

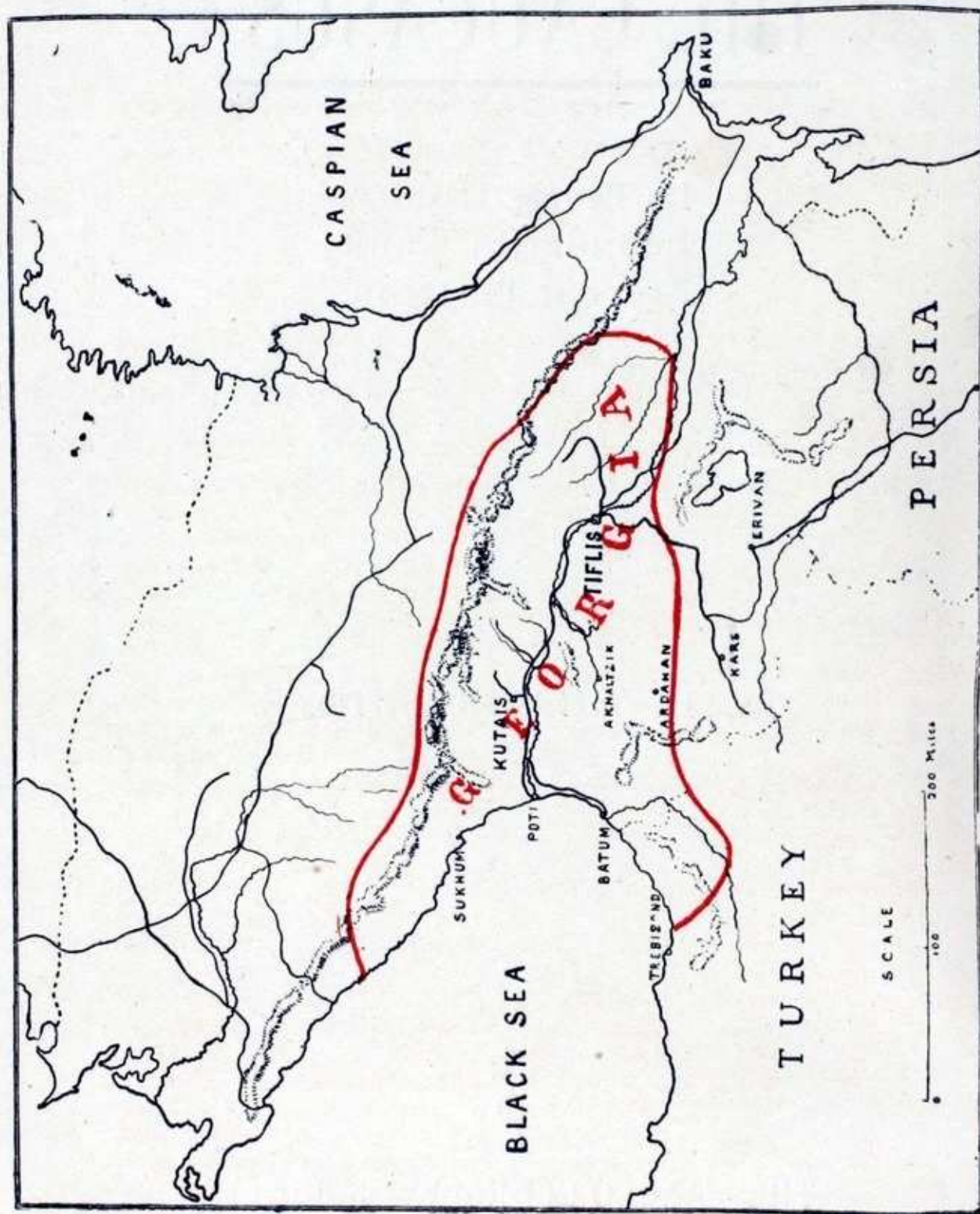


THE CAUCASUS:

Its People, History,
Economics, and
Present Position.

By D. GHAMBASHIDZE.

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This map shows position of Georgia in the Caucasus, indicated with red lines.

THE CAUCASUS.

ITS PEOPLE, HISTORY, ECONOMICS, AND PRESENT POSITION.

By D. Ghambashidze.

The Caucasus has come into prominence very much lately, and as there is considerable ignorance about it, not only among the general public, but in the English Press, it will be interesting to give rather detailed information on the subject.

Physical Features.

The Caucasus is situated between 38°-47° Northern latitude and 38°-50° longitude East of Greenwich. It borders in the North on the Don Cossack district and the Government of Astrakhan, in the South on Eastern Turkey and Persia, in the East on the Caspian Sea, and in the West on the Black Sea. It is divided by the chain of the Caucasian Mountains into the North Caucasus and Trans-Caucasia. The total area of the Caucasus is 272,000 square miles. The Caucasian mountain chain stretches from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, and is about 1,000 miles in length. The central chain from the mountain of Elbruz to Kazbek is about 130 miles long, and in some places about 18,000 ft. high. The highest peaks are:—Elbruz, 18,470 ft. and Kazbek 16,346 ft. The chain is intersected by four passes, the biggest among them being the Georgian military road between Tiflis and Vladikavkas. Among the rivers the most prominent are:—Kuban, 420 miles long; Ingur and Rion, 200 miles; Terek, 350 miles; Kura, 690 miles; and Aras, 520 miles.

The climate of the Caucasus is very varied, thanks to the vertical configuration of its surface and the unequal fall of rain. For instance, at Sochi, on the Black Sea, the rainfall is 3,000 mm., and at Baku 241 mm. per annum. In the western part of the Caucasus the climate is sub-tropical; in the eastern part dry, owing to the influence of the winds from the Trans-Caspian district. Under the protection of the Caucasian Mountains and plenty of moisture

there is very rich vegetation, and at a height of 4,000 ft. there are forests of oaks, beechs, chestnuts, boxwood, etc. In Trans-Caucasia the vegetation is of the same character as in Asia Minor and along the shores of the Mediterranean. Along the Black Sea shore and round Batoum are grown oranges, lemons, bamboos, cork trees, etc. At a height of 9,400 ft. there are wonderful rhododendra, and Alpine grass is met even at a height of 11,500 ft.

