

The Armenians and the Eastern
Question.

A SERIES OF
LETTERS BY AN ARMENIAN

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THE TEXT OF THE "MÉMOIRE" ADDRESSED TO THE CABINETS
OF EUROPE,

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS little volume is offered as a handbook to the Eastern Question in as far as it relates to the Armenian nation. It contains a little pamphlet translated by the Editor, entitled "The Armenians and the Eastern Question," and largely circulated by the Eastern Question Association; an address to the same Association by Armenian residents in London, suggesting SELF GOVERNMENT as the best remedy for the evils of Armenia; letters to the *Times*, written by the Editor of this compilation and signed by him "An Armenian;" letters of the correspondents of the *Times* at Constantinople and in Armenia, inserted in this volume by special permission; an eloquent letter from a highly esteemed friend of the Editor, the Rev. C. G. Curtis, M.A., of Constantinople, pleading the cause of the Armenian nation; etc., etc. The Appendix contains two documents, one of which is a stirring letter from Erzeroum, strongly urging that the Armenian cause also should obtain a hearing; the other is the historical Memorial which the Armenians of Constantinople, at a time of considerable agitation and of great hopes and fears, addressed to the Cabinets of Europe through Seth Apcar, Esq., of London, praying that the Powers in remedying the evils of Turkish rule in Europe should also take into serious consideration the grievances of Armenia. The Editor thought fit, at the last moment, to append further documents, containing valuable information, which will speak for themselves.

In offering these documents and letters to the public in their present form, the Editor hopes that more interest will be taken in this country in the condition of his countrymen in Armenia than heretofore.

The insertion of the letter of Oct. 1, 1877, from the *Times* correspondent in Armenia, at page 45, will, the Editor hopes, be taken as sufficient proof of his perfect impartiality and love of truth, however unwelcome. The reader will observe that some of the severe strictures which that letter contains on the Armenians lose their sting upon reading, a little further, the reasons which the writer unwittingly supplies for the actualities he describes, which, by their nature, rather excite commiseration and sympathy for so much misfortune than the contrary.

It is for the intelligent reader to give his sympathies according to the evidence laid before him, and exert himself within his immediate circle in the noble work of doing something for Armenia and her long-oppressed and ill-treated Christian population.

With this view the Editor particularly addresses himself to those who in the Press indicate and inform public opinion, and more especially to members of both Houses of Parliament, that they may take cognizance of the intolerable condition of Armenia, and, drawing the attention of the Government, bring it before the approaching Conference or Congress, and thus ensure the better administration of Armenia, if possible under the guarantee of the European Powers.

It is indeed a matter of astonishment that the Armenian question has been so long overlooked by Europe. When the Constantinople Conference met it decided that the condition of the Christians of Turkey required amelioration, and it urgently demanded certain remedies. The Turkish Government pointed to the new constitution and rejected these demands. Russia having been the principal cause of the Conference, and the Conference having failed in its objects, took upon herself to do by coercion that which the Conference failed in doing by peaceful means. She declared war against Turkey on behalf of the Christians of Turkey, *i. e.* not for the Bulgarians alone, but on behalf of all the Christians both of Europe and Asia. Now, by the light of the treaty which has just been published, we find that Armenia gets little or nothing, and the little the

Armenians have obtained (see Clause 16) with so much exertion has after all the cardinal defect of not only being expressed in ambiguous language, but of being inadequate to the needs of Armenia as regards the final settlement of the Eastern Question.

Now why should the Bulgarians alone be benefitted by a war ostensibly entered upon on behalf of all the Christians, and the condition of the Armenians be overlooked? Is there one thing that one may bring forward in behalf of the Bulgarians as a suffering people that may not with equal truth and greater force be stated on behalf of the Armenians? Have the Bulgarians suffered from oppression and tyranny? The Armenians have suffered more during a longer period of centuries. Was Bulgaria misgoverned? It is shown on the highest authority that Armenia has not been governed at all, but it has been subjected to all the horrors of an anarchic tyranny. Some people might urge that this partiality to the Bulgarians springs from their religion and the particular Church to which they belong. Is that so? and are the Bulgarians Christians? The Armenians can say the same thing, and urge the undisputed fact of being the earliest Christian nation of the world.

Does Russia allege that the Bulgarians have shed their blood for their faith? The Armenians have been a nation of martyrs since the fifth century; long before the Bulgarian name was even heard. Christianity was a material gain to the barbarous Bulgarian of the ninth century; to the Armenian it has for fifteen centuries imposed immense sacrifices—sacrifices of life, sacrifices of property, sacrifices of population. So that a nation which in the fifth century is estimated to have numbered some 18,000,000 strong in Armenia, is now reduced to 2,500,000. Is sympathy accorded to the Bulgarian on account of his lately discovered capacity for culture and civilization? The Armenian can show that, to go no further than the fifth century, no nation at that time—indeed, few nations at any time—had annals so bright. Since in that century, from

Byzantium to Rome, and Alexandria to Athens, there was no branch of culture in which Armenian scholarship was not represented till the bitter and persistent persecutions of the Fire-worshippers of Persia put a stop to all this mental activity. From that period till the fourteenth century—to the last hour of political independence—Armenian nationality meant Christianity.

In Europe the Bulgarian had always this advantage, that when over pressed he could go for a time to some of the neighbouring states free from Mohammedan persecution. In Asia no such refuge has ever been possible for the Armenian till very recently. He was surrounded on all sides by hostile races and religions, and whilst all other Christian races, like the Assyrians or the Chaldeans, have either fallen victims to Mohammedan assaults or are disappearing, the Armenians still exist in sufficiently large numbers not only to plead their own cause, but that of the minor Christian races. Armenia, as the first Christian kingdom, has been the vanguard of Christendom; and her children, when driven to Lesser Armenia, to the shelter of the Cilician Taurus, founded a kingdom which came to be regarded as the *ultima Thule*, or last bulwark of Christianity in the East. Does Europe take account of these facts? Can history show one single nation who has gone through such trying ordeals on behalf of Christianity as the Armenian? And if Christianity be synonymous with the highest form of civilization, of progress and of enlightenment, then what the Armenians have suffered and bled for was for things which the civilized world regards as of inestimable value.

When the representatives of such a race, of such a militant Church, come forward in the hour of need and of the desolation of that Armenia, that beloved first fatherland, and plead their cause before Christian Europe, will Europe refuse to hear their prayer and turn them adrift? The Armenians hope not, they dare not expect otherwise than that their claims and rights will

obtain hearing and satisfaction from the justice of Europe or from her approaching Congress.

Russia could not well refuse the formation of an autonomous or self-governing state of Armenia under European guarantee, since she herself has already expended vast treasures and sacrificed the lives of 100,000 soldiers for the liberation of Bulgarian and other Christians in Europe, and the granting of self-government to Armenia would be the crowning of the edifice. Turkey could but favourably regard the formation of such a state, since it would free her from the constant anxiety and duty of holding the Kurds and Circassians in check, and allow her to devote her whole attention to the developing of the resources of the Mohammedan provinces of Asia Minor. England herself could not but welcome such an arrangement, as in the first place it would liberate the Armenians and introduce order into Armenia, which would take away the excuse for the further advances of Russia, of which she is so jealous on more grounds than one.

But to alleviate the suffering of the Christians in Armenia, to deliver them from the hands of their barbarous oppressors, and to secure for them the blessings of good government England must lend her powerful influence; for it is pretty certain that Turkey, having conceded so much, will be disinclined to yield more in favour of the Christians; and Russia, having obtained so much for the Slave portion of the Christian populations, may find it difficult, perhaps inconvenient, if not impossible, to obtain more for the rest. It is precisely at this point that European interests, and particularly those of England, in Armenia and Western Asia will operate in favour of the Armenians, and save them from their desperate position. It is in the circumstance of European interests moderating Russian ambition and counteracting Turkish incapacity and wilful misrule, that the main hope of the Armenians in securing for themselves a just and reasonable administration rests.

The Armenians do not pretend to lay before England their well-grounded grievances, and appeal to her in order that she may avenge their wrongs and redress their grievances. Nor do

they appeal to Europe simply because the Armenians are an interesting and oppressed people ; they do not put forward any such plea. They appeal because they are debarred from the legitimate exercise of those capacities for intellectual advance which belong to them, and from reaping the fruits of their perseverance and industry by the complete anarchy and disorganization prevailing in Armenia, and because they know that this can in no way be to the advantage of the world. And, further, they appeal to the civilized nations because the Armenians know what civilization means ; because they are desirous of treading in its path and seek to improve the moral and material condition of their country. Their history moreover tells them how much they, as a nation, have done for Christianity and civilization in past ages and now may do in refining and enlightening the races and populations who surround them. They appeal because they know their advantage is the advantage of Western Asia. Let us therefore consider what are the natural resources of Armenia, which the Armenians are so well fitted to develop if a favourable opportunity be offered to them. I will first speak of the geographical position of Armenia.

Armenia in its entire state was about 160,000 square miles in area, extending from the Caspian to the Black Sea. Her ancient boundaries were—the Caspian Sea on the East, Georgia and Mingrelia on the North, Asia Minor on the West, Mesopotamia and Assyria on the South. She was divided into 20 Satrapies or Governments, 620 Cantons or districts, and 20,000 parishes. This once flourishing kingdom is now partitioned between Turkey, Russia, and Persia. The portion belonging to Turkey, which is the largest of these divisions and the more central part of Armenia, is at present the object of the hopes and fears of the Armenian people, and it is on its behalf that appeal is made to Europe.

The soil of Armenia is to a considerable extent of volcanic formation ; her mountains culminating in the magnificent Ararat, and her historical rivers such as the Euphrates, Tigris, etc., are too well known to require description here. Armenia

is rich in minerals, such as gold, silver, iron, lead, mercury, etc. In the provinces of Koukark and Ararat one may see entire mountains of copper and rock-salt. Jasper, porphyry, marble, alabaster and basalt abound; also sulphur, naphtha, bitumen, petroleum and coal.

The varied climate of Armenia renders her exceedingly rich in vegetation, and in her forests one may come across all kinds of trees, such as the fir, larch, birch in the mountains, and the oak, cedar, elm, maple and beach in the plains. The plantain tree, which is considered to be one of the finest trees in the East, is a native of Armenia. The chestnut, walnut, filbert, apple and a considerable number of other fruit trees grow almost wild, and here all the plants of temperate countries and of alpine regions succeed to a remarkable degree.

Agriculture has from time immemorial been known and held in honour in Armenia; and so far back as the time of the Roman Empire, we have the evidence of Quintus Curtius that in his time there were no lands in the whole of Asia better cultivated than those in Armenia. And in our days cotton, tobacco, honey and silk are among her staple produce. All kinds of corn are still grown, and the wheat of Armenia is of the best quality in existence. The harvests are sometimes so abundant that half of them, exceeding local wants, are left to rot in the fields for want of proper means of transport and sale. Armenian vines have always been famous, one might say from the remotest ages downward.

Millions of cattle are yearly conducted from the neighbouring provinces into the Armenian meadows for grazing. Armenian horses have been at all times celebrated for their fleetness, agility and firm footedness upon uneven ground, and as war horses the Khenousse horses are invaluable. Armenia also abounds in medicinal plants, and in spring her forests, meadows and mountains are enamelled with flowers of every form, hue, and perfume.

But all these natural resources are, in Turkish hands, either entirely neglected or badly worked, whereas in Armenian hands

with life and property assured, and the investment and introduction of capital and intelligent enterprise, the same resources could be made to return untold riches.

And we have it upon the best authorities that the Armenians have been from the remotest time enterprising traders. They had commercial relations with most of the countries mentioned in ancient history both by land and sea. On the south-west of Armenia they furnished Tyre and Tarsus with horses and mules ; on the south-east they supplied Nineveh and Babylon with the produce of Armenia by means of the Euphrates and the Tigris ; on the east Armenian merchants, following the courses of the Araxes and the Kour, reached the Caspian Sea, then ascended the courses of the Yaxartes and the Oxus, and penetrated into Bactria and into all the intermediate countries between it and India. On their return they brought the produce of central Asia and India for the markets of Greece and Italy by way of the Black and Mediterranean Seas. In the middle ages their commercial relations with the world became more extensive still, and Armenia concluded commercial treaties with Sicily and Aragon and the republics of Genoa and Venice. The seaport town of Ayas in the Bay of Iskenderoun, in the Mediterranean Sea, became the depôt of the produce of the East and of the West, very similar to what Constantinople and Alexandria have become in our day.

At the present time the Armenians exclusively represent the national industry of Turkey, whilst they sustain abroad their ancient commercial reputation through the wealthy merchants and great firms established in London, Manchester, Calcutta, Batavia, Tiflis and Tabriz ; and the credit and prosperity which they everywhere enjoy speak highly for their intelligence, activity and honesty.

Nor are the Armenians behind hand in the fine arts, in literature, and in science. Artists like Aïvazowoki, Manasse, or Diratzon have become well known as painters, and their works are justly appreciated. Almost all the kiosks, palaces, or mosques of note in Turkey are the work of some Ar-

menian architect like Nigoghos, Agop Bey, and Serkis Bey Ballian. The Armenians, moreover, excel in decorative painting, in embroidery, as goldsmiths, in jewellery, and in mosaic. They have introduced printing into Turkey, and Turkish drama owes its birth to Armenian composers and actors.

The works of Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Plutarch, St. Chrysostom, and a considerable number of the masterpieces of other Greek and Latin authors have been translated into classical Armenian, and the originals of some works like the Chronicles of Eusebius, portions of the Homilies of St. Chrysostom, the books of Philo the philosopher, etc., being lost to the world, have only been preserved in their Armenian version. The revival of Armenian Letters since the beginning of this century has further enriched the Armenian language, besides some original compositions, with the masterpieces of authors like Bossuet, Fénelon, Lamartine, Victor-Hugo, Le Sage. Milton, Byron, Walter Scott, etc. etc. The aptitude of the Armenians to learn languages being great, dictionaries and grammars for the principle languages of Europe have already been compiled and are extensively used among them. It is well to note here that no less a distinguished personage than Lord Byron assisted at Venice in the composition of the first Armenian-English Grammar. The Armenian nation has, moreover, been well represented as generals, governors, diplomats and statesmen.

The importance of doing something for the Armenians of unfortunate Armenia will perhaps recommend itself more strongly upon considering the physical characteristics observable in them, and which they have preserved across the lapse of so many centuries. And it is firmly to be hoped that as Humbolt considered the enormous mass of Armenian uplands as the centre of gravity of the Old World, so also the untold sufferings of a noble race resulting from five centuries of fanaticism, injustice, and barbarity, will gravitate in their favour the sympathies and protection of the great Powers of Europe, and especially of the people and government of England, inaugu-

rating for Armenia an era of progress and liberty, and so fulfilling the intense longings of the Armenian nation.

A distinguished author, A. Maury, speaking of the unity of the human race and its degeneration, ranks the Armenians among those Eastern races in whose perfect regularity of feature, noble symmetry of the face, and physical beauty, he recognises the standard of the human form in the white race. He remarks that the farther we remove from the cradle of the human race, *i.e.* the land situated at the foot of the Caucasus comprised between the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the steppes of Central Asia and Himalaya mountains, the more the physical characteristics of the standard races are altered and effaced.

If then the Armenians have not degenerated in form, but are among the living representatives of standard manhood, the Editor trusts he has also shown that they have not degenerated in mind either. The Armenians, remembering their literary and moral activity, which always accompanied the political freedom of their country, desire to reproduce with the existing aids to knowledge and civilization the halcyon days of Armenian prosperity and intellectual activity. And here it should be remembered that, in the present state of Asia, the Armenians are the only people on this side of the Hindu-Kush accessible to the ideas and culture which are the heritage of the natives of Europe. And if Western civilization is to penetrate and conquer South-Western Asia, here is a nation ready and well fitted for the task. And would not the formation of a united Christian political nation (under the auspices and guarantee of the Western Powers), extending from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and from the Caucasus to the frontier of Mesopotamia, be a great gain to Western Asia, to Western Europe, and to the world at large?

The occupation of Armenia by Russia is regarded as an element of trouble and anxiety in the Eastern Question. Even the temporary conquest of Armenia by Russia, according to military exigencies, was, and still is, in some influential quarters

regarded as a damaging blow to English influence and interests in that part of the East. But the possession of Armenia by Russia is considered to give an incalculable accession of political power to that Empire, since as masters of the Armenian fatherland the Russians would have a political propaganda arising from Armenian solidarity and the presence of the Armenians in every country. Moreover, what is considered to be of even greater importance is the acquisition by Russia of the whole of the transit and other trade of Armenia, and the opportunities this would give the Russians of advancing along the Tigris and Euphrates as far as the Indian Ocean, on one side, and the shores of the Mediterranean Sea on the other.

How far all these fears are justifiable may be easily gathered by a perusal of Lord Salisbury's despatch dated from the Foreign Office 1st April, 1878, and especially by the perusal of this remarkable passage :—

“The acquisition of the strongholds of Armenia will place the population of that province under the immediate influence of the power which held them; while the existing European trade which now passes from Trebizonde to Persia will in consequence of the sessions in Kurdistan be liable to be arrested at the pleasure of the Russian Government by the arbitrary barriers of their commercial system.”

However, so long as there is oppression under Turkish rule, so long as the Turkish administration continues to be hopelessly corrupt, and, so long as the subject races are kept in bondage, there will be room and even necessity for Russian interference.

To remove this disturbing element of misrule and anarchy on the very frontier of Turkey, England and the other Western Powers must interfere on behalf of Armenia, as they have or will interfere on behalf of the Christian provinces of European Turkey.

Lord Salisbury, in the above stated despatch, after declaring that the policy of the English Government has been to reform Turkey under the Ottoman Government, and after referring to the unfortunate resistance of the Ottoman Government, acknow-

ledges the necessity of making large changes in the Treaties, by which South-Eastern Europe has hitherto been ruled, and proceeds to say that "good government, assured peace and freedom, for populations to whom those blessings have been strange, are still the object which England desires to secure."

If this is the case, the Armenians will undoubtedly have their share of attention from England not only in the measure of their sufferings and great misery in Armenia, which still continue unrelieved, but also in the measure of the important place held by the Armenians among the Christians of Asia, the geographical position of their country and its commercial and industrial capacities.

