

BLOTTING OUT THE ARMENIANS.

HUNDREDS KILLED AT BITLIS

AN OFFICIAL VERSION.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

CONSTANTINOPLE, Monday.

News continues to arrive from many parts of Asia Minor of massacres of Armenians. These are not conflicts, as they are sometimes described. The heads of the Armenian Protestant and Catholic Armenian communities in Marash have telegraphed to the two Patriarchs and the official representative of the Protestant communities in the capital that they had been to the Governor and urged him to take measures to prevent anticipated massacres, and that already many Christians had been wounded. On Saturday they again telegraphed that they had urged the Mutessarif and the military commander to defend the lives of the Christians, that many Christians had already been killed, that the massacre was continuing, and that they were at their wits' end.

Nothing has yet been done to prevent the massacres in the neighbourhood of Ismidt. From Bitlis a massacre is reported, and it is said several hundreds have been killed. At Kharpout it is reported that arms have been issued to the Moslems, and that the Christians have been disarmed. No one has yet heard of the punishment of the offenders, though Armenians are being everywhere arrested.

No Imperial Hatt has been published, nor have the official papers yet mentioned the appointment of the Commission of Control. The capital is full of rumours of the doings of the revolutionary Turkish party. At the Selamlık on Friday it was observed that the Sultan's personal body guard instead of preceding the carriage marched parallel with it, but behind a line of troops. Threatening letters emanating from the Young Turkish party are reported to have been received by various highly-placed Turkish officials.

(THROUGH REUTER'S AGENCY).

CONSTANTINOPLE, Oct. 28.

According to advices from Aleppo, fighting has been proceeding for three days near Marash between the Turkish troops and the Armenian population. No details have, however, yet been received. The situation of the Asiatic provinces generally inspires great uneasiness here, and it is feared that serious complications will ensue unless tranquillity be promptly restored.

At Igoun, on the Angora Railway, a number of railway officials, including a German and a British subject, the latter being a native of Malta, have been captured by brigands. The number of captives in the hands of the robbers and the ransom demanded for their release are not yet known.

CONSTANTINOPLE, Oct. 29.

The following official Turkish accounts have been received here concerning the recent massacres of Armenians at various places in Asia Minor:

On the 24th inst. fifteen Armenians killed without cause a young Mussulman of Marash. The murderers were captured alive, together with a number of weapons which were in their

possession. On the 26th an unimportant dispute served as a pretext to the Armenians to cause a riot in the bazaar. The Governor, however, by his personal intervention, succeeded in allaying the excitement. Nevertheless, towards evening twelve Armenians severely wounded two defenceless Mussulmans on the outskirts of the town. Most of the guilty parties were arrested, but those who succeeded in escaping subsequently dressed themselves in Mussulman clothes, with turbans, and murdered an Armenian notable during the night.

Six other Armenians who had fired shots from their houses upon the patrols were also arrested, and, owing to the measures taken, tranquillity was restored in the town.

As to the agitators at Alabash (Zeitoun), they attacked and pillaged the Mussulman village of Camarly, wounding some of the villagers. The Commander of Gendarmerie at Marash, who was sent to the place to make an inquiry, was set upon as he returned by a body of 2,000 rioters and put to death, with four out of the five gendarmes who were escorting him. The leaders of the mob were Armenians of Marash and Zeitoun. They intended shortly to invade various districts and towns, and also to foment further rioting in the town of Marash. According to the information furnished by the Vali of Aleppo, the agitation in that district is said to have been provoked by some foreigners who recently came into the country. A certain amount of agitation among the Armenians having been reported from Gumushdagh, the Governor-General of Trebizond immediately took measures for the maintenance of order and tranquillity. Certain Armenian agitators having sought to provoke disturbances at Kharpout by suddenly closing the shops, the Governor-General, aided by the notables and the American missionaries, succeeded in averting bloodshed and restoring order, and also persuaded the merchants to reopen their shops.

According to information from the Vilayet of Bitlis, the number of killed and wounded in the riots at that place amounted altogether to 352—namely, 173 Mussulmans and 179 Armenians.

A later despatch states that the Armenians who murdered the Commander of Gendarmerie at Marash burned the bodies of two of their victims.

ST. PETERSBURG, Oct. 29.

In its general political review in the unofficial portion of its columns, the official "Messenger" declares that the views of those organs of the Press are rational which recognise that the thanks of Europe are not really due to England for the solution of the Armenian question, but to the common influence exercised over the Porte by France and Russia, in conjunction with the British Government. The journal proceeds:

For France and Russia the question centred mainly in the assurances of the rights and interests of the Christian subjects of the Sultan in view of the systematic evasions of the Turkish Government to avoid carrying out the obligations imposed upon it by the Berlin Treaty, in the agreement between the three Powers whereby the Porte was compelled to respect the demands set forth. Confidence was wanting on this occasion in the sincerity of British intervention. For, in the opinion of political circles, there was no Power connected by substantial interest with the East which did not resent the double-dealing policy of British diplomacy, which almost raised the question of the partition of Turkey. There has never shown itself in Europe such a manifest feeling of distrust of the tendency of English policy and its aims as at present, and this certainly cannot be considered as a gain on which the Tory Government, and with it the English Press, can congratulate themselves.

Referring to the recent action of the Ambassadors at Constantinople, the "Novosti" today regrets that the Powers do not act unitedly in the Eastern question, and observes that the absence of a feeling of solidarity among them is taken advantage of by the Porte, which, profiting by the conflict of opposing interests, resorts to every kind of evasion. "In the end," says the journal, "the Ottoman Government does as it pleases, and yet the Berlin Treaty gives the Powers a handle for intervention in favour of the Christians in Turkey."

The "Novoie Vremia" adopts a totally different tone, alluding to what it describes as the circulation of disquieting reports by the English Press and the suspicious part played by Great Britain during recent events in Turkey. The journal says: "It is the duty of Continental diplomacy to lighten the burden laid upon Turkey in the interest of European peace and to prevent Great Britain from interfering single-handed in Turkish affairs."

A telegram from Constantinople states that the passengers—about one hundred—on the St. Sumbava visited the Selamlık, and received a special message from the Sultan, through his chamberlain and Woods Pasha, welcoming them and wishing them a pleasant stay. After the receipt of the message, the Sultan was heartily cheered by the party on his return from the mosque.