

THE SUFFERINGS OF ARMENIA.

ORGANIZED TURKISH OUTRAGES.

GERMAN COMPLICITY.

A Blue-book [Cd.8325] was issued yesterday on "the treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916. Documents presented to account Grey by Viscount Bryce, with a preface by Viscount Bryce."

The documents are the evidence as to the outrages committed by the Turks against the Armenians. The information covered is of the same nature as that on which "The Times History of the War," Vol. VIII., chap. 133, was based, but the documents are here presented in full, and with official sanction. In a letter to Viscount Bryce, Viscount Grey says that this "terrible mass of evidence ought to be published and widely studied by all who have the broad interests of humanity at heart." The evidence was submitted by Viscount Bryce to Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, to Professor Gilbert Murray, and to Mr. Moorfield Storey, ex-President of the American Bar Association, with a request that they would give their opinion upon its nature. All reply that they regard the evidence as entirely convincing. Mr. Moorfield Storey says, "While there may be inaccuracies of detail, these statements establish without any question the essential facts." Professor Gilbert Murray believes that "the evidence of these letters and reports will bear any scrutiny and overpower any scepticism." Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, now president of the Board of Education, says that he is "impressed with the cumulative effect of the evidence. . . . It is clear that a catastrophe, conceived upon a scale quite unparalleled in modern history, has been contrived for the Armenian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire." Mr. Fisher thinks that the original responsibility rests with the Government at Constantinople. But Germany and Austria-Hungary must bear part of it:—

In view of the fact that the representations of the Austrian Ambassador with the Porte were effectual in procuring a partial measure of exemption for the Armenian Catholics, we are led to surmise that the unspeakable horrors which this volume records might have been mitigated, if not wholly checked, had active and energetic remonstrances been from the first moment addressed to the Ottoman Government by the two Powers who had acquired a predominant influence in Constantinople. The evidence, on the contrary, tends to suggest that these two Powers were, in a general way, favourable to the policy of deportation.

The preface which Viscount Bryce has written to the documentary evidence analyses the sources from which that evidence has been collected. Viscount Bryce points out that nearly all the evidence comes from eye-witnesses; that the main facts rest upon evidence coming from different and independent sources; that facts of the same, or of a very similar, nature occurring in different places are deposed to by different and independent witnesses; that the volume of this concurrent evidence from different quarters is so large as to establish the main facts beyond all question; that many of the most shocking and horrible accounts are those for which there is the most abundant testimony; and that

The vast scale of these massacres and the pitiless cruelty with which the deportations were carried out may seem to some readers to throw doubt on the authenticity of the narratives. Can human beings (may be asked) have perpetrated such crimes on innocent women and children? But a recollection of previous massacres will show that such crimes are not of the long-settled and often-repeated policy of Turkish rulers. . . . European travellers have often commended the honesty and the kindness of the Turkish peasantry, and our soldiers have said that they are fair fighters. Against them I have nothing to say, and I will even add that I have known individual Turkish officials who impressed me as men of honesty and good will. But the record of the rulers of Turkey for the last two or three centuries, from the Sultan on his throne down to the district *Mutassarif*, is, taken as a whole, an almost unbroken record of corruption, of injustice, of a profligacy which often rises into hideous cruelty.

Of so bulky a mass of evidence it is impossible in a short space to give any adequate idea of the most dramatic passages is an account given by a survivor of the massacre of Sassoun, the last stand of the Armenians in the district.

The Armenians were compelled to abandon the flying lines of their defence and were retreating day by day into the heights of Antok, the central peak of the mountains, some 10,000ft. high. The non-combatant women and children and their large herds of cattle greatly hampered the free movements of the defenders, whose number had already been reduced from 3,000 to about half that figure. Terrible confusion prevailed during the Turkish attacks as well as the Armenian counter-attacks. Many of the Armenians smashed their rifles after firing the last cartridge, and grasped their revolvers and daggers. Turkish regulars and Kurds, amounting to something like 20,000 altogether, pushed higher and higher up the heights and surrounded the main Armenian position at close quarters. Then followed some of those desperate and heroic struggles for life which have always been the pride of mountaineers. Men, women, and children fought with knives, spears, stones, and anything else they could handle. They rolled blocks of stone down the steep slopes, killing many of the enemy. In a frightful hand-to-hand combat women were seen thrusting their knives into the throats of Turks, and thus accounting for many of them. On August 3, the last day of the