The Armenians hopefully look forward to the assembling of a Conference or a Congress, which, while devising means for the reform of the local administration of the other parts of the Ottoman Empire, will also apply the same measures to Armenia, according to her needs. The Armenians hope that some sort of autonomy will not be refused to them, as they have come to regard the further rule of Pachas, Caimacams, Mudirs and Derebeys a perfect anachronism. Perhaps the neutralization of Armenia under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Government, and the restoration of the strongholds now in the possession of Russia, and their garrisoning with a native Christian or Turco-Christian militia, would not only conciliate all clashing interests, but free the Armenians and begin a new era for Armenia.

This little volume will bear testimony to the preparedness and fitness of the Armenians for a change, as indicated above. The Editor trusts that he has conclusively shown, that if the Bulgarians could for a moment be considered as worthy of self-government, how much more so the Armenians. However, under any circumstances, the least that can be done for Armenia would be the introduction of a system, being an improvement upon that of Lebanon, which was established under the direct supervision of the Western Powers of Europe.

Surely no European Government, not even the Turkish Government itself, will dream of replacing the Armenians under

their former administration, with all its iniquities. Surely the enlightened conscience of Europe, and especially of England, will not permit such a thing; for if a commercial people like the Armenians, with their historic claims and high character of the earliest Christian Kingdom, are not to be absorbed by a Power like Russia, they cannot either be again abandoned to Turkish oppression. It is therefore most devoutly to be hoped that the ultimate solution of the Eastern Question will not leave Armenia a province of Russia, but rather tend to make her again one of the few and most necessary Christian States or principalities in Asia.

In saying this the Editor does not merely echo the inmost aspirations which exist in the bosom of every Armenian, whose ears can hear and whose heart can understand the mournful voice of Armenia calling to her sons dwelling in every land and under every clime, in words like these:—

My well-beloved children,
Who wander in foreign lands!
Where shall I meet them? Where shall I seek them?
They minister to the wants of strangers!
Come, oh my beloved ones, come,
Visit your mother-land, visit your mother-land.
Centuries have run, yet have I not heard of you;
My heroes have died and are gone.
I weep! my blood freezes!
For I have none to cherish me.
Come, oh my beloved ones, come,
Visit your mother-land, visit your mother-land.
[*Armenag Häigouni.*]

But the Editor even, to some extent, echoes the sentiments of an accomplished English writer, who during a long life has met and known Armenians in cities so remote from each other and from Ararat, as Calcutta and Bombay, Cairo and Constantinople, Moscow and Amsterdam, and who, in the closing words of an essay on "The Armenians, their Past and Future," exclaims:—"Is this older civilization, this purer church, this

higher national life, this historic people, to be lost in the as yet barren uniformity of Russian ambition? I cannot say that a continuance of Turkish oppression were better. But in Armenia, as in Bulgaria, in Bosnia and in Greece, the best of all is a restoration of that independence for which no Christian people is so well fitted, or has such ancient claims, as the Armenians."

Let the reader ponder and judge.

THE EDITOR.

London, April, 1878.

The Armenians and the Eastern Question.

"The lover of freedom always looks to us; the oppressed everywhere turn their eyes to ask for sympathy and wish for help from us. They feel that they make this claim upon us—a free people. We not only do not deny that claim, but we freely acknowledge it."

From Mr. John Bright's Speech at Birmingham, Dec. 5, 1876.

THE Armenian nation may with good reason be considered one of the oldest historical nations of the world, since it was contemporaneous with the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Jews, and Persians. Ezekiel, Herodotus, Xenophon, have recognised it, and Assyrian inscriptions have referred to it.

Although this nation has not played a great or splendid part in ancient history, it nevertheless has had days worthy of being remembered. It shone in glory in the reign of Tigranes the Great, who, as Cicero tells us, made the republic of Rome tremble before the prowess of his arms.

Situated on the confines of the Eastern and Western worlds, Armenia became the battle-field of nations. She, however, adopting Western ideas and civilization, embraced Christianity at its very birth, and made it the national religion many years before the conversion of Constantine the Great. From the beginning of the fourth century the Armenians were the only nation in Asia which had embraced Christianity. As such, after a struggle of many years with the Sassanide Dynasty, in which the Armenians were now conquerors and now conquered, they, under the able leadership of Vahan Mamigonian, compelled the "king of kings," the Persian monarch, to sign in their favour a charter according perfect religious liberty and self-government. Two centuries later the Armenians are again found defending their religion and rights from the impetuous attacks of the Mohammedan Arabs. At times overwhelmed by their enemies, sometimes in war or rebellion and sometimes tributary, they under all circumstances held aloft the standard of Christianity. At length, in A.D. 1046, the Arme-

nian kingdom yielded to the repeated blows of Byzantium on one side and of the Seljoukide Turks on the other, and Ani its capital was betrayed into the hands of her adversaries. When, however, the Armenians found their country a prey to anarchy and in the possession of strangers, they took shelter in the Taurus mountains, and thence made incursions into Cilicia. And here, after eighty years' contest with the Greeks and the Mohammedans, an Armenian kingdom was erected, which lasted about three hundred years. So much for the past.

At the present moment Armenia, divided into three portions, is in the possession of Russia, Persia and Turkey. The Armenians in those three States are estimated at four millions, of which the majority live in the Ottoman Empire, scattered over Armenia, Asia Minor and the Eastern shores of European Turkey. After the misfortunes and persecutions of so many centuries, nothing remains to them but their religion and their language. It is due to history to say that these people not only suffered from the Mohammedans, but surrounding Christians themselves gave them but little assistance, and caused them much trouble and vexation, on account of their religious convictions, during the time they were under Moslem rule; whilst justice compels us to acknowledge that the Russians have been the most tolerant of those Christian nations.

The Armenians are a Caucasian race, as their form and features show. Their language is, by most philologists, ranked among the Indo-Germanic tongues; there are, however, so many different and contradictory opinions upon its origin, that it is impossible to state anything certain upon that head. This much, however, is plain, that their classical literature, their national history and traditions, the translation of the Bible in the early part of the fifth century and their Ecclesiastical Canons and Confessions, give them a distinctive place among the nations of Asia; and there is every ground to believe that the Armenians, through their literature and religion, exhibit more readiness and aptitude for the sciences and languages of Europe than any of the populations that surround them.

Is it to be wondered at that a nation crushed down during five centuries should now be submissive, to the point of being

slandered by many as cowardly? The patience evinced under the Ottoman yoke by a nation whom Tacitus called "turbulent," for its unwillingness to submit to the yoke of Rome, and for its eagerness to shake it off at every opportunity, may well be regarded as a proof of its wisdom. The taunt, however, of certain European authors, who represent the Armenians as contented under their oppressive chains is groundless. The Armenians, when they have been able, have always endeavoured to break their bonds. In witness of this we may cite their wars, under Tavit Suni and Mekhitar, in the early part of the last century in Northern Armenia, when priests and people were seen fighting side by side against the Mohammedans.

Though the Armenian has been an agriculturist from the time of his forefathers, yet, since he has been dispossessed of his country through the oppression of his rulers and the absence of security, he has confined himself to the pursuits of the artisan and the merchant, in all of which he has shown himself laborious, and, we may add, just, and scrupulously honest—at least, in so far as honesty is compatible with slavery; for it cannot be expected that an oppressed nation should be a paragon of virtue when its rulers use deceit and cunning in addition to their ordinary modes of oppression and violence. But, notwithstanding this, it is the expatriated and needy son of Armenia who keeps and watches over the goods and treasures of the native and European merchants of Constantinople and Smyrna. History informs us that Selim [Yavous] transported from Isphahan to Constantinople one thousand artizans and their families, in order to revive the industries of the Turkish capital. History further tells us that Shah-Abbas transferred the inhabitants of the commercial towns of Choogha to Persia, and latterly we have seen Russia for a similar purpose inviting tens of thousands of Armenians from Persia and Turkey.

Those who have known the Armenians confess that they are an improvable race, showing every aptitude for instruction and learning. Young Armenians are often seen successfully competing in European academies, side by side with Europeans.

If curiosity directed to useful objects may be regarded as one of the signs of quickness of perception, we see it in

the peasantry of Armenia. A philanthropic association was formed in Constantinople, having for its object to deliver lectures to Armenian workmen at night-schools, and it has been found that in a short space of time they not only learn to read, write and cipher, but also make progress in history, geography, and religious instruction. It is an undeniable truth, that at the present day the Armenians, without having the distinguished ancestry of the Greeks, their literature, their glory, and national independence, are next to them in scientific, literary and ethical pursuits; whilst they are far in advance of the Mohammedans, who command large financial resources. The relation of the Armenians with the ruling race has always been politic and judicious, and necessarily so.

Some European authors, travellers and journalists insist that the Armenians see with regret the decay of the Ottomans: that, however, is a mistaken opinion. The Armenian has seldom had confidence in Levantine Europeans, seldom indeed in Europeans themselves, viewing them as a suspicious element, capable of betraying him. There is no doubt that he is justified in his view, since it is well known that even a former British Ambassador handed over to the late A'ali Pasha a confidential paper written by an Armenian at his express desire. Hence the Armenians have ever conducted themselves towards their masters, the Moslems, just as the ministers and courtiers of the late Sultan Abdul-Aziz did towards him before his deposition. We can never believe that self-love and the sense of honour can ever die or be annihilated in man. We cannot believe that abasement and villainage can so far become a part of a man's nature, that he should every day and every hour see himself set at nought, the honour of his wife and children violated, his nation oppressed and his religion and interest despised, and yet in spite of all remain satisfied and indifferent;—no, that is not possible! such an idea could not even for a moment be entertained by any rational being.

Although the Armenian nation has been obliged to bow to necessity, it is quite impossible that it should sit down and bewail the fall of the Turks or regret the ruin that they have brought upon themselves. We are afraid that England is not yet fully convinced of the truth of this assertion, for even amongst those of

its politicians who are now strongly opposed to the idea of supporting Turkey, we fear there may hereafter be found some who would waver in their opinions, change their convictions, and be again parties to the squandering of English money and the shedding of English blood to uphold the Turkish rule.

Far wiser were those who in former days worked for the deliverance of Greece, and succeeded, at a cost of only four millions of money, in raising up that noble nation, which has now a future, than those who in 1854 sacrificed the lives of 400,000 Christians, squandered several hundred millions in war, and gave away two hundred millions more in loans. And wherefore? Was it merely to see Turkey, on whose behalf such sacrifices were made, reduced to its present decrepitude? We fear that many in England would make similar costly sacrifices to-day, only to reap similar barren results. Why?

Because the inhabitants of Turkey, partly Mohammedan and partly Christian, are and will ever remain in a state of jealousy and rancour, and those heterogenous elements will at the very first blow from without array themselves in irreconcilable hostility.

Because corruption and bribery have taken such deep root amongst all classes of the public functionaries, that offices, honours and decorations are to this day sold by secret auction; so that every village, town, and province in the empire becomes a prey to the cupidity and oppression of the most ignorant and worthless of men.

Were Sultan Hamid II. Peter the Great himself, we cannot believe that he could remedy this state of affairs. We do not admit supernatural agency for the Mohammedans, and Mohammedanism will soon be compelled to betake itself to Asia. Woe to the Christian who may not, by that time, have been able to liberate himself from their yoke!

Now, it may be asked, What does the Armenian look for, and what are his expectations?

The Armenian, who has experienced so many vicissitudes and catastrophes, during forty centuries, looks calmly at these events, because, finding everything gone, he thinks he has no more to lose. In one word, if after the return of the Turks to Asia their ferocity or policy should make it impossible for the

Armenians to continue to live there, they will be obliged to cross over to Russia, which is now considered the only protector of Christianity in Armenia and Asia Minor.

The Armenians of Russia, who were sunk in the deepest ignorance some forty years ago, now exhibit wonderful moral and material progress. The Armenian population in Russia, which in 1830, according to a census made in that year, numbered only 350,000, has now reached over 800,000. Agriculture and industrial arts flourish among them; schools are being built and increasing; the land which in 1840 had no newspapers, now possesses four or five in the Armenian language; the people are daily growing richer, and the numbers of pupils who pass through Russian Gymnasiums are rapidly increasing. Although the Armenians in the Caucasus are exempted from conscription, there are many who volunteer in the Russian army, and get quickly promoted to the highest ranks on account of their intelligence and their courage. There are now as many as twenty-six Generals of Armenian birth in the Russian army.

Whilst formerly the darkest ignorance prevailed at Etchmiadzin, now the present Catholicos has built a spacious school, with rich endowments, and its curriculum of studies promises well. In these parts only are to be found a few purely Armenian towns, such as Alexandropol, on the Akhourian river. In these districts the Armenians show great energy of character, which exhibits itself in their newspapers. Lately, one of them, the *Meshag*, "agriculturist," published in Tiflis, invited the Armenians to rebellion, and condemned their inaction in contemptuous terms; drawing a faithful but terrible picture of the oppression of the Armenians of Turkey, and concluded by saying, "If you cannot give your life for your liberty, come over to us." That the material condition of Russian Armenia is incomparably better than that of Turkey is an undeniable fact. While in Turkish Armenia there are no roads, in that part of Armenia which belongs to Russia, high-roads, railways, bridges and public buildings abound, and there is every security for life and property.

Should England, directed by that philanthropy which is inherent in her people, restore by her influence to the Armenians at least Cilicia, where a patriarchal chair still exists, beside the

royal throne, now in ruins—should England restore to them the plains of the Taurus, on whose summits only a few years ago the Armenians unwillingly fought and routed the troops of Aziz Pasha, and, then dreading the consequences of their valour, turned away the wrath of the conquered by their prayers and submission—should England accomplish such a feat of generosity, then she would have the satisfaction of seeing the Armenians flocking back to the land of their sires, and showing their gratitude by rapidly advancing in the path of Western civilization, so that, instead of exiling themselves to Russia, they would go hand in hand with the natives of Western Europe, and bear the torch of knowledge to the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean.

AN ARMENIAN.

LONDON, *Dec. 8th*, 1876.

ADDRESS OF ARMENIAN RESIDENTS IN LONDON TO THE EASTERN QUESTION ASSOCIATION.

THE Committee of Armenian residents in London, in view of the most pitiable and oppressed condition of their brethren and fellow-countrymen under Turkish rule, beg to memorialise the National Conference Committee on their behalf, and submit to its consideration a short statement of the wrongs which are complained of, and of the remedies which, in their humble opinion, would at once assure the future security and happiness of the Armenians.

The numbers of the Armenians in the world are variously estimated from four to five millions, of whom about three millions inhabit the Ottoman Empire, one million are under Russia, and the rest are scattered over Persia, India, Java, Europe and America.

While in Mohammedan countries, like Turkey and Persia, they enjoy little or no protection for their property, life and honour, and are subjected to various political and legal disabilities, in Christian countries and under Christian Governments the Armenians are entitled to the same rights and privileges as the dominant race, and enjoy the same security.

In India, for instance, where the Armenians have been settled since the beginning of the seventeenth century, they have the same rights and liberties as an Englishman ; they may compete with him for civil or military employments, and receive the same protection from the Crown and the law. In the Russian dominions they have rapidly increased in numbers, wealth, and influence ; and a great many of them occupy high places in the civil and military services. In Java they are among the richest merchants ; in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy many of them are great landowners and chief magistrates of their districts. But in Turkey and Persia the condition of this same people, whose industrious and orderly character will not be disputed, is rendered miserable by the cruel tyranny of their rulers, which makes both moral and material progress impossible. The concessions and ameliorations which the Armenians obtained from the Sultans of Turkey, by arduous and continuous efforts, have not produced the results which ought to have followed. Surrounded by ferocious hordes of Turkomans and Kurds, and latterly also Circassians, many of them fanatics and all of them robbers, the Armenians have lived at the mercy of those ancient enemies of their race and religion, the Turkish Government being too weak to protect its peaceable subjects, even if it cared to do so. The local authorities, both administrative and judicial, are proverbially unjust, venal, rapacious, and while they act in the name of the Sultan and his Government, they have altogether neglected the letter as well as the spirit of the laws of the Empire, which, for all practical purposes, seem to have been enacted only to be paraded before Europe. In a country priding itself for its religious toleration, Christianity has constantly been insulted, and forced conversions have been of frequent occurrence. In a land where equality, life, honour and property were promised for all in solemn charters, murders, robberies, oppressions constantly occur, with no punishment or redress, and Christian female honour is always at the mercy of Mohammedan libertines. The oppressions directly resulting from the practice of farming out the tithe-tax would of themselves form a volume full of horrors. The non-admittance of Christian evidence renders the administration of justice where Christians are concerned impossible.

In one word, whatever cruelties have transpired in European Turkey, and have drawn the horror and execration of the civilized world, have existed in Armenia under the Turkish Government. During twenty years the Armenian Patriarchs have complained and made frequent representations to the Sultan's "paternal" Government; but where impunity is consecrated by law, it was complaining of the Sublime Porte to the Sublime Porte.

Your memorialists can see but two practical means of ensuring the security and happiness of their fellow-countrymen in Turkey—the first and the most practicable, from an Armenian point of view, is SELF-GOVERNMENT in Armenia Proper and Cilicia, regions where they are congregated in large numbers. And to self-government they are fully entitled by their important position and numbers in Asia, by the ability which they have already shown in the management of their own affairs under a constitution, and, above all, by their subjection during five centuries to wrong, cruelty, and oppression.

Should, however, self-government for the Armenians be deemed at this moment inexpedient, your memorialists can see no other possible method for the amelioration of the condition of the Christians in the East, and of the regeneration of Turkey, than to exact and enforce real tangible guarantees from the Turks for the conscientious execution of the new reforms. We think that the following five cardinal reforms are indispensable for the good government of Turkey:—

I. To abolish the Sheriat (the law embracing or based on the Koran and its commentaries) as a law applicable to non-Mussulmans, and replace it by a new code based on the laws which obtain in civilized countries.

II. To admit Armenians along with other Christians to every rank of the Turkish Civil Service, and in places where Christians form the majority to appoint none but Christian officials.

III. To admit Armenians and other Christians into all the ranks of the military service, providing that they shall form separate battalions; and that, during time of peace, such battalions shall do duty in their native province in assuring public safety.

IV. With reference to the administration of Public Worship, to provide that the Armenians also should, in return for the

taxes paid by them, participate in the grants which the Government has hitherto made to Mohammedan schools, for it is not fair that the Christians should bear heavy State burdens, and, at the same time, provide for their own schools, while the Mohammedan finds all this done for him by the State.

