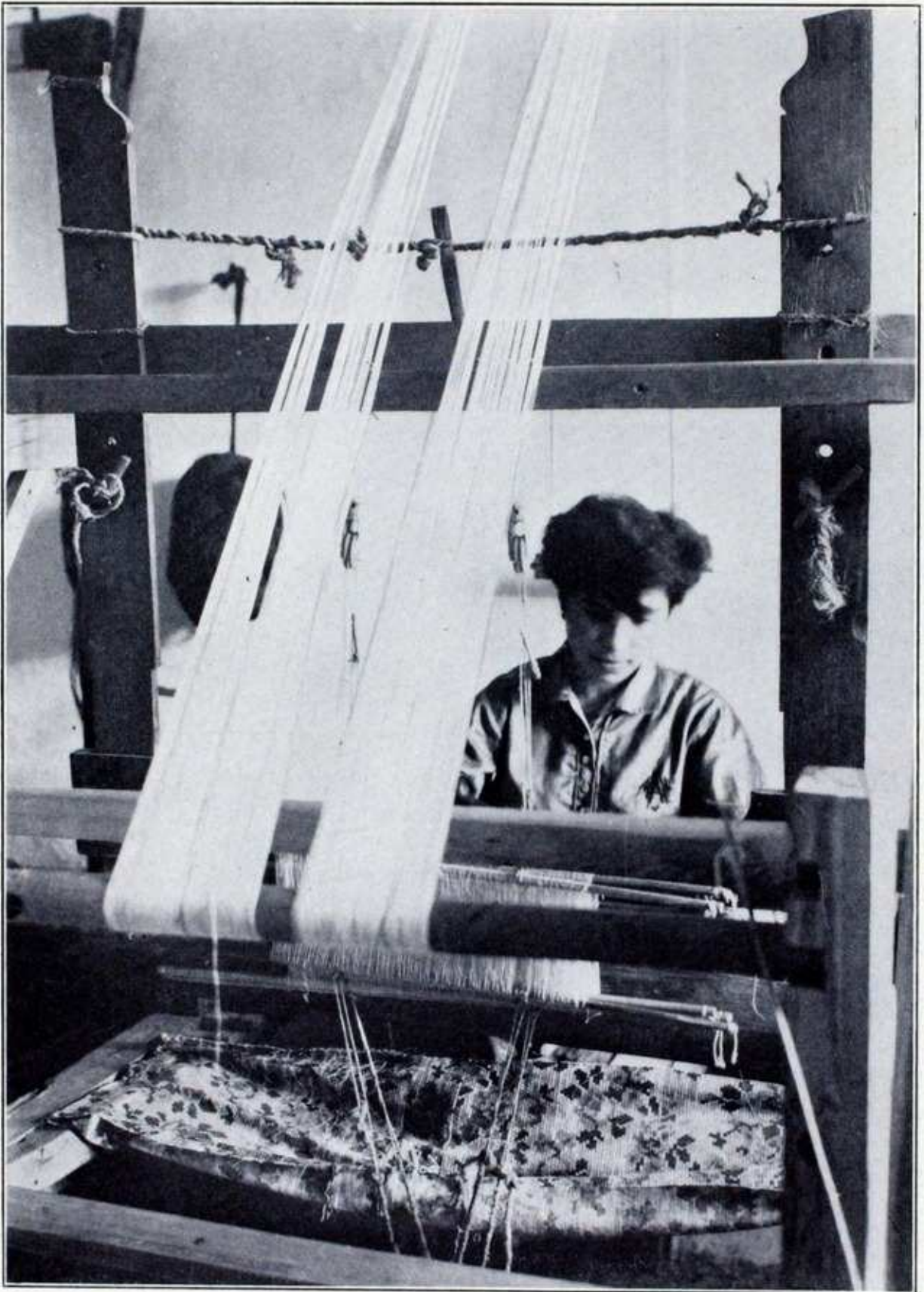


SHELLING CORN ON THE THRESHING FLOOR OF A FARM

Economic conditions are unfavorable to the point of tragedy, although some villagers are self-supporting, producing all they need from field and flocks. Agriculture is carried on in a most primitive way. Destructive insects and parasites do great damage, yet the typical villager hates to kill any vermin. Trees have been cut down for wood to such an extent that the tree-line, once close to the houses, has withdrawn a half day's journey or more. Work is seasonal, leaving many months of complete idleness, when loitering in the coffee houses breeds bad habits. Little is known of home industries. Women often weave rugs; but remuneration is pitifully low, and the market is now overstocked. Distrust of each other causes lack of cooperation, thus preventing economic advance through partnership enterprises. Also, the religious feeling of "kismet" (fatalism) is a powerful influence, for it causes satisfaction with conditions as they are, and stifles ambition.

