

A PLEA FOR THE ARMENIANS.

Prominent Boston Merchant of the Race in Its Defence.

Misleading Nature of Recent Newspaper Articles Upon the Armenian Question Pointed Out—How the Deceitful and Hypocritical Turk Obtains False Testimony.

To the Editor of The Herald:

There have been several articles on Armenia published recently, some anonymous, and one by Thomas G. Allen, Jr., which appeared in both the Boston and New York Sunday Herald of Dec. 16. Without exception, they are all self-condemning, because of the many inconsistencies throughout the articles, and yet they contain such misleading statements, probably due to an erroneous impression obtained during the sojourn of the writers in that section of the world, that I accept this opportunity to make an accurate presentation of the prevailing condition of things, which have direct or indirect bearing upon the Armenian question, much agitated at the present time on account of the reported massacre in Sassoun, Armenia (Eastern Turkey).

Any impartial observer, one who is thoroughly acquainted with the country, in question and its government, would at once notice where they trouble lies. I should dislike very much to think that American or European writers and publicist would willfully misrepresent things, but the fact of it is, most of them are victims to the same fault, common with many foreigners who travel in Asia Minor and Armenia, upon whom Turkish deceit and diplomacy is bound to make a favorable impression, unless they have had some experience before.

The Turkish officials and other prominent Turks throughout the empire are especially instructed to spare no effort to make as favorable an impression upon their foreign visitors as possible. The Turk in his real everyday selfhood, the everyday neighbor, the "cursed Glaur", is indeed a different individual from that Turk who stands before an European or an American, clothed from head to foot in deceit and hypocrisy.

I am very sorry that many travellers are thus impressed by the outward appearance, instead of making a thorough study of the state affairs, otherwise they are not in a position to make such publications. One of the writers thanks the Turkish government—its officers, its chief, coming to his knowledge through the courtesy of the American consul at Sivas—for the non-resistance now of any organized lawless bands who live only upon their plunder.

This is news even to the present consul at Sivas, who I am sure must know the fact to be other than that. It is news to the population of Turkey, who are still suffering—more than ever—from the barbaric raids of the almost hereditary "Ashirats". It must be amusing news to the government itself, which by certain arrangements existing between the chiefs and the officials, is continually being benefited by its existence.

No doubt that the government of Turkey made a seeming effort to suppress brigandage, after the ratification of the Berlin treaty of 1878. But, can any one truthfully say, that the government of the Sultan really exterminated those cruel and plundering Ashirats in Asia Minor and the barbarous Kurdish chiefs in Armenia? No; on the contrary, it gave them a new lease of life and planned for them a systematic course of robbery and plunder directed only against the Christian Armenians.

The condition of the Armenians was not as bad when the demands of article 61 of the Berlin treaty was made upon the Turkish government as it is today. The terrible outrages committed openly upon these helpless Armenians during the past 15 years by the tax gatherers, by the Kurds, by the Circassians, by the soldiers, by the officials, are indeed much greater, more brutal, more barbaric.

Brigandage exists in Turkey, but its existence is no longer lawless. It is working in perfect harmony with the Turkish law and its court of so-called justice, to the great detriment of the Christians, who are impoverished beyond description through this infernal and most atrocious scheme, the ultimate aim of which is their total annihilation.

Some writers have attempted to belittle the Armenians and slur their characteristics, but they are such as lack reliability, and it is therefore needless to make any comment. As to the various advantages which the Armenians enjoy over the Turks, in possessing better educational institutions, etc., set forth by different writers as being attributable to the tolerant spirit of Islamism, that is incorrect. It is not due to that, because the Mussulman religion tolerates no toleration. The Armenian race is most thriving, pushing and courageous. It has survived centuries of persecution, and is today, in spite of the existing conditions, a most progressive and promising race.