V. To enlarge the constitutional attributes and functions of the Armenian Patriarch so as to enable him to make suggestions and propositions for the good of his people, and also to empower him to supervise the execution of the reforms; and to provide that if his application or demand for improvements or amendments be rejected by the Executive Power, he should have the right of appealing to the Guaranteeing Powers.

Such are the aspirations of the Armenians; but under every circumstance they would cling to autonomy or self-government as the quickest and the most effective way of regenerating their race and country. And are they wrong to think and feel thus? Let us consider for a moment what Mr. Gladstone, in reference to the European Provinces of Turkey, said at St. James's Hall: "Absurd ideas are entertained in many quarters that when these provinces pass from under the cruel and grinding yoke of Turkey they are to pass under somebody else's yoke. I, on the other hand, think they ought not to be under any yoke at all; but that God in His mercy has made these provinces for the people to inhabit them, and, moreover, that it is in the freely-developed liberties, and in such liberties alone, that you can find an effectual defence against foreign aggression, whether from Russia or anybody else." And we would respond to those noble sentiments in the words of the Armenian poet—

" Sweet land of Armenia,
O thou, too early forsaken Fatherland,
O thou, the ever-present home of my heart !"

as expressing the love, which now, at last, we are free to declare for our own Armenia, and our yearning to see its people delivered from foreign bondage.

On behalf of the Committee of Armenian Residents in London,

G. P. MELITUS, *President*.

46, *Holland Park, W.*, Dec. 16, 1876.

An Armenian's Letters to the "Times."

THE ARMENIANS.

(*"Times," June 9, 1874.*)

SIR,—Those who are acquainted with the geography and history of the East know that Armenia was the original seat of a people who belonged to the family of the most civilized nations of antiquity. The Armenians are this people, and they belong to the Indo-European race.

The Armenians have been a warlike nation, and although long oppression has exercised a withering influence on their genius and strength of character, they still preserve some remnant of their pristine mental and physical vigour. They were the first people who embraced Christianity, and a tradition in the Armenian Church positively asserts that Apgar (Abgarus), who reigned over the Armenians during the Saviour's lifetime, sent Him an embassy, and subsequently received the Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus, one of the seventy, and was thus the first king who even became a convert to Christianity. Any one, upon reading the history of the Armenians, would wonder that they exist at all. He will hardly understand how amid the sanguinary persecutions of the Sassanide kings, and the terrible tyranny of the Arabian Caliphs, not to mention the unparalleled sufferings to which the Armenians were subjected during four centuries of Turkish mis-rule, they should have preserved "intact" both their nationality and religion. It was their faithful attachment to the Gospel and their National Church which wrought this miracle.

Since the loss of their political independence as a nation, in Armenia Major in the 12th century, and in Armenia Minor in the 14th, they colonized wherever any security could be found for their life and property. The majority of the people, however, adhered to the soil of their forefathers, and their principal occupation in the present day is agriculture and tending flocks, while the greater part of those who quitted their father-

land exercise different trades or employ themselves in commerce, banking forming no small feature in the range of their transactions. The rapid strides they are making in every direction of social improvement would seem to show that the spirit of their fathers has not quite deserted them, and promises well as regards their future place in Eastern history. They remember their former civilization, the fame of their academies, gymnasiums, and public institutions, which attracted scholars and military cadets from the remotest parts of Asia ; but this recollection makes them more alive to their present backwardness, as compared with Western civilization. The great problem for them now is to devise some means by which they might profit by the blunders of others, while they are directing their attention to the reform of their schools, and to the improvement of their internal, civil, and religious government. It may be worth mentioning here that the first community which has ventured to give a public concert, where nothing but classical music was played or sung, has been the Armenian community. The greatest schism, which rent the nation asunder, and formed two distinct communities, occurred in 1832, at a time when the national life and feeling was at its lowest ebb. The blame of schism falls equally on the shoulders of both parties, as both parties did nothing to prevent it, and almost every thing to hasten it. It is estimated that at the present moment there are 4,000,000 Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, of which 200,000 are Roman Catholics. The latter are divided into two sections, the Hassounists and the anti-Hassounists. There is also another community, which is styled the Protestant, and which numbers from 16,000 to 20,000 souls. These religious and civil divisions have not produced a beneficial effect ; they have rather served to retard the general progress of Armenians. They feel this, and as a consequence the anti-Hassounist party, which has Monseigneur Kupelian at its head as Patriarch, has some leanings towards the national party ; and intercommunion with these two is more probable than between the Hassounists and those who have not forsaken the Church of Armenia. The latter are, as is evident, preponderant ; to them, therefore, we must turn our attention as constituting the national body. The Armenians have not been able to effect any serious reform in their internal affairs without going through a severe struggle for liberty. The clergy and some of the governing

classes formed one party, and the rest the other. The fiercest encounters arose at Constantinople, where there are 200,000 Armenians, who represent the emotions and feelings of the provincials. At length the popular party obtained what it wanted. A Constitution was framed, and after receiving the Imperial sanction it became law, enabling the Armenians to administer all their civil and religious affairs by means of a properly constituted National Assembly, composed of 180 members, who are elected by every male Armenian who has reached his 25th year. This Assembly appoints from itself two Committees—the one for ecclesiastical and the other for civil affairs. These two bodies advise the Patriarch, or act in concert with him, for the management of the national business. Four Patriarchs have, within the last fourteen years, either been deposed or had to resign, on account, as they alleged, of the impracticability of the Constitution. It is now announced from Constantinople that the Archbishop, Monseigneur Nerses, who has been for some months past Vicar of the Patriarch, has been elected Patriarch. The political influence of the Patriarch of Constantinople is greater than that of any other in the Ottoman Empire, not excepting the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

The Armenians are, properly speaking, the only community in the East which possesses a Constitution with a deliberative Assembly, and knowing, as they do, how much it has cost them to obtain it, they feel extremely jealous of it. They have always had a strong attachment to their national rights and privileges. A rumour was lately set abroad that the Russian Government had decided to have all the schools in Russian Armenia inspected by a Government inspector. This news travelled with the rapidity of electricity, and the Armenian journals are filled with protestations against this forcible interference with their privileges, without having previously, as they allege, received the sanction of the Catholicos at Etchmiadzin. What Armenians dread most at the hands of Russia is the proscription of their national vernacular, for the example of Poland greatly augments their alarm on this head. The least blow dealt to the national privileges and immunities in Turkey is felt by the Armenians of Russia, and *vice versâ*. The want of concerted action is, however, much felt among them. A number of causes would seem to conspire against such unions; so that while numbers of their

compatriots are dying from starvation in the famine-stricken Province of Angora, the wealthy and influential Armenians are calmly looking on with folded arms, for want of an extensive national co-operative organization. The Government, of whom much is expected, on very just grounds, are in the meantime making the most lamentable blunders with regard to the shipping and transport of corn victuals. However, the English residents in Constantinople are setting a noble example, by taking the initiative in the philanthropic work of relieving the poor sufferers. As soon, therefore, as circumstances shall permit the Armenians to form those much needed national co-operative societies, they will not, it is presumed, allow themselves to be outstripped in anything that affects the interests and well-being of their fellow countrymen.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

AN ARMENIAN.

THE "ARMENO-CATHOLICS."

(To the Editor of *The Times*.)

SIR,—To prevent any misunderstanding of the telegrams which have of late successively followed each other from Constantinople on the subject of the persecution directed by the Turkish Government against the "Armeno Catholics," will you permit me to give a few particulars through *The Times* respecting the body which in Turkey forms the legally recognised community of "Armeno Catholics."

As I stated in a former letter (June 9, 1874), there are in the Ottoman Empire about 200,000 Armenians belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. These are divided into two parties, which not long ago were known as the Hassounist and the anti-Hassounist. The official recognition of these parties by those titles has been discontinued since the Sublime Porte, finding that the name Hassoun had become, as it were, a bone of endless contention, occasioning to the Government not a little trouble, declared that no document containing that name would be taken notice of. As your readers may be aware, Mgr. Hassoun was educated at the College of the Propaganda in Rome, and

gradually rose to the highest dignities in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the "Armeno Catholics." Notwithstanding an election which was declared illegal at the time he received the full support of the Pope, and was actually nominated by him Patriarch and supreme head of the Catholics in the East. He was at the height of his prosperity when the Empress of the French visited Constantinople in 1869, and went one Sunday in full state to the Patriarchal Church in Pera to perform her devotions, and received the benediction at his hands. Those of the "Armeno-Catholics" who were jealous of the liberties and privileges of their Church and community, were indignant at this breach of their rights, which they justly or unjustly attributed to the intrigues of the Patriarch himself, but did not think it expedient at the time to give full expression to their grievances. It was not long, however, before the true motives of Mgr. Hassoun's nomination became evident, as also the reason of his being held in such exceptional favour at the Vatican, for no sooner did he feel himself the reins of power in his hands than he systematically began to Latinize the Armeno-Catholic Church. It may as well be mentioned here that although the Catholic Armenians recognise the supremacy of the Pope, and admit certain dogmas peculiar to the Roman Catholics, they still adhere to the liturgy, rites, and ceremonies of the Armenian Church. This, together with the famous *Reversurus* Bull which the ex-Patriarch did all in his power to promote and to induce his flock to accept, set the smouldering embers of party passions in a full blaze; and as the Sublime Porte was opposed to the spirit of the Bull from a political point of view it used its right of veto, and prevented the Bull from taking effect.

It also requested Mgr. Hassoun to return to the Government his credentials as Patriarch, which right the Turkish Government has possessed from time immemorial. Then comes a Legate invested with full powers to reconcile the contending parties; conference followed conference, but the unconditional submission to plenipotentiary required from the anti-Hassounists prevented a seasonable accommodation. The proverbial *non-possumus* style in which the Pope's envoy went into the business had not a little share in obtaining such an unsatisfactory result. In the meantime the intrigues of Mgr. Hassoun, which he

was carrying on with a high hand, made his presence in the Ottoman capital obnoxious, and thereupon the Government first requested and then ordered him to quit, not only Constantinople, but the Ottoman territories as well. He at once repaired to the Vatican, where a most cordial and affectionate reception awaited him. His opponents were at the same time excommunicated. But the Sublime Porte took a different view of the case ; it contested the Pope's power of interfering with the civil concerns of its subjects, and, favouring the anti-Hassounists, permitted them to set up a Patriarch, and confirmed their choice, which fell on Mgr. Rupelian. This party had till then been recognised as the Oriental Catholics. But Jesuits and other Ultramontanes persist in calling them Rupelianists. The minority of Hassounists, who resist every order of the Government to surrender the churches and other national possessions to the supervision of the recognised Armeno-Catholic authorities, are the poor persecuted " Armeno-Catholics," concerning whom the telegraphic wires are constantly kept at work. These " Catholics " refuse to recognise any other Patriarch but Mgr. Hassoun, though, legally speaking, from the day the Turkish Government divested him of that office he can no longer be a Patriarch.

It is therefore the Hassounists who are bringing on themselves the vengeance of an un-Christian Government, to whom the civil side of the question is everything and the spiritual almost nothing. It is the Hassounist Bishop who, is alleged to have been dragged down the stairs, though he was dressed in Pontifical robes ; it is these " Catholics " who, at Broussa, seem to have been beaten and wounded by the Turkish soldiery, and whose holy vessels were desecrated by unholy hands. This is almost incredible, as in modern times the Ottoman Government is not known to have been guilty of such proceedings. Prince Bismarck and the German Embassy at Constantinople are made responsible by the Roman Catholics for these outrages, and not the Turkish Government in reality. Be that as it may, the incident of the Armenian cemetery in Pera, which the Armenians retained in spite of the Government, plainly proves that the Turks are not so impolitic as they may be sometimes supposed. The facts of the case were as follows :—The Armenians were in possession of a plot of ground which is, perhaps,

unequalled in the world for its exceptional position. The municipality of Pera attempted, at first single-handed and afterwards through the Government, to force the Armenians to exchange this plot of ground (which, although it was formerly used as a cemetery, had long been disused for that purpose) for another near Ferikeui. The Armenians objected most strongly to the exchange, and petitioned the Sultan according to certain time-honoured privileges, stating that they had been in the enjoyment of this national patrimony for four centuries; that therein were buried some of the greatest dignitaries of their Church; that the manes of their martyrs were interred there; that the Armenians had ever been among the most loyal of the Sultan's subjects; and therefore they desired to be left in the full enjoyment of the ground which had thus become so dear to them. They succeeded, and an eminent personage, Archbishop Khorene de Nar Bey, led a procession in the cemetery, and publicly gave thanks to God on behalf of the nation that the Sultan had favourably received their petition, and offered up prayers for the preservation of his life. Should not all this convince all right-minded persons that justice can be obtained in Turkey, though it may often be attended with considerable difficulties? It is, after all, a wonder that the Turks can manage so many hostile dependencies, races, communities, creeds, and Churches. Those who are acquainted with the East will easily admit that that is not a very easy feat. The most unfortunate side of the question is, perhaps, that these never-ending dissensions and quarrels are extremely prejudicial to the true interests of Christianity in the East; and one principal reason why Mussulmans despise the "infidels," *i. e.* Christians, may be traced to these dissensions.

AN ARMENIAN.

London, Oct. 18, 1874.

ARMENIA.

(*"Times," Sept. 3, 1875.*)

SIR,—As you did me the honour of inserting in your influential paper two letters on the Armenians, respectively dated the 9th of

June, 1874, and October 18, 1874, will you allow me to make a few remarks about the excitement prevailing in Armenia on account of the excessive zeal displayed by the tax collectors in the execution of their duties? In the Provinces of Turkey, when a man cannot pay his taxes he is imprisoned, bastinadoed, yoked like cattle, and made to stand before a scorching sun, or bearded and held before the flames of a hot fire, in order to make him pay. I have seen eye-witnesses of these horrors in the Province of Amasia, and, what is curious, Mussulmans were subjected to them.

If, then, the Turks themselves receive such treatment at the hands of their rulers, it stands to reason that their Christian fellow-subjects are not likely to be spared similar, or even worse, indignities, as they have the most taxes to pay. The Armenians of Turkey have made great strides in national development; they are proud of their history, and have ever hoped that the age of barbarism had gone by in Turkey; but when they experience the contrary from their conquerors they are not slow to resent it. Soon after the massacre of the Christians in Damascus in 1860 they knew how to maintain their right against great odds—I refer to the affair of Zeitoun, when the Armenian mountaineers made a bold stand for liberty. Mr. V. Langlois, who is well known as a traveller in the East, and as translator of the Armenian historians by order of the late Emperor Napoleon, has an exhaustive paper about these brave mountaineers in the “*Revue des Deux Mondes*,” in one of the numbers for the second quarter of the year 1863. There it will be seen what a handful of Armenians have done by defeating an army of Regulars sent against them as rebels, though rebels they were not, but merely men who claimed the right of self-government, which they alleged that they had never lost. Of late years complaints have frequently been made to the Armenian Patriarchate about the misdeeds of lawless Kurds and Turcomans. And although representations were made to its successive Grand Viziers, Ottoman inertness left the grievances of the poor rayah taxpayers unredressed. Now, if the Government made its rule intolerable in the Herzegovina, and brought about the revolt which is occupying so much attention in Europe, its rule could not be more tolerable in Armenia. The Armenians dwelling on Russian

territory do not remain indifferent to what happens in Armenia, nor do the Russians spare their sympathies. And there are several Armenians in high command in the Russian Army who would not find it impossible to cross the frontier and profit by popular excitement, and cause considerable trouble to the Ottoman Government. The Armenians, however, know that their best interests as a nation lie in the integrity of Turkey. They do not like Russian policy, and the example of Poland is sufficient to cure them of any predilections which they may entertain for the masters of the North. But should the system now prevailing in Turkey remain unchanged, the Armenians will soon have to choose between the less of two evils. Hence it is of the utmost importance that, alike in the interests of Christians and Moham-medans, the Government of Turkey be carried on according to modern ideas, and bid an everlasting farewell to false principles of administration.

AN ARMENIAN.

(*"Times,"* Sept. 21, 1876.)

SIR,—The accounts of Turkish barbarities inflicted on the Armenians in Asiatic Turkey compel me to ask you to grant me a small space in your valuable paper, to state a few facts, and make an appeal to the proper quarters, in the very words of a little but courageous Armenian journal of Constantinople.

The regular and irregular soldiers whom the Turkish Government called out at Yosgat, for the purpose of sending them to join the Turkish army on the Servian frontiers, have preluded their heroic actions on the battlefield by perpetrating all sorts of rascalities on the native Christians of the province of Yosgat, and especially in the villages in the immediate neighbourhood of that important town. The citizens complain that their shops have been besieged by the soldiery, who compelled them to sell goods at its own prices. They also complain that the local Government being appealed to would not interfere, and that in consequence of its inaction they have not dared to go out of their homes, and have had to keep their shops closed ; and that

their children cannot go to school from fear of being pelted by the Turkish children. The citizens express their extreme surprise that such should be the behaviour of their Mohammedan neighbours, inasmuch as they have hitherto lived together on pretty good terms. Sari-hamza is an Armenian village, at a short distance from Yosgat. Three hundred Redifs lately took it into their heads to quarter themselves there. On reaching the village they used these words :—" *Olan Kiaffirler tchapuk, bizé baklava ve ghairikum hazerlainiz, yoksa sizi kesseriz.*" " O, ye Kiaffirs, now make haste and get ready for us some *baklava* (a Turkish sweetmeat of the most expensive kind), or we will massacre you all." (I wonder whether this behaviour would be considered admirable by the great traveller, Dr. Vambéry?) As the villagers demurred to this summons, the Redifs set about rummaging the cottages, and brought out whatever provisions they could lay hold of in the shape of butter, honey, &c., and compelled the women to get their *menu* ready. The report says that they did all they could to make the priest of the village procure for them two of the prettiest women in the village, but could not prevail. Nevertheless, as the women seem to have been perfectly defenceless, most of them were outraged. It is said that the progress of these men through the country struck terror into all the inhabitants of the Province of Yosgat.

From Sivri-hissar it is reported that a fire broke out there in the Armenian quarter of the town; the Caimacam would do nothing to stop the progress of the flames. The fire raged during eighteen hours. The Caimacam rejoiced that the Giaours were reduced to beggary, but was at last prevailed on by his subordinate to leave the Konak, as the fire had gained the Turkish quarter.

