

# SHALL THIS NATION DIE?

BY

Rev. JOSEPH NAAYEM, O. I.

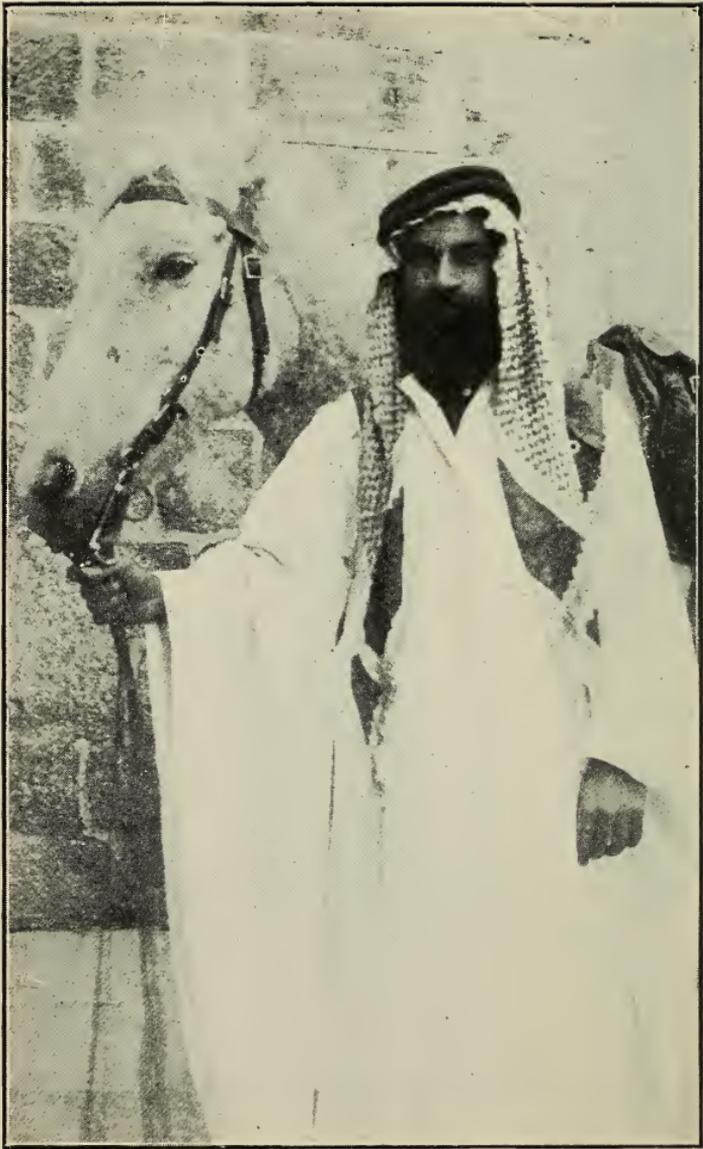
With a Preface by  
LORD BRYCE

and

An Historical Essay by  
Rev. GABRIEL OUSSANI, D.D.

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Chaldean Rescue  
253 Madison Avenue  
New York, N. Y.



THE AUTHOR IN THE BEDOUIN DISGUISE IN WHICH  
HE ESCAPED FROM THE TURKS

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# PREFACE

BY

LORD BRYCE

The bloodstained annals of the East contain no record of massacres more unprovoked, more widespread or more terrible than those perpetrated by the Turkish Government upon the Christians of Anatolia and Armenia in 1915. It was the sufferings of the Armenians that chiefly drew the attention of Britain and America because they were the most numerous among the ecclesiastical bodies, and the slaughter was, therefore, on a larger scale. But the minor communities, such as the Nestorian and Assyro-Chaldean churches, were equally the victims of the plan for exterminating Christianity, root and branch, although the Turks had never ventured to allege that these communities had given any ground of offense. An account of these massacres, organized and carried out with every circumstance of cruelty by Enver and Talaat, chiefs of the ruffianly gang who were then in

power in Constantinople, has been given in the Blue Book, published by the British Foreign Office in 1916, and entitled "Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire." In the present volume there is presented a graphic and moving narrative of similar cruelties perpetrated upon members of the Assyro-Chaldean Church in which about half of them, men, women and children, perished at the hands of Turkish murderers and robbers. The narrative is written by the Rev. Father Naayem, who saw these horrors with his own eyes and narrowly escaped with his life. He has recounted to me and to other friends of his people in England the terrible story, and we have encouraged him to believe that his English translation of his book will be read with sympathy and pity both here and in the United States. I venture to recommend it to those who wish to know what these innocent victims have suffered, trusting that it may do something to sustain that interest in the sorely afflicted Christian Churches of the East, which has been manifested in both countries, and hoping also that the charitable aid so generously extended to them in their calamities may be

continued. The need of relief is still very great and it is for their Christian faith, to which they have clung during centuries of oppression and misery, that they have now again had to suffer.

*23rd July, 1920.*

AN HISTORICAL ESSAY  
ON THE  
ASSYRO-CHALDEAN CHRISTIANS

BY

REV. GABRIEL OUSSANI, D. D.

The Rev. J. Naayem, the author of this work, and an eye-witness of most of the horrible scenes of massacre herein described, has requested me to write an introduction to this English version of his book for the benefit of the American public, which is perhaps not so well acquainted with the history, geography and religion of the Assyro-Chaldean Christians who suffered during and after the great war (1915-1920) at the hands of the unscrupulous Turks, indescribable tortures, and who lost through murder and famine 250,000 of their membership.

Having the interest and the welfare of this unfortunate nation at heart, being myself a native of that unhappy land, and having already known of these

things through direct correspondence with bishops, priests, merchants, friends and relatives in Mesopotamia, I gladly accede to his request, hopeful of awakening in the loving hearts of the American people a genuine sympathy and commiseration for this martyred race, one of the most ancient and glorious nations; but, alas, decimated and reduced to ruin.

Never in the past have the American people had such an opportunity of extending a helping hand to oppressed Christian nations as they have at the present time in Upper Mesopotamia.

The sufferings of the Belgian, French, Polish, Serbian and Austrian peoples during the great war completely fade away by comparison with what the helpless countries of the Near East suffered and endured, and are still enduring, from Turkish and Kurdish ravages and cruelties.

The excellent work done by the Near East Relief Committee has accomplished much; but a great deal more must be done, and done quickly, if the Christianity of the Near East, and especially of Mesopotamia and Persia, is to be rescued from immediate and total destruction. The well-merited relief so generously

extended to the suffering Armenians has in a way so completely focused the attention and the generosity of the American people on this unfortunate race, that the other,—smaller, but just as unfortunate,—races of the Near East have been to a great extent lost sight of. These smaller Christian nations, and particularly the Assyro-Chaldeans, suffered as much at the hands of the Turks as the Armenians, and proportionately more, and thus deserve as much sympathy and help.

Ethnographically, the modern Assyro-Chaldeans are the descendants of the Ancient Babylonians, Assyrians and Arameans, who for many millenniums inhabited and ruled over the Tigris-Euphrates valley, Upper Mesopotamia and Syria, and who were the political masters of the Near East for many centuries before the Christian era.

With the downfall of the Kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia (7th and 6th centuries B. C., respectively) and the political ascendancy of the Medians, Parthians, and Persians (from circa 6th century B. C. to 6th century A. D. especially during the reign of the Sassanide dynasty), they suffered many political and later on religious persecutions, but stood the test heroically.

Incidentally, their very ethnographic identity and their national spirit of independence were completely crushed. They were, so to say, engulfed in the many religious, racial and political whirlpools and currents which swept over their country for more than ten full centuries.

Under the Arab domination (from the 7th to the 13th century A. D.) they once more prospered, and developed the greatest and most extensive Christian Church of the Near East, enjoying vast political and religious privileges, marred at times by occasional and local adversities. From the 13th century on and until our own day, however, this heroic Christian nation suffered such untold misery and persecutions at the hands of the cruel Tartars, Moguls and Mohammedan Turks that at the beginning of the 20th century this once great and fertile country, this glorious and powerful nation, was reduced to less than one-tenth of its former size.

The Assyro-Chaldean nation embraced Christianity, if not during the first, certainly during the middle of the second century. Setting aside the controversy as to the early evangelization of Edessa in Upper Meso-

potamia during the reign of King Abgar (circa 35 A. D.) and the traditional propagation of the Gospel throughout Mesopotamia by the Apostles Thomas, Addai and Mari, it is unanimously agreed by all scholars that towards the end of the second century the Christian religion had penetrated into the whole country inhabited by the Assyro-Chaldeans. In the third and fourth centuries, they already possessed a highly developed and well organized hierarchy, with numerous dioceses and churches, a Patriarchal See, stationed at Seleucia-Ctesiphon on the lower Tigris and a Christian population exercising, at times, a far-reaching political and religious influence over the Sassanian dynasty of Persia and the Arabian dynasty of Hira. During the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, the Assyro-Chaldean Church became so extensive and powerful that it excited the fear and the hatred of the Sassanian kings of Persia, who determined to exterminate it with a series of almost uninterrupted persecutions and unheard-of cruelties. Hundreds of thousands of martyrs gave their lives willingly for the faith of Christ. Patriarchs, bishops, priests, virgins, widows, children and adults, noble and poor, vied one with the

other in their faith and love for Christ, and were massacred with tortures the like of which was not even dreamed of by the most cruel of Roman emperors. And if the number of martyrs in the Roman Empire during the first three or four centuries, according to a generous estimate, may have reached the grand total of 200,000, that of the Assyro-Chaldean martyrs in the Persian Empire, from the 3rd to the 7th century, must have reached the half million mark and perhaps twice that number. Entire cities and whole districts were destroyed and their Christian inhabitants slaughtered.

Monasticism also penetrated and flourished early among the Assyro-Chaldean Christians. The mountains of Assyria and Kurdistan teemed with hundreds of their monastic institutions, and their inmates equalled and often surpassed the most austere and absurd asceticism of the early Egyptian and Syrian monks and anchorites. Great schools of theology and philosophy also flourished within this great Church, and it is a well known fact that Arabian philosophy, mathematics, medicine, the arts and the sciences of the Middle Ages, though to a great extent of Greek origin, penetrated the Abbaside Empire through the influence of

the numerous Nestorian and Jacobite scholars and schools of learning; and thus preserved Western culture from utter destruction and made possible its reintroduction into Europe through Spain at the hands of the Mohammedan Arabs.

Up to about the middle of the 5th Christian century, the Assyro-Chaldean Christians professed the same orthodox Christian Faith. In 429, Nestorius, a native of Syria and Patriarch of Constantinople, began to preach his doctrine that in Christ there were two distinct persons (the human and the divine) just as there were in Him two distinct corresponding natures, and thus denying the Divine Maternity of the Virgin Mary. Condemned by the Council of Ephesus (431) and repudiated by the whole Church of the West, and finding no outlet for his doctrine in the Roman Empire, Nestorius, or rather his Syrian followers and admirers, bishops, priests and monks, found in Mesopotamia and Persia a fertile field for their teaching. Aided by the Sassanian kings of Persia, the inveterate enemies of the Roman Empire and of Western Christianity, they succeeded in propagating Nestorianism throughout the length and breadth of the Persian Empire,

with the result that within a few decades the vast and powerful Christian Church of Persia embraced the Nestorian doctrine and thus separated itself from the Christianity of the West, becoming an autonomous church.

Hardly had this been accomplished when a new christological heresy appeared on the horizon,—that of Eutyches, another Syrian monk, and Abbot of Constantinople. In his opposition to Nestorianism, Eutyches ended by propounding the opposite theory to Nestorius, by maintaining that as in Christ there was but one Person, so also His two natures became so thoroughly united or admixed as to form but one composite nature. He was deposed and his doctrine condemned by the Councils of Constantinople (448) and of Chalcedon (451).

Finding again no outlet in the West, this new teaching began to spread in Syria, Egypt, Armenia, Mesopotamia and throughout the Persian Empire, rivaling in its rapid spread Nestorianism itself; with the result that throughout all the following centuries and till our own days, Assyro-Chaldean Christianity, which in the 10th and 11th centuries boasted of

not less than five hundred dioceses, thousands of churches and millions of adherents, reaching in its extension from Central Asia, China, Tartary, Mongolia, India (Malabar), Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria, Cyprus and as far as Egypt, became divided into two great rival Churches, viz., the Nestorian Church, and the Eutychian or Jacobite Church.

From the 14th century, however, and as late as our own day, missionaries from religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church centered their activities on converting these people, with the result that ever since, and for the last six centuries hundreds of thousands of these Assyro-Chaldean Nestorians and Jacobites entered the Roman Catholic Church, preserving, however, their own national and ecclesiastical language, liturgy, church discipline and customs. At present, therefore, the Assyro-Chaldean Christians are divided into four big sects or churches, with their own corresponding hierarchy and distinct church organization and *government*, differing but slightly in their faith, in their liturgy and liturgical language (rather dialects of the same language), church discipline and ecclesiastical customs.

At the beginning of the great war, according to more or less reliable statistics, the total number of the Assyro-Chaldean Christians in Turkey and Persia was about seven or eight hundred thousand, scattered over the plains of Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Upper Syria and the mountains of Assyria, Kurdistan and Persia, whereas at the present time, having lost more than 250,000 souls at the hands of the tyrannical Turks, Kurds and Persians, they hardly number 500,000, many of whom had to abandon their country and homes and flee into Russia, Syria and lower Mesopotamia.

