

# THE STORY IS DISCREDITED.

## Alleged Closing of Churches by Turkish Authorities.

**American Board Has Received No Report of Such Action—Intimidation of Would-Be Believers of Gregorian Armenians—Great Destitution at Hadjin.**

The recent dispatch from Hartford, Ct., printed in the newspapers, stating that word had been received from Armenia that 29 Congregational churches had been closed by the authorities, is not credited by the American board in this city, who say they have received no news to that effect.

The latest advices received at the rooms of the American board are from Rev. Lyman Bartlett of Smyrna, in the Western Turkey mission. The term Protestant, as used by him in the following letter, it will be seen, is the equivalent of non-Mohammedan. He writes as follows concerning a tour of 26 days in the interior:

"At Afion Kara Hissar we received five new members to the church. One was a woman probably 70 years of age, the mother of one of the brethren, who has suffered bitter persecution from family friends for several years. Two of the others were sisters, both of whom have been stoutly opposed and often beaten by their husbands because they persisted in attending the Protestant worship. Another is a young man, the son of one of these sisters, and has been driven from home by his father, with the assurance that he can never return unless he will take an oath to keep away from the Protestants.

"The opposition to the truth shown by the Gregorian Armenians of this city is somewhat remarkable. The chief object seems to be to intimidate any who may be inclined to identify themselves with the little band of believers. The form of opposition changes from time to time. At one time, for months together, the house where the worship is held and the preacher resides was stoned nearly every night, and the brethren were stoned upon the street, both day and night. This was done mostly by boys, but evidently not with-

out encouragement. At other times people are watched when coming to the service and are warned that evil will follow such attendance. Then the taxes of the brethren are heavily increased, and they are plainly told that it is because they are Protestants, but if they will return to the old church their burdens will be removed.

"Just now one of the poorest of the brethren, an old man, is required to pay a tax of 500 piastres, the most of which he declares that he has paid, but failed to secure a receipt for, and now, as he is unable to pay, his son is arrested in a village where he is working, brought to this city and imprisoned.

"Last winter when we were making a strenuous effort to secure from the government a permit for a school there, the leading Gregorian Armenians met in council and formally petitioned the mutesarif to forbid the Americans to open a school of any kind, and of course our efforts were all in vain. These deluded people need the gospel so much, and yet they are unwilling to receive it themselves and seek to prevent those who desire from receiving it.

"We have many friends here who are kept away from us only by fear, for a few wealthy Armenians virtually rule the town. But we are not discouraged. We greatly need a permanent place for worship here. I have often spoken of this pressing need. Here are perhaps 6000 Armenians, with only three or four Greek families, and we have the best of reasons to believe that if we could assure them of a permanent occupation by securing a property which would be a centre of Protestant work, with no more danger of frequent changes, a goodly number would soon identify themselves with the followers of Christ.

"We are still unable to open a school in Kara Hissar, for though we have complied with all the conditions required by the school law, we have thus far been denied a favorable reply, or, in other words, have been refused. If a missionary could reside there a few months, I should hope the object might be secured.

"Our schools were never so prosperous as now. Our Armenian and Greek pastors are laboring faithfully, and not without encouragement. The work in Bourdour is prospering, no further opposition being shown, and the new house built with the indemnity is serving an excellent purpose. We have no school there, but hope to have one next year."

From the Central Asiatic Turkey mission Rev. John C. Martin writes of the effect of a recent fire in Hadjin and of destitution:

"A large section of our town has been consumed by fire, which according to the lowest calculation leaves at least 2000 persons without food and shelter. Three hundred and seventy houses were burned and of the provisions which had been stored in those houses for winter supply scarcely any have been saved. At the time of the fire most of the people were away in their vineyards, their houses without occupants and locked up.

"With wheat at famine prices, winter at hand, and the inability of the rest of the people to get a sufficient supply for themselves, this fire is regarded as a much more serious calamity than that of 10 years ago. The loss sustained by the mission, that of a school building, is comparatively small. Only one Protestant family lost their home. The Catholic quarter was completely swept out. Their schools and dwellings are all in ruins.

"Owing to the failure of crops in this region for the past two years, the mass of the people are in such straits that unless aid comes from outside for those who have suffered by this fire, many will doubtless perish this winter."

Hadjin is a town of southeastern Asia Minor, about 30 miles north of Adana, in the heart of the Taurus mountains. The population is almost entirely Armenian.

## LYNN ARMENIANS IN TROUBLE.

### A Friendly Meeting Ends in a Free Fight and Arrests Follow.

The Lynn police were called to a house on Alley street yesterday morning and arrested 17 Armenians, charged with playing cards on the Lord's day and creating a disturbance. All were bailed out except one, whom, his companions claim, was the cause of all the trouble.

From one of the men it was learned that two of the Lynn Armenians are to leave within a few days for their homes in Armenia, there to do what they can toward assisting their countrymen in overthrowing the Turks. It was for the purpose of bidding them godspeed and giving them encouragement that the company met at the house, and everything was going along peacefully until an Armenian who was opposed to the departure of the fellow-countryman made his appearance. Immediately a free fight began, and chairs, knives and clubs were used promiscuously, with the result that several of the band are suffering with broken heads, blackened eyes and small cuts. The neighbors thought murder was being done in the house, and notified the police.