To show this fact, let us see what the Armenians are doing in Boston. It is estimated that there are about 1000 Armenians in this city and its immediate vicinity, and I can say that there are practically none among them who are engaged in a low grade of labor. They are merchants, manufacturers, artists, engravers, jewellers, enamellers, tailors, furriers, photographers, practical engineers and electricians, wholesale fruiterers, restaurant keepers, newspaper men, printers, rug weavers and repairers, silversmiths, plumbers and tin-smiths, persons occupying positions of trust, clerks and book-keepers, salesmen, engaged in factory work, and a large number of college students in the different departments of science, art and theology. The diversity and quality of the occupations pursued by the Armenians, even here in Boston, show the high ideal of the average Armenian.

It is no wonder, either, that a number of Armenians have found their way into responsible government positions in Turkey. This is no advantage, however, to the Armenians, and, in fact, they in general wish that their fellow-countrymen never entered into the service of such a corrupt government, because instances are rare when such men have been of any use to their own people. This is an inevitable result of the pressure to which they become subjected.

Armenians have had and want to

have good schools, but what would allowed them if they were not allowed to support them? They are many difficulties which they are obliged to encounter in maintaining them have been in a pitiable condition. Books on history, religion and science are forever denied to them. Thus in their progress, so much so, that the young men of today are kept ignorant of their history and literature, to a great extent.

Mr. Allen speaks of the remarkable Sanasarian College in Erzeroum. Yes, it is a good institution. Its teachers are all Armenians, and it is located in Europe. It is all Armenian, founded by Mr. Sanasarian, a wealthy Armenian in Russia, and the school is under the direct protection of the Russian government. The Russian consulate at Erzeroum is under the nose of the school, and yet the management of the school has encountered great difficulties and is under pledge (backed by the Russian consulate) to exclude all books pertaining to the Armenian history and literature, even their religious history, and to teach them to be taught. Imagine, if you would, can it be the case with a school under Russian protection, what would be the case with a school under the nose of the Turkish officials, and thus need. What has that American writer far? He has been told to be patient. So they have been patient, and, furthermore, what has been the result of the appeals, which are called an advantage to the Armenians? In every case it has enraged the Turk, and caused wholesale imprisonment, murder, and the like. While the foreign ministers and consuls would be still shouting "patience" into the ears of these helpless Armenians.

There is a tremendous effort being made to score the Armenians on the ground of their revolutionary movement, with organized armies in Europe and America. When a writer in this country, once a resident of Constantinople, made certain disclosures concerning the Armenian revolution, he was probably realize the future outcome of such statements. His sole aim was to show the government of Turkey that the Armenian cause was not as it was in sympathy with Armenians and the Armenian cause.

The Hunchagist, or the so-called revolutionary party, has been admitted to be of Russian origin. I have been trying to obtain some facts as to their past and present movements. They are a handful in number, and so far, I am not aware that they have distinguished themselves as warriors. They find sympathizers among the Armenians here only on the basis of patriotism, but I know of no Hunchagists in this country who plan revolution and seek independence through the bloodshed of their innocent countrymen in Armenia. Some Armenians here, being informed of the terrible outrages to which their fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters are continually subjected, naturally feel that they become so indignant, so sorrowful, that a few may think the only remedy left is death and bloodshed, but

Armenians naturally are not lovers of war and bloodshed. The great majority know and appreciate the fact that it is more desirable for them to better their condition through foreign intervention, and their wisest and best leaders are today working in that direction. But suppose there are a few Armenians all over the world who cherish the idea of extreme measures, does that make the actions of the Turkish government against the innocent men, women and children excusable? A barbaric government, unable to find any political offenders, takes vengeance upon thousands of helpless and defenceless people, and then takes infinite pains, not only to suppress and minimize the news, but to call to its defence the unwise and thoughtless statements of Christian writers.

