

## THE CONDITION OF CHRISTIANS IN TURKEY.

All the indications are that the European powers have either agreed upon some plan of division of the Turkish Empire or have at least decided for the time being to sink their differences and unite in wiping out the Sultan's Government. Just how soon or in what way this will be done is in one sense of little moment. In another it is of great moment. For upon it depends the rescue of the Christians scattered over the empire. No one supposes that the nine millions of Turks, besides the Kurds, Circassians, Lazes, Xelbecks, and other Moslem tribes scattered over the country will yield without a struggle. There is undoubtedly a good deal of humbug about the Turkish Army. An organized army means an enormous expense, and the Ottoman Treasury is bankrupt. But there are many ways of securing money besides drawing regular wages, and in these the Turk and his fellows are adepts. The more we learn of the disturbances in Erzeroum, Diarbekir, Ak-Hissar, and elsewhere, the more it becomes apparent that one great object of the Turks was to enrich themselves at the expense of their Christian neighbors. Throughout the empire the Christians, not Armenians only, but Greeks, Jacobites, Syrians, and others, are the richest in goods and money, the Moslems being chiefly landlords, farmers, and shepherds. The shopkeepers and bankers are uniformly Christians.

Once let the impression get abroad through Asiatic Turkey that European soldiers are on their way to protect these Christians, and the Moslems will soon see that there is very little left for them to protect. Every letter from Turkey, every account by passing travelers, speaks of the reign of terror. It is perhaps too much to expect that there will be any extensive occupation by the powers before Spring. The mountain passes through which alone they can reach the disturbed sections are already covered with snow. Russian troops could reach Erzeroum and possibly Erzingan, but not Mush, Bitlis, Harput, or Diarbekir. English, French, and Italian warships can easily enter the harbors of the Mediterranean and the Aegean, and, if pushed, troops could reach Aleppo, Aintab, Adana,

and Marash on the south and Aidin, Brusa, and Nicomedia on the west. Marsovan might be reached also, but through the whole central tableland of Asia Minor Armenians and Greeks would be at the mercy of Turks, Kurds, Circassians, and others embittered by the prospect of ultimate defeat and subjugation. Every effort would probably be made by the Government, if it continued to have any existence at all, to protect foreigners, but it is doubtful whether it would be successful, and it is certainly possible that it would leave them to the mob.

With even the best that can be done, the outlook for the Christian population is very dark. Already there is intense suffering. Notwithstanding the generally disturbed condition, the taxgatherers have been busy collecting what they could. Men dare not stir outside of their own houses for fear of being shot in the streets. Idleness brings destitution. And on every hand the reports of the situation are appalling. The American missionaries are doing what they can, but they can give no more than they receive. In such circumstances any aid given through the American Board at Boston or either of the relief committees in this city will be sure to reach those who most need it.

---

It is now reported that TEWFIK Pasha, the newest of the Sultan's Grand Viziers, has replied to the Ambassadors of Great Britain, Russia, and France that he will tell them what he is going to do about the outrageous disorders in Asia Minor "without delay." There is an element of the grotesque in this assurance. Some things are unquestionably done "without delay" in Turkey, in the ordinary acceptation of that phrase—among them murder, outrage, and robbery, when the Mussulman mind is seized with a desire to do them. Changes in the Ministry are also made with promptness. The late Vizier, so soon as he showed signs of doing something that the powers required, was dismissed "without delay." It is now said that a new change is impending, and if the Ambassadors show signs of accepting it as an excuse for further dilatoriness, it will no doubt be made "without delay." Meanwhile an Italian detachment of warships has been ordered to the eastern end of the Mediterranean. When Sir PHILIP CURRIE, the British Ambassador, reaches Constantinople, it is to be hoped that the powers will reach some agreement not only as to what they will say in notes, but what their fleets are prepared to do, and that it will be done "without delay."

---