

DIANA APCAR

BETRAYED

ARMENIA

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Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	19

Diana Agabeg Apcar

Betrayed Armenia

WHY AND WHEREFORE

In making a study of my race, I have found three marked characteristics Intelligence – Energy – Industry. Combined with these three characteristics is an intense Love of Nationality. We live in a complex world. In an independent people these characteristics and this sentiment are laudable Virtues. In a subject people they are Crimes.

After I had laid this bitter Truth to heart, I did not have to seek for the Why and Wherefore of the Armenian Massacres.

The Armenian Massacres stand without their parallel in history. The human mind staggers to contemplate the fiendish orgies of which they have been the victims, and no pen can describe their horrors: and this helpless christian people are to-day in the same deadly peril as they have been since the famous Treaty of Berlin consigned them bound hand and foot to the mercy of their executioners.

The Armenians may be led again “as sheep to the slaughter” and the work of extermination may be completed – Jesus Christ was crucified on Calvary and the servant is not greater than his Lord – but the work of their extermination can only be completed when the evil influences in the Turkish Empire have reached their culminating point. Hitherto the Powers of Europe have by their jealousies and rivalries cultivated these evil influences, they have watered them and made them grow, but when their culminating point is reached, they must re-act on Christendom and the natural consequence must follow. Those who sow the wind, must reap the whirlwind. It is in the natural order of things.

I will allow that Liberty, Justice, Equality, Fraternity are the watchwords of Young Turkey, but Young Turkey is only a small minority; the great majority of the Turkish nation are not Young Turks.

The question therefore resolves itself into this critical point: “What will Christendom do even now?”

The trouble began in Adana. An armed mob strengthened and augmented by soldiers fell in overwhelming numbers upon the unarmed Christians. The Armenian population of Antioch and vicinity were practically wiped out and the Armenian villages in the Alexandretta district destroyed with immense loss of life. Hadjim, Kessab and the neighbouring villages were burned. The Armenian quarter in Tarsus was ruined and ill-omened Marash stained again with the blood of thousands of Armenians. Zeitoon was desolated. The entire population of Kirikon between Aleppo and Alexandretta were massacred to the last babe. The mob and the soldiers burned what they could not carry away, so that the material loss has been enormous. In place of the former abundance and thriving industries there are instead desolated provinces and the charred and blackened remains of pillaged and ruined homes, and the residue of those who escaped massacre are reduced to homelessness and starvation.

DISINTERESTED EVIDENCE

I have thought it advisable to insert a few extracts from accounts of the Massacres of April, 1909, given by disinterested witnesses.

History repeats itself. In 1895 Turkish soldiers fell upon seventy to eighty young women and girls in a church, where they had fled for refuge, and after hideously outraging them, barricaded them in, setting fire to the building at the same time, and derisively shouting to their victims as they were being roasted alive, to call upon their Christ to save them now.

“We are having a perfectly hideous time here. Thousands have been murdered – 25,000 in this province they say; but the number is probably greater, for every Christian village was wiped out. In Adana about 5000 have perished. After Turks and Armenians had made peace, the Turks came in the night with hose and kerosene, and set fire to what remained of the Armenian quarter. Next day the French and Armenian schools were fired. Nearly everyone in the Armenian school perished, anybody trying to escape being shot down by the soldiers.”

“The Turkish Authorities do nothing except arrest unoffending Armenians, from whom by torture they extort the most fanciful confessions. Even the wounded are not safe from their injustice. A man was being carried in to me yesterday when he was seized and taken off to gaol. I dare not think what his fate may be.”

“For fiends incarnate commend me to the Turks. Nobody is safe from them. They murder babies in front of their mothers; they half murder men, and violate the wives while the husbands are lying there dying in pools of blood.”

“The authorities did nothing, and the soldiers were worse than the crowd, for they were better armed. One house in our quarter was burned with 115 people inside. We counted the bodies. The soldiers set fire to the door, and as the windows had iron bars, nobody could get out. Everybody in the house was roasted alive. They were all women and children and old people.” – Extract from letter of Mrs. Doughty-Wylie, wife of British Consul at Adana; published in the London “Daily Mail.”

“The soldiers led the way in these horrors and were guilty of atrocities so terrible that they can never be described in a public print. Even the soldiers landed at Mersina – the soldiers sent expressly to restore order – added to the crimes and for three days continued the murders unchecked.” – Extract from the London “Daily Mail.”

“The outbreak began in the Armenian bazaar on April 14th, and on the pretence that an Armenian revolt was in progress the Redifs or reserves were called out. These, as villainous a crew as could well be found, had arms and ammunition served out to them, and immediately joined in the slaughter, and all the worst of the subsequent killing, looting, and house burning was done by them.”

