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CENTURY

SEPTEMBER

1918

THE FUTURE OF INDIA

BY SIR JOHN FOSTER FRASER

♦

SECRETARY BAKER AT THE FRONT

BY RALPH A. HAYES

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR

♦

BLOOD AND WATER

BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

♦

PERSECUTED ARMENIA

BY NISHAN DER-HAGOPIAN

THE CENTURY

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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THE BEAUTIFUL
AGHTAMAR VANK.
ISLAND CHURCH OF
THE TENTH CEN-
TURY, DESTROYED
BY THE TURKS IN
1915

Persecuted Armenia

By NISHAN DER-HAGOPIAN

WHEN a man has been slaughtering human beings for many months, and his eyes have grown accustomed to the sight of blood, his ears used to the scream of shell and shrapnel, and his soul calloused to all save his sense of duty, he moves automatically, and it is only when there comes a lull, and the black-winged horrors lift for a little, that with clear vision and delicate ear he sees and hears the world around him.

On June 12, 1915, there came to the terror-stricken city of Van, Armenia, such a lull, and for several hours the mind was free to wander over the present and in and out of the past. Taking advantage of this respite, with Captain Ashghar-Beg, assistant professor to the world-famous antiquarian, Dr. Mare, I climbed to the top of Zum Zum Maghre, and, like Moses of old, surveyed the land. It was not a land flowing with milk and honey upon

which we gazed, but one drinking in the life-streams of its people. Our minds leaped to the past as we scanned the natural picture before us.

Armenia centers in the high mountain-ranges from which sweep out the great water arteries, the Tigris, Euphrates, Halys, and Araxes rivers. She belongs to hallowed ages. It is supposed that she contained the Garden of Eden. On Mount Ararat rested the ark. Armenia grew in power, in splendor, and in culture. She was one of the first nations to embrace Christianity, her churches dating back to A. D. 34. In the sixth century the kingdom was overthrown by the Babylonians. Following this, many battles were waged with and won from the Assyrians. In 67 B. C. she was allied with Rome; later, for a short period, she became subject to Persia.

A beautiful episode in Armenia's Christian history took place in A. D. 451.

Prince Vartan Mamigonian was commanding the Armenians. Yesgerd II, king of Persia, who fulfilled all the ordinances of the magi, issued the decree, "All peoples and tongues throughout my domain must abandon their heresies and worship the sun." Accordingly, Mihermish, the grand vizir of the Persian court, wrote a long letter to the Armenians, making charges against their religion. The Armenians replied, repudiating these charges, and adding: "No one can move us from our belief, neither angels nor men, fire nor sword. Here below we will choose no other God, and in heaven no other Lord but Jesus Christ." Whereupon the Persians declared war, and the armies were arrayed for battle on the plains of Avaraye, by the river Dughmood, near the present site of the city of Van.

Before the onslaught Vartan Mamigonian knelt and prayed to God for help and to Christ for his own salvation. Then, turning to his men, he said:

"Soldiers, as Christians we are averse to fighting, but to defend our religion and our freedom we must fight. Surely our lives are not so valuable as the life of Christ. If He was willing to die on the cross for us, we ought to be willing to die in battle for Him."

With this appeal the Armenians rushed against the vastly superior forces of the Persians, swept them backward, and won the victory. In the engagement Prince Vartan was mortally wounded. He was buried in Eurmia, Persian Armenia, between the cities of Koy and Dizadiz. In gratitude to him, his people built him a great tomb on a tiny hill by the river. Since then this tomb, now falling into decay, has stood under the blue Persian sky.

In February, 1915, our military camp was pitched for a few days about an hour's

distance from the tomb. I made a special trip to visit it, took several pictures of the stately ruins, and then on my knees I gave sincere praise to God for the man who had accomplished so much for Christianity and for humanity.

Armenia had regained her independence in Cilicia, but lost it again in 1375. The Turks and the Huns had whispered together: "These are the heirs. Come, let us kill them and cast them out, that the inheritance may be ours," and the slaughter which has cried out to the world for the last five hundred years began.

Armenia was hemmed in on the west by the Ottoman power, constantly growing in strength and numbers; on the north and east by the Mongolians, under the leadership of Torgrul Bey, Alf Arslan, Genghiz Khan, and Tamerlane, who desired to be called the greatest warriors and the most cruel sons of the world; on the south by the Mohammedans of Egypt, under the Mameluke sultan, who was no less formidable than the others in his ha-



Photograph by Paul Thompson
VILLAGE AND FISHING-BOATS ON LAKE VAN, ARMENIA

tred of the Christians and his cruelty toward them.

