Asiatic Turkey

A SKETCH OF
THE MISSIONS OF
THE AMERICAN BOARD



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
1908

In preparing this account of the missions of the American Board in Asiatic Turkey, the sections relating to the country, the races, and the government, as well as to the early periods of missionary work are drawn largely from the admirable sketch prepared by the late Rev. Dr. Edwin E. Bliss, of Constantinople. The sketch is here brought down to the present time.

E. E. STRONG

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

CONDENSED SKETCH

of the

MISSIONS

of the

AMERICAN BOARD

in

ASIATIC TURKEY

BOSTON
PRINTED FOR THE AMERICAN BOARD
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THE MISSIONS IN ASIATIC TURKEY, 1907

MISSIONS IN ASIATIC TURKEY

THE COUNTRY. — Of the three missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which form the subject of the present sketch, that to Western Turkey occupies the region formerly constituting the Roman provinces of Pontus, Bithynia, Paphlagonia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Phrygia, Lycaonia, Mysia, Asia, and Troas; that to Central Turkey is in Ancient Cilicia, and that to Eastern Turkey in Armenia and Mesopotamia. The greater part of the whole region is made up of tablelands, having an average elevation above the level of the sea of three thousand feet, which rises to forty-five hundred in Through these tablelands pass Armenia. various mountain ranges, the principal of which and forming the basis of the mountain system are the Taurus and the Anti-Taurus Mountains, the first from ten to twelve thousand feet high, extending eastward along the shores of the Mediterranean and reaching into the interior; the second almost parallel to it on the north.

In Eastern Turkey the principal rivers are the Tigris and the Euphrates, emptying into the Persian Gulf. In Western Turkey are the Iris (the Yeshil Irmak), the Halys (the Kizil Irmak), the Sakkariah, emptying into the Black Sea, and the Hermus and Menander, emptying into the Mediterranean.

CLIMATE AND PRODUCTS. — The climate varies according to latitude, elevation, and exposure, ranging from the heat and dryness of regions south of the Taurus and the Mesopotamia Plain, to the cool summers and severe winters of Armenia and other elevated regions. On the whole, the country is poorly supplied with water, for want of which many of the high plains are almost barren. Valleys and places where irrigation is possible are fertile. The mountain slopes afford good pasturage for numerous herds and flocks. Formerly the country was more fertile, but six centuries of war have almost stripped it of trees, and greatly diminished its water supplies. The forests are few, but the beech, the oak, and the pine tree are found to a limited extent, and, where they are cultivated, the cypress, poplar, sycamore, mulberry, olive, fig (indigenous in some parts of the Taurus), lemon, pomegranate, apple, peach, and plum. The principal productions are wheat, barley, rice, cotton, tobacco, maize, hemp, and flax. The grape-vine abounds in some parts, as do different kinds of melons.

AREA AND POPULATION. - In 1820 the Turkish Empire included within its boundaries, as it still does at least nominally, large portions of Europe, Asia, and Africa, all bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, and estimated to cover more than two millions of square miles, and to have a population of forty millions. This area and this population have since, as the result of numerous wars, been much diminished. Large provinces, Greece, Servia, Roumania, and Bulgaria, have become independent, or, as in the case of Bulgaria, acknowledge only a nominal connection with the empire, while Egypt and other African provinces pay an annual tribute to the Sultan as their sovereign, but practically are self-governing. The empire, including all its dependencies, may now, according to the Statesman's Year Book, be regarded as covering 1,662,000 square miles, and as having a population of about 40,000,000; an area less than one half that of the United States, including States and Territories, and a population equal to a little more than one half that of those States and Territories. The provinces under the immediate control of the Sultan measure 1,157,000 square miles, and have a population, in the absence of an accurate census, supposed to be nearly twentyfour millions.