“The Armenians did not take their punishment lying down. Their quarter of the town was so well defended that the mob, mad as they were with lust for blood, would not venture into it. Houses on the outskirts were besieged by thousands of men and held by half a dozen; in fact, the courage of these hordes of Moslem savages was only equal to butchering women and children and unarmed men. I saw a Greek house which was held for eight hours by one Armenian with a shotgun against hundreds of Turks firing from the surrounding houses and the minaret of a mosque. At last his cartridges gave-out, but not for two hours after that did the mob pluck up

courage to rush the house.” – Extracts from accounts by Mr. J. L. C. Booth, special correspondent of the London “Graphic.”

“Kessab was a thrifty Armenian town of about eight thousand inhabitants, situated on the landward slope of Mt. Cassius (Arabic, Jebel Akra) which stands out prominently upon the Mediterranean seacoast half-way between Alexandretta and Latakia. Kessab is now a mass of blackened ruins, the stark walls of the churches and houses rising up out of the ashes and charred timbers heaped on every side. What must it mean to the five thousand men and women and little children who have survived a painful flight to the seacoast and have now returned to their mountain home, only to find their houses sacked and burned! There were nine Christian villages which clustered about Kessab in the valleys below. Several of these have been completely destroyed by fire. All have been plundered and the helpless people driven out or slain.”

“Can you imagine the feelings of the Kessab people as they climbed on foot the long trail up the mountain, and then as they came over the ridge into full view of their charred and ruined dwellings? Their stores of wheat, barley and rice had been burned; clothing, cooking utensils, furniture and tools had gone; their goats, cows and mules had been stolen; their silk industries stamped out; their beloved churches reduced to smouldering heaps. The bodies of their friends and relatives who had been killed had not been buried. And yet the love of home is so strong that the people have settled down there with the determination to clear up the debris and rebuild their houses.” – Extracts from “The Sack of Kessab,” Stephen Van R. Trowbridge.

As these sheets are going through the press there comes news of famine at Zeitoon. The Rev. F. W. Macallum, American Missionary at Marash, writes to the Rev. W. W. Peet, American Missionary at Constantinople, that 12,000 souls in and around Zeitoon are dying of hunger; they are wandering about in rags, mixing bran and water, and cooking and eating it, if they can get even that. Rev. Macallum adds, “The same story comes to us from all sides. As we foresaw all along, from now on the distress will be greatest.”

If 50,000 were massacred, the list of those who have died and are dying of homelessness and starvation will exceed 150,000. It is true; and the numbers are not exaggerated. Last year the people reaped no harvest, and this year there are no sowings.

The latest news is that Mush, a prosperous Armenian village that had escaped the desolation of the massacres, has been plundered in a night attack by armed Kurds, and the villagers are now reduced to extreme distress. Before the outbreak the Armenian patriarchal vicar at Mush had repeatedly appealed to the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople, and the Armenian Patriarch had repeatedly appealed to the Authorities at Constantinople asking protection for the villagers of Mush as a Kurdish attack was apprehended. It is evident that the authorities at Constantinople are unable to protect thriving Armenian villages from Kurdish and Turkish raiders.

PREFACE TO 2ND PRINTING

The first and second parts of this little book were written and printed in pamphlet form for circulation in the United States, shortly after the Adana Massacres of April, 1909. I have now thought it advisable to add a Supplement of a short history of the Origin of the Armenians and the Introduction and Revival of Christianity in Armenia.

The illustrations and the extracts from the periodicals “Harper’s Monthly,” “The Wide World” and the “Cosmopolitan” have been added to the 2nd printing.

INTRODUCTION TO 2ND PRINTING

My object in writing this little book is to lay the hard case of my unfortunate race before the men and women of the United States; since it is from the United States that the American Missionaries have gone forth, who have been the only helping influence from without for my suffering people in Asiatic Turkey. To the earnest and devoted men and women of the American Missions, we Armenians owe a debt of gratitude which we can never repay.

If in the contents of the pages of this little book I have exaggerated Facts by one whit or one iota, if I have deviated by one hair's breadth from the Truth, I stand to be judged.

“God save us from another Adana, but the sword of Islam has not been dulled” was one of the clarion notes sounded at the Sixth International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement, which was held at Rochester, New York. The man who sounded that clarion note knew Islam, and because knowing of my own knowledge that the sword of Islam has not been dulled, I tremble lest its sharp edge fall once more on the neck of my helpless race. If I knew and felt sure in mine own heart that the sword of Islam was dulled, I would be content to let bygones be bygones, and to hold my peace and be silent for ever.