They are the following :

1. The Nestorian-Assyro-Chaldeans — commonly called Nestorians.
2. The Catholic Assyro-Chaldeans — commonly called Chaldeans.
3. The Eutyhian Assyro-Chaldeans — commonly called Jacobites.
4. The Syrian Catholic Assyro-Chaldeans — commonly called Catholic Syrians.

Numerically :

No. 1 before the war numbered circa 250,000.

No. 2 before the war numbered circa 150,000.

No. 3 before the war numbered circa 250,000.

No. 4 before the war numbered circa 50,000.

Owing to the staggering losses, it is almost impossible to give accurate statistics of the Assyro-Chaldean Christians at the present time. When the whole tale of destruction is told and the condition of the country becomes normal (keeping in mind the horrible slaughter of 250,000 souls, the total destruction of the churches, the burning of thousands of homes, the killing of a dozen or more bishops and hundreds of priests, the plunder and spoliation of public, private and church properties, the ravages of hunger, starvation, violence, disease, poverty, deportation, tortures, amputation and mutilation of thousands still alive and rendered helpless and in a state of abject poverty, ridicule and shame), then, and only then, will the American people be enabled to form an adequate estimate of the terrific losses in property and human life, in domestic and personal happiness, in religion and education among the unfortunate Assyro-Chaldean Christians.

For this reason Father Naayem's book is of timely

interest, as it will give the American public an accurate, though meagre pen picture of the horrible sufferings of but a small portion of the Assyro-Chaldean Christians.

America and American principles of justice and liberty, American love for suffering humanity and American charity are the only hope of stricken Eastern Christianity, and the one bright star in the once brilliant, but, alas, now darkened Eastern sky!

ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY,

Dunwoodie, N. Y.

*Oct. 1st, 1920.*

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Several works have already appeared on the atrocities and massacres perpetrated by the Turks in Armenia, Asia-Minor and Syria. Eyewitness and victim of these cruelties, I come in my turn to present my testimony. It is my heartfelt wish to reveal to the public yet one more prey of the Monster of Anatolia;—the brute whose history is one of felony, pillage, destruction, murder and massacre;—the beast whose life has been prolonged by fifty years through the action of the Great Powers to the ruin of the unhappy Christians, ground for centuries beneath his heel. I desire to plead the cause of a little people as deeply interested as it is abandoned; a nation descended from a great Empire and from the most ancient civilization known to history; a race whose country, like that of Armenia, has been the theatre of abominations practiced by the Turks, who have assassinated its men and deported the women, children and greybeards to be subjected to the worst of outrages, and martyred with cold and cruel calcu-

lation. That little people is the Assyro-Chaldean race.

In this work will be found :

My account of the massacre of the Christians in my own district of Urfa, the ancient and celebrated city of Mesopotamia.<sup>1</sup> I recount the tragic fate of my father, victim of Turkish hatred, and my own flight from Urfa.

In 1895-96, as a child of seven, I had witnessed, in this same city of Urfa, the butchery of 5000 Christians, whose throats were cut by their Turkish fellow-citizens. On that occasion, thanks to some Arab merchants, his faithful friends, my father had escaped the massacre.

An account of my imprisonment and sufferings at the hands of these human demons in the concentration camp of the Allied prisoners of war at Afion-Kara-Hissar, to which I had been appointed Chaplain by the Turkish Government at the request of the Holy See.

The testimony of a German of sincerity, one of that nation whose government is not itself altogether guiltless of complicity in the tragedy.

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<sup>1</sup>Better known perhaps in history by its former name, Edessa.

Documents confided to my care and detailed narratives given me personally by eye-witnesses or actual victims of the persecution who survived, miraculously, their sufferings.

Three hundred pages stained with human blood! A story full of horrors and degradation in which the Turk reveals himself for what he is;—a double-dealing fanatical hater of the Christian.

I should like to quote a few lines from a letter written to me on the 31st of May, 1919, by a Frenchman who had passed more than three years among the Turks as a prisoner of war:

“ . . . I received your letter just at the moment when you were giving your lecture, and was with you in spirit as I thought of what you had to say as you retraced the unheard-of suffering of the poor people who, during the war, lay prone under the Turco-German whip. But have you told everything? Did you witness over there *all* the misery and sufferings of those unhappy people? I saw them in camp on their way through Kara-Pounar, a flock of miserable, bleeding, starving, fever-riddled wretches, living skeletons who had not even strength enough to dodge the

cudgels of their murderers. How I should have applauded had I had the good fortune to be among your audience and hear you show up those butchers! . . .”

Would that I could bring to light the details of the martyrdom of the Assyro-Chaldeans in the district of Djezire on the Tigris and of Mediat, where over fifty villages I know were completely sacked and ruined, all the inhabitants being put to the sword:— a district which was fertile and prosperous and looked forward to a happy future, because of the fact that the Bagdad Railway was about to run through their territory.

There is not the slightest doubt that not less than “ 250,000 Assyro-Chaldeans, perhaps rather more than a third of the race, perished through Turkish fanaticism during the Great War, and immediately after the signing of the Armistice.

During the occupation by the Allied Armies, in June and July, 1919, two other Chaldean districts, Amadia and Zakho, not far from Mosul, which until that time had been preserved by the frenzied efforts of the Patriarch of Babylon, were invaded by the Kurds, who put the men to death, and, after pillaging

and sacking everything, rode off with the women and girls. A letter from the Patriarch, given me by his Vicar General at Rome, Mgr. Paul David, and which I published in the press, briefly relates the details of this new horror.

To-day the situation of this little nation is indeed precarious, surrounded as it is by a thousand fanatical and hostile Arab and 'Kurd tribes, which are still armed and seem contemptuous of the small Allied forces sent to maintain order. At the first opportunity they will fall upon our unhappy countrymen and exterminate the race.

In desperation we launch our appeal to the pity and the justice of the Great Allied Powers, whose aim it is to safeguard the rights of little nations, and we pray that they will not delay in offering efficacious protection to this little Assyro-Chaldean people which for centuries has groaned in slavery and oppression. Confidently we hope and trust that they will assuage its misery, mindful of its attachment to their cause, and will at length restore to it its fatherland, its liberty and its autonomous existence.

J. NAAYEM.

# PART I

## CHAPTER I

### *My Father's Death*

At the commencement of the Spring of 1915, I was in my parish at Urfa. The Great War was still in its early stages. The Russians in the Caucasus were advancing with great strides, and the Christians followed their operations with great interest, for they preferred Muscovite to Turkish rule.

One day, while I was paying him a visit, Bishop Ardawart showed me a map, pointing out with great satisfaction the progress of the Russians in their march on Erzerum. This happened some days before the arrest of the leading men of the town; and the poor Bishop had no premonition whatever of the fate awaiting him. Propaganda of Armenian treachery was circulated. The faces of the Turks changed and became more threatening. Photographs, purporting to show Christians killing Turks, were passed from hand to hand in the police stations, where they were shown to the Turkish populace in order to excite their fanat-

icism. It was alleged that bombs and rifles were found in Christian houses and churches.

In March, 1915, there began to arrive at Urfa, in the most pitiable state, convoys of women, children and old men who were being deported. The girls and pretty women had been carried off while on the road, and the men had been separated from them or killed. To prolong the wanderings of the unfortunate people, and to make them spend all they possessed, they were compelled to halt several days at a time. This gave the Moslem population sufficient time to besiege the convoy, and appropriate for nominal prices whatever they wanted. At the same time, the soldiers and police, who monopolized the trade with the convoys, charged exorbitant sums for the provisions they had to buy.

They did worse, for at night they scaled the walls of the large yard in which the Christians were kept, selected various women and girls and carried them off across the flat roofs of the houses. After being kept for some days as playthings, the wretched creatures were then abandoned or massacred.

The yard where the convoys were taken soon be-

came infested with vermin, and rank with refuse, so that for several months from ten to fifteen people died every day. The bodies were piled on carts and taken outside the town, and thrown into ditches. Those who had the strength, wandered about the streets, ill and in rags, reduced to begging their bread. Whenever I went out, I met many of these poor people, the sight of whom unnerved me, and I would hasten home again, sick at heart, obliged to refuse alms, to my intense mortification, to so great a number. Many fell in the streets and died there of starvation, their death-bed one of mud or dust.

Aye! These eyes of mine have seen little children thrown on manure heaps, while life still lingered in their little bodies.

The Armenian Bishop, although assisted by the members of his community, was unable to cope with all this misery, for the convoys multiplied in number. As soon as one had passed, after being pillaged and ill-treated, another followed, and the same heart-rending scenes were repeated, again and again.

This state of things, far from touching the hearts of the Turks, increased their fanatical hatred toward the

followers of Christ. In the bazaars, the cafes,— everywhere,— one saw them whispering together, planning foul surprises for the Christians.

Finally, several well-known persons were arrested, and to force them to reveal the names of imaginary *Comitadjis*<sup>1</sup> and to reveal the places where they had hidden arms, unmentionable tortures were inflicted upon them.

This made me so apprehensive that I advised my father to call upon the local head of the Committee of Union and Progress, one Parmaksis Zade Sheikh Muslim, who was acting mayor, and an associate of my father's in business. To him my father confided his intention of leaving for Aleppo with his family, but Sheikh Muslim reassured my father, saying:

“Do not worry; you have nothing to fear. In case of danger I shall know how to get you away without difficulty.”

My father was comforted by his words, but I was still very doubtful and anxious, for I knew to the bottom the character of the unspeakable Turk.

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<sup>1</sup>Members of secret organizations, here obviously for the overthrow of the Turkish Government.

The continual passage of the convoys through the town caused the Christians to live in a state of great anxiety.

One day the Chief of Police called upon the Armenian Bishop, and ordered him to summon his flock to the Cathedral, as he wished to address them. The bell was rung, and all the people ran to the Cathedral, filling it. Then the Turkish Commandant entered, harangued the crowd, and in the name of the Government ordered them to deliver up whatever arms they possessed under pain of suffering the same fate as those perishing in the convoys.

“If you obey,” he added, “not one of you will be interfered with.”

The Commandant with the Bishop then proceeded to Garmush, a large village of five hundred Christian families, situated about an hour and a half from the town, where he repeated his harangue. Whereupon the National Council assembled immediately at the Bishop's residence and discussed the advisability of surrendering weapons. Treachery on the part of the Turkish Government was feared, and the Council was divided in opinion. Bishop Ardawart, seeing danger

imminent, implored his flock to yield their arms, in order to appease the anger of the Turks.

“I am ready to sacrifice myself, if necessary,” said the prelate, kneeling before his flock in tears.

Touched by his words, his hearers decided unanimously to obey, and next day carts carried from the church to the Governor's house rifles, revolvers and other arms which had belonged to the Armenians. Unfortunately, a number retained their better weapons.

Knowing the Christians to be disarmed, the Turks began their foul work. First of all fifteen or twenty prominent men were arrested and thrown into prison, and their houses, that of the Bishop and the Cathedral, were confiscated. All papers, books and registers were taken to the Governor's house to be examined minutely; and corners of the Cathedral and the episcopal residence were dug up in search of arms. Gradually, all men of influence were arrested, imprisoned, and subjected to long inquisitions, during which they were flogged until blood was drawn.

Special envoys with full powers arrived at Urfa from Constantinople to direct the tribunals, and were

entertained as the guests of ex-deputy Mahmoud Nedim, a bloodthirsty man, all powerful in the province. Bishop Ardawart, himself, and several of his priests were soon arrested and taken to prison. Panic reigned among the Christian population.

As for the Moslem civilians, they markedly avoided the society of the Christians, and held secret meetings at night, their sinister looks showing that they were hiding some tragic plan. If approached for help, they answered that they could not mix themselves up in these matters, and declared definitely that it was impossible for them to offer protection or shelter to a Christian. Such action had been forbidden formally by the Government. In fact, all Turks had been made to swear in the Mosques on the Talak<sup>2</sup> that they would give no assistance to the Christians.

One evening a police agent, accompanied by several soldiers, knocked at our door, and when we opened, announced that he had come to search the house.

Three days before, two Armenian villagers had be-

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<sup>2</sup> A characteristic Turkish oath, by which the swearer pledges to divorce his wife if it be proved that his statement be false, or that he has broken his oath.

come our guests, since they were our employees and helped in our transport of cereals. In Syria, and especially in Lebanon, business was limited to trade in foodstuffs, on account of the war. Urfa, being an agricultural town, my father, among others, exported cereals to Aleppo and to Lebanon. According to an old custom, peculiar to this country, villagers in the employ of merchants or farmers, when they come into town, become their guests, and are lodged and fed by their masters; in many houses, indeed, rooms being set apart for this purpose.<sup>3</sup>

Not knowing what was happening in the provinces, we had no suspicion of the danger we were running in receiving these people into our house. Nor did our guests tell us of what was going on in the country from which they had come. Nevertheless, as a matter of prudence, my father, before leaving for his office the day after their arrival, suggested to my mother that she should advise them to seek lodgings elsewhere. The poor villagers, unwilling to leave us, remained yet another day, and made up their minds to

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<sup>3</sup> The very same custom prevails to-day in the wheat belt in our Western States.

go only when my mother insisted. Next morning they left, to return again in the evening and spend the night with us, and had not left the house when the police found them hiding in the corner of the kitchen.