Of these twenty-four millions of the immediate subjects of the Turkish Empire, about sixteen millions are Mohammedan in their religion; a large proportion of the remaining millions profess Christianity in various forms. Within this general division there is a large diversity of race and language, making up a most heterogeneous population. The large proportion of the Mohammedans are Ottoman Turks, found for the most part in the northern part of the empire; next are the Arabs, restricted principally to Syria, Arabia, and the African provinces; then the Koords, in the eastern and central portions of Asia Minor; and then the Albanians in European Turkey, about two thirds of whom are Moslems and the remaining one third Christians. Along with these are Turcomans, Tartars, and Gypsies, and also a large number of Circassians, — emigrants from Russia, with Yezidees and Druses and other semipagan tribes.

The Christian population is made up largely of Armenians, numbering about two and a half millions, and having their home in the northeastern portion of the empire, but found also throughout Asia Minor; of Greeks, some two millions in number, and found along the northeastern shore of the Mediterranean and on the adjacent islands; then Bulgarians,

Syrians, Nestorians, Chaldæans, and Maronites. In many parts of the empire, and especially in the large seaport towns, are found a good many Jews.

This mingling of races and religions is found to such an extent in Turkey, that even in small cities and towns there are frequently to be found three or four distinct races, each with its own language, its own religious and social peculiarities, living on together generation after generation, never commingling beyond the necessities of business relations. These are carried on in the Turkish language, which each man learns to an extent in addition to his own race-tongue used in the family. There are places with a homogeneous population, Turkish, Armenian, or Greek, but the mingling of races without fusion is characteristic of the country.

The Turks. — The Turks came originally from the high plateau of Central Asia, having China for its eastern border. They have been known in history under various names, as Mongolians, Scythians, and Tartars. Chinese annals, dating back to before the Christian era, speak of a powerful people threatening their empire from the west, calling them *Hiong-nee* (vile slaves), and also afterward *Thiukiu*, or Turks. Numer-

ous tribes of Turanian stock, using dialects akin to the Turkish, and some of them professing Buddhism, are still found widely scattered in that region. In early times the tide of emigration and conquest, forced back from China, poured towards the west, as early as the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era. Turkish tribes became known in Europe from their connection with the Greek and Roman Empire at Constantinople. Advancing slowly, with great hordes of cattle, through the vast region now bearing the name Turkestan, some of these Turkish tribes encountering the Saracens (Mohammedans coming from Arabia), they themselves in the tenth century embraced the religion of Mohammed and became from that time its zealous propagators.

One of these tribes, called Seljuk, from the first known chief of the tribe, moving on by a southern route through Bagdad, established a kingdom which at one time extended from the borders of China to the shores of the Mediterranean. For 224 years (1075–1299 A.D.) it had for its capital Konia (the ancient Iconium) and waged frequent wars with the Crusaders and the Greeks of Constantinople. When this Seljukian Turkish Empire began to wane, other Turkish tribes, advancing by a more northern route

from the prolific hive in Central Asia, by the Caspian and Aral Seas and through Armenia, completely subverted the dominion of the Seljukians and established in its stead that of the Ottoman Turks, so called from Othman, their chief. Under him and his successors this new Turkish power extended into Europe, even to the walls of Vienna, and in its reflux wave captured Constantinople in the 857th year of the Mohammedan Hegira, and the 1453d year of the Christian era. Since that time these Ottoman Turks have ruled the land. They assume to themselves as Mohammedans and conquerors all the high offices of government, and designating the Christian part of the population as rayahs (subjects), compel them to pay special taxes, but exempt them from military duty. These Ottoman Turks, through the change of climate and habits of life resulting from removal from Central Asia to Asia Minor, and from the introduction of so many Circassian women into their harems, now present a physical type quite different from that still found among the Turkish tribes in their original homes.