The church has held the Armenian people together through all these long years of unceasing persecution. The Armenians had missionaries in British India sixty-three years before the British Government took possession of the country.

Armenian women are not allowed by

the men to work outside the house; all their time is devoted to the care of the home and the education and upbringing of the children. After my father's death, when the Turks had pillaged and stolen our property,—all the old heraldic treasures that were priceless to our family,—my mother used to gather us together in the evenings and read the Book of Job. Such is the faith of the Armenian women; and it is to their wonderful training, their practical and beautiful Christianity, that the peacefulness and obedience and moral strength of the people are due.

An uprising has never been known among the Armenians, and yet their courage is superlative. An evidence of this was the holding of the pass to Ardjish valley in April, 1915, by four soldiers against several thousand Turks for twenty-four hours, thus giving the villagers of Ardjish time to escape.

Physically, intellectually, and morally, the Armenians are the equals of the other world races. In the Old Testament

centage of Turks or other Orientals have reached the heights of the Armenians.

It is always the geographical position of a country that makes the history and character of its people. Armenia is what may be called a "bridge" country; that is, a buffer state. Now, as in times past, it is of great strategic importance. For this reason its security has always been threatened and frequently attacked. Its people have always been fearing or repelling an invasion, until the nation has become exhausted and almost submerged; but it still survives.

Some thirty years ago England began to use her influence to put an end to the Armenian massacres of that period, but German diplomacy blocked the good grace of God. If England at that time had insisted on a termination of the Armenian atrocities, the world war would have been precipitated then. Red Sultan Abdul-Hamid knew how to promise and how not to perform. For the time being he kept both England and Germany deceived. Since then Turkey has become a serious problem for England. After the downfall of Abdul-Hamid the influence of Germany became supreme in Turkey. The Turkish revolution was neither an intellectual nor a moral movement; the people had no part in it: it was the guise under which Janabad Enver Pasha sold the Turkish Empire to the Germanic Organic League, and under the protection of Germany Janabad Enver murdered more Armenians within a few years than had Abdul-Hamid in the preceding twenty-five.

The Germans knew that Sultan Abdul-Hamid was too feeble-minded and too shrewd to be used as a tool in their hands and they set about to destroy him. They began to cultivate the Young Turks, telling them what a paradise their country would be if only Abdul-Hamid were dethroned. Janabad Enver Pasha was chosen as the leader of the revolution. He had been educated in Berlin and he knew how to bribe. The world was led



Photograph by Paul Thompson
GENERAL VIEW OF BITLIS, ARMENIA, THE MOST IMPORTANT CITY IN THE LAKE VAN REGION

Ezekiel mentions their industry. In business fields, both at home and abroad, they have shown remarkable tact. They attain to highest ranks in educational culture; in America to-day many Armenians are holding leading positions in colleges and universities. There is no Orientalism in the Armenian mind. The Turks have nicknamed them the "Anglo-Saxons" of the East. Virtually only a very small per-

to believe that the revolution was a triumph for liberalism in Turkey and that liberty was being born in that nation, but the régime that followed was worse and more cruel than the one which preceded it. The persecutions of the Armenians increased, and the massacres multiplied.

One cannot sympathize with the sufferings of other nations unless he himself has suffered; the blessing of health is not fully appreciated until one is ill. The Turkish Empire is a sickness in Europe, and Europe will not be well until health has been restored. To-day we stand by the graves of nations that are flooded with many tears. Shall we be blinded to the facts? Shall we shrink from the horrors of war? Or shall we nobly resolve to fight to the end that liberty and democracy may be established in the world?

The hypocrisy of European diplomacy and the misrepresentation of the attitude of neighboring governments by a venal press contributed largely to the making of the conflict. The Berlin Congress of 1878 established a cause for jealousy and mistrust over the ultimate division of the decadent Turkish Empire and the position of Constantinople. In 1877, Germany and England united to thwart Russia's advance upon that city, because neither of these powers was willing to trust the others. In 1878, Russia's relief of Armenia was only a cover under which to extend her power to the Orient, or so at least the English thought. After the unspeakable Armenian massacres of 1896, Great Britain was willing to do something for the relief of that persecuted people and proposed action toward that end. Russia, in turn, suspected English motives. Again, in 1912, England proposed to relieve the Armenians from the yoke of their oppressors, but was bitterly opposed by Germany, because Armenia is the high bridge of a possible Russian advance upon Constantinople. Then the

self-styled German protector of the Muslim world and the Young Turks placed themselves in opposition to any assistance to Armenia and, as was shown in the Balkan War, took a negative stand, all the while preparing for this war. If the German dream of the control of Con-



Photograph by Paul Thompson

ARMENIAN REFUGEES

stantinople was to be realized, it would be a long stride toward the fulfilment of her ambition for world dominion, and would enable her to undermine both Russian and British power in Asia.