It was not until later that we learnt that the village where the poor people had lived — Hochine, a dependance of the Sandjak of Severeck — had been entered by soldiers and Kurds, who had massacred nearly every inhabitant. A few men escaped to the mountains, among them our two villagers, who later came to us.

They were arrested, of course, and taken to prison.

My mother was alone in the house when my father returned at seven in the evening, at which time a policeman called and arrested him, on a charge of having given refuge to two insurgents. It was even alleged that he had relations with the enemy, and was exporting cereals to them via Lebanon.

One of my brothers at once ran off to my father's intimate friend, already mentioned, Sheikh Muslim, the head of the Committee of Union and Progress, gave him an account of what had occurred, and implored him to intervene. Although the official reas-

sured him, my brother went to the Chief of Police, likewise a friend of my father's, who a fortnight before, in company with Sheikh Muslim, had accepted our hospitality and spent the evening at our house. The Commandant promised to release my father the very next day, whereupon my brother returned at a late hour and calmed the family.

Next day he went again to our Turkish friends, who, this time, declared that we must have patience for two or three days, since to liberate my father immediately would only attract public attention, inasmuch as none of the influential Armenians had been released. These repeated promises led us astray and prevented us from taking recourse to other and perhaps more practical methods. Several days passed, fruitful of no more than promises. Hadji Bekir Bey, father of Sheikh Muslim, an octogenarian millionaire, who occupied the position of Honorary Persian Consul, and who held my father in great esteem, sent every day to obtain news and begged his son to make every effort to save him.

A month passed, and the definite promises of the earlier period became evasive. My father's friends,

now seeing themselves powerless to save him, ended by declaring that it looked as if someone in high authority was opposing his release. They would not name the person whose interest it was to ruin my father, although Sheikh Muslim admitted to us later that it was no other than the ex-deputy, Mahmoud Nedim, the terror of the countryside.

Six months before, Mahmoud Nedim had had a difference with my father, and became his enemy. This man had a large property at Tel-Abiad, an important station of the Bagdad Railway, forty kilometers from Urfa, a point from which cereals are exported on a large scale. Here, also, it happened that my father kept on hand a large stock of empty grain sacks.

Nedim had harvested his crops and wished to send them to Aleppo for sale, but was unable to procure sacks, which had become rare and costly, owing to requisitions by the Government. Knowing that my father had some stored at the Railway Company's depot, he went to the official in charge, unknown to us, and asked for them, saying that my father had taken his sacks under similar circumstances, they being intimate friends. Either of his own free will,

or through fear of the consequences if he refused, the storekeeper handed over several hundred sacks which belonged to my father.

My father soon learnt of the loss of his sacks, which did serious harm to his business, but in view of the accomplished fact, he said nothing. Later he requested payment for the sacks — a rather large sum in itself. Nedim was deaf to the appeal. Several months passed! Eventually my father encountered him at a meeting of the influential men of the town, and, tired of waiting, asked him to settle the matter. This his debtor considered a personal affront, and in an insulting manner refused to pay. My father, outraged, expostulated indignantly, and left him.

Now, it was this man, Mahmoud Nedim, who was acting as host to the high officials sent from Constantinople to take charge of the persecution at Urfa. It was his influence with his powerful guests, which was stultifying the efforts of my father's old Mohammedan friends, Sheikh Muslim and the Chief of Police, to secure his release.

Arrest followed arrest, and Sheik Safwet, a deputy

of the town, went to Diarbekir in the infamous rôle of instigator of a Djehad.<sup>4</sup>

The Christians of Ourfa were terrified, as well they might be, and in desperation and in the hope of saving their men folk, the women cast themselves at the feet of these officials and tried by every means in their power to soften their hearts. The Tchettas patrolled the town armed to the teeth, and watched the Christians with sinister intent, pursuing those who tried to escape to the mountains to join the deserters from the army.

As an example of the barbarity of these Tchettas chiefs I will digress here for a moment to repeat an incident that was related to me by Mr. Demarchi, controller of the Ottoman Bank at Urfa, who is a friend of mine. He was attending an open reception in the Governor's official residence upon one occasion when he saw one of these men in heated discussion with the commandant of the city, an Arab from Damascus. As he watched, he saw the Tchetta box the ears of the commandant and then draw his revolver to shoot him.

Only the swift intervention of the Governor himself saved the soldier's life, and the weakness of the

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<sup>4</sup> A religious or "holy" war.

Turkish Government is manifested by the fact that instead of punishing the chief the Governor pacified him, adopting the friendliest attitude towards him, as though he himself were afraid of similar treatment; though the Turk continued to hurl insults upon him and all other Arabs.

A commission charged with the trial of those detained in prison arrived at Urfa from Aleppo; whereupon we hastened to call upon the President of the Court, and endeavored to gain his sympathy by every means in our power. He told us that my father, being innocent, would be released without delay, and he repeated this to my mother when she, too, sent to him.

In the meantime many of the Armenians decided to send a petition to the Governor, informing him that they intended to embrace Mohammedanism, which had no effect whatever upon the Turkish chiefs.

From the date of the arrival of these brigand chiefs matters took a grave turn. No news came from the outside. Letters, which had been sent to our cousins, the Roumis, at Diarbekir, the sons of the former dragoman of the French Consulate, were returned to us, marked "Absent."

We learned later that the Roumis had been put on a raft on the Tigris, with the first Diarbekir Convoy, and had been murdered en route.

The manager of the Ottoman Bank of Diarbekir had arrived in great haste some days before this. Utterly panic-stricken, he would tell us nothing of what he had seen. He had undergone many dangers on the road, and remaining only for two days, during which time he was concealed with Mr. Demarchi, he hastened to Aleppo.

One day a rumor was spread that a soldier had been killed by a bullet fired by one of the Armenian refugees who had taken to the mountains. Thereupon, even greater hostility began to be shown to the Christians. As the body of the soldier was being taken through the streets, those who accompanied it made fanatical demonstrations, and would have stoned a priest whom they encountered had he not taken refuge in the barracks. This was Father Wartan, who later, after three years' imprisonment, was unjustly hanged at Adana, *although the Armistice had already been declared.*

Meanwhile, the Turkish soldiers in charge of the convoys returned, their fell work done and their

purses filled with the pieces of gold they had taken from those whom they had deported, and wantonly put to death.

During this time my father was confined in the part of the prison reserved for those under sentence. There he soon contracted dysentery and, very much reduced in strength and needing proper care, begged us to use every possible means to procure his release. The influential Turks who claimed to be his friends were unwilling to intervene. It was the Arabian Commandant from Damascus, the one whom the Tchetta Chief had struck in the Governor's mansion, who, at the request of a friend, went to the captain in charge of the prison, and asked him to remove my father to a place of less severe confinement.

Meanwhile, the arrests continued, and became the sole occupation of the Government officials and the police. For hours, the head of the telegraph office remained at the instruments, his anxious and worried expression showing the importance of the secret orders he was receiving. All Christian officials were discharged, and the Christian members of the palace force were degraded and dismissed with contempt.

The hatred of the Turks for the "Gaour,"<sup>5</sup> increased, their looks became blacker and blacker, and the fear of the Christians increased with the passing of time.

The Turkish populace now openly menaced the Christian citizens, with the connivance of the police, calling them traitors, adopting a threatening attitude, and seeming to await the signal for assault.

At night, the dwellings of rich Christians were invaded, when a thoroughbred would be appropriated, or whatever else of value pleased the robber. If the owner resisted, shots were fired, and in the end he had to submit.

We now lost all hope of seeing my poor father released, and I, myself, avoided leaving the house, so intolerable did I find it to face the openly expressed hatred and scorn of the Turks.

One day I had occasion to go to the Ottoman Bank on business, and went out of my ordinary route so as not to pass the Government Building, wishing both to avoid black looks and to spare myself the pain of seeing the prison where my poor father languished. Although short, my journey seemed long to me, and,

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<sup>5</sup> *Infidel*.

fearing insult or pursuit, I walked more quickly. On arriving at the Bank I knocked at a door on the first floor, and found myself opposed by a sentry, who hitherto had shown me every respect. He asked me impertinently whom I wished to see.

“The Manager,” I replied.

“He is not here,” he said.

“I shall wait for him,” I answered.

On entering, I found neither M. Savoye nor my young brother, who was an accountant. Two minutes later the guard entered and said insolently, “There is no one here. It is forbidden to wait here. Get out!”

Keeping quite cool, I told him I required to see the Manager, whom I should ask if he, a mere sentry, had the right to act as he had done. My reply irritated him and he advanced towards me angrily. I then made my way to the door of Mr. Savoye’s apartment, which was in the same building, entered and met Madame Savoye, whom I asked if her husband was there. She replied in the negative, and noticing that, in view of the grave circumstances of the time, my presence troubled her, I told her in two words of the

gross rudeness of the sentry. I then asked to be allowed to leave by her back door so as to avoid a scene which might easily have fatal results for me, and hurried off, thinking sadly of the unhappy lot of a Christian in Turkey.

Some days before this incident, two well known deputies, Zohrab and Wortkes Effendis, had arrived from Constantinople. After being received with honors by Haidar, the barbarous governor of the town, and invited to his table by the hypocrite Mahmoud Nedim, they were foully assassinated by Tchettas on the road from Diarbekir to Sheikhan Dere. Shortly before this, Nakhle Pasha Moutran of Baalbek, after being spat upon in the streets of Damascus, had been taken as far as Tele Abyadh, and put to death.

Police Commissioner Chakir, brother-in-law of Mahmoud Nedim, made use of the occasion to fill his own pockets. It was his custom to order the arrest of a Christian, liberate him on receipt of a bribe, and then rearrest him two days later. Whoever arrived, exile, prisoner, or one who had been deported, Chakir always found a means of getting money out of him.

Later, in the Prisoners' Camp at Afion-Kara-Hissar, I heard of one instance in which he failed.

Major Stephen White, an Englishman, who had been captured on the Suez Canal and taken to Urfa with another officer of the Egyptian Army, told me that this same Chakir, learning that he had received a sum of money from his mother in England, tried his best to obtain a share of it, but in vain. Major White always alluded to Chakir and Nedim as the outstanding ruffians in the massacres of Urfa.

One morning, the news spread that fifty of the more prominent prisoners had been taken after midnight to Diarbekir. The anxiety of my home may be imagined! Was my father of the number? We rushed off to the prison to find out. No, he was still there, and was yet hopeful, for he had no suspicion of the terrible fate which awaited him. Little did he dream that his wife and eight children would soon be weeping at his tragic end, and he the victim of a shameful injustice.

We ran to the houses of the chief friends of our family.

“Have mercy, Muslim Bey! Save our father, your

old associate! Save your friend, your brother! He is going to be deported and we shall lose him," with tears in his eyes, cried my younger brother, Emine, who daily grew thinner and paler, wasted by the fear of losing his beloved father.

But the Chief of the Union and Progress Committee remained mute, saying nothing, doing nothing. We could not make out his attitude. He was probably obeying some order he had received. Everything, even one's best friends, had to be sacrificed for the Committee.

During the night, a new convoy, in two sections, was sent towards Diarbekir, the victims bound arm to arm. One or two hours outside the town, near Kara Koupru, they were shot in cold blood, and their bodies left on the road for the ravens and the wolves.

Although they could not precisely know what had happened to their menfolk, the families of these martyrs experienced the wildest apprehension and grief, and the hearts of the mothers, wives, and daughters told them that their dear ones were no more; a foreboding which was confirmed by the hypocritical looks and smiles of the returned murderers, who in the hope

of further bribes, came to reassure the relatives that all was well.

More and more anxious as to the fate of our own dear prisoner, we returned to the prison. Alas! we were too late. My father, a follower of no party, innocent of political crime, absorbed in his family and his business, loved and esteemed by all, had been taken along and slaughtered without the semblance of a trial. He was mourned even by Turks, and his friend Hadji Bekir, the leading Turk in the place, shed tears on learning that he had been done to death.

A person who saw him being deported told us, two days later, that my father was one of a group of thirty led in the direction of Diarbekir. He delivered to us a scrap of paper upon which the head of our family had scribbled by moonlight, with trembling hand, the following:

“We are leaving for Diarbekir. Pay Monsieur N——— the sum of . . . . ., which he has lent me.”

The note was signed with my father's signature.

He had then wept, according to our informant, and said:



THE AUTHOR'S FATHER, R. NAAYEM

“I am patiently awaiting my fate. My life is of little importance to me! But my children! What is to become of them?”

Taking out his watch he handed it to the messenger to be delivered to Sami, his youngest child, then a boy of nine, and requested him to keep it in remembrance of him.

## CHAPTER II

### *My Escape*

We received the news of my father's murder early in August, 1915. That very evening one of my brothers, Djemil, who had come from Aleppo to Urfa some days before, fled on horseback with some companions back to Aleppo in fear. At Tell Abyadh he encountered Sallal, the son of an Arab Sheikh who was a friend of the family, whom he begged to return to Urfa with our horses and rescue the rest of the family.