OTHER RACES. — The Armenians are descendants of a people whose home was the mountainous region in the vicinity of Mount

Ararat. They once constituted a powerful kingdom, covering a good part of Asia Minor and extending even to the ancient province of Cilicia on the Mediterranean Sea. Though subject through much of their history to foreign rule, they have all along kept themselves as distinct as the Jews from all commingling with other races. Accepting Christianity in the fourth century, they have always maintained their profession, though subjected in consequence, in common with other Christian nationalities, to much injurious treatment at the hands of their Mohammedan rulers. The Arabs, the Greeks, the Albanians, and the Koords are probably descendants more or less directly from the races which anciently occupied the regions where these nationalities are now found.

THE GOVERNMENT. — This is an absolute monarchy, the supreme authority being in the hands of the Sultan, who bears the title of padishah (king of kings), and claims to be caliph also, or head of the Mohammedan religion. The oldest male member of the royal family succeeds to the throne in case of a vacancy. The Sultan has ministers in various departments, appointed by himself, whose counsel he seeks but often overrules. The head minister of religion is called the

Sheik ul Islam and is the supreme interpreter of the sacred law. The highest minister in the civil service is called the Grand Vizier, or Sadrazam (the occupier of the highest seat), corresponding to the Prime Minister in other governments. After him comes the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for the Interior, for War, for the Navy, etc. All unite to constitute the Grand Council of the empire, and are designated by the Sultan as his viziers, or representatives. Religious and judicial magnates of different ranks bear the general title of ulema (learned men), and have as their head the Sheik ul Islam. them the book of law is the Koran. Of late years the French code of laws and methods of procedure by commissions are coming into use in place of what is called the sheriat, or ancient sacred law. The empire is divided into provinces called vilayets, over which governors, called valis, are appointed by the Sultan, and have provincial councils to assist in the administration. Provinces are divided and subdivided, each district having its own local government subject to the one above it. In some parts of the empire Christians are admitted to positions on various councils, but controlling authority is always retained in the hands of Mohammedans. The various Christian communities have each its own national organization to which the supreme government accords limited authority and privileges, subordinate to itself, and constituting an intricate system, wheels within wheels, of civil and ecclesiastical administration.

MISSIONARY WORK.

The missionary work of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Turkey began in 1820. Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons were appointed in 1818 to labor in Palestine, but did not leave America till the close of 1819, and reached Smyrna only in 1820. From that place Mr. Parsons went on alone to Jerusalem in 1821, but was soon obliged on account of illness to retire; and he died at Alexandria in Egypt, February 10, 1822, his associate, Mr. Fisk, being with him at the time. The next year the Rev. Jonas King joined Mr. Fisk, and the two proceeded to Palestine.

The missionary work of the American Board in the parts of Turkey under consideration in this sketch began at Constantinople on the arrival there, in 1831, of Rev. William Goodell. It had been preceded since 1822 by the publication in Malta in various languages of portions of the Bible and other books for schools and for religious

reading. There had been also as early as 1826 some efforts in the line of schools for Greeks at Smyrna. The previous year (1830) Messrs. Eli Smith and H. G. O. Dwight had made an extensive tour of observation and research through Asia Minor, Armenia, and Persia, reaching Constantinople on their return a little after Mr. Goodell's arrival there.

FIRST PERIOD. — The first period in the history of the mission thus established, extending from 1831 to 1846, may be called the period of preparation. During this period five stations were successively formed: Constantinople in 1831; Smyrna, 1833; Brousa, 1834; Trebizond, 1836, and Erzroom, 1839. At first the missionaries were mainly occupied in the study of the languages of the country, making the acquaintance of the people and establishing schools as opportunity offered and teachers could be secured. Subsequently as they acquired the ability they secured the translation of the Bible into the spoken languages of the country, with the preparation, publication, and circulation of religious books and tracts, and of textbooks for schools, at the same time preaching the gospel, as their tongues were loosened, to individuals and small audiences. They had been instructed to regard themselves as missionaries to all the people of Turkey, but soon discovered that the door of access most widely opened was that to the Armenians, and accordingly devoted their labors for many years mainly to that people. It was, however, no part of their scheme to labor to bring about any secession from the Armenian Church, but simply to secure a reformation within the church from the serious errors in doctrine and practice which had crept in during long years of ignorance.