Like the sudden explosion of a volcano in the physical world, comes the explosion of a Turkish Massacre of Armenians in the moral world. It comes just in that way; the subterranean fires are always there, but all of a sudden the sulphur flames of religious fanaticism burst, the lava floods of race hatred and lust of plunder, break forth and run in fiery streams; the unfortunate victims are pounced upon, swooped upon, pillaged, plundered, butchered, slaughtered, subjected to outrages so hideous, cruel, loathsome, and revolting, that no pen could depict their horrible realities and the details can never go into print. The human mind is staggered and asks itself the question if even the imaginations of fiends and devils could originate such horrors. Then this orgy of the human fiends is arrested. For the time being the appetite for blood, lust, and plunder is satisfied; for the time being, the eye is content with the scenes of havoc and desolation lying under the sun; the smell of corpses is in the air, the odor from the carcasses of the “christian swine” reek in the nostrils of the Turk, he turns away, his jaws dripping with blood, and rests to couch for a future spring. We have seen that sort of an end to the tragedy of a tiger's victim: the tiger has eaten his fill, he rests, to keep guard over the crunched bones and mangled bits of bloody flesh that bestrew the earth. So also now there is a residue left of those that have served as the meat and wine of this devil's feast; the demons have gorged themselves over the banquet, and now there are left over the broken remains of the banquet, the miserable residue homeless and destitute.

Civilized nations have received a temporary moral shock, like a shock that spreads from the centre of an explosion; the electric vibration running far and wide from the scene of the centre of devastation. There are among these civilized nations generous and kind-hearted people who open their purse strings; they give money to purchase shelter, food and clothing for these homeless, naked and hungry beggars, made homeless, naked and hungry through no fault of their own. But oh! ye generous and kind hearted people! can any power under heaven assuage the heart anguish of this miserable residue? Can they be made by any means of human comfort to forget the black horrors or recover from the effects of the fires of the hideous affliction through which they have passed? What is there left for a woman who has seen with her own eyes the slaughter and heard with her own ears the dying cry of her murdered child? even her reason must give way under the stress of her anguish. All ye who are mothers, I appeal to you, for one moment to put yourselves in the place of thousands of such mothers, in whose hearts the same mother's love burns as in yours, and then measure the depth of their agony.

Generous and kind hearted people who open your purse strings; would to God I entreat, ye would raise up your voices and demand that this hideous slaughter and oppression of a helpless

christian race should cease. Would to God I entreat, ye would raise up your voices and demand that this people of an industrious, intelligent christian race, robust in mind and body, should be let to live. Would to God I entreat, that ye would raise up your voices and demand for them that security of life and property to which they are entitled just as equally as all other peoples.

Public Sentiment has done great things in the world's history. Public Sentiment liberated Greece, The Lebanon, The Balkan States from Turkish Oppression. Slavery was abolished in the United States through Public Sentiment: but alas! does Public Sentiment sleep for this helpless Christian race. Are they not God's creatures? have they not a right to live on God's earth as other nations? Does Humanity, does Christianity allow that tender babes and children should be hideously and horribly mutilated and butchered before the eyes of their mothers, or that the ears of mothers should be rent with the cries of the dying agony of their murdered children? Does Humanity, does Christianity allow that helpless women should be forcibly subjected to the most hideous, the most loathsome, the most revolting, and the most cruel outrages? Does Humanity, does Christianity, allow all this?

Christian Governments have organized a Hague Conference of Peace and Civilization, but they have closed its doors to the cause of a bleeding christian race groaning under the yoke of the cruellest oppressors that the world has yet known. Christian men and women have held up their hands in horror at the Indian Juggernaut; but alas! the political wheels of Christian Governments have been a Greater Juggernaut for a helpless christian race. It is by Christian Governments that "we are made as the filth of the world, and as the offscouring of all things unto this day." It is as if the answer to our groanings had been made by Christian Governments in just these words:

"We know that you have had frightful grievances, such as have been beyond the measure of human endurance. We know that since the Treaty of Berlin your history has been written in blood and tears, as the history of no other nation has been written before or now. We know that your women are subjected to the most revolting and hideous agonies, and your babes and children hounded to hideous deaths. We know that the sum total of your wrongs and sufferings is so great, that the cry of its anguish is piercing the very heavens, but really, our political and commercial jealousies prevent; and we each one of us being on the look out lest our separate political and commercial interests in the Empire of your oppressors be endangered, cannot regard you. It may be the deadliest scandal of Christendom that we Christian Powers should be all gathered together, one against another, in the Empire of your Oppressors, as eagles gather together round a carcass; but really there is no help for it; and if you must die hideously by a hellish extermination, why then you must die, and we have to condone your hellish extermination, for in any case, each one of us must secure his own political and commercial interests in this same Empire of your Oppressors."

