MISCELLANEOUS.

COST OF LIVING.

TURKEY.

Higher prices for nearly everything—cereal shortage.

Consult-General E. H. Osman, of Constantinople, states that it is a generally recognized fact that the cost of living has increased considerably in the Ottoman capital during the last few years. His detailed report reads:

"It is a common saying in Turkey that when an article rises in price it rarely, if ever, goes back to the low level, but remains a little dearer than it was before the rise took place, and this is almost invariably true. Owing to a prolonged and severe winter 1906 was an exceptional year; foodstuffs, vegetables, meats, and fuel reached famine prices. At one period vegetables were not to be had at all; at others they were sold at three times their usual price, or at the equivalent one would pay for choice fruits. Fuel (in the absence of cooking and heating by gas, wood and charcoal are used to an incredible extent) during several periods of a few days each could not be had, and when a shipload reached the port the vessel was attacked as if by pirates, to the extent that the police had to interfere and distribute the shipment to various districts, where the scramble and fight were repeated.

Wood for heating purposes could be had a few years ago at 13 piasters per cheeki ($0.55 per 500 pounds) alongside ship. At the commencement of last year 18 piasters per cheeki was the ruling price; during a period of severe snow 40 and 50 piasters was demanded; nevertheless, this season, before the winter is here, the price is already 25 piasters per cheeki alongside ship, a rise of 58 per cent on last year's price, and it is still rising. Charcoal of good quality (purnal and meshe, made from holly and oak) was to be had at this season last year for about 40 to 45 piasters per 100 oke (64 to 72 cents per hundredweight); this year the consul-general has bought it for his own requirements at 45 piasters per 100 oke (85 cents per hundredweight), showing a rise of 25 per cent.

ADVANCED FOOD PRICES.

Fruits and vegetables are dearer than they were at this season last year and dearer by at least 25 per cent than they were two years ago. Water and musk melons are fairly plentiful this year and their prices are not above the average; if anything, they are a little cheaper than last year. Chickens which a few years ago could be bought for 4 or 5 piasters each (16 or 20 cents) can not be obtained now for less than 6 or 7 piasters (24 or 28 cents); the prices they reached last year, a rise of almost 50 per cent. For a fowl which could be previously obtained for 7 or 8 piasters (28 or 32 cents) one has to pay as much as 10 or 12 piasters (40 or 48 cents), a rise of about 50 per cent.

RENTS AND OTHER EXPENSES.

Another fact one must not overlook in the Levant is that the cost of living is in accordance with one's position, and one has to pay for everything in proportion to his rank.

Notwithstanding the fact that in the European quarter of the city old houses are being demolished and large apartment houses built in their stead, rents are regularly increasing. Some years ago $500 per annum was an average high rent, while double this figure is near the amount demanded now for an apartment flat with seven or eight rooms without heat and often without a bathroom or any lighting fixtures. Wherever the municipality has repaired a street—and to the credit of the new prefect he is said that this has been done in many by-streets—rents have immediately been increased 40 to 50 per cent.

The foregoing alludes to town rents. Owing to the heat four or five months must be spent at some country resort. Season rents for a country house range from $250 to $1,000, according to locality. In the uplands Bosphorus, where the diplomatic and consular officers take up their summer residence, the lowest rent for a house for the season is $450. To this sum must be added between $10 and $15 a month for traveling fares to and fro by ferry. Means of communication in Constantinople are very limited. Because of the absence of respectable street cars and the necessity of using a carriage for going any distance too great to walk, the cost of travel is doubtless higher than in any other city in Europe.

Household help is very unsatisfactory, and one is willing to pay high prices to obtain good servants.
receive $7 to $11.

COST OF CLOTHING—PHYSICIANS AND DENTISTS' FEES.

Gentlemen's clothing from good-class tailors costs from $30 to $55 a suit, which is higher than in several other capitals of Europe. Women's clothing is more expensive than in Paris or London. The cost of clothing for men, women, and children, which in the course of ten years has increased the world over by 20 per cent, has not failed to have its reflex upon this market, and the recent increase of customs duty by 3 per cent and the stamp tax by every business transaction, from the entry of goods in the custom-house to their sale across the shop counter, give the stores other opportunities of further raising their prices on the score of increased taxation. House furnishings can be imported cheaper directly from London than they can be had at stores in this city.