Their hopes in this respect were disappointed. The ecclesiastics and other leaders among the Armenians, seeing after awhile that those brought under missionary influence began to forsake the confessional, neglected to pray to the saints, abandoned the use of pictures in worship, and appealed to the testimony of the Word of God on all questions of doctrine, set themselves to the work of opposing the missionaries and of persecuting all who yielded to their influence.

This persecution began in 1839 and continued with varying degrees of severity for years. This was a period of great religious interest in the intercourse between the missionaries and the gospel brethren, as those were called who favored the new views.

The Christian experience of many of the latter was very remarkable; the persecution suffered often seeming to stimulate rather than repress their spiritual life. Allusion has already been made to the authority accorded by the Turkish government to the different national organizations among the Christians. Availing themselves of this authority the ecclesiastics and other chiefs of the Armenian community inflicted all manner of hardship upon the gospel men. They were bastinadoed, thrown into prison, fined, put out of employment, deprived of permits to trade, or sent into exile. The ecclesiastics had but to denounce a man as an unruly member of their flock, disobedient to their orders, when the Turks would deliver him into their hands, giving their own police orders to punish the offender. Then, too, the anathemas hurled in the churches against the heretics, as they were called, made them outlaws. No one in the Armenian community might give them salutations or sell them even the necessaries of life. Of course they were deprived of all church privileges and in case of death were cast out to the burial of dogs.

Rejected thus from their own national church, the gospel brethren naturally sought a church organization for themselves in which they and their children could enjoy the or-



dinances of the gospel. The aid of the missionaries was invoked in this matter, and was granted, for it was obvious that it was impossible for the excommunicated brethren to return to the national church except by subscribing to doctrines and conforming to rites that would violate their consciences. At the request, therefore, of the native converts a plan of church organization, including a simple creed and covenant, was prepared by the missionaries, and, having been examined and accepted by the native brethren, on its basis forty individuals, including three females, united in forming (July 1, 1846) the first Evangelical Armenian Church of Constantinople. They chose one of their number named Apisoghom Hatchadoorian to be their pastor, who was ordained to that office during the following week. Churches on the same basis were formed during the summer at Nicomedia and Adabazar in the neighborhood of Constantinople, and in the autumn at Trebizond on the Black Sea. This may be regarded as the termination of the first period of the work in this part of Turkey, during which, in connection with preparations for larger operations, the gospel had been already extensively preached in the vicinity of Constantinople, and to some extent in more distant places. The zeal of the native converts and the evidence they gave of the power of the truth upon their hearts, their cheerful endurance of the persecutions laid upon them, attracted the attention of many and brought numbers to places where the missionaries preached, and thus laid deep foundations for work in the future.

SECOND PERIOD. — A second period in the history of the missionary work under consideration, covering twenty years, from 1846 to 1866, was a period of growth and organization. The stations occupied by missionaries increased in number from five to twenty-four. Aintab, in what is now called the Mission to Central Turkey, was first occupied in 1849; Mosul on the Tigris in 1850; Diarbekir, also on the Tigris, and Marsovan, in the centre of Asia Minor, in 1857; Arabkir, in Eastern Turkey, in 1853; Tocat and Cesarea in 1854; Marash, Aleppo, Sivas, and Harpoot in 1855; Oorfa, Nicomedia, and Antioch in 1856; Mardin, Bitlis, and Adrianople in 1858; and Adana in 1863; the work thus spreading to all parts of Northern Turkey.

Division into Three Missions. — At first all the stations occupied constituted but one mission, which held annually a meeting of

delegates from each station for the consideration of all plans and estimates for the coming year. But at length the expense of time and money involved in attendance upon these annual meetings became so great for delegates coming from remote places that in 1856 the stations of Aintab, Marash, Antioch, Aleppo, and Oorfa were constituted a separate mission, having the Taurus Mountains for its boundary on the north. This is called the Mission to Central Turkey.

