

ARMENIANS WERE RESPONSIBLE

CONSTANTINOPLE RIOTS PREMEDITATED, SAYS A CORRESPONDENT.

Provocation and Intimidation the Plan of the Revolutionists, He Thinks—English and American Opinion.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

A convincing proof that the Constantinople riots were premeditated and organized by the Armenian revolutionary committees is to be found in the fact that Armenian newspapers, published out of Turkey announced a few weeks before the occurrence of said riots that they would take place at Constantinople. The Turkish authorities knew besides from other sources that such would be the case, and they were fully prepared to meet any emergency. Provocation and intimidation seem to be the plan of the Armenian revolutionists—provocation to the authorities and intimidation to their co-religionists. Bloodshed is the crowning result of their criminal efforts, supported, we are sorry to state, by English and American public opinion.

Admitting that Americans have no direct interest in European politics, the partiality shown by them toward the Armenian instigators of disorder has no excuse. The reason of such partiality must be because the Armenians are Christians. Still, this is certainly a bad reason; for, in spite of their Christianity, the Armenians are certainly an inferior and unreliable race, which was just as inferior and just as destitute of any sterling qualities or fame at an epoch when it had its own Government in Asia. In the present day, Armenians are scattered about all over Asiatic Turkey, and they constitute in any Turkish province the minority of the population, which fact alone makes the use of the word "Armenia" simply preposterous. There may be an Armenia out of Turkey, but surely there is no Armenia in Turkey. There are Armenians there, and that is enough. A New-York newspaper, the enmity of which to the Turkish Government is not denied, wrote lately the following:

"The statement has been made and repeated until it has become trite, without, however, having any apparent effect upon some people, that there is no country now existent which can fairly be termed Armenia. Historical Armenia included the Southwestern Caucasus, a section of Northwestern Persia, and that portion of Eastern Turkey now included in the Provinces of Erzeroum, Van, and Bitlis, with part of those of Diarbekir and Harpoot. The Caucasus section is still predominantly Armenian in population, but under rigid Russian rule. The Persian Armenians are comparatively few in number, and are found chiefly in the plain of Salmas and in the City of Khol. In the Turkish provinces there are but four sections, of limited area, that would even ten years ago be fairly called Armenian—the plain of Moosh and Harpoot, the City of Van, and the Passen and Knus region, near Erzeroum. Already the Kurds, Circassians, and other Moslem tribes were driving them out, and within the last five years they have so nearly accomplished their purpose that to-day they probably far outnumber the Christians in those very sections. Where, then, are the Armenians? All over the empire."

To state, therefore, that there is an Armenia in Turkey is to make an erroneous statement. But erroneous statements on this Armenian question are so many that to contradict them all would be almost an impossibility. All these false statements originate from the Armenians themselves, whose veracity is an unknown quantity. If Constantinople had been a small town in Asiatic Turkey, the Armenians would unmistakably have asserted, and such men as W. W. Howard, Dillon, and the Rev. F. D. Greene, basing their assertions solely on Armenian testimony, would have promptly affirmed that the Constantinople riots had as instigators not the Armenians, but the Turks, and that during those riots thousands upon thousands of Armenians, women and children included, were tortured and killed by Turkish soldiers. Constantinople being where it is, even The Daily News of London—that is to say, a newspaper whose policy is to try to ruin, if possible, and to destroy Turkey—was obliged to remark:

"Two points ought, in justice to the Turks, to be noted. First, that it is beyond doubt that a large number of those Armenians who took part in the demonstration on Monday were armed. Secondly, the Government has not employed troops, nor allowed rifles to be used. The police were armed with revolvers, but the soldiers have only been employed as patrols, and I am not aware of any allegation of misconduct against them."

