

Armeria---The Challenge to America

Included under the shadow of the historic name of Armenia are not only Armenians, Syrians and Greeks; but Assyrians, Jews, Maronites, Arabs and others.

All have suffered untold agonies during the present war. Hundreds of thousands have died the martyr's death. The remnant is now left to perish from exposure, disease, starvation.

America alone holds the key to the situation. Her wealth is abundant, her blessings unmeasured. Her generous heart will not fail to respond to the piteous cry of these descendants of the early races of Bible lands.

Read the story in these pages. Join hands with thousands of others to help meet the appalling need described.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.—Luke 10:33, 34, 35.

STORY OF ONE WHO ESCAPED

(NOTE:—These thrilling experiences of Moosheh Vorperian are so full of human interest details that his story is reproduced practically as he has been giving it before audiences in America. He is seventeen years old, the son of an American professor in the college where the boy was a student up to the time of deportations in 1915. He escaped from Turkey, crossed the mountains into the Russian Caucasus, traveled through Siberia, Korea, China and Japan to America, landing in Seattle, Washington, May 1, 1917.)

Dear Kind Americans:

I have been asked to tell you my sad story. I do not know English well and it is hard for me to express myself, but I will try my best.

I lived with my father, mother, two sisters and brother, and we were happy. We had colleges, schools, churches and comfortable homes. But that was before 1915. In March, 1915, suddenly our town was surrounded by Turkish soldiers and all of the prominent Armenian merchants, doctors, dentists, professors and business men were imprisoned. Then they began to torture them. I do not like to tell you sad things, and to tell you of tortures in the land of freedom seems to me not good, but I must tell you of the suffering of my people.

They tortured the professor of history in our American Missionary college. First they beat him with a stick; then they burned his hair; then they burned his fingers and finally crucified him; and all the time he was murmuring, "Oh God, all this for your sake." They did not arrest my father at first, but later they took him to the prison and kept him in a room where they tortured prominent Armenians. After he saw these tortures they told him, "These things will happen to you if you do not bring your guns. But my father was a peaceful man; he had no guns. He was a professor and he had no arms with which to defend himself. He was a kind man and he could not bear to see such tortures. He became sick and they took him to Dr. Atkinson's hospital. After two months of these tortures the Turkish government ordered all Armenians to be deported to the Syrian and Arabian deserts, and in July, 1915, 3,000 Armenians, the most prominent men in our city, doctors, lawyers, merchants, professors, with their wives and families began to move towards the deserts. Our family was in this group.

In America, if someone is pretty they want to be prettier, if someone is beautiful they want to be more beautiful; but it was not so in our country during the deportations. At the time of deportations they tried to spoil the beauty of God gave. I saw mothers cut the long hair of their daughters. I saw my mother cut the long blond hair of my sister, but they could not take out her beautiful eyes. I heard mothers saying, "Daughter, I wish you were blind." But it is hard to spoil the beauty which God gives.

We were traveling towards the deserts, surrounded by Turkish soldiers and officers, and these soldiers selected were the most cruel ones. After a few days the Turkish officer saw my sister and asked for her, but my father would not do that. Neither would any Armenian do that. Never will I forget my father's words. We were standing on the bank of the Euphrates. He said to the Turkish officer, "You are a Turk and I am Armenian; you are Moslem and I am Christian; I cannot give you my daughter. If it were not written in our bible that suicide is a sin, I would throw myself with my daughter into the river." The Turkish officer said, "You need not do that for you will see the same condition in a few days."

After a few days we reached Malatia. This beautiful little city was father's birthplace. As we saw the town my father said, "My beautiful birthplace, will you also be my deathplace?" When we reached Malatia we were suddenly surrounded by another corps of Turkish soldiers and the men were separated from the women. It is hard for me to describe what a heart-broken scene this was for men to be separated from women. Even if I tried to tell it to you in Armenian I could not describe this heart-breaking scene. Husbands could not say goodbye to their wives for the last time, fathers were torn from the arms of their wives and children. I could not kiss my sister for the last time.

I was surrounded by two Turkish soldiers and they pulled me away without

any chance to say goodbye to my mother and sisters, and 550 men, Armenians, were thrown into a great dungeon. Men in the Orient do not weep very much. I have seen fathers bury their daughters and they did not weep, but in this dungeon every Armenian man was weeping. I wept, too, and I went into a dark corner, for if my father saw me weeping it would make him more sad. All the men began to pray. They did not pray for their own lives, because it was better for them to die than to go out into the desert to starve; but they prayed for these women and children, who had no one to protect them or help them.