Three days later some English civilian prisoners employed at the Ottoman Bank in the Administration of the Public Debt, obtained permission to leave the town, and despite the risk they ran, very kindly took with them in their carriage two of my brothers, George, aged thirteen, and Fattouh, who was two years older. Thus there remained in Urfa only my two youngest brothers and my mother. Soon after Sallal, accompanied by Aziz Djenjil, a very brave and

devoted Christian employee of ours (dressed as a Bedouin) arrived, and took the rest of the family, excepting Emine and me, to Tel-Albiad. The station-master, another friend, put them in the train for Aleppo.

My mother, before leaving, sent a large part of our furniture to her cousin, M. P. Ganime. Twenty days later it was all looted by the Turkish populace.

My brother Emine and I remained at Urfa, where the arrests continued, several of my friends and acquaintances being taken and massacred.

On August the 19th a police agent with some soldiers went to the house of an unfortunate Armenian to take him into custody. Determined not to be trapped without making an effort to defend himself, the man, knowing that arrest meant death, shot and killed the policeman and two soldiers. Armed Turks rushed through the markets and streets, killing all the Christians they encountered. Some managed to save themselves by hiding. Many took refuge in the presbytery. My brother Emine, who had been obliged to go to the bank, had the greatest difficulty in reaching me.

The streets were strewn with the bodies of the six hundred Christians killed that night, and their blood

literally ran in the streets. The murderers steeped their hands in the steaming gore and made imprints on the walls that bordered the streets. In this frightful orgy English and French civilians, some of whom had been interned at Urfa a month previously, also perished. Several of them who happened to be in the streets at the moment of the outburst were taken back by soldiers to their homes, lest the populace should fall upon them by error. One of them, a Frenchman of Aleppo, M. Germain, had his throat cut by the ruffians. A Maltese who was pursued and stoned took refuge in the house of a Christian and was saved.

Two hours after the firing had ceased, I mounted to the roof to see what was happening in the streets, and noticed that the police, instead of calming the fanaticism of the Turks, were inciting them to renew the massacre. Not until all the Christians who were discovered in the shops or in the streets had been killed was an order issued to end the carnage.

In the evening, all was quiet, but no Christian dared show himself, and the Armenians prepared to defend themselves, barricading their premises. But the cow-

ardly murderers were afraid and attempted no further harm.

The next morning I heard cries in a little lane near our house where there was an oil press. A moment later I saw a Turk named Moutalib leave his house and make off in the direction of the cries. Half an hour later I saw him return with his dagger stained with blood, proud of his work, laughing and shouting: "Hiar Guibi Kestim."<sup>1</sup> The victims were two workmen who had hidden themselves in the oil press. The Turks, under pretence of saving them, had succeeded in making them come out into the streets, where they cut their throat, stamped on their heads and dragged their bodies along the ground.

It was the duty of the Jews to drive carts and pick up the dead bodies and throw them outside the town to the dogs and birds of prey.<sup>2</sup>

In the afternoon, a soldier, accompanied by the porter from the Bank, came by order of the Manager, M. Savoye, for my brother, Emine, who returned to the

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<sup>1</sup>"I chopped him up like a cucumber!"

<sup>2</sup>This sinister duty had been imposed upon the Jews by the Turks during the massacre of the Christians.

Bank, where he resided. There he was safe, the establishment being guarded by the police.

Towards ten o'clock I saw the Governor himself, Haidar Bey, passing through the streets with the Chief of Police, to show that he had no official cognizance of any disturbance, and to prove to the Christians that order had been restored, and that they could come out without fear.

M. Savoye, I should like to state, displayed the highest courage during these terrible days in the way he helped our family in our extremity. We owe him the warmest debt of gratitude.

Sallal, our Bedouin friend, had promised to return as soon as he had taken my mother and brother to a place of safety, and the day after the massacre he came to see me at the Presbytery. Being now alone, I was in danger of arrest every moment, and decided to take to flight. It was a hazardous undertaking, but I was determined to make the attempt. Urfa had become a very hell! Muffling myself in Bedouin robes, I prepared to leave with Sallal.

The town was not yet quite calm, and Christians remained shut up in their houses, fearful of new out-

bursts, although every one of prominence among them had already been executed. About five hundred Christian soldiers employed on the construction of roads near the town had also been put to death. One alone escaped. In giving me an account of his experiences, he declared that the officers were keeping in their tents young Christian girls, stolen from the convoys. He spoke in particular of one very beautiful Chaldean girl from Diarbekir, kept as a prostitute, and passed from one Turk to another. By a miracle the girl survived and is living to-day in Urfa.

At seven o'clock of the evening of August the 21st, 1915, Sallal came, and I bade farewell to my friends, including Father Emmanuel Kacha, who stayed behind with his family.

Hurrying through the almost deserted streets, we reached the house of one of my relatives, where I donned the costume of a Bedouin. This consisted of a long wide-sleeved shirt of white linen, an "aba,"<sup>3</sup> and on my head I wore a "tcheffie."<sup>4</sup> As I spoke

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<sup>3</sup>"A sleeveless cloak of camel hair."

<sup>4</sup>A head-dress, square in shape, with long fringe, surmounted by an "agal," a kind of camel-hair crown.

Bedouin a little, I was not likely to be recognized. Near the edge of the town we met a police agent and two soldiers, who seemed to be waiting for us. The valiant Sallal, who was armed with a large sword and a revolver and was a man of great height, advanced fearlessly. We both salaamed profoundly and passed on, our salute being returned. A hundred yards further on, my companion remarked that we had just had a very narrow escape.

At the house of a friend outside the town we found our two horses, and took the road to Tell Abyadh.

The moon shone softly down upon us, and my companion, happy to have saved a friend from the claws of the Turk, and moved by the beauty of the scene, burst like a troubadour into the most beautiful Arabic verse.

Three hours later, as we were about to halt on the bank of a river, two horsemen appeared and rode towards us. Sallal told me to take my horse and keep at a distance. The newcomers turned out to be a Turkish tax collector and a soldier, and after asking Sallal for news of the town, they rode on.

Farther along, we met some Arabian horsemen,

among whom was Sallal's brother, a despotic chief with whom he was on bad terms. Sallal was in the happiest of moods. While passing us his brother, bent on loot, called out:

"I quite understand! You are busy saving another Christian."

At these words I was alarmed, but Sallal, always resourceful, replied with a joke, and the danger passed.

At twilight we came to the village where my companion lived, and where I accepted his hospitality for a day, his mother and brother welcoming me as if I were a relative.

We had intended to continue our journey without delay, but several Turks inopportunately arrived. They thought me a Kara-Guetch, one of a marauding Arabian tribe, then in revolt, and asked Sallal why he had taken me under his roof. Fearing that it might be discovered that I was a Christian, Sallal had his brother take me to a distant spot in the country, and the Turks left, threatening to report him to the *Kaimakan*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Lt. governor.

On my return to the village I found everyone in a state of alarm and terror, declaring that Sallal had jeopardized their safety, so he mounted his horse, told me to do likewise, and we rode at a gallop to Tell Abyadh. There I met several of my parishioners, who were in the service of the Bagdad Railway Company, and was taken to the house of one of them, M. Yousouf Cherchouba, who received me in a very friendly spirit. Then, wishing me a safe journey, my Arab protector said good-bye, and returned to his own home. Day had not yet broken. Cherchouba told me in a low voice that persecutions had begun at Tell Abyadh and that he was very anxious.

I knew the telegraph operator of the Railway Company, M. Dhiab, and on expressing a desire to see him, was taken to his office by George Khamis, one of my Chaldean parishioners. Circassian Guards, of whom the Railway employees were in deadly fear, were posted at the station. Had they suspected me, I should have found myself in considerable danger. The operator was very much astonished to see a Bedouin, and wondered what one could want with him. He was still more astonished when he found that the

Bedouin spoke and understood French. He was the friend who had assisted to smuggle my mother and brothers through, and it might be compromising for me to remain in his office dressed as a Bedouin. I was unable to change, as Sallal had left my clerical dress on the road, so I hid until the evening train left.

An Arab had been notified, and for baksheesh<sup>6</sup> hid me in a neighboring village, which the inhabitants had abandoned for the summer.<sup>7</sup> There I waited alone, and, being very fatigued, fell asleep on the floor in a tiny room, to awake at break of day, bathed in perspiration, but very much the better for my rest and very hungry. An hour later the Arab returned with some bread and "khather,"<sup>8</sup> but the bread was so very bad that, hungry as I was, I could not eat it.

When night came the Arab took me back to the station, where I hid in a building until the arrival of the Aleppo train. My friend, the telegraph operator, came to an understanding with the conductor, receiv-

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<sup>6</sup>*A bribe* (Eng.).

<sup>6</sup>*A tip* (American).

<sup>7</sup>Evidently the winter home of a Nomadic tribe.

<sup>8</sup>Curdled milk.

<sup>6</sup>Sour-milk.

ing a guarantee that I should be taken safe and sound to Aleppo for a stipulated sum of money, which I readily paid. I was put aboard a cattle truck, which had not been cleaned since its prior load had been unshipped, so gave off a very disagreeable odor.

The train stopped and through the crack in the doors I saw a guard approach my truck. It was the conductor to offer me a place in a first-class carriage. Because of my dress, I asked him to let me travel third-class, but a brakesman, who noticed us conversing and who suspected our agreement, at Arab Punar forcibly put me into an open truck, during the absence of the conductor.

At this place we took on deported families of English and French civilians, going from Urfa to Aleppo. At the next stop, the first guard returned me to my compartment in the coach, which was shared with some invalid soldiers and some Turks from Urfa. The latter commenced to make fun of me, as is their custom with Bedouins, but I pretended to be asleep. We arrived in Aleppo at ten o'clock the next morning.

At Aleppo I hunted up my cousin, Faris, who acted

as storekeeper for the Railway, in order to ask him to direct me to where my mother lived.

I asked a Mohammedan who was in the station to show me where the company's store was located. He demanded baksheesh, and when I had complied he condescended to point with his finger to the particular depot. Faris had not yet come to his office, and in accordance with the Bedouin custom, I took up my position in the shade of a wall a short distance away and waited. He arrived ten minutes later and, recognizing me, gave a cry of astonishment. I made a sign to him to keep quiet. Much moved at seeing me, he abandoned all thought of work, and placing himself entirely at my disposal, conducted me to my family, who, fearing to be molested by the authorities, had decided to live in a house in the outskirts of the town. To get there we to pass through many narrow and winding lanes. Imagine, if you can, the tears of delighted surprise with which my mother, who had begun to fear that I had shared my father's tragic fate, welcomed me!

I had been a month at Aleppo, assisting the Chaldean parish priest of the town, when I received a

telegram from His Beatitude, Thomas Emmanuel, the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, suggesting that I should go to Constantinople as a Chaplain to the English and French prisoners of war in a Turkish camp.



## CHAPTER III

### *The Fate of Urfa*

The unhappy town of Urfa suffered one of the saddest fates ever recorded in history. The day after my departure, August the 23rd, the Governor sent an order to the Christians to leave their houses and carry on their businesses. As soon as they obeyed, a second order commanded the Armenians to leave the town. Knowing what this meant, the unfortunate people refused to obey. Already doomed, they preferred to die in their homes than perish in the desert. The government resorted to force to make them leave, and the Armenians resisted, till finally, on September 23rd, a pitched battle was fought. Although it lasted a week, the Turks were unable to penetrate the Armenian quarter. The Governor sent to Aleppo for reinforcements to put down the so-called "insurgent" Christians, and Fakhri Pasha soon arrived at Urfa at the head of an army supported by artillery. The Armenian quarter was attacked, but the Turkish

troops, in spite of all their efforts, were powerless to overcome the resistance of the brave Armenians, who, seeing that in any case they had to die, defended themselves most valiantly. Several hundred of Turkish soldiers were killed in the course of the battle. Women and girls threw themselves into the fray and assisted their menfolk to defend their homes, their lives and their honor.

Fakhri Pasha then opened fire with his artillery upon the Armenian quarter, and a bombardment commenced which lasted a fortnight. Several English and French witnesses interned at Urfa at the time told me later that it was a German officer who had directed the fire. A large number of combatants took refuge in the American Mission, whereupon the Turks ranged their guns on the Mission and managed to destroy part of the building. Through the breaches thus made, they were able to penetrate the lines of the defenders, who were obliged to hoist the white flag.

The bombardment had caused a conflagration, which spread over a wide area, owing to the fact that many of the Armenians, themselves, seeing death approaching, gathered in crowds in their houses, and

rather than give themselves up alive to the Turks, set fire to their dwellings and perished in the flames.

After the inevitable surrender of the remnant of the Armenians, the Turks gave freer play than ever to their innate barbarity. Throwing themselves on the quarter, they put to the sword all the Christian men, women and children they met, looted everywhere, and set aflame all that remained. The men still alive were dragged along the Diarbekir road outside the town, as so many of their fellow Christians had been before them, and were executed. Some women and children were ranged on the edge of an abyss, stabbed and pushed over, to be devoured by the dogs and birds of prey attracted by the odor of the bodies.

The women and children who still survived, about two thousand in all, were shut up in an immense building, known as the "Millet Khan." Here they were the butt of Turkish ill-treatment. Many of them died of hunger and of typhus, which spread rapidly. The corpses were taken to a distance and emptied into huge ditches; living children cast in with the dead.

