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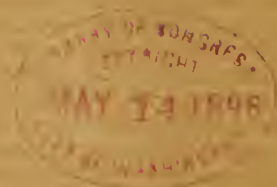






# HORRORS OF ARMENIA

Price 10 cents.



*The Story of  
an Eye-witness*

*by*

*William Willard Howard,*

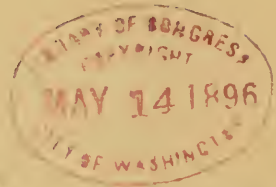
*the only man who penetrated into  
the interior of the devastated re-  
gions of Armenia.*

*Published by  
The Armenian Relief Association,  
New York.*



# Horrors of Armenia:

The Story of an Eye-witness.



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BY

WILLIAM WILLARD HOWARD.

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ARMENIAN RELIEF ASSOCIATION.  
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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

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MR. HOWARD has twice visited Asia Minor in connection with the Armenian question. Of the fifteen newspaper correspondents who left London in December, 1894, to investigate the massacres of Armenians in Eastern Turkey, Mr. Howard was the only one who succeeded, at the risk of his life, in penetrating into the interior of the devastated regions. On his second visit, now recently finished, he went as a Relief Commissioner to arrange for the distribution of relief funds. The Turkish government forbade him to enter the country, and put a price on his head ; the Kurds shot at him, bandits captured him, and other servants of the Sultan made his journey perilous.

In this little book Mr. Howard speaks from knowledge acquired by nearly a year and a half of personal observation and careful investigation in the distressed country. He is neither an Armenian nor a missionary, and he speaks without race or religious prejudice. His testimony is the testimony of an unbiased American and man of affairs who now comes direct from the blood-soaked land of Armenia.

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# HORRORS OF ARMENIA.

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## I.

### THE CONDITION.

The Armenian has been abandoned to his fate. England has withdrawn her protests and her threats of war; Russia has turned her eyes to the farther East, and the other Powers of Europe remain silent and indifferent, leaving the oldest Christian nation on earth in the hands of the most inhuman monster in the history of all time. After a year and a half of diplomatic remonstrances, indignation meetings, reluctant promises of reform, and agonized appeals of tortured men, outraged women, ravished maidens, and starving children, the condition of Armenia is worse to-day than it has been at any time in the red record of the Turkish empire. The situation is described in two lines of Tennyson:

“The red ribbed ledges drip  
With a silent horror of blood.”

As a result of the Sultan's promises of reform three thousand villages are in ruins, fifty thousand persons are dead, half a million are naked and hungry, all business is at an end, and an industrious, peaceful people are on the verge of utter extermination.

The Kurdish tiger, gorged with blood and lust and plunder, has slept through the long winter. The

snow has been deep and the cold intense, and travel has been suspended. Like his American prototype, the Apache Indian, the Kurd has little liking for frost and snow, and it is not until the grass grows green on the hillsides that he saddles his horse for a murdering expedition among the Christians. With the coming of summer, when the Moslem raiders can find pasturage for their horses, there will be a renewal of all those nameless outrages and fiendish atrocities which have shocked the civilized world since the premeditated assassination at Sassoun in August and September, 1894. If the Sultan of Turkey, in spite of British threats of war and the probable dismemberment of his empire, was reckless enough to order the general massacre of October, November and December, 1895, just after a scheme of reform had been wrung from him by the Powers of Europe, it is not in human reason to doubt that this blood-lust and butchery will now be carried on with increased zeal, for the withdrawal of Great Britain, humiliated and ashamed, leaves the Turk free of the fear of interference. Having insulted the American government without causing even a remonstrance, the Sultan has dismissed America from his mind. When he finds by experiment that he can fire upon American citizens and destroy American property without being called to account it would be a waste of time to take America into consideration.

When one considers the renewal of the outrages as an addition to the unthinkable miseries of the winter peace the imagination halts in dismay, for the present state of the unhappy people is beyond belief. The women and girls who escaped massacre last autumn

have lived to endure a worse fate. An honorable death would be preferable to the shame, dishonor and degradation which Moslem fiends are forcing upon them. After the massacres the Kurds and Turks began an orgy of lust which has seen no cessation, day or night. It is their deliberate purpose to utterly debase and degrade Armenian women, and so hasten the destruction of the Armenian nation. Not one Christian woman in the towns and villages escapes. When I was in Armenia on my first visit last year there was not one village woman in all the length and breadth of Armenia who was not ravished by any Kurd or Turk who took a passing fancy to her. To-day that passing fancy has become a settled policy of defilement and pollution.

It is not merely that a maiden's virtue is taken in wanton lust and wickedness: that was a common crime last year. But now this same girl is violated again and again, from day to day, by different men, until life is worse to her than death. Nor is it merely that girls are ravished continually by different men. Matrons and middle-aged women—even old women and nine-year-old children—are daily forced to submit to the same hideous debauchery. Formerly the nine-year-old children, the middle-aged and old women were exempt; but, in carrying out his orders to destroy the honor and self-respect of the Armenian women, neither Turk nor Kurd has time for discrimination. The Moslem beast is not now ravishing women for his own amusement and pleasure: he is acting under instructions which he may not disobey. What was once a pleasure is now a duty.

That husbands, fathers, brothers or sons may feel the awful degradation to the utmost they are frequently bound to posts in their houses to witness the dishonoring of wives, mothers, daughters or sisters. Sometimes the Moslem ravisher is more merciful, and permits the men to go to the fields until the shameful visit is over.

To protest is death. If it were merely plain death it would not matter, for death would be a release from a life that has long since ceased to be of any value: it is outrage and torture that even the most hopelessly desperate man shrinks from. Yet death by torture is one of the commonest forms of Christian death in the Ottoman empire. A man who protests against the defilement of wife, mother, sister or daughter is usually first beaten until few of his friends would recognize him. Then the soles of his feet are held before an open fire until the flesh drops off. After that his tongue may be pulled out, or red hot irons thrust into his eyes. If he is not dead by this time he is hacked to pieces with knives. Or he may be hung up by the sensitive parts of his body until he dies in unspeakable agony. While I was in the city of Van, the centre of Armenia, Boghos, headman of the large and important village of Boghas Kessan, now a heap of ruins, was put to death in the prison at Van by the crushing of his sensitive parts. He was guilty of no crime; yet Bahri Pasha, governor of the province of Van, caused his death in this savage manner. Sometimes a man who protests against the degradation of his household is taken to a lonely place in the mountains and buried up to his neck in the ground.



He is left there until wolves come down and tear his head to pieces.

But it is not alone the man who protests against the violation of his women folk that is tortured to death. Fiendish atrocities are perpetrated upon men for no reason whatever. Soon after I left Van the Rev. H. M. Allen, an American missionary attached to the Van station, and Cecil M. Hallward, Esq., British Vice-Consul at Van, made a tour of the districts of Moks and Shadakh. During their journey they were for part of a day guests of an Armenian priest, who impressed them as being an unusually refined, cultured, educated and pious man. After Mr. Allen and Mr. Hallward had left the village the Mohammedans seized the priest, skinned him, and stuffed his skin with hay. The stuffed skin was then hung in the village street as a warning of worse things to come if the Christians dared complain of persecution and oppression.

Last November, soon after my arrival in Asia Minor on my second visit to the Armenians, three hundred and fifty villages in the province of Van were destroyed by order of the Sultan. In one village an Armenian priest, a pious and worthy man, was burned at the stake. In the village of Kartalon, the entire population, consisting of two hundred men, women and children, were put to death by the Sultan's soldiers because they would not renounce Christ and accept Mohammed. A refugee from another village told me that forty young women and girls had been forced to remove all their clothing, join hands in a circle and dance for an hour around a group of blood-smear-

soldiers. When I asked what took place when the dance was ended the wretched refugee turned away with sobs and tears of rage. His wife and sister had been among the dancers.

“Where are they now?” I asked.

“God knows,” he said. “I hope death has ended their shame, for the Kurds carried them off to the mountains. I shall never see them again.”

Abduction is not now such a frequent occurrence as it was last year. It is no longer necessary. Instead of lying in wait for a girl in the fields, or going in armed force to her house to carry her to the mountains, the Kurds now merely go to a Christian village and select whomsoever they wish.

Formerly a bride was forcibly dragged off as the bridal procession left the church door. There is no longer any need, or even opportunity, for that, as marriages in Armenia have practically ceased. Any girl who presumes to make preparation for a wedding merely invites additional violation and defilement at the hands of her Mohammedan neighbors. Last year Turks and Kurds considered it praiseworthy sport to abduct a bride from a wedding procession, take her to the mountains, keep her in a Kurdish village until every man of the tribe had violated her, and then return her, half-crazed and polluted, to her heart-broken bridegroom if he had happened to escape assassination at the time of the abduction. In many cases the bride's father and brothers and the bridegroom and his male relatives were killed while trying to prevent the capture.

I have visited the spot where four bridegrooms

were murdered at one time while vainly attempting to protect their brides against a party of Kurds. The brides were ravished in the presence of their dead and mutilated husbands, and then turned loose with taunts and jeers. No longer fearing death or caring for life, the frenzied young women procured the assistance of relatives and bore the bloody corpses of their dead to the house of the governor of Van, demanding justice. The governor looked out of the window and said: "Yes, I see. It's really too bad." The Kurdish ravishers and murderers were known to be in the city at that moment, yet no attempt was made to arrest them.

Not only does the Turkish government give absolutely no protection to Christian women, but its high officials actually take an active part in the work of abduction and degradation. While I was in Van, Neuri Effendi, chief of police, had in his harem four Christian girls from the villages of Sassoun. They are there yet unless Neuri has grown tired of them and cut off their heads. At that time there was good reason to believe that seventy Christian girls were forced and unwilling inmates of the harems of Turkish officials in the city of Van. Abd-ul-Hamid, Sultan of Turkey, and the "Shadow of God on Earth," buys Christian girls from professional kidnappers, and it is not strange that his officials follow his example. If unwilling to pay money to an abductor, the official has never hesitated to go on kidnapping expeditions on his own account. The spectacle of a Turkish governor chasing a Christian bride like a hunted deer through the streets of a village is by no means unknown in the Ottoman empire.

