

DR. CYRUS HAMLIN

HOPEFUL FOR TURKEY, BUT NOT UNDER ISLAM.

He Was the Cousin of Hon. Hannibal Hamlin—His Recollections of His Missionary Life in Turkey—The Christian College in Constantinople—Armenian Outrages.

LEXINGTON, Jan. 3.—A century ago or so two young men, twin brothers, Cyrus Hamlin and Hannibal Hamlin, were the district school teachers in the town of Harvard. They left their Massachusetts home shortly afterwards and went to Maine. Cyrus settled in Paris, where his son Hannibal, afterwards U. S. senator and vice-president, was born, Aug. 27, 1809. Hannibal settled in Waterford, where his son Cyrus, founder and first president of Robert College, Constantinople, was born, Jan. 5, 1811, eighty-four years ago tomorrow.

The career of the latter has been hardly less notable than that of his illustrious cousin, though his field of activity has been a widely different one. Graduating at Bowdoin in 1834 and from the Bangor Theological Seminary in 1837, he went almost immediately to Turkey as a missionary of the American board. He remained in that country till 1873, when he returned to the United States, becoming professor of dogmatic theology in the Bangor Seminary in 1877, president of Middlebury College from 1880 to 1885, and has since been a resident of this historic old town, actively engaged in the service of the American board.

It hardly seemed possible that I was carrying the congratulations of The Advertiser to a man of 84, as the fresh looking, stalwart, vigorous man of apparently 65, gave me a cordial greeting, and sat down for an hour's chat on various subjects. Speaking of his excellent health he said: "Perhaps one reason for it is that I have never been over careful regarding it, and have never paid much attention to it. It seems to me that the people who are most anxious about their health suffer most from illness. I have never shunned danger when I felt duty called me into it. For instance, I have been through several seasons of the Asiatic cholera, caring for the sick and dying without apprehension, only taking care to bathe frequently, and when feeling especially wearied to take some kind of tonic for the system. I have never believed that it was best to worry about one's health."

Calling his attention to the fact that his cousin, Hannibal, so long refused to wear an overcoat, he said: "I think he was unwise in that, though during the last two or three years of his life his family induced him to overcome his prejudice to an overcoat. Old men, I find, have, as the years go by, less and less physical vitality, and need to clothe themselves more warmly than when younger."

It is but natural that after 35 years of active missionary and educational work in Turkey, Dr. Hamlin should be intensely interested in affairs in that country and should keenly watch events there at the present time. The mission of the American board had been established only about seven years when he went out, and he was soon impressed with the need of the establishment of a college for the furtherance of its work. He had a seven years' contest with the Turkish authorities before he was able to open the institution in 1860, when an imperial edict was obtained committing the institution to the care of the United States. He is a firm believer in the importance of this institution and in its great success. It stands there a Christian college in the capital city of Mohammedanism. It is difficult to estimate its Christianizing and civilizing influence. It is simply incalculable. Dr. Hamlin only resigned its presidency and returned to America for the purpose of raising an endowment for it, and in this work he was successful.

"It is," he said, "a fairly well endowed and successful college of about the grade of our smaller New England colleges, though naturally linguistic studies have a greater prominence than here. The students average in number, year by year, about 200, for the most part of three nationalities, races and languages, though I have seen ten or twelve nationalities represented. The Armenians number nearly a third of the students, of the Indo-Germanic stock, of a primitive Christian faith and a language of their own. The Bulgarians make up nearly another third. There has been doubt as to their racial origin, but I am inclined to think they are Tartars, who centuries ago conquered Bulgaria and intermingled with the Slavs, so that the Bulgarians of today are a mixed race, some of them seeming like pure Slavic stock, while others have all the phy-

sical characteristics of the Tartars, as have the Turks. Their language is Slavonic and their religion that of the Greek church. Nearly another third of the students are Greeks, with Greek characteristics and speaking the modern Greek language. It is not difficult to see what must be the influence upon these three races of an American Christian college established in the great commercial centre of the three nationalities, with its graduates holding prominent positions in the governments of the two last named powers.

"Our missions have accomplished little among the Mohamedans. There seemed a promise at the first. A spirit of inquiry was awakened, and under an edict forced by threats from the Sultan about 1845 by the British ambassador guaranteeing freedom of conscience and of religious belief, comparisons were instituted between the Gospels and the Koran which led to some conversions and gave promise of a greater work, but when Sir Henry Bulwer became ambassador and counselled the Sultan to thoroughly Islamise the empire, this work ceased, and the bitter hatred of Christianity has continued till the present."

"This manifests itself in the persecution of the Armenians, and the horrors of this persecution can hardly be exaggerated. There are about 3,000,000 Armenians in the empire. It is estimated that there are no less than 40,000 all the time in Constantinople, but not the same 40,000. They are coming and going. Probably not more than one-fourth of the population of Armenia itself is of Armenian stock. They are unarmed, forbidden, in fact, to bear arms, constantly watched, and constantly persecuted. Their

condition is most pitiable. I can see no help or hope for them from the Turkish government, which is corrupt through and through, but only in the intervention of Europe. Russia under the treaty of Berlin has the right, of course, to step in and control Armenia, but Russia waits the consent of England."

"Supposing Russia should intervene without the consent or in opposition to the wish of England?"

"Oh! I cannot answer that conundrum," said Dr. Hamlin. "The Turks, you know, have a way of disposing of such difficult questions as this by saying: 'Well, God is merciful.'"

Most men after 35 years of such service as Dr. Hamlin had rendered would have felt like taking a rest, but returning to America in 1873, he devoted himself successfully for four years to raising an endowment for Robert College. Then came the Russo-Turkish war, and this work was brought to a standstill by the prevailing feeling that the college would be ruined by the war, and he accepted the professorship of dogmatic theology at Bangor. At the age of 70 the presidency of Middlebury College was offered him, and he said to the trustees that if they were foolish enough to offer the position to a man of 70, the man of 70 would doubtless be foolish enough to accept it. But the event showed that there was folly on neither side. Dr. Hamlin's five years at Middlebury were years of hard work on his part, and of great prosperity for the college. He said, "I thought the age of 75 was a good one at which to superannuate, and so I came to Lexington and settled down for the remainder of my life."

That was nine years ago, but these nine years have been like those that preceded them, full of labor. The American Board availed itself of his long experience and knowledge of missionary work, and there is seldom a Sunday that Dr. Hamlin does not address some congregation in the interest of this great historic missionary organization. Lexington honors him as one of her most distinguished citizens, and his home on Bloomfield st. is a most pleasant one. His published works are mostly in Armenian, though he has been a frequent contributor to American magazines and periodicals. Harvard conferred the degree of D.D. upon him in 1861, and the University of the City of New York that of LL.D. in 1870. Dr. Hamlin's career has been a notable one, and he is still in excellent health, carrying his fourscore and four years lightly and doing the work which many younger men would regard burdensome with ease and cheerfulness. He is hopeful for the future of Turkey, but not for Turkey under Turkish rule.

An Armenian Meeting.

The United Friends of Armenia held a mass meeting in the Y. M. C. A. hall, Cambridgeport, last evening, to protest against the atrocities that are being perpetrated upon the Armenians by the Turks. Rev. Charles Olmstead presided. The speakers were M. H. Gulesian, Alice Stone Blackwell, Rev. Q. B. Chitzian and G. H. Papazian. The last two speakers favored a revolution against the Turkish government.

Resolutions were adopted condemning the conduct of the Turkish government and calling upon the civilized world to interfere, and also thanking Pres. Cleveland for appointing Consul Jewett.