Educational facilities are improving, but are still very inadequate. Most villages have no schools; a few have three-year schools; teachers are hard to get.

"It will take us 60 years at this rate to place a teacher in every village," said an inspector after studying his statistics.



BELKIS AT ONE OF THE SCHOOL LOOMS, MERZIFON

Imagine yourself in the town of Merzifon. Once prosperous, with thirty thousand industrious people—Greeks, Armenians, and Turks—it now has eleven thousand inhabitants, all Turks, save for a small Armenian remnant. The town is located along the upper slopes of a magnificent valley, some fifty or sixty miles long. It is the only station occupied by our Board in the northern half of Asia Minor. There are sixty-three villages directly dependent upon Merzifon, most of them within reach by an hour's auto ride. Last year a doctor came to Merzifon. His coming was especially arranged with a view to making possible visits into these 63 villages where there is no doctor or pharmacy. In many cases contacts were made which led to calls by villagers on the doctor and nurse in Merzifon.

There is also a small girls' boarding school in Merzifon. Girls in this school, coming as many of them do from the more comfortable homes in cities of Northern Anatolia, have become interested in the villages. In order to make their help practical, they have adopted as their special care one of the poorest villages, three hours' walk from Merzifon. On one occasion they contributed money, and bought apples, candy, combs, soap, and ribbons which they gave to the children. Little boys to whom cakes of soap were given soon appeared with parts of their faces shining with a new light; girls tried to comb their hair, but found it not easy, for it was perhaps the first time in their lives that a comb had been used. The children were gathered for games, and thus a tiny beginning was made in brightening their dull lives.

Every Saturday night last winter, the teachers in the Merzifon School held a story-reading hour. As the students listened, they worked on dolls and picture books. These are used in special village visits. The School has also made a little beginning in practical help by developing a flock of white leghorn chickens, the eggs of which are in great demand. This past summer two playground workers gave the people in town and village new ideas for recreation, that is so desperately needed.

Merrill Isely believes in gardens and bees. For nearly ten years he has been the general missionary in Gaziantep (Aintab). Being practical, and wanting to help the farmer, he began by starting his own garden. This qualified him to join the Gardeners' Guild, and so brought him in touch with all the gardeners in that region. Mr. Isely is a specialist in bees. He imports breeds from abroad, and is gradually developing a hive suitable for the country, and capable of producing a great increase of marketable honey.