In the courtyard of the cathedral, ghastly scenes took place, where heaps of bodies almost blocked the

main entrance, living and dead piled together; the death rattle of those in their last agony distinctly audible from time to time.

And on one occasion, a large number of men and women were publicly hanged, in the presence of the rejoicing Turkish pòpulace.

Thus fifteen thousand people were done to death in a few days.

The American Missionary, Mr. Lesly, with whom a certain number of the Armenian defenders had taken refuge, was summoned to appear before a courtmartial on the charge of having taken part in the revolt. One day, on leaving the court, they found him dead on the road. A paper was found in his pocket in which he stated that he had not been implicated in the matter of the Armenian revolt.

## CHAPTER IV

### *My Prison Experiences*

At the beginning of November, 1915, a telegram from His Beatitude, Emmanuel Thomas, the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, suggested to me that I should go to Constantinople as Chaplain to the Allied Prisoners of War. I set out, furnished with a permit from the Governor of Aleppo.

Pope Benedict XV, after several months' negotiations, had obtained from the Turkish Government permission for priests to visit the Prisoners' Camp. They were, however, to be Chaldeans.

On my arrival at Constantinople, the War Office granted me the requisite papers, and on December the 15th I left for Afion-Kara-Hissar, a concentration camp for English, French and Russian prisoners. I was accompanied by a young and very devoted priest from Smyrna, the Reverend Moussoullou, who, claiming to be a Chaldean by origin, obtained permission to replace

the Chaldean priest originally appointed to assist me, but who was unable, by reason of his advanced age, to undertake the long journey from Aleppo.

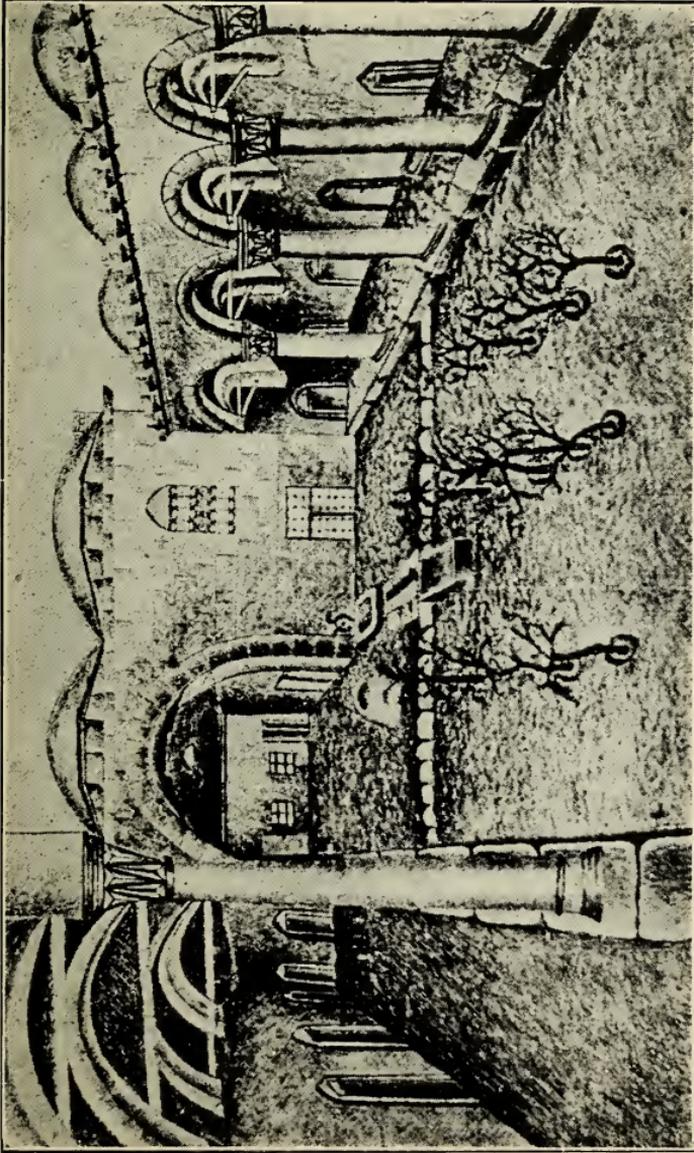
It was an opportunity for my colleague to rejoin his parents, who were then at Afion-Kara-Hissar, and whom he had not seen since his ordination.

We arrived at Afion on December 17th and were met at the station by a Turkish officer, who conducted us to the camp in which we were to be interned.

I pass over here much detail of which I hope to treat in the near future in a separate work, entitled: — “The Allied Prisoners in Turkey.”

When I had been there about three or four months, that is to say, early in the Spring of 1916, three British Naval officers escaped. The Commandant of the camp, Assim Bey, a Staff Colonel, was dismissed, and replaced by the notorious tyrant, Mazloum Bey, a conscienceless, cruel and despotic creature of the Committee of Union and Progress. His assistant, Captain Safar, was no less cruel. Both of them took the greatest pleasure in worrying and torturing the prisoners.

Several months passed. Towards the end of September, 1916, Mazloum gave orders for a general



A SKETCH OF THE COURT OF A CAMP AT AFION-KARA-HISSAR, CALLED MADRISSE, BY A  
RUSSIAN PRISONER



search to be made in the camp, and the belongings of the officers were searched with meticulous care. Of this we learnt from Dr. Brown, an Englishman, who came to look after the prisoners.

Shortly after this, Major Ahmed Hamdi, a reserve officer and a relatively good and honest man, came with Captain Safar to warn me that I was to leave the camp and live in a house near that of the officers. I left my quarters on the morning of October the 2nd, two British prisoners being kind enough to carry my luggage. The new quarters assigned to me had formerly been occupied by Christians, who had been exiled or massacred.

The evening being cool, and having a few minutes' leisure, I took a constitutional walk, up and down a space of a hundred yards before my door, in company with a kindly and sympathetic British naval officer, Commander Goad, and a French lieutenant, named Otavie, who had fought at the Dardanelles. Being desirous of familiarizing myself with English, I chatted a great deal with my companions.

In accordance with the routine of the concentration camp, we returned to our respective quarters at 7

o'clock. Five minutes later gaolers made their usual round, and doubly locked our doors with their large keys.

Absolute silence reigned in the camp, each man being shut off from his fellows. My orderly, a faithful Indian prisoner, named Enadji, brought me my dinner. As I ate, I thought of the hundreds of prisoners whom I had been obliged to leave.

At 8 o'clock, I was glancing through a Turkish daily newspaper, my orderly was sleeping soundly in his quarters, when the lock turned and the hall-door opened. A knock sounded on the door of my room! Leaving my newspaper, I arose and opened the door. Nebzet, a Cypriot Turk, who held the post of English interpreter, entered and told me very politely that Mazloum, the Turkish Commandant, wished to see me.

Putting on my overcoat, as it was chilly, I went out with the interpreter, and, expecting to return shortly, I left my lamp alight, and did not even disturb my Indian orderly.

I suspected absolutely nothing, and I remember asking the interpreter for what special reason the

Commandant wished to see me at this hour. He replied that he knew nothing about it.

“I hope he is not angry with me again,” I remarked, jokingly, as he had been many times.

“I do not think so,” said Nebzet. “As a matter of fact, he was very gay this evening.”

On the way to the Commandant's house the interpreter chatted familiarly and almost cordially, and, on our arrival, deferentially stood aside for me to enter first. I seated myself on the nearest chair, but Nebzet pressed — or rather obliged — me to take the post of honor, offering me a cigarette, which, not being a smoker, I declined. He then left me; and, two minutes later, the Commandant, clad in his night shirt, entered with Major Ahmed Hamdi, Captain Safar, Nebzet and a companion whom I did not then know, but whom I found later to be an influential citizen of Afion-Kara-Hissar, named Khalil Agha. The Commandant came towards me and with the smiles and gestures of a comedian, shook hands most graciously and offered me a seat reserved for honored guests. Then addressing the companion I did not know, he said:

“Here is our very great and most sincere friend.”

After an exchange of greetings, as we sat down, a long silence ensued, until the Commandant broke it by saying to the interpreter:

“Now, bring the letter and read it.”

Nebzet read the following words, which I quote from memory:

“Mon bien cher Commandant.” . . .

As I heard these words, the situation became clear to me. This was a letter I had addressed to the French Captain of the . . . . . eight months previously, when the French prisoners of war had left our camp. I had wished to follow them to Bozanti, in the Taurus Mountains, where they were to be employed on the construction of an important tunnel on the Bagdad Railway. At the time, the camp commandant was Assim Bey, with whom the senior French officer was on good terms. When almost all the English and French prisoners had left I requested Assim Bey to allow me to accompany them, as was natural, writing as well to Monsieur X——, and begging him to use his influence with Assim to this end. At the same time, I recollect, I expressed my regards for the pris-

oners and towards their country, and also my wish to be able to make myself of use to them.

The Turkish Commandant had a grievance against me, and made this letter a pretext for taking his revenge.

Four months before, it is true, I had disobeyed his orders in regard to the burial of a Russian doctor, who had died of typhoid fever. My church did not permit me to conduct the funeral services for those professing another religion, and I had tried to excuse myself to Ahmed Effendi, who had come to me with an order from Mazloun to read the last rites for this Russian. I refused, but gave no reason for doing so, fearing I should be misunderstood. The officer retired without insisting.

The next day, the Commandant expressed his displeasure to me in person.

The same difficulty arose on two other occasions, when again I refused to obey, and again evaded giving my reason. I was exceedingly loath to wound the susceptibilities of the prisoners, all of whom I regarded as brothers in adversity and between whom

I never made distinctions other than those laid down by the canons of the church. But in the end, Commandant Mazloun insisting, it was necessary to give the true explanation.

Mazloun had become still further exasperated when, at Easter, on his wishing to prevent my going to see the officer prisoners, I wrote to him that it was my duty to put myself at their service, and that, if he made difficulties, I should send in my resignation to Constantinople.

Shortly after this many English prisoners arrived from Kut-el-Amara, and a Russian doctor was assigned to their care, although he knew no English. As I had learned to speak the language a little, I offered my services as interpreter. One day Mazloun came to the prison quarters and, seeing me with the doctor, expressed his disapproval. He told me that I had nothing to do with the Russian doctor, which was absurd, since it was my duty to be with all the prisoners. Furthermore, as the doctor was unable to understand the patients, he manifestly needed my assistance.

The camp was completely filled by the new prisoners, almost all invalids, through Turkish treatment. Owing to the great number of them, the doctor was unable to pay them all daily visits, and consequently left certain remedies with me, which I was to administer. To do this, it was necessary to enter certain isolation rooms, labelled "Quarantine Quarters." This was made known to Mazloun, who for this reason bore me still greater ill-will, which was intensified when he discovered that not only did I give the medicine, but, at the request of the prisoners, wrote a few reassuring words to their relatives. Mazloun sent for me one day, and reprimanded me, forbidding me to correspond at all, even with my own nearest relations, for a period of three months.

Finally, on the arrival of a convoy of Indian prisoners, these British had to be transferred to another part of the town. I was prevented from following them, being assigned to the incoming Indians, none of whom were Christians, and who spoke a language of which I knew not one word. But the English claimed my services, and even expressed the wish to return to my camp. Wearied by their

importunity, the Commandant had them returned, but held me responsible for the incident.

Taking everything into consideration, therefore, Masloum Bey cherished considerable animosity towards me, and as he read the words, "Bien cher Commandant," he said: "Look you! It is his *very dear* commandant!" Then coming to a passage in which I asked the officer to give me some simple information about the condition of the captives, he cried: "You see! He is complaining that we are ill-treating them, so that later on he may pose as their defender. He is taking notes in order to write on their behalf. He admires their courage, and well he may, for these are the brave warriors who have taken Constantinople and Berlin!" His lips curled in sarcastic taunts.

On finishing this tirade Mazloum arose and in a threatening manner said to me:

"Now, hand over your notes and those which the French Captain gave you! I want them! Unless you do so immediately, I shall kill you."

Those present looked at me in a hostile manner,



MAZLOUM BEY AND HIS STAFF

shouting threats and menaces. Captain Safar ground his teeth and hurled insults at me, and the Commandant cried to the Tchaouche:<sup>1</sup>

“Take the priest downstairs! We have important work to get through.”

*On the Rack*

A petty officer told me to follow him down a staircase which led to an underground corridor. The Commandant threw himself upon me and commenced to beat and cuff me with all his strength, finally hurling me to the ground. A sailor and the interpreter, Nebzet, held me face downwards with my hands behind my back, while the petty officer lit up the corridor with a torch. The Commandant then seized a heavy stick, with which he rained blows upon me until I quivered with pain. All the while he blasphemed like a fiend. Each blow jolted every bone in my body and shook me to my very soul. Unable any longer to support my suffering, I ended by screaming, twist-

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<sup>1</sup>Tchaouche is literally “Sergeant,” but in as much as the guard at Afion-Kara-Hissar was naval, it probably corresponds to “petty-officer.”

ing about and howling, each blow seeming to bring death nearer and nearer. The Commandant, after giving me about fifty blows, passed the bludgeon to the Captain, who in turn fell upon me, accompanying his blows with the grossest insults. When he grew tired the Commandant invited Kol Aghassi<sup>2</sup> Ahmed Hamdi to continue, but he refused; whereupon, seizing the club anew, the Commandant attacked me again, meaning this time to kill me. My whole frame was twisted in agony. One would have thought that my poor soul in its suffering was trying to escape from my body as my screams reechoed through the subterranean gallery.