I have in my possession notes and records of authenticated cases of abductions, nameless outrages, forced conversion to Mohammedism, and every crime against and violation of woman that the human mind can conceive of; yet I cannot make these things known lest the wretched victims be put to death and their unfortunate relatives imprisoned and tortured. I have mentioned the name of Boghos only because he and his friends are forever beyond all harm. I can give only an instance here and there, without names or dates, and let that serve as a type of the whole. Moreover, I cannot tell the full measure of this awful tale, because the English language has its limitations. Even though it were possible to make public something more than a fractional part of the actual truth, the clean, decent Christian mind of America could neither appreciate nor understand.

The Turk is so absolutely without a moral sense, so unutterably bestial in his consideration of woman, so unthinkably vile and filthy in his personal habits, and so hopelessly degraded in his relations with his fellow man that the depth of his infamy is past all human credence.

The Turk is not a human being. I do not call him a beast, because not one of God's dumb creatures could sink so low. The Turk is a devil without a tail. And the educated, polished Turk—the official who affects a knowledge of the French language and a veneering of Parisian manners—is the most unspeakable fiend of all. In proof that this assertion is based upon incontestable truth I challenge denial from any unprejudiced man who has known the Turk

thoroughly well for a quarter of a century.

All the abominations barely hinted at in the Bible are common, everyday incidents of the Turk's life. But each succeeding generation of Turks has apparently added some new and ingenious form of iniquity to the abominations of early days, so that the inhabitants of Sodom, if yet alive, might consider themselves reasonably clean and pure by comparison. And the helpless followers of Christ in Asia Minor are in the slimy grasp of this unmatched monster of sin and shame. As for the character of the Kurd, a remarkably accurate description may be found in the book of Isaiah.

When the Turk has, for the moment, satisfied his bestial lust in a Christian village he amuses himself by adding horror upon horror to the woes of the powerless peasants. In a village near the northeastern shore of Lake Van a party of soldiers, after repeatedly violating the women and girls, killed a baby and boiled the body in an iron pot. When the tender flesh was cooked the mother of the child was compelled to eat of it until she became a raving maniac through grief and horror.

This incident was reported to the British government by an English Vice-Consul whom I know; yet the Foreign Office remained inactive. I have, in fact, selected from my notes for use here only those things which I am certain have been reported to the British government through Her Majesty's own consuls.

Occasionally I am asked why the Armenian women do not put an end to their lives rather than endure outrage and defilement; and why, also, the Ar-



Armenian men do not resist to the death this pollution of their homes. The Armenians are a strongly religious people, and they believe that they should live out the lives that God has given to them, no matter what may happen. Self-destruction is a sin which finds no atonement in the hereafter. Therefore, they endure hell on earth that they may not lose hope of heaven to come. Yet, many, many an Armenian woman, preferring eternal damnation to personal defilement, has ended her own life to escape the degradation of Turkish lust. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers have hidden many a Christian woman's despair, and precipices on Taurus mountain sides have witnessed the death plunge of women and girls who were willing to pay even the price of salvation to avoid the Turk's embrace.

Armenian women value virtue and religious faith above all things. When death has been offered as a penalty for adherence to Christianity few Armenian women have refused it. In every massacre in Turkey the wretched, panic-stricken Armenians have been given their choice between Mohammedism and death. Last year's fifty thousand dead speak with mute lips of unquenchable faith in Christ. In the massacre at Kharput the fugitives filled a large Armenian church. The venerable pastor, whose son I know well, exhorted them to remain steadfast in their faith, even unto death. The despairing creatures were brought out and told to choose between Mohammed and death. They chose death. One after another, the pastor first, they were asked: "Will you accept Mohammed?" As each one unfalteringly answered "No!"

the executioner's sword fell. Not one wavered in this modern-day martyrdom for Christ. No saintly martyr of any race, who has died for the faith in any age of the world, could do more than that.

It is idle to ask why the Armenian men do not resist the pollution of their women. The bones of thousands who did resist are scattered from the Black Sea to Arabia, and from the Dardanelles to Persia. From a practical point of view it is worse to resist than to submit. It is not that the Armenians fear death. To most of them death not of their own volition would be accepted as a relief. But they have others besides themselves to think of. If the men resisted they would be exterminated from the face of the earth, and the women would be left to perish miserably or become concubines and slaves in Turkish harems. So long as the men live the women will have support and comfort, and such protection as a Christian woman may expect in the Turkish empire. Should the men resist and bring death on themselves the Armenian race would die with them, and there would be an end of the Armenian question for all time. No matter what his agony of heart and mind, the Armenian cannot leave his wife and daughters alone.

While passing along the trail near a village in the province of Van I was stopped by a grief-stricken Armenian, who seized the bridle-rein of my horse and blocked the way.

"Oh, illustrious and merciful stranger, whom fortune hath thrice blessed, if thou art a Christian, even though of another race, hear the voice of despair!"

“Speak,” said I; “my ears listen.”

“Even now the son of a Kurdish Sheikh came to my house in yonder village and selected my two young daughters for his infamous and brutal lust. He commands me, on pain of death, to keep them free from the touch of any other man until it shall please him to come for them. Oh, man with a human heart! Tell me what shall I do? They are but little children, and they are dearer to me than my life, which, in itself, is no longer of any worth. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, turn not away!”

“Have you given offense to the Sheikh’s son?”

“Not so, oh, friend of the persecuted. My attitude toward him has ever been friendly and humble. I have given him gifts of butter and cheese and sheep and goats. I have herded his flocks without pay, and whenever his lambs and kids have been stolen by wild beasts I have made good the loss from my own meagre fold.”

“Why, think you, has he singled out your children for his vile purpose?”

“Because they are the only virgins remaining in the village. All the others have been violated by Kurds, Turkish officials, tax-gatherers and soldiers. My children have escaped, up to the present time, owing to their youth. One is only nine years old and the other ten. If they are ravished I shall go mad.”

“Have you any money with which to buy their safety?”

“Once I was rich and prosperous, with many sheep and goats and cattle and fields of grain; but now I have nothing. The Kurds, the Turks, the tax-gath-

erers and the soldiers have taken everything."

"Have you a rifle?"

"Merciful God! Have I a rifle? I have not even a knife with which to cut the little food that I am able to scrape together. If I had a rifle I should be tempted to use it on the Sheikh's son when he comes to ravish my children, and then destruction would fall upon the entire village."

"What would happen?"

"The Kurds would put every man in the village to death with horrible tortures; they would brutally ravish my children before my eyes, and skin me alive and burn me at the stake, and after violating all the women and girls in the place they would drive them out into the fields and burn the village to the ground. That would be the result, oh, kindly stranger, should I use a rifle in defense of my children."

"Will not the government protect you if you make complaint?" This was an unnecessary question, as I knew what the government would do in such a case; but I wanted to add one more man's testimony to the damning verdict.

"The government!" said the poor man, clenching his hands in impotent rage. "The Sheikh's son himself is a high officer of the government. If I complained I should be cast into prison and tortured and killed, and my children would be taken as slaves to a Turkish harem. It is destruction and death to complain."

"Can you not take your children and escape out of Turkey by night?"

“If I had money for food by the way, and if I had a gun with which to defend myself and my children against attack, I could steal off to the mountains by night and escape. But I have neither food nor gun. For the sake of Jesus of Nazareth, tell me what to do?”

While I looked at him a sudden terror came into his face. He pointed mutely down the trail and darted out of sight among the rocks. A small body of Hamidieh cavalry came trotting along the mountain side, and, after eyeing me wolfishly for a moment, went on. What the Armenian's fate would have been had they found him talking to me I hesitate to conjecture.

In another village a man insisted upon showing me seven hideous sword wounds which he had received while trying to protect his sister from dishonor. In the same place a man had gone mad as the result of witnessing the violation of his daughter.

My notes are rich in horrors of this sort, to say nothing of murders, tortures, forced conversions to Mohammedism, highway robbery, defilement of holy places, and confiscation and destruction of churches; yet I have spoken herein only of the normal condition of Armenia, without reference to the recent massacres. The massacres themselves I shall not attempt to describe, for the Armenian question is not so much what took place last year as what is the present condition of the country and its probable future.

The present condition may be partly understood by taking the situation as I have herein barely outlined it, and adding to it actual starvation in its most



appalling forms. After the massacres last autumn fifty thousand village refugees crowded into the city of Van for safety. On the first day of March, 1896, the relief committee was feeding nineteen thousand of them. Attempts were being made at that time to induce some of the refugees to return to their destroyed villages in the hope that the Kurds had overlooked a little of the grain stored in underground pits. One party of returning refugees died of cold and hunger on the way. Writing on this subject at that time one of the American missionaries at Van said:

“Whoever goes back now is promptly murdered.”

The same writer thus outlines the situation in that district:

“These weeks before us are to be anxious ones. If political action is not taken by the middle of April or May terrible things will be writ in blood here.”

In another letter this missionary says:

“The relief work grows continually, and if the condition of political affairs does not speedily mend the entire population will be in want of bread. Those who have had bread up to the present (March 1) are coming to the end of their resources, and every day adds to the list of our beneficiaries by the score. We see no signs of political help. We have five to six weeks of waiting until the roads are open, and then surely something will come to put an end to this unbearable situation. Either some European power must come in to coerce reforms or else anarchy and terrible bloodshed and horrors will run riot here. So you can imagine we wait, with almost breathless interest, to see whether the verdict is to be life or death

for our poor neighbors and friends. It is terrible to look on this or that well-known and esteemed man and think that he may fall a victim—he and all his—to the fanatical hatred of his Moslem neighbors.”