The Armenian journal, in view of the attitude of the Mussulmans, says :—

" These oppressions, instead of decreasing, are daily growing into larger dimensions. It has become a crime for us to be Christians ; we give to the Government the greater portion of the fruit of our labours, we never give them the least trouble, and yet our clergy, our women, our children, and ourselves are being dishonoured daily. Neither the captivity of the Israelites in Egypt, nor the sufferings borne by the

Bulgarians, nor the past sufferings of the negroes in America could for a moment be compared to the afflictions and miseries which are at this day borne by the Armenians of Anatolia.

"The European Powers are now considering how to insure the welfare of the people of European Turkey. But if they wish to perform a philanthropic and Christian duty, it is not enough for them to improve the condition of the Christians in European Turkey alone; in Asiatic Turkey there are millions of Armenians who are at this day suffering merely because they bear the name of Christ."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

London, Sept. 20, 1876.

AN ARMENIAN.

("Times," Sept. 30, 1876.)

SIR,—A week ago you were good enough to publish my appeal to Europe on behalf of the Christians in Asiatic Turkey, and particularly on behalf of the Armenians. May I again beg of you a similar favour?

As your correspondent writing from Therapia has stated, a large body of Armenians presented a petition to the Grand Vizier praying that the grievances of the Christians in Asiatic Turkey might be speedily redressed and proper provision made for their non-recurrence. When, two days after, a deputation waited on the Grand Vizier, at the Sublime Porte, to receive his reply, he said :—"If 20 or 30 years ago there were 100 degrees of oppression, there are now but 20 degrees left, which would be effectually removed by the peremptory orders of the Sultan." It is reported that the deputation retired not particularly pleased at the *couleur de rose* fashion in which the aged Sadrazam regarded the whole affair; and if there had been the same liberty of speech which characterizes similar deputations in this country many a dissentient voice would have been raised. The gentlemen who waited on the Chief Officer of State immediately repaired to the Armenian Church in Galata to press on the Patriarch the necessity of his taking the necessary measures for the protection of his flock. Two days afterwards the Patriarch, accompanied

by all the members of the Ecclesiastical Council, waited on the Grand Vizier at his yali and made the following demands:—

1. The settlement of questions respecting landed property which cause considerable irregularities.

2. The abolition of Derebeys.

3. The appointment of a Special Commission through the Patriarchate for the investigation of the Christian grievances in Asiatic Turkey.

4. The settlement of the questions relating to the property of churches and monasteries.

5. That 21 be the legal age for individuals intending to alter their religion.

6. That a Special Commission appointed by the Patriarchate be allowed to sit at the Public Worship Department of the Sublime Porte.

7. That Christian evidence be accepted.

The above tells its own tale, and I only wish to touch upon two or three points. According to the latest intelligence the Armenian Patriarch has resigned his office. Taking the above as the context of that resolution, it is not difficult to say why he resigned. As regards the statement of the Grand Vizier that oppression is dying out in the Ottoman Empire, I need go no further than merely point to the Consular Reports published in the English Blue-books, which prove that his assertion is entirely at variance with facts. If oppression has decreased 80 per cent., if pure justice is administered to all parties, if there is protection for life and property, how is it that whole tracts of arable land have turned and are turning into deserts? How are we to explain the wholesale ruin and destruction of villages in the various parts of the Empire?

As regards the crimes of the Redifs and others, it was telegraphed from Constantinople on the evening of the 21st inst. that the Porte had sent a Special Commissioner to Yosgat. What guarantee have the Armenians that he is not a second Edib Effendi, and why has the third demand of the Armenian Patriarch been rejected?

Sir, the sufferings of the Christians in Asiatic Turkey can in no way interfere with the amelioration of the condition of and the extension of self-government to Bulgaria, Bosnia, &c. It is

enough that a refuge be created somewhere from a tyranny that refuses to look at facts bravely and honestly, and says that the Christians of the Ottoman Empire are better off now than they were some 30 years ago, entirely forgetting the storm which has been raised in distant Christian lands by the black deeds of the servants of the Porte. What is there to prevent Europe from creating in Asia also a refuge, similar to Bulgaria, by making the Porte accord to the Armenians the right of self-government in Armenia, where they are massed in large numbers? With the right of self-government the Armenians could, along with the Slavs, change the whole aspect of the land and make an Eden of what is now a desert. I am not making an empty assertion here, and could point to history to bear me out. Given self-government to Christians where they are congregated in large numbers, and given a controlling committee in Constantinople appointed by the Great Powers of Europe, would not the whole aspect of the Ottoman Empire change as by magic, and would not peace, prosperity, and civilization follow where there is strife, tyranny, and retrogradation? Sir, there are those who doubt the self-governing capabilities of the Christians in Turkey; could they govern themselves worse than the Turks are governing them? People talk of Turkish reforms, but the Turks are incapable of reform, and I point to their history from 1838 downwards in proof of it.

I am, Sir, faithfully yours,

AN ARMENIAN.

THE ARMENIANS AND THE TURKS.

(*"Times,"* Nov. 13, 1876.)

"An Armenian" makes the following appeal to us against outrages practised on his countrymen, of which our Correspondent in Constantinople wrote us an account some time ago:—

"I must again resort to you to appeal to Europe, through the powerful means of *The Times*, and ask for mercy and justice at her hands for my fellow-countrymen of Turkey, as to expect fair play out of the free will of the Sublime Porte is becoming a folly, if not a crime.

“Your readers have already been informed by *The Times* that three Armenian newspapers were suppressed at Constantinople and their editors arrested for publishing news which was alleged by the Government to be false. It was subsequently telegraphed that the editors were sent to Trebizond, to be present at the investigations of the alleged atrocities in that Vilayet.

“The papers suppressed were the *Haïrenick* (Fatherland), the *Ararat*, and the *Médjmouai Havadis*, or collection of news. The *Haïrenick* published in its issue of the 17th of October a piece of news which spoke of atrocities committed by the agents of the Porte in the Vilayet of Trebizond. The *Médjmoua*, not crediting the intelligence, refrained from reproducing it. But soon its doubts as to its authenticity were dispelled upon receiving a letter addressed to the editor from a well-known person at Trebizond, fully corroborating the report contained in the *Haïrenick*. The *Médjmoua* forthwith published the account *in extenso* as communicated from Trebizond, and regretted the necessity which compelled it to do so in order to draw the attention of the Central Government. The facts related were these:—

“Towards the end of the month of August a Yuzbashi was appointed for the collection of taxes in the villages round about Trebizond. This officer, seemingly a warm partisan of certain proceedings in Tatar Bazardjick, after severely whipping and, with the scabbard of his sword, beating a large number of the villagers, had them bound to stakes planted in a row, and whipped each of them several times in turn. He next ordered buckets of water to be poured upon them, and keeping them without food or drink, would not liberate them until the required sum was brought to him by some other individual. Some of the inhabitants hastened to Trebizond to inform the Governor of these barbarous proceedings. The Yuzbashi was at once superseded by a Binbashi, who, immediately upon his arrival ordered the number of stakes to be increased by ten, and surpassed his predecessor in ‘severity,’ who, he considered, dealt too leniently with the peasants. Der Serkis, the parson of Chan (the village where some of these things occurred) became guarantee for one of the sufferers, and obtained for him half an hour’s respite; but the liberated man having absented himself two minutes beyond the time stipulated for, the priest himself was bound to the vacant stake and subjected to the operation of the whip and water.

“The *Médjmoua*, in publishing the above on the 23rd of October, says:—

“ ‘As we hear these things it is impossible for us still to doubt that our country is not floating on an ocean of justice and happiness. But what is injustice, if this is justice and well-being? Or else is it because by justice it is meant barbarity, and we have been left in ignorance of the true sense of the term? O God! in what times do we now live! Ancient Egypt became civilized and put herself on the same level as Europe. Can it be possible that the *régime* of the Pharaohs has chosen Asiatic Turkey for its home! O ye miserable inhabitants of Anatolia! You must suffer every evil—work like serfs, continually struggle against robbers, and, under the pretexts of imposts, you must be trodden under foot, be beaten and bound to stakes. You may protest, beg, implore, it is of no avail. You must put into the hands of greedy Yuzbashis and Binbashis the produce of the ruinous sale of your pallets, your only ox, and still continue praying for the Sultan. Are not these things perfect specimens of justice, of humanity, and of reform? But what could be said against that particular form of justice administered in the provinces of Turkey, which consists in the spoliation of the taxpayer until he is stripped of all—against that justice which allows beating, impaling, the drying up of the blood and soul—in short, by preventing the poor from breathing to make him perish of utter misery? However, we have the firm belief that the Sublime Porte, when informed of these evils suffered by its subjects, and which are so intolerable, will immediately put a stop to them by energetic measures, and save the poor from the utter rottenness with which they are threatened by injustice and slavery.’ ”

“The next day, the 24th of October, the editor, Mr. Markarian, was summoned at a specified hour to the *Bureau de Presse* at the Porte. He answered the summons, but was half an hour late, and found the *Bureau* in an uproar. He was at once ushered into the presence of Blacque Bey, the Director, who in angry tones wanted to know what he meant by publishing news contrary to the wishes of the Imperial Government, at a time, especially, when the four corners of the Empire were in conflagration. Mr. Markarian wished to know which part of his publications was contrary to the desires of the Government. ‘What is the meaning,’ replied the Director, ‘of the false reports which you publish of the oppression of the Armenians, reports which are entirely without foundation, but which, thanks to your lies, have begun to take the form of a question before Europe.’ The editor of the *Médjmoua* said, ‘Your Excellency already knows what the meaning of Asiatic oppressions, or oppressions practised upon the Armenians is. And as regards their authenticity, I have

only to refer you to the official reports hitherto addressed to our National Administration and published by it, concerning which I had to explain to you last time you summoned me here. But we have yet to be told that publishing reports of the oppressions of the Armenians in Asia, and drawing the attention of the Government to it, is contrary to the will of the Imperial Government.' 'Those things do not now exist,' replied the Director of the *Bureau de Presse*, 'and your object is no other than to oppose the Imperial Government, to libel it before Europe, and to revolutionize the Armenians. The Sublime Porte regards you as revolutionists and enemies. He who says this is a greater man than I; it is the Grand Vizier himself. We will presently wait on his Highness, when you had better answer and convince him. I have ten times advised you not to publish news contrary to the wishes of the Government, or of a nature to inflame the Armenian nation; but you would never listen to me. We never can correct you by shutting up your papers—you always find some means or other to obtain permission, and again reappear; but we must imprison and banish you.' Just then the proprietor and editor of the *Ararat* was ushered in. To these also Blacque Bey repeated the above, and then took them to the Grand Vizier, each of them holding in his hand a copy of the *Médjmoua* of the previous day, containing the article on the Trebizond affair, with a copy of the same in Turkish characters.

"The Grand Vizier, after perusing the article in question, turned to the Editor of the *Médjmoua* and asked him whence he had derived his report of the Trebizond oppressions. It was published a few days before in the *Haïrenick*, and he had reproduced it. Then the Sadrazam addressed himself to the Editor of the *Ararat*, Mr. Aïvadian, and inquired for the source of his report. He had seen it in the *Haïrenick*, and afterwards, upon receiving a private letter from the vilayet where the oppressions had occurred, published his account. 'Do such letters come to you often, and do you credit them?' further inquired his Highness. It is the custom of newspapers, said Mr. Aïvadian, to have correspondents; for how could an editor publish anything more or less than what is actually communicated to his paper? '*Sizi guidi yézidler, sizi!*' 'O, ye Infidels ye,' growled the Sadrazam, and although the representative of the *Ararat* reminded him that they were poor and obscure persons, possessing no weight or importance, he ordered them to be taken to the Ministry of Police and have their letters from Trebizond examined, as also any other papers they might be carrying about them.

The two gentlemen were immediately taken hold of by zaptiehs and conducted to the adjoining room, where they proceeded to pinion them. On this Mr. Aivadian observed that there was no necessity for it, as he and his companion were both willing to go with them. Upon this his custodians, alleging that he was producing an uproar, began to slap him, saying, '*Olan Giaour, daha seuiliormoussoun.*' 'O Giaour, do you still speak?' The blows were so severe that one of Mr. Aivadian's glasses was broken, which put him in great danger of losing one of his eyes. He, therefore, shouted for help, upon which he was immediately thrown down and belaboured with blows. He continued crying for help even more lustily. To stop him effectually one fellow squeezed his throat, another his stomach, and another thrust a handkerchief into his mouth. On the road, as Mr. Aivadian's strength was beginning to give way, and he could walk no further, they again pommelled him as a means of making him go forward and gagged him to prevent his cries being heard. At the Ministry of Police the two Editors were subjected to a close investigation and their persons closely searched, but nothing compromising could be discovered. The fact was intimated to the Sadrazam and further instructions were asked respecting the prisoners. At this juncture the Editor of the *Haïrenick* was brought in, accompanied by one cavass; the other two were escorted by fifteen each, including the aides-de-camp of the Grand Vizier.

"But this gentleman was not stripped like the two former, but was merely asked to indicate the source from which he had received his account of the Trebizond affair, whereupon he produced from his pocket a letter which had been addressed to him on the subject from that vilayet. Soon there arrived an order from the Porte for the liberation of the Editors, which was done on bail. The *Levant Herald* of the 25th of October stated that the officer of the police station, hearing that they were foreign subjects, released them at once. The fact, however, is far otherwise; they are rayahs, all three of them, and it is added that it was the complaints made to Midhat Pasha from some very influential quarter that procured their release.

"Now, Sir, in relating the above I respectively beg to draw to it the attention and compassion of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby, but especially that of the Premier, who is said to be anxious to be well-informed of everything that has relation to the East and the Eastern Question; and, inasmuch as negotiations are about to begin between the Great Powers regarding the future treatment and wel-

fare of the Christians of Turkey, I have thought it not amiss to lay before them in *The Times*, through your generosity, what public opinion says in Turkey as regards the attitude of the Turks and their Government towards the non-Mussulmans. And this I have endeavoured to do upon evidence derived from various sources, all corroborating each other, of the circumstances under which the above suppressions, arrests, and outrages were effected. I therefore respectfully implore the Powers of Europe to consider for a moment the very distressing and helpless condition of the Armenians in Asia, as well as that of the other Christians, their fellow-sufferers from the same injustice, tyranny, and maladministration now long prevalent in the Ottoman Empire."

"Coming to Mr. Aivadian and his companions in suffering—all three honourable and respectable gentlemen—I am sure that the silent but universal gratitude and sympathy of their countrymen will accompany them, whether it be on the bed of sickness, for their past trials and sufferings, or for those yet in store for them from the Government. To that Government as to the ministers of mercy and justice they appealed on behalf of their brethren of the Provinces, but it has proved before the world that it is no better than its merciless nominees and agents of Anatolia—would it be out of place to add here, of Bulgaria."

We have now received a long Memorial upon the grievances of the Armenians, drawn up by M. Seth Apcar, and which, we are informed, has been presented to the Chancelleries of the Great Powers. After describing the conquest of the country by the Mohammedans, the Memorial proceeds to complain of five centuries of fanaticism, injustice, and barbarity, which ought now to give place to a reign of progress and liberty. The concessions and ameliorations in their condition which the Armenians had obtained by arduous and continued efforts have not produced the results which ought to have followed. Surrounded by fanatical hordes of Kurds and Turks, the Armenians have lived at the mercy, as it were, of those fierce enemies of their race and creed; their religion has been insulted, their liberties have been restricted, their honour and their property have alike been assailed. Forced conversions have been a constant practice, while their women and children have been carried off and ill treated. At the present moment, when the attention of Europe is attracted to-

wards the East, the Armenians entreat that their fate may not be overlooked by the Powers when considering the position of the Christians of European Turkey. The Armenians can feel and can have no confidence in the promises of reform on the part of the Ottoman Government. Whatever its wishes and intentions might be, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to carry them into effect and to transform in one day an administrative system already firmly established. Moreover, among all the Ottoman statesmen at present in power there are some who would never consent to recognise an equality of all subjects of the Empire, so convinced are they of the moral and intellectual superiority of the Christians over the Mohammedan race. The four millions of Armenians now under Turkish rule place their reliance for the amelioration of their condition upon the goodwill and sense of justice of the Great Powers. The measures which are proposed in respect to a portion of the suffering Christians under Turkish sway, those of the European Provinces, will, if not applied to all, only aggravate the distressed condition of those in Asia, and especially of the Armenians, who form the great mass, and probably that which deserves the most consideration.

THE ARMENIANS.

(*"Times," January 24, 1877.*)

SIR,—The telegraph has at length told us the real truth as to the extent of the participation of the Armenians at the Great Council at Constantinople, convened to decide whether the Sublime Porte should yield to the powers of Europe or not. Some injustice was done to the Armenians by the telegraphic despatch not particularizing at first which of the Armenian Patriarchs spoke with such pathetic eloquence as, according to the Constantinople correspondent of a London journal, to necessitate the suspension for a time of the proceedings of the Council, for allaying the generous and heroic feelings which the impassioned words of the Armenian orator in favour of everything Turkish had evoked. As everybody knows, the Armenians in

Turkey are divided into four religious sections—namely, Hassounite, anti-Hassounite, Armenian, and Protestant. The first two sections together number about 200,000, the third about 3,000,000 and the fourth 20,000. Agop Effendi, the Protestant *vekil*, alone seems to have had the courage of his opinions by going against the feeling of the Council, and advising the Porte to yield to Europe. The Hassounites were not represented; but Mgr. Kupelian, the rival of Mgr. Hassoun, was there, and it was he that displayed his remarkable oratorical gifts in defence of Turkish sovereignty, integrity, dignity, and all the rest of it. The Armenian and Greek Patriarchs were not there, nor the Exarch of the Bulgarians, prelates than whom none had a better right to declare authoritatively the real sentiments of the Christians about European intervention. However, although these authorities were “too indisposed” to be present, they, for form’s sake, sent their vicars, who, it may be well assumed, could not give much trouble, and would good-naturedly acquiesce in everything that the promoters of the Grand Council had originally resolved upon. For to judge from a Turcophile point of view, were not the abject rayahs, by virtue of the wonder-working Constitution, at once metamorphosed into actual Osmanlis, and should not their gratitude for such a boon induce them to bow before every decision of the Turkish majority, who but yesterday were their lords, and say “Evvét Effendim” (Yes, sir)? But really were not the rayahs in the presence of those who wielded immense power, made and unmade Sultans, gave entire districts to fire and sword, interpreted the oracles of truth, mercy, and justice? This apparent support by the Christians of the East of the policy of the Turkish Government need not deceive any one; and as far as the Armenians are concerned, I will mention a few facts which may serve to put the matter at rest.

