

A SURVIVOR OF THE SASOUN MASSACRE
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY THE AMERICAN MISSIONARIES.)



SHOWING THIRTEEN WOUNDS MADE BY THE SWORDS, BAYONETS AND RIFLE BULLETS OF THE TURKISH SOLDIERS.

PICKING UP CRUMBS.

A few moments later we were joined by several Armenian villagers who had hidden until the Hamidieh soldiers filed past. They did not beg, but they greedily picked up the crumbs and bits of meat that we threw away, and when my servant, Sago, shook out the bread-bag they scraped up the precious particles and ate them with wolfish eagerness.

"Is it so that you are hungry?" said I to the head man.

"Truly, master, our stomachs have not known food these three days," the old man replied.

"For what reason is this?"

"Why should a rich man like you care about the woes of the poor? Is it an idle tale that you would hear? Be kind, master, and leave us alone in our misery."

"Nay, friend," said I, "it is with a true heart that I would ask. Speak, then. Is there no food, and why?"

"Know then, O illustrious sir, that there is no food in all the length and breadth of beautiful Armenia—this place which was long ago the Garden of Eden. Strong men eat the grass of the fields, and helpless mothers weep that there is no food for their starving children. If there is a God in heaven, tell me why He permits this thing. We have planted only half a crop this year because of the persecutions against us, and because many of our strong men are in prison. The green grain is even now springing through the ground, with its promise of food and life, but the Kurds drive in their buffaloes and their cattle and the growing fields are destroyed."

SLAVES TO TURKS; SLAVES TO KURDS.

"Why do you permit that, you strong men of the soil?" I asked.

The villagers stirred uneasily, and muttered to one another, and the old man continued: "Kind master, if we so much as lift a finger in protest we are beaten like dogs and left for dead by the wayside. If we complain to the Governor we are cast into prison and tortured with nameless cruelty. Know, O friend of the oppressed, we are slaves to Turks and slaves to Kurds. They do unto us whatsoever they will. At this moment my own aged back is covered with many stripes because I protested against the dishonor of my daughter. My life was saved only by

friends, who dragged me away from my home, where the shameful deed was done. My poor child is overcome with grief and shame as with death. She neither eats nor sleeps, and I fear that death will put an end to her woe."

The old man wiped his weak old eyes, and the villagers murmured in tones of helpless rage.

"Who has done this thing?" I asked.

"Who but the son of the Sheikh, and even this morning, an hour ago, he came to the village and demanded that certain girls, whom he selected, should be kept for him, on pain of death. Yonder is the village, merciful traveler, in plain sight from where you are pleased to sit, and you yourself may go and ask if I speak a true word."

"And this scoundrel of a Sheikh's son, has he done aught else to your injury?" I asked.

The villagers raised their hands to high heaven in mute protest.

NAMELESS CRUELITIES.

"Sir," said the old man, "the story of his deeds of harm to us would take long in the telling, and woe to us if we be found here pouring tales into your ears; but this man has robbed us, beaten us, cheated us, outraged our women, abducted our maidens, ravaged our brides, and reduced us to poverty and shame. Only this month we finished at great cost of labor a reservoir with which to store water for our field, and now this man comes and takes it from us, turning the water upon his own fields. Our new crops are parching in the sun, but we have no water. What can we do but die? We are worse off than slaves, because slaves are allowed to eat and live."

"What, then, is your crime that you are thus persecuted above all others of your people? Why are you singled out for this fiendish work?"

"O stranger to Armenia," said the old man, rising, "know you that we are not singled out among our people for persecution and outrage! No, on the contrary, we are better off than many, for we are still able to remain in our village. It is not an isolated case of personal vengeance. No, it is merely a part of that which is going on in all of Armenia from day to day. We are better situated than many, for none of us has yet died of hunger, and we still have homes, although famine knocks loudly at the door. Go to Van, ask the refugees and the beggars who

swarm in the street if I speak a true word. Armenia is in ruins and death abroad where life has been."

"Old man," said I, "your words are terrible. Tell me, then, as man to man, can it be that all the women of Armenia are treated as shamefully as the Sheikh's son treats the women of your village?"

NOT ONE WOMAN ESCAPES.

The venerable head man clutched feverishly at the collar of his outer shirt. "O sir!" he gasped, "in all of the villages of Armenia there is not one young woman whose virtue has not been taken by force, not one woman, young or old, who is not raped and ravished, day after day, by any Turk or Kurd who takes a fancy to her!"

The villagers turned away, clinching their hands in impotent rage.

"Oh! Man with a human heart, hear me!" cried the old man, seizing the bridle rein of my horse. "We value virtue in our women above all things; yet we know that if we fight to defend them from dishonor we shall be butchered like dogs, and then our loved ones will be forever at the mercy of their ravishers, with no one to care for them. For the sake of those dear ones, whose protectors we are, we endure the agony and shame of their degradation. Oh, do not think that we are not men! We would give our wretched lives gladly to protect our women from this cruel fate, but it would be madness to thus leave them alone with no friend to help bear their burdens."

The old man was overcome. Tears ran down his furrowed old cheeks and he shook with a grief that he could not control. Shocked beyond all expression, I turned towards the city of Van.

"What think you of this old man's tale?" I asked my servants.

"It is truth, said Sago, the Nestorian of Ouml. 'I have heard such tales before, and perhaps my own people of the region of Gaowar, in Kurdistan, could tell a tale or two if they were asked.'"

The swarthy face of Yusuf, the Armenian, of Teheran, was pale with suppressed emotion. "It is truth," said he, simply.

VILLAGERS SEEK PROTECTION.

"Kurd of Kotour," said I to my Kurdish horsemaster, "these charges lie against your people. Speak!"

"It is a common tale," replied the Kurd, "and doubtless true. There be many such tales, if one can be found to

listen. But why should the Sahib concern himself with the baying of village dogs?" The man was a Persian Kurd; hence his use of the word "Sahib" instead of "Efendi."

As we jogged along towards Van we were joined by five Armenians, who came from behind rocks by the wayside and trotted patiently at our stirrups.

"Who are these men?" said I, "and what is the meaning of this?"

"They are village people," replied Yusuf, "and they are on their way to Van to beg their bread. They ask that they be allowed to run beside your horses for protection. No one will harm them, they say, if they are with you."

"And if I refuse?"

"They will hide among the rocks and make their way from point to point slowly and with great care, lest Kurds or Turks should find them and do them harm."

"Let them come." The villagers kept alongside until we climbed the last pass and looked down upon the city of Van, with the great lake at its feet and the snow-capped mountains in the distance. Then they disappeared, to enter Van by an unfrequented way.

THE FORBIDDEN CITY.

As I drew rein at the top of the pass I felt that I had rarely seen a more beautiful picture. All around the horizon were snow-clad mountains, and at my feet was a plain clothed with patches of green. To the right, stretching from the centre of the plain to the edge of the broad lake, were masses of trees, with here and there the flat mud roof of a house showing through. These were the gardens of Van, the forbidden city. Near the edge of the lake, but hidden from my point of view, lay the old walled city, with its time-famous rock fortress and its cuneiform inscriptions.

We descended quickly to the plain, turned the base of the great rock known as the Topra Kahda, forded a small river and entered the city. We were in the very heart of Armenia, the forbidden ground.

"Yusuf," said I, as we trotted up a long, narrow street hemmed in by bare walls, "the empire of Persia is full of people who told me that I could not reach the city of Van."

"It is true," broke in Sago, "but it is a miracle that we are here."

AT THE AMERICAN MISSION.

We passed along several streets, in-

quirling our way to the American mission, and when our journey was near its end we came upon Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consulate, with the union jack flying above it. In the absence of the Stars and Stripes I saluted it, for it represented peace and civilization in a land of bloodshed and savagery. In a few moments we were at the gate of the American mission, and I dismounted with as profound a sense of relief as I ever expect to feel in all the rest of my life. My long, perilous journey was over, and I was the only newspaper correspondent who had penetrated into the interior of Armenia.