Finally a Turkish officer came and looked at me in the corner and he said, "Wouldn't you like to go to the prison of the women?" I said, "Yes, I would." But then again I did not want to leave my father, but my father was wise and said, "Yes, Moosheh, go to the prison of the women." And it was good for me that I did, for in a few hours that same night at midnight the Turkish officers and soldiers took those 549 Armenians out to the nearby mountains and killed them all, one by one, with axes and knives. One of the Turkish soldiers laughed and told me that they did not use guns because cartridges cost four cents each.

When I reached the prison of the women, only one boy of fifteen years of age among 2,500 women and children and girls, it was a sad sight. Mothers were asking me about their sons and about their husbands. Sisters wanted to know about their brothers, but I could only say, "They will see you all again, though of course not in this world." That same night the officer who had asked for my sister from my father came and took her away. She was weeping, but there was no one to help, only a boy of fifteen years of age who could do nothing. She went and pleaded with the officer for her family, so we were allowed to go back to our city, my mother, my little sister and brother and I. But what happened to those 2,500 women and children and girls? I know you will ask. First they took their money, their carts, their goods, and then their clothes. Our Armenian ladies could not bear to live without clothes and they threw themselves into the rivers.

We went back to our city, but we had no home. The Turkish government had confiscated our home, our garden, our goods and all that we had. My little brother was not strong enough to stand such sufferings, so he died. He would wake up in the night and call, "Brother, do you not see there in that corner they are killing my father, just there in that corner?"

For months we lived under the protection of the American Consul and the American missionaries. But it was the intention of the Turkish government to kill every Armenian student. Of the 500 boy students in the American college where I studied, only five escaped and it became impossible for me to live there any longer. We planned to escape one night in September, 1916, with four other Armenian villagers. I bade goodbye to my mother and little sister and we began our journey. It is hard to make an almost hopeless flight over rough mountains, sometimes covered with the snow. We slept on the hard ground, sometimes we did not have bread to eat. Five times we were captured by Turkish soldiers, and they would have taken our lives but we gave them money and bought our freedom.

Finally we came to the Russian army. I saw a Russian soldier standing on the hilltop and we ran to him and he was glad, but I was not glad for much longer, for when I reached the Russian army, there in that Christian land, I found Armenians starving, in Russia, that Christian land. Armenians who had escaped the sword of the Turk were starving day by day. Students like me who had escaped over the mountains were starving. Armenian girls who had escaped from Turkish harems were starving there in Russia and they could not find a blade of grass to eat. They buried Armenian children alive in Turkey. I know a place where scores of Armenian children were buried alive, and those children who had escaped being buried alive were starving in Russia. The Russians were kind to them but they did not have food enough for

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Where Millions of Human Beings are Starving!



DEMOCRACY'S DEDICATION

Without provocation, without warning, without one single chance to defend itself, the Armenian nation was foully done to death. With incredible barbarity, with insensate cruelty, with unspeakable and unprintable accompaniments, the Turkish government added its last superlative crime to the long list which has horrified and maddened civilization.

Plunder, arson, murder, torture, rapine and slaughter on a gigantic and titanic scale, proportionate to the scale of the world-war—a scale of wholesale infamy hitherto unknown in the history of the world; this is the tragedy of Armenia.

Three degrees of the wholesale crime are discernable. Massacre, torture, deportation. The Turk, unsatiated by a positive slaughter, raises his horror to the comparative and superlative.

Massacre. Marching into a town the Turkish soldiery called out all males of any conceivable military usefulness, disarmed them with fair promises, drove them outside the gates, compelled them to dig their own graves and get into them, where they were cut to pieces with axes, knives and bayonets. This was the positive degree.

Torture. They pulled out the hair, eyebrows and beards of men with pinchers. They used the rack, the bastinado. They crucified. They burned. They violated women, and bayoneted babes for pleasure. They mutilated living bodies. They carried away boys and girls into unspeakable slavery. And this was the comparative degree.

Deportation. They tore up a people by the roots, robbed them of their homes, their goods, their fortunes. They set them in caravans, afoot, to traverse a region infested with savage tribes, who attacked the defenseless widows and orphans again and again, with the connivance of the soldiers who were their presumed guards. Women giving birth to babes on the journey were compelled at the point of the bayonet to resume the bitter march. They starved. They died by hundreds and by thousands, and the trail of the march is blazed by their bleaching skeletons. They planted them in deserts and swamps, to die of disease and hunger. And this was the superlative degree.