In 1872 a general report was drawn up at Constantinople by order of the National Assembly of the Armenians, who belong to the Church of Armenia, and who number, as I stated above, some 3,000,000. This report fully established that there had been no improvement in the condition of the Armenians since 1856. Mahomed Pasha, the then Grand Vizier, was zealous in the cause of reforms throughout the Empire. Considering the

moment opportune, the Armenian Assembly memorialized him on the subject of provincial oppressions, taking the said report for basis. But neither this, nor the other steps of a similar kind, produced any tangible results; and a second report on provincial oppressions was drawn up in September, 1876. These were the two documents to which allusion was made in the memoir lately submitted to the Cabinets of Europe, by Mr. Apcar. A perusal of these two reports will show that whatever the Turkish oligarchy may do or say about good government, a Commission of Control, not only over the administration of what are called "the Christian Provinces," but also over the administrations of Erzeroum, Van, Erzangan, &c., is indispensable for securing a satisfactory state of things in Turkey. The position of the Christians in the East is most critical, and the Patriarchal Vicars at the Grand Council had a very difficult task to perform. Had they advised the Turks to yield to the demands of the Powers their loyalty would have been suspected. Moreover they had to bear in mind that the Turks are well armed, the telegraphs are under their control, Mohammedan fanaticism is at its height, and Osmanlis are not bad adepts in massacres. As for the supposed new order of things under a Constitution, it must have its existence in a few brains only, for the Governor of Severez has but lately made an assault on the representative of the Protestant community of his town, and a Christian was murdered in broad daylight on the very same day, and in the very same town. While the Constitution was concocting, Mr. Aivadian was wrongfully arrested and beaten, from the effects of which he died only three weeks ago, leaving a wife and four children, for whom the Turkish Government has made no provision. Again, it is when the liberty of the Press has been promulgated as a principle under the Constitution, that the two *confrères* of Mr. Aivadian are further persecuted for insulting the Government of Turkey; not for publishing false news. If nothing else, the splendid funeral which the Armenians gave to Mr. Aivadian ought to prove to the Porte that its doings, though silently borne by the Armenians, are not for all that mistaken by them for being always those of a justice-loving Government—a Government for whose independence they should be willing to lay down their life and property. And if the Ar-

menians had not themselves approved and desired European intervention in Turkey, they would neither have made their grievances known to Europe, nor appealed to her sense of justice on behalf of the oppressed Christians of Asiatic Turkey.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

AN ARMENIAN.

THE ARMENIANS.

(*"Times," January 6, 1877*).

SIR,—A bald statement of sufferings in Van, one district of Armenia, drawn from Armenian papers of the 18th of November (O.S.), and the 1st of December (O.S.), of this year, gives a specimen of the daily life of the Christian subjects of the Porte in Asia. They "die daily." But who and what are these sufferers? and what claim have they to our consideration? Not all of the same race, they are alike in their sad condition. They are known severally as Nestorians, Jacobites and Armenians, and are victims in common of the Kurds, Circassians, Derebeys (valley lords), and moreover of those whose office it is to protect them.

The most important among these races are the Armenians. "It pains us much," said one of them, "to see that while the Bulgarians are moving the pity of Europe, we are forgotten. The sufferings of our people are as great, and we are always quiet and peaceable. Do we deserve to be forgotten, especially by England?"

The Armenians (though decimated by oppression) are more numerous than some European nations. They are reckoned 3,000,000 in the Ottoman Empire; 1,100,000 in Russia; 450,000 in Persia; some are settled in India. Everywhere they are distinguished by their quiet habits, intelligence, and industry. The porters at Constantinople, who come chiefly from that Province of Van, are as strong in honesty as in sinews, and so firm is their fidelity that the poorest are the chosen and trusted guards of the Galata banks. The reports alluded to above show the Armenians to be in their own country a pastoral and agricul-

tural people like the Bulgarians ; but abroad they pursue many lines of business, as bankers, traders, and mechanics. The traveller finds traces of their commercial houses in Western Europe as well as in the Danubian Provinces, and at Vienna, Venice, and Paris may judge of their zeal in education, and their attainments in science, literature, and art. The fire of genius is alight among them. There must have been a kindred glow within the walls of the island Monastery of St. Lazarus to kindle anew the spirit of Byron and to keep alive a correspondence (discovered but lately) between the fitful poet and the calm monk, whose language he loved to acquire :—

“I’ve taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes
“Have made me not a stranger.”

Are the Bulgarians to be indulged with “autonomy?” The Armenians have already been the first to establish a National Armenian Council. Is the Bulgarian to receive into his unskilled hands the machinery of a representative system? The Armenien will have shown him how to work it.

How much does humanity, how much does Christianity owe to this race? The Armenians are the only Christian nation in Asia; the Armenian nation were the first to become Christian; missionaries of Christianity in early times, they have been its martyrs in all—from the fifth century, when they rose as one man to repel the Zoroastrians, who tried to force fire-worship into the place of the worship of the true God; through ages of Moslem oppression since, they have passed on an inheritance of resistance and suffering for Christ’s sake. It is this nation which seems to be specially marked out to be in time to come the pioneers of civilization and religion. Scattered, like the children of Israel, in other lands, they are the ready medium of intercourse among all. Without losing hold of their fatherland in Asia, they find home and station in all the four continents. Moreover, they have some blood in common with the Chosen People, if history points truly to captives of Nebuchadnezzar as the root of their Bagratid dynasty. One of their ancient kings may have followed the Star of Bethlehem; and who knows but that from their stock may rise those Kings of the East for whose coming the way seems to be now preparing. But lately

one of their bishops visited the King of Burmah and met on common ground of habit and tradition. Another of their Bishops risked his life at the Court of Abyssinia a few years ago to plead for British captives there. (The writer, not knowing that there were two Bishops who risked their lives at the Court of Abyssinia, mentions only one; the fact is that in 1870 Mr. S. Apcar was at Jerusalem and met the *two* Bishops who had been to Abyssinia, and, having returned safely, were residing at the Armenian Monastery of St. James.—ED.) Armenia has always furnished confidential counsellors to Oriental Princes. Armenians facilitated the first settlement of the British in India. To England Armenia looks—to the English nation, the English Church; they have always practiced the tolerance and desire to enjoy the liberty dear to both. They might plead their services—they do plead their sufferings. The Greek points through a tearful memory to Sulium, Cydoniæ, Moschopolis, Scio, Crete, and truly says that precious blood is no less shed because it is now dry. The Armenian points to his home in the valley, and to the blood flowing still, and day by day. Alike Greek, Armenian, Syrian ask that when equality is impartially proclaimed, it may not be partially bestowed, and that those may not be thrust into the background and clean forgotten out of mind who are marked by the distinction of not rashly stepping into the toils or rushing into desperate revolt. All with one voice call on England to listen to their cry. It is not within the scope of the Conference now sitting here to remedy their condition directly and immediately, but let England hear and know their complaint, and, on occasion, act. Let them tell their griefs to willing ears. But who shall dare to tell them? One of them, Matthew Aïvadian, editor of the *Ararat*, published misdeeds done near Trebizond. He was beaten by order of the late Grand Vizier without trial, for telling the truth, and died of his treatment on our Christmas Day.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

C. G. CURTIS,
Chaplain of the Memorial Church, Pera.

Constantinople, Dec. 29.

CHRISTIAN OFFICIALS IN TURKEY.

To the Editor of "The Hour."

SIR,—Observing in the *Daily Telegraph* of December 1st a letter written from Stamboul, by "An Occasional Correspondent," reflecting strongly against the Christian officials of the Sublime Porte, and especially against those who belong to the Armenian nation, I beg to make a few remarks by way of rectifying some of the erroneous statements of the writer.

Armenians of all classes suffer as much from Turkish misrule as any of the other Rajahs, and their complaints on this head have been much more frequent than those of any nationality in the Empire. And in Armenia the utter incapacity and weakness of the Government has intensified the feeling of suffering, inasmuch as the Kurds have now for a long time carried on their depredations with comparative impunity. But whenever these complaints were laid before the Armenian National Assembly, which meets in Constantinople, the very Armenian officials of the Porte, most of whom are members of the Assembly, and whom the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* calls "grasping" "luxurious," "unscrupulous," "wolves in sheep's clothing" were among the first to enter a protest against the inactivity of the Ottoman Government in redressing the grievances of their down-trodden brethren in the provinces. The speeches that were made on those occasions were all conspicuous for their vehemence and warmth, and among the principal speakers were those very officials who are represented by the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* as having been the "corruptors" of Turkey. One of these so-called corruptors, Serkis Effendi, who held at the time an important post under the Government, said that the Rajahs, being incapacitated by law to serve in the Imperial Army, paid the military tax instead: they have, therefore, a right to hold the authorities responsible for the safety of life, honour, and property. But if the Government were unable to provide that security, then let them abolish the military tax, and permit Christians to bear arms and provide for the security of the districts where they live. If, Sir, such words could be used by

the Christians' servants of the Porte in what I may call the Armenian Parliament, to rouse the Ottoman Government to a sense of their duty, how could these gentlemen, who themselves suffer from the effects of bad government in the person of their countrymen in the provinces, as belonging to the same race and tongue, have been instrumental to the introduction of mischievous principles into the Ottoman Administration? How is it possible that the members of the thrifty, industrious, and hard-working community of Armenians, a people who are allowed on all hands to be the chief support of the Empire, should have become "extravagant," "reckless," and profuse, and should have introduced such habits into the very "palaces of their rulers?"

Perhaps the correspondent had under his mind's eye one of those Armenian bankers or merchants, and others, who, for the sake of filthy lucre, would not only betray their own country and people, but even do worse things. But such men are to be found everywhere and among all nations, and when they become known they are shunned and hated. But a well-informed man like him (the "Occasional Correspondent") ought not to have forgotten the very small proportion of the Christian officials to the Mohammedans, the proportion being three in a thousand.

Now, how could this infinitesimal number of Christian officials—even supposing them to be all Armenians, which they are not, but whose influence excites so much jealousy—bring about such a stupendous change as to corrupt the whole Administration throughout the Ottoman Empire is a mystery, a mystery which none but the worthy Stamboul correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, who seems so well up in Turkish affairs, could solve or find out the secret.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

AN ARMENIAN FROM CONSTANTINOPLE.

Dec. 23, 1875.

DISORDERS IN ARMENIA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

Pera, Jan. 23, 1877.

WE have now letters detailing some particulars respecting the conflagration at Van. Those which are printed in semi-official organs allow that the catastrophe "was far more destructive than was at first supposed." More than 500 of the best shops of the Bazaar have been consumed by the flames; a good part of the town is in ashes; business is prostrate, and "thousands who a few days ago had a competence are now reduced to extreme poverty." These letters avow, though with visible reluctance, that "the whole affair was the work of incendiaries." They also add that the apparent object was plunder. "Thousands assembled, ostensibly to stay the progress of the flames, but in reality to pillage, and help on the conflagration." And they go on to say, "Some were engaged in this stupendous crime who, as soldiers of His Imperial Majesty, should have been the protectors of the lives and property of his loyal subjects."

This is a sufficiently important admission, coming as it does from writers who have undertaken to clear the Government of the Porte of any participation in the horrors of Bulgaria. But it is not yet the whole truth, nor am I sure that the very worst will be known, even if I subjoin a narrative which has been evidently written with less regard to the interests either of the men in power or of those opposed to them:—

"On the 30th of November, old style, towards half-past eleven o'clock, Turkish time,—*i. e.* half an hour before sunset,—three soldiers entered the shop of Dlodian Siméon to buy candles. On leaving they dropped something in the shop, apparently a *coundak* (a bundle of combustible matter used by malefactors in Turkey, where incendiarism is only too common), and their deed was unperceived by the shopkeeper, who was then closing the shop, and who left immediately after fastening the shutters. Candles also had been bought by soldiers at other shops throughout the day. The fire broke out at half-past twelve—*i. e.* one hour after the soldier's visit to Siméon's shop—and raged till past midnight. In six hours more than 600 shops on the ground-

floor were a prey to the flames. Strange to say, it was only towards half-past two that the Armenians within the town—the Bazaar is at some distance outside the walls—were apprised of the occurrence, and hastened to save their merchandise. They found the Bazaar invaded by soldiers, by gendarmes, by Turks coming from a spot called the Vineyards (Aïkesdan), from Ardamed, and other localities both far and near—all busy sacking and pillaging, and spreading the conflagration by throwing burning brands. Vainly did the townsmen endeavour to save their wares and the money in their tills. They were pitilessly beaten back and compelled to return empty-handed. The Bishop Eremia and the Priest Boghos strove to stop the pillage, but they were in their turn terribly beaten by the soldiers, and it was not without extreme difficulty that they were able to escape with their lives. Scarcely one in a thousand succeeded in rescuing a package or two of their merchandise, or a small sum of their money.

“The inhabitants of the Vineyards, startled, some at day-break, some at sun-rise, ran to the spot and beheld the rich Bazaar of Van reduced to a heap of reeking ruins. They found nothing but half-consumed tatters of thick linen, scraps of paper, and other merchandise of lesser value, all objects of price having disappeared. Only the shops of the Turks, Charan Bey, Ghalib Bey, and others in the central part of the Bazaar had escaped total destruction, and a few jewellers’ shops have had the same good fortune; but only Ghalib Bey’s stores and some of the Turkish provision shops, were not pillaged. The clarions sounded throughout the night. The soldiers thronged into the Bazaar in the utmost disorder. They plundered, they drove back by hard blows the owners of the shops. The wretched Armenian community would now with difficulty be able to find the means of subsistence for one day. They protest that they have been robbed of their gold and their wares by the soldiers; that search should be made among them, and search is being made—we shall see with what result.”

“A shoemaker, by name Barghamian Kevork, upon attempting to defend his shop, was beaten so cruelly by the soldiers that he died of the blows on the morrow. Who knows how many still may die of the consequences of their wounds!

“The desolation of the people is heartrending. The wealthiest men in Van are now beggars; at least, fain would they beg did they only know of whom, but we are all brought to the same mendicant condition. The schools are shut up, for neither the churches nor the citizens can any longer supply the means to keep them open. And, as if all that were not enough, our very lives are threatened. ‘Giaours,’ they say, ‘be satisfied with what you have. Be thankful that your lives are spared.’”

We are further told—

“Unless help is sent, the town of Van will soon be a desert, so far as its Armenian inhabitants are concerned, for many, despairing for themselves and their families, are preparing to migrate, and those who cannot follow will have to starve.”

Other letters assure us that:—

“Shopkeepers who were able to reach their shops and started away with their money and valuables were intercepted and robbed of their burdens. One man thus intercepted was so injured that he afterwards died; one other body has also been recovered from among the *débris*. The losses of goods and money are estimated at £T200,000, and if we add the buildings, account-books, etc., the whole loss would doubtless exceed £T500,000—a crushing blow for a town of 30,000 to 35,000 inhabitants.”

Such is the condition of the Christian people in Armenia. Here is a clear case of frightful disorder caused by the men intrusted with the maintenance of order, and in a province where not only no disturbance, but even no symptoms of disaffection had hitherto been heard of. It is thus that alarming tidings came from Bulgaria in the months of September and October, 1875, before the slightest attempt at insurrection had been made. In Bulgaria, besides the soldiers and policemen, and the Mussulmans of high rank and authority, the Circassians were the people's scourge. In Armenia the ravagers and destroyers are Koords, a nomad race hovering on the frontier of the province, making frequent incursions into its interior, pouncing upon towns and villages, and spreading havoc and terror among the industrious and laborious rural population. The impression among the Christians in Armenia and elsewhere is that the Turks, jealous of the superior thrift and intelligence of the subject people and

of the well-being arising from it, and contrasting it with the rapid decline and disappearance of their own race, wilfully resort to murder and robbery of the Christians, with a view to "keep them under" to prevent their too rapid spread and development. But whatever the real cause may be, the effect is undeniable. Enmity of race, tyranny and anarchy are decimating the Christian population, or at least stunting it in its youth. At the very moment I am writing, the following letter, dated December 4th, from Dindil, between Sivas and Cæsarea, addressed to the vicar of Yusgat, and by him to the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople, is laid before me:—

"On the 18th of November, old style, about eleven Koords summoned the notables of the Christian village of Dindil, and claimed 1500 piastres. One of the notables was bidden to pay £T5, and he paid that sum, though not without great difficulty. The inhabitants of the village laid their complaint with the Mayors of the neighbouring Mussulman village of Sighir, but no attention was paid to them. On another occasion thirty Turks, inhabiting the said Turkish village of Sighir, set up by Ahmed Effendi, Karamoussa Oglou, and Seid Mehemed, these latter both sons of a notable of Sighir, attacked four Christian villagers of Dindil (whose names are given), and two of whom were so severely wounded as to be still in danger of their lives. These same Mussulman evil-doers, in a more numerous band, again attacked Dindil, and so ill-treated the inhabitants that fright took possession of them and the people of neighbouring Christian villages, and hundreds of families took refuge in glens and mountains, where they are subsisting as they can without shelter. Many of these families have been urgently recalled by the authorities, and by these an inquiry has been set on foot and a Commission appointed, but hitherto without any result, unless we consider as such the arrest of many innocent Christians of the village of Dindil, who, with characteristic Turkish justice, have been taken to prison, chained hand and foot. Agricultural work is at an end till the Government provides better security for life and property."

What is here stated in a letter signed by sixteen honest Christian villagers, is only too much in keeping with a multitude of other documents of the same nature, some of which have been laid

before your readers in former letters. The first element of all society, security for life and property, is wanting in Turkey, in a great measure owing to the impotence and improvidence, but partly, also, to the ill-will and race enmity of the Musulman rulers. Armenians, Bulgarians and other Christians are merely a defenceless flock, exposed to the devouring rage of such wolves as the Koords, Circassians and other lawless races, and the Government, whose duty and right it is to keep off the destroyers, not unfrequently abets and countenances them in their ravages, and shares their prey with them.

POLITICAL ASSIMILATION.

To the Editor of the "Times."

