

OCTOBER 18, 1915

## THE ASSASSINATION OF A RACE

### THE HOPES AND THE THREATENED FATE OF THE ARMENIANS

**T**HE Armenians in Turkey before the present onslaught upon them numbered about two millions, but their importance in the empire is not to be measured by their numbers. Intellectually and physically they are vastly superior to the Turks. In education, enterprise, industry and love of home they surpass all the other races. Among all the peoples of Turkey they have been the quickest to catch the spirit of modern education and twentieth century progress. Within the last fifty years in the eastern part of Turkey wholly, and in a measure throughout the empire, they have been the artisans, the leaders in the learned professions and promoters of commercial enterprises.

This ancient and proud-spirited race, conscious of its own innate superiority, ambitious to educate its children, Christian in its religion, and eager for progress, cherished the hope of an independent Armenia reestablished upon the ruins of its ancient kingdom.

For thirty years a few of the more hot-headed youth, both within and without the country, have carried on a revolutionary propaganda that was as hopeless of successful achievement as it was foolish in organization. The loud talk of some of these revolutionary leaders frightened Abdul Hamid into a nightmare of massacre and brought untold suffering upon innocent heads. There has been comparatively little of this in more recent years, but the fear of this aggressive, successful, prolific and industrious Christian race never departed from the councils of the Mohammedans.

When Turkey entered into this war, the Armenians enlisted in large numbers and showed themselves loyal Ottomans. For some reason not explained—some say because of German prejudice—arms were gradually taken away from them and they were set to other tasks.

Early in March the Russians were drawing down toward Van, where, as has already been stated, the Armenians are unusually strong. The Governor of Van was Jevdet Bey, a brother-in-law of Enver Pasha, who, with Talaat Bey, controlled the fate of Turkey. The Armenian men of Van loyally offered their services to the Governor, who, under pretense of gratitude, tried to conduct the leaders into an ambush for their destruction. Three of the five leaders and spokesmen for the Armenians were killed, but two escaped. These rallied their followers while Jevdet

*Just at the time when it seems that the tyranny of the Turk is about to be broken and the submerged Christian peoples given an opportunity to develop a national life of their own, the terrible news comes to us that the Armenians are being massacred, dispersed and enslaved with the object of extirpating the race before the hour of their deliverance has come. In an editorial on another page of this issue we consider what this means to the world. We have also asked one who is better informed on the Armenian problem than any other man in America to explain who the Armenians are and what might be made of them if the red hand of the assassin can be stayed. On account of his official position and close relations with the people now endangered, it is necessary to conceal the name of the author, but we can vouch for his competency, high standing and truthfulness.—THE EDITOR.*

called out his troops and enlisted the services of the Kurds to annihilate them. For five weeks they maintained their position, until the Russians entered the city and the Turks fled to the west.

This attempt of the Armenians to defend their lives against treachery and open attack seemed to awaken in the Turks a generation of slumbering wrath. From that hour, so far as the leaders at Constantinople were concerned, the Armenians were doomed to extinction throughout the length and breadth of the Empire. Not only were men and boys imprisoned without charge, assassinated, tortured beyond comprehension, and killed, singly or in groups, but the women were ravished, girls carried into Moslem slavery, and entire towns—what remained after the slaughter—sent across hundreds of miles of country, without preparation for the journey, to die like animals upon the road thru disease, starvation and repeated attacks by their guards or other ruffians, and ultimately miserably to perish in the deserts of northern Arabia.

This process of destruction, begun last March, is now going on, according to indisputable evidence of creditable eye witnesses recently compiled from authentic documents by a special committee designated to that task, and recently made public. Constantinople is threatened, and the 150,000 Armenians in that city may any day be started upon their death march to the desert.

Our Ambassador, Dr. Morgenthau, at Constantinople, is doing all in his

power to stay the gruesome tide of death, and we note with gratification that the public sentiment stirred by a knowledge of this tragedy is moving the President to protest in the name of humanity against such crimes against civilization.

If the Central Powers win in this war over the Allies, Turkey will become a German province, in which the Armenians would find scant place. Officials at Constantinople have declared that the Greeks also must follow in the same path, so that when Germany becomes master of Asia Minor, no stray races claiming the land as inherently belonging to them thru centuries of occupation, and dreaming of possible independent principalities, will be there to challenge the German right of occupancy. The Kurds could be easily subdued and the Turks would have no spirit to resist. Some have gone so far as to declare that the present attack upon the Armenians is but the first step in the preparation of the promised land for the incoming hosts.

On the other hand, if Constantinople capitulates to the Allies, and the two men who drove Turkey into war and rule her today with an iron hand and their German advisers are shorn of their power, there is reason to expect that the Turks as a whole will sue for peace, as multitudes of them today keenly desire to do.

We can hardly conceive of any power's favoring the perpetuation of Turkey in any form, after this ghastly exhibit of Moslem incapacity to rule alien peoples or even Mohammedans. At once then will and must begin the repatriation of the exiled Armenians and Greeks, for the Greeks also in a measure are suffering the same treatment. This will be an expensive task, but the civilized world must unite to achieve it. There are said to be 300,000 refuge Armenians in Russia and more than half that number in Persia. In their return naturally the most of them will drift back to the land of Ancient Armenia, where in a few years it will be possible to create, under the protection of one or more friendly powers, an autonomous Armenia. In western Asia Minor, where the Greeks predominate, a Greek principality would be the natural outcome.

We have reason to expect that following this baptism of fire and blood, Asia Minor, freed from Turkish domination, will become a place in which non-Moslem races may, for the first time in a century, live in peace and enjoy the prosperity due their quiet, constructive industry.