Again in 1860 the delegates to the annual meeting of the remaining stations, finding that some of their number had been obliged to travel seven hundred and fifty miles, requiring more than a month of time, and finding other difficulties in the care of so extensive a region by one mission, decided upon another division, by which the stations of Erzroom, Harpoot, and Arabkir, uniting with Mosul, Mardin, and Diarbekir (stations of the Assyria Mission, which had been carried on for eleven years in Southeastern Turkey), should constitute a separate mission, to be called the Mission to Eastern TURKEY, having for its boundary on the west the forty-second degree of east longitude, and for its eastern limit the borders of Persia. The remaining stations, Constantinople, Adrianople, Smyrna, Brousa, Nicomedia, Trebizond, Marsovan, Sivas, including Tocat and Cesarea, are within the bounds of what is called the Mission to Western Turkey. These three missions, all acting under the supervision of the Prudential Committee at Boston, now carry on the work entrusted to them, holding annual meetings independently of each other, but securing unity of plan and operation by an interchange of representatives at their meetings.

The persecutions, already mentioned, continued with but little abatement till 1850, when through the kind intervention of the English ambassador, Sir Stratford Canning, afterwards bearing the title Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and others, the Sultan issued a royal firman, giving to his Protestant subjects all the rights and privileges of a distinct civil organization, putting them on an equality with the Armenians, Greeks, and other non-Moslem communities. The provisions of this firman have been imperfectly carried out, but have secured the cessation, to a great extent, of former persecutions. During these twenty years, the number of evangelical churches increased from four to fortyseven, with 1,913 members in all, the number on their rolls from the beginning having amounted to 2,337.

Evangelical Unions. - In 1864 eight of

the churches in the vicinity of Constantinople formed an ecclesiastical association called, from the ancient name of the Roman province to which they belonged, the Bithynia Union. It carries on its work independently of the missionaries, who, however, attend its meetings and take part in their exercises as honorary members. The object of the union is to take oversight of the churches, provide pastors, attend to cases of complaint, and promote the prosperity of the evangelical work in the region. A similar union was formed in 1665 among the churches in the mission to Eastern Turkey, and was called the Harpoot Union. This union has carried on an important missionary work for years for the Armenians living among the Koords in that region. Another union has been formed among the churches of Central Turkey, and bearing the name of the Cilicia Union, and still another called the Central Union, among the churches centering about Marsovan, Cesarea, and Sivas in the Mission to Western Turkey. There have been established native evangelical societies also in the regions of Erzroom and Bitlis for the promotion of home missionary work. Besides the meetings of these associations, repeated conferences were held during these twenty years, sometimes extended for days,

and attended by missionaries and representatives of the churches, pastors, and others, to secure harmony in action and progress in the work. Extensive tours on the part of native pastors and of missionaries helped in the same direction. During the same period there was continual advance, though at first not very rapid, in the contributions of the churches to the support of their own institutions. The habit of giving tithes to the service of the Lord was adopted in many of the communities, especially in the interior.

Theological Seminary and the Press. -Early in the history of the station at Constantinople, a seminary was established there for the education of young men preparing for the ministry, such as gave promise for that work. This seminary, long under the care of Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, D.D., was removed in 1865 to Marsovan in the interior, and has been continued there as the theological seminary for the Mission to Western Turkey. In its place has arisen Robert College, which though having no organic connection with the mission, is in full sympathy with its work. Robert College opened in 1862, and graduated its first class in 1868. A theological seminary was started in 1859 at Harpoot in Eastern Turkey, and sent out its first class of eighteen men in 1863.

Schools for the training of preachers and teachers were also early established at Tocat, Mardin, Marash, and Aintab.

