

## BASKED IN SULTAN'S SMILES.

### Statements of Gen. Lew Wallace Dissected by Alice Stone Blackwell.

*To the Editor of The Telegram:—*

A good deal of comment has been excited by some of the remarks attributed to Gen. Lew Wallace in the reports of his recent lecture at Worcester upon "Turkey and the Turks." He is reported to have said that the Turks as a people are "tolerant and even indulgent as regards other faiths than their own"; that they have "the reverence and respect for women," and that the present sultan is so far from being cruel that he "cannot be persuaded to sign a death warrant." Gen. Lew Wallace is furthermore reported to have said that if the alleged massacres in Armenia took place at all, they must have been committed by the Kurds, not the Turks, and that the sultan cannot be to blame for them.

Religious toleration is not a virtue with which history has largely credited the followers of Mohammed. In 1822, a Turkish army fell upon the island of Chios (which was not in rebellion) massacred 23,000 Greek Christians, and sold into slavery 47,000, or nearly the whole population. In 1843, again, 10,000 Nestorian Christians were massacred or sold into slavery. In 1860, there were 8000 Christians massacred in the Lebanon, and many more at Damascus, Sidon and all over Syria. In 1866, on the island of Crete, the blood of Christian women and children flowed like water; and in 1876 took place the greatest massacre in Bulgaria.

On each of these occasions thousands of women and children were slaughtered. Gen. Lew Wallace is reported to have said: "At the sight of a mob of men, they (the Turks) are brave; at the sight of a mob of women they grow white with fear and run." If so, it is curious that the women should not have put the soldiers to flight, instead of letting themselves be massacred.

It is possible that the Turks might run from a mob of angry Mahomedan women, whom they would not feel at liberty to slaughter, but the atrocious treatment of the Armenian women during the recent massacres is only a repetition of what has taken place in all the great historic massacres of Christians by the Turks.

The experience of the missionaries furnishes another illustration of Turkish "toleration." American missions have been established in Turkey for nearly 70 years, but during all that time the missionaries have been obliged to confine their religious work to the Greek and Armenian Christians. This is not the fault of the missionaries. They would have been glad to labor for the conversion of the Mahomedans if they had been permitted, but they knew that they would immediately be driven out of the country if they attempted it. The Turks do not mind the conversion of Christians from one denomination to another; as one English traveler, H. C. Barkley, expresses it, they care no more whether a Christian changes his denomination than whether a vagabond dog changes his street; but they will not stand any attempt to convert Mohammedans to Christianity.

Again, can a nation be said to be tolerant where Christians are subject, by law, to special taxes and special disabilities on account of their religion? Such is the case in Turkey. The Armenians, being Christians, are not allowed to serve in the army or the police and are forbidden, under heavy penalties, to possess any weapons. Most of them live in districts where they are exposed to constant depredations from fierce tribes of marauding Kurds, and where to be unarmed is to be subject to constant plunder and outrage. In return for the privilege of exemption from bearing arms, they are subject to a special tax not imposed on Moslems.

The Turkish government has for years been importing into Armenia colonies of Circassian immigrants. They want land, and are practically told to help themselves so long as they do not plunder the Mohammedans. The Circassians being well armed and the Armenians unarmed, the former simply evict the latter from their farms and homesteads and take possession. In this way, the Armenians are being driven from all the best farms, which they and their ancestors have cultivated for centuries. In addition, the present sultan has enrolled the semi-savage Kurds in regiments, furnished them with arms and government uniforms, and commissioned them to preserve order in the Armenian provinces. As Mrs. Julia Ward Howe has well said: "It is as if the United States gov-

ernment were to arm the Apache Indians and commission them to preserve order in Arizona, while it forbade the white settlers to possess any weapons." Under such circumstances, our government would certainly be responsible for the outrages the Indians might commit; and the Turkish government is equally responsible for the outrages of the Kurds. By this action, the sultan practically signed the death warrant of thousands of innocent persons.

These things have been done in violation of the most solemn promises of reform. Prof. James Bryce, author of "The American Commonwealth," said in a speech in the British parliament, May 28, 1889:—

"Everybody knows that nothing has been done by the Turkish government to carry out any of the promised reforms. The present condition of the country is quite as bad as it has been at any time within living memory. Numbers of persons have been thrown into prison, and some of them subjected to torture by Turkish officials. Others have been sent to languish in exile. I might recount hundreds of cases in which innocent people have been murdered; in which Christian girls have been carried off by force and consigned to a harem; in which churches have been despoiled or defiled; and all without any effort or apparently any wish on the part of the government to punish the guilty persons. Not only has the government made no efforts to put down the evils which exist, or to check the proceedings of the Kurds, it aggravates the disorders by depriving the Armenian people of weapons, while their persecutors are well armed. Colonies of Circassians are brought into the country, and the whole policy of the Turkish government would make one believe that they were following out the principle laid down by a Turkish prime minister, some years ago, when he said that the way to get rid of the Armenian question was to get rid of the Armenians."

This applies to the interior of Turkey, not to Constantinople, where Gen. Lew Wallace got his experience. An American ex-consul, with whom I was talking, yesterday, said that Constantinople was exquisitely beautiful when seen from the sea, but terribly dirty and ill-smelling after you landed. He added that the interior of Turkey was to Constantinople what Constantinople seen nearby was to Constantinople as seen from the sea; that the sultan did not allow open outrages to take place in Constantinople, under the eyes of the foreign ambassadors; but that in the interior, where he himself had been stationed, the oppression of the people was enormous; and that the government undoubtedly encouraged the persecution of the Armenians by the Kurds.

The sultan always exerts himself to make a pleasant impression upon foreign ambassadors, and with Gen. Lew Wallace he evidently succeeded completely. But it is possible to eat a good many diplomatic dinners with a potentate without knowing all about him.

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