Among the animals, bears are prevalent, and near Lenkoran, on the Caspian Sea, there are even panthers and tigers. In the high mountains there are still to be met bison, wild goats, hogs, foxes, reindeer, antelopes, etc. Along the river Rion, in the western part of Georgia, there is an abundance of pheasants. Altogether there are 400 varieties of birds.

Population.

There has been much misunderstanding and exaggeration about the mixture of races in the Caucasus, some of the so-called "experts" having spoken of sixty races. In point of fact the mixture of races is similar to that of the Balkan Peninsula.

The total population of the Caucasus is about eleven million, divided into:—

1. **RUSSIANS**: 2,400,000, chiefly Cossacks, in the north of Caucasus. In Trans-Caucasia the Russian population did not exceed—before the Revolution—180,000, including the army and sectarians. Total, 2,580,000.

2. **CAUCASIAN MOUNTAINEERS**: (a) Circassians, 200,000; (b) Lesgians and Chechens, 680,000; (c) Ossetians, Nogais, Kalmyks, Ingushes, 395,000. Total, 1,275,000. With a few exceptions, they are all Mohammedans.

3. **GEORGIANS**: About 3,000,000, including 200,000 Mohammedans living in the districts of Batoum and Ardahan, and 300,000 Lazes living in the district of Trebizond.

4. **ARMENIANS**: 1,490,000, living mixed with the Tartars in the districts of Erivan, Elisavetpol, Baku, and Kars.

5. **TARTARS AND PERSIANS**: 2,300,000.

6. **GERMANS**: In the north of Caucasus, 42,000; in Trans-Caucasia, 18,000. Total, 60,000. The Germans were brought to the Caucasus from the south of Germany at the instigation of Emperor Alexander I.

7. **GREEKS**: 60,000. They immigrated to the Caucasus from Asia Minor.

8. **JEWS**: In the north of Caucasus, 64,000. They immigrated from Palestina in the first century, and speak a mixture of old Hebrew and Tartar.

The variety of races inhabiting the Caucasus can be explained by the geographical position of the Caucasus as a bridge between Asia and Europe, over which many peoples

have wandered. The historical transformations in Western Asia have always directly affected the development of the Caucasus.

History of the Caucasus.

From times immemorial, long before Alexander the Great, many peoples have tried to conquer the Caucasus. Big towns existed in that region long before Athens and Rome were known. Greeks, Persians, Turks, Skethians, Huns, etc., tried to obtain a foothold there. When speaking about the history of the Caucasus during the last five centuries we have to consider the following three factors:—

1. The expansion of the Russian Empire towards the south and the constant desire to reach Persia and Turkey.
2. The continuous struggle of Turkey and Persia to obtain a foothold in the Caucasus.
3. The isolated position of the ancient kingdom of Georgia in Trans-Caucasia as a buffer between the clashing ambitions of Russia on the one side and Turkey and Persia on the other.

THE GEORGIANS.

From among the many races in the Caucasus, only Georgia existed as an independent and powerful kingdom up to the end of the eighteenth century. Georgia, or the Iberian State, existed long before the Christian era. The country received its first lessons in civilisation from the Greeks. In the third century B.C. Alexander the Great conquered Georgia and established his administration; but a national hero, Pharnavaz, organised a revolt, expelled the Macedonian governor, and founded the Georgian dynasty. During his reign Georgia was converted to Christianity by St. Nina. The Greek Emperor sent the bishop with priests to Georgia, and the King and the people were baptised in the year 332. King Vakhtang Gorgaslan (446-499) completed the conversion of Georgia, and Georgia became a considerable power in the Middle East.

In the year 458 the first Georgian Bishopric was founded at Metzkhet, and in 542 the Emperor Justinian recognised the independence of the Georgian Church, whose Primate was styled Katholikos-Patriarch. In the seventh century Georgia was invaded by the Arabs, and the ancient kingdom was split up into several principalities—Kakhetia, Imaretia, Mingrelia, and Abkhazia—so that the Arabs only ruled the country around Tiflis. Under David III. (1080) the country was again reunited, the Mohammedans expelled, and the greater Georgian kingdom, extending from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, and from the mountains to Kars, was constituted. He reorganised the country, built churches and schools, and made Georgia a centre of culture and civilisation. The celebrated Queen Tamar reigned from 1184-1212, and her great achievements made the country famous. She successfully waged war against the

Turks and the Greeks and helped to form the Empire of Trebizond. The period of her reign is considered the golden period in the history of Georgia, but soon after her death the Mongol hordes, under Genghiz Khan, invaded the country, and from 1236-1393 it was subject to constant invasions on the part of the Mongols, Tartars, Turks, and Persians.

The position of Georgia, as an isolated Christian kingdom in the East, was very critical. She was surrounded by enemies, such as Turks and Persians, and she naturally began to look towards the north, especially to the Moscovite country, where she expected to find sympathy and relief on account of the common faith. Soon, however, the Tartar invasion stopped all connections between Russia and Georgia. The latter opened up very close relationship with Byzantium, and only when Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1453 Georgia was obliged to look towards Moscow. After the suppression of the Tartar rule Moscow rulers began to pay attention to the Caucasus. In 1555 Ivan the Terrible sent some Cossacks down the River Terek, who in 1567 formed a military district. The son of Ivan the Terrible, Theodore, opened diplomatic relationship with the Georgian King Alexander II. But this was also interrupted, as there was no proper communications between Georgia and Russia.

From 1602-1607 Persia started to invade Georgia, and tried to prevent any alliance between that country and Russia. They took from Georgia about 15,000 prisoners and made a colony of them in Persia near the town of Shiraz. In 1619 the Georgian King Theymouraz approached the Russian Tsar Michael Theodoravitch with a view to organising a combined expedition against Persia. But the proposal was not executed. The infuriated Shah of Persia again invaded Georgia, which was unable to obtain help from Moscow, as at that time Russia was at war with Poland and Sweden.