Yusuf hammered on the gate, and when a servant appeared I was conducted across the compound to the residence of Dr. George C. Reynolds, whom I had asked to see. The servant was so stupefied with amazement that he merely opened the door of Dr. Reynolds's study and left me standing on the threshold. Dr. Reynolds, who was seated at his desk with his back towards me,

turned around, expecting to see a patient or a refugee.

DR. REYNOLDS ASTOUNDED.

I have seen surprise and amazement on the human face many times; I have seen men rendered speechless and stupefied, but never shall I forget the appearance of Dr. Reynolds as he turned and saw me standing in the doorway. His large brown eyes seemed to grow and grow until they resembled big round saucers. Wonder, doubt and amazement chased one another across his expressive face.

"How on earth did you get here?" he burst out as speech came to him.

"I'm very sorry," I began, "to come upon you in such an unceremonious way."

"Yes, yes," he broke in, "but how did you ever get here?"

"Oh, I rained down," I said, laughing at his amazement. "Don't you see how wet I am?" We had passed through a thunderstorm on the outskirts of the city.

Then he asked my name, and I told him, and he called Mrs. Reynolds from an adjoining room.

"You correspondents do go everywhere," said Mrs. Reynolds as we shook hands. I had not mentioned my errand, but the quick-witted woman had guessed it in a moment.

"So you've come to buy carpets?" said Dr. Reynolds, with a twinkle in his eye.

"How did you know that?"

"We received a letter from Constantinople saying that you were coming here to buy carpets and authorizing us to supply you with money."

"That's all well enough," said I, "but I've come to you as a patient with a broken arm, and I want a surgical examination immediately."

This was literal truth, as my left arm had been useless for seven days owing to a riding accident in Persia.

"I'll call Dr. Kimball," said Dr. Reynolds, taking up his hat, "and we'll look to it at once."

Presently he returned with a handsome young woman dressed in black who, I supposed, was one of the mission teachers.

TENDED BY A WOMAN DOCTOR.

"This is Dr. Kimball," said Dr. Reynolds, "and now let me take off your coat."

"Welcome to America," said the young woman. "It's needless to say that we are very much surprised to see you, and also very glad to have you here. Where are you hurt?"

Miss Kimball (I positively refused to call this handsome young woman "doctor," although she is a most skilful physician and expert surgeon) took hold of my disabled arm with all the professional confidence of an army surgeon, and she twisted at it and kneaded it until I howled for mercy.

"There are no bones broken," said she, "but it's just as bad. There are some tendons and muscles torn asunder, and you'll have little use of that arm for a month or more."

(It was eight weeks from the time of the accident until I recovered the free use of my arm.)

"Did you come all the way from Persia with your arm in this condition?" asked Dr. Reynolds.

"It's a bit better to-day," said I, "but I came most of the way with it in a sling."

"Some people do have wonderful luck," commented the doctor.

"What sort of luck do you call a broken arm when you've got a bad country to travel through?" I demanded.

"You've had wonderful luck at being able to get here at all, arm or no arm," he explained. "It is a wonder that you are not at this moment lying dead along the road."

I could not dispute this, for I knew

that it was only too true, as Dr. Reynolds, who had lived for thirty years in Van, had opportunity of knowing.

In a few minutes the Rev. Mr. H. M. Allen, the mission treasurer, came in with a hearty welcome, and a little later I met Mrs. Allen and the baby, and Miss Kate Frazer and Miss Elizabeth Huntington. Dr. and Mrs. Reynolds occupied one house, and Mr. and Mrs. Allen another, while the three young ladies lived in rooms in the main mission building, which they had humorously christened the "Spinsteran."

"See here," said I to Dr. Reynolds, "I have come here as a patient, and you can't turn me out, Turk or no Turk."

He laughed heartily. "Well," he replied, "I think we can take care of you." And they did, to my complete satisfaction.

THE CORRESPONDENT UNDER THE PROTECTION OF BRITAIN.

Presently I received a visit from Mr. C. M. Hallward, the British Vice-Consul, a stalwart, blonde young Englishman, who had seen consular service in Syria. He welcomed me in a quiet, friendly way, and I thought that he seemed to be rather amused that I had circumvented the Turk and reached the interior of the forbidden country. I gave him my passports, and claimed the protection of the British Government.

At my request Mr. Hallward sent my passport to Bahri Pasha, Governor of the Province of Van, asking for an interview in which I might pay my respects. Word came back that the Governor would be glad to see me at 5 P. M. By thus acting promptly and demanding to see the Governor I saved myself a lot of trouble, for I practically put the Turkish Government on the defensive. I also demanded a permit to continue my journey to the Mediterranean Sea at Iskenderoon, but this I really had no expectation of obtaining, as I knew that no one was allowed to travel through any part of Armenia. I was content, however, to make my headquarters at Van for a few weeks, as I was then in the interior of the devastated region and in the centre of the largest Armenian population.

After luncheon I took a turn about the mission grounds.

"What is this crowd at your back door?" I asked Dr. Reynolds.

"Ask them," suggested the missionary.

"What want you?" said I to one of them, through my own interpreter.

NATIVES LIVING ON WEEDS.

"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth," replied the woman addressed, "give me a bit of bread that my two children may not die of hunger before my eyes. For seven days have we lived on the weeds of the field, until now my head whirled around, and I fear that I am going mad."

"Bread for the love of God," whispered a girl with hollow eyes and sunken cheeks. "My mother is dying at home, the poor baby is already dead, and my father is in prison, though guiltless of any crime."

I dared not question further, but turned away, as a servant began to hand out bread.

"Are you then a rich man that you can feed the hungry in this way?" I asked Dr. Reynolds.

"Would that I were," he answered, with a touch of sadness in his voice. "But I have only my salary as a missionary."

His salary, I believe, is something like \$750 a year, and yet, like the rest of the missionaries in Van, he gives fully one-fourth of it to the poor who besiege his door clamoring for bread. The fools at home who rant about the overpaid missionaries should acquire wisdom by a visit to Van, if the Turks will let them in.

A still larger crowd stood about the entrance to the mission dispensary, patient, ragged, hollow-eyed and wretched.

"What diseases have these people?" I asked of Miss Kimball, who was sitting in judgment at the dispensary door.

ONE DISEASE—HUNGER.

"There is but one disease—hunger," replied the young physician. "They come for medicines for as many ailments as science knows of, but it is not medicine they need; it is food. But the mission has no fund for food, so I am giving medicine."

Miss Kimball has a fine intellect, a strong will, a sympathetic heart and a large amount of common sense. Nature apparently made her for a practical missionary, although it seems a pity to waste such good material on the wilds of Asia Minor when it could be utilized to such excellent purpose at home.

The utter wretchedness of the people about the dispensary door made me shudder, and I was glad to turn away to prepare for my call on the Governor. At Mr. Allen's door food was also being distributed, and many hungry-eyed tat-

terdemallions were looking wistfully in at the gate.

My call on the Governor was the ordinary formal visit to a Turkish official. I expected to merely pass a few compliments of the season and retire. Bahri Pasha is a Georgian, from the Caucasus region of Russia. He was originally a Christian, but he turned Mahometan for the sake of material advancement. He has openly declared that he was sent to Van to suppress the Armenians, and right faithfully has he fulfilled his duty.

The only incident of my call on Bahri Pasha was the sensation that I created by taking the Governor's own cup of hot

water from the coffee tray, thinking that it was meant for me. One of my servants usually notified my host's servants that I drank only hot water, and I supposed that this had been done in the Governor's house. However, Bahri Pasha made light of the mistake, and we pledged each other merrily in cups of hot water. How any one who drinks only hot water can be guilty of the fiendish crimes committed by this man is more than I can understand.