In 1787, Joseph of Austria asked Catharine of Russia, who planned the restoration of the Grecian Empire, what would be done with Constantinople. For more than a hundred years this question has remained unanswered, and the conclusion is irrefutable that it is one of the fundamental causes of the present war.

The Treaty of Paris, in 1856, was only one of the many efforts to maintain a balance of the European powers and to postpone the answer to this question. Now all the world is suffering for the evasions and postponements of a century and for allowing Turkey to hold the balance of power in Europe. Edmund Burke, replying to Pitt in the British Parliament, said: "I have never before heard that the Turkish Empire has been considered any part of the balance of power in Europe.

They see the crimes, but never act justly." To give Turkey that right was a great wrong. It has contributed toward the present strife, and there is no hope that European diplomacy will ever be sincere and truthful until democracy is triumphant on that continent.

The re-alignment of the political map of the Balkan States after the last Balkan War was for the advantage of Germany and helped to pave the way for German access to Asia Minor and the absolute control of the territory lying between the North Sea and the Gulf of Persia.

After the Armenian massacre of 1896, Germany pretended a sincere interest in that unhappy country and professed to be the protector of the Christian population within the Turkish Empire. Germany established missions, and the German missionaries have been agents in the hands of Germany. Particularly was this the case in the 1915 outrages. Never until its alliance with the kaiser did the Turkish Government commit a massacre so cruel, ruthless, deliberate, and extensive as that.

Germany has poured great stores of her wealth into Asia Minor. In building the Bagdad Railway she made a direct threat to England's Indian dominions, and her ambition in this region was one of the underlying causes of the war. The Turko-German Alliance was a constant menace to the peace of Europe. The Turks also had a dream of world dominion, but though they realize it not, they are broken and cast into the German melting-pot. Their dream is already shattered.

From 1895, Armenia has been constantly before the world because of the persecutions repeatedly visited upon her for no other reasons than her faithful adherence to the Christian religion and her persistent refusal to embrace the religion of Islam. These massacres have been organized by successive governments since the Middle Ages. Armenia's sturdy defense of her faith prevented the Mahomedan power from imposing its faith on the whole of Europe in the Middle Ages. Armenia helped to save Christian civiliza-

tion from perishing at the time of the Crusades. As the Belgian is the hero of the present struggle, so likewise is the Armenian the hero of the Middle Ages.

The Armenian question is as important to-day as it has ever been, and this war must result in the liberation and rehabilitation of that land if the Christian nations are sincere in their allegiance to democracy and liberty. The ghastly tragedies which have afflicted that people since 1878 have been explained to the world over and over again.

Some may think that the people submit supinely to the atrocities inflicted on them; but during the last fifty years many a Thermopylæ of which the world has never heard has been fought in her mountain passes. Time after time small bands of Armenian forces have successfully resisted whole Turkish divisions. No people has ever shown a more indomitable resistance, no people has ever fought more bravely against overwhelming odds. Atam Pasha has testified that a small Armenian force fought courageously against four Turkish divisions. In 1896, Zaitoomlis destroyed one whole division of Atam Pasha's soldiers. To-day the brave and heroic people of Zaitoomlis have been almost obliterated by the Turk.

Russia has failed to respond to the hopes of the Armenian people, who had justly expected better treatment as a reward for their loyalty; for it must not be forgotten that from the beginning the Armenians had espoused the cause of Russia at a great sacrifice. For two long centuries this people gave the highest proof of faith and loyalty and absolute allegiance to the Muscovite throne.

For fifteen hundred years Christianity maintained itself in Armenia till the fell hand of Moslem jealousy and European rivalry came to root it out. But the Armenians know how to live and how to die. The genius of their nation can steady its faith and life. In 1915 the Turks refused to allow medical aid to reach the victims of their diabolical cruelties, and had the Armenians not known how to care for themselves, they would have passed into

oblivion. Eventually they would have died off, anyhow, had it not been for the entrance into Armenia of a mighty Russian army. To-day there are over one hundred thousand Armenian soldiers in the Russian Army.

