

6,000 PEOPLE KILLED.

Horrible Crimes of the Turks in Kurdistan.

NO QUARTER FOR ANY ONE.

Women and Girls by the Hundred Assaulted and Murdered.

The Armenians Had Asserted that Owing to Kurdish Raids They Were Too Poor to Pay Taxes—They Killed Some of Their Oppressors and the Turkish Troops Were Sent Against Them—Indescribable Scenes of Outrage and Carnage that Followed—Children Impaled on the Same Weapons with Their Mothers—Crowds of Maidens and Women Terribly Maltreated Before They Were Killed—An Inquiry Now in Progress—All the Inhabitants of Many Towns Killed.

CONSTANTINOPLE, Nov. 16.—The Porte has issued an account of the last Armenian troubles in the Sassun district. The responsibility is laid upon Kurdish brigands, who murdered a Musliman and committed many other excesses.

The Turkish troops called to Sassun are said to have restored order and protected all law-abiding persons.

LONDON, Nov. 16.—The *Standard's* correspondent in Varna describes the recent massacre of Armenian Christians as of equal importance with the Bulgarian butcheries which led to the Russian-Turkish war. He says:

"The trouble began with the refusal of the Armenians to pay taxes on the ground that the Kurdish raids had so impoverished them as to render it impossible. This probably was true. Troops were sent to enforce the payments, but were beaten off. The Governor of Bitlis then arrived with an imposing force of regulars. The people, seeing that the struggle was hopeless, yielded, but the Governor resolved to make an example of them.

"He ordered the troops to fire on the defenceless populace, and they obeyed with alacrity. They only ceased when the residents of twenty-five villages, numbering some thousands, had been killed. Some reports say 6,000 were slain.

"Great Britain sent her Consul in Van, Mr. Hallward, to report on the slaughter. The British Ambassador in Constantinople upon receiving the report communicated it to the Porte. The Sultan was horrified, and he ordered the local military commander, Zeki Pasha, to make his report on the matter at once.

"Zeki had been originally instructed to proceed to the scene after the repulse of the troops, but the Governor of Bitlis arrived there ahead of him. It seems that Zeki's report confirmed Mr. Hallward's, whereupon the Governor formulated the grave charge that the latter was inciting the Armenians to revolt, thus causing the whole original disturbance. This was submitted to Sir Philip Currie, who has sent out British officials to make inquiries."

Mr. Hagopian, Chairman of the Armenian Patriotic Association in London, has sent Lord Kimberley, Foreign Secretary, a letter sent from Bitlis on Oct. 9. Mr. Hagopian, after declaring his belief in the reports of the massacre, submits that, in view of the horrible tortures and persecutions of the Armenians, the time has come to abolish the Administration of the Porte and substitute a régime approved by the signatories of the Berlin treaty.

The letter from Bitlis gives details of the origin of the disturbances. There was a Kurdish raid on Armenian cattle, resulting in a fight in which two Kurds were killed.

The friends of the Kurds took the corpses to Moush and declared that the Armenians had overrun the land and were killing and plundering right and left. This furnished the pretext for the massing of the troops.

The letter then describes the horrors of the massacre. It says that on the admissions of the Turkish soldiers some of whom tearfully protested that they merely obeyed orders, 6,000 people were killed. It is asserted that no compassion was shown to age or sex. In one place 300 or 400 women, after having been forced repeatedly to submit to the soldiery, were hacked to pieces with swords and bayonets. In another place 200 women begged at the commander's feet for mercy. The commander, after ordering that they be outraged, had them all despatched with the sword. Similar scenes were enacted in other places.

In one case sixty young brides and maidens were driven into a church and were violated and butchered until their blood flowed from the doors.

A large company, headed by a priest, knelt near the church begging for compassion, averring that they had nothing to do with the culprits who killed the Kurds. It was in vain all were killed.

Several attractive women were told that they might live if they would recant their faith. They replied: "Why should we deny Christ? We have no more reason to do so than had these," pointing to the mangled bodies of their husbands and brothers. "Kill us, too."

This was done. The letter says that between 6,000 and 10,000 were killed. Babes were impaled on the same weapon with their mothers.

Several soldiers admitted that they had disposed of a hundred victims each. Nearly thirty villages were destroyed. Some families were burned with kerosene in their own houses.

The *Times* will say so-morrow: "We fear it is only too probable that something like the reported slaughter of Armenians occurred, but we discredit Mr. Hagopian's contention that it was

effected under direct orders from Constantinople.

The account furnished by the Association bears every mark of its political origin. There is a distinguished absence of specific dates and places, and its purpose is revealed in the casual reference to the Bulgarian atrocities.

Although England will not be indifferent, it is idle to imagine that the new atrocities and agitation will be made an excuse for reopening the Eastern question."