On my return from calling on the Governor I had a long talk with the missionaries and Mr. Hallward on the condition of Armenia. I prefaced this talk by describing my conversation with the villagers on the road from Archak, and I asked if it could be possible that such awful things could be true. Starvation, I explained, I could understand, but outrages on women and children, the abduction of brides and the torture of men seemed to me to be beyond human belief.

HORROR UPON HORROR.

"Nevertheless," said the missionaries and Mr. Hallward, "these stories are all true." Then they told me horror upon horror, until my head swam and my bewildered brain refused to receive a single additional impression. I went to bed in such a dazed and shocked state of mind that my sleep was one long horrid nightmare.

"Boghos, headman of the village of Boghas Kessan, has just died in the Van prison," said Dr. Reynolds, the morning after my arrival; "and Vice-Consul Hallward and I have made an examination of his body."

"Well, what did he die of?" I asked, my mind busy with the stories of horror that I had heard.

Dr. Reynolds hesitated. "You may not be able to print it," said he; "but the fact is he was put to death by the unthinkable torture of crushing the private parts of his body."

I shuddered in speechless horror. "What was his crime?" I managed to ask.

"He was guilty of no crime. A zabtieh (a police-soldier) went to the village of Boghas Kessan to recover sheep stolen by Kurds. He was attacked and killed by Kurds near the village. Boghos, the headman, and sixteen others were arrested, charged with killing the zabtieh. The village has been utterly ruined, and now the headman has been put to death in prison. Prisoners who have been released since he was imprisoned say that an attempt was made to kill him a short time ago, when a notorious Kurdish bandit attacked him in his cell."

The story of Boghos, of Boghas Kessan, has been reported in detail to the British Government. I also have the details of this crime, with all the names, dates and attending facts, but the story is too long for use here, and there are too many of the same kind.

"I am sick with horror," I said on the third day. "Let us all go for a ride." Six of us, including Mr. Hallward, rode out on the plain late in the afternoon. In the course of our ride we paused on a beautiful grassy slope near a village three miles south of the city.

A PARTY OF BRIDES SEIZED.

"Possibly you would like to know the story of the spot where we now stand?" suggested one of the party. I nodded, for I was thinking of the ancient cuneiform inscriptions which I had just seen on the face of Topra Kahla.

"A short time ago," the speaker said, "four young Armenian bridegrooms, with their brides, came to this spot from yonder village to gather flowers. As they were romping and making merry they were suddenly set upon by a party of Kurds, who demanded the brides. The four young men fought desperately to protect their brides, but their heads were smashed in and they were left dead on the ground. The brides were then seized and ravished by the entire party of Kurds."

On the road leading to Van we came upon an Armenian sitting wearily on a stone.

"Every one I meet seems to have some tale of horror to tell," said I. "Let us hear what this man's story is."

I dismounted, ostensibly to tighten my saddle girth, and the man offered to

"Thanks, friend," said I; "but you look unhappy. What sorrow has come to you in the past day?"

The wayfarer passed his hand wearily over his swarthy brow. "Merciful stranger," he replied, "my sorrows can concern you little, for I am but a slave and a Christian dog."

RAVISHED BY KURDS.

"My ears are open," said I. "If you have sorrows, speak."

"My sorrow," he went on, "is that I live. I, a grown man and strong, this day witnessed the dishonor of my own sister-in-law!"

I regretted that I had stopped, but it was too late. "And does the scoundrel yet live?" I asked.

"Truly does he live and boasts of his deed. I was returning from a field for a shovel with which to turn on the water when I saw at a little distance my sister-in-law gathering roots and edible grass for our supper, there being no bread to eat. As I looked I saw a Kurd spring upon her and drag her into a little hollow in the ground. Wild with rage I started forward, but a second Kurd with a Government rifle met me and ordered me back. 'Go,' said he, 'lest I shoot you like the Christian dog that you are.' Mother of God! I was forced to turn back, leaving my poor sister-in-law to be ravished by both these Kurdish beasts."

"Shall you complain to the Governor?" I asked.

"Complain?" he repeated with a ghastly laugh. "Do I wish to be thrown into prison to die of torture? Do I wish my family outraged, my little property

seized and my village ruined? No, stranger to Armenia, I shall not complain."

Two days afterwards nine of us, including Mr. Hallward, made an all-day excursion to a distant village on the lake. When we stopped for luncheon on the banks of a small river we were surrounded by Armenians from a nearby village. The headman wished to uncover his back, which was still smarting from two hundred blows of a stick in the hands of a zabtieh who had come to demand the year's taxes, but I would not look at it. The wretched village had been assessed for \$5,000 taxes, which was more than it would have sold for in open market. As the villagers could not produce the money at a moment's notice the women were outraged, the girls were ravished and the headman were beaten until they fainted. All this was done, not by lawless Kurds, but by the Sultan's soldiers intrusted with the important task of tax collecting.

To divert the headman's attention from his wounds and sorrows I called out: "Don't you see that buffalo feeding in that growing wheat field?"

"Yes," said the villagers; "we see."

"But the beast is doing great injury to your crop," I protested.

"True; it does much harm."

"Then, why do you not run and drive it away?"

"Because it is a Kurdish buffalo."

"I understood, but I continued my questions. 'Who has charge of this buffalo?' I asked."

"This little Kurdish boy beside you."

Then I pounced upon the boy.

"See here," said I, "don't you know that your buffalo is destroying that growing wheat field?"

"It is perhaps so," replied the young scamp, who was apparently amused at the interest I took in his unimportant buffalo.

"Then why do you keep him there?"

"Because my father told me to drive him there."

By this time my indignation was surging up in hot waves. "See here," I said to the Armenian, "I will cuff this boy until he is black and blue; then I will mount my horse, cross the river and chase that buffalo into his village until the Kurds think a whole avalanche has fallen on them."

"No, no," they protested. "For the love of God do no such thing. If you do, the Kurds will take revenge on us, and our lot will be worse than before!"

I was compelled to hold my hand, as the missionaries agreed with the villagers, but it was a bitter trial to my Western nerves to see that buffalo feed on the young wheat undisturbed. Sometimes I have dreamed in my sleep of chasing that buffalo headlong into a crowd of Kurds.

Next day, however, the wisdom of the Armenian villagers' discretion was shown to me in a way that I could not mistake. For several mornings I had been awakened by the noise of men weighing and piling firewood under my window at Dr. Reynolds's house. In Armenia firewood is so valuable that it is bought by weight instead of by measure. The Armenian who sold wood to Dr. Reynolds made a practice of coming with his first loads for the day at

about 4 o'clock in the morning, when he would make such a disturbance under my window that sleep for half an hour would be impossible.

On the morning after my experience with the buffalo I slept until 9 o'clock, the wood-piler not having put in an appearance. I had on several occasions wished him in the centre of a vigorous Armenian massacre, but on this morning I was irritated that he had not awakened me.

"What's become of that wood-piler?" I asked my servant Sago as he appeared with my boots. "He has let me sleep all the morning."

"He will neither pile wood nor disturb you any more, master," replied Sago.

"What's up?"

"He is dead, master."

"Dead! Why the man was here yesterday at daylight, piling wood and swearing in several unknown languages. What has happened to him?"

"The Consul will tell you, sir; he has seen with his own eyes."

BATTERED IN HIS HEAD.

Mr. Hallward was at that moment passing along the walk, and I called out to him: "What's gone wrong with this wood-piler?"

The Vice-Consul tapped at his boot with his riding-whip for a moment, and replied: "Oh, he's been killed or something. The Kurds were pasturing their buffalos in his wheat field and he protested. They fell upon him and battered in his head. I think he's dead now. At least he was just on the point of drawing his last breath when I saw him carried through the streets this morning."

"Then you saw the man?"

"Oh, yes. They were bringing him up from the village of Avants."

"Why, that's the village we passed through twice yesterday where my stirrup came off."