When Germany started the war in August, 1914, for the consolidation of the German Empire from the Bosphorus to the Gulf of Persia, had she willed, she could have stopped Turkey's crimes in Armenia. Instead of that she taught the Turks to deport Armenians from their homes and torture them. In 1915 one entire village was deported by German and Turkish officers.

I had my own military training in America (all Armenians are as anxious for military achievement as they are for business activity), and when the war broke out in 1914, I was in New York. I feared this would mean the destruction of my people, for the massacre of 1896 was still fresh in my mind, a never-to-be-forgotten memory. I went to Russia, and immediately from there to the Armenian front. June 5, 1915, I was in Van.

Few cities in the world are as ideally and beautifully situated as Van. Before the war she lay like a rainbow across the tender heart of an exquisite garden valley, set in a framework of vine-clad foothills flanked by superb mountain-ranges. Beside her, in crystal purity, stretches a lake. This lake is embosomed in a verdant plain surrounded by an exceedingly beautiful mountain-chain, which culminates farther north in the sublime monarch of western Asia, Mount Ararat, and its lesser companion, Mount Massis. This

wealth of mountain scenery and sky repeat themselves in inverted splendor in the lake. A string of tiny villages on the foot-hills used to surround Van as diamond chips surround a fire opal in a ring. The morning sun picked up these villages in his journey over the mountains, lingered

with them all day, and then drew the sunset through them as he dropped into the night.

In Van were churches and schools and monasteries, beautiful homes in beautiful gardens, fine business places, streets, and boulevards. On one of the islands in the lake was the church built by the Arzroonian Dynasty in the tenth century. Not only was the interior of this church beautiful, but the exterior was decorated with wonderful carvings, the Armenians excelling in architectural skill. As we stood on Zum Zum

Maghra, June 12, this church was still standing. On August 26 the Turks riddled it with shrapnel, and the titanic structure, its altar smoke streaming to heaven, went down forever.

Northwest of the lake, Vara ka Vank (Vank means monastery), built in the eighth century, nestled in a picturesque little hollow on the top of a mountain as a bird's nest nestles in a tree-top. In front of this aggregation of buildings a powerful spring of water leaped from the mountain and rushed to the valley below. Jasmine blossoms, grapevines, and roses, garden beauty and wild nature, lay spilled around them as they faced the lake. Here, too, was one of the greatest libraries and museums of the world, filled with ancient and modern books and works



Photograph by Underwood & Underwood
AN OLD SURVIVOR OF THE GREAT MASSACRE

of art. In April, 1915, the Turks burned this wonderful institution to the ground. In the following June our regiment camped for a week upon the sacred ruins, and for the whole time my heart cried out with the misery of it all.

After this first stay in Van our entire army moved toward Bitlis. On July 15 a great struggle began under the blazing sun. During that age-long day the smoke of battle rose to the skies; women were dying, children crying, men fighting furiously and courageously, and the Russian soldiers doing magnificent work. Many Armenian refugees were rescued by them that day. About the first of August we forced the Turks from their trenches, and they began to retreat ahead of us toward Bitlis. As soon as they reached Bitlis they reveled in their fiendish work of looting and massacring innocent people; then, after abducting all the young women for slaves to the army, they burned the city, with all its remaining inhabitants.

Our forces did not enter the city on reaching it, because of the burning bodies and the stench. I stood upon a hill and watched the smoke of the beautiful city streaming into the clouds, my heart breaking with pity for the multitude of suffering men and children. The moans of women and children could be distinctly heard.

The Turks then moved toward Mush, still committing their dastardly crimes. No civilized person will ever forgive the Turks for their abuse of the young women and the suffering of the old women and little children. Pashas Kalil and Jauded had three times the army we had, yet they were retreating before us. It seemed to me that they lacked the military knowledge of how to put up a good fight; but they lacked no knowledge of how most villainously to massacre the Christians.

At this time, just south of Mush, at Sasoon, there were forty thousand Armenians. We were about to set out to their rescue when a report, which was subsequently found untrue, caused our Russian commander to order a retreat. What became of those Armenians I never heard.

We fell back hurriedly upon Van, but the retirement did not stop there. On the evening of August 13 I was in a friend's house, where they were holding a mourning party in Oriental fashion, drinking and crying. At midnight came the order to leave the city. Every one rushed to evacuate. In the morning I hurried to the hospital for the sick and wounded soldiers, and we soon had them, in various carry-alls, on the way. Then I went to the American mission to offer my assistance to Miss Usher, an American missionary at Van, but the Russian Hospital Corps had given her good accommodations. At eleven o'clock I again went through the city. It seemed to me that the sun had stopped. There was no more happiness; even the birds had ceased singing. The great city looked like the ruin of the ages. Again had she gone to her grave.