The Mission Press, which had been transferred in 1833 from Malta to Smyrna, was again transferred in 1853 to Constantinople, where it has ever since continued its operations. The books, tracts, and newpapers printed have been in Armenian, ancient and modern, for the use of Armenians speaking their own language; in Armeno-Turkish (Turkish printed in the Armenian character), for Armenians using only the Turkish language; in Arabo-Turkish (Turkish in the Arabic character), for Turks; in Greco-Turkish (Turkish in Greek character), for Greeks using the Turkish language. The Scriptures in these different languages and characters were at first published under the auspices of the mission, but since 1858 this work has been under the care of the agents of the American and of the British and Foreign Bible Societies. The general publication work of the three missions is done principally at Constantinople on account of facilities found there, and is about equally divided between publications of Christian literature and textbooks for schools.

THIRD PERIOD. — A third period, cover-

ing the thirty years 1866 to 1896 of the history of the missions in Turkey, may be characterized as the period of decided advance in educational work, and in the establishment of cordial relations of co-operation between the native evangelical churches and the foreign missionary laborers. During this period the number of organized churches increased from 47 to 111, and the membership from 1,913 to 11,889.

One of these churches, organized by the Bithynia Union in 1867, was composed entirely of evangelical Greeks. In other cases Greeks and converts of different nationalities, Turks, Jews, Bulgarians, have become members of the local evangelical church. In 1872 Van was added to the list of stations in Eastern Turkey. The theological seminary at Marash graduated its first class in 1871. The erection of a large and commodious Bible House (dedicated in June, 1872, by means of funds collected, mainly in America, by Rev. I. G. Bliss, D.D., and placed under the care of trustees) marks an era in the Bible and general publication work.

Educational Work. — From the beginning, common schools to teach reading (especially the Bible), writing, and other primary studies had been established at all stations and out-

stations. During these thirty years these schools were multiplied, improved in character, and graded schools introduced. High schools for boys, and seminaries for the higher education of girls, were established in almost every important city in the three missions. Industrial departments were added to some of the high schools for boys, to teach the pupils to some extent useful trades, form habits of industry, and aid in their pecuniary support. "The Home," a boarding schools for girl, established at Constantinople in 1872 under the auspices of the Woman's Board of Missions, for the higher education of pupils of various nationalities, now called the American College for Girls, began to send out its graduates in 1875. In the same year Central Turkey College commenced operations at Aintab, and soon added its medical department. Prior to 1903, 224 had been graduated in the twenty-four classes of this institution. The Normal School established in 1872 at Harpoot became Armenia College in 1878. Its name has since been changed to Euphrates College. The institution is for both sexes and it has primary and high school as well as collegiate and theological departments. In 1907 there were in all these departments nearly 1,000 students, of whom 242 were in the college

proper. In 1886 the high school for boys at Marsovan became Anatolia College. One third of its pupils have been Greeks. About one sixth of its graduates have become preachers of the gospel.

In 1882 a high school for girls was founded at Marash, which subsequently received the title of the Central Turkey Girls' College. Nearly all the graduates from this institution have been engaged in the work of teaching.

St. Paul's Institute at Tarsus was chartered by the legislature of New York in 1887, having been founded by Col. Elliot F. Shepard, of New York. From its inception the institution has had a good body of students, numbering, in 1906, 158.

Another college formed within this period is the International College at Smyrna which was started as a boys' school in 1891, but was incorporated as the International College in 1903. The city of Smyrna has a population of 325,000 and the college also reaches out towards Greece, Macedonia and the islands of the Ægean. The American Board aided the college in its earlier years, but since 1898 the institution has been entirely self supporting.

Self-support and Self-government. — It is a principle early accepted on the part of

missionaries and of the churches formed in connection with their labors that an evangelical work once begun in any region should pass, as soon as may be, into the hands of native Christians; that the work should be primarily regarded as belonging to their churches, and that the missionaries from abroad should be regarded as their helpers. Hence the efforts to establish self-supporting and self-governing churches, and to induce them to take upon themselves as fast and as far as possible the responsibilities of pushing on the work.

