

CORRESPONDENCE

The Armenian Massacres

TO THE EDITOR OF THE JAPAN ADVERTISER.

Sir,—I see by a telegraphic despatch in the newspapers that The Times has been publishing an account of the Armenian Massacres on information supplied by "trustworthy Turkish ex-officials." It would be interesting to know who these "trustworthy" Turkish ex-officials are, whom The Times is now introducing to the world.

However, if you will kindly allow me space in your columns I will give an account of how the Armenian Massacres were accomplished.

In April, 1915, the Armenians of Van, realizing that the Turkish garrison of the province were preparing a massacre, armed themselves as best they could, and ejected the Turkish garrison, making a seizure of the military stores and setting fire to the barracks. The Armenians being in larger numbers in Van than in the other provinces had been able to resist in a great measure the Turkish mobilisation; in the other provinces all the able-bodied men had been hounded into the Turkish ranks, but there were able-bodied men left in Van to fight the enemy.

The ejected Turkish garrison reinforced by more Turkish troops laid siege to Van. The besieged defended themselves against a whole Turkish division with artillery for four weeks. Then the 3rd and 4th Armenian volunteer corps under Hamazasp and Sourine (familiarly known as Druro) fighting their way from Bagravend (Turkish name Bayazid) arrived to the rescue and raised the siege of Van and the Turkish army fled. The Russian army arrived three days after the volunteers had raised the siege of Van.

After raising the siege of Van, Hamazasp and Druro advanced towards Bagesche (Turkish name Bitlis) and fought against a Turkish army of from 50,000 to 60,000 at Sur: at this place they were hard pressed for the Russian army at their heels dawdled like a white elephant and did nothing more, but it was at this time that Andranik, the leader of the 1st volunteer corps fighting his way through Dillman and Khoi against another large Turkish army, arrived at Van, and immediately advanced to the help at Sur, and there the Turkish army was heavily defeated.

The volunteer corps with the Russian army at their heels advanced towards Bagesche (Turkish name Bitlis) and were within four hours of reaching the town when the white elephant at their heels became suddenly transformed into a dragon, spitting fire and lashing his tail in fury. The Russian Army ordered the Armenian volunteers to turn back.

The Armenian volunteers thus found themselves between the devil and the deep sea: there was the enemy about five times their number in front and the enemy behind: they were obliged to turn back from Bagesche (Turkish name Bitlis).

Up till that time no massacres had taken place but this turning back instead of forward to victory became the wireless signal. The Turkish wolves took courage, and then it was that the butcher battalions of the Turkish army began massacring the defenceless Armenians of Bagesche (Turkish name Bitlis) women and children and old men, from whom the help and rescue that their own people were bringing them had been turned away.

This was the beginning of the massacres.

Now if the Russian army had remained in Russia the victories of the Armenian volunteers would not have been blasted; there would have been no retreats, no wanton and unexplainable evacuations of occupied positions, and consequently no massacres.

Yours truly,

DIANA AGABEG APCAR.

220-A Bluff, Yokohama, January 12.