SIR,—As stated in a recent number of the *Times*, the Armenians of the Caucasus, with the approbation and support of the Grand Duke Michael, the Viceroy of the country, have presented a petition to the Emperor of Russia, praying him to exercise his powerful influence on behalf of their oppressed and suffering brethren in adjoining Turkish Armenia. In view of this fact, will you kindly give a place in the *Times* to the following remarks.

The union of the Trans-Caucasus with Russia, which happened about seventy years ago, caused many Armenians to settle in Tiflis and become Russian subjects. The conquest of Paskievitch, made during the war which ended in 1828, added a considerable territory to the Russian empire, so that Ararat, the sacred mountain of Armenia, forms at one point the boundary between Russia, Persia, and Turkey. The monastery of Etchmiadgin, the seat of the Armenian Catholics, is on the Russian side of Ararat. Shortly after the annexation of the Trans-Caucasus to Russia, a large number of Armenians emigrated from their ancient seats and settled down on Russian territory. Among these emigrants were men who afterwards became famous as leaders of armies and skilful administrators. The two most prominent in these respects were Prince Bebutoff

and Prince Argutensky-Dolgoruki. The former was an especial favourite of Prince Paskievitch, the conqueror of Erivan, and was afterwards Commander-in-Chief on the Caucasus. Argutinski-Dolgoruki was a stern and brave soldier, who passed through many a severe campaign, and has left a name which will not soon be forgotten on the Caucasus.

Prince Melikoff, the present Chief of the Province of Daghestan, the former stronghold of Schamyl, is an Armenian. Loris Melikoff, commanding the Russian forces now assembled at Alexandropol, near the frontiers of Asiatic Turkey, is also an Armenian General, who governed for many years the Province of Terek, and was commander of the forces disposed there, with his head-quarters at Vladikavkay, a fortress guarding the northern entrance of that celebrated pass which cuts the great mountain range in two, and known in ancient times as the Gates of the Caucasus. Some years ago I was guest of the General while on a journey from Tiflis to St. Petersburg. At dinner the General made the flowing remarks, which struck me much at the time. He said :—

“The company present will give you a good idea of the force of Russia in assimilating foreign elements. I am an Armenian, but I think no one could detect it by my speech ; my wife is a Georgian, and speaks the purest Russian ; at my left hand is the Chief of the district, who is as much Russian as if his ancestors had been in the country 500 years, though he is of recent German origin ; next to him sits my Adjutant, Captain Allison, whose grandfather was an Englishman ; he himself speaks no English ; and so on to the end there is not a man present of Russian origin, but it is a thoroughly Russian company. Then, as to the place which I occupy, Vladikavkay, as you know, means in the Russian language ‘ Commanding the Caucasus ’—in other words, the key of the Caucasus. Now, the Russian Government puts this key into my hands with the same confidence as if every drop of blood in my veins were Russian. Neither England in India nor France in Algiers dreams of giving a principal command to a native, while on the Caucasus the highest positions are held by natives. At one of the most critical periods of our history the Commander-in-Chief was a Georgian, Prince Tsitsiani, who fully

justified the choice of the Government, for he was one of the ablest men we have had at the head of affairs."

So much for Loris Melikoff. In case of war he will lead the Russian forces into the heart of Turkish Armenia, where a suffering population will receive him with open arms. The recent atrocities at Van seem to bear a family resemblance to those of Bulgaria, and also demand punishment for their authors. Mr. Artsruni, editor of the *Mshak*, an Armenian paper published at Tiflis, assured me last summer that the population of Turkish Armenia would rise up against their oppressors should they receive the least encouragement or support. Besides those who have attained marked distinction in the service of the state, there are many Armenians who have amassed large fortunes. A great part of the commerce and industry of the Trans-Caucasus is in their hands. They own extensive tracts of land, and are continually acquiring more. All these results have been attained because they find complete security of life and property under the laws of Russia. These are two conditions of success which they never could have found under Turkish rule, and no one is more fully aware of this than the Armenians themselves, who, being a shrewd, active, and practical people, know to a nicety where their interests lie, and what are the causes of prosperity and well-being. It is not surprising, then, that the Armenians, remembering their former condition, and contrasting it with the present, are devoted and loyal subjects of the Emperor of Russia. Being a people with an ancient history, a very considerable literature, a strong feeling of attachment to their own race and religion, they have the greatest solicitude for the remnant of their people beyond the border, and very naturally have petitioned on behalf of their brethren the only sovereign in Europe who does or can take a personal interest in their welfare. To describe the condition of the inhabitants of Turkish Armenia would we but to repeat, with certain additions and variations, the dismal story of Turkish imbecility, cruelty, and misrule in the European part of the Empire. The Armenians of the Caucasus, being perfectly acquainted with the state of things, and knowing that it is precisely the same as that in which they themselves had been forced to live, till Russia, by the annexation of the Trans-

Caucasus, afforded them the means of escaping from the Mohammedan oppression, which had afflicted and weighed down upon them for centuries, have come forward, as was their duty, to plead for men who are now suffering as they have suffered.

Most truly yours,

JEREMIAH CURTIN.

London, Jan. 1st, 1877.

TURKISH ANARCHY.

(From the "Times" Special Correspondent.)

Pera, March 6, 1877.

ATROCITIES in Turkey are still the order of the day. (Here the correspondent gives long extracts from a letter sent from Salonica, detailing the anarchy there, and then makes the following observations) :—

"Such is still—such will for a long time yet continue—the state of things in this constitutional country. Those gentlemen who think that the Turk should have his chance, that time should be given to him to ripen his reforming schemes, should bear in mind that the foregoing narrative, for the fairness and honesty of which I vouch, merely describes a state of things which is normal in Turkey, although by the letter of a hundred hatts and firmans, by all the laws binding the Government to the people, and by all the treaties making it responsible to foreign states, such abuses as the farming out of tithes and taxes, the violation of person and domicile on the part of the police, ought to have ceased long since. Anything like security for the person and property of the men or for the honour of the women, anything like even an attempt at fair administration of justice, cannot and never will be obtained here without the application of foreign coercion. Diplomats think that coercion would be a remedy worse than the evil. Best so; and let nothing more be said about Turkey; let us give up the silly pretence of waiting to see what may come of "granting her a

respite, of allowing her one more chance." After seven-times-seven chances the Turk will still be the Turk, and "the Giaour the Giaour"; the latter an inferior animal, to be rough-ridden, robbed, outraged, trodden under foot, cut to pieces by the former.

Were I in need of evidence of the incurable disorder to which the country is a prey, I should only have to look at the letters from the provinces printed in papers best affected to the interests of the Ottoman Government, and never contradicted by the authorities, who are only too conscious of their correctness." Etc., etc.

We learn from the *Levant Herald* that a great fire broke out at Ada Bazar, near Ismid. There was a loss of £T40,000 by which it seems some wild Circassians managed to profit, if indeed they were not the originators of the calamity, as was the case with the soldiers at Van in Armenia, and would have been the case in Erzeroum had it not been for the foresight and timely interference of the Commander-in-Chief.

"THE TIMES."—OCT. 1, 1877.

(*From the Correspondent with the Turkish Army.*)

Erzeroum, Sept. 9.

* * * * *

I have had several opportunities during my recent visit to Erzeroum of conversing with many of the leading Armenian families in the place on the subject of war, of Turkish rule, and of their ideas as to the effect of any change of Government upon them. The conversations have not improved my ideas of the Armenian. A more selfish, narrow-minded, mean, cringing race I fancy does not exist, the Protestant Armenian being of a lower type than those who have clung to their old religion; but both are despicable to a degree. Far preferable is the agricultural Turk, who bears uncomplainingly the heavy burdens imposed on him in the way of taxation, sends out all the males of his family between the ages of sixteen and sixty to fight the

common foe—the hated Muscov—intrusts the gathering of his harvest to the women of his family, and sees ruin, absolute ruin, staring him in the face through the wickedness and corruption of his pashas, whose ears never hear the maledictions hurled at them by their poorer, suffering fellow-countrymen.

As far as I have been able to learn the bulk of the Armenians would welcome any change. They have been oppressed for centuries, treated with contumely, unable to obtain a hearing in the law courts, compelled to pay, in addition to the Government taxes (which fall far heavier on the Christian than on the Mohammedan), innumerable unjust levies forced on them by officials against whom there is no redress; and they consequently see that there is no hope for them to obtain an equal footing with Mussulmans in this country. When the Russians in June were close on Erzeroum, and the fall of the city was looked on as inevitable, the Armenian might have been seen moving briskly about, as if he longed to welcome the invader, the prowess of whose deeds, the valour of whose men, and the invincibility of whose armies had for years been old wives' tales in every Armenian household. The check at Zewin and the subsequent retirement of both Russian armies caused a revulsion of feeling, and the evil deeds of the Muscov began to be recounted, his tyrannical form of government, his religious intolerance, dim visions of the knout and of Siberia flitted through the Armenian brain; and the question began to be asked whether it would not be better to bear the ills we have than fly to others we know not of.

The idea of freeing themselves and forming "Switzerland in Asia Minor," has never entered their heads; and although since I saw the scheme mooted in your columns I have propounded it to many well-educated, intelligent Armenian gentlemen, they have one and all denounced it as impracticable and absurd. For centuries they have remained a subject race, and so they will remain to the end of the chapter. Those few who have travelled in Europe, and become politicians of a minor character, and merchant princes, may have formed wild visions of a kingdom in the mountains of Anatolia; but the idea is scouted with scorn by residents of the country itself. They long for change, that is all; they long to escape from the hateful

thralldom of the Turk ; they long to be taken in hand by some beneficent, just Government—to them it is immaterial, though they would prefer America, England, or Germany to Russia—and allowed to live peaceably and quietly, tilling their own land, selling their own merchandise, living their own uneventful unambitious lives, free from all dread of their wives being dishonoured by their Kurdish neighbours, their children carried off into captivity worse than death, and themselves unable to move a finger in self-defence and powerless to call for justice.

In fact, so strong has this longing for change become, that many of the wealthier families, both here and in the neighbourhood, seeing the chances of Russian occupation diminish, have determined on emigrating, and more than one already, having realized all its property, has gone to America. That the Armenians are content with Turkish rule is false. Their hatred and dread of it are evident from the fact that upwards of 5000 families have fled from the Van and Alashgera district and taken refuge in Russia. I am aware that Ismail Pasha states that these people were forcibly taken away by Terguskassoff in his retreat from Zaidkan. Common sense repels such an idea. We know the Russian General had an army consisting of eight battalions, 24 guns, and seven regiments of cavalry, and we know that he was threatened in rear by Faik Pasha with 12,000 and in front by Ismail Pasha with 15,000 men. The despatches of the latter General state that he so closely pursued Terguskassoff and harassed his retreat so continually, that the advance of his men was impeded owing to the infection arising from Russian corpses. This we know how far to believe, for Mr. Williams, an English gentleman present at the so-called pursuit, states that on the 28th all touch of the Russians was lost, and Ismail Pasha himself reported to the Commander-in-Chief that he did not know which road they had taken. Still, any military man will know that it is a moral impossibility for an army of less than 5000 to convey over a hundred miles of ground some 15,000 souls, with all their worldly belongings, in face of an army following them in rear, with one double their strength harassing them in flank. No ; I have conversed with many fugitives from Alashgera, who came into Erzeroum for safety from the Kurds ; and these people—Mohammedans for the

most part—inform me that immediately after the battle of Khal-dass the Armenian exodus was made, and that Terguskassoff never broke camp at Zaidkan until he was assured of the arrival of the fugitives in safety across the Russian border. In the Van district the Muscovites never appeared. There, in consequence of the barbarities committed by the Kurds, the Christians spontaneously fled, not, however, until they had suffered terrible losses, and more than 380 young girls and boys had been carried off into the most hopeless slavery one can imagine.

(From the Right Hon. W. E. Forster's Speech of Oct. 9, 1876.)

Then again we must consider not merely the Christians in European Turkey, we must consider the Christians also in Asiatic Turkey, and such a settlement of the matter as would be simply a forced occupation by a foreign Government of these Christian Provinces of European Turkey, besides very much enraging the Turks, would expose the Armenians and other peoples in Asia Minor to great danger. Now, again, I must beg you for one moment to listen to one other memorial. The Armenians, as you will see, some two or three millions of whom are still under Turkish rule, have suffered great hardship, and have been in great alarm of late. I saw several of their leading men before I left Constantinople, and this morning I received this telegram. There is a Committee of Armenian gentlemen sitting in London, and they are very anxious that I should read this appeal by them to the English people by means of this meeting. A number of Armenian gentlemen resident in London, having formed themselves into a Committee, beg to lay the intolerable condition of their fellow-countrymen in Turkey, through your powerful means, before the people of England, on the occasion of the meeting to be held to-day at Bradford, and appeal as follows:—That, considering that during the last five centuries, and specially of late years, the Armenians have suffered quite as severely as their fellow-subjects, the Bulgarians, from Turkish misrule; considering that, in spite of their law-abiding and peaceful disposition, they are daily subject to every kind of

spoliation, and that the Christians of Asia Minor, and especially of Armenia, are excluded from even the least elementary civil rights ; considering that the wholesale ravages, robberies, and outrages of Turcomans and Circassians have brought and are daily bringing dishonour and misery to thousands of Christian families of Asiatic Turkey ; and that, in spite of the innumerable complaints made by the Armenian Patriarch to the Porte, these have hitherto remained without any result—the above Committee sincerely hopes that when the British Government, in concert with the Great Powers of Europe, shall devise some measure for the welfare of the Christians in European Turkey, the condition of some three millions of Christian Armenians in the Ottoman Empire will also be considered, and guarantee made for their future peace and security in the same measure as for their fellow-Christians in European Turkey.”

THE ARMENIANS.

Therapia, Sept. 29, 1876.

The case of the Armenians has been laid by Monsignor Nerses, the Patriarch of Constantinople, before the Government of the Porte, and before the representatives of all the European Powers. The sufferings inflicted on this intelligent, industrious, inoffensive people by the race which has ruled over them for five centuries are not less severe than those which have befallen their Bosnian and Bulgarian fellow subjects ; but they are less known to the world, partly because their country lies far away out of the traveller's path, but especially because the Armenian, long trodden down and almost as much scattered as the Jew, looks upon suffering as “the badge of all his tribe,” has little faith in the efficiency of unarmed complaints, and is too peaceful and law-abiding to seek redress in violence and civil strife. Of late, however, either because the yoke is unusually galling or because the insurrection and war in the European Provinces have awakened the world's attention to the shortcomings of the Ottoman Government, the Armenians are lifting up their voice, in the hope that in any settlement of this dis-

tracted Empire the Powers may come to the knowledge of their true condition and almost of their existence, may not cause them to be overlooked and unrelieved. The Armenians, once a nation of 8,000,000, now dwindled down to uncertain but far less insignificant proportions, still constitute a mass of 2,500,000, according to that computation, in their original seat of Great Armenia, the region round Mount Ararat—a territory, like Poland, partitioned among several States, the Empires of Turkey and Russia and the Kingdom of Persia. But large detachments of these people are settled here and there in various parts of the world, especially in the Ottoman Provinces, about 500,000 in Asia Minor, Syria, etc., and perhaps 250,000 in Constantinople. The main grievance of the Christians of the Ottoman Empire, including the Armenians, is that while they, by their intelligence, by their thrifty and laborious habits, contribute almost exclusively to the well-being, and indeed to the very existence of the Empire, they are rough-riden and trodden by a dominant race—an ignorant, arrogant, bigoted, unimprovable race, which neither can nor will do any manner of work, and is determined to live at the expense of the better educated and industrious part of the population, the Government abetting and encouraging this system of a general *corvée* of the subject races by appointing a crowd of State functionaries, sanctioning by their example the wholesale robberies of the stronger party, and hushing up, by sheer terror, the complaints of the weaker. Monsignor Nerses says:—"The Porte directs her Valis, Mutessariffs, and other rulers to keep the Christians in a state of absolute dependence and of marked inferiority to the Mussulman element, so as to place the two races in perpetual antagonism, and, by dooming both to misery and want, stifle among them those aspirations to freedom which can only spring from the development of material well-being."

To suffer the Christians to attend unmolested to the peaceful pursuits of their avocations, allowing the Mussulmans at the same time to wallow in their idleness, would be to insure with time the preponderance of the Christian element. Hence the oppression of the thriving race by the thriftless one becomes a necessity of the Ottoman policy; hence the monopoly of the power and the bonds of the Mussulmans, the Christians never

being admitted to public offices, even in subordinate capacity, unless recommended by an abject servility to the Government, which makes them more Turkish than the very Turks.

Monsignor Nerses reckons that 5,000,000 of Government officials, with their families and dependents, mostly Turks, live and some of them grow rich at the cost of the industrious classes. Deprive this parasitical multitude of their dishonest resources and they must need starve, "the dominant becoming the mendicant class" — hence, the Monsignor insists, the spoliation of the Christian in favour of the Mussulman, the non-admission of Christian evidence in civil and criminal courts, in spite of all Hatts to the contrary, the exclusion of the Christians from the ranks of the army, and all that could tend to the assimilation and fraternization of the races. These general evils, common to the Christian population of all the Provinces of the Empire, are aggravated in the case of Armenia by the settlement on the borders of that territory of those savage hordes of Kurds, Turcomans, and, more lately, Circassians, who overrun the country, unimpeded, if not invited, by the Government authorities, who use them as instruments to terrorize the Christians and share the spoil with the plunderers. "These nomadic brigands," says the Patriarch, "infest almost daily the Christian villages, lay hands on the harvest, carry off the cattle, kill, burn, and destroy whenever they meet with resistance." The robbers put forth claims to the original possession of the soil, which in many instances the authorities do not scruple to admit, to the manifest injury of the indigenous population, thereby insuring impunity for all outrages. The Derebeys, descendants of a kind of feudal lords who squatted upon the natives at the conquest, a few of whom still remain, use the Kurds and others as collectors of black mail, backed in their pretensions by the authorities, who profit by their exactions, and in frequent cases murder the Armenian bishops and archbishops who dare to have recourse to Constantinople for redress. The convents and monasteries, numerous throughout the Levant, richly endowed with lands by their flocks, are the especial object of the vexations and extortions of the wandering robber hordes, especially because when, owing to violence or to any other cause they became extinct, the individual and

common property of the monks devolves not on the donors or their families, or their community, but on the State—the authority being interested in hastening a death which calls it to the inheritance. Whenever any dispute about these rights of succession arises, armed men in the pay of the Governor or of the Derebey, invade the monastery, plunder and kill, and carry off as booty the sacred vases, wantonly destroying the books and manuscripts and the objects of art, of which these monastic communities are in many cases receptacles. The fear inspired by the burning torch of the Kurds is so great, that in many of the oldest and richest convents orders have been given to bury those precious relics of a better age under ground, as the only means of preserving them from barbaric destruction, “a fact which speaks volumes as to the terrorism to which the unfortunate region is a prey.” The violation of women and the abduction of girls, to whom the alternative is offered between death and conversion to Islamism, are matters of such frequent occurrence that the Patriarch petitions the Porte to enact that at least the conversion should not be admitted as valid till the neophyte has attained her 21st year.