To one who knows the strong will, dauntless courage and unfaltering hope of the writer there is in this letter an undertone of pathos and despair that cannot be put into words.

Such was the state of things in Armenia during the winter tranquility. If life or death depends on coercion by an European power it is not difficult to forecast the future. No European power has the slightest intention of interfering. The situation in Van in January was so desperate that the two married ladies of the American mission station were escorted to Persia over mountain trails covered with six feet of unbroken snow, in a temperature of several degrees below zero. The unmarried ladies would have gone with them had they been willing to abandon the girls of the mission school to a fate worse than death. I have been looking for a massacre in Van since last August. As a matter of actual fact, which I can vouch for, a massacre in Van in December was averted by the merest hair's breadth. During all of the past winter the American missionaries stood heroically to their duty, although they felt absolutely certain that a massacre might take place at any moment. More than one of them has said to me: “We are living on the edge of a volcano, the mutterings of which we can hear day and night.”

The writer of the foregoing letter is as capable and as dispassionate a judge of the Armenian situation as

any person in Turkey, and I accept that forecast of the future as being the only one which a rational-minded person could make. Its value to me lies not in the fact that it coincides with my own forecast, but as the deliberate judgment of one of the best-balanced minds in the mission service. To any unprejudiced person who has investigated the Armenian question in the distressed regions of Eastern Turkey the making of an accurate forecast is not a particularly difficult matter. A year ago, during my first visit to Asia Minor, I made public a forecast of the events in Turkey for the summer and autumn of 1895. In the autumn, one of the leading London papers reprinted parts of that forecast and pointed out the remarkable manner in which the predictions had been fulfilled. Every event that I had predicted had come to pass, including the assassinations in Constantinople and the massacres throughout Armenia. I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, and I claim no prophetic ability. The forecast which I made a year ago was not prophecy or theoretic speculation. It was merely the natural deduction of facts which I had obtained after many hundreds of miles of weary travel on horseback and months of patient investigation. Any man who is willing to carry his life in his hand; to sleep in stables; to live on unpalatable food; to ride on horseback 2,500 miles, and to sift to the bottom a bewildering mass of Mohammedan lies in the hope of finding the precious kernel of truth, can make forecasts with equal accuracy, provided that he is a trained observer and is able to judge facts not only as isolated actualities but with respect to their relation to each other.

Knowing from actual, personal contact the condition of affairs in Asia Minor, and giving due consideration to all the component and correlative parts of the situation, one can forecast the immediate future with unvarying exactitude.

My missionary friend, whose horizon of personal observation is necessarily restricted to Armenia, says that unless some European power takes coercive measures anarchy and terrible bloodshed and horrors will run riot. Circumstances caused me to include in my investigation of the Armenian question, not only Armenia itself but all of Northern Persia, the Caucasus region of Asiatic Russia, Southern Russia, Germany, France, England, Constantinople and the Turkish coast of the Black Sea, and I say, as an addition to the missionary's forecast, which coincides precisely with my own, that neither the British government nor any other European power contemplates using coercive measures.

In Great Britain there is no secret about the government's position. The statesmen who direct the destinies of the empire believe that it is better to let the entire Armenian race in Turkey perish by fire and sword and nameless atrocity than to kindle an European war, which would cause the death of hundreds of thousands of men. The rest of Europe has little interest, one way or another, in the fate of the Armenians.

Until I see some radical change in the attitude of the great powers I shall consider European interference in Turkish affairs so remote a contingency that it need not be taken seriously into account.

Leaving out of consideration, as anyone must who is guided by the actual facts and not by theoretic speculation, the possibility of European interference, the present situation in Armenia is seen to be the most desperate that has ever confronted a Christian race. The relief funds have run out, the suffering people have come to the end of their own pitiful store of food, epidemics of loathesome disease have seized upon the starving refugees in the cities, the atrocities have begun again, and a riot of bloodshed and horror is impending.

The future is as plain as the past. Even without a renewal of wholesale massacres in obedience to orders from the "Shadow of God on Earth," there will be the same raping and ravishing of women and girls, the same beating and torturing of men, and the same skinning and burning of priests as in the recent past. In the event of general massacres men will be buried alive in pits in the ground, and the earth will be trampled down upon their writhing bodies. Other living men will be bound hand and foot and corded up in rows, one row upon another, with brushwood between. Then kerosene oil will be poured upon the squirming mass and set on fire. Moslem fiends will dance about this awful funeral pile until the bodies of these Christian men have burned to ashes. These things will be done, because they have been done in Armenia within the past two years.

I have seen starvation. If I could forget it Armenia might be to me less of a living horror than it has been for more than a year. No man can realize the awfulness of famine until he meets it face to face.



If he once sees it he will never forget. One may face with fortitude the hunger of strong men, but the starvation of women and children is beyond all human endurance.

Passing through an Armenian village in the province of Van one afternoon I halted my party before a house where a little girl was crying in the street. A spectre of famine, in the person of a middle-aged man, sat listlessly by the door.

“Why does the child cry?” I asked.

“The man looked up weakly, with the eyes of despair. “I know not,” he said.

“Surely, one who is apparently the child’s father makes a strange reply to a simple question. Speak, thou; why does the child cry?”

“It cries because it cries,” he answered wearily.

“Not so; there must be a better reason.”

“Perhaps so; but I am a Christian dog, and thou art a great lord with fine horses and strong servants. Why should the grief of my little child concern thee?”

“Thou art a man, as I am. Speak, then, as man to man. Why does the child cry?”

“It cries because it is hungry.”

“Is there no food for a helpless child?” My cook had already dismounted, with a bag of bread in his hand. This experience was new neither to him nor to me.

“Food!” said the man, his eyes moving unsteadily and his wasted hands trembling nervously. “Truly, there is abundance of food. There is the bark of trees by the watercourses which one may gnaw from dawn till dark, there is grass growing in the



fields, there are roots to be dug on the mountain side, there are strong weeds to be had in the ditches, and there is moss to be gathered from the rocks."

"But bread!" I broke in with; "is there no bread for a crying child?"

"Verily, master, there is much bread," he replied; "beautiful black bread, made from linseed and flaxseed and the seed of the clover which intoxicates him who eats. See, my lord, here is bread, if it please you to eat. Fear not to touch it, for it is not a cake of stable refuse, although it may have that appearance." He held out a round cake of stuff that resembled the cakes of dried stable refuse which serve as fuel in Asia.

"It is the hunger bread of Armenia," said one of my men. "Do not eat of it, for a steady diet of it injures the mind."

I ate a very small piece, which was quite enough. It had the taste of bitter weeds or nauseous medicinal herbs. I exchanged good, wholesome wheat bread for five small cakes of it which I have brought home to America as specimens of the famine food of Armenia. The child's crying was stopped by a piece of bread nearly as big as herself. The cook shook out the bread bag, and the villagers, who had gathered around us, snapped up the crumbs with wolfish eagerness.

The history of this village was but the story of every Christian village in Turkey. The villagers had been reduced from prosperity to starvation by the illegal exactions of tax-gatherers, the demands of Turkish officials, and the raids of Kurds. In ordinary

times the villager might reasonably expect to retain for his own use one-fourth of his crop. He gave one share to his Kurdish neighbors as blackmail under the form of tribal protection; he gave another to the government for taxes, and a third in gifts to the local officials. In addition, he could count upon losing a fourth share at the hands of Kurdish raiders. In times of active persecution, such as last year, the Kurds pastured their cattle in his growing wheat fields, as I myself have seen, and, during the harvest, came down to the threshing floors and stole all the grain that they could carry away, leaving for the Armenians only wheat straw to eat.

This state of things made no difference to the tax-gatherers. To collect the same tax twice in a year was a common occurrence, and if the villagers were unable to pay they were beaten and tortured by the soldiers, and the women and girls were violated.

After the tax-gatherers had thus slaked their thirst for outrage and cruelty, the portable property, even to the cooking utensils, was sold to Mohammedan bidders in farcical public sale for a twentieth part of its value. The village was thus left stripped of everything, and the people were reduced to eating the grass and herbs of the field.

Most of the villages in Armenia were in that impoverished condition when the Sultan ordered the massacres to take place last autumn. Where the Moslem assassins, raiding under orders, found any property they carried it off, destroyed the village and drove the Christians out into the mountains, foodless and naked. Even the women were stripped to a single

dress garment. While I was in Tabriz, Persia, on my way home late last February, a Turkish caravan came to the city with great quantities of clothing which had been taken from the persons of Christian women in Armenia during the massacres in November and December. The Turkish caravan-master had the hardihood to offer this pathetic cargo to the Armenian merchants of Tabriz.

I had no need of this evidence to prove to me that the Armenian women had been stripped of their clothing, for the woeful condition of the refugees spoke as distinctly as a caravan of their blood-spattered garments. When I opened my first relief stations Armenian women came to me barefooted and stockingless through two feet of snow. I found a fur overcoat none too warm, yet they were protected from the freezing cold by only thin calico wrappers. One wrinkled, haggard old woman in particular attracted my attention.

“You are too old and feeble to come barefooted through the snow,” said I. “Let your daughter come for you next time.”

“Old!” she sobbed; “I am not so old. I shall be only nineteen years of age next month. And I have no longer any daughter. I am now alone in the world. Would to God I, too, could die! All my relatives have been killed. My sister threw herself into the water to escape defilement by the Kurds, and the soldiers tossed my baby girl into the air and let her fall upon the points of their swords. It is better so; for I shall now have no daughter to be ravished when she grows up. Do I look old? Have I no cause for looking old? I

have lived through a thousand years of agony."

She came close beside me, and scanned my face with a searching stare. "Tell me, thou man who art wise with the wisdom of many strange lands, does the priest speak a true word when he says that it is sin to put an end to one's life? Speak," she said.

I bowed my head in assent, for mere words would not come.

"Mother of Jesus!" she moaned, groping blindly in the sunlight; "and I have before me fifty years of agony."

