

ARMENIAN ATROCITIES

GHASTLY STORIES.

On July 28, in the House of Lords, the Earl of Crewe, Lord President of the Council, replying to a question by Viscount Bryce, concerning the killing of Christians in Armenia said that such crimes had increased both in number and in degree of atrocity. The Armenians have often suffered outrage and massacre, and the present war offers a new opportunity for oppression.

As far back as last January some 100,000 persons from the Turkish and Persian Armenian provinces had taken refuge at Etenmadgin, at the foot of Mount Ararat, in Russian Armenia, where they appealed for relief to the head of the Armenian Church and to their compatriots. They had been chiefly suffering from the wild Kurdish tribes along the border.

In May, however, the Armenians of Asia Minor had to meet another oppressor, the Turkish Government. It issued an order, the execution of which at Brusa (the city which the Turks may make their capital if Constantinople falls) is thus described by an eye-witness:—

"The police at midnight swooped down upon the homes of all Armenians whose names had been put on the proscribed list sent from Constantinople. The men were arrested and the minutest search made of their homes for possible revolutionary documents. The young Armenians were then ordered into the army; the older men were deported into the interior, while women and children who were not carried off in an opposite direction were left to shift for themselves. In thousands of cases the deportation had been carried out on such a basis that families, broken up by the Turkish officials, will never be reunited."

ANOTHER REPORT.

Another report is at hand in a letter just received by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions from a British resident of Constantinople:—

"Zeitun has ceased to exist as an Armenian town. The inhabitants have been scattered, the city occupied by Turks, and the very name changed. The same is true, to a large extent, of Hadjin, except, I believe, the name has not been altered. The Armenians of the regions of Erzerum, Bitlis, and Erzinjan have under torture been con-

verted to Islam. Hardin reports 1895 (the year of the infamous massacre) conditions as prevailing there. The tale is awful to the last degree. . . . The inhabitants of cities like Zeitun and Hadjin are driven out like cattle, and made to march long distances under the burning sun, hungry and thirsty. For instance, large numbers from Zeitun have recently reached Adana utterly destitute, many having been left to die along the road. More than a thousand families from Hadjin recently arrived at Aleppo in the last degree of misery, and yet the purpose is to send them much further. Husbands forcibly separated from wives, and sent to places long distances apart, children are similarly separated from parents.

We learn that some 20,000 Turks from Thrace were taken to Zeitun and established in houses that for generations belonged to the Armenians, while the former owners were scattered to the extreme ends of the empire, one portion being sent to the sandy deserts at the head of the Persian Gulf, and the other to malarial marshes in the interior.

So critical is the situation that Mr. Morgenthau, our Ambassador at Constantinople, who, almost single-handed, is fighting to prevent a wholesale slaughter, has asked and obtained the co-operation of the Ambassadors there of Turkey's Allies, Baron von Wangenheim and Margrave Pallavicini. They have joined our Ambassador in trying to convince the Turkish Government that a renewal of the atrocities of the former Turkish regime would be a crime.

WHAT HAPPENED IN PERSIA.

We have been so accustomed to thinking of the Armenians as resident only in Turkey that we often lose sight of the fact that they also live in Russia and in Persia. The news which comes to hand from Persia is as ghastly in its detail as that which has been received from Asia Minor. The city of Salmast, for instance, has been completely destroyed by the Kurds. One of the survivors writes:—

"Hundreds of old people and children remained behind in the ill-omened 'Valley of Blood,' unable to reach Duz-hue. Those who could go on tottered as they walked. Here a dozen women and children, buried in a chasm of

and children, buried in a chasm of snow, were crying out for help. There a cart had been upset into a deep ravine with all its passengers and animals. One woman, unable to walk further, fell on the snow and gave birth to a child. A few yards away another, made insane by suffering, leaped over a cliff, at the bottom of which hungry wolves were whining. Such scenes were repeated all along the route. I saw one woman, whose husband had just been killed, walking with all her clothes frozen, one child in her arms, another at her back, and the oldest walking by her side. A sick woman was telling how her husband and children had been butchered before her eyes. She begged to be killed too, but instead she was subjected to treatment worse than death. The wailing of the children, women, and old people was heartrending. Many of the refugees were swept away in trying to cross the streams, and dead bodies by hundreds lined the roads."

Again, near Urmia, 4000 Armenians were killed outright. Crowds of men, women and children took refuge in the churches, but these were burned down, and the poor refugees slaughtered like trapped rats. Nor was this the worst. For many days the fields around Salmast and Urmia were strewn with dead bodies, for no kindred or friends were left to give them interment. The marauders allowed them to fester and rot on the open ground. No wonder that from the Azerbaijan Province of Persia alone there has been an exodus of some two score thousands into Russia.