I shall not dwell on the variety of flagrant abuses enumerated by the Patriarch in his report, concerning specially the non-admission of Christian evidence in the courts of law, by which impunity is insured for the most startling crimes, wherever Mussulman witnesses are not forthcoming, the non-punishment and even promotion of high functionaries by whom justice has been notoriously denied, and against whom proofs of venality and corruption have been laid before the Porte; and, finally, the utter disregard of all complaints and grievances of the oppressed people—as many as 200 *takrirs*, or reports of murders and other outrages, referred by the Patriarch to the Government within the last twenty years, being left, not only unredressed, but even unanswered and unnoticed. The recent atrocities perpetrated by the Redifs, or regular troops of the Reserve, at Yozgat, in the Province of Angria, and at Tchemeschghezek, in that of Diarbekir, to which I alluded in a former letter, have emboldened the Patriarch to lay his memoir before the Grand Vizier, and, as no encouraging answer was vouchsafed, to tender the resignation of his office.

It is evident, however, that the evils of Armenia, as of so many other provinces, admit of no other remedy than the one now proposed by the Powers on behalf of Bosnia and Bulgaria, *i.e.* some kind of self-government. I asked some of the most intelligent Armenians, residents of Constantinople, what was the condition of those of their countrymen, about 500,000 as they think, who are now Russian subjects. They answered that Russia, possibly from political motives, and with a view to the extension of her dominion on that side, treats her Armenian subjects with the utmost regard and even partiality, promoting their prosperity with a zeal and alacrity seldom shown in the treatment even of the most favoured Russian districts. I then inquired whether they, the Armenians, complaining of Turkish sway, would like to be admitted to the same destinies as their brethren across the Russian border. The answer was that their desire is certainly not to exchange the Turkish for the Russian yoke; that all they want is justice, and a certain control over the management of their own affairs; but that, if autonomy is inexorably denied, and the evils they have so long submitted to are in no way to abate, the abuses not to be reformed and the grievances not to be redressed, they could not help looking either to the Russians or to any other invaders as their best friends and deliverers.

Let those who are most anxious to raise barriers against the designs of the encroaching Muscovite, and to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire against all comers, think seriously of this. The Ottoman Empire must either be saved by the reconciliation and assimilation of all its subject races or it must perish, let its destruction and dissolution profit whomsoever it may.

Pera, Sept. 30th.

Letters from Armenia, some of them bearing hundreds of signatures, report frequent murders and worse outrages recently perpetrated by the Kurds in that Province.

At Eghin, Province of Siwas, the Kurds carried off a young lady, and after detaining her for several days in the mountains, they killed her and threw the body into a river. The mother,

who went in quest of the girl, fell into the hands of the savages, who subjected her to the same treatment and then murdered her.

At Pinghian, in the same Province of Siwas, five villagers on their way to their vineyards were shot at by the Kurds: two fell dead, the three others were severely wounded. The object of the murderers was plunder. Complaints to the authorities against the authors of these atrocities remained unnoticed.

The same letters refer to other letters previously written and detailing horrors of the same description, but which never reached their destination, being probably seized at the Post Office. I can bear witness to the authenticity of these letters, having seen the originals. They have been printed in two Armenian journals in Constantinople, and have met with no contradiction.

APPENDIX.

MÉMOIRE SUR LA SITUATION ACTUELLE DES ARMÉNIENS ET SUR LEUR AVENIR.

RESPECTUEUSEMENT TRANSMIS AUX CHANCELLERIES DES GRANDES
PUISSANCES PAR SETH A. APCAR.

AUX confins du monde civilisé, en Asie, il existe un pays jadis prospère et florissant, premier berceau de l'humanité, un pays presque oublié de l'Europe, et qui demande à se faire entendre à la barre des Puissances, au moment où l'heure de la justice va sonner pour les Chrétiens de l'Orient. Si le règne de cinq siècles de fanatisme, d'injustice et de barbarie doit enfin faire place à la liberté de conscience, au droit et au progrès réel, l'Arménie ne doit pas être la déshéritée parmi les populations qui gémissent sous la même joug. Elle ne vient pas, sans titres, mendier une faveur imméritée. C'est un droit qu'elle réclame. Comme tous les pays appelés à apporter chacun son contingent, à l'œuvre du progrès et de la civilisation, elle demande, par tous les moyens légaux, le respect de son droit à l'existence, la cessation de ses souffrances, l'assurance de son développement progressif, libre de toutes entraves et de toute oppression.

Les peuples de l'Occident instruits de ses malheurs et de ses aspirations lui tendront la main sans hésiter. Tel est son espoir.

A l'époque où les Musulmans, partis du fond de l'Arabie, firent flotter l'étendard du Prophète jusqu'au cœur même de l'Europe, l'Arménie, épuisée déjà par les invasions successives de ses voisins barbares, n'avait plus la force de résister à ce flot envahissant et destructeur. Les Turcs y campèrent comme quelques années plus tard ils devaient camper dans Byzance. A partir de ce moment l'Arménie dévastée, meurtrie, menacée de disparaître entièrement n'a eu qu'un souci : travailler autant que possible à la conservation de sa nationalité, garder pure et

intacte la religion Chrétienne léguée par ses pères, et, en échange de la justice et de l'équité qu'elle était en droit d'attendre de ses nouveaux maîtres, se constituer leur tributaire résignée jusqu'au jour de la délivrance.

Les Arméniens de la Turquie forment actuellement une population de quatre millions d'âmes qu'on évalue avoir été plus du double au commencement de l'occupation Ottomane. Se livrant exclusivement à l'agriculture et au commerce, payant les impôts même les plus lourds, l'Arménien par sa conduite paisible, son amour du travail et sa tolérance religieuse, rare dans ces contrées, s'est efforcé de vivre toujours en parfaite harmonie tant avec la race dominante qu'avec les autres nationalités de rites différents. Mettant le respect des lois au dessus de toutes les vertus, on n'a à lui reprocher aucune révolte à main armée, convaincu qu'il a toujours été, avec sa prévoyance instinctive, de l'issue fatale et stérile de ce mode d'émancipation, si pareille tentative n'est pas secondée par un peuple puissant. Demander, réclamer toujours et par toutes les voies légales, justice et égalité—mais souvent inutilement, hélas !—telle a été la ligne de conduite suivie par la nation dont nous exposons aujourd'hui la situation.

Les Arméniens subjugués ainsi par la force brutale, entourés de tous côtés d'ennemis qui en fait de loi ne connaissent que l'arbitraire et le fanatisme, ont su néanmoins se conserver à travers tant de siècles d'esclavage, diminués en nombre il est vrai, mais plus compacts et plus unis que jamais. Vivant jusqu'au commencement de ce siècle par le dévouement de ses martyrs, puisant sa force et son énergie dans sa religion, cherchant à conserver sa nationalité dans les débris littéraires arrachés des mains des incendiaires de bibliothèques, l'Arménien s'est trouvé, il y a peu d'années encore, en face du progrès accompli en Europe pendant sa captivité. C'est le premier rayon qui frappa ses yeux entr'ouverts et il voulut marcher sur cette trace.

Certains privilèges et immunités lui étaient octroyés par le conquérant de Constantinople, qui avait su discerner les qualités intrinsèques de cet élément d'ordre et de prospérité dont il voulait doter sa capitale. On avait bien voulu lui laisser l'administration de ses biens nationaux et de ses églises, qui se faisait par le Patriarche de Constantinople ayant à son aide quelques

notables de la nation choisis par lui. Cette forme oligarchique d'administration avait donné lieu à quelques abus ou tout au moins à une disposition malheureuse des fonds péniblement recueillis. C'est pour obvier à ces inconvénients inévitables que la nation a élaboré, il y a une quinzaine d'années, un règlement organique basé sur le suffrage populaire, qui, dans sa modeste sphère, est un véritable modèle de législation et d'administration intérieure.* Ce règlement fut sanctionné, après quelques mutilations, par le Sultan Abdul-Médjid, d'autant plus facilement qu'il ne lésait aucun des intérêts immédiats du Gouvernement.

A partir de cette époque les Arméniens, au prix de grands sacrifices et de lutttes incessantes avec le milieu qui les entourait, sont cependant parvenus à se créer assez de ressources pour administrer leurs églises, leurs couvents et hôpitaux et surtout ce qui leur paraissait le plus digne de sollicitude, leurs écoles. Grâce à l'exemple donné par les Arméniens habitant la capitale de la Turquie, toutes les villes de province ont actuellement leurs écoles qui prospèrent autant que leurs ressources, ravies en partie par les oppresseurs, le leur permettent.

Les privilèges et immunités accordés depuis la conquête et dont le règlement organique national, n'a été, en quelque sorte que la consécration, n'ont cependant pas produit jusqu'ici les résultats que tant d'efforts et de persévérance pouvaient faire

* D'après ce règlement organique l'Administration Nationale est composée comme suit :

Le Patriarche de Constantinople, élu par l'Assemblée Générale de la Communauté, préside à cette Assemblée et aux Conseils administratifs. Il est l'intermédiaire entre le Gouvernement et la nation.

L'Assemblée Générale de la Communauté, issue du suffrage populaire, est composée de 140 membres ; à savoir :

100 élus dans la capitale, dont 20 parmi le clergé ;

40 élus dans les provinces de l'Empire.

Cette Assemblée nomme :

Un Conseil Ecclésiastique,

Un Conseil Civil,

plus, sept sections pour les diverses branches administratives.

Dans chaque province il y a une administration nationale calquée sur celle de la capitale. Les assemblées générales des provinces sont seules en relation avec l'Administration centrale de Constantinople.

Chaque paroisse est gérée, en outre, par un Conseil, élu par le suffrage populaire.

espérer. Entourés dans leur pays d'une population nombreuse de Turcs, de Kurdes et d'Avchars, hordes souvent nomades, toujours fanatiques et barbares, les Arméniens ont vécu jusqu'aujourd'hui à la merci des avanies de toutes sortes. Ces peuplades sauvages vivant de rapine, agissent, dirait-on, de connivence avec l'administration locale. Il ne se passe pas un jour sans que les paisibles et laborieux habitants Arméniens ne soient molestés, ne soient atteints dans leur religion, leur liberté, leur honneur, leurs biens. Usurpation de terres dûment acquises, sacrilèges commis dans les églises et les couvents, conversions forcées à l'Islamisme, notamment de femmes et de mineurs, incendies, rançons, viols, assassinats, tel sont les lots que l'Arménien a constamment en partage. Les Turcs, les Kurdes et les Avchars, auxquels sont venus se joindre les Tcherkess, dominant dans certaines localités en maîtres absolus. Sous les yeux même de l'autorité locale, mise au second plan, ils prélèvent des impôts exorbitants et poussent la témérité jusqu'à s'immiscer, en jetant la terreur, dans les relations les plus intimes des Chrétiens. Sous les prétextes les plus futiles leurs moissons sont détruites, leurs villages brûlés et les habitants chassés à coups de sabre ou de fusil. L'anarchie est pour ainsi dire à l'état permanent en Arménie. Le gouvernement local inquiète rarement ces criminels, et les plaintes réitérées des victimes le laissent souvent indifférent. Encouragés ainsi par une impunité systématique, ils recommencent leurs forfaits avec une nouvelle vigueur. Le port d'armes est toléré chez les Musulmans seul ; aussi voit-on ces hordes nomades, dont la plupart ne payent aucun tribut, qui ne sont soumis à aucune loi, porter des armes, leur principal moyen d'existence, au vu et au su de l'autorité. Si l'Arménien se fait soi-même justice ou s'il porte plainte, il n'a jamais gain de cause s'il n'est pas appuyé par des témoins Musulmans, ainsi que la loi du *Chéri* l'ordonne. Or, un Musulman ne saurait, sous peine de forfaire au Coran, témoigner contre un coreligionnaire. De là tous les dénis de justice.

Sans habitation fixe, sans industrie, ni aucune occupation avouable, il y a aujourd'hui en Arménie près d'un million de Kurdes, d'Avchars et de Tcherkess qui vivent aux dépens de la population agricole.

Traqués ainsi d'une part par ces bandes d'assassins embri-gadés, constamment en butte au fanatisme et à l'incurie des gouverneurs Turcs de l'autre, les Arméniens n'ont d'autre alternative que celle de se plaindre à leur Patriarcat de Constantinople. A chaque nouvelle avanie—et ces avanies se succèdent avec une fréquence désespérante—le Patriarche s'adresse à la Sublime Porte pour attirer son attention et provoquer ses ordres pour que justice soit faite. La Sublime Porte considère quelque fois l'affaire comme nulle et non avenue (*battal*) ; ou bien elle envoie des ordres aux autorités de la province pour procéder à une enquête par les soins du gouverneur même accusé de négligence ou de connivence. Il est aisé de deviner le résultat d'une enquête faite dans de semblables conditions. C'est ce système dérisoire pompeusement appelé *istilam* où la mauvaise foi se mêle au grotesque, qui a de tout temps arrêté le cours de la justice. Il arrive souvent encore que les habitants signataires d'une première plainte se voient forcés de se contredire dans un second document, arraché cette fois par les autorités en cause au moyen de la captation ou de menaces. Bien heureux le Chrétien plaignant qui échappe ultérieurement au châtiment d'une pareille témérité !

Les faits que nous signalons ici d'une manière succincte s'appuient sur des témoignages authentiques, et sont corroborés par les procès-verbaux imprimés des séances de l'Assemblée Générale de la Communauté, et même par des documents émanant des autorités Turques. Chacun de ces actes contraires aux principes les plus élémentaires d'humanité, a son dossier conservé soigneusement au Patriarcat Arménien. Leurs détails, la nomenclature seule des noms feraient l'objet d'un travail volumineux ; ils pourraient être vérifiés au besoin, et, entre autres, par les deux rapports importants de l'Assemblée Générale publiés sous les dates du 11 Avril 1872, et du 17 Septembre 1876 (v. s.)

En présence d'une situation aussi anormale on comprend aisément pourquoi les Arméniens n'ont pu jusqu'ici prospérer en raison de leur amour du travail et du progrès. Le mode d'administration à jamais condamnable du Gouvernement Ottoman, reconnu *arbitraire* par le *Hatt* du Sultan actuel lui-même, n'a cessé en tous temps d'entraver, notamment en province, les efforts tentés dans ce but par la Communauté. Cependant, grâce

à la persévérance et au prix de mille sacrifices—en dehors de tout appui étranger—les Arméniens sont parvenus à introduire dans leurs écoles les principes de l'éducation européenne et à acquérir ainsi une position honorable dans le commerce, l'industrie, les sciences et les arts. Depuis trente ans la jeunesse Arménienne va puiser la lumière bienfaisante de la civilisation dans les principaux centres de l'Europe et de l'Amérique; si bien qu'aujourd'hui on peut dire—non avec orgueil, car leur développement intellectuel n'est que relatif—que la nation Arménienne renferme actuellement dans son sein tous les éléments nécessaires pour former, dans un avenir plus ou moins prochain, le centre d'une population avancée d'où pourrait rayonner la civilisation tant désirée de cette portion de l'Asie. Cette initiative lui revient de droit en raison des services qu'elle a rendus à cette partie de l'ancien monde, où elle a eu son histoire glorieuse et dont il continue depuis des siècles à arroser le sol de la sueur de son front.

Si l'Europe a réellement à cœur de faire cesser les ténèbres et la barbarie où se trouve plongée une population de vingt millions d'âmes, de nationalités hétérogènes, elle trouvera pour faciliter sa tâche et pour la seconder, un peuple offrant toutes les aptitudes pour l'accomplissement de cette œuvre humanitaire.

Telles étaient l'espérance et la conviction intime de tout Arménien suivant d'un œil anxieux l'agitation légitime qui s'est produite en Europe pour l'amélioration du sort des Chrétiens d'Orient. Mais nous voyons avec un serrement de cœur indescriptible et un effroi toujours croissant, tous les yeux tournés vers les Chrétiens de la Turquie d'Europe. On les considère à tort comme les seules victimes du fanatisme et de l'incurie des Musulmans, sans tenir nullement compte des plaintes cent fois plus justifiées des Chrétiens d'Asie gémissant sous un régime reconnu abusif et intolérable.

Si les Puissances Occidentales ne songent pas à alléger les maux dont souffrent les Arméniens, ni le fameux mandement du Patriarche, écrit sous la pression de circonstances critiques, ni sa récente pétition contenant sept points essentiels et exposant la réalité des souffrances de ses ouailles, ne sauraient rendre le sort de celles-ci meilleur.

Favoriser les réclamations des Chrétiens de la Bosnie, de

l'Herzégovine et de la Bulgarie, chercher à améliorer leur sort par des démarches diplomatiques ou autres, à l'exclusion des Chrétiens de la Turquie d'Asie, ce serait déplacer le champ des exactions, ce serait maîtriser le feu d'un côté pour laisser plus loin l'incendie prendre de l'intensité.

En supposant une bonne partie de la Turquie d'Europe arrachée par des combinaisons plus ou moins ingénieuses à la domination des Musulmans, et l'influence du Gouvernement Turc singulièrement amoindrie dans les autres provinces de Roumélie, n'est-il pas permis de croire que les héros des atrocités commises en Bulgarie et ailleurs retourneront ou émigreront en Asie, la haine du Chrétien dans l'âme ? Et cette haine ne sera-t-elle pas d'autant plus redoutable qu'ils considéreront plus que jamais comme suspects tous les disciples du Christ ? Continuant leurs exploits, que de crimes ne commettront-ils pas sur ces populations désarmées et sans protection aucune ?