When, therefore, a European delegate attached to the Commission of Inquiry that has been conducting an examination at the district of Sassoun into the alleged atrocities committed in that part of Asiatic Turkey says, as he does, that the allegations of Mr. Dillon and his Armenian friends are gross exaggerations, his statement must be true. Said delegate asserts most positively that the stories of wholesale massacre and violations of women, those connected with the number of killed, which number fluctuates, strange to say, in one and the same pamphlet—we mean the slanderous pamphlet of the Rev. F. D. Greene—between 3,000 and 25,000, and those in relation to the finding of forty bodies buried in a pit at Gheliguza, and to the throwing of Armenian women over a cliff to escape dishonor, all those ridiculous stories that made such a deep impression on credulous people already prepared to hate the Turk, are, one and all, absolutely fictitious. The delegate, moreover, contends that the Armenians instead of being remorselessly butchered while in a condition of helplessness, made a spirited stand against the troops and were, just as during the Constantinople riot, armed. The European Commission of Inquiry has also proved that, instead of 30,000 Christians having been driven into exile, as alleged, the entire number of inhabitants of the disturbed district, Moslem and Christian, did not exceed 4,000.

However the administration of distant Turkish provinces may be, if ever it were bad—and in that case, it could be reformed—the fact now remains that the so-called Sassoun massacres have never existed. We do not say that no excesses have taken place there. In time of revolt, especially at places where the central Government is powerless to exercise its influence, excesses do always take place. But the responsibility of those excesses lies with the criminal instigators of disorder, and that is precisely what the European and American public opinion, influenced by a huge religious agitation, refused to see and to admit. One of the most prominent Armenians living at Constantinople, but who deprecates the foolishness of this Armenian agitation, gave, according to The Sun, the following true version of the Sassoun revolt:

"It was a regular battle, begun by our people attacking the Hamidie Kuzdish troops, (that is, committing an act of high treason,) and perpetrating horrible cruelties on such Kurds as fell alive into their hands. These barbarous acts were the work rather of Armenian brigands, whom the revolutionists pressed into the ranks, than of the villagers themselves, who by no means are addicted to cruelty. Well, the fortune of war was favorable to the Armenians, who, partly armed with rifles, drove the Kurds before them like a flock of sheep. They resolved to wipe out the Kurds once for all, and would have done so if they had not been stopped in time; indeed, God only knows what would have happened. All Kurdistan would have been in revolt had it not been for the foresight and energy of Zekki Pasha, who ordered troops to march to the scene of the disturbance and soothe the ruffled spirit of the Mohammedans and Christians. Then, to be sure, certain excesses were committed, mainly by Kurds, who were thirsting for revenge."

The increased agitation since Sassoun, on the part of the Armenian revolutionists in the Turkish provinces, and in Constantinople itself proves in a forcible and clear manner that the above assertions are true to the letter. But, unfortunately, it is a very hard thing to convince people when guided by secular prejudices or by political motives. Even Americans fail to perceive the political side of the Armenian intrigues in England. The Armenian agitation in the United States is not, it is true, political. It is merely religious, based not upon the great intrinsic merits of the Armenians, which are totally lacking, but upon the fact that they are Christians. The result is that Armenian intrigues are upheld both by English and American public opinion, although fatally tending to an armed rebellion in Turkey. The Missionary Boards are, we believe, to a great extent to blame for this disturbance of the sense of fairness on the part of Americans. The missionaries evidently trust that, by helping the Armenians in this emergency, by organizing relief funds on the pretext of an alleged famine in Asiatic Turkey, and by having the money distributed to the Armenians alone, to the exclusion of any other nationality—which latter fact is a very curious one, supposing that there is a general famine out there—they would

increase later on the field of their operations and usefulness, which means that they would make more converts to Protestantism, although the Armenians are already Christians. What would Europe and America say if the Turks were to exercise—which they do not—the doctrine of proselytism? Would they call it persecution? However this may be, let every American who, forgetting the appalling needs of, for instance, the negro population at home, subscribes a single cent to the above relief funds, bear always in mind the following warning that the Rev. H. N. Barnum sent not long ago to America:

"I hear that our Armenian friends in America have given large sums of money in the name of Armenia, which I think is worse than thrown away, for some of it at least is used in a way to injure the Armenian name before the world, and to make their brethren who remain here uncomfortable. It also hinders the progress of true reform, for which so many are praying and laboring."

In the presence of such weighty and sensible words, would it not be folly to hinder "true reform" and encourage further sedition? * * *

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