"Precisely," and the Vice-Consul, who was growing accustomed to these tales of outrage, murder and death, smiled at the note of dismay in my voice. One can never fully realize the horror of these things until they happen under his window, or in the familiar village that he has visited a few hours before. There was no more wood-piling that day, nor the next, and when it was resumed a strange hand held the scales and a strange voice disturbed me in the early morning. But the hopeless terror of every-day life in Armenia had come home to me in a way that I could not forget.

For days and days it seemed as though I could not set foot out of doors without running up against some fresh horror more awful than anything I had yet heard, and when I remained indoors the horrors sought me out in the shape of refugees with wounds to show, village notables with scoured backs and frenzied women with tales of violence done to their children.

There was a lull in these things one morning, but when I ventured out I found a fresh horror, more bestial than anything I had known, waiting for me at the entrance to the dispensary. A sad-eyed man was there talking to one of my servants.

"Here is indeed a dreadful thing," said the servant.

"Speak, village headman," I said. "My ears listen."

"I cannot speak, for the shame of this thing which has happened in my house," said the villager; "let your servant tell the tale."

INGENIOUS CRUELTY.

"This man," began the servant, as I motioned him to proceed, "lives in a village just out of sight of the city. Yesterday there came to him a zabtieh collecting taxes. The zabtieh entered down his blanket, and prepared to pass the night. 'Sir,' said the villager, 'I pray you let me conduct you to another room, which you shall have to yourself until you choose to go on your way.' 'This room is good enough for me,' said the zabtieh, and I shall stay. 'But, generous officer of the Sultan,' the villager said, 'my wife is even now very ill in this room, and I beg that you will honor us by accepting a room to yourself.'"

"What is the matter with the woman?" demanded the zabtieh.

"She is about to give birth to a child," said the headman.

"Good!" exclaimed the zabtieh. "I have never witnessed childbirth, and I shall stay!"

"Did he stay?" I asked the villager.

"Truly, master, he did stay. Oh, the unthinkable beast!"

The ingenious cruelty of this Turkish monster passes all human conception. A savage in Africa would not have done this thing.

A LITTLE GIRL DECAPITATED.

During the time that I was making my investigation in Armenia I visited fourteen villages and three monasteries, and in each place the tale of robbery, torture, abduction and murder was unchanged and unchangeable. I can only pick out a case here and there, for a description of them all would fill many pages of The World.

Of all the tales of refugees coming under my attention none struck me more forcibly than the case of Hagope Aharonian, a survivor of the Sassoun massacre, whose picture, showing his many wounds, is herewith reproduced from a photograph specially and secretly taken for the purpose. Hagope was first wounded severely by the Kurds at his home in the village of Aliantsug, in the Sassoun district, during the massacre. Nine members of the family were killed, and the rest took to flight,

the missionary who interpreted for me gave the story as follows:

"Nine were killed—Aharon (the father of Hagope), Gero, his brother, and the rest children. These last were Miriam, six years; Musay, six; Larkis, three; Hamo, two, and Inshinish, an infant, who was shot and fell from mother's arms. Sahmam, a girl, four years old, could not keep up with the rest, and was decapitated by soldiers; Savoug, a boy five years old, was shot."

"Hagope himself was first wounded in the fight with the Kurds by being shot through the neck. His friends took him off to a sheltered place among the mountains. His father and mother were with him when some Kurds and troops were on their way to Dalvorag. Four Kurds caught sight of them and fired a shot killing his father, Aharon, but not molesting them further."

"Later more Kurds came upon them, stripped Hagope stark naked, taking from under him what blankets he was lying on, and, stripping the rest of the company—ten or twelve individuals—of all clothing. They rolled away Hagope's mother, who was crouched by Hagope, slashed away at the wounded Hagope till he was supposed to be dead. A Kurd suggested that his head be cut off, but the man who had been cutting had just washed his sword and put it up, and said he would not pollute his sword again, as the man was dead. But to make sure, they threw large stones at the body. One hit his leg and pushed it one side, but he kept it limp where it was, so there was no suspicion that he was alive. One large stone that hit him on the chest he said hurt him more than the sword cuts."

LEFT FOR DEAD.

"His mother came to him after the Kurds had gone, but would not give him the water he craved till the Kurds, who were dividing their spoil within sight at some distance, had gone. She then brought water in her hands and poured it into his mouth. After taking the water he became unconscious for the first time."

"The mother and other friends that fled at this time did not expect that he would live, and so did nothing for his wounds for fifteen days. During this time he subsisted on mud and grasses. At one time during a cold snap an inch or two of snow fell. His mother placed brush leaves over his naked body, but the dripping of the melting snow was more than he could stand, and he preferred to be wholly exposed to the cold."

"After two weeks had passed and he persisted in living his mother got some sheep bones, charred them, and, reducing them to powder with stones, rubbed the dust into his wounds."

"For about forty days he was kept here among the mountains, subsisting on roots and any raw food that could be provided, until he was brought back to his ruined village. As winter came on and the people could no longer stay there they left for Moush plain, but through fear of the Kurds, who knew him, he did not dare to go with them. He went, instead, to another Armenian village, where he had relatives. When the European delegates on the commission of inquiry went to Moush he descended into the Moush plain, where he passed the winter."

DESERTED VILLAGES.

"It will be admitted," the missionary said, "that he must have had a miraculous constitution to have survived. There are thirteen wounds on him—the bullet wound through the neck, a sword cut just below the right shoulder, another on the right arm two inches below the shoulder, a third cut just above the elbow, two between the elbow and the wrist, three large cuts that cross one another near the thigh, the eighth cut about four inches below; another near the knee, still another vertical near that, and the thirteenth on the left leg. There are other scars on the right side, but they were there prior to the Sassoun massacre."

It was absolutely impossible for me to see one-tenth of the refugees and village headmen who came thronging to the mission gates to pour their tales of outrage, persecution and murder into my ears. Despairing of being able to see me, several of them wrote long letters giving accounts of their troubles, hoping that I could do something to stay the tide of extermination rising about them.

Here is a sample letter, taken at random from a large pile of village complaints:

"Sir: We humbly come to inform Your Excellency of the intolerable condition of the poor and unprotected Armenian people of Moks. To the tortures of our already miserable condition are added the tortures which the Kalmakam Islander Bey, his four sons and the Chief of Zabtiehs, Hassan Agha, gives the excuse of tax collecting. They torment us by severely beating and swearing at us and by seizing all the means which the poor people have for a scanty livelihood. When they cannot find money they sell anything that they may see in the house at one-third its value. They sell a sheep for twenty, fifteen, ten or even five piasters. They give no time for finding money. When the money is presented to them they take it with curses and scoffings. We have no means of protesting against their unspeakable atrocities."

SEIZED A PRIEST AT MASS.

"We fled by night, leaving in the hands of cruel officials and Kurds our helpless families. Some of us were caught on the way and carried back to prison. God only knows what their condition is in the hands of the brutal Turks. The tax collectors went so far in their cruelty as to seize our priest in the church while he was performing the mass, and to carry him, pushing, beating and cursing at him on the way. They compelled another priest, eighty years of age, who had no time to find money, to carry mud in a basket as a workman to mend the roof of a Turkish court."

"Add to the barbarity of the Turk the numerous atrocities of the Kurds and then judge! It is the time of sowing, but who is able to sow? If one can find seeds, what safety is there to carry it to the fields?"

"Rapes and abductions are very frequent. When the Zabtiehs hear that a certain house has some ale or food (because there are very few that have)

they enter and use it as they will."

"Tax collectors have suffocated one person and killed several others. The tax collectors are ordered to torture those persons who cannot pay their taxes and to compel them to turn Moslems. Following is a list of some who have recently turned Moslem: Harootioon Melhamian, of Narovantsee; Adom Mardrosian, of the same place; Manrig's daughter Pshe, of Ligansee; Mardiros Khoosian, a blind man; Sukho Garibian, his wife and two sons, of Subgantsee; Gozo's wife and Ohanness's wife and two sons, of the same place; Manro's daughter, of Gerdnootsee; Khacho's daughter, of Denistsee; Nadir Hordepan and Murad Hoochannessian, of Mogatsee; Taro's daughter Suldian, of Komertsee; Manooq's son and daughter-in-law, of Taramaztsee."

