

MISSION BOARD TOLD OF TURKISH HORRORS

Correspondents Confirm the Reports of the Wiping Out of Armenians.

SCATTERED OVER EMPIRE

Christian Cities Cease to Exist as Such and Inhabitants Are Driven Far from Home.

Under the caption "In Darkest Turkey," the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions says that it has at hand "abundant and undeniable evidence" confirmatory of the newspaper reports concerning the persecution of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

"This evidence," says the board, "does not come through letters from the missionaries; they write briefly and of their own affairs; they refrain from discussing political affairs. They seek to maintain a neutral attitude in this time of strife.

"But from other sources, in roundabout but absolutely reliable ways, come to the board rooms accounts of proceedings in many parts of Turkey that are so appalling as to be almost beyond belief. They indicate a systematic, authorized and desperate effort on the part of the rulers of Turkey to wipe out the Armenians.

"Apparently the uprising of Armenian revolutionists at Van, which paved the way for Russian occupation of that city without resistance, has been seized by the Turks as a pretext for a general attack upon the Armenians everywhere. In some cases by massacre, more often through torture and exile, they are being eliminated from the field; they are being put where they need no longer be considered.

"Along the track of the Russian armies toward the Persian border, from Van to Moush and Bitlis, in the cities of Eastern Turkey, such as Diarbekir, Harpoot and Mardin, and especially in Central Turkey and the region stretching to the south, this cruel, relentless persecution has been for some time under way.

Report by a British Resident.

"A British resident of Constantinople who had left that city and was temporarily at a Mediterranean port beyond the reach of the censor, writes as follows:

You have probably learned something of the sad condition of the Armenians from the papers, but probably nothing gets through that in any adequate way portrays the desperate straits in which these poor people find themselves.

You may have heard that Zeitoun has ceased to exist as an Armenian town. The inhabitants have been scattered, the city occupied by Turks and the very name changed. The same is true to a large extent of Hadjin, except, I believe, the name has not been altered. The Armenians of the regions of Erzurum, Bitlis and Erzingen have, under torture, been converted to Islam. Mardin reports 1895 conditions (the year of the infamous massacre) as prevailing there. The tale is awful to the last degree.

More than a thousand families from Hadjin recently arrived in Aleppo in the last degree of misery, and yet the purpose is to send them much further. Husbands are forcibly separated from wives and sent to places long distances apart. Children are similarly separated from parents.

The board also makes the following report from persons in Northern Syria not connected with the missionary circle, but said to be of unquestioned reliability:

"Between 4,300 and 4,500 families—about 28,000 persons—are being removed by order of the Government from the districts of Zeitoun and Marash to distant places, where they are unknown, and in distinctly non-Christian communities. Thousands have already been sent to the northwest into the provinces of Konia, Cesarea, Castiamouni, &c., while others have been taken southeasterly as far as Dier-el-Zor, and reports say to the vicinity of Bagdad. The misery these people are suffering is terrible to imagine. To go into details would be useless waste of time, for all the sufferings that a great community would be subject to in such circumstances are being experienced.

"About 300 persons, heads of prominent families, have been imprisoned in Marash, of which some fifty are from Zeitoun and about fifty from Osmanieh. From Zeitoun about 350 families, or about 2,000 persons, have been sent to Marash and from there to Aintab, and are expected to arrive in Aleppo about May 15, to be sent to Meskene, while about 250 or more families are expected to follow before May 20, to report to the Governor of Aleppo. These latter are more fortunate than the first mentioned, as there is a different opinion prevailing in the competent official circles of that city. Seventy-one families were sent to Konia about April 25.