Departments of Work. — Aside from the evangelistic work, to which the larger number of the missionaries devote their energies, the educational department calls for the entire attention of many of the missionaries. Indeed, most of them give some attention to the supervision of educational work. The seven colleges and four theological schools and forty-seven boarding and high schools demand constant labor on the part of the men and women of the mission.

The publication department for the three missions is located at Constantinople, where the press under the care of a special committee is preparing and issuing books, tracts and newspapers as needed throughout the Turkish Empire.

The medical department is an important arm of the service, eleven of the male missionaries being physicians. Well conducted hospitals are open at Marsovan, Cesarea, Sivas, Harpoot, Van, Mardin, and Erzroom. The hospital at Aintab is second to none in efficiency, but is independent of the mission. A new one is about to be opened at Diarbekir in Eastern Turkey.

The work of these three missions has been, through its whole history, to a very great extent, among the Armenians, but has extended also to other nationalities of the empire, especially to Greeks in Western Turkey, to Koordish-speaking and to Syrian Christians in Eastern Turkey, and somewhat in all the three missions to the Turks. Few of this latter nationality have publicly professed acceptance of Christianity, but judging from the increasing sale of Scriptures and portions of the same in the language used by them, and from the not infrequent attendance upon evangelical worship by individuals of this nationality, many among them are giving attention to its claims.

FOURTH PERIOD.— From 1896–1907. The beginning of this period was marked by a sudden and fierce persecution, involving the loss of thousands of lives and much prop-

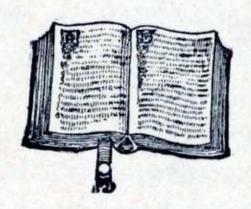
erty. Not since modern missions began has a disaster so widespread and severe befallen Christian converts unless it may be compared with the Boxer rebellion in China, in the year 1900. These massacres began in the autumn of 1895. With a single exception, all the eight stations of the Eastern and Central Turkey Missions, besides several in the Western, were the scenes of brutal massacres, while hundreds of villages were pillaged and burned. Mission property at Harpoot and Marash went up in flames, and while the life of no foreign missionary was taken, hundreds and thousands of native Christians were cruelly slain, scores on scores of them dying as faithful martyrs for Christ's sake.

The persecution was directed chiefly against the Armenians, both those belonging to the old Gregorian Church and to the Protestant churches; their church buildings were desecrated and burned, their homes were destroyed, many were slain, and it seemed for a time as if the race would be entirely obliterated. One of the most dreadful stories connected with this reign of terror throughout the cities and villages of Asia Minor was that which came from Oorfa in Central Turkey. There the Armenians fled for refuge to their great church, crowding it with 2,000 people, some estimating the number as high as 3,000,

and upon these defenseless multitudes the persecutors drew their swords and while slaughtering to the right hand and left, the building was set on fire and not more than 100 escaped with their lives from the terrible holocaust. But the effort to blot out the Christian faith reacted upon the persecutors; the blood of the martyrs again proved to be the seed of the church. The furnace of affliction through which the people passed welded them together as never before and the Gregorians to some large extent learned that the missionary movement among them was designed not for the destruction, but for the reformation of their church.

It is wonderful to say that the Protestant communities, though so terribly smitten by the loss of so many of their churches and pastors, and the destruction of their homes and property did not give over to despair. Smitten to the earth they kept their faith in God and have shown marvelous recuperative power. Little by little they have rebuilt their churches; they have kept open the schools; out of their deep poverty have sought Christian education for their children, so that at the present time the number of pupils in the various educational institutions of all grades is larger than ever before. Churches are fairly prosperous; the conditions under which

they live are most trying; taxes are exorbitant and their positions are insecure. Emigration to America has been very constant and communities that have been under the influence of our missions are found in many parts of the United States. Our missionaries are laboring hopefully and are anticipating a brighter day for the evangelical work throughout the empire.





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