A woman who had come limping painfully on frost-bitten feet looked on in pity. "Poor girl," she said, "her suffering is greater than she can bear. But many a Christian mother's arms are empty to-day that lately held laughing infants. I, too, could tell a tale; but the sympathetic ear of the giver of relief is already wearied with the cries of despair."

"Poor dead baby," said another woman whose bare ankles were swollen with the sting of frost. "But its little life was quickly snuffed out, and that was a mercy. I have heard of a babe that crawled through a pool of blood and sought nourishment at its slaughtered mother's breast. I thank God I did not see that."

The poor women insisted upon crowding about me and kissing my hands, in token of gratitude for the relief. "It must have been mothers with little children of their own who gave you this money," one of them said. "Tell them that poor, childless Armenian widows will pray that their babies may be spared to grow up strong men and good and beautiful women. O, God in heaven! I shall never again feel the soft,

clinging touch of a baby at my breast!"

"Thou art not a missionary, nor yet a priest?" asked another.

"No," I replied; "I am neither missionary nor priest."

"Then speak to me a true word. Is it true, this which I have heard, that all the women of your far-away country are wise and good and beautiful like the wives and sisters of the missionaries here?"

"It is a true word."

"And are they all safe from the violence of soldiers, tax-gatherers and government officials?"

"Any soldier, tax-gatherer or official would give his life to defend any woman against harm."

The woman looked at me fixedly for a moment. "Truly," she said, "thou hast the face and eyes of truth; yet thy tongue utters strange things. Thou dost speak of paradise, yet thou art but a mortal man." She turned away, shaking her head slowly, as though struggling with a doubt.



## II.

## THE CAUSE.

The blackest spot on earth is the heart of the Sultan of Turkey. The great monsters of history appear as puny weaklings, infirm of purpose and irresolute in execution, when contrasted with Abd-ul-Hamid, the "Shadow of God on Earth." Even Nero, whose fiddling while Rome burned is a synonym for deliberate cruelty, was a child in comparison. It is the inhuman blackness of this man's heart that has brought outrage and torture and death to Christian homes in Asia Minor. Every massacre, every wholesale Kurdish raid, every bloody disturbance in Armenia since August, 1894, has had its origin in this man's heart. No unprejudiced human being in Turkey has any doubt of that.

Abd-ul-Hamid asserts that the disturbances in his empire were caused by revolutionary uprisings among the Armenians. I deny that absolutely. Not one massacre in all the crimson list, from Sassoun to Urfa, was caused by Armenian attack or uprising. The Blue Book, of the British Foreign Office, may be taken as authority on that point, and a careful reading of that will show not only that in each case the Mohammedans were the aggressors, but that in nine-tenths of the big massacres the work of butchery was the result of preconcerted arrangement sanctioned and directed by the Turkish government.\*

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\* See Blue Book, "Turkey No. 2 (1896)," presented to Parliament February, 1896.



More than that, Abd-ul-Hamid, as I can prove, issued orders for massacres which the Kurds refused to carry out.

If the Sultan of Turkey desires the world to believe that he is merely putting down Armenian uprisings he must stop murdering other Christians. He must not give orders for the destruction of Jacobites, Chaldeans and Nestorians. He may succeed in dazzling the eyes of American diplomats and casual visitors to Constantinople, but to obtain the confidence of thinking men he must be consistent.

During the massacres of Armenians last autumn the Sultan sent to the kaimakam of Gawar, a district in eastern Kurdistan, an order directing that all the Nestorian Christians of the region should be massacred. The kaimakam called the Kurdish Sheikhs together, exhibited the order, and said: "Obey." After consultation the Kurds declared: "We will not kill these Christians, because they are our oxen. They are our slaves, and we do not desire to destroy our property."

"But there is the order from the Sultan himself," said the kaimakam.

"True," replied the Sheikhs, "it is an order; but who is to take the places of these people to do our work if we destroy them? We will not kill them, but we will give to the Sultan a paper making ourselves responsible for these Christians when they are wanted." The paper was given, and the order for the massacre was recalled.

This matter was first brought to my attention by a Nestorian protestant who had escaped from Gawar at the risk of his life. Two weeks later a Kurdish

Sheikh who holds a position of considerable importance in the Turkish service in Gawar told precisely the same story, adding, by way of corroboration: "I was one of the Sheikhs who signed the paper." Since that time the Christians in Gawar have been bottled up so effectually that not one of them can get away without assistance from the Kurds. Meantime the Hamidieh cavalry in the district is being reinforced and strengthened. The Kurds are told that they may expect active service when summer begins.

The Nestorians have nothing to do with the Armenians. They are a different race, and they have no revolutionary or nationalistic ambitions. They are satisfied to be allowed to live. There is no tangible reason why the Sultan should murder them if he seeks only to suppress Armenian revolutionary uprisings.

During the massacres last November the Jacobite and Chaldean villages in the Mardin district were destroyed, the men were murdered, and many of the women and girls were carried to the mountains. Neither the Jacobites nor the Chaldeans have any concern in Armenian affairs, nor have they any revolutionary conspiracies of their own. Like the Nestorians, they are satisfied to be allowed to pasture their flocks, to cultivate their fields, and to live their simple pastoral lives unmolested. There was no cause why these harmless Christian peasants should have been butchered to quell Armenian uprisings. They were not even in an Armenian district, their homes being on the edge of the Syrian desert. Abd-ul-Hamid must add consistency to his cunning if he would not make it impossible for his hard-worked

apologists in America and England to save his character from universal condemnation.

The proof that Abd-ul-Hamid gave the orders for the massacres last autumn is not hard to find. It can be had from Kurds, Turkish officials and foreign consuls, to say nothing of the evidence of attending circumstances. I have had in my possession for a year ample proof that the Sassoun massacre was planned by the Sultan several months before it took place. I will make public the facts now for the first time.

In the summer of 1893 the Kurds, after levying their customary tribute from the Sassoun villages, made a supplementary raid, which the villagers resisted. News of this was sent to Constantinople, and the Sassoun district was marked for destruction. Little could be done at that time, as winter came to the high mountain passes of Sassoun in September, preventing further operations. The Sultan made his plans, however, and early in the summer of 1894 he prepared to carry them out.

In July and August large quantities of kerosene were sent from Erzeroum to the city of Moush, on the northern edge of Sassoun. People wondered what Moush intended to do with so much kerosene, but no questions were answered. At the same time unusual numbers of soldiers from neighboring provinces were concentrated at Moush. No one could explain this. Simultaneously with this ingathering of soldiers there was a sudden demand for horses far and near. In the streets of Van caravans were stopped, their loads were dumped to the ground and the horses seized for the use of the soldiers. Not even a pretense

of paying for the animals was made by the officials who took them. All through the summer strange tribes of Kurds gathered, as though by common instinct, about the Sassoun district. Hundreds came from Diarbekr and beyond. All camped with pack animals within easy striking distance of the Sassoun villages. A Spaniard of the name of Ximenez arrived in Van early in August and remained there until late in September. It was known that he sent telegrams to and received messages from the Sultan's palace at Constantinople.

In the closing days of August the Kurds and the troops pounced upon Sassoun, and when the work of death and destruction began the kerosene from Erzeroum was found to be at hand to accelerate the burning of the houses and to cremate human bodies. Ximenez was at Van prepared to bear witness in the capitals of Europe that he had passed through the Sassoun region in September and found no traces of a massacre. He subsequently went to London, where he repeatedly asserted that no massacre had taken place, basing his assertion upon the fact that he had been in Sassoun at the time that the massacre was supposed to have occurred. Ximenez was in Van all the time, as I have learned from persons who saw him there every day during that time. In London he tried to organize mass meetings to protest against the outcry over Turkish barbarity, but his first meeting was such a failure that the Turkish government refused to pay him his wages, and no more were held.

Added to all this evidence of careful preparation for the Sassoun massacre is the fact that on the first



day of the butchery Zekki Pasha, commander of the troops, read to the soldiers an order from the Sultan directing that the Sassounlis be killed and their villages destroyed. On the anniversary of the Sultan's accession to the throne, Zekki pinned this order to the breast of his coat and exhorted the soldiers to great zeal and activity in the extermination of the Christians. For his energy in depopulating Sassoun by fire and sword Zekki was afterward decorated by the Sultan, and the soldiers were highly complimented on their heroic conduct. A stand of colors was sent to them, but before the presentation could be made the outcry had become so great that the Sultan deferred it until a more propitious time.

The next disturbance of any consequence took place in Constantinople on September 30, 1895. The Armenians, hoping that a respectful petition to the Grand Vizier might have a beneficial effect, made a harmless demonstration to ask the government to redress their wrongs and grant reforms. There was nothing of a revolutionary or violent character about it. The men carried no guns, and they conducted themselves in an orderly manner. Three hours after the demonstration was over the Turks began an attack on the Armenians, which resulted in the assassination of many peacefully-disposed men and women. For the details of this butchery, including the ripping open of a pregnant Armenian woman, I refer the reader to the British Blue Book of last February.\*

A few days later an Armenian fired at and wounded Bahri Pasha, ex-Governor of Van, as he was passing

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\* Blue Book, "Turkey No. 2 (1896)," pages 22, 25, etc.

through the streets of Trebizond on his way to Constantinople. Search was made for the assailant, and the city relapsed into its normal state of calm. This tranquility lasted for four days, when, without warning of any sort, the Turks made a sudden and furious attack upon the Armenian population. Hundreds of innocent, unresisting men were killed, and much property was destroyed. The massacre was the result of orders issued by government officials whose actions are controlled by the Sultan.\*

While yet the civilized world was doubting the reality of this act of barbarism a cyclone of Moslem hate descended unexpectedly upon the city of Erzeroum. The people were in the streets, fearing no harm. At a signal the Turkish citizens, assisted by the soldiers, rushed upon the dazed Armenians, shooting, stabbing and hewing until hundreds of Armenian men, women and children lay dead and mutilated. † The attack had been in preparation for some time, and so sudden was it that an American, who was in Erzeroum for the purpose of opening an American consulate, barely escaped with his life while walking in the street. He was rescued from a mob of Turks by the armed servants of the British consul.