GIRLS RAVISHED AND ABDUCTED.

"Sherbeg raped the daughter of the abbot of Sourp Kevork. Sulleman Bey and his son took £75 from Armenian villagers. They graze their sheep, 300 in number, in the wheat fields of the poor villagers and do not let them water their fields. This is done to compel the Armenians to emigrate. The priest of Tasht has emigrated. Sulleman Bey and his brother killed Neto and seized his lands, which are worth more than 300 L. P."

"Avald Bey's servant raped Sdepan's girl. Kurd Beys killed Melik and seized the lands of four monasteries—Sourp Minas, Sourp Garabed, Kavavank and Sourp Asdvatatzin."

"Melik's daughter was abducted by the son of Ghoul Khan Bey. Kurds plundered the church of Tagh and desecrated it, making crosses of dung on the walls. Kurds plundered Sourp Asdvatatzin, of Agustashed, and desecrated it by tearing the gospels to pieces and pouring the holy oil on the manure heaps. The church is now the bathroom of a Kurdish harem. Sulleman Bey desecrated the church of Tasht by making dung crosses on the walls. Kurds have seized the lands of Amenaperghich. Zolee Bey seized the cemetery of Subgants. Denistsee Kurds pulled down Kaghavank and seized the lands. Nerey Bey has seized the lands of Sourp Asdvatatzin, of Haghin. Kurds have seized the lands of a monastery near Amenaperghich. The church is now used as a stable. The inhabitants of Shgrents are scattered and the Kurds have occupied their place. There is no village in which the Kurds have not seized a field or more. In addition to this the poor villagers have to keep without charge the sheep of the Kurdish chiefs during the winter."

DESERTED VILLAGES.

"Here are some of our deserted villages: Dinis, ruined by Abo, Sall, Mzde and Hadji; Tzupants, ruined by the same men; Tzardants, ruined and occupied by Kurds; Koments, ruined by Durbaz Agha, a noted Kurdish bandit; Komer, ruined by Moula Sherif; Pesavank, ruined and occupied by Kurds."

One morning I was informed that a committee of Armenians from the city desired to see me. There were three members of the committee—a middle-aged man representing the business interests of the city and province, a young man representing the youth of the district and a woman representing the families and women and children. I received them in the sitting-room of the main mission building and Miss Kimball acted as interpreter. After telling me how much the Armenian people valued my presence among them and how greatly they depended upon me to help them out of their troubles, the business man said:

"Sir, we have come as a committee of the Armenian people to beg that you will tell us what to do. We cannot decide among ourselves, and we have

agreed to abide by your decision.

Despairing of any help from England, and fearing that England does not fully appreciate the desperate nature of our condition, the young men are anxious to rise in revolt and fight to the death, in the hope that the massacre of Armenians, which will inevitably follow, will arouse public opinion in England to such an extent that something will be done for us. They argue that it is better that a patient should lose an arm by amputation than his life should be endangered. It is better, they say, that twenty thousand Armenians of Van should give themselves up to sacrifice, in the hope of benefiting their fellows, than five hundred thousand should be put to death, a few at a time, by persecution, outrage and murder. The old men counsel patience in the hope that help may come; the women shudder at thought of the outrage and atrocity that await them. We all know that, if the young men make their fight, it will involve every Armenian in the place, men, women and children."

SEEKING ASSISTANCE.

"For my own part," the man continued, "I am perfectly willing to give my life to the Armenian people. My life is no longer any value. My business has been ruined by the Turkish Government and I would as soon die as live on in this wretched, despairing way, which can end only in starvation and death. Speak, honored sir, and we shall obey. Our destiny is in your hands."

A vision of the streets of Van running red with the blood of men butchered and tortured; of women outraged and hewn asunder, and of children tossed on bloody bayonets rose before me with a sudden, sharp pain.

"I cannot advise you," I said at length. "It is beyond the power of mortal man."

"Nay, but you must, honored sir, lest we fling ourselves to destruction in sheer despair. You cannot desert us in our day of need."

I paced the room in an agony of doubt. My sympathies were ready to brave young men who were ready to give their lives that their people might perhaps live; but through all the mists of uncertainty there shone the pallid face of the woman waiting breathless for the knell of her doom.

"Young men of Van," said I, "hear this from him whose heart is with you in your desperation: Stay your hands! Restrain the noble promptings of your hearts until there is no longer any hope. Take no action for eight weeks, but rest quiet. If at the end of eight weeks no help has come in sight, and I can send you no word of hope from England,

whither I go soon, then shall you meet together and decide, as one man, what you shall do, whether to fight, to run away, or to remain and starve. Whatever you do, let there be no dissensions in your ranks, but act as one man—the young, the middle-aged and the old. This is my word to the young men of Van."

PLANNING A MASSACRE.

The woman raised her eyes to heaven, with moving lips, and tears trickled down her pallid face. In a moment both men were sobbing, and tears flowed freely. They thanked me in words that choked.

"It shall be as you say," they promised, and the forlorn little group passed down the stairs.

Miss Kimball drew a long breath of relief. "Thank God for eight weeks of respite," she said. "After that—who knows?"

Who does, indeed, know? For now the Kurds are planning to massacre the Armenians the moment that help comes in sight. Shall I ever see those devoted, unselfish missionaries again?

One of the leaders of the revolutionary party in Van is the richest and most prominent Armenian in the province. This man, with several of his friends, called on me frequently to discuss the Armenian question, and I asked him to give me an interview which should represent the sentiments of the better class of his countrymen.

"Honorable sir," said he, "our beloved country is already in ruins. Instead of the rising smoke of populous villages and towns, there rises the smoke of burning hay and grain; we see no more the cheerful villager fearlessly ploughing his fields or shepherding his flocks. He has no protection in raising his cattle and sheep; no money to buy agricultural implements or draught animals; no food for his hungry family; no ability to pay the innuerable exorbitant taxes; no safety in protesting against constant outrage, and no weapons to defend himself against the outrager. So, deprived of all physical and moral rights, he staggers under a crushing burden."

ROBBING WITHOUT MERCY.

"It seems almost a miracle that he still endures. How can he recount the numberless evils which threaten to destroy him entirely? The Kurdish robbers drive off his cattle and sheep unpunished; they besiege villages in open day and rob without mercy; they graze their horses in the green wheat fields or cut off the heads of the ripened grain, leaving only the worthless straw to the poor villagers; they come and fill their sacks from the threshing floors as freely as if it were their incontestable right. The Kurdish chiefs do not trouble themselves with hay-making, since in the fall they simply bring their flocks to the Armenian villages and order them kept. If in the spring any are missing, the villagers must make good the loss by the best of their own flocks. And what payment is made to the villagers? Only curses against their religion and honor, if nothing worse."

Besides this kind of robbery, in many places the inhabitants pay regular taxes to the nearest Kurdish chief, who, moreover, appoints a shepherd or herdsman for the village from his own people, regardless of the wishes of the villagers themselves. No Armenian may oppose even the lowest and most brutal Kurd. If the Kurd does not at once succeed in his designs by intimidation, he accuses the Armenians with being revolution-

ists, thus calling to his aid the Government itself. The poor villagers must then either yield or be handed over to the Government. The Kurdish chiefs divide the villages among themselves and rule over them as their monarchs, collecting regular taxes. Then, on the other hand, the Government collects its taxes by means of a brutal gendarmerie, who perform their office by swearing and destroying and seizing whatever they find—wheat, cattle, sheep or household goods, in lieu of taxes, old and new. Thus frequent raids on the villages, long illegal imprisonments, unpunished murders, frequent abductions and forcible conversions to Mahometanism have brought our people to a very low level, both morally and pecuniarily."

DRIVEN FROM HOME.