The next King of Georgia was Vakhtang VI., a very learned ruler and founder of the first Georgian printing office in Tiflis in the year 1712; he edited the ancient Georgian annals, and was the author of the code of law of Georgia. Peter the Great was very anxious to extend his influence round the Caspian Sea and to penetrate into Persia, and, for that purpose, he concluded an alliance with Vakhtang VI. and built sailing ships for transporting troops from Astrakan to Persia. In 1721 about 50,000 Russian troops arrived at Derbend, occupied Derbend, and, in conjunction with the Georgian troops, proceeded further to Baku. Persia did not take up the challenge, and ceded to Russia Derbend, Baku, Gilan, Mazandaran, and Astrabad. But Turkey was very much alarmed, and immediately occupied the Persian provinces of Tabriz and Erivan.

With the accession to the throne of Katherine I. relations with Georgia were renewed, and Vakhtang VI., together with a thousand representative Georgians, went to Moscow, where this colony was of great assistance in cementing the relationship between Russia and Georgia. Many notables received vast estates in the Ukraine. In 1727 King Vakhtang acted as mediator between Persia and Russia, and concluded a very favourable treaty for Russia. But in 1734 Persia again invaded her lost provinces, and retook them. King Vakhtang waited in vain for the arrival of troops from Russia, and, being very much distressed, died in 1737 in Astrakhan, where he was buried in the Uspensky monastery.

The Crown Prince Vakushti was at that time in Moscow, where he organised a very big printing office chiefly for the publication of ecclesiastical literature. He was educated by Catholic missionaries in Tiflis, and was a very good linguist. His book of the geography of Georgia is still recognised by the Academy of Science as the best reference book. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, according to the Treaty of Belgrade—1739—between Russia and Turkey, the north-western portion of the Caucasus was entirely abandoned to Turkey. In 1747 the Georgian Army defeated the Persians and annexed the provinces of Erivan and Ganja, making them tributaries to the State. In 1754 Persia again invaded Georgia, and was again defeated.

With the ascendancy of Katherine II. to the throne of Russia relations with Georgia were once more reopened. At that time a celebrated king, Heraklius II., reigned in Georgia, whose great intellectual capacity and fighting power was so enormous that Frederick the Great of Prussia sent a special military mission to make inquiry about his methods of warfare. Katherine the Great, in her letter to Voltaire, praised him very much for his stubborn fighting with the Turks and Persians in defence of Christianity. In 1768 Russia declared war on Turkey, and concluded an agreement with King Heraklius II. for joint action, and sent an expeditionary force to assist the Georgians, commanded by General Gottlieb Kurt Heinrich von Tottleben. In 1769 the Russian expedition arrived on the frontiers of Georgia, and, after receiving formal permission to pass the Georgian territory, joined the Georgian army. On March 17, 1770, the joint forces attacked the fortress of Akhaltsykh, but Tottleben treacherously turned back and abandoned Heraklius. A very stubborn battle was fought against the superior forces of the Turks, and the latter were heavily defeated. But they recovered and, together with Persia, began to press Georgia very heavily, and it was decided to enter into formal alliance with Russia, for which purpose a special delegation was sent to Russia.

But the policy adopted against Turkey by Russia at that time did not permit of the conclusion of the treaty.

Meanwhile, Katherine began very energetic work in constructing fortresses in the north of the Caucasus. In 1782 the Ukrainian Cossacks settled there and founded the town of Ekaterinodar. In 1783 Crimea was annexed, and the Crimean Khan Shagin-Girey was defeated by General Suvoroff. This alarmed Turkey and Persia very much, and they again began to invade Georgia. As no help came from Russia, King Heraklius despatched a special delegation to the Austrian Emperor Joseph II.—mediation was offered by the Catholic Missionaries Dominique and Mavros—asking for an alliance for combined action against Turkey. The suggestion was very favourably received, but Katherine II. hurried to prevent such an alliance, and sent a special delegation to Georgia, headed by Count Potemkin. This delegation was met by the Georgian envoys Princes Bagration and Chavchavadze at the fortress of Giorgievsk, and the treaty of July 24, 1783, was concluded between Russia and Georgia.

This treaty contains thirteen articles and four supplementary articles, and was printed in the Russian Code of Law in Petrograd in 1831. According to it the Russian Empire granted protection to the isolated Christian Kingdom of Georgia. It solemnly promised to respect its internal independence and the dynasty. Georgia had full right to maintain its national army and Russia had no right to interfere internally. It also promised to respect the independence of the Georgian Church. In return, Georgia was obliged to give assistance to Russia in her wars with Turkey and Persia, and if such wars had been waged successfully Russia would have been obliged to return to Georgia the territory recovered from Turkey. This treaty was ratified by both monarchs, and it has its international importance and value.

On January 27, 1784, Russian troops arrived in Tiflis—but this alliance infuriated Turkey and Persia, and they invaded Georgia in 1785. At this time the second war on Turkey was declared by Russia, and on October 14, 1788, the Turkish fortress of Anapa was attacked and captured; but, according to the treaty of 1791, at Jassy, it was returned to Turkey.

Meanwhile, Persia invaded Georgia in 1795 with eighty thousand men, and as there was no help forthcoming from Russia, after a stubborn fight the Georgians were defeated and the Persians occupied Tiflis. In 1796 a relief expedition arrived from Russia, commanded by the Georgian General Prince Tsitsianoff. This expedition cleared the Persians out of the Georgian territory, threw them out of all provinces of Eastern Caucasia, and pursued them up to Tabriz. But the relief expedition again returned to Russia, and

Georgia was left alone. Thanks to the urgent requests of the Russian Ambassador in Tiflis, General Kovalski, a new expeditionary corps was sent.

On January 18, 1801, Russia violated her treaty with Georgia, annexed that country, and made it a Russian province. The Russian troops were commanded by General von Knoring. The behaviour of Knoring was atrocious. The expectations of Georgia were cruelly disappointed, and the Russian troops were despatched to the western part of Georgia, which was ruled by King Solomon II. He offered resistance, and, being very badly treated, left the country and went to Trebizond, where he died in 1815, and was buried in the Greek Cathedral there. In 1827 another war with Persia broke out, and the Russian troops, commanded by the Georgian General Prince Eristov, occupied Erivan and Tabriz. According to the Treaty of Turkmenchai, February 9, 1828, Persia lost the province of Erivan, had to pay twenty million tomans as compensation, and had to abandon the right of maintaining the fleet on the Caspian Sea. The celebrated Russian writer, A. S. Griboedoff, took a prominent part in concluding this treaty, and was appointed Russian Ambassador in Teheran, where he was killed on January 30, 1829. His remains were transferred to Tiflis and buried in the Georgian monastery of St. David.

