

# PERSECUTED FOR CENTURIES.

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## Armenians Still Maintain Their Christian Faith.

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**Mr. M. H. Guleshian Makes an Earnest Appeal in Bulfinch Place Church for Sympathy for His Countrymen—Miss Alice Stone Blackwell Also Speaks.**

"Armenia and Its Christian People" was the topic of addresses delivered last night in the Bulfinch Place Church by Mr. M. H. Guleshian, a native of Armenia, and Miss Alice Stone Blackwell.

Mr. Guleshian began by describing the geographical and topographical characteristics of Armenia. It was the first country, he said, to adopt Christianity as a state religion. It became Christian in the second century, the church being organized as an evangelical church in the beginning of the third century. The heathen nations round about it had constantly invaded it during the past 15 centuries, yet the Armenians had maintained their Christian faith in spite of every attack upon them.

Since the Mohammedan conquest of Armenia, the population of the country had fallen to barely 3,000,000. The Armenians were a race of great mental endowments, and capable of high intellectual achievements. Under the Turks they were subject to all kinds of disabilities. When a crime was committed, the richest Armenians were arrested in order to get bribes. The testimony of

a Mussulman was preferred to that of an Armenian in a court of law.

The Turks, he said, regarded machines as devils. More than two-thirds of the Turkish officials could neither write nor read their own language, so that if civil service reform were introduced into Turkey 90 per cent. of the Turkish officials would be dropped at once. The Armenians were forbidden to carry arms, and thus were at the mercy, not only of the savage Kurds, but of a neighbor who coveted their vineyard or an official who carried off their daughters.

The speaker cited in support of these statements, and in extension of them, passages from the works of American and English authors who had travelled in Armenia. He gave an account of the loathsome underground dungeons of Turkey, in which 10,000 people now languished because they refuse to become Mohammedans, and said that when a native Armenian was taken to see one of the prisons of Massachusetts he could not understand why people did not want to go there.

Mr. Guleshian finally read letters from Americans in Armenia describing the atrocities which accompanied the recent massacre, and made a strong appeal for the sympathy and active protest of Americans. He did not want to praise Russia, but Russia was heaven compared with the Turkish government. The speaker closed by reciting a poem translated by Miss Blackwell from the Armenian.

Miss Blackwell began her remarks with an account of the religious history of the Armenian people. It was a remarkable testimony to their vitality that, after so much invasion and persecution, any Armenians now remained alive. For 1500 years the Armenians had maintained their Christianity with remarkable tenacity. Their form of worship resembled that of the Church of England; they were remarkably tolerant.

Miss Blackwell added some facts about the disabilities under which Armenians labored in Turkey. She hoped that Turkish rule over Armenia would soon come to an end, but while it remained America should do something to protect naturalized Armenians, who, having become American citizens, returned on business to Armenia.

## ARMENIANS HAVE A SCHEME.

### Propose to Send a Large Body of Men to Turkey.

**Fifty Recruits from Each of the Cities Like Worcester, Boston, Lynn, Lawrence and Providence—Plan to Remove Fellow-Countrymen Out of Reach of the Turks.**

(Special Dispatch to the Boston Herald.)

WORCESTER, Dec. 30, 1894. The local Armenians held another largely attended meeting tonight to protest against the unjust taxation levied by the Turkish government in the vicinity of Harpoot. News received through private letters says that three years' taxes in advance have been demanded of the people already impoverished by Turkey.

Enthusiasm was created at the meeting by suggestions that a central organization of Nationalists be established in this country, if possible in Worcester. A scheme was unfolded to organize a body of men, as many as 50 each from cities like Worcester, Boston, Lynn, Lawrence and Providence, to visit Turkey next summer, and, by promoting wholesale emigration or other means, remove their fellow countrymen forever out of reach of the Turks.

The Armenian Nationalists received today the following reply from Washington in regard to the appeal recently forwarded to President Cleveland, protesting against the Sassoun horror:

EXECUTIVE MANSION,

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 27.

Mr. M. V. Derounian, Worcester—Dear sir: The President is in receipt of the communication signed by yourself and others concerning affairs in Armenia, and I am directed to inform you that it has been referred for consideration to the secretary of state. Very respectfully,

HENRY T. THURBER, Private Secretary.

### TO PLEAD FOR ARMENIA.

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., Dec. 30, 1894. Herant M. Kirtchjian left for Washington last night to intercede with President Cleveland and others in authority regarding the American aspect of the Armenia-Turkish troubles. He carries letters from Senator Washburn and others.

### OPENED BY TURKISH OFFICIALS.

**Letters Sent Abroad by the American Board Examined Before Delivery.**

Official letters recently sent out from the rooms of the American board of commissioners for foreign missions, containing accounts relative to the European Turkey mission, were opened by the Turkish officials and subsequently delivered, but with the Turkish word "examined" written upon the envelope. This indicates that the Turkish government is attempting to assume all authority over the mails of foreigners.

When the reports of the massacre of Christians in the Sassoun region of eastern Turkey, after more than a month of suppression on the part of the Turkish officials, became public, the Ottoman government was alarmed at the widespread publications in the American and English press. Under pressure from the foreign powers the Sultan agreed to send a commission to investigate and report upon the outrage. In view of this promise of the government, representatives of the European powers in Constantinople decided to wait for the report before taking any positive action. But after this decision by the powers, and while they were waiting for the departure of the Sultan's commission, which had been appointed and which was to make a full and impartial investigation of all the affairs reported by the English consul, as well as by many individuals from the Sassoun region, the Turkish government came out with an official statement of the case, which statement was printed in all the papers of Constantinople. All papers printed in Turkey are under close censorship, and no paper could refuse to print the statement under

penalty of immediate suspension. Hence the Christian periodicals were compelled to print what they knew to be false. The substance of this statement has already been printed in The Herald's foreign dispatches.

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