"Although leaving home and seeking work abroad is a bitter cup to the Armenian, yet it has been the great resource heretofore; but for the past two years it has been virtually prohibited. The villages are held responsible for murders committed in or near their boundaries, even when known to have been committed by the Mahometans themselves. This recently happened in the case of two villages within sight of the city of Van (Sughka and Ardamed), one being sentenced to pay L. T. 600, and the other L. T. 300 for Mahometan murders committed near or within the village confines. In the case of Ardamed the greater part of the inhabitants are Mahometans, and, although the sentence pertained to the entire village, the payment was levied only upon the Christians."

In the village of Shahbaghi, also within sight of Van, a certain sheikh recently seized many of the fields of the Armenians; when the case was brought up for trial, of course, the Turkish tribunals decided in favor of the sheikh."

After describing in detail numerous cases of robberies, murders and outrages which had already come under my attention, the Armenian notable continued:

"From three to four hundred young Armenians have been unjustly imprisoned as political offenders for months or years; to-day more than one hundred are in prison, of whom only one-quarter have received sentence, while the remainder have passed, in some cases years, in others months, confined in dark, filthy rooms, without trial or sentence. Nor even are Armenian prisoners served the meagre rations allowed by law, so that many imprisoned villagers go for days hungry. But if this were all it would not matter so much. Alas! this is the least of what they endure."

BEATEN WITH CLUBS.

"Imagination hardly suffices to portray the real state of things. The days of the Inquisition have truly returned! They are beaten with clubs until they fall to the ground bleeding and senseless; ponderous chains are fastened to feet and hands and neck so that they cannot move; in some cases the neck chain of a



ARMENIAN CHRISTIANS AT A SERVICE OF PRAYER THAT THE SULTAN'S PERSECUTIONS MAY BE STOPPED.

prisoner in one room will be fastened to the feet of a prisoner in the next room; young men are brutally violated; for months men are kept in solitary confinement in dark, damp, filthy cells, hungry, thirsty, without beds or fires in severest winter. As a cruel joke, the prison officials subject the prisoners to the cold, so that some have had their toes frozen off; many are branded with hot irons, and many have had their hair and beard torn out piecemeal. It is little wonder that some attempt suicide, as did Manoug Shadvorean, who was afterwards hanged. This young man actually had nails driven into his skull and large needles into his throat as a part of his torture. The greater part of this torture is ordered as a means of forcing the prisoners to give testimony, sometimes to things which indeed they are cognizant of, but very frequently to intimidate them into repeating as testimony incriminations against their fellows which are the shameless fabrications of the judges or of the Commissioner of Police.

This horrible state of things in the Van prison I have carefully verified by personal cross-examination of several discharged prisoners. Each man told the same simple story, even under the most searching examination, so there can be no doubt of the truth. I have the names of one hundred Armenians confined in the Van prison, and, after investigation, I am prepared to say that nine-tenths of them are guiltless.

PITS FULL OF BODIES.

One of the most interesting of my visitors was Hampartoom Ghazarean, of Ghelieguzan, in the Sassoun district. When I had looked at the scars of the wounds which he had received in the massacre at Ghelieguzan he gave me a most graphic description of the visit of the European delegates on the Commission of Inquiry to the ruined villages of Sassoun. He told me of the evering of the Three Pits of Death in Bedo's field in Ghelieguzan. The English newspapers have published reports showing that no bodies were found in the pits, but this, Ghazarean said, was entirely misleading. Not only were all the pits opened, but they were found to be full of bodies of slain Armenians. He himself helped to uncover the pits with his

up the earth with their fingers, there being no tools. Twenty bodies from each pit were laid out on the ground for the inspection of the Commissioners. The odor was overpowering.

"How could you endure such an odor while uncovering the pits?" I asked. "Our hearts were on fire," replied the simple, honest villager. "We did not know what we were doing."

THE CORRESPONDENT'S PRESENCE CAUSES UNEASINESS.

I took also the stories of Asbadoor Geragosian and Serope Asbadoorian, survivors of the Sassoun horror, and incidentally I obtained photographs showing scars of the wounds inflicted upon them by Turkish soldiers. Their stories were merely the ordinary tales of murder, outrage and atrocity, and I need not repeat them. It is not my purpose to pile horror upon horror, but merely

to give sample cases out of the scores that came to my notice.

Finding that a month's stay in the province of Van had given me many times as much material as I could expect the public to read, I made preparations to return home, leaving Van about the middle of June. The Turkish Government was becoming very uneasy over my long stay in Van, and was asking the British Vice-Consul every other day when I intended to go. The Governor even went so far as to ask the Persian Consul-General, who was on friendly terms with me, why I did not go, but, of course, the Consul-General did not know.

Fearing pursuit and assassination in some lonely place, I decided to ride night and day, without stopping, until I reached the Persian border. In making my escape from Armenia I rode seventy miles on one horse without drawing rein, except for a short half-hour. Most of that distance was covered on a moonless night, during six hours of which I was lost and directing my course by the North Star. For three days and nights I rode steadily, resting only an hour or two each night, until I reached the city of Tebriz, in Persia, where I felt that I was safe from all pursuit. My friends in Van, however, were not satisfied of my safety until I had reached Germany on my way home.

Since my return I have received information showing that the condition of Armenia is much worse than when I left it. The murders and atrocities are increasing, the people are starving and the Kurds are planning new massacres. It seems to me that we are only at the beginning of the Armenian question. Worse horrors await us in the near future.

FROM THE HEAD OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH.

Soon after my arrival in Van I sent messages to the Catholicos at Akhtamar, an island in Lake Van, asking for an official statement from him as head of the Armenian Church in the distressed district of Armenia. There is another Armenian Catholicos in Etchmiadzin, Russia, who ranks theoretically higher than the Catholicos at Akhtamar, but the testimony of the man on the island in Lake Van is more valuable, because he is in the devastated region and is in constant touch with the persecuted people.

In a few days I received word that the Catholicos was writing an official church despatch to Izmirian, Patriarch of Constantinople, and that he would permit me to translate it and use it in any manner which I might deem good for the Armenian cause.

One peculiar feature of this document is the way in which thefts of wheat and sheep are spoken of in the same

breath with murders, abductions and outrages on women. Thus, the Catholicos would say: "Kurds entered the village, stole ten sheep, twenty cows, and killed two men and one woman!" It sounds strangely to those who have not

visited the district where the outrages are taking place.

As to outrages on women, the Catholicos says with characteristic brevity: "The rapes committed have been simply without number."

The desecration of churches and the confiscation of monasteries are given in lists, as one would write a catalogue; yet it should be borne in mind that the desecration of holy places is a most deadly sin in the estimation of Armenians. Murder is a mild crime in comparison.

The pathos of the document is the matter-of-fact way in which the persecutions, robberies, rapes, outrages and murders are, as it were, numbered and catalogued. And the Catholicos justly says that this is only a leaf out of the whole heartrending story.

The official despatch in part is as follows:

ARMENIAN CATHOLICOS AT AKH-TAMAR.

Official Correspondence with the Patriarch at Constantinople.

No. 2,601.

Most Reverend Sir, Matteos, Archbishop, Patriotic and Benevolent Patriarch of Constantinople, President of the National Administrative Council, and Brother in Christ.

When I contrast the responsibility of my office with the heartrending scenes that surround us on every side, I only wonder that we live after being shot with so many arrows. True, this is not life, but simply a state of half living, in which, while shedding tears of blood, we are consumed in flames, and at death will send out a cry into eternity. Can one remain indifferent while being burned in such a furnace, and not communicate to our beloved colleagues, the shepherds of the people, our bitter sorrows and agonies?

I know, holy brother, that your ears and heart are wearied with the news of our national sufferings, but you well know that it is impossible to record one out of a thousand of all that have occurred, and if only hearing of these is an unbearable pain, how much greater is the pain of seeing with the eyes and touching with the hands these awful sores of our nation. A single day does not pass but some oppressed provincial does not, holding the hands of his half-naked children, move away from his home.