Not a handful. Not a family or two. Not a village or two. But a nation of more than two millions of souls. Not a savage nation. Not a half civilized nation. But a people of culture, refinement and tender sensibilities. The oldest Christian nation on the globe. The bulwark of Western civilization in the East. And these were trodden under by those who, on any count are their inferiors.

Not only is the challenge of Armenia to compassion, to pity. It reaches beyond that to a righteous indignation against Armenia's persecutors. And it reaches yet further. Into the very depths of the love of America and the loyalty of America to that for which America stands.

For America is no mere geographical designation. America is an idea and an ideal. It is the ideal of political freedom. It is committed by its own act to the principle of the right of every people to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Of the right of every people to determine its own government. It is fighting a great war to make the world safe for democracy. It is dedicated and consecrated to its ideal, and having set its hand to the plow it can by no means turn backward until the furrow is completely finished.

It is not the mere fact of starving millions that challenges America in the case of Armenia. That were enough, but it is not all, or even most. The repatriation of a nation destroyed by autocracy! The salvage of the destruction wrought by the principle that might makes right! That is America's challenge.

We saw Belgium struck down, a free people threatened with loss of political life. And we gritted our teeth and said "It shall not be." We see Armenia struck down. And if we have the courage of consistency and of our convictions, once more we must say "It shall not be." We are committed to the championship of democracy—not merely for the strong but for the weak. But if as we fight, the champions of the little peoples in western Europe, and those peoples are being blotted out in Asia Minor, then what shall we do?

The repatriation of Armenia is as much a part of the American program embarked upon April 6, 1917, as is the repatriation of Belgium, the restoration of northern France, and the destruction of the power of the German alliance. For the world cannot be made safe for democracy, until it is made unsafe for autocrats! And if America slights her program in Asia, she cannot maintain it in Europe without becoming worse than ridiculous. If America is supine, indifferent to the democracy of the east, then her championship of democracy in the west is so much empty phrase; and the hands which shall one day raise the Stars and Stripes over the Prussian capital will be hands stained with the lust of conquest, and not the hands of one who took the sword to defend and maintain the right.

We cannot forget that for which America stands, and that for which she fights. She asks nothing for herself that she does not ask for all humanity—all. Her task is to give to all the world, the ideal of freedom which she enjoys; because it is right; and because there is no safety for any people anywhere so long as any people is enslaved. To this task America dedicates her gold and her blood, her manhood and her material resources. God helping her, she cannot do otherwise.

Mass Meeting, 8:30 Tomorrow Night at Armory. Dr. McNaughton, 20 years head of a Boy's School in Turkey will Speak. Be there. You are needed. Come and hear.

President Wilson's Appeal to the American People.

One year ago, in compliance with resolutions passed by the Senate and by the House of Representatives, I appointed days upon which the people of the United States might make such contributions as they felt disposed for the aid of the stricken Armenian and Syrian peoples.

American diplomatic and consular representatives and other American residents recently returned from Western Asia, assure me that many thousands of lives were saved from starvation by the gifts of the American people last winter. They also bring full assurance of the continued effective distribution of relief and report that the suffering greater this winter than last unless the survivors can be helped by further contributions from America.

Reports indicate that of orphans alone there are more than 400,000, besides women and other dependent children, reaching a total of more than 2,000,000 destitute survivors. The situation is so distressing as to make a special appeal to the sympathies of all.

In view of the urgent need I call again upon the people of the United States to make such further contributions as they feel disposed, in their sympathy and generosity for the aid of these suffering peoples. Contributions may be made through the American Red Cross, Washington, D. C., or direct to the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, Cleveland H. Dodge, treasurer, One Madison Avenue, New York City.

28 October, 1917. WOODROW WILSON.
(Since the foregoing appeal was written the situation has grown more acute by the advance of winter, collapse of relief work in Russia, and the progress of destitution.)

The Story in Letters, Cables and Conversations.

Details from Constantinople and Asia Minor; Beirut and Syria; Tiflis and Russian Caucasus; Alexandria and Egypt; Tabriz and Persia; Bagdad and Mesopotamia; Jerusalem and Palestine.

Quoted from Consuls, Missionaries and Others, Representing Many Distribution Centers.

Demands for help are inexorable. Bread winners generally have perished through massacre, deportation or in the army. Estimate number deported at one and one half million. Practically all now destitute were self-supporting before the war.