After the conclusion of the Persian war the Russian Administration in Georgia began to withdraw all the privileges granted to the Georgian nation, and Count Paskevich acted with such harshness that the nobility and the people revolted, and the Provisional Government of Georgia was proclaimed. The revolt, however, broke down, and thirty-four Georgian generals and officers were deported to the north of Russia, where they received consideration due to their rank.

In 1829 war with Turkey broke out, the fortresses of Kars and Akhaltsykh were taken, and, according to the Treaty of Adrianopol, Turkey was obliged to evacuate the Black Sea shores from Anapa to Poti.

At this stage a new religious movement began amongst the mountaineers of the Caucasus, under the name of Muridism, which originated from Asia Minor. It assumed a political character, and was directed against the Russian rule, which was so harsh, and facilitated the spread of this new movement. The leader was the celebrated Shamil. This genius among mountaineers baffled the world with his powers of resistance. The fight began immediately after the termination of the war with Turkey and continued till 1836. All the mountaineers of Eastern Caucasus were on his side. At that time Count Vorontsoff was appointed commander-in-chief of the troops operating against the mountaineers. He arrived in Tiflis and inaugurated a very friendly policy towards the Georgians, taking into con-

sideration the very important military assistance which they were able to give against the mountaineers. Count Vorontsoff made improvements in the Civil Service of the Caucasus, and made special recommendations to the Emperor Nicholas I., to whom he wrote the following:—

“Every reform and measure introduced in Georgia must be carefully weighed, as this nation, which has voluntarily entered into alliance with Russia, and whose services in defence of Christianity are immense, deserves every consideration. Harsh measures would not prevail, and would produce very tragic results.”

The activities of Count Vorontsoff were many-sided, and he made numerous improvements which had very beneficial effects.

During the reign of Alexander II. the Crimean War broke out. It ended with very disastrous results for Russia. The Congress of Paris on March 18, 1856, deprived her of the right of interference in Turkish affairs and of the exclusive right of protecting the Christian inhabitants of Turkey. The Black Sea was neutralised, the size of the fleet reduced, and, what is more, Russia was forced to cede to Turkey the districts of Kars and Bayazid, also the southern part of Bessarabia.

During the Crimean War the mountaineers profited by the occasion to continue their attacks, and this time they were supported by the adversaries of Russia, with the result that the struggle was prolonged. Alexander II. appointed Prince Bariatinski as the first Viceroy of the Caucasus, and, as his assistants, the Georgian Generals, Princes Orbelliani and Melikichvili, who started various attacks on the strongholds of Shamil. On August 25, 1859, Shamil was defeated and taken prisoner, but his family were deported to Russia and his sons were given an education at the Military Academy in Petrograd. At the same time a movement began among the Circassians, who were being hemmed in among the mountains by the Cossacks. On June 13, 1861, they formed a Union and elected a Council of fifteen Eldermen. They divided their country into twelve districts and appealed for help to Turkey and to England through the British Consul, Mr. Dickson, at Soukhum. The Circassians were pressed from the North and from the South. From the South there were six Georgian regiments operating against them. At that time Alexander II. arrived on the spot and gave the command of the armies operating against the Circassians to the Georgian General Orbelliani. Prince Bariatinski went to Russia and General Orbelliani was appointed as Viceroy.

In 1864 the Circassians were finally defeated and pressed back towards the seashore. They were given the choice—either to submit or to emigrate to Turkey. Only 90,000 consented to remain, mostly old people; four hundred and

eighteen thousand emigrated to Turkey. In this way the war with the mountaineers, which lasted forty years, terminated. Unnecessary cruelty was applied to the Circassians by the Russian Government in forcing them to leave their country and to emigrate to Turkey, the more so as their revolt against the Russian Government was chiefly caused by economic reasons, as the Cossacks were gradually depriving them of their lands, which they had cultivated with the greatest care. Even to-day in the mountains there are ruins of beautiful old orchards—witnesses to the peaceful occupation of the Circassians. The policy pursued was also unwise, as this colony of Circassians in Turkey always took a prominent part in every war against Russia and fought with the greatest fanaticism. It will be remembered, too, how cleverly Abdul Hamid created Circassian colonies in the Balkans, and how he used them against the Bulgarians.

In 1864 the autonomy of the Georgian province Abkhazia was abolished and the Georgian General Djemardjidze was appointed Governor-General of Dagestan. In the same year serfdom was abolished in the Caucasus. On January 4, 1867, the autonomy of the Georgian province of Mingrelia was abolished. In 1877 the Russo-Turkish War began. The Georgian regiments under the command of General Amiradjebi took the fortress of Ardahan. On November 6 the fortress of Kars was taken—the Russian troops were outside the gates of Constantinople, and the Treaty of St. Stefano was signed. Subsequently, at the Berlin Congress, this Treaty was abrogated, and Russia was forced to return Erzeroum to Turkey, but received permission to annex Kars, Ardahan and Batoum districts, being obliged by Article 59 to maintain Batoum as a free port.

These annexed provinces were the former territory of the Georgian kingdom under the domination of Turkey for two centuries. The Christian Georgian population of these places had been forcibly converted to Islam by Turkey, but they had always considered themselves Georgians by race, and when they were annexed the Georgian nobility asked the Russian Government for permission to open Georgian schools and to cement their relationship with their Christian brothers. This wise suggestion was not adopted, and the Russian Government, with unnecessary brutality, began to oppress the Georgian Mohammedans, forcing about 100,000 of them to emigrate to Turkey, in 1880, when they were received with the greatest courtesy by the Turkish Government and were settled around Broussa. In this way these fine representatives of the Georgian race were separated from their country for the further benefit of Turkey.

The Emperor Alexander III. abolished the viceroyalty in the Caucasus and appointed a Governor-General. In 1886 Batoum ceased to be a free port.

The military operations in the Caucasus had made the entire population a community of warriors, and up to 1874 the Georgian National Army remained intact and at considerable strength. In 1887 conscription was introduced, but it applied only to the Christian population, and relieved the Mohammedans of military duty. In 1900 Prince Golitsin introduced a law forcing the Georgians to do their military service in the remotest parts of the Russian Empire, where they suffered much from the cold climate.