In "Transcaucasia and Ararat," published by Mr. James Bryce in 1876, there occurs in the chapter entitled "Some Political Reflections" the following passage:

"The attention of the West was so much drawn towards Herzegovina and Bulgaria by the events of 1876 that the miseries of the Asiatic subjects of the Porte have been unreasonably forgotten or neglected. They are fully as wretched as the Slavs or Cretans have been; and in so far worse off, that in Europe there exists no large body of tribes making murder and robbery its regular and daily occupation as the Kurds, and latterly the Circassians also, have done in Armenia. If anyone will take the trouble to read the complaints of oppressions and cruelties presented to the Porte by the Armenian Patriarchate in 1872 (since reprinted in England) and some of the more recent statements printed by the Armenians in England on the same topic, he will see that the state of Turkish Asia presents as grave and pressing a problem as that of Bulgaria itself."

In the 4th edition of the same book, published in 1896, the following note appears to the passage I have quoted:

“Shortly after this was written, the Blue Books presented to Parliament, containing reports from British Consuls in Asiatic Turkey, showed that things were really far worse there than they had been in Bulgaria or Herzegovina.”

What has followed since 1876 is too well known. For seeking redress from their frightful grievances the Armenians were hunted like wild beasts and killed like rats and flies during the Hamidian régime.

You will tell me, my christian friends, that with the rise of the reform party in Turkey, the era of massacres is at an end, and I will tell you that the conditions of 1876 and 1896 have not actually changed, though they may seemingly appear so to the uninformed and uninitiated. I will answer you that the hideous massacres of April last happened nine months after the reform party first rose in power, and nine months after the inauguration of the Constitution. I do not question the goodwill of the reform party, but the reform party does not comprise the whole Turkish nation, and until the Turk learns to become liberal, civilized and human, there may be no more Armenians left, unless some Christian Power such as the United States demands their protection and enforces it. No! my Christian friends, it can be well for other Christians in the Turkish Empire with their powerful Governments at their back; but alas! there is no security for a subject people alien in race and religion.

The massacres in April last raged from Adana to Alexandretta, and according to authenticated reports about fifty thousand men, women and children were hideously exterminated; more than this, the last massacres were especially characterized by the most hideous, the most loathsome, the most revolting and ferocious cruelties perpetrated on women and children. Now what other name can we find for the perpetrators of this diabolical orgy, except to call them fiends incarnate; and who is the bold man who can guarantee that these same fiends incarnate have become metamorphosed and changed all of a sudden; or that the handful of liberal Turks at Constantinople are capable of controlling and restraining them. We have not even heard that the leaders and participators of the last massacres have been punished as they deserved; and what is the reason they are left unpunished? because the Government is afraid to punish Mahommedans for killing Christians; because the liberal Turks dare not punish the “true believers” for killing “Kaffirs.”

The religion of Mahommed, the religion of the sword, has been infused into the Turk, and to understand the effect of the religion of Mahommed upon the Turk, it is necessary to regard it from four aspects, or from four points of analysis. First, the fundamental doctrine and law of the religion. Second, the character of the founder as an example to his followers. Third, the racial and ethnographic characteristics of the Turk. Fourth, the effect which this particular religion would be likely to have on this particular race. When we have viewed the Turk and his government from these four points of analysis, we have the explanation of all the woe and desolation which have lain over the countries under Turkish rule.

“When ye encounter the unbelievers strike off their heads until you have made a great slaughter of them” is a chapter of the Koran which the Turk has religiously and steadfastly made his creed.

In conclusion, I will ask my readers to compare one point of difference between the two races, the oppressor and the oppressed. Thousands upon thousands of Armenian women, thousands upon thousands of Armenian children, have been hounded to death, or savagely, ferociously, horribly and loathsomely maltreated by the Turk, and yet in all the agonizing years when Massacre has succeeded upon Massacre, has there been one known case or one single instance of a Turkish woman or child maltreated by Armenians?

The last massacres though especially organized from the Palace at Constantinople, were officially announced to originate from an affray between one Armenian and three Turks, in which the single handed one, on the one side, grappling with the three on the other, killed one of the three: given equal numbers and arms, the Armenian is always a match for the Turk, but alas for him that unequal numbers and want of arms have always made him the victim of his oppressor.