When, with my men, I left the city I saw a chain of people numbering three hundred thousand men, women, and children, on the highway of the north bank of the lake. No human being can imagine the misery of that long procession. In the evening a little boy and girl came to me and many others and said:

"We have lost our mother and father. We can't unload the ox. We don't know where to camp."

I answered:

"I guess, my boy, my place will be good enough for you. Come here." I kept them for a few days, because we could not find their parents.

In the morning, on the way, there was a continual stream of agony. I found a blind man and put him on a wagon; later I came upon a woman sitting on a stone with three barefooted little children. She was crying and completely exhausted. She had lost her husband in the crowd and did not know what to do with the little ones. I told her not to be afraid, that my horse would be for her until we found her husband. During that fifteen days' march I never once mounted my own saddle; I tramped to Russia.

On August 25 we reached Bargherri village. Beyond this village we had to

pass by a narrow road through a great mountain pass. About this time the food gave out; sickness broke out, and many were dying. Then there came the report that Bargherri village was locked; so the army went through first, and the people followed. The day was not long enough for all to go through, and great masses were still in the passage when night fell.

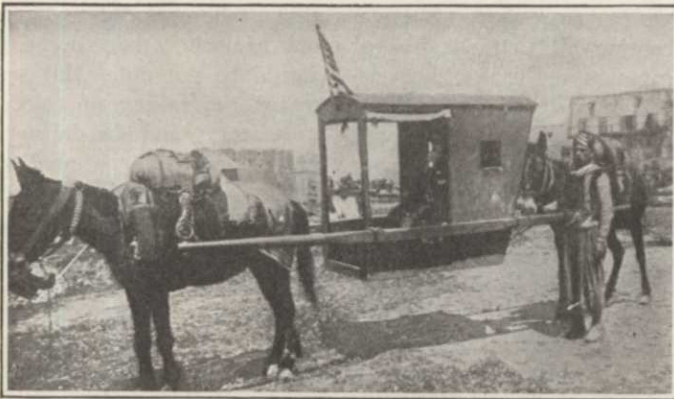
Huge mountains walled each side of the valley, and a mighty river rushed by on one side of the road. If an attack were made there, it would be impossible to escape. At 2:30 A. M. about forty Kurds, brigands, fired on us. Our men sprang to action and drove them out of the way in double-quick time, but confusion seized the women and children. There was no checking their fear. Many hundreds threw themselves into the river. There was one young woman from Van whom I knew who said, "I 'd rather kill myself with fire or in the river than to be taken by the Turks." True to their Christian faith, they plunged into deep water-holes and river rather than be captured and imprisoned in the Turkish harems. So numerous were the suicides that evening that in places the stream was black with the dark-clothed corpses. On the journey there was not a day but numbered its four hundred dead. I myself was ill for weeks after, enervated by the long abstinence from food and the suffering of the multitudes by the way. Not able to continue

in the ranks, I left Etchmiadzin, and, by proceeding through Siberia and Japan, returned to the United States.

This is not a war. It is the destruction of civilized humanity. To-day, in Turkey, the Armenians are absolutely destroyed, their wealth, their property, and their lives taken. During the defense of Van, April, 1915, before the arrival of the first force, the inhabitants of Van had held out against the Turks for twenty-seven days. How did the struggle start? In the first place, Pasha Jauded wanted to massacre the people as he had in other cities, and then followed the execution of Mr. Eshgan, the leading Armenian. The attempt to arrest the high priest and other leaders was made. It failed because the people decided to be massacred rather than to give up their leaders.

The Jauded army, numbering thirty thousand, surrounded the city, cutting off all communication from the outside; but the faith and the courage of the Armenians rang to victory. They drove off the Turks and captured the whole district of Van before the arrival of the main Russian reinforcements.

My race is now face to face with destruction, and its helplessness cries mightily to humanity for immediate and effectual aid. The situation is unprecedented in history. If it is permitted to continue unchecked, it will cast an eternal cloud over the twentieth century.



Photograph by Paul Thompson

AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY TRAVELING IN ARMENIA. EVEN IN PEACE TIME IT WAS THE CUSTOM OF ALL FOREIGNERS TO FLY THEIR COUNTRY'S FLAG AS A PROTECTION AGAINST MARAUDING BANDS