On September 26, 1901, the jubilee of a hundred years' alliance between the kingdom of Georgia and Russia was celebrated in Tiflis, for which purpose the Grand Duke Michael Nicholaevitch arrived in Tiflis, and read the following manifesto of the Emperor Nicholas II. :—

“On this glorious day of union of the Georgian kingdom with Russia I am filled with the greatest joy in remembering that great event of our history. A hundred years ago the Georgian King Heraklius II. voluntarily placed his kingdom under our protection, uniting it with our Empire with indissoluble ties. From the very beginning the Georgian people and nobility have displayed the greatest loyalty, and, with their bravery, have been instrumental in helping us to fight common enemies. In recognition of their valuable services, I beg to express herewith my Imperial thanks to the Georgian nation and the promise of my special attention and care to this brave nation, which is united with us by common ties of religion.”

It was tragic that after violating the Russo-Georgian Treaty of 1783, and depriving the Georgian nation of its rightful position, Tsar Nicholas II. could find nothing to say but a few empty compliments, which were in no way taken as satisfaction of the national aspirations of the Georgians.

It is also worth mentioning that the Romanoff dynasty, especially throughout the nineteenth century, always proclaimed a special desire to act as defender of Orthodox Christian nationalities; yet on May 26, 1811, the independence of the Georgian Church—which had existed since 542 and had been respected by nearly all the Mohammedan invaders—was abolished, at the instigation of General Tormasoff. The Katholikos-Patriarch of Georgia, Antonius II., was invited to Petrograd under the pretext of conferring with the Holy Synod, and was never allowed to return to Georgia. The property of the Georgian Church, to the value of 700,000,000 roubles, was confiscated, and, out of twenty-eight bishoprics, only six were allowed to remain. An Exarch of Georgia was appointed by the Russian Holy Synod, and throughout the nineteenth century the Georgian Church was reduced to a dependency of the Russian Holy Synod.

In spite of unjust treatment the Georgian nation made remarkable progress, especially during the second

half of the nineteenth century. Its literature considerably advanced; the number of daily papers and weeklies in 1913 was twenty-four, and the number of books published in the same year on various subjects was about 240 in 460,000 copies. It must be remembered that 75 per cent. of the total population can read and write, and there are many schools and libraries. Eighty-five per cent. of the total population is composed of peasants, whose chief occupation is agriculture (very intensive)—tobacco, wine, cotton, silk-growing, and other forms of high agriculture.

The co-operative movement is very strong in Georgia. There are about 400 co-operative societies, and nearly 70 per cent. of the peasants are members.

During the last eight centuries the nobility of Georgia has devoted its attention chiefly to military matters and the military calling. There were about 5,700 officers in the Russian Army—among them very distinguished generals, like Princes Bagration, Amilakhvari, Tchavachavadze, Orbelliani, Amiradjebi, and others. Prince Imeretinski acted as Governor-General of Poland, and through his wise rule won great respect among the Poles. Incidentally, he was instrumental in obtaining the Emperor's permission to erect a monument to the great Polish poet, Mickiewicz, in Warsaw. General Kazbek acted as commander of the fortress of Vladivostok, and General Orbelliani was Commander-in-Chief of the Russian troops stationed in Finland.

Among the Georgian Bishops the most celebrated was Bishop Gabriel, whose famous sermons have been translated into English by the Rev. D. Malan, of Oxford. There were also a great many Georgian Professors at various Russian universities—among them the celebrated physiologist, Professor Tarkhanoff; the philologist, Professor D. Tchubinoff, and M. Petrieff, the late Dean of Odessa University. Distinguished Georgians, such as Princes Tchavachavadze and Eristoff were members of the Russian House of Lords. M. Tseretelli, the celebrated Georgian deputy of the Duma, acted as one of the leaders during the present Revolution and Minister of State.

Among the great authorities on Georgia in this country may be mentioned the late Miss Marjorie Wardrop, and Mr. Oliver Wardrop, her brother, who together translated into English the celebrated Georgian poem of the twelfth century, entitled "The Man in the Panther's Skin." They were also instrumental in presenting to the Bodleian Library at Oxford a great number of Georgian books.

The Armenians.

The Armenians, like the Georgians, are an ancient, Christian, civilised race, whose independent kingdom was submerged by the Mohammedan invasion many centuries before the Georgian kingdom's loss of independence. Their

real home is in Turkish territory, only a portion of it being situated in the extreme south of Trans-Caucasia. So long as their kingdom remained independent, the Georgians always offered hospitality to the Armenian refugees. The Georgian King Heraklius II. especially encouraged their immigration to Georgian territory. The residence of the Armenian Katholikos-Patriarch was at Etchmiadzin.

Until the first half of the nineteenth century relations between the Georgians and Armenians were very friendly, but after the war between Russia and Turkey great numbers of Armenian refugees penetrated Trans-Caucasia and also settled on Georgian territory, especially in the South, and quite a considerable number of them devoted their attention to commerce. On this and the agrarian question there has been growing animosity between the two nations, which has been sedulously fostered by the extreme Armenian parties. Whilst the Armenians had no other place of refuge from Turkey but Trans-Caucasia, the Georgian peasants found their own lands not quite sufficient for them; and this naturally produced great tension. This was the greater because for twenty years some of the Armenian political parties advanced an unjustified claim to the historical territory of Georgia. The Russian Government treated the Armenians in quite a friendly way until the end of the nineteenth century, when Prince Golitsin inaugurated a very harsh policy against them, forcibly depriving them of the property of their Church and closing the Armenian schools. During the viceroyalty of Count Voronstoff Dashkoff the Russian Government protected the Armenians.

The Tartars.

The Tartars who inhabited the Eastern part of Trans-Caucasia throughout the nineteenth century were of a somewhat low standard of civilisation. In 1906 they began to publish their first daily paper, called *Irshad*. At present the number of their dailies and weeklies is about twenty. Up to 1906 they had practically no published books; in 1913 the number of books published on various subjects was seventy-three—126,000 copies.