Not long ago the present Sultan, in one of his firman to the Armenian patriarch in Constantinople, called the Armenians his "most faithful, most loyal, most peaceful and most industrious subjects." But now things have changed. The Armenians have come to the conclusion that to be patient is to be criminal; silence means their total annihilation, and they are raising their voices and earnest appeals and protestations, making a gallant effort, ably assisted by their friends in Europe and America, to make known the terrible sufferings of the people to the civilized world. In view of this, what alternative remains for the government of the Sultan but to absolutely deny the facts and make these absurd charges and accusations against "the faithful, the loyal, the peaceful Armenians."

If the Armenians in Europe and America looked upon the Turkish empire with indifference and lack of patriotism, then, and then only, the name of Armenia would become hateful to the liberty-loving people of the civilized world. But they are patriotic, and the spirit of independence is taking root in the breast of every Armenian. Their patriotism had made a substantial gain during the past few years.

It has increased as the sufferings of their people in the hands of the Turks, Kurds and the ruling power have increased in enormity and magnitude. It is admitted on all sides that the Armenians are superior to the Turks in every way, and also that while the western civilization has stimulated an effect upon the Armenian Christians, moving them forward to greater achievements, it has the opposite effect upon the Turks and all the followers of the Koran. It makes them more fanatic than ever, and seems to arouse them to greater hatred for the Christians and makes them utterly irresponsible for their numerous and inhuman brutal actions. Why, then, should the government of such a people be allowed to rule the destinies of the Armenians, and keep their advancement in check by a barbaric despotism? The history of the Turkish empire condemns itself. It is going backward. Its record of periodical massacres stands against civilization. Is it not about time to stop it forever?

I mentioned above the charges and accusations against the Armenians which are being used in defence of Turkish barbarity. In connection with this I must not omit to mention also the name of a venerable old gentleman, Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, the ex-president of Roberts College in Constantinople. In spite of his statements, I believe this gentleman's sympathy is with the Armenians. I see of late he has been writing letters of sympathy and support to the various meetings held in this country in behalf of the Armenians in unmistakable terms as to his present attitude toward their cause. Several years ago I heard him lecture at Amherst, Mass. How proud he was to tell his audience the important part taken by the Bulgarian graduates of Roberts College in securing the freedom and independence of their country.

I ask Dr. Hamlin if he was not aware of the existence of patriotic societies among his Bulgarian students? Did he

ever consider it reasonable to work for the freedom of their country and did he ever make such public charges and accusations against them? If he has, then his position is much changed and after the work was accomplished.

Dr. Hamlin today is before the bar of justice and humanity. He knows the righteousness of the Armenian protests, and though I myself am not inclined to attach much importance to such utterances, his allowing them to become instruments of defence—I am sure not at all designed for that purpose—is, indeed, an additional outrage heaped upon the Armenian people, who are already undergoing such unspeakable sufferings. He is in a position today to advance this just cause—will he accept his opportunity? I have his better judgment prevail, and that friends of justice will soon find him where he belongs.

Beware, Americans! all charges made against the Armenians in general by the Turkish government are baseless and wholly devoid of truth. The Sultan is bound to purchase the prejudice of a civilized world, if he can, at any price, against this long-suffering people. The people of this country have always been friends of the oppressed. Will not the abominable efforts of the Turkish officials here and elsewhere, and of any one who dares to sell his services for money and become a traitor to justice, meet the indignation and contempt of all Christendom?

Let all men and women who have any humanitarian spirit at all lend a helping hand in the struggle for existence of the Armenian Christians. It is a war of the Crescent against the Cross.

It has been so for centuries, it is nothing else now.

When the Crusaders found themselves in an unknown east, ignorant of the country, of the people and of the do, they tried to find out the Armenians do? History tells us they sacrificed much, joined the bearers of the cross, and bringing into their camp new hope and accomplishing what was deemed impossible.

Armenians have always been identified with every progressive movement. Their country might be called the cradle of the earliest civilization. It is the duty of Christian nations, not only to end the long and terrible sufferings of their people, but to place them where they can show their capabilities and become a factor for the larger advancement of the human race.

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