Ahmed Riza Bey in the first part (*Ses Causes*) of his book “La Crise de L’Orient” published in Paris in 1907 holds a brief for his nation which through its own fallacious arguments falls to the ground. I will quote one passage as an example.

“Jamais les populations chrétiennes ne se sont révoltées, spontanément, d’elles-mêmes. Les révoltes ont toujours été partielles et espacées, ce qui tend bien à prouver qu’elles sont provoquées non par certaines injustices administratives que nous savons être constantes et les mêmes pour tous, mais par les sourdes menées de l’extérieur. Les agences consulaires, les écoles étrangères, les maisons des missionnaires, couvertes par les Capitulations, ont servi de foyer de propagande, de dépôts d’armes, et même de refuge pour les perturbateurs. Souvent les ambassadeurs sont intervenus pour faire gracier des rebelles pris et condamnés. On se rappelle avec quelle solennité les Arméniens qui s’étaient introduits dans la Banque Ottomane furent conduits sains et saufs à bord d’un bateau par le drogman de l’Ambassade russe – leur complice.

“Si ces prétendus patriotards sont tant soutenus et choyés dans le monde occidental, c’est parce qu’ils constituent un élément ou plutôt un instrument de destruction au service de certains Européens élevés dans les préjugés des Croissades et qui crient avec Chateaubriand: (‘L’espèce humaine ne peut que gagner à la destruction de l’Empire Ottoman’).”

The author of “La Crise de L’Orient” continues in this strain. Are we then to suppose that the British Consuls, men whose truthfulness has never been impeached, whose reports on the unsupportable sufferings of the subject christian races and the oppressions and hideous atrocities of the Turks, have filled volumes: and likewise the American Missionaries, men who have deservedly gained the honor and respect of the world, whose statements have corroborated the British Consular reports; have been according to Ahmed Riza Bey the mischief-makers in the Turkish Empire? since it is from them alone the world has gained the widest and most correct knowledge of the daily miseries and oppressions under which the subject Christian races have groaned. Are we also to suppose that men like Mr. James Bryce and Dr. Dillon have by mendacious writings upheld them, British Consul and American Missionary, liars, and mischief makers? Or rather are we not to suppose that if thinking men and women in the world have come to cry out with Chateaubriand “L’espèce humaine ne peut que gagner à la destruction de l’Empire Ottoman” it is because the Turks have earned the world’s condemnation through their own diabolical acts, and on account of the woe and desolation which Turkish rule has worked over the fairest provinces under the sun. If the Turk will turn from the evil of his ways unto good, the stigma of “the unspeakable Turk” which now attaches itself to him, will cease to be a veritable truth. The bringing about of the transformation rests with himself.

Further in answer to Ahmed Riza Bey’s account of the Armenian “prétendus patriotards” in connection with the Ottoman Bank; I cannot do better than quote from Mr. Bryce’s version of the story, and the massacre that followed: “In the following June serious trouble arose at Van, where some sort of insurrection is said to have been planned, though in the discrepancy of the accounts it is hard to arrive at the truth. Masses of Kurds came down threatening to massacre the Christians, and a conflict in which many innocent persons perished, was with difficulty brought to an end by the intervention of the British Consul. A little later the Armenian revolutionary party, emboldened by the rising in Crete, where the Christians, being well armed and outnumbering the Muslims, held their ground successfully, issued appeals to the Embassies and to the Turkish Government to introduce reforms, threatening disturbances if the policy of repression and massacre was persisted in. These threats were repeated in August, and ultimately, on August 26, a band of about twenty Armenians, belonging the revolutionary party, made a sudden attack on the Imperial Ottoman Bank in Constantinople, declaring they were prepared to hold it and blow it up should the Sultan refuse their demand. They captured the building by a *coup de main*, but were persuaded by the Russian dragoman to withdraw upon a promise of safety. Meanwhile the Government, who through their spies knew of the project, had organised and armed a large mob of Kurds and Lazes – many of whom had recently been brought to the city – together with the lowest Turkish class. Using the occasion, they launched this mob upon