Baku became a great centre of national wealth of the Tartars, where they owned a very substantial portion of the oilfields; it also became a spiritual centre of pan-Islamic propaganda. They were in very close touch with the Young Turks of Constantinople, considerably assisted the revolution in Persia, and played a very prominent part in the general organisation of all Mohammedan races inhabiting the former Russian Empire. As a great many Armenians in Trans-Caucasia are mixed up with the Tartars, very considerable tension has been produced between the latter and the Armenians. This was cleverly utilised by Prince

Golitsin, and was followed by the Armenian-Tartar massacres of 1904 and 1905.

In the religious sphere the Tartars enjoyed complete immunity from the Russian Government, and, what was more, up to the end of 1916 they were not called up for military service.

The Russian rule of the Caucasus, and especially of Trans-Caucasia, from 1903 up to the Revolution, was very greatly influenced by the policy of Count Voronstoff, who tried to protect one of the nationalities of Trans-Caucasia in preference to others. But the Revolution of 1905 and the Tartar-Armenian massacres placed him in such a difficult position that he had to present a confidential memorandum to the Emperor, explaining that it was impossible to govern big provinces situated so far from the centre of the Empire without some sort of self-government. The result of this memorandum was that his powers were considerably increased, and he was in the position of a little Tsar in the Caucasus. He devoted particular attention to the spread of Russian influence in the northern part of Persia, where his experiments produced such deplorable results for the Persian situation, and particularly for the unity of Persia. He also inaugurated a policy of construction of the Black Sea Coast Railway and of the electric railway along the Georgian military road to increase further the centralised system which has been so fatal for the progress of Russia. Throughout his rule in the Caucasus he was practically controlled by the members of the Caucasian General Staff, from which representatives of the local nationalities were removed.

The general staff referred to was busier with political matters than with military, particularly instigating the Kurds against the Armenians, increasing the number of police in the Caucasus, and, again, removing the local elements from the administration.

The Revolution of 1905 had a very great effect in Trans-Caucasia, where all the nationalities, like the Georgians and Armenians, advanced their claims to self-government. Particularly vital was the agrarian question on account of the very unjust policy of the Russian Government in withdrawing the Georgian peasants from the Black Sea shores and planting there the peasants from the interior of Russia, and giving the best part of the land to the retired Russian generals. It was quite obvious that such a policy must produce animosity, as there was not enough land for the Georgian peasants themselves. There was also a strong demand on behalf of the Georgians, Armenians, and the Tartars for recognition of their languages. Needless to say, the Russian Government turned a deaf ear to all these just demands, and further enhanced its policy of oppression. At the outbreak of the present war all the Caucasian nationalities responded to the call: and the suggestion was made to the Government by the Georgians and Armenians that their

reserves should be confined to the defence of the Caucasus from the Turkish side, the more so as the difficult ground of the mountains required a special knowledge which they, as natives, possessed exclusively. But, instead of that, about 300,000 Georgian reserves were despatched to Poland and Galicia.

This policy was changed with the appointment of the Grand Duke Nicholas as the Viceroy of the Caucasus, who started despatching fresh Georgian and Armenian reserves to the Turkish front. The only result of this was a very substantial offensive, which was followed by the occupation of Erzeroum and Trebizond, and the greater part of Turkish Armenia.

Whilst the Grand Duke was actuated by the desire to meet the claims of the nationalities, so far as it was possible under autocracy, General Yudenitch began to pursue a very aggressive policy against the Armenians and Georgians. As soon as Turkish Armenia was occupied, thanks to the active participation of Georgians and Armenians, he issued an order that, in those occupied territories the Armenians and Georgians should not be allowed to settle, and he intended to create a Cossack colony in this district. It is difficult to understand how such a plan coincides with the widely spread policy of the Allies—protection of small nationalities!

In connection with the war it must be mentioned that although the Caucasus possesses deposits and raw material for producing huge quantities of ammunition, the Russian Government has not permitted the construction of a single ammunition factory, and the Caucasian front had to rely upon ammunition being transported from Archangel. There were many other anomalies during the war traceable to the same causes as operated in other parts of Russia, thanks to the autocratic régime. These are known to-day throughout the civilised world, and we do not need to enumerate them.

Turning to the economic situation in the Caucasus, it must be mentioned that here again the old Russian Government has never given a chance to the inhabitants to develop properly the almost unlimited natural resources of the country. The Russian Government, whilst hampering the economic development of the whole of Russia, has placed exceptional restrictions on the economic development of the Caucasus. But, in spite of these restrictions, there has been considerable activity for the last twenty years. In order better to illustrate the situation we give here certain data:—

In 1913 the crops of cereals in the whole of the Caucasus yielded 204 million bushels. But with the proper application of modern methods of agriculture, the output could be increased at least twenty-fold. In the same year 190,000 acres were cultivated as vineyards, and there were about

210,000 small vineyard peasant proprietors. Forty million gallons of wine were produced. The quality of the wine is excellent, and in those cases where modern chemistry was applied it was as good as that of the French and Italian wines.

In the same year there were 19,188 tobacco plantations, mostly in the western part of the Caucasus, which yielded about 23,000,000 lbs. of tobacco leaf. The greater part of this crop was raised from Turkish seed, was of good quality, and capable of being blended with high-grade Turkish tobaccos. It is worth noting that the popular Russian cigarettes are all manufactured from the Caucasian tobacco.

In the same year in Trans-Caucasia 112,000 acres were used for growing cotton, and 150 million lb. of ginned cotton were produced. With the proper organisation of irrigation, especially in the eastern part of Trans-Caucasia, the crops could be increased at least thirty-fold.

Among other branches of agriculture, silk production is the most prominent in Trans-Caucasia. This industry has existed for the last thirteen hundred years, and there are about 3,000 villages and 400,000 families engaged in it. In 1913, 14,400 lb. of grain were cultivated and about 433 million lbs. of cocoons were produced, which were chiefly exported to Marseilles and Milan.

Around Batoum, on the Black Sea, there are tea plantations. In 1895 there were only six acres. In 1912 there were 1,700 acres. In 1895 only 85 lb. of leaf were obtained; in 1912, 1,106,597 lb.; in 1895, 20 lb. of tea were produced; in 1912, 268,540 lb. This branch of cultivation is still in the experimental stage, but there are vast possibilities for expanding it in the near future.