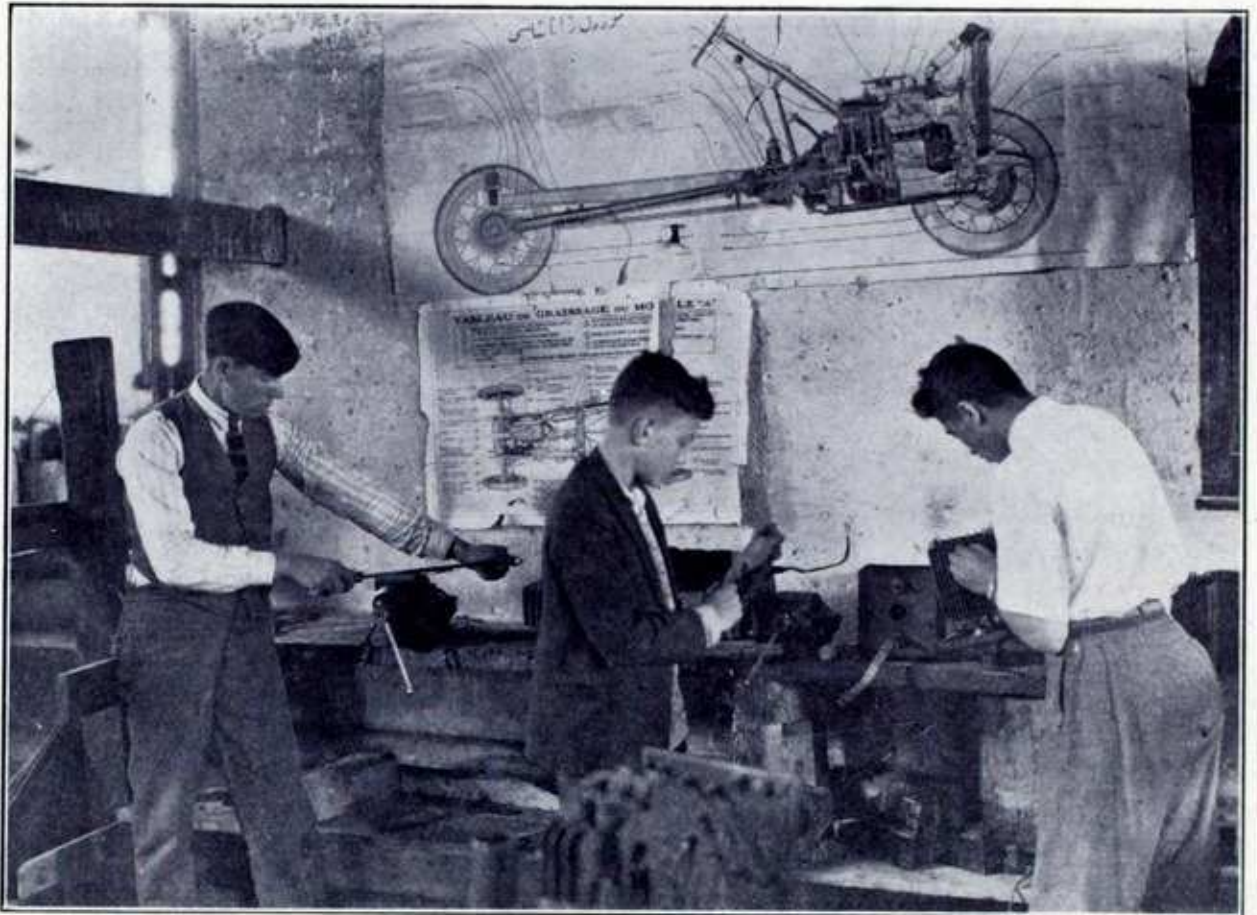
Blooded live stock is the specialty of Harold Pence. Special gifts from friends in America have enabled him to make a beginning with blooded live stock that will eventually enrich the stock of that area. Already



MOHAMMED LEARNING MODERN METHODS OF DAIRYING

there is a fine herd of Guernsey cattle, and the new dairy barn is a drawing card to attract many visitors. Every Friday people come in great numbers and go away to bring others the next time. Experiments in crop rotation are being made, and are eagerly watched by land owners. All farm work is done by the sons of farmers from villages. These boys are supplied with clothes and food, and live with Mr. and Mrs. Pence. One can picture these boys, after a year or two of work with new methods, going back to their fathers' farms, and applying what they have learned to the economic, social, and physical welfare of their neighbors.

A most interesting experiment is to be tried in Burj, a village of some 2,000 inhabitants. Here Mr. and Mrs. Pence are to spend two or three months. They will live in a house similar to those of the villagers except that it will have screens. This is the plan of work: On going to a village—there are a dozen villages within easy reach—the Pencses will offer to plow a farmer's field. They will use a special plow, which can be purchased for \$4.50, and which has been developed for work in that region. At night they will use the wall of the farmer's house for showing stereopticon pictures. Sports, games, and swimming will be taught the young men and boys. Lantern shows, movies, and the book table will be



THE AUTO-MECHANICS CLASS IN TALAS BOYS' SCHOOL

used to entertain and instruct the adults. Pieces of scented soap are to be a part of the equipment, to be offered as prizes for mothers who will be willing to bathe their babies. The Pencés' own babies will serve as positive evidence that baths with both water and sun, and a wholesome, moderate diet are conducive to healthy living.

Paul Nilson of Talas has discovered that moving pictures fascinate and educate the villagers. His work has won the hearty approval of educational authorities in Angora. Listen to his own report of such work:

"Ahmet Bey, teacher in the Lycee, often asked, 'When are you going to visit some villages with me?' Finally we found a free afternoon, loaded the cinema outfit into the car, and started for Kul Tepe and Gomech.