Other exorbitant charges are physicians' and dentists' fees. A physician never charges less than $2.50 for a visit to his consulting room, and $3 is the usual fee for his visit to one's home, or more if in the country. Dentists seem to vie with each other as to who can make the heavier charge. It is nothing unusual to be charged $5 for dentistry for which one would pay $1 in the United States. Although the charges of pharmacists are regulated by tariff issued by the Imperial School of Medicine, this is only a safeguard for the poor, and a prescription of a good physician sent to a reliable pharmacist to be dispensed will be charged for according to the rank of the patient in whose name it is issued.

MISSIONARIES' PAY—BREAD AND FLOUR.

It is safe to say that the cost of living in this city has increased by fully 50 per cent within the last few years, and I have been informed by those with experience that life in this city is more expensive than in Paris or London in the same style. One eloquent comparison may be mentioned of cost of living in the capital as compared to the interior. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which pays its missionaries on the basis of their bare cost of living according to the post at which they are serving and retires them on a pension when their life's work is over, allows missionaries stationed at the capital just double the amount allotted those at an interior post.

The following is an extract from the Levant Herald of September 9, 1907, and advises the official approval of the increase of the price of bread from 45 to 50 paras (para=one-tenth of a cent) per loaf (price at bakery): This is equivalent to 11 per cent rise at one bound, and is only another example of the all-round rise in the necessities of life:

The prefecture of the city notifies that from to-day the price of bread has been raised by 5 paras. The increase of the price of bread was demanded by the bakers' corporation, and in consideration of the rise in the price of flour was sanctioned by the council of ministers.

The same newspaper contained the following statement on October 1:

As has already been announced the Imperial Government has prohibited the export of wheat and has suspended the import duties on grain. The duty on foreign flour has been reduced to 6 per cent, the reduction also applying to Bulgarian flour.

NECESSARIES OF LIFE DEarer IN GENEVA THAN IN NEW YORK.

Consul Francis B. Keene, of Geneva, furnishes the following information concerning the increased cost of living and the decreased value of the bonds and shares of leading industrial concerns in Switzerland:

Geneva, until about twenty years ago, had the reputation of being a cheap place in which to live. By degrees it has become more and more expensive, until the point has been reached where a prominent woman, who spends her winters in New York and her summers here, has made the assertion that the necessities of life cost more in Geneva than they do in New York. The increase in the cost of these necessities was already marked in the years 1904 and 1905, but the customs tariff which went into effect January 1, 1906, gave a new impulse to the advance. There are very few things that have not advanced in price. Bread, meat, wine, and chocolate are all on the increase. Milk, butter, and eggs have reached prices never known before. Nearly everything being dearer, shopkeepers, shoemakers, laundresses, barbers, fuel dealers, all follow the movement with higher rates. Cotton manufactures are almost the only articles that are cheaper. The crops have been far under the average this year, both in quantity and quality, owing to the cold season, and this has had a tendency to increase prices. The vintage in the Canton of Geneva amounts to nearly nothing. In the large Canton of Vaud it will be very irregular, and wine selling prices will vary. An average price will be about 50 centimes per liter (9.63 cents per 1.0567 quarts). The hotels, both in the mountains and in the open country, have had a profitable season; in comparison with the season of 1906, which broke all records in the number of visitors, it has been very unsatisfactory to them. There were few days that were very hot, and the summer was so short that many residents remained either in their city homes or at their country places. To make matters worse, the stock exchange market has experienced severe falls in the value of nearly all shares and bonds of industrial concerns, especially those making motor cars, a branch of national industry that has become very important. Shares in the chocolate industry have also fallen.

BELGIUM.

APPROXIMATE INCREASE OF TWENTY PER CENT IN FOOD PRICES.

Consul W. P. Atwell, of Ghent, Belgium, says that recent statistics show that food commodities in general have increased in price approximately 20 per cent. He gives these examples:

Flour has advanced from $3.76 to $3.50 per sack, an increase of $1.54. Rice has advanced 12 per cent, chocolate more than 20 per cent, cheese 20 per cent, peas 13 per cent, beans 50 per cent, and oils 40 per cent. These same statistics show an increase of 40 per cent in the price of unbleached cloth, while that of other cotton goods varies from 20 to 25 per cent. Shoes are being sold at 20 cents per pair more than formerly, while the price of meat is exorbitant. The price of coal has also considerably increased. Ten years ago a ton was sold at $1.45, while the price now paid is $5.70.