Quant au Gouvernement, voyant son prestige amoindri aux yeux même des Musulmans, son trésor épuisé, ses ressources limitées, il n'arrivera jamais à introduire en Asie les réformes destinées à l'amélioration radicale du sort des Chrétiens. Il se trouvera forcément, malgré toute la bonne volonté qu'on se plaira à lui accorder, dans l'impossibilité de favoriser tant soit peu le commerce et l'agriculture afin d'augmenter ses ressources par le bien-être et la richesse des contribuables.

Les Arméniens ne se sentent nullement assurés par les promesses de réformes que le Gouvernement Ottoman se montre actuellement disposé à introduire dans son système administratif, réformes auxquelles doivent participer toutes les populations Chrétiennes tant en Europe qu'en Asie. On sait que le Gouvernement Ottoman, à dater du Hatti-Humayoun du 18 Février 1856, n'a jamais été avare de promesses de ce genre. Mais voudrait-il, dans un élan de sincérité, mettre cette fois en pratique les conseils des Puissances amies, qu'il lui serait absolument difficile, si non impossible, de la faire pour transformer ainsi du jour au lendemain un système administratif qui a pris de si profondes racines dans les mœurs nationales. Il continuera à se heurter contre l'ignorance et les préjugés. Il y a plus. Parmi les hommes d'Etat Ottomans qui tiennent à l'heure actuelle dans leurs mains les destinées de l'Empire, il

s'en trouve plus d'un qui ne consentiront qu'à leur corps défendant à signer l'égalité de tous les sujets, persuadés qu'ils sont de la supériorité morale et intellectuelle des races Chrétiennes sur celle des Osmanlis proprement dits. Cette conviction intime de quelques personnages Turcs n'a sans doute pas peu contribué à l'exclusivisme qui a toujours fait la base du système gouvernemental.

Telles sont, en résumé, la situation présente et les aspirations de quatre millions d'Arméniens d'Asie. Telles sont aussi les appréhensions qui les dominent au moment où le grand problème des Chrétiens d'Orient recevra un commencement de solution. Les mesures que l'on se propose de prendre à l'égard d'une partie de leurs compagnons de souffrance, les Chrétiens de la Turquie d'Europe, ne feront qu'aggraver le sort de ceux de l'Asie et notamment des Arméniens qui y forment la masse la plus compacte et peut-être la plus digne de sollicitude.

Si l'Europe Chrétienne est véritablement soucieuse de l'émancipation morale ou politique de ses coreligionnaires d'Orient, elle ne souffrira pas, sans doute, qu'il se produise, par son fait, une injustice aussi flagrante.

Les Arméniens, en présentant ce mémoire succinct aux Chancelleries des Grandes Puissances, osent espérer qu'elles ne négligeront pas de prendre leur cause en considération d'une manière toute spéciale.

Constantinople, Octobre 1876.

MISGOVERNMENT IN ARMENIA.

(*"Times," April 4, 1877.*)

SIR,—I wish to second the admirable appeal of Mr. Curtis, published in the "*Times*" of January 6, on behalf of the Armenians. For nearly two years the eyes of Europe have been centred on European Turkey, and the Powers have been doing their

utmost to remedy the evils existing there. Why should there be this solicitude for European Turkey while the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire excite almost no attention? Is it because the Christians in Herzegovina and Bulgaria are in worse danger than those of Kurdistan? I think not. Why, then, this difference? It is simply because the Christians in these provinces have risen in rebellion, thus provoking atrocities that have curdled the blood of the civilized world. Must similar atrocities occur in Armenia before any attempt is made to remedy the condition of the people? Do the Powers wish to place a premium on rebellion? Can the voice of a people only be heard through the ashes of their ruined homes and the mangled corpses of their wives and children? The position of the Sultan was a strong one, that to admit the demands of the Conference respecting revolted districts would only encourage rebellion in other provinces. Why did not the representatives of the Christian Powers consistently labour for amelioration of the condition of all the Christians of Turkey? I am aware there were diplomatic considerations that led to the course pursued. But is it never possible to break through the meshes of diplomacy and be actuated by the pure principles of Christianity and humanity? I am confident the Foreign Office has been kept well informed by Mr. Zohrab, the present indefatigable Consul for Kurdistan of the many irregularities in this Province, and why the English representative in the Conference was not instructed to labour for general reforms is quite surprising!

I need not speak in detail of the great wrongs of the people. The ordinary demands of the Government have always been enough to keep them impoverished and staggering under intolerable burdens of debt. In addition, inferior officials, by illegal exactions, oppressed the people on the one hand, and robbed the Government on the other, so that generally not more than one-half the money ever reached the Central Treasury. This year the burdens are far greater than ever. The war-tax in many places is three times the usual amount. Then the villages are constantly called on to transport troops and war material, and to entertain soldiers while *en route*, and to make "voluntary" offerings of socks and other articles of clothing. Added to all these are the depredations of the Kurds, which

are growing worse and worse as the troops are withdrawn from the more remote regions and the local governors are left helpless.

Perhaps one will ask why these people do not complain or take the redressing of their wrongs into their own hands. If they suffer from those who come in the name of the Government they can say nothing, even though the tax-collector does what he has no authority for doing. And if a man complains of one of these robber Kurds, he is sure a terrible vengeance will come on him or his family. A year or two ago several Kurdish chiefs were arrested by the Governor of Moosh, and sent to this city, but they were soon after released, because, forsooth, the Pasha could find nothing against them. And why? The Christians, if they dared do so, could not by the laws be permitted to testify against them, and as no Mussulman testimony was produced, they were discharged.

A few weeks ago, soldiers, while on their way to this city, committed many outrages in the Geghi district, beating one man till he became blind, insulting the women, etc. A report of these things getting into the papers, the local government was ordered to investigate the matter and punish the culprits. Instead of doing this, the Governor of the district drew up a paper certifying that the report was false, and called on the members of his Council to sign it. Several pliant tools did so, but the representatives of the Protestants and the Armenian Bishop refused to do so, the latter boldly asserting that the report was true, only the half had not been told. The Bishop was then quietly informed that he must sign the paper or abandon his office, whereupon he yielded and signed it, at the same time protesting against the falsity of the certificate. This lack of courage and honesty is one of the most serious obstacles to the Christians securing their rights. But what can be expected of a race that has for centuries been subjected to all forms of oppression, and has come to feel that life itself can be purchased only by submission to every kind of deceit and fraud.

These are but a few words when volumes could be written of the sufferings of the people; and where is the remedy? The Turks themselves acknowledged the existing evils, and proposed the Constitution as a remedy, and, on paper, it seems to meet

the case. But will it be executed? The people have so often had promises of reform, with nothing of reform itself, that they have little hope of the Constitution. In my opinion it is in the power of the English to disappoint the forebodings of the people on this point.

While rejecting the propositions of the Conference, the Porte pointed to the Constitution as the remedy for all the evils of the country. It now remains for the Powers, and especially England, as the acknowledged friend of Turkey, to insist on the faithful execution of the provisions of the Constitution. This England can do by largely increasing her consular force, so that nothing shall occur in the remotest corner of Turkey without being at once reported to the Foreign Office, and by friendly but strong diplomatic representations, so that the Turkish Government would be obliged to remedy evils and fulfil all promised reforms. This would be practically, though not formally, a Foreign Commission; and, though the plan would involve considerable additional expense, it would be an economical outlay if future Conferences, and possibly future wars, and the necessity for relief committees were averted by it, or even—to drop the mercenary view—if the people of the land should be benefitted by it.

Many years of residence in Turkey and a devotion to her best interests are my apology for asking so much of your space on the trite “Eastern Question.”

Yours, &c.,

M. P. P.

Erzeroum, Feb., 1877.

THE ARMENIANS.

(Times, March 18th, 1878.)

It is evidently at the present moment beyond the power of the Governments to arrest the general movement which has set in among the Christians of the East. They all aspire to see their lot improved and to be placed beyond the pale of the influence of Turkish absolutism. With what right, when Europe is

busy with the liberation of Christianity from the Mussulman yoke, could it be said to any portion of the Eastern Christians, " You will remain subject to Turkish barbarities ; it is our pleasure to choose among the Christians those who have to submit to the will of a master from whom we have freed the others ? " Would any of the Powers speak in such terms ? The Christians of the East know there is none that would do so, and it is therefore not surprising to see that they are all appealing to Europe to be allowed to share the lot of those she is placing beyond the absolute rule of the Crescent. The following extract from a letter addressed by an Armenian of high standing to a friend in Paris has been kindly communicated to me, and as it is accompanied by the authentic text of Article 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano, the first part of the authentic text which has come before the eyes of the public, I believe it will attract general attention, and will show how serious is the task which devolves on the statesmen called upon to take part in the Congress :—

" Events have of late followed one another with such rapidity that the *dénouement* has taken us by surprise, the result being that in the general bases of peace signed at Kezanlik every Christian nationality of Turkey has been considered except the Armenian nation. Startled at this, all the superior clergy, with the enlightened men among our notables, have addressed themselves simultaneously to the Emperor of Russia and to the Grand Duke Nicholas and the Russian Plenipotentiaries, to claim their share in the treaty of peace—viz., autonomy for the Armenians of Upper Asia. The Patriarch of Etchmiazin, in Russian Armenia, and an Armenian delegate to St. Petersburg are pleading our cause with the Russian Cabinet. I should add that these overtures have been most favourably received by the Grand Duke Nicholas and the Russian Plenipotentiaries—a reception prompted, I believe, in high quarters—and they have been crowned with this important success : that at the moment of signing the preliminaries of peace at San Stefano it was stipulated by Article 16, despite the opposition of the Turkish Plenipotentiaries and the absence of the least mention of Armenians in the bases of peace of Kezanlik, that the Armenian provinces of Upper Asia should have the same *régime* as certain

Christian provinces of Roumelia—that is, reforms conformable to local requirements. The provinces of Roumelia to which autonomy is not guaranteed are Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia. The Armenian provinces are thus assimilated to these vilayets as regards the *régime* guaranteed by the treaty. But just as these guarantees cannot give satisfaction to these Greek provinces, which by the force of things will finish by being accorded autonomy, so the aspirations and needs of the Armenians cannot be insured by these vaguely prescribed reforms. Neither of them can be guaranteed except by autonomy. In presence of the changes now being made, the Armenian nation is not going to remain a simple spectator. Strong in the position it occupies in the Ottoman Empire, and trusting in the elements of organization which it offers, it will address itself to the Congress and plead its cause, soliciting the same conditions as apply to other Christian populations.”

Article 16 reads thus:—

“As the evacuation by the Russian troops of the territories which they are occupying in Armenia, and which are to be restored to Turkey, might give rise to conflicts and complications injurious to the good relations of the two countries, the Sublime Porte engages to realize without delay the improvements and reforms demanded by local wants in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Kurds and Circassians.”

THE CLAIMS OF THE ARMENIANS.

(*Times*, March 20th.)

SIR,—Your impression of to-day contains a telegram reporting that the Armenians in Constantinople are taking steps to bring the case of their fellow countrymen in Armenia before the notice of the approaching Congress. It is high time that they should move; high time, also, that the condition and claims of the Armenian people should receive more attention in England than they have yet obtained. In the excitement with which the progress of events in Europe has been followed, the existence of

that people has been almost forgotten, and we have thought of Armenia only as a region where Russia will seek territorial compensation for her war expenses. But the Armenians have as much claim as any other section of the Christian subjects of the Porte to the sympathy and help of Europe, and are at least as well entitled, by their sufferings and their capabilities, to be considered in that general resettlement of the East which we await. For many generations they have endured, in addition to the usual exactions of Turkish officials, terrible oppressions and cruelties inflicted by the Kurds and other marauding tribes who dwell among them and whom the Turkish Government is powerless to control. And in another respect, too, they have fared worse than the Rayahs of Herzegovina or Bulgaria, for there have been in their country fewer European Consuls to whom they could turn for protection. Thus a region naturally fertile and a people proverbially industrious have been reduced to a state of poverty and wretchedness that can hardly be described. They have repeatedly appealed to the Porte through their National Council, which sits at Constantinople, and their Patriarch; but the Porte, whether unwilling or not, has, at any rate, been unable to redress the wrongs complained of, and is now less likely than ever to have the vigour or the resources which the difficulties of the task demand. If Europe refuses to listen, they will be forced to turn to Russia.

I will not occupy your space by stating in detail the reforms which the Armenians desire further than to say that, while some aspire to see a sort of Armenian principality created which, while tributary to the Sultan, should be practically self-governing, others would be content with some such measure of autonomy as has been with such happy results conceded to the Lebanon. Autonomy is a vague word, but what Armenia substantially needs is local self-government, with an armed native force sufficient to hold the Kurds in check. True it is that the Armenians in Armenia proper do not exceed two millions, but this number would be quickly increased by the immigration of others from the rest of Asiatic Turkey and from Persia; and though many Mohammedans live intermingled with the Christians, the Armenians constitute by far the most energetic and intelligent part of the population. They are peaceable, thrifty, industrious, and

their revived spirit of nationality is a great and growing source of strength and hope. If anything is ever done for these countries, it is by and through the Armenians that it must be done.

What will follow if nothing is done? In the first place, there will probably be a large emigration of Christians from the Turkish into the Russian dominions in Asia, as there was after the war of 1829. Then afterwards that part of Armenia which remains Turkish will remain in a state of misery and discontent, which must powerfully aid any further designs of annexation that Russia may entertain. Through the Armenian race, which will regard her as their only helper, she will exert a perilously effective influence over the whole of Asia Minor. If, on the other hand, peace and freedom are established in Armenia and the sentiment of nationality is strengthened by the grant of local self-government, not only will the country and people regain prosperity, but a firm and permanent bulwark against Russia will be created. The Armenians have no love for Russia. They prefer her rule to that of the Sultan, and would rather be annexed to Russian Transcaucasia than be left as they now are. But they suspect Russia—rightly or wrongly I need not inquire—of seeking to extinguish their nationality and to depress their national Church. They do not wish to be absorbed by her. They would infinitely prefer any scheme of government which, under the suzerainty of the Porte, should secure them in the enjoyment of their lives and property, which they now hold at the mercy of the Kurds. Apart from all questions of humanity, it is the clearest interest of England to recognise and support their claims. And I may add that the demand which Russia makes for territorial annexations in Asia can be resisted with far better grace if something is done for the Armenians of Turkey. Kars and Batoum Russia will, no doubt, insist on having; Batoum, for the sake of these countries themselves, she ought, perhaps, to have. But the chief or only justification for her demand of Bayazid and the large district to the north-west of that city is to be found in the fact that her troops now occupy this district, and that if she evacuated it, the vengeance of the Moslem tribes would be wreaked on its Christian inhabitants. This argument, and, indeed, any argument drawn from the interest of the Christian

population, would be removed if steps were taken for the establishment of a better and stronger administration in the lands left under Turkish supremacy.

The Armenians are fully sensible of the difficulties which the position of their country, so far from Western influences and scarcely touching the sea, throws round the question ; but they, nevertheless, venture to hope that England, towards which their eyes have often been turned and to which they are linked by so many commercial ties, will not refuse to befriend them. The English Government has indicated a more generous policy in urging the claim of the Greeks to be represented at the Congress ; ought it to forget a race not less energetic or promising than the Greek—a race which has clung to its faith and its nationality through many centuries of misery, a race to which, more than to any other, the future of Western Asia seems to have been committed ?

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

Lincoln's-Inn, March 18.

J. BRYCE.

From the Blue Book on the Affairs of Turkey, No. I. (1878).

[No 287.]

CONSUL ZOHRAB TO THE EARL OF DERBY.

(Received September 6.)

Erzeroum, August 12, 1877.

MY LORD,—I have the honour to inclose a translation of a letter addressed to the Armenian Bishop of Bitlis by an Armenian of Van, which has been sent to me by an Armenian missionary residing at Bitlis. This letter gives further details of the ravages committed by the Kurds on the Christians, and also bears out my reports.

This information, from details collected by the writer, shows that the southern and eastern portions of Armenia have been laid waste, and that the reports I have had the honour to forward have not been in any way exaggerated.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

JAS. ZOHRAB.

[Inclosure in No. 287.]

Letter written in July, 1877, by an Armenian in Van to a Bishop in Bitlis.

[Translation.]

HONOURABLE AND HOLY FATHER,—The condition of this city is most distressing. For the distance of three days' journey on all sides of it the Christian villages have been despoiled. Not a sheep, not an animal, not a vestige of moveable property remains; neither is there safety of life. Every Christian village on the road from Van to Bayazid has been destroyed by the cruel Koords. They have robbed the people of everything; desecrated the churches, and carried away the church treasure. The pitiable villagers, utterly destitute and helpless, have fled to the mountains and caves, are hungry, thirsty, and naked, having no shelter from the scorching heat of day or the cold at night. The daughters and wives of some they (the Koords) ravished, and of others they took captive. They plundered shops without number; those that resisted they beat and wounded, and many they killed.

At Shabagh, Leghch, Vosgch, Pay, Nabar, Mughter, and other villages, after pillaging these they killed some of the inhabitants. They also murdered a man of the Higha monastery, in the plain of Avants.

The Jizirik Chief's men completely robbed Alabash Kaloo, the very rich and holy monastery of St. Bartimeus; they opened the grave of the saint and defiled it; they converted the monastery into a stable. In like manner the holy monastery of Derrama has been converted into a ruin, and the town and walls of the church pulled down. Also Hoosagan Vorts monastery they plundered, of which not a vestige remains.

Of which shall I speak? Of which shall I write? Armenia has become a desolation. It will be almost impossible for you to believe the things which have come to pass. But if the Lord prospers you so that you come here, your eyes will be filled with tears at the sight of the desolation. In this city a Christian cannot walk about with freedom, to meet together and talk is

impossible; to open the shops is wholly out of the question. Taxes grow heavy from day to day. Troubles increase daily. The wheat is ripe; to reap it is impracticable and unsafe. There are no means to hire labourers. Oxen and carts have been stolen, so that we are given up to unbearable suffering. If we go out from our houses, we take off much of our clothing, lest it be seized in the streets.

The Turkish army went to Bayazid and took it from the Russians. While the fight was going on, the Koords plundered the city and surrounding villages, and killed many of the inhabitants. The beautiful women and girls they carried away to their mountain fastnesses, and now the region is desolate and uninhabited. Many of the slain lie unburied.

The Almighty Saviour our God deliver His people from these straits!

PA 21.11