Bee-keeping is also one of the ancient occupations in the Caucasus. In 1912 there were about 26,067 apiaries, with 596,924 beehives, and the production amounted to 5,653,302 lb. of honey and 656,820 lb. of wax. It is worth noting that the Russian Holy Synod has not given a chance to the Georgian Church to develop this minor industry very considerably. Had the reverse been the case, the Caucasus could have supplied all the demands of the churches all over Russia for wax for candles. But considerable quantities of so-called wax (actually cerasine) have been imported from abroad.

In 1913 the numbers of the domestic animals in the Caucasus were as follows: Horses, $1\frac{1}{2}$ million; mules, 160,000; cows and oxen, $5\frac{1}{2}$ million; buffaloes, 638,160; sheep, 15,000,000; goats, 767,613; camels, 16,000; pigs, 980,000. Altogether about 20,000,000. The country has vast possibilities for cattle breeding.

In the same year 10,000,000 acres were covered by forests, chiefly oak, pine, birch, etc. There were also fine varieties of boxwood and walnut. This industry in the Caucasus has

been very feebly developed, for the reasons indicated above. In 1913 there were about 17,700 small workshops, including also a few large factories which employed about 127,846 workpeople and produced goods to the value of about £20,000,000.

Mining is at present very feebly developed, but it could be made a most important branch of the economic activity of the Caucasus. The mineral resources of the region are vast. There is a legend among the people there that when God Almighty created the world he dropped all the minerals on the spot where the Caucasus is situated. The unexploited deposits of copper are practically unlimited. In 1912 there were fifteen copper refineries, out of which only nine were working. These produced 9,656 tons of copper. In the same year 26,000 tons of silver, lead and zinc were produced, 900 tons of iron, 9,000 tons of sulphur, and 68,000 tons of coal. Of particular importance is the manganese ore entirely produced in Georgia, of which in 1912 885,000 tons were exported abroad. Of this Germany had 275,000 tons. Altogether Germany took for ten pre-war years from 41 per cent. to 47 per cent. of the total quantity exported. The importance of the great oilfields of Baku is well known. Baku is connected with the Black Sea port of Batoum by the Trans-Caucasian Railway and the pipe line. The total length of the Caucasian Railway is about 3,500 miles. The trunk line from Batoum to Baku goes through Tiflis, and there is also a direct line from Tiflis leading to Tabriz, in Persia.

Present Position.

The outbreak of the Revolution of March, 1917, was enthusiastically greeted by all the peoples of the Caucasus, who were quite confident that their just outstanding claims would be at last realised. They watched patiently for a couple of months, but discovered, to their great disappointment, that those who were at the head of the Government in Petrograd did not pay much attention to the vital problems of Russia, preferring to indulge in oceans of beautiful phraseology.

For the first two months, whilst the Cadets were the actual leaders of the Provisional Government, the question of nationalities was not carefully considered. The Cadets were perfectly honest patriots, but they did not display the wisdom of the practical politician; and, instead of working for the conversion of Russia into united States—which would have meant its salvation, on account of the mixture of nationalities in the country—they proclaimed a centralised system of government. They appointed a special Commission, consisting of four members of the Duma—Mr. Kharlamov (Russian) (chairman), Mr. Tchenkeli (Georgian), Mr. Djaffaroff (Tartar), and Mr. Papajanoff (Armenian)—to administer the Caucasus, in place of the Viceroy, the

Grand Duke Nicholas, who was recalled. This Commission was given very small powers to deal with local matters, and had to refer for decisions to Petrograd.

Later on came Kerensky's Government, and the question of nationalities became acute. The following nationalities advanced their claims for self-government, besides the Finns and Poles, who claimed complete independence:—the Esthonians, Letts, Ukrainians, Moldavians, Tartars, and Georgians. The Armenians proclaimed that the question of their future was of an international character, and, therefore, they were waiting for the peace conference to settle it.

The demands of the nationalities of the Caucasus for self-government were met by complete refusal, until they came to the conclusion that, unless they looked after themselves, Petrograd was not going to trouble about them. The Georgians, Armenians, and Tartars, therefore, arranged their National Assemblies, at which each nationality elected a supreme National Council. These National Councils tried very hard to work in harmony with the Soldiers' and Workmen's Councils, but they found it quite a hopeless task. In a country like Russia, where 85 per cent. of the peasants cannot read or write, it is sheer madness to attempt Socialistic experiments; and the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils throughout the whole of Russia had on their executive committees practically every class, with the exception of workmen and peasants. The climax was reached at the Moscow Conference, when Prince Kropotkin made a very passionate appeal to transform Russia into a federated republic. But this appeal was made in vain—nobody seemed to care about it.

Meanwhile, the nationalities of the Caucasus continued the process of nationalisation. The schools were converted into national schools; the Georgians restored the independence of their Church, which suffered so much humiliation from the Russian Holy Synod from 1811-1917, and Bishop Kirion was consecrated as Katholikos Patriarch of Georgia. The Russian Holy Synod again started a tremendous campaign against the Georgian Church, and at the Moscow Church Council it was proposed to proclaim the Georgian Church schismatic. About twenty members of the Council, headed by the most eminent Bishop Andrew of Ufa, vehemently protested against the proposal as being contrary to Christian tradition and unjust to the Georgian Church as defender of Christianity for ten centuries, and left the Council. It is pleasant to know that the body of Russian ecclesiastics, who were for a long time governed by the imbecile Rasputin, should still have some fine personalities among them.

At the very beginning of the Kerensky regime the Georgians and the Armenians proposed that all their units on the Austrian and German fronts should be transferred to

their native country, where they would form a national army corps. This very fair demand was supported by the Allied Governments, but it was not granted until three days before the fall of Kerensky's Cabinet.

In November of last year the Bolsheviks seized Petrograd and overthrew Kerensky's Government. This was a signal to the nationalities of Trans-Caucasia to break off all relationship with the Central Government, and, in the same way as the Ukrainians and the Don Cossacks, they formed a Trans-Caucasian Republic. The elected Government was composed of three Georgians, three Armenians, three Tartars, and two Russians, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister being Mr. Gegechkori (Georgian). The Georgian and Armenian troops were subject to the orders of this Government, and Trans-Caucasia was governed as a separate republic.