the peaceful Armenian population. The onslaught began in various parts of the city so soon after the attack on the Bank that it had obviously been prearranged, and the precaution had been taken to employ the Turkish ruffians in different quarters from those in which they dwelt; so that they might less easily be recognised. Carts had moreover been prepared in which to carry off the dead. For two days an indiscriminate slaughter went on, in which not only Armenian merchants and traders of the cultivated class, not only the industrious and peaceable Armenians of the humbler class, clerks, domestic servants, porters employed on the quays and in the warehouses, but also women and children were butchered in the streets and hunted down all through the suburbs. On the afternoon of the 27th the British Chargé d'Affaires (whose action throughout won general approval) told the Sultan he would land British sailors, and the Ambassadors telegraphed to the Sultan. Then the general massacre was stopped, though sporadic slaughter went on round the city during the next few days. The Ambassadors, who did not hesitate to declare that the massacre had been organised by the Government, estimated the number of killed at from 6000 to 7000; the official report made to the Sultan is said to have put it at 8750.¹ During the whole time the army and the police had perfect control of the city – the police, and a certain number of the military officers and some high civil officials, joining in the slaughter. Of all the frightful scenes which Constantinople, a city of carnage, has seen since the great insurrection of A.D. 527 when 30,000 people perished in the hippodrome there has been none more horrible than this. For this was not the suppression of an insurrection in which contending factions fought. It was not the natural sequel to a capture by storm, as when the city was taken and sacked by the Crusaders in A.D. 1204, and by the Turks in A.D. 1453. It was slaughter in cold blood, when innocent men and women, going about their usual avocations in a time of apparent peace, were suddenly beaten to death with clubs, or hacked to pieces with knives, by ruffians who fell upon them in the streets before they could fly to any place of refuge.”²

I am also obliged to quote from an Article written by a Turkish Officer who signs himself A. J. and published in the “Siper-i-Saika-i-Hurriet,” a Turkish daily, on July 6, 1909.

Every time that I hear the name Armenian I feel the bleeding of a moral wound within me. It was the year I was sent into exile (1896). On a Thursday, before we had left the Military School for our vacation, a rumor flew through the school, – “They are massacring the Armenians.” All my young patriotic companions turned pale from deep emotion. Every one tried to read in the sad faces of others the reason for this bad news. But each one avoided expressing his thought. After a time the details began to circulate to the effect that the Armenians had dared to destroy the Ottoman Bank and government buildings with bombs, and that this was the reason why they were massacred. At that time all of us trembled, because we also were enemies of that government, because we also wished to overthrow it, and although we were not convinced that the best service could be rendered by bombs, we were working quietly to spread our ideas. In our hearts a flame of enmity and indignation, no less terrible than bombs, was burning. The poor Armenians were being massacred ruthlessly, because out of their number five or ten persons, resenting their wrongs, had rebelled. But that which maddened these poor men, that drove them to rebellion and placed bombs in their hands was the stupidity of the people and the outrageous oppressions of the government. And now this inhuman government was killing with

¹ In a recent publication “Fifty Years in Constantinople,” the author Dr. George Washburn, ex-President of Robert College, estimates the number that were slaughtered in cold blood in the streets of the city as 10,000. Dr. Washburn adds the following: “The massacre of the Armenians came to an end on Friday, the day after the soldiers came to the College; but the persecution of them which went on for months was worse than the massacre. Their business was destroyed, they were plundered and blackmailed without mercy, they were hunted like wild beasts, they were imprisoned, tortured, killed, deported, fled the country, until the Armenian population of the city was reduced by some seventy-five thousand, mostly men, including those massacred.”

² “Transcaucasia and Ararat: Twenty Years of the Armenian Question.” – James Bryce.

clubs a noble nation, under the pretext of putting down a rebellion produced by its own oppressions. Among the crimes committed by the former government the most unpardonable crime was the Armenian massacre. If there was a race up to that time among non-Moslem peoples which with sincere and deep feeling honored the Ottoman fatherland that race was the Armenian. It is the Armenians who wear most nearly the national dress, who speak and write Turkish best, and recognize the Ottoman country as their fatherland. Besides this it is the Armenians who engage in commerce and agriculture, and thus, by demonstrating its fruitfulness, increase the value of the Ottoman Empire. Because a few among them justly started an agitation, these our noble and industrious brethren were being massacred. What a terrible scene! When we left the school building we saw hundreds of the bodies of our Armenian compatriots being removed in manure carts; legs and arms were hanging down outside. This bloody scene will ever remain impressed on my mind.