"At Kul Tepe we stayed long enough to see the excavations made by some Czecho-Slovaks a few years ago, and to inquire the road. Before dark we reached Gomech, and were welcomed by the head man of the village. While Ahmet Bey, the men and I roamed around the village, Miss Pohl and Miss Dwight spent their time with the women and children who had instantly surrounded them, eager to talk, to listen, and to share in the flowers and pictures which had been brought along.

"It was the usual village, with cows and chickens in the streets, farmers returning from their fields, loafers sitting around in front of the little mosque, some women quarreling, etc.

"They were glad to have a movie show. 'Have it right here in this house if you want to,' they said. But we finally picked the wall of a house that was not in the moonlight. I hitched the 6-volt movie codascope to the Chevrolet, let it idle, and turned on the pictures, while the huge, orderly crowd squatted on the ground.

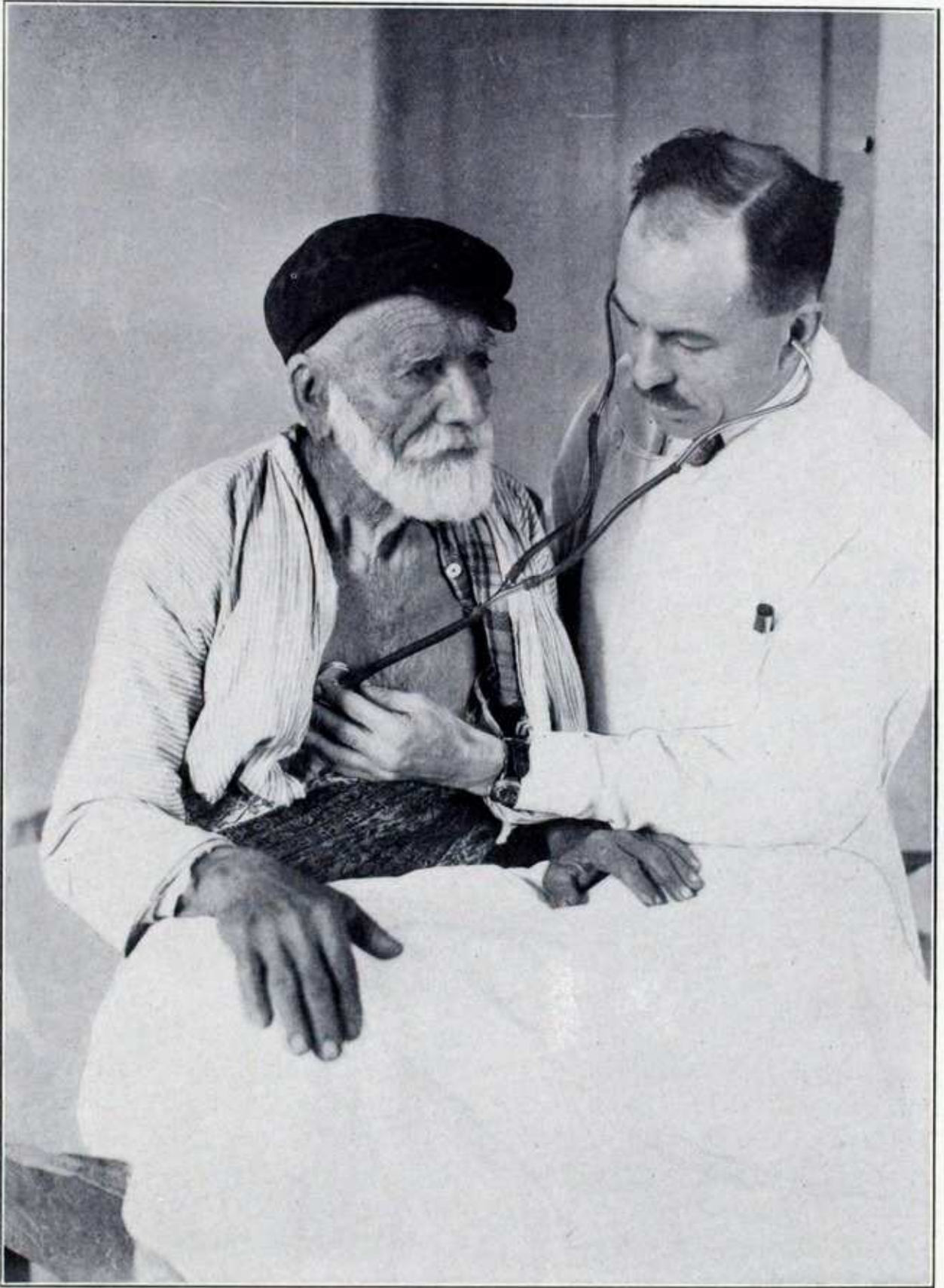
"I gave two hours of clean, educational movies, such as Paper Making, some local scenes, and Felix the Cat thrown in for good measure. The audience was delighted. Most of these people cannot read or write; many of them would hold a picture upside down; but they understand a picture that moves before their eyes, even though it is made for American audiences. I can show only what I have, and I do need some more agricultural and inspirational films.