Then followed massacre after massacre throughout Armenia. The city of Kharput was the last place in Turkey that one would have selected as likely to be devastated by Kurds or attacked by Turkish soldiers. The destruction of American mission property by order of government was such a remote contingency that

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\* Blue Book, "Turkey No. 2 (1896)," pages 88, 89, 113, 114, 136.

† Blue Book, "Turkey No. 2 (1896)," pages 149, 151, 154, 216.



anyone prophesying it would have been looked upon as demented; yet eight of the twelve mission buildings were burned by Kurds and soldiers; the missionaries were shot at; many hundreds of persons in and around the city were killed, and more than one hundred thousand were stripped of their possessions and left destitute. Not the slightest intimation had been received that an attack on the mission was contemplated. In fact three days before the massacre one of the chief officials of the place personally assured the missionaries that the mission was perfectly safe; that there was absolutely nothing to fear, and that anyone who harmed the mission would first be compelled to walk over his dead body. When the red wave of massacre and devastation broke upon Kharput it was so electric in its suddenness that no one in the mission suspected harm until the assassins swarmed in with torch and rifle and sword.

In the midst of the sack of the mission, while the mission houses were burning and bullets were whizzing about the ears of the missionaries fleeing to shelter, it was noticed that the officer in chief command of the work of destruction was the official who, three days before, had pledged his own life in protection of the mission. It was this same man who urged the missionaries to come out from their place of refuge, in order that they might be conveniently shot to death. When the massacre was over it was found that the wheel chair of Mrs. Allen, who is an invalid, was in possession of a high government official. Mr. Allen was compelled to pay three Turkish pounds to get it back.

I have made a list of thirty-four separate massacres of Christians in the Turkish empire from September 30 to December 29, 1895. In almost every case the responsibility for the massacre rests upon the government officials. I was in Asia Minor while most of these massacres were taking place, and I made it my business to investigate their origin. At the time of the destruction of three hundred and fifty villages in the province of Van I talked with some of the Kurds who were taking part in the work. In explanation of the wide extent of the disaster the Kurds said that they were acting under orders from the government. Mr. Hallward, British Vice-Consul at Van, reported to the Foreign Office the same fact.\*

I have received a trustworthy report of the massacre at Zilé, which had been overlooked in the greater magnitude of other Turkish butcheries. As the details of the Zilé massacre are the least horrible of any in my possession, and as the official method of carrying out the Sultan's orders will stand as a fair type for the rest of the massacres, I will give parts of the report, incidentally calling attention to the fact that it was from Zilé that the great Cæsar sent to Rome the historic message, "I came; I saw; I conquered."

"When disastrous events were reported of other cities," the report says, "the Armenians grew fearful. Some desired to close their shops and remove their goods to their houses, but were prevented by the officers, who called the principal men of the Armenians together, assured them there was nothing to fear, and urged them to continue their business. On

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\* Blue Book, "Turkey No. 2 (1896)," page 288.

November 28, most Armenian shop keepers were in their places, and of those whose business did not require shops, fifty or sixty of the principal men were collected by the police at a casino in the market under pretense of business about taxes.

“ At noon a trumpet was blown and the Turks, both soldiers and civilians, began to assault Armenians, crying out, ‘ Down with Armenians! This is the Sultan’s order! Real estate to the crown; commodities to plunder.’ The captain gave order to forty or fifty soldiers to open fire. They obeyed, and when the Armenians tried to run from the market to their houses they encountered the soldiers stationed in the quarters as well as the armed Turkish mob, neither of whom showed any mercy to the Christians. Of those in the casino all were killed except fifteen or twenty, who escaped one by one, although wounded. In two hours two hundred shops were looted.

“ The governor called to the crowd, ‘ Be active! Don’t fail in killing, plundering, or in praying for the Sultan.’ The other officers joined in killing. A major attended to the distribution of the cartridges, as the supply was exhausted. The officers arranged to have for themselves the most valuable plunder secured by their men.

“ From the market the attack proceeded by several orderly bands to the different quarters of the city. The soldiers fired over walls, into upper windows, and at anyone in sight. Under cover of their fire the mob burst open gates, delivered up remaining inmates, and sacked the houses. A prominent man, long a member of the Irade Mejlisi, was killed with his two sons, and

thrown from the upper window with the remark, 'Get a move on you! The governor wants you at the meeting.'

"A woman tried to intercede for her husband, but she was killed with him, their young babe sharing their fate. A man of eighty years of age was killed by the mob, and then his skull was broken in pieces by a man equally old.

"A young man was halted by the crowd, and a man put a revolver in the hand of his son, eight or ten years of age, saying, 'Shoot, my boy, and learn how to kill infidels.'

"The alternative of life on the acceptance of Mohammedism was commonly offered. A priest bared his own heart to the weapons about him rather than deny Christ. He was killed. Another said, 'I do not believe in Mohammedism, but I will die for the honor of Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' He was bayoneted to death.

"One hour before sunset a trumpet was blown again, and the mob began to desist, although some could not be called from the spoils until sunset put an end to activity and gave the remaining Armenians time to realize the horrors of the situation. When the trumpet was blown it was announced by criers that the remaining Armenians should be gathered to the government for protection. But only fifteen or twenty could then be found. They were taken to the government house, helped along by the butt end of guns when they fainted at the sight of the corpses in the street. They were told that they would be killed at

sunset unless they turned Moslems, and turbans of green and white were wound about their heads in the attempt to force them to a change of faith. The same alternative was pressed on those who took refuge in Turkish houses.

“During the night the dead were gathered in wagons and carried to the trash pile outside of the city. Some of the wounded begged to be carried home, but they were killed and carted out with the rest. Bodies were thrōwn from the upper stories and dragged by cords tied to the feet. The next day one hundred were buried in one trench in the Armenian cemetery, of whom all but three were cut and hacked beyond all recognition. The burial place of the rest is unknown to this day.

“The next day all were gathered to the government, where they were urged to become Mohammedans.

“When orders came for examination into the ‘event,’ two Turks were imprisoned. They bawled out, ‘The governor gave orders, and we killed and plundered! Now will they put us in prison?’ Next day they were quietly released.

“About two hundred persons were killed. Ten were women and thirty were children. Two hundred shops and three hundred houses were looted. The loss is estimated at nearly two hundred thousand Turkish pounds (\$888,000.)”

The Sultan’s responsibility for the Zilé massacre is evident enough.

There is no lack of proof from Mohammedan sources that the massacres were ordered by Abd-ul-



Hamid. While I was in Van the British Vice-Consul happened to call upon Bahri Pasha, the governor, at a time when several prominent Kurdish Sheikhs were present. Bahri Pasha, whom I met several times, has a record of having caused the death of 1,200 Armenians. To impress the British Vice-Consul with a sense of the activity of the government in quelling disturbances, Bahri said, in a stern, severe manner, to the Sheikhs: "I want you to understand that this thing must stop. If you do not put an end to these Kurdish raids upon the Armenians I will have the head of each one of you!"

"Bahri Pasha," said the chief Sheikh, wholly unmoved by the governor's show of displeasure; "you speak with a double face. You well know that no Kurd could raid an Armenian village without permission from the government. In private you say to us, 'Go; kill, burn, plunder.' In public, before the face of the British official, you threaten to cut off our heads for obeying your orders. Have an end to this hypocrisy and foolishness." Bahri Pasha did not renew the conversation on that line.

In the whirlwind of death and devastation which swept down upon Diarbekr, Mardin and the country roundabout, the Kurds rose up for the slaughter and plunder of Christians, saying that they had been commanded to do the bloody work by an imperial order from the Sultan. No distinction was made between Armenians, Jacobites, Chaldeans or Nestorians. That it may be seen that the other Christians were no better treated than the Armenians I quote parts of a letter from an unprejudiced and reliable

person in Mardin describing an attack on a Jacobite Syrian church in Kutterbul:

“Saturday evening, November 2, the inhabitants of Kutterbul took refuge from the Kurds in the large stone church of the Jacobite Syrians, to which they had already moved their house-hold goods. Fugitives from three other villages, which had been attacked the day before, had also taken refuge here, so the church was packed with goods and people. That night the Kurds, with some men from Diarbekr, surrounded the church and began to shoot into the high narrow windows by which it is lighted. Aboosh Yacobe, pastor of the Protestant Church of the village, was the first one struck, but his wound was not serious, and he kept on his feet, giving such comfort as he could to his distressed companions. Seeing little effect from their efforts to dislodge the people and get at the booty, about midnight the Kurds took up part of the vaulted stone roof. Throwing in fire-brands through the opening thus made, they poured down kerosene on the blaze, at the same time firing into the defenseless crowd of men, women and children. A frantic rush was made for the door, but it was locked, and could be opened with the key only from the outside. As is the case with most of the old churches, in order to prevent their desecration by being used as stables for horses, the door was very small, only about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet high by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide. After much effort it was broken down, and the stifled, scorched, sorrow-stricken crowd poured out from the narrow egress, only to meet a deadly shower of bullets from the surrounding Kurds.

“Among the crowd was Jourjis Khathershaw, who was for some years pastor of the mission church in Mosul. As he came out he was at once recognized by his beard and intelligent face as one of the clergy, and was seized, thrown down and clubbed. One of the books which had been scattered about by the marauders was thrust into his mouth, and he was mockingly called upon to read the church service. Fire-brands were then thrown upon him. Restored partly to consciousness by the pain, he began to crawl away; whereupon he was again clubbed, drawn back, and burned to ashes.”