The Kol-Aghassi, touched with pity, and fearing, perhaps, for my life, threw himself upon the Commandant, trying to calm him, but the maniac in his fury continued to rain blows upon me, declaring that he "*wanted*" to kill me. Placing himself before the madman, my protector, with the aid of Khalil Agha, the citizen of Afion-Kara-Hissar, forced him to stop by snatching the instrument of torture from his hands.

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<sup>2</sup>Major.

I was then more dead than alive, my sight was dimmed, and I was in a fever of delirium. The petty officer helped me to arise, and I again stood before the Commandant, who leapt at me again, giving me many blows full in the face with his fists. Then, seizing me by the beard with all his strength, he pulled part of it out by the roots, causing the blood to drip from my chin.

Intervening once more, the Kol-Aghassi saved me from his hands, and I was led to the room above by the petty officer. On arriving at the threshold the Commandant said:

“Leave him on the ground like a dog in front of the door, for he is the friend of the prisoners, the infamous traitor.”

Once again he began to insult me as I stood at the door, until, overcome again by blind rage, he rushed at me, grabbed the little of my beard which remained and tugged at it with all his strength. The Kol-Aghassi once more interfered, and snatched me from the clutch of the tyrant. Blood, flowing freely from my chin, was staining my cassock.

The tired ruffian stopped and, going straight up to

Khalil Agha as if he were mad, knelt before him, and raising his headgear, said:

“Put your hand on my head! Feel how it is burning!”

Arising, he burst out again into a string of insults at my expense. When he had finished, he seated himself and gave orders that I was to be put outside the door on the floor. Then, noticing that his hands were stained with blood, he washed them and cried:

“Search the dog thoroughly.”

The petty officer carried out the order, emptying my pockets and passing what he found to the interpreter, whose face lit up.

“Bring me those papers,” cried the Commandant, joyfully. “If there are any written in Arabic, I know how to read them. I have been in Syria and know Arabic.”

To prove his assertion he screamed insults at me in that language. Then the interpreter and the Captain examined attentively the few pages which remained of my little notebook. On finding no money on me, he exclaimed:

“Where is your money, you dog? I have paid you

L. T. 100<sup>3</sup> during the last year as salary. Give it to me, traitor! Tell me where your money is!”

“Search him well!” he ordered the petty officer, who, putting his hands into my pockets, brought out my small purse, which he passed to the Commandant. The latter emptied it, finding some Egyptian bank-notes and about ten rupees, which the Indian prisoners had exchanged with me for Turkish money, since their own coinage was not current in the country. Seeing this, the Commandant cried:

“Where did you get this money? You have stolen it from the English! You are a thief!”

The amount found in my pocket came, if I remember well, to about L. T. 10<sup>4</sup> in gold and paper. This was noted.

“Search him again,” cried Mazloun. “Take off his clothes.”

The petty officer took off my overcoat and my cassock and turned them inside out. I remained in shirt and trousers for half an hour, kneeling on the ground, shivering with cold. When the petty officer declared

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<sup>3</sup>\$500.00.

<sup>4</sup>\$50.00.

that he had found nothing, the interpreter was told by the Commandant to go and search my room. The order was carried out immediately, and he returned with some coins he had found on the table.

The Commandant, the Captain, and Nebzet whispered together for a few minutes, after which the interpreter left the room, and the petty officer was instructed by the Commandant to take me to the barracks. It was about eleven o'clock. Passing through several streets in the dark, we came to a large house in the Christian quarter. The interpreter reappeared before us, as if by magic, and made a sign to the petty officer to enter the house, the vestibule of which gave forth a nauseating smell. Pointing to an iron door which was shut, the interpreter said:

“There is someone quite near here who will be able to hear us. Let us go up to the next story.”

We climbed a tiny staircase, which led to a corridor, where three naval petty officers awaited us. Other sailors were asleep.

What was going to become of me? What new torture was I to expect?

The interpreter, still most polite, spoke to me and

invited me to lie on the floor, face downwards. Two petty officers held my arms across my back. This time it was the interpreter who was to be my torturer. Taking a rod he commenced to thrash me, two petty officers held me and two others took it in turn to see which could best exercise his muscles upon me; accompanying each blow with insults and roars of laughter. I cannot give any impression of the suffering I underwent from these blows. As they fell thick upon my bleeding wounds, my whole nervous system seemed to give way. I screamed and writhed and shouted, my body heaving, despite the rough hands of the men who held me, finally fainting from the excruciating agony.

*In a Dungeon*

Water was thrown on my face to bring me back from a condition of lethargy which seemed likely to be fatal. Opening my eyes, I saw my executioners before me. Five minutes' respite was given me. The humane and kindly interpreter calmed me, saying:

“Come along, sir, don't make a fuss! A few more

strokes and it will all be over. It is the Commandant's order."

Replacing his rod by a whip, he recommenced with greater energy, until I fainted again.

On recovering consciousness, I heard the interpreter say to the sailors:

"Get him downstairs now."

I was unable to arise, so they dragged me the length of the staircase and threw me into a portion of the building which had been changed into a stable, shutting the door upon me and posting a sentry. I remained some time, lying in the dirt, groaning, unable to move because of my wounds, to which even the least movement brought back the pain. When I was able to bring my mind to bear upon my surroundings I found that I was wet through, and I noticed that the room was flooded and that I was lying on a bed of slime. Crawling along with difficulty, I reached a corner of the place which was, as yet, free of water. The sentry at my door watched me through a little window, grinding his teeth and hurling insults at me all night, for on my account he had been obliged to keep awake all night. Thus I remained in my corner

until, at last, day came, when a few faint rays of light penetrated my dungeon.

It happened the kitchen was behind the stable where I lay, and the sailors came in turn to wash themselves at a place near by, when each made some ill-disposed or vile observation with reference to me. My gaoler declared to his comrades that if he were allowed, he would cut my throat most willingly.

Day brought me no rest. I was suffering atrociously; my body was one sore, and my chin, so swollen, and the remains of my beard so stuck together with congealed blood, that I could hardly open my mouth. In the afternoon, stiff from lying motionless on the ground, I made an effort to crawl as far as the little window, which looked out on the main entrance. Here I noticed the grating of an iron gate, which opened and shut again immediately. The sound of footsteps which followed, made me think that a prisoner of war was being incarcerated.

Far from my country, far from my people, having lived now for over twelve months with prisoners, the sight of these men had become as dear to me as the sight of relatives. I pitied this poor prisoner, like

me, at the mercy of the pitiless Turk. Raising myself, I tried to get to the window, although the movement caused me great pain. I saw no one from my point of observation but some Russian prisoners at work in a road-mending gang, and from time to time I heard their voices.

After remaining for some time at the window, I heard a noise. An adjoining cell opened, and I saw that it was occupied by a British naval officer, a Mr. Skaife, but owing to the presence of the sentry I dared not make him the least sign. In the evening my gaoler threw a bit of bread to me through my prison window. That was all! I begged a drop of water to quench my torturing thirst, a request which obtained for answer a torrent of insults. Weak with mental suffering, and with the pain from the wounds in my face where my beard had been torn out, I could not open my mouth to eat. Only on the third day was I able to swallow a morsel of dry bread.

Black thoughts began to assail me. I thought of my father, who fifteen months before, without provocation, and through sheer hatred, at the instigation of the worst brigand of the country, Deputy Mah-

moud-Nedim, had been imprisoned fifty days, and then, perhaps after being scourged, had been massacred on the Diarbekir Road. I realized that I might meet the same fate. The scenes of horror, and the massacres I had witnessed at Urfa came back to me. The spectre of the ferocious Turk stained with human blood seemed to rise before me. Death I looked upon as happiness and a deliverance from what I suffered. Then I thought of my mother, who had lost her husband, and was so soon to hear of the death of her son. I seemed to hear the sobs of my little brothers, who had already suffered so much when my father was butchered, and whose tears would flow again at the news of the tragic death of their elder brother. I thought of my parishioners at Urfa — now scattered; of my poor Assyro-Chaldean fellow-countrymen, ruined and massacred; all, by that same bloody hand of the barbarous and implacable Turk!

Another cause of torment to me was the fear that the ferocious Commandant, Mazloun, might discover various notes I had received from prisoners regarding their captivity and ill-treatment by the Turks. The knowledge of the existence of these notes was always

before my mind, and left me frozen with apprehension. I thought also of the French Commandant, to whom I had addressed the letter which had got me into trouble, and feared that trouble had also come upon him through me. Then my thoughts turned to the poor prisoners, who would be grieved at hearing of my fate, and thought to myself if, for a letter containing nothing of importance, I have had to suffer so much, what shall I have to endure if it be discovered that I have been in the confidence of the prisoners? As soon as inquiries are made, they will learn that I am the son of a man who was executed on the false charge of having conspired against the Government.

As I was indulging in these thoughts night fell, and sleep began to overpower me. But how was I to lie down in a room flooded with water? Finding in a corner the wooden frame of a small window, I placed it on the ground and stretched myself upon it, face downwards; for owing to the swelling of my bruises, I could sleep neither upon my side nor upon my back. The wooden frame, at any rate, kept me off the mud. Folding my arms under my head, I drowsed uneasily, haunted by nightmares.

Next morning, nothing of importance to chronicle occurred, save that the jailer refused me water. At midday, standing before my little window, I noticed people going to and fro; and Mr. Skaife's door opened and shut repeatedly. I heard some talk of a carriage in which a bed was to be placed, and passing soldiers smiled and congratulated Mr. Skaife, who appeared and prepared to leave. My jailer, having disappeared for the moment, I took my chance and called to Mr. Skaife, who turned, and, surprised to see me, made signs, asking me why I was there. I told him in a few words in English of my imprisonment, and of what I had suffered. The jailer coming on the scene, I ceased speaking, and Mr. Skaife pretended to have heard nothing. Nevertheless, these few words cheered me.

“Now, if I disappear,” I thought, “this Englishman will be able to bring the matter to the notice of the responsible authorities.”

The carriage arrived, Mr. Skaife's bed was brought out, and he left the prison. This was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

In the evening a Sergeant opened my door, and,

telling me to come out, conducted me to Mr. Skaife's room, a tiny cellar with thick walls and a double door of iron. It was seven feet square and had been used by the Christian owners of the house as an opium store. The former Christian population of the town had a monopoly of this drug, which was an important article of exportation from Afion-Kara-Hissar for medical purposes. In changing my quarters I did not forget to take the piece of bread, which had been given to me the evening before, and which served me as a pillow at night. There was a hole about eighteen inches square in the corner of the room opening on the street. Through this, I heard the voices of English and French officers, and realized that I was within their lines.

The flagstones being like ice, I decided not to lie down, and stamped up and down my cage. At length tired out, I wanted to sleep, but had nothing on which to lie. I knocked at the door and a petty officer appeared with a torch, and asked me what I wanted. I requested him to bring me the wooden window frame from my first cell, as I wished to lie down upon

it. He refused, crying, "Yassak!"<sup>5</sup> and slammed the door. Kneeling in the corner of the room, I tucked my overcoat round my legs, placed the bread on the ground, and fell asleep with my head upon it.

Next day I was tortured by thirst, not having drunk any water for three days. I knocked on my door and asked for a glass of water. The jailer showed annoyance, but eventually brought me a bottle filled with liquid, which I hesitated to drink, knowing that the savage was capable of poisoning me. As a precaution, I drank at first only tiny mouthfuls at long intervals. Then, breaking my bread, I moistened a little piece in the water and ate it.

The fourth night was passed in the same way as the third, and I slept in the same fashion; but I awoke with a chill, and suffered so acutely from colic that I groaned continually. Hearing me, the sentry appeared at the door, and I asked for a doctor. The man told me that I did not deserve one, and that I ought to die like a dog.

"You traitor of a priest!" he cried. Then he shut the door and vanished.

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<sup>5</sup>"That is forbidden!"

I was so weak and worn out that I could not stand. Lying on the ground, I resigned myself to death from exhaustion. About ten o'clock the door opened. Commandant Mazloun entered the cell and began to abuse me.

“Die like a dog, you ungrateful traitor!” he said. “You Christians live among us, but you are ever ready to bite us like venomous snakes. We ought to crush your heads and get rid of you.”

Raising his foot, he brought it down as if he wished to stamp upon me. Then, with a final string of his choicest insults, he left me.

Towards midday a camp bed, formed of three planks, was brought to me, but without mattress or blankets. The senior petty officer of the camp, Osman Tchaouche, who later robbed me, accompanied the sailor who carried the bed, and as if to let me know of his own goodness, said:

“It was I who begged the Commandant to send you the bed.”

This was a lie, of course. He then remonstrated with me on my treason, and reprimanded me for the attachment I had shown the French, towards their

fatherland, and also for my exaggerated devotion to the other prisoners.

“Are you not committing a crime towards Turkey,” he asked, “when you invite her enemies to your table, give them remedies, and tend them when they are ill? You who are an Ottoman subject?”

Evidently my captors had spied upon me at night through the window of my room, which opened on the street, and seen prisoners in my quarters. After a long sermon he went off, still raving about my ingratitude.