The mountaineers of the Caucasus and the Kuban Cossacks formed themselves into a distinct republic, with a joint Government, but it proved impossible for them to work together, as the traditions of Shamil still survived, and the differences between them, especially on the land question, were unsurmountable. There were sanguinary fights between them for some four months, which constantly increased in bitterness.

Finally, in December of last year the mountaineers separated themselves from the Cossacks, and constituted the independent Republic of Dagestan, in the north of the Caucasus. The President of the new State is a Lesgian, Colonel T. Tchernoeff, a striking personality, and one of the most progressive Mohammedans. The members of his Cabinet are also men of character. He invited representatives of the Georgian National Council to attend the congress of mountaineers in Dagestan, an historical spot where Shamil made his last defence.

At this congress the Mohammedan clergy, together with the celebrated Sheikh Najmudin, attended. This latter dignitary had been very active amongst the mountaineers preaching a "Holy War" against the Christians. Colonel Tchernoeff strongly insisted that he should abandon his fanaticism, not only as undesirable and dangerous, but also as highly insulting to the Mohammedan religion. In this way this memorable gathering provided a good object-lesson for the Young Turks of Constantinople, who want to compensate themselves for military disasters by organized massacres. The Trans-Caucasian Republic, and particularly the Georgian Supreme National Council, have achieved enormous success, thanks to the intelligent co-operation of Colonel Tchernoeff and other leaders.

With the commencement of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations and the Bolshevik comedy the Ukrainians sent a special delegation to negotiate peace with the Central Powers in order to safeguard themselves from being sold by the Bol-

sheviks. The Trans-Caucasian Republic, having its territory close to the Turkish frontier, was confronted with violent Bolshevik propaganda, and special agents of the Bolsheviks penetrated the purely Russian troops on the Turkish frontier and started a criminal propaganda amongst them, inciting them to murder the Georgian and Armenian Christian races, who refused to accept class warfare as a substitute for national self-respect. Unfortunately, the Russian troops began their devastating work; but they were promptly disarmed by the Georgian and Armenian armies, and most of them then left for the interior of Russia. The defence of Trans-Caucasia was left entirely to the Georgian and Armenian troops. The only danger was from the Baku Tartars, whose leaders were very busy propagating the Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turanian movements. In these circumstances the Trans-Caucasian Government had to sign an armistice with the Turkish military command, with the proviso that until the peace treaty was signed the Turkish troops would not be transferred to Mesopotamia.

When the Bolsheviks at last signed peace with the Central Powers and Turkey they also agreed to cede Batoum and Ardahan districts, which are an integral part of Georgia, and populated by Georgian Mohammedans, and the Kars district, largely populated by Armenians; and also agreed to the reoccupation of the entire territory of Turkish Armenia by Turkey. This criminal act aroused great indignation amongst the Georgians and Armenians, the more so as the Trans-Caucasian Republic does not recognize the Bolsheviks, and could not allow them to negotiate with anybody on their behalf. The Turkish Government had not the courage to propose the above-mentioned cession of territory to the Trans-Caucasian Government direct, but arranged it behind their backs with the Bolshevik desperadoes. Immediately the Brest-Litovsk negotiations finished the Porte addressed a Note to the Trans-Caucasian Government, expressing its desire to enter into peace negotiations after the cession of the above-mentioned territories, which cover about 4,000 square miles. This offer was indignantly refused.

The Turkish Government next entered into negotiations with the demoralised sailors of the Black Sea Fleet, requesting them to bombard the Georgian towns on the Black Sea coast. Accordingly, a dastardly attempt was made on the defenceless port of Soukhum, where there is a large concentration in the hospitals of wounded and consumptive soldiers. Immediately after this a large Turkish force advanced on Trebizond and Erzeroum, and approached the old frontiers of Trans-Caucasia. This emergency was immediately met. The Georgian and Armenian National Councils concluded a defensive alliance, and, as is well known, fierce fighting broke out with the Turks. The Georgian and Armenian armies are operating together, and the entire

population of Georgia has been mobilised. This heroic action is worthy of high admiration, for the Georgians and Armenians are completely isolated from any Allied assistance; and are threatened in the rear by the Tartars, who are in sympathy with the Turks. The struggle will be a fierce one. The Georgians and Armenians will show adventurers like Enver Pasha and Talaat Pasha that self-respecting nations, however small they may be, will not allow themselves to be treated in the same way as the Bolshevik rabble.

It is interesting to note the reasons which prompted Turkey to undertake this dangerous operation. First, she looks for compensation for those military disasters which Great Britain inflicted upon her by detaching Mesopotamia, the whole of Arabia, and Palestine. Secondly, she wants to establish direct contact with the Baku Tartars, in order further to extend her influence in Turkestan, and with the Mohammedans inhabiting the south-eastern part of Russia. Thirdly, there is the desire to utilise the Trans-Caucasian railways, and, through Baku, to penetrate to Afghanistan. She also claims that the Georgian Mohammedans who inhabit the Batoum district, which is an integral part of Georgia, ought to be considered as Turks. But she forgets that even amongst the Mohammedans the principle of nationality has been established as supreme. During the Balkan War Albania broke away from Turkey, in spite of 75 per cent. of the Albanians being Mohammedans. In this war the Arabs of Mesopotamia and Arabia are fighting against her, in spite of being better Mohammedans than the Turks, as it is certain that the Arabs are not only the originators of the Islamic religion, but much superior as a race to the Turks.

The Georgian Mohammedans in the Batoum and Ardahan districts number 200,000. They were forcibly converted from Christianity to Islam after the devastating wars with the Turkish invaders. They have the same blood as the Christian Georgians, and they will never consent to be separated from their race. There is ample proof of this in the fact that in the present war against Turkey in the entire Georgian army there are three divisions composed purely of Georgian Mohammedans.

This struggle will be watched with lively interest by the entire civilized world, and by all friends of small nationalities. It will create great suffering for the Georgians and Armenians, but these two races represent the traditions of many centuries of self-defence. Especially will the well-known bravery of the Georgians be demonstrated once more.

It is the sacred duty of the Allies to help the Georgians and Armenians in every way, so that they may not share the same cruel fate as other small nationalities who have suffered so bitterly in the present struggle.