That the Sultan of Turkey has a tangible reason for putting Christians to death in this wholesale way there can be no doubt. He says that he is suppressing revolutionary uprisings, but that is ridiculous. There have been no revolutionary uprisings. The only demonstration at all resembling an uprising was the capture of Zeitoun by men driven to desperation at the thought of the fate about to overtake their wives, sisters and daughters. The capture of Zeitoun was not the result of revolutionary planning, although the leader of an Armenian society in London tried to claim the credit of it. The real reason for the massacres is to be found in this Mohammedan prayer:

“O, Allah; make their children orphans, and defile their bodies, cause their feet to slip, give them and their families, their house-hold, their women, their children, their relations by marriage, their possessions and their race, their wealth and their lands as booty to the Moslems, O, Lord of all creatures.”

Faithfully have the exhortations in this prayer been heeded. Christian children have been made orphans; the bodies of Christian women have been defiled by

lustful Moslem fiends; Christian feet have slipped in pools of blood, and Christian families and their possessions have been taken as booty by force of Moslem arms.

The persecution in Turkey is not a persecution of Armenians, but of all Christians. It is a crusade against Christ. It is directed as much against Christians in America as against Armenians in Turkey. The Armenians happen to be the most numerous of the Christian races in the Ottoman empire; therefore they bear the brunt of the crusade. The Jacobites, the Chaldeans and the Nestorians have their proportionate share.

Leaving out of consideration other evidence of equal importance, the mere fact that during massacres the Christians are called upon to accept Mohammed or meet death proves the religious character of the crusade. Priests and protestant pastors have invariably been selected for exhibitions of special hatred and cruelty. The Moslem butcher has taken keen delight in torturing holy men in the presence of their congregations and in hewing them down in the midst of their families. Each murdered pastor could have had life and honor and riches among the Turks had he consented to renounce Christ and accept Mohammed. I have already spoken of the heroism of the protestant pastor at Kharput. In my slight reference to the carnage in the Mardin and Diarbekr districts I have mentioned the death of a pastor in Kutterbul. The deaths of three others in Kutterbul and neighboring villages are typical of the fate of many holy men throughout the Turkish empire.

During the attack on Karabash, three miles from Kutterbul, Pastor Hanoosh Melkie took refuge with his family and many other persons in the large dove-cotes around the outskirts of the village. What followed is thus described by my informant:

“As soon as pastor Hanoosh in the dove-cotes knew that the village was taken he tried to open a small door opposite the one at which the Kurds were already forcing an entrance. Before he could get it open they broke in, and he was the first to meet them. Judging from his beard that he was the priest of the village, they supposed that he would have a large sum of money with him. He had only some bread, and taking a loaf from his bosom he gave it to one of them. This enraged them, yet they would have spared him had he lifted but one finger in token of acceptance of Islam. Refusing to do this he was struck down with a sword and killed before the eyes of his wife and children. His body was stripped and his family plundered.”

Hanna Sehda, a young preacher of much promise, escaped with his family from the Karabash dove-cotes. After wandering about and being fired on he at length found himself fleeing from a party of Kurds. The rest of the story is in the words of my correspondent:

“Already faint with hunger and having stripped off nearly all his clothing, he soon became stiff with cold, and could make but slow progress. He was soon overtaken by the Kurds to whom he refused to yield by accepting Islam to save his life. The last seen of him by one of his church members, as he looked back in his flight, he was extending his arms to ward off



the sword blows which hewed him down, after which a gun was discharged into his body. A few days after, one of his congregation, compelled by Moslems to go to the village where he had been killed, saw that his body had been burned. His baby girl and youngest boy died that night from exposure, while the elder boy, and his fair looking mother were led away into captivity."

Pastor Aboosh, already mentioned as the first person to be wounded in the Jacobite church at Kutterbul, was again wounded as he escaped through the broken door. Two days later he found the remnant of his family and part of his congregation in a deserted bath-house, where they were set upon by a party of Kurds. "Aboosh tried to persuade them," said the same writer, "to cease from further barbarities toward those who had already suffered so much. Perceiving that he was a 'spiritual head,' as the clergy are spoken of, the Kurds at once called on him to renounce his faith and accept Islam. He fixed a steady gaze upon them, but said nothing. 'Ha!' said one, 'see how the Infidel still holds stoutly to his faith.' Another said to him, 'Just raise one finger (this is accepted by them as a confession of one God and Mohammed his prophet) and you will not be harmed.' Instantly he calmly replied, 'I shall never raise my finger.' A Kurd near him made a thrust at him with a straight dagger, while another a little farther away shot him, in the presence of his flock."

Not only are priests and pastors specially selected for torture and death in this religious crusade, but churches are needlessly destroyed or made use of as

stables. Even in time of peace the destruction and confiscation of Christian churches is carried on with unflagging zeal. I have among my notes long lists of churches that were taken from the Armenians during times of normal quiet within the past two years and turned into stables, sheep folds and bath houses for Kurdish harems. The Armenians regard with a high degree of reverence and love the sanctity of their churches. To them any defilement of a church is an affront too great to be forgiven. The Mohammedan knows this, and makes use of it to harass and persecute his Christian neighbor.

When Kurds and Turks, in time of tranquility, select a church for confiscation, they often imitate the conduct of a wild beast playing with its prey. As a beginning the Kurds raid the church and carry off all the altar cloths and other portable property of any value. When the pastor and his congregation have had time to recover from this indignity the Kurds come again and defile the altar and sanctuary with nameless filth. This is usually repeated, after which the church is unmolested for a short time. Then the Kurds come in force, drive off or kill the priest and use the church for some ignoble purpose.

Apart from the torture and murder of priests, the confiscation of churches and monasteries, and the cry, "Islam or death," which is the battle note of all massacres, there are, to one who has visited the country, many other proofs of the religious nature of the crusade. These proofs are to be found in the conduct of Mohammedans toward their Christian neighbors in all the details of everyday life. They are so numerous

and so far-reaching that I shall not attempt to describe them here. In Turkey there is neither law nor justice for the Christian. As to law and order, the greatest law-breaker and criminal in the Ottoman empire is the government itself.

The judicial mind will naturally look for a reason for the present religious activity of the Sultan, as compared with the less violent persecutions of past years. It is due chiefly to the pressure brought to bear upon him by fanatical Mohammedans of high standing among the faithful. Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid is Kaliph of the Sunni sect of Islam and the "Shadow of God on Earth." The souls, as well as the bodies, of his subjects are in his keeping. Many zealous Mohammedans assert that the Kaliphate should not rest with Abd-ul-Hamid, but with an Arab, who has better claim to it. Last summer a force of Arabs actually made war on the Turks, mainly for that reason.

If Abd-ul-Hamid were compelled to resign his position of "Shadow of God on Earth" the substance of his earthly throne would go with it. He would lose not only his Kaliphate but his Sultanate, and very likely his head. Therefore, if he can appease the fanatics by putting a literal interpretation upon the bloodthirsty exhortations of Moslem prayers he will remain secure on his tottering throne. Abd-ul-Hamid may fear the frown of Europe, but he fears his constituents more.

In saying that the persecution of Christians in the Ottoman empire is a religious crusade, and in asserting that no massacre has been caused by a revolutionary uprising, I have no intention of denying that Ar-

menian revolutionary societies exist. They do exist, but they are all outside of Turkey. In my capacity of investigator of the Armenian question I should have fallen far short of my duty to the public had I failed to probe the revolutionary movement to the bottom. There are several Armenian patriotic societies working on different and sometimes conflicting lines. There are quack revolutionists whose sole purpose is to make a living out of their fellow-countrymen, and there are revolutionists whose patriotism is as unselfish and sincere as that which led to the battle of Bunker Hill. Among the quack revolutionists are scoundrels who deserve the contempt of all honest men. Among the patriots are preachers of the Gospel, teachers in schools and colleges, merchants and other men of character and ability. Their dream of "Free Armenia" may never, never come true; but in America, at least, the ambition of a sincere patriot can be understood.

The Sultan has shown such an overweening anxiety to throw blame for the revolutionary movement upon the unoffending shoulders of the American missionaries in Turkey that I consider it only just to say that, as a matter of actual fact, the missionaries know nothing about it. Living in Turkey they are out of the sphere of revolutionary activity. The Sultan brings against them a charge of revolutionary complicity as a means of getting them out of his dominions. He does not want them there, as he is already alarmed at the spread of education and other influences of civilization among the Christians. He prefers to remain in the dark. The white light of civilization is painful to his clouded eyes.



## III.

## THE REMEDY.

After nearly a year and a half of almost uninterrupted investigation I can see only one practical remedy for the present Armenian situation. There is nothing in sight to justify the hope that the condition of the country will improve. On the contrary, there are unmistakable signs that it will grow worse. Yet it seems as though nothing could be worse, short of total annihilation. Armenia is one huge flaming hell from end to end.

The relief funds are practically exhausted; yet the missionaries who distributed the relief have not fed one-fourth of the total number of hungry and destitute people. Half a million persons are wandering about in search of food or cowering in their ruined villages face to face with famine. They cannot be allowed to die of hunger and the epidemics of typhus, smallpox and other dreadful diseases now raging among them; yet even the coming of summer will not improve their condition. They cannot till the fields, even if allowed to do so in peace and security, for they have neither seed nor farming implements. During the massacres and raids last year they lost all of their possessions, including their household goods and most of their own clothing.

It is hopeless to try to feed the Armenians until the Turk grows tired of persecuting and murdering them. So long as no definite steps are taken for the permanent improvement of the condition of the Armenians



any relief given will be only temporary in its effects. To continue it is merely pouring water into a sieve. Friends of the persecuted Christians in Turkey must unite upon a practical plan for permanent relief, or join with Europe in abandoning the Armenians to their fate.

I have a practical remedy. As a result of two visits to Asia Minor to investigate the Armenian question I am convinced that the only course open now is to RESCUE the Armenians from the flaming pit which has engulfed them, and to assist them to find homes in less barbarous lands than Turkey.