Although fear has rooted itself in the hearts of the people and spread itself through their veins, thus making it difficult for them to lodge their complaints either with the Government or the Arachnotaran, yet every day protests are made against the evil course

of Government officials, gendarmes, oppressors, robbers, tax-gatherers, and in a word against all persons bearing the name Moslem who direct all manner of evil towards the pitiable Christians. The abbots, heads of villages, and all classes of men cowed with fear come to the Catholicate, confess their troubles and open a wound in the heart of all who hear. Holy

brother, when I look at your picture I long to have it hear and see all, but that is impossible and my age prevents me from coming to you.

Holy brother, my tears and grief overwhelming the soul quicken the desire of my heart and would fain make this my last communication to you. Take it and read it, perhaps it is the last. It is impossible for me to live much longer; you are still in your prime; read it, sigh, and with your hands lift it to the public gaze.

This letter is an abstract from a communication from Sahag Vart, abbot of the monastery of Soorpe Khach, in the district of Khizan. The letter bears date of May 4, 1895. My letter also contains information received from other districts. I send you only such parts as will serve for examples.

Hassan, brother of Jeladin of Khizan, Ahmed the present Sheikh, Said Ali, son of Jeladin; Mustapha, and Khalut Beys, also Adeh of Khoros, formed the conspiracy of massacring the Christians of Khizan, Badig, Guzelle Dareh, Boulunuk, Karchegian and Kavash. In order to carry out their purpose 5,000 men were gathered, officers appointed, and all preparations were made to have the massacre take place on the feast of Easter. A report of the affair reached the Kaimakam, who immediately went to Bitlis and the attack was prevented, and in the investigation the Sheikh and his men tried to justify themselves by giving other reasons for their assembling. The first meeting called by the Sheikh was during Passion Week. The Christians, through fear, closed their churches for one whole week. The Sheikh called a second meeting after Easter, but the object of it has not been known.

LIST OF DESECRATIONS.

List of desecrations of churches and monasteries in Khizan, Moks and Hagatsore:

Abaranits Soorpe Khach Monastery, Soorpe Khachin, Mamadan; Soorpe Asvadadzin Monastery, Sorva; Soorpe Khach, Segha; Soorpe Giragos, Spargerdo; Soorpe Asvadadzin Pazents; Soorpe Kevor, Sherin; Soorpe Asvadadzin, Kava; Soorpe Garabed, Abgants; Soorpe Minas, Nanavants; Soorpe Asvadadzin, Agutasht; Soorpe Naragatsi, Gochokh; two shrines in Hin; two churches, Vostan; Soorpe Harootune, Daveh Boyoun; Soorpe Asvadadzin, Garader; Zaghu Monastery, Shahdagh; Soorpe Kevork, Junug.

The chapel in Iki, in Shandagh, was desecrated by Shakhir and his men in 1893, Soorpe Stepanos by soldiers in 1891, and Soorpe Asvadadzin the same year. Some Kurds pulled down the church of Soorpe Kevork and occupied its lands.

Soorpe Asvadadzin, Khosp, was abominably desecrated by Kurds on the night of April 7, 1895, just before the people went there for special services. This was done by polluting all figures of the cross and even the altar itself. The church of Mulk was desecrated, also the church of Karavants by Kurds from the same village in 1892. The same Kurds destroyed the church of Govgants. The Kurds of Mulk buried three of their dead in a field which belonged to the church, and after that occupied it as a cemetery. They had also seized a field belonging to the monastery of

Charahan Soorpe Nushan. There is no monastery either ruined, deserted or unoccupied which is not directly or indirectly under the influence of some Kurd. The lands of many of them have been occupied. If present conditions continue it is plain that all lands pertaining to monasteries and churches will pass into the possession of the Kurds.

(Note.—"Soorpe" means "holy." All places of this name are churches or monasteries.)

During last Christmas Eve, when all the Christians of Mashgakebag were gathered in the little church for special services, Said Agha, son of Mustapha Bey, of the same village, rushed into the church and fired off his revolver several times. The people were so terrified that they left their chants and prayers unfinished and fled to their homes. In this village the people have almost entirely ceased to cultivate their orchards and vineyards, because they not only fail to enjoy the products, but are often obliged to pay far more than the whole yield is worth as a tax to the Government.

MUTILATION, HANGING AND BURNING ALIVE.

My dear brother, we do not consider it necessary to give in this memorandum all the circumstances, although of course these details if given would have made the terrible picture more graphic. Only bear in mind that beating, mutilating and murdering people, violating women and girls and desecrating the holy churches of Christ are the commonest of crimes committed by Turks and Kurds.

Some of the murders have been committed by a horrible mutilation of the body, others by hanging, some by burning alive and still others by placing a quantity of gunpowder in the abdomen and exploding it.

The rapes committed have been simply without number.

It must be borne in mind that what has been written in this account is only a single leaf from the forest of persecution. I have been able to get comparatively little information from the villages and districts mentioned, and for lack of accurate data have been obliged to leave altogether the districts of Karchigan, Dummorik and Antsevanstik.

We know that all these outrageous atrocities are perpetrated with the deliberate purpose of obliterating the Armenian villages.

We ask you, then, to take seriously into consideration this memorandum and consider its contents well. We have reason to believe that a renowned and intrepid patriarch like yourself can apply an immediate remedy to the evils of the oppressed Armenians. We pray that you may be gifted with wisdom and strength.

(Signed) KHACHADOOR, Catholicos of Armenians, at the Seat of Akhtamar, Akhtamar, May, 1895.

OUR AMERICAN

MISSIONARIES' VIEWS.

One morning, after a sleepless night passed in thinking of the stories of horror that I had heard from the village refugees, I said to the missionaries:

"It is impossible for any man to grasp at once the awful condition of things to be seen and heard in this distressed country. I can hope to assimilate it only by degrees. Now, while I am doing this, I want one of you to draw up in writing a statement representing the situation as it appears to you, and I will publish it as your authorized utterance. The Christian world has been looking in vain for a statement from the missionaries, and I want you to give them the truth at last.

"I am aware that the missionaries have kept silent through fear of destroying the work that they have been sixty years in building up, but it seems to me that the time has come when the demands of common humanity should be heard."

After some hesitation and consultation the missionaries granted this request, and one of them prepared a statement which I was authorized to make public as representing the views of the entire mission. These missionaries deserve great praise for their courage in thus making a public statement, for no outsider knows better than I the perils that beset them on every hand in their every-day lives.

I take great satisfaction in giving this statement publicity, as it is positively the only public utterance of the American missionaries in Turkey on the Armenian question. The statement represents the condition of Armenia in June, 1895. It is as follows:

THE MISSIONARIES' TALE.

"The English-speaking public has, during the past months, been startled by disclosures of the infamous treatment of fellow Christians by the unspeakable and unchangeable Turk. Viewing these necessarily fragmentary and incomplete disclosures in the light of the 61st article of the Berlin Treaty, England, at least, has doubtless come to feel that she is directly responsible for the profound misery of 4,000,000 of fellow Christians, for thousands of un-avenged murders and abductions, for the forcible conversion to Islam of hundreds if not thousands yearly (most of which converts are helpless girls and women) and for the moral and physical degradation of the entire Armenian population in Turkey.

"But in the midst of these generalizations let not the Christian world forget that the consummate fruit of the outrage and oppressions is found in

the condition of the individual and of the family. And although administrative reforms should be secured to this people, the results of the present condition will still remain as a crushing burden far beyond the unaided ability of the bankrupt community to bear.

EXTERMINATION IS THE SCHEME.

"Governments, Christian or otherwise, have no conscience; else the present writing would be unnecessary. But it is to the individual conscience of the Christians of England that we look both to form government policy and to contribute to the succor of the people who are reduced to such sore straits.