“This shocking crime of Yildiz formed a deep lake of blood, and this lake, during the whole course of a cursed absolutism, up to the last moment, grew wider. Even during the past nine months of the Constitution, in spite of the brotherly feelings which had been shown, the awful events in Adana took place and the souls of all true Osmanlis melted into tears. Up to the present time the deep sorrow caused by this event has not disappeared, because this bloody wound in our social body cannot easily be cured. While we fill our stomachs with choice morsels, while we rest selfishly in our comfortable beds, these fatherless and brotherless orphans, widows hungry, naked, and barefoot wander hither and thither, and thousands of families are fleeing from the fatherland. We are convinced that the government is doing its work, but what has happened is so great a calamity that it can keep a government busy for years. However much sacrifice we may make, still it will be inadequate, because the happiness of the fatherland depends on healing such blood wounds as these as soon as possible. We are convinced that the government and all connected with it are persuaded of this as well as ourselves. We must now wipe out the traces of the misfortune brought by a cursed period. We must now comfort weeping hearts. We must understand and teach those who do not understand that patriotism and brotherhood do not differ from each other. The responsibility of the government for the Armenians is very great and very weighty. The whole Ottoman nation is under obligations to protect this suffering race, because the liberty we enjoy to-day is in large part due to the blood shed by the Armenians. We thought that these truths were so obvious that we preferred to keep silence, whereas to-day we understand that it is necessary from time to time to recall the greatness of our obligation. We must not forget that this unhappy people up to yesterday has endured only barbarism, and for twelve years has been constantly oppressed and ground to the earth, and has given thousands of victims. Hereafter we must work to assure them that the era of massacres has passed, and with all our strength of mind and soul we must quiet them. The obligation of the government to protect them is also very heavy, because our Armenian countrymen live among wandering tribes. We must all assist the government and point out its obligation. It must be declared in public and periodically that the one of the most important duties of the Ottoman nation is to protect, together with those of other races, the interests, the life, and property of the Armenians as well, since these are their sacred rights. Let investigations be made and let whatever is necessary be done in order to reach this aim.”

This article of the Turkish officer, who however does not dare disclose his identity; and the account given by an authority like Mr. James Bryce surely refute the facile explanation of Ahmed

Riza Bey in alluding to the Massacres as “les Massacres occasionnés par les aventuriers Arméniens.” Indeed it holds out poor hope for the furtherance of liberty and justice in Turkey when the man who is the President of the Chamber of Deputies only as far back as 1907 tries to palliate the horrors of the Hamidian régime by misrepresentations.

The author of “La Crise de l’Orient” also cites the Japanese as an instance of the civilization and aptitude for progress of a non-Christian oriental race. In this case, Ahmed Riza Bey certainly needs to measure the distance between the mental, moral and humane qualities of the Japanese and the Turk, a distance as great as lies geographically between the North Pole and the South.

PART I

THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES AND THE TREATY OF BERLIN

Since the gathering of the Plenipotentiaries of Europe at the famous Congress of Berlin in 1878, and the signing of the still more famous Treaty of Berlin, the martyr roll of the unfortunate Armenian nation stands without its parallel in history.

In the Guildhall at Berlin hangs a picture of the memorable scene witnessed in that city on July the thirteenth 1878. The painter has depicted the proud array of representatives of the powerful Governments of Europe, but in the interests of Humanity there should be attached to that painting the wording of Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin written in letters of blood (Armenian blood).

It was a curious irony of Fate, that although the taking of “the terrible stronghold of Kars,” universally admitted to be one of the greatest and most difficult military exploits ever achieved, and the crowning success of the Russian arms in Asiatic Turkey, should have been accomplished by an Armenian General; that although Armenian Generals in the Russian service had led to conquest, and Armenian soldiers fought, conquered and died, yet by these successes not only was no amelioration attained of the hard fate of their unhappy nation under Turkish rule, but that fate, hard before, was made a hundredfold and even a thousandfold harder.

The efforts of the Armenians, and the entreaties of their Patriarch Nerses had procured the insertion of Article 16 in the Treaty of San Stefano signed between Russia and Turkey in March 1878. In fact the wording of the Article had been suggested by the Patriarch himself. It provided the following stipulation for the protection of the Armenians: —

“As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territory which they now occupy in Armenia, and which is to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications detrimental to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to carry into effect without further delay the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Kurds and Circassians.”

What followed has passed into history. The British Government of which Lord Beaconsfield (then Mr. D’Israeli) was Premier, and Lord Salisbury Foreign Secretary, once more pursued the old policy of baffling Russian aggrandizement in Turkey. Afraid that her own real or fancied interests would thereby become imperilled, England threw in the weight of her power, and virtually commanded the substitution of the Treaty of Berlin in lieu of the Treaty of San Stefano. Thus the substantial guarantee of a natural and immediate protector, both able and desirous of enforcing the protection which the Armenians then had in Russia, was taken away, and the security of impotent words given in its stead, namely: —

“The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out without further delay the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds. It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application.”

“It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application.” How this last proviso could furnish food for laughter were it not for the terrible tragedy involved in it.