"We slept on the floor that night, well cared for, and well entertained.

"In the morning we drove home via Munjesun, where the Mayor of the town insisted on our staying a while. 'Can't you show us some pictures, too?' he asked. I agreed to do so if he would get a little dark room. Someone suggested the mosque. In a short time the three little windows of the mosque were covered with rugs, and about three hundred men, women, and children crowded in. All set! I turned on the movie, and the light wouldn't burn! For an hour I worked on that auto and battery, and finally we had to dismiss the crowd. After working another hour, I found the deceptive loose battery connection, but it was too late for a show. 'Do come again,' they pleaded.

"During the year I have been able to give shows with the movie or stereopticon in various places: Talas, Kayseri, Gesi, Aghirnas, Bunyan, Zinjidere, etc. Always there is a welcome. Officials are pleased, as well as the people. The town crier gives the news, and the school teachers usually make the arrangements."

Mr. Nilson is also in charge of a "Life School," a new type of school which seeks to fit boys for their life work by equipping them with knowledge of one or more trades. Although the charge for a boarding student is only \$100 a year, this is beyond the means of any ordinary village boy. Mr. Nilson is planning, therefore, a four months' course for village boys. They will be expected to bring their own bedding and even their own food, just what they would eat if they were to stay at home during the idle months of winter. Sleeping quarters, water, and fire for cooking will be provided. All this at an expense of only \$7.50 to the students! Turkish, Arithmetic, and Hygiene will be emphasized, and will consume half of



DR. DEWEY LOCATING THE TROUBLE FOR ONE OF THE VILLAGE FATHERS

each day. The other half will be spent in practical work, such as iron and wood work. Mr. Smith, the teacher, will study at first hand in the villages the types of iron and wood work the village boys should know.

Perhaps the most advanced work in agriculture is being attempted by the **International College at Smyrna**. Although a full agricultural school has not yet been organized, there is a well-developed College Farm, with its crop experiments, its live stock, and its extension work. This work is soon to be greatly strengthened by adding courses in Animal Husbandry, Farm Shop work, etc.

In **Marash**, Mr. Lyman has attempted an entirely different approach in village work. He found that an abundance of fine spring water was being brought by tunnels into the town. Therefore he imported hydraulic rams, and installed them in the Mission grounds. One of the happiest experiences of a traveller in Anatolia, especially in summer, is to arrive at the Lyman house in the interior of Turkey, and find a perfectly equipped bathroom with running water. Imagine what it means to the villagers to talk with a man who can install a Machine that will make water run up hill! No wonder he is in demand to install these rams in villages. And a man that can serve them in this practical way is a man who is listened to when he talks on the real problems of life.

At **Aleppo** medical work is being carried on by a traveling ambulance that is seeking to improve the sanitary condition of villages. Although this work is not under the auspices of the Board, our Girls' School in Aleppo is coöperating.

We are not working alone. Nothing is more encouraging than to know that the authorities in Angora are interested in the same problems, and are doing what they can to bring a new life to the villages of Turkey. One of the outstanding agricultural experiments in the country is that of the Ghazi's (Mustapha Kemal Pasha) farm in Angora, the capital of Turkey. This great farm is a show place for visitors from all over the republic. It is said that a million trees have been planted there. Eggs from pure-blooded fowl are being distributed throughout Turkey. Bottled, pasteurized milk, a commodity heretofore unknown, is being peddled in Angora. A shop is building new farm machinery adapted to the peculiar needs of Turkey. This farm is a proof that the highest official in the land is interested in the common villager, and eager to help him find a new life in the new Turkey.

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