When evening came, another petty officer arrived, opened my cell and ordered me to follow him. My heart began to beat rapidly, not knowing what new misery I was to undergo. He led me to the spot where Nebzet and his companions had beaten me; and thence into a dark room, which, although without light, was more dry and habitable than the other. This gave me courage. From this day, however, the sailors and jailers were less hard and spiteful towards me. Since I was now in some sense their guest, in that I had come to live among them, they seemed to have less against me, and called me “The Prisoners’ Priest.”

As night fell, silence reigned throughout the barracks. I heard the sailors say to one another in low tones, "Yuzbachi galdi,"<sup>6</sup> and soon after Captain Safar, under whose command they served, entered and made his way to my room. His hard and masterful voice demanded light, and, preceded by Osman Tchaouche, who bore a torch, he entered my new cell. Other sailors crowded round curiously. The Captain approached and saluted me amicably, asking after my health, as if nothing had happened. I thanked him, and he made hypocritical excuses for my ill-treatment, saying that it had been caused by the natural indignation aroused by my scorn for things Turkish.

"At bottom we wish you no harm," he said, and asked me if I had need of anything. I begged him to be so good as to send me a bed, mattress and some blankets.

"Certainly," he replied, "you shall have them immediately. You need not worry. You are my guest. The Commandant cannot hear your name mentioned, and had resolved to leave you in the cellar, but I interceded for you, and insisted, saying that I should hold

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<sup>6</sup> "The Captain has come."

myself responsible for you and should keep you in the midst of my men in the barracks.”

He then left me, taking away the light. An hour later, my bed clothes arrived, and I was able to sleep that night, and recover a little from my experiences. I was puzzled as to my future, and every time I thought of what I had undergone I broke out into a cold perspiration.

After a night's sleep, I felt very hungry, having had almost nothing to eat for several days. The evening before I had asked Captain Safar to allow me to have some eggs and milk. He had said he would ask the Commandant, who had forbidden anything except dry bread. A sentry, who was relieved every two hours, was posted before my room, which was dark and cold, the panes of the two windows opening on to the corridor being broken. The sentry had orders to watch me closely and even accompanied me to the lavatory, to prevent me from speaking to anyone.

I asked to see the petty officer, and asked if I could not get someone to buy me some food. The request was passed on to Captain Safar, who gave me permission to buy milk only, a very great favor, however,

although the sailor charged with the purchase swindled me outrageously. The Kol-Aghasi sent me a little money, and continued to do so regularly.

Though not yet at liberty, I felt that my new situation was a great improvement on that of the evening before. The coming and going of the sailors was a distraction. Nevertheless black thoughts worried me at night, and in the darkness of my cell I continued to suffer from nightmares. After nine o'clock the silence was as profound as that of a monastery, only the tramp of the sentry was to be heard.

About eleven I heard footsteps, my door opened, and there entered Commandant Mazloun, accompanied by the interpreter, Nebzet, and a senior officer. I was overcome at the sight of this savage, who so much desired my death, and remained stretched motionless on my bed as he stood beside it. As usual, Mazloun began with abuse, and then remarked ironically to the officer:

"You see this papas? He has come among the prisoners to foment trouble. He is urging the English to bring charges against the Turkish Government to the notice of the American Ambassador. He would

appear even to have entered into relations with the English War Office. He distributes money to the English prisoners to help them to escape and urges them to revolt. He is even taking notes which he intends to use later against the Turks."

Then looking contemptuously at me, he observed:

"Why! He still has some of his beard left!"

The officer in his turn said to me:

"What evil have the Turks done you that you should dislike them?"

I remained silent, and the vile Cypriot interpreter, Nebzet, seized me by the collar and pulled the few hairs which remained of my beard.

"Answer!" he cried.

The officer intervened and forbade him to do me further harm. Such evidence of humane feeling in a Turk I shall not easily forget. To myself I said:

"What evil have they done me? Well, all they have done is to kill my father, massacre my countrymen, and now to flay me alive!"

The officer, asking then whence I came, the interpreter answered:

"From Aleppo."

He then began to talk to me very affably in Arabic. I did not reply. Mazloum now closed the interview with the usual torrent of vituperation, my visitors retired, and I was able to breathe again.

But Mazloum's words as to my relations with the prisoners remained in my mind. Had he discovered the letters of protest they had written and signed, regarding the ill-treatment to which they had been subjected? Had he found my own notes and papers? Among them was a letter of thanks to me from an Englishman, a certain Sergeant Smith, written before we separated. I had helped him with money when he arrived in the camp in so pitiable a state that, had he not been assisted, he would have died. If the Commandant had chanced upon this letter he would probably take it for granted that I was distributing money among the prisoners to enable them to escape. There were also some fifty pages, which Smith had written about his captivity and that of his companions, and their wanderings between Bagdad to Afion-Kara-Hissar. Smith had dictated this to me to teach me English, and the narrative did not praise the Turk.

As for the protest to the American Ambassador, this had emanated from the British soldiers, incensed at the bad treatment accorded the prisoners of war by the Commandant and the jailers. This protest had been forwarded to Mazloun himself for transmission to Constantinople. Nebzet told the Commandant that it was I who had put them up to this.

The prisoners had been condemned to work at house-building from 6 a. m. to 7 p. m. under the petty tyrant of the garrison, Nebzet, a mere interpreter, who, with a whip in one hand and a revolver in the other, lost no opportunity of scourging the poor victims whenever, wearied with fatigue, they expressed the least discontent. One day a prisoner named Noble revolted, absolutely maddened by the ill-treatment of the wretch, and resisted the Tchaouche. Nebzet came up, and, after beating the man without mercy, reported him to the Commandant, who sentenced him to work on Sundays, a day on which the prisoners did not work as a result of a protest, although at a later date this privilege was abolished.

When Sunday came, the Tchaouche arrived to take Noble to his work. Noble refused to go. Nebzet

came on the scene, but Noble remained obstinate, even though an English Sergeant, named Cherryman, pleaded with him. The Sergeant then came to me and asked me to advise Noble to work, so as to prevent worse happening to him. I went to his room and persuaded him to start. Nebzet, feeling affronted that I had succeeded where he had failed, went off to the Commandant and stated that it was I who had urged the prisoners to refuse to work on Sundays. Mazloun lost his temper and forbade me to leave the camp either for the purpose of seeing prisoners, whether officers or men, or to make purchases in the market. I was thus "gated" for forty days.

With these reflections, I fell asleep, to awake next day, happy in the knowledge that I was going to have some milk. I asked the Tchaouche to send for a pint, for lack of food had greatly weakened me. It made me feel a new man. After this, I had a diet of milk for several days, when, tiring of the milk, I asked Captain Safar to let me have something else. He granted my request, and, encouraged by his kindness, I asked and obtained his consent to have my trunk transferred from my quarters to my cell, since I needed a change

of linen. It was brought to me, and on opening it I found everything safe except some provisions, stolen probably by Osman Tchaouche, whose manner made me think him guilty. It was he, in fact, who later robbed me of all my clothes and certain other effects while I was in the hospital.

Finding my mirror, I looked at myself, and was terrified to discover that I was as pale as a corpse, with my chin bare of beard except for a few hairs, which but added to my ghastly aspect. My eyes were rimmed with black, and the whites were bloodshot.

One day I was brought some food from a restaurant, but the next day instructions were changed, and I had to do my own cooking, a sailor bringing me what was necessary in the way of meat, potatoes, and other edibles. The sentry took me each day to the kitchen to prepare the food. This helped to while away the hours.

One day I heard some words in English outside the kitchen window, which opened on a courtyard adjoining the barracks. My curiosity was aroused. In the momentary absence of the jailer, I ran to the window and looked about the yard to see whence the conver-

sation proceeded, and, to my joy, found that I was opposite the house in which lived Commander Goad and several other English officers. The house had a little roof-terrace which overlooked the yard. At all hazards, I felt, I must send them a word to say that I was near them, and let them know all I had suffered at the hands of the Turks.

“If, some day,” I thought, “the Turks bring about my disappearance, their deed will not rest unknown.”

The door into the yard was near the kitchen, and I noticed it was not locked. It was easy enough to write a letter, but to get it to them was another matter. Night and day I concocted plans, but a week passed without my being any nearer a solution.

Then fortune favored me.

Among the sailors whose duty it was to watch me was one who was very simple and naive, although — like all Turks — an inveterate thief. On one occasion he got into my cell by means of the broken windows and disappeared with my larder. His lack of intelligence I hoped to turn to my advantage in carrying out my plan.

Having no writing paper in my room, I took an

envelope, on which I scribbled a few lines to a French officer, telling him briefly what I had suffered. Folding the envelope, I enclosed it in another, addressed to the English officer, and wrapped it in an old newspaper, taking care to weight the packet with about a quarter of a pound of bread. To the string I attached a piece of cardboard, upon which I wrote in English:

“Open, please.”

My object was to throw the parcel onto the terrace over the quarters of the English officers, hoping that the label would attract the attention of someone who would forward the parcel to its destination. My great difficulty was to get into the courtyard, from which I could throw the letter. Time was passing, and at any moment I might be searched.

One night towards the end of October my simple jailer, who was on duty outside my room, was astonished to find me still awake at midnight. I told him I was suffering from insomnia, and lit a candle. Then I offered him a slice of melon, which he swallowed willingly. A quarter of an hour later I asked him to take me to the lavatory, and carried with me a

saucepan containing the melon skins, which I said I was going to throw out into the yard, our usual dumping place for garbage. To this he agreed most readily, as it was his own duty to get rid of rubbish. When we came to the door into the yard I opened it just enough to pass through, for I did not want him to see what I was doing, and throwing my bundle on the terrace, slipped back hastily. I heard the thud of the parcel as it fell on the terrace. The trick had succeeded, and I returned, well satisfied, to my quarters, and went to bed.

### *In the Hospital*

At the beginning of November, Captain Safar came to my room one morning and, adopting a confidential and kindly manner, said to me:

“The Kol-Aghassi, who has a high esteem for you, and I, have found a way of saving you. The Commandant has left for Constantinople, and we are masters here. We have thought of sending you to the hospital, and have come to an understanding with the medical officer in charge, who is always very good and kind. He will come and see you here. You must

tell him you are ill and have heart trouble, and he will order you to the hospital, and give you a statement to the effect that your confinement in a damp and unhealthy room is bad for you. We shall then allow you to return to the prisoners. When the Commandant returns, the whole affair will be ancient history, and the matter will be closed."

"But," said I, "how am I to tell the doctor that I am ill, when I am not?"

"You will explain to him that you have heart disease," he replied. "It is a difficult malady to diagnose."

I understood later that it was not exactly out of pity that the hypocrite acted. Inspectors were to visit the garrison, and the ruffians did not desire that they should see to what a state I was reduced. Above all, they feared that they would speak to me.

To make a long story short, the doctor came two days later and asked me if I were ill. I replied that there was nothing the matter with me. He felt my pulse, inquiring if I had any stomach trouble. In spite of my reply in the negative, he ordered the Tchaouche to send me the next day to the hospital for

examination. When the time came, I packed my trunk, and before leaving, Osman Tchaouche (the thief) assured me as to the safety of my belongings, saying that they would be despatched to the garrison baggage depot, of which he had the key.

I felt better on breathing the open air, since for a month I had not been out of my cell. Nevertheless I was puzzled. This admission to the hospital appeared to me very suspicious, and my doubts increased when my companion took a side street which passed behind the citadel. I was reassured, however, by the sight of the facade of the hospital in the distance. On arrival I was taken to the office of the medical officer in charge, who handed the Tchaouche a paper, and told him to see that I was admitted immediately. He did not even examine me, but I had to take the usual bath on entering. In the ward to which I was conducted I found some sick prisoners from Kut-el-Amara, and was pleased to see my British friends again. I soon got into conversation with them, and learnt that a large number of the prisoners had left the garrison for Angora. An epidemic had broken out among them and carried off several.

Doctor M. Wassilaki, who was attached to the hospital, sounded me, and declared that I had a strong constitution and was quite well, although weak. Shortly afterwards the principal medical officer, Dr. Mustapha Loutfi, arrived, and instructed the stewards to place me in another room. There, to my surprise, I found a master mechanic from the French submarine "Turquoise," who, nine months before, had left Afion-Kara-Hissar with the other French prisoners for Bozanti, where they were to be employed in the construction of the Taurus tunnel. We greeted one another warmly, and he recounted his terrible experiences.

After months of imprisonment at Adana he had been sent to Afion-Kara-Hissar, where a few days after his arrival Mazloum had given him work entirely beyond the strength of any ordinary man: namely, to carry on his shoulders blocks of stone weighing from sixty to eighty pounds apiece all day long. I told him what I had undergone myself, and he was most indignant.

The senior medical man now wished to separate me from the prisoners, and so ordered me to be sent to a room in which were Turks only. One day, while I was

leaning out of the window, I saw four prisoners carrying to the cemetery one of their comrades who had just died. They recognized me and saluted me quite affectionately. One of them was an Irish volunteer fifty years of age, named Walsh, the father of five children. He was very devoted to me, and seeing me so changed, tears came to his eyes, and he turned his head away.

I had been about a week at the hospital, when the doctor in charge told me that I needed to be in the open.