The insertion of Article 61 in the Treaty of Berlin, granted, or rather seemingly granted, by the six Powers of Europe, proved in reality, as subsequent events bore out, an instrument of death and

torture. It was as if the reversal of the figures had reversed the possibilities of succour and protection, and with the death of the Czar Liberator, the last chance of the Armenians died.

The Turkish Massacres of 1875 and 1876 which led up to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 are historical facts too well known to need further comment in this article. The Czar Liberator stands out in history as that noble figure – a benefactor of mankind. Through his humanitarian susceptibilities, and his sublime efforts for their deliverance, the Christians of European Turkey received immunity from Turkish slaughter; and the protection of his benevolent arm was extended over that unhappy Christian nation of Asiatic Turkey, the Armenians; at least it would have secured them immunity from the record-breaking slaughter that followed, but the Power that had stood behind Turkey since 1791 frustrated his endeavours.

A British commentator on that page of British policy has summed it up in the words: —

“In no other part of the world has our national policy or conduct been determined by motives so immoral and so stupid.”³

The same commentator, in reviewing also the result of the substituted Treaty, fittingly remarks:

—
“The Turk could see at a glance that, whilst it relieved him of the dangerous pressure of Russia, it substituted no other pressure which his own infinite dexterity in delays could not make abortive. As for the unfortunate Armenians, the change was simply one which must tend to expose them to the increased enmity of their tyrants, whilst it damaged and discouraged the only protection which was possible under the inexorable conditions of the physical geography of the country.”

It had been the constant endeavour of the Patriarch Nerses to point out to the Armenians that their true policy lay in aiding Russian advance in Turkey: that even if Russia were selfish in her designs, she was the only Christian Power that would stand as their protector against Turkish or Persian tyranny. His political foresight had already been verified as early as 1827,⁴ and his strenuous life-long labours were nearing the goal in 1878, but were frustrated by the fatal action that intervened.

England, by commanding the substitution of the Treaty of Berlin in place of that of San Stefano had taken upon herself the heaviest obligations any nation could incur. It is unnecessary to repeat that those obligations were never fulfilled.

If the lamented death of the Emperor Alexander II was one of the most unhappy events that could have befallen Russia; it was a hundredfold more unhappy for the Armenian nation. His successor, who adopted repressive and coercive measures for his own people in the place of his father's liberal policy, not only applied the same measures to his Armenian subjects in his own domains, but left their countrymen under Turkish rule to their merciless fate.

Russia, twice foiled in her subjugation of Turkey, changed her policy from that of crushing into that of upholding the Ottoman Empire. When the horrors of the Armenian massacres, revealed to the people of England by their own ambassadors and consuls, their own journalists and men of letters, thrilled the hearts of men and women, when England's “Grand Old Man” thundered his vituperations against the “Great Assassin,”⁵ Prince Lobanoff in answer to British proposals of coercion towards Turkey, conveyed Russia's intentions in his warning note to the Salisbury Government, and England,

³ “Our Responsibilities For Turkey.” – Argyll (note to 2nd printing).

⁴ In 1826 the Russian General Paskevitch defeated the Persians at Elizabetopol and in the following year 1827 he seized the monastery of Etchmiatzin (the seat of the Armenian Patriarch) and Erivan one of the great towns of Armenia and gained for himself the title of Erivanski. By these successes Russia advanced as far as the line of the Araxes and wrested from Persia the provinces of Erivan and Nakhitchvan. The Treaty of Peace was concluded between Russia and Persia at Turkmantchai on the 22nd of February 1828. – Note to 2nd printing.

⁵ Commenting on the effect on Abdul Hamid of the indignation aroused in England over the massacres, Mr. James Bryce writes, “The indignation expressed in England exasperated him; he passed from fear to fury, and back again to fear; and went so far as to beg, and obtain, the friendly offices of the Pope, who, through the Government of Spain, asked the British Government not to press too hardly upon the Sultan with regard to the Armenians.” – Note to 2nd printing.

who in 1878 had rivetted the Turkish yoke on the necks of the Armenians, to use the words of an eminent British authority on Turkish affairs, “wrung her hands and submitted.”⁶

The same authority tells us that the *coup de grace* to the intervention of the Concert of Europe in Armenian affairs was given by Prince Bismarck, “who in 1883 intimated to the British Government, in terms of cynical frankness and force, that Germany cared nothing about the matter, and that it had better be allowed to drop.”

⁶ “Transcaucasia and Ararat: Twenty Years of the Armenian Question.” – James Bryce. Note to 2nd printing.

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