Property taken from these people by military or destroyed in deportations totals millions of dollars. The number of destitute is increased by the deportation of Greeks from the coast. Refugees from regions occupied by military are increasing the poverty. Business paralyzed. Animals requisitioned. Schools and churches generally closed. Buildings used by military. Prices of food and other necessities rise with this progressive element, going higher. Needs greater because destitute people are more numerous than last year.

Extermination or material diminution of Christian races greatly deplored, as the hope of future upbuilding lies with this progressive element, which is most useful for regenerating the empire. American and Swiss missionaries remain on the field for continuing the work for destitute as in the past. They are now imploring that we continue usual appropriations.

There are many more whom we cannot help than the number helped by us. They come pleading for work until it seems sometimes as though we must go crazy from being constantly compelled to refuse them. Illustrations seem out of place. It is one constant stream of ragged, forlorn women with drawn faces, begging with tears, and even demanding work. It is impossible for the people to return to their old homes; conditions are too uncertain. Local farmers and merchants feel the stress of the times too much to employ help, so the refugees are dependent almost wholly on charity. It is pitiful to see people once well to do now begging. When opportunity presents itself most of them swallow their pride and gladly become servants.

It seems inconceivable that in this day and age, human beings could crucify, drown, tear to pieces, burn by wholesale, other human beings.

Last year no rain fell in Syria before December 25 or after the last week in March. The fields could not be sown before January. This drought coming after the locust plague resulted in great shortage of crops, reducing them to one half of their normal

amount. This shortage is the first cause of starvation. The second is the difficulty of transportation. Mules, horses, camels and wagons have been commandeered by the army. The railroad engines burn wood so that the Lebanon has become bare of trees. The use of trains is limited to soldiers.

The last news received from Syria and Palestine confirm the tidings that the present conditions in that country are of the worst. Thousands of the people are dying from hunger, and it is asserted on good authority that in one province alone 50,000 persons have so died.

El Hoda says that in the Lebanon province alone 110,000 have died of starvation and disease. In Beirut they are dying by dozens in the streets. Each day the government sends wagons to collect the bodies which are buried in a common potters field.

The three races that are suffering most severely from this blow are the backbone of the Turkish empire, so far as industry, intelligence, enterprise and general ability are concerned. Without them the country must miserably go to ruin.

The committee therefore now is collecting funds for keeping the refugees alive, but is looking forward to the great and final work of repatriation, which will mean the moving of more than 2,000,000 destitute and stricken people—some of them across a thousand miles of intervening territory—and their re-establishment in their homes upon a self supporting basis.

Persia committee asks American approval for the inclusion of special relief work for another group of 40,000 driven from home by war. Villages destroyed. Extreme destitution. At least children should be saved. No hope except America. Wholesale relief is most strategic measure for pacification and settlement of the local race problem. This the most abject case of suffering we have seen.

If what we saw today in Sunni Mosque, Urmia, could be transplanted ten hours westward to Madison Square, New York, every newspaper in America would ring with the story of most object spectacle in a world at war and millions for relief would follow straightway. Refugees from mountain villages, driven from ripening crops, living unsheltered on stones, indescribable rage, starvation, sickness and filth. Human beings in state of oriental street dogs with whom they compete for offal. Work already done by Americans for Armenians, Syrians, Assyrians is national triumph, but vastness of continuing need is overwhelming. (Signed) ELLIS, BETRY.

William T. Ellis and Charles H. Beury are commissioners of the American committee, who at their own expense went to investigate conditions in Persia and the Russian Caucasus.

Who Are These Sufferers?

The Armenians.

The Armenians are of Latin origin. About 1300 B. C. they left their original home in Thrace, Southeastern Europe, crossed the Bosphorus into Bythinia, pushed easterly into Cappadocia, and in the eighth century B. C. reached Ararat, where they founded the State of Armenia.

Under Tigranes the Great, about the first century B. C. Armenia attained the height of her glory and power. Her territory extended from the Caspian to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, from the western Caucasus to the Mesopotamian plains, with an area exceed-

ing 500,000 square miles and a population of 25,000,000.

Armenia was the first nation to embrace Christianity as a national religion. Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew preached the gospel there. The Armenian church has had 137 Pontiffs in unbroken succession, whose seat, since 300, with occasional transfers elsewhere has been at Echmiadzin, the Great Monastery in Russian Armenia. There were in 1913 4,500,000 Armenians the world over. Of these about 200,000 were communicants of the Church of Rome. Since 1847 about

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