It is not necessary that the Armenians should remain in Turkey. There are billions of acres of uncultivated land in South America, Australia, South Africa, Persia, Russia and Siberia, where the Armenians may be colonized to great advantage to themselves. They are hardy, frugal and industrious, and they would make splendid pioneers for the development of new countries. In my travels about the world I have visited many places that could take all the Armenians in Turkey and would be glad to get them. The matter of climate is not a formidable obstacle, for experience has shown that the Armenian thrives well in any climate, whether it be on the frozen steppes of Russia or the burning sands of Egypt.

On my return from Asia Minor recently I submitted a Rescue Plan to the Armenian Relief Association, of New York City, with the request that funds be raised immediately to carry it into effect. The gentlemen comprising the Association gave the plan their

unanimous approval, and voted to undertake its execution at once, without, however, abandoning their temporary relief work, which will necessarily be continued until the need for it no longer exists. The members of the Association are so widely known and hold so high a place in the confidence and esteem of the public that their names alone are a guarantee that the funds received for the Rescue work will be wisely and carefully administered. A full list of officers will be found farther on in this volume.

The obstacles in the way of this Rescue work are thoroughly well known and fully appreciated. I realize better than anyone else that the undertaking is difficult, but I can conscientiously say, as a practical man of affairs, that it is by no means impossible. Good management alone is necessary to its success.

As I have no desire to take the Sultan of Turkey into the confidence of the Association in this matter I am debarred from making public the details of the plan. All that may be said at present is that the Rescue Fund will be used to take such means as may be found desirable to rescue destitute Armenians from the horror of their present situation and transport them to places of safety where they may begin life anew. The subscribers to the Fund need no further guarantee than the names of the officers of the Association.

The need for a Rescue Fund is appallingly urgent. No one who has not actually been on the ground can realize the awfulness of the state of things, and no one who has not passed through the experience can appreciate the utter impotency of human tongue and pen to

tell the story as it is. Even the American missionaries, necessarily accustomed to the sufferings of persecuted Christian people, are overwhelmed at the magnitude of the disaster and the depth of the distress. A missionary in Kharput says, "It almost wears me out to stand up against the constant pressure of want and misery." In Kharput 61,586 persons had received aid up to March 2, yet the demand was increasing. A missionary stationed there writes:

"The tremendous size of the problem facing us grows upon us as we go on. I do not think that any centre in the country is surrounded by such a vast number of destitute people as is Kharput. The number of the needy increases, because many who had a little food have now exhausted their store. For multitudes the end of April will bring no alleviation of their distress. There are thousands of widows and orphans thrown upon the world with no bread winners. There are artisans without tools, farmers without seed or cattle, and people without houses. What are they to do? The prospect is awful.

"As we consider matters it seems to us that the estimate of 100,000 destitute people in this field is not exaggerated, as new villages keep coming in whose supplies are exhausted. If we should reckon on giving one lira for each destitute person it would require one hundred thousand liras, and one lira (\$4.44) per soul is not an extravagant estimate if people are to be at all adequately clothed and fed.

"It is not a district that has suffered and individuals in distress, but a kingdom desolated and a nation in danger of perishing."

It is natural that this writer should suppose that there were more destitute persons in the Kharput district than in any other; yet I think that he would acknowledge the claims of the province of Van if he knew the facts. On the day on which his letter was written the missionaries were feeding nineteen thousand starving persons in the city of Van alone, and at that time the funds were exhausted and the number of applications for relief was increasing. No relief was being given to the 350 villages that had been devastated by the Kurds last November.

In Marash between four and five thousand refugees have died of smallpox, dysentery and typhus, yet that fact has not diminished the number of refugees who flocked there from Zeitoun and the surrounding country. A message lately received from Marash says: "The problem of how to help sufferers here and in Zeitoun comes upon us with crushing force. The misery is past human imagination." On their way to Marash the Zeitoun refugees were shamefully treated by the soldiers, who stoned, beat and clubbed them with great cruelty.

In Bitlis the Christians are casting about for some means of getting away. Thousands of them will emigrate as soon as the means are provided. My correspondent in Bitlis writes:

"Every other day a panic destroys the hope of the day before. The Turks are constantly threatening, and arrests are the order of the day. The emigration plan is the only salvation for the people. This awful distress must inevitably continue for months, if not for two years. A second harvest must come before



people can eat to decent satisfaction. Even suppose thousands of pounds are poured into the country for the reconstruction of the farming industry, the coming harvest cannot be large."

Heretofore the presence of the American missionaries has been to some extent a restraint upon the Sultan in his persecution of Christians, but there are strong indications which point to the expulsion of the missionaries from Turkey before the close of this year. It is believed by persons best qualified to speak on the subject that while the Sultan may not go to the extreme of issuing an order for the expulsion of the missionaries in a body he will get them out one at a time. To do this he will bring charges against them individually, thus causing them to be recalled to Constantinople to stand trial before the United States Consul-General. After their acquittal and discharge by the Consul-General they will be so annoyed and harassed by agents of the government that they will be compelled to leave the country.

This policy of expulsion has already been begun. Charges of revolutionary complicity have been made against missionaries in three Turkish cities. One of the accused persons, the Rev. Mr. George P. Knapp, was taken from his home in Bitlis on March 29 to go to Constantinople to stand trial. The Turkish government made no secret of the fact that it intended to expel Mr. Knapp from Asia Minor. Mr. Knapp's chief offense was his activity in distributing relief to the starving Armenians. For many weeks he was a prisoner in his own house, not daring to step outside of his door lest he be shot. The Turks repeatedly threatened to take his life.



When the Sultan succeeds in getting rid of the American missionaries he will be free to do as he pleases with the Christian inhabitants of his empire, for there will be no one to give aid to the destitute and no one to make known the results of persecutions and massacres. The Christians will suffer and die in silence. With the exception of British consuls, whose reports are promptly pigeon-holed by the Foreign Office, there will be no one to hear their cries of distress and their appeals for help. The Turk will have full sway.

Before summer is well begun many of the ladies attached to the mission stations in Turkey will probably be on their way to Constantinople. It has already been decided that as soon as the situation grows more threatening the ladies will be recalled. Each mission station, however, will be allowed to decide for itself the date of departure. This is a course which I have urged repeatedly upon all the missionaries whom I met in Turkey. It is fitting and consistent that the gentlemen of the mission stations should remain at their posts, for they have some chance of escaping in case of a general massacre. They know the country, the languages, and the ways of the people. They have good saddle horses, and most of them can ride fast and far if need be. With the ladies it is entirely different. The mere fact that they are Christian women is enough to subject them to outrage and death. They cannot, as I have been compelled to do, ride 220 miles on horseback in three days, nor can they exchange rifle shots at close range with Kurdish brigands or extricate themselves from the hands of robbers.

The ladies are not actually needed for the distribution of relief funds. All that they are doing in that line can be done efficiently by the men.

Even the work which Miss Kimball is doing in Van with the assistance of Miss Fraser, Miss Huntington and Miss Knapp, can be done by her fellow-missionaries the Rev. H. M. Allen and Dr. George C. Reynolds. There is no practical necessity for the presence of four American girls in Van, when two capable men are there to stand by the ship until it is overwhelmed. It will serve no good purpose to allow these girls to make martyrs of themselves. Their martyrdom will not help the Armenians, nor will it wean the Turk from his bloodthirsty prayers and his murderous fanaticism. If their deaths would convert Turkey to Christianity or even put an end to the persecution of the Armenians there would be some justification, but the present situation calls for no such heroic measures.

It is not a question of mere willingness to die for the spread of the Gospel. Of the fifty-three missionaries in Turkey and Persia whom I have the pleasure of knowing not one would refuse to become a martyr for the cause of Christ; yet I should be very sorry to have any of them throw their lives away when no distinct gain to Christianity would result. With few exceptions the ladies at the Turkish mission stations are not evangelists; they are teachers in the mission schools. I do not think that any rational-minded person will advocate the outrage and martyrdom of American girls for the sake of keeping Armenian schools open in Turkey. Knowing the situation from actual observation I most earnestly urge that the ladies be recalled.

If one considers the present situation from a business point of view the utter impossibility of doing anything to repair the damage and put the people on their feet again will be apparent. The figures from the missionaries having charge of the relief funds in the devastated districts tell their own story. In Kharput alone half a million dollars are needed to furnish food and clothing to the destitute, to say nothing of rebuilding the destroyed houses. Another half million will be needed in the province of Van. But the million dollars thus wanted for mere subsistence represents only two districts. How much would be required to feed and clothe the people, rebuild their houses and restock their farms with oxen, sheep, cattle, farming implements and seed for the spring crops is beyond computation. The amount would be several millions. Considering that America and Great Britain together have contributed a beggarly fraction of what has been imperatively demanded the outlook for the Armenians is not cheering.

Let the situation be considered solely as a business proposition. Assuming that there are five hundred thousand persons in need of food and other assistance, and taking the Kharput estimate of one lira each for subsistence, the amount needed to ward off hunger is seen to be, in round numbers, about two millions and a half of dollars. Assuming, further, that seven dollars a head are needed for the rebuilding of houses, the purchase of farming tools, and the restocking of stables with sheep and cattle and draught oxen, the total is three millions and a half.

This is a small estimate, as the loss in Zilé, where

one of the least of the massacres took place, was nearly a million dollars. In Trebizond the loss was another million. But I am not estimating on the cost of restoring the destroyed property to its original value: I am merely making a minimum calculation for food and the restocking of farms. The amount needed, therefore, to enable these people to maintain a bare existence, is six million dollars. America was six months in raising \$160,000 for the famine funds. Anyone can estimate how long it would take, at that rate, to obtain the whole amount. As a business proposition the thing is impossible.

The Rescue work is not only possible but is comparatively inexpensive. It costs less to feed and find shoes for a man during the short time in which he is traveling to a place of safety than to try to feed him, clothe him and set him on his feet at home in his ruined village, where a repetition of last year's disaster is to be looked for from year to year until the Armenian race is exterminated.

