

THE ARMENIAN ATROCITIES OF 1915.

Only a third of the two million Armenians in Turkey have survived, and that at the price of apostatising to Islam or else of leaving all they had and fleeing across the frontier. The refugees saw their women and children die by the roadside, and apostacy too, for a woman, involved the living death of marriage to a Turk and inclusion in his harem. The other two-thirds were "deported"—that is, they were marched away

from their homes in gangs, with no food or clothing for the journey, in fierce heat and bitter cold, hundreds of miles over rough mountain roads. They were plundered and tormented by their guards, and by subsidised bands of brigands, who descended on them in the wilderness, and with whom their guards fraternised. Parched with thirst, they were kept away from the water with bayonets. They died of hunger and exposure and exhaustion, and in lonely places the guards and robbers fell upon them and murdered them in batches—some at the first halting place after the start, others after they had endured weeks of this agonising journey. About half the deportees—and there was at least 1,200,000 of them in all—perished thus on their journey, and the other half have been dying lingering deaths ever since at their journey's end; for they have been deported to the most inhospitable regions in the Ottoman Empire: the malarial marshes in the Province of Konia; the banks of the Euphrates where, between Syria and Mesopotamia, it runs through a stony desert; the sultry and utterly desolate track of the Hedjaz Railway. The exiles who are still alive have suffered worse than those who perished by violence at the beginning.

The same campaign of extermination has been waged against the Nestorian Christians on the Persian frontier, and against the Arabs of Syria, Christians and Moslems without discrimination.

In Syria there is a reign of terror. The Arab leaders have been imprisoned, executed, or deported already, and the mass of the people lie paralysed, expecting the Armenians' fate, and dreading every moment to hear the decree of extermination go forth.

This wholesale destruction, which has already overtaken two of the subject peoples in Turkey, and threatens all that 60 per cent. of the population which is not Turkish in language, is the direct work of the Turkish government. The "Deportation Scheme" was drawn up by the central government at Constantinople and telegraphed simultaneously to all the local authorities in the Empire; it was executed by the officials, the Gendarmerie, the Army, and the bands of brigands and criminals organised in the government's service. No State could be more completely responsible for any act within its borders than the Ottoman State is responsible for the appalling crimes it has committed against its subject peoples during the War.