"Doubtless the Vilayets of Van and Bitlis, including as they do the scene of the massacre of 1894, and having a larger Armenian population than any other, have felt the full force of the deliberate scheme of extermination, and hence are in a more desperate condition than others. That there has been and to-day is a deliberate scheme of extermination on the part of the Sublime Porte one who understandingly reads the daily papers—still less one who has access to consular reports (as all England to-day ought to have)—cannot for a moment doubt.

"To-day the Turk has very nearly approached the climax of his policy to leave no Armenians to either need or receive foreign protection! This policy has been carried out chiefly by means of forcible proselyting murder and starvation. With the first two we will not deal. Let us note the progress along the third and most efficient line of action. That it is the direct and deliberate policy of the central Government to starve out the Armenians has time and again been frankly acknowledged by provincial officials, while their constant and unvarying conduct speaks louder than any words.

A STARVING-OUT PROCESS.

"This starving-out process began with the disarming of the Armenians and the distribution at various times of arms to the Kurds. Then followed, naturally, the wholesale robbery of Armenian villages, authorized and—certainly during the past year—even commanded by the central Government. Then we must add to actual robbery the robbery sanctioned to some extent by custom under the form of regular taxation levied by the Kurds upon the villages in exchange for liberty to live at all. Add also ruinous taxation by the Government, for which not only no protection or assistance of any kind whatsoever is given, but, on the contrary, the very tax collectors themselves extort far more than the rightful taxes and inflict every possible injury and indignity upon the people in the process.

EVERYTHING PARALYZED.

"Add to these actual robberies the fear of robbery which prevents villagers from moving freely from place to place for exchange and barter, and deters them from using the most fertile but distant fields and pasture grounds, and you have the chief factors in bringing about steadily and surely the present desperate condition of the people of the villages. And the prosperity or poverty of the towns is inevitably the result of the condition of the peasantry. If agriculture and grazing are dead, trade and manufactures die speedily.

"It is impossible to obtain all-around statistics even of the city, much less of the villages. But one living here has no need of statistics to add to the conviction that every day's experience renders deeper, that human misery is at its worst in the case of fully three-quarters of the Armenian population, and that the remaining quarter is in a condition where if European protection is not right speedily forthcoming they will deliberately choose speedy massacre at the hands of their oppressors rather than the slow but equally effective destruction of the recent past. No day passes that we are not made sick by the repeated tales of direst want and woe, hunger and wretchedness. It is hard to know where to begin to give details in the frightful wealth of material at our disposal. Let it be borne in mind that the particular cases chosen are only specimens showing the true condition of fully three-fourths of the peasantry and one-third of the city people.

MISERY IN VAN.

"The city of Van, as regards the Christians, is divided into twelve parishes. Of these the largest is Varark, comprising 872 families and 5,640 souls. Of these 872 families, 9 are reported as 'rich'—that is, possessed in personal and real estate of from L. T. 500 to L. T. 2,000. Probably the average wealth of these nine families would fall below L. T. 1,000.

UTTERLY HELPLESS.

"If we turn to the condition of the peasant still in his village, the picture is even more pathetic—yes, verily appalling! Neither by day or night is he for a moment secure in his own life, as to the life and honor of his wife and daughters, as to his flocks and herds, his wheat or any other possession. Any wanton Kurd may attack what most attracts his fancy unchallenged. And the Turk, be he soldier, gendarme or private individual, is in no way behind the Kurd in his thievishness and brutality. The Armenian has neither weapons to defend himself with in the first instance, nor possibility of protest to the Government, for he well knows that these things are done in accordance with official design.

"Hence he can only stand with folded hands and agonized heart and actually see, not only his daily bread stolen, but, as in hundreds of authenticated cases, witness the shame and torture of wife or sister or daughter. Sometimes companies of armed Kurds come to a village, announce their foul intent, and the utterly helpless men are actually obliged to flee the village that they may not witness the horrors they are powerless to avert. If in self-defense they were to kill a Kurd, the whole village would be arrested, brought to Van, imprisoned in the horrible Van prison for months, many to die there by natural or unnatural means, and finally the whole village would be ruined.

"Call them not cravens, and do not think for an instant that, rude and simple as they are, they do not realize the pollution and disgrace. They are Christians, and value family purity above everything. Do not think that we

are dealing in exaggerations or generalizing on the strength of isolated cases. There is not a village in the length and breadth of this Van vilayet where more or less of the above atrocities have not often and are not daily taking place.

"At the present writing I have reliable testimony from more than fifty villages that the people are on the verge of starvation. Many thousands have already emigrated from villages so situated that the people can reach the Persian border without encountering Turkish officials. But the great majority have simply lived on—dazed and confounded—from day to day, until now they find themselves utterly ruined. Many nearer the city and large towns have held on in the hope that England was going to do something for them. They come by scores, and with hungry eyes ask: 'When is help coming? Only let us live and work in safety!' And when we say we hope help will come in a month or two, pinning our confidence to the much-talked-of scheme of reform, they say in agonized tones: 'A month or two! It is not a matter of months, or even of weeks! It is a matter of days! Our children are starving even now!'

"In the city of Van the condition is only less desperate. And inasmuch as the greater part of the village refugees eventually congregate in the city, we look forward to a formidable condition at no distant day. Even now one might stand at his own door from morning till night and give bread to the indescribably wretched, ragged and homeless of all ages and both sexes who come to beg. It is already appalling, and we are at a loss to know how to meet this demand. And yet those who can beg from door to door are the most fortunate, for they are at least sure of something to eat. It is the condition of those city people who are reduced to absolute want and who cannot bring themselves to beg that is pitiable and desperate in the last degree.

"Let me repeat, that to my personal knowledge a full third of the population of Van is no better off than are these women whose condition I have noted. How are they to meet the severe cold of another winter, even if they survive to see it? If help does not come they are inevitably doomed."

After I had been in the interior of Armenia a month I read this statement a second time, and when I had finished it I said to the writer: 'It is an understatement of the true situation.'

And it is, for no language acceptable to civilization can tell the shameful story as it is.

ELUDING THE SULTAN'S SOLDIERS.

The difficulty of penetrating into the interior of the devastated region of Armenia against the express order of the Sultan of Turkey cannot be fully appreciated by any one who has not undertaken the task. With all the resources of civilization at my command I was compelled to take a roundabout route and to work hard for many weeks before being able to reach my destination.

During my journeys in going to and returning from Armenia I travelled 1,500 miles on horseback and 450 miles in wagons, sleeping in stables and living on sour milk and coarse native bread.

I went from London to Constantinople, where I remained a week perfecting my plans. I then took steamer and went up the Black Sea to Batoum, in Russia, stopping on the way at Ineboll, Sinope, Samsoun, Kerasund and Trebizond. From Batoum I went to the city of Tiflis, where I remained for some time readjusting my arrangements.

On leaving Tiflis I went to Baku, on the Caspian Sea, and there took steamer to Rescht, the entry port for Central Persia. From Rescht I travelled on horseback and by wagon to Teheran, capital city of Persia, where I had audience with His Imperial Majesty the Shah, and where I also took out a new passport and secured a letter of recommendation from the Turkish Embassy.

Leaving Teheran with one servant, I went northward to Tebriz, travelling 100 miles by wagon and 300 miles on horseback in five days, eight hours. In Tebriz I had my passport vised by the Turkish Consul-General and set out for Ourmi, a Persian city near the Turkish frontier.

In Ourmi I sought to obtain from the mountains an escort of Kurds, but at that time all the Kurds along the border were at war with one another and I was forced to set out for Turkey unattended except by three servants and a horsemaster.

I passed through Salmas and Khol and turned westward through the wild gorge known as the Kotour Valley. Passing through this gorge I had some adventures with Kurdish robbers, but I reached Kotour safely.

From Kotour I went directly across the Turkish border, evading the Turkish soldiers and officials, and pushing on rapidly, night and day, until I was well into Armenia. In the village of Archok I was held up by Turkish officials, but got away safely, and continued on to the forbidden city of Van.

W. W. HOWARD.