I wish it to be distinctly borne in mind that I am not formulating a mere theory: I am giving facts. I have investigated the situation in the distressed districts of Armenia, and I have examined into the condition of the large Armenian colonies in Russia and elsewhere. I have discussed the emigration plan with missionaries, consuls, merchants and refugees. At the present moment there is no other practicable solution of the Armenian question.

Assuming, as I most certainly do assume, that every American man and woman, whether Christian church member or not, has a sincere desire, as a mat-



ter of common humanity, to give practical, permanent relief to the starving Armenians, I offer this plan as the only possible thing that can be done.

I ask the people of America for one million dollars with which to Rescue the Armenians from the pit of lust, rapine, outrage and murder which holds them.

I ask the members of the churches, for the sake of the Christ whom they worship and whose words are the guiding lines of their daily lives, to join in this work of Rescue.

I ask those who are not church members to come, for the sake of common humanity, to the aid of these human beings in bitter distress. No man, whatever his religion, would let even a dog starve to death.

I ask mothers with little children in their arms to save other Christian mothers and children from death by violence and hunger.

I ask fathers of families to help other men protect wives and daughters from defilement and pollution.

I ask young men to assist other young men to get mothers and sisters away to a place of safety.

From the young women of America I ask pity and help for the young women of Armenia whose fate is worse than death. Help them to escape.

As a practical man of affairs I ask practical men to take hold with the members of the Association in carrying out a practicable working plan for the permanent relief of the Armenians.

Many persons have refused to subscribe to the temporary relief funds on the ground that unless the money could be used for the permanent improvement of the condition of the Armenians it would be poured



into a sieve. To those persons I offer the Rescue plan as a measure of permanent relief, founded on sound business principles. Every dollar of the Rescue Fund will produce permanent relief, and instead of running through a sieve it will be the nucleus for the growth of happy, industrious Armenian homes in kinder lands than Turkey. In presenting this plan I desire to specially bring it to the notice of business men, who will appreciate the solid character of the foundation on which it rests.

In asking for funds I acknowledge the right of every subscriber to know the names of the men into whose hands his money goes. It is not necessary to print here the names of all the members of the Armenian Relief Association, as the publication of the list of officers will be sufficient. The officers are as follows:

President.—The Rev. Henry Y. Satterlee, D.D., Bishop of Washington, D. C.

First Vice-President.—The Hon. Levi P. Morton, Governor of the State of New York and ex-Vice-President of the United States.

Second Vice-President.—The Rt. Rev. Henry C. Potter, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of New York.

Honorary Secretary.—The Rev. David J. Burrell, D. D., pastor of the Marble Collegiate Reformed Church, New York City.

Treasurer.—Charles H. Stout, Esq., Cashier of the National Bank of the Republic, New York City.

General Secretary.—Herant Mesrob Kiretchjian, 203 Broadway, New York, office of the Association.

Vice-Presidents.—The Hon. William L. Strong, Mayor of New York City; the Rev. Lyman Abbott,

D.D., pastor of the late Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's church in Brooklyn, N. Y.; Gen. Horace Porter; the Rev. David H. Greer, D.D., rector of St. Bartholomew's Church; Prof. A. D. F. Hamlin, of Columbia College, son of the Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, D.D., founder of Robert College, Constantinople, Turkey; Augustus D. Shepard, Esq., Vice-President of the American Bank Note Company; the Rev. William R. Huntington, D.D., rector of Grace Church, New York City; Prof. William H. Thomson, M.D., of the University Medical College; the Rev. Robert S. MacArthur, D.D., pastor of Calvary Baptist Church; Prof. C. W. E. Body, D.D., of the General Theological Seminary; Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, Esq.; William P. St. John, Esq., President of the Mercantile National Bank; the Rev. James M. King, D.D., pastor of the Union M. E. Church, New York; the Very Rev. Eugene A. Hoffman, Dean of the General Theological Seminary.

Executive Committee.—Chairman, J. Bleecker Miller, Esq., of the Lawyers' Title Insurance Company, New York City; Secretary, Nicholas R. Mersereau, Esq., merchant; Ludlow Ogden, Esq., President of the Church Club; the Rev. C. W. E. Body, D.D.; Prof. William H. Thomson, M.D.; Henry H. Man, Esq., of the law firm of Man & Man; Prof. A. D. F. Hamlin; Robert G. Hone, Esq., of the Lawyers' Bond and Mortgage Company; Charles H. Stout, Esq.

Most of these names are known in every part of the American continent. All are familiar to residents of New York City. The men who bear them need no commendation here, and it is unnecessary to say that funds placed in the hands of the Armenian Relief

Association for the Rescue of the Armenians will be carefully used.

During the past winter the Association has been hard at work raising funds for the relief work among the starving Christians in Turkey. Its collections have been forwarded for distribution to the American missionaries and to Miss Clara Barton, who has been in Constantinople as agent of the Red Cross Society. But the purpose for which the Association exists is not confined to the giving of temporary relief. It has in view the permanent improvement of the condition of the Armenian people. The Rescue work, therefore, is to the Association a matter of the most pressing importance. Its method of treatment of the Armenian situation is broad, philanthropic and practical.

As an American citizen I ask my fellow-countrymen, without distinction of race, religion or creed, to join in this work. Let every reader of this little book fill out the subscription blank on the last page, cut out the entire leaf, and send it to Mr. Stout, Treasurer of the Association, whose address appears thereon. Any subscription, no matter how small or how large the amount, will be welcomed, and the giver may be certain that it will be a practical, permanent help to the Armenian people. I shall not consider that the book has done its full duty unless the subscription page is cut out.

Under no circumstances should money be given to persons representing themselves as agents or collectors for this Fund. Subscriptions should be sent direct to Mr. Stout, the only person authorized to receive them.

# Armenian Rescue Fund.

1896.

To CHARLES H. STOUT, Esq.,  
Treasurer Armenian Relief Association,  
National Bank of the Republic,  
New York City.

Dear Sir:

Inclosed please find my subscription of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
to the Armenian Rescue Fund.

Name, \_\_\_\_\_

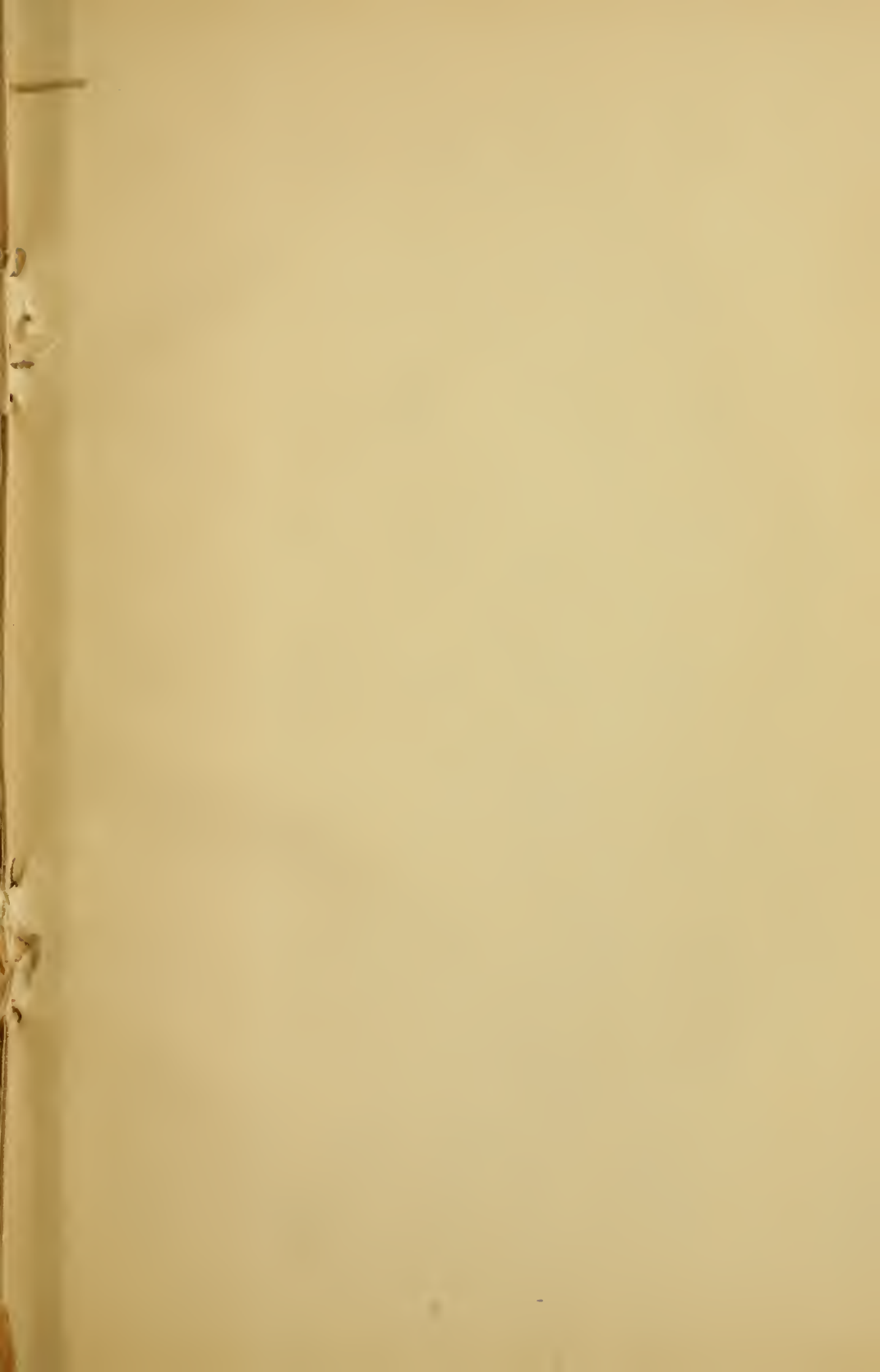
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