"I am cured now, Doctor," I said. "Why do you not give me the report about which Captain Safar spoke?"

"Not yet," he replied, "you must be patient and wait some days."

"But, Doctor," said I, "that will be too late. Commandant Mazloun will have returned and the report will have no effect. You know how cruel and despotic he is."

"You need have no fear," was the reply. "He cannot go against the report. It is beyond his power."

On the following day I was transferred to another

building where the second in command was a Turkish dental surgeon named Ali-Riza. I was consigned to an isolated room, the shutters of which the dentist himself came and nailed up. Being personally responsible for my safe keeping, he was going to make sure that I should not escape.

My stay here lasted five days, during which time I saw the dentist attending to the wounds of the soldiers every morning, all the while uttering gross insults. The head steward, a Turkish corporal, was exceedingly kind to me. The doctor prescribed certain tonics, which I accepted with a good deal of distrust.

Three days after my arrival in the new ward, I asked the chief steward to tell the doctor that I should like to see him. He came in the afternoon, gave me two letters from home, and asked me what I wanted.

“I have had enough of this,” I exclaimed. “I was promised that I should be kept only a week in the hospital, and here we are at the tenth day.”

The doctor, very much taken aback, said that this was his business, not mine, and I began to doubt Safar's sincerity.

Finally, I heard that Mazloun had returned, and all my hope of deliverance faded away, for I could expect no good from that tyrant. Three days later, when I least expected it, the order came for me to be discharged from hospital. The Kol-Aghassi sent for me, and I was taken from the hospital to the Commandant's office. At first I thought that I was going to be set at liberty and sent back to the prisoners, as Safar had promised, but it was Safar himself who gave the order to a soldier to take me to the barracks, where I was to be shut up. Deceived once again, I set out for the prison.

On arriving at the door of the building, I noticed Captain White in front of his own house. We saluted one another, and he did not take his eyes off me until I entered the barracks. Here I was imprisoned again in the black room I knew so well.

### *Third Degree*

We were only at the end of the first act of the drama. The second was about to commence. Hardly had I laid down to rest in the evening, when Osman

Tchaouche came to say that the Commandant had given orders that I was not to be allowed to sleep that night.

“Get up,” he cried, instructing the jailer not to allow me to go to bed again. I obeyed, and remained standing until morning. Nor was I permitted to sleep during the day. This barbarous régime made me anxious. I was to have been set at liberty, yet here they were beginning to torture me more than ever. I could not understand the mystery.

Next evening at about nine o'clock the Tchaouche came to inform me that the Commandant was asking for me, and took me to the courtyard of the church, where the latter's office was situated. In the vestibule I noticed several prisoners, who looked at me with pity. I entered the room in which the Staff of the Command was assembled. It was composed of Mazloun, Safar, Kol-Aghassi Ahmed, the lieutenant, Nebzet and another interpreter named Dervish. These I saluted. Mazloun fixed his eyes on me and smiled sarcastically. Then Captain Safar remarked ironically:

“Guetchmich ôla Papas effendi, rahat oldunuzmi?”<sup>7</sup>

By this he meant to indicate jocularly that the farce of sending me to the hospital under pretence of setting me at liberty had been carried out satisfactorily.

Mazloun still looked at me in a threatening way. Then the fanatical Unionist cried out:

“So he is still alive, this dog!”

“Nebzet pointed to a chair and asked me to sit down. Distrustful of his politeness, I hesitated. Mazloun flew into a rage and shouted:

“Very well, stand then! Valahi, seni yakadjayem!”<sup>8</sup>

Pulling my letter to the French Commandant from his pocket, he read me a more or less accurate translation in Turkish.

After asking me for my Christian name, surname, those of my father and mother, when I had left my country, how I got to Constantinople, and thence to Afion-Kara-Hissar and so on, he dissected my letter sentence by sentence, to the French Naval officer. Then began a long series of questions.

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<sup>7</sup>“Congratulations, Reverend Father, are you quite well again?”

<sup>8</sup>“I should like to burn you, you wretch!”

“Who is this Commandant X—— to whom you write?”

“He is a French officer,—a prisoner whom you know.”

“Why do you call him ‘Commandant?’ Do you mean that he is in command here? He is only a captain of a ship.”<sup>9</sup>

“In French, they call him ‘Commandant.’”

“Then why do you address him as your ‘dear’ Commandant?” asked Mazolum.

“I use the word ‘dear’ because one can address in this way anyone with whom one has lived on friendly terms.”

Meanwhile a Turkish lieutenant, who acted as clerk, took down the questions and my answers in writing. He asked me if I knew how to write Turkish. On my replying in the affirmative, I was handed a sheet of

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<sup>9</sup> It is necessary that these words should be left in the original French of the letter. The word, “Commandant,” in that language, as is well known, bears a double significance in English in which it may mean “Commandant,” e. g., of a Prisoners of War Camp, or Captain (also Commander) as applied to a Naval officer. On this two-fold meaning rests the real and pretended confusion made by Mazloun and his subsequent charge against the author. It is, therefore, manifestly impossible to translate the word, and use one or other equivalent, since to so do would be to render the story unintelligible.

paper and a pen, after which I wrote the answers myself.

“Why do you eulogize France and show such interest in French prisoners, seeing that you are an Ottoman subject? The French are at the present moment the enemies of Turkey. The matter is the more serious in that you are a Turkish official of this garrison and are paid by the Ottoman Government.”

“I spoke in praise of France because it is the country to which I owe my education. Naturally I am grateful to France for this. I interest myself in the prisoners of France, for it is precisely to do so that the Government has sent me here.”

Mazloun and Safar expressed their opinions to one another and offered reciprocal suggestions as to how best to form their questions.

“Where are the notes for which you asked in your letter?”

“All he gave me was a word of information regarding the death of a non-commissioned officer who died before I came to the camp.”

“Where is the note?”

“I have destroyed it.”

"You were living with Langlois<sup>10</sup> and the others," added Mazloun. "You have got to tell me what they wrote and what they said."

"I do not know what Langlois and the other prisoners wrote," I replied. "That was no business of mine."

Mazloun jumped up, and standing in front of me, shouted angrily:

"Hand me the list Langlois gave you, also the French Commandant's notes. If you do not give them to me I shall kill you."

"Langlois gave me nothing, and I can only repeat that the French Commandant gave me nothing more than some simple information about the death of a non-commissioned officer. The note I have destroyed."

Mazloun rushed at me in a threatening way, but the Kol-Aghassi held him.

"Take him back to prison," he shouted, "and see that he does not sleep."

Back I returned to my cell, worn out, the jailer strictly enforcing his orders not to let me close my

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<sup>10</sup> A French soldier who, understanding Turkish, acted as an interpreter. He secured many favors for the prisoners owing to his knowledge of the language.

eyes. Day came, and to some extent drove away the heaviness, but I developed a violent toothache and suffered most horribly.

At nine o'clock that evening I was brought anew before my prosecutor, but on my first negative reply, he sent me back to my cell, with the usual order that I was to have no sleep. One well-disposed sentry, however, allowed me to rest a little, and in this way I obtained two hours' sleep, only to be awakened by the next guard to await the coming of daylight.

Next day I felt a little better. Towards nine o'clock Osman Tchaouche came with the garrison marangos,<sup>11</sup> a creature of Captain Safar's, whose habit it was to steal planks from the houses of the deported Christians. This unpleasant person had great influence with his chiefs, whom he was accustomed to treat in a very familiar manner. He had come to take me to the Commandant's office, where the interrogation was to be resumed. As soon as we were in the street the marangos struck me as hard as he could with his fists, saying:

"Give up the notes, you pig of a priest! Say what

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<sup>11</sup>"Marangos," i. e., "carpenter'."

you saw written, and the whole affair will be done with."

When I nearly fell because of the blows, my tormentor roared with laughter.

The room where I was questioned reeked of drink. Mazloum was almost intoxicated, and his breath, when he spoke, smelt strongly of alcohol. As soon as I entered the tyrant snarled at me:

"If you do not speak to-day, dog, I shall crush you."

Cracking jokes, meanwhile, Osman Tchaouche and Nebzet stood near me and ordered me to speak, the last-named scoundrel, in particular, displaying great zeal. He even went so far as to spit in my face.

Unable to drag anything further from me, the Commandant sent me back with the customary insults, and the usual order that I was not to be allowed to sleep. The marangos and Osman accompanied me again as far as my prison, behaving in the street like savages. I was at the end of my strength. My compulsory sleeplessness caused me indescribable suffering. My nerves were utterly upset, and I believed I was losing

my reason. The barbarians, I was sure, were going to kill me.

Next day my eyes were so weak I could hardly distinguish the soldiers who passed before the window. Seated on a bench, I awaited in patience the end of my sufferings.

Before mid-day Osman Tchaouche came, gathered his men in the adjoining room, and addressed them in a low tone of voice. He seemed to be speaking of me, and I thought I caught the words "priest," "treason," "prisoners," "punishment," and "insecurity of the country." He advised them to clean their rifles, and I heard the click of the bolts of their Mausers as each man took his weapon and cleaned it, as though about to prepare for an attack. In the afternoon the same sounds were repeated. Osman Tchaouche came again, gave some orders, and left.

Shortly afterwards, the sailors assembled in the corridor and, rifle in hand, fell in outside my room, where the Tchaouche inspected them. The two or three men who had been with me from the beginning were sent away lest they should be tempted to assist me to

escape. Others arrived soon after to take their places. I noticed that they were watching me narrowly.

One of them locked the garden gate, the turning of the key being audible in my cell. I felt that my last hour had come! It was of me the Tchaouche had spoken to his men! He had told them that I was a traitor, and, as such, was to be punished. I was to be shot!

Yet, convinced as I was of the approach of death, I did not dread it. I resigned myself to it, and even felt that it was the end of my sufferings. "At least," I thought, "I die an innocent man." The only thing that saddened me was the thought of my relatives and their pain when they should learn of my tragic fate.

Towards evening, a sailor came to the window and said a few sympathetic words to me, which increased and strengthened my presentiment of coming death. A moment later another man passed through the corridor, a large sheet of paper in his hand.

"This is the inscription which is to be hung round my neck when I am executed," I said to myself.

I felt full of courage, and I was going almost joyfully to death. I said my prayers in preparation,

offering up my life to God as a sacrifice for my nation and my kindred. I walked up and down my room in a kind of exaltation, impatient for the coming of my last moments on earth. I was prepared to drink the chalice to the dregs.

Evening came, and I awaited my last summons. About half past eight the petty officer arrived and ordered me to go to the Commandant. On the way I passed the time in prayer. Osman Tchaouche asked me what I was doing.

“As I am about to die,” I said, “I am preparing for death.”

My words caused the hypocrite to sigh sadly, and he pretended to weep. After all, he was a Turk!

We reached the entrance to the camp, and I entered and took my stand before the tribunal, ready to hear my death sentence. The Commandant, surrounded by his staff, was seated at a table.

“Well,” he said, “are you going to speak to-day?”

“I have nothing new to add,” I answered, “but before I die I wish to ask you a favor, and hope that you will grant it.”

“Speak,” he ordered.

“I beg you to allow me to see my colleague, Father Moussoullou, for the last time, so that I may carry out my religious duties before I die. I should also like to make my will.”

“You die!” cried the Commandant. “Why you are capable of making the Devil and all his angels die before turning up your toes. As for your colleague, he also is in prison. The Greek priest of the town is likewise under lock and key, so that it is impossible to bring you a priest. As for your will, you may make that.”

Nebzet, the interpreter, took up his pen and wrote down what I dictated to him, making fun of me the while. When it was finished, Captain Safar said:

“Since you are giving something to everybody, why do you not leave a legacy to the Red Crescent as well? Oh, I understand,” he added, “it is a Turkish institution, so it will not interest you.”

“Well,” I said, “here is my last pound. You can give it to the Red Crescent.”

Safar pocketed the money.

I had finished and signed my will, when the Commandant suddenly left the court. I noticed that those

who remained changed both in word and manner towards me, and the Kol-Aghassi, touched by pity, told the lieutenant to give me a cigarette.

“It is all over,” he said to me; “you will be able to sleep to-night.”

I could not believe my ears! I was being deceived again, and this was doubtless a last word of consolation which the Kol-Aghassi, always friendly, wished to give me. Or did he refer to the everlasting sleep of death?

At length the Tchaouche, who had been present, took me back to my prison, asking me on the way to bequeath him something. He accompanied me to my cell, and, opening my trunk, I gave him some articles, but he was not satisfied, and wanted my overcoat and rug as well. I refused. To my disgust, I found that most of my things had been stolen.

I was very tired and tried to sleep, but terrible thoughts came to my mind, and I pictured the moment when they would come during the night to take me out and shoot me.

Eventually I fell into a sound sleep. When I awoke next day much of my pain due to insomnia and my men-

tal torture had vanished. My first action was to reopen my trunk to see what things were missing. I found that all my linen, my watch, clothes and many other things had disappeared, and I suspected Osman Tchaouche of the theft since it was he who had the key of the store room. On being informed of this, he came himself in all astonishment to ask me what was missing. I insisted particularly on the return of the linen, but it was useless. A petty officer told me next day that he had seen Osman with a night-shirt of mine.

The same day a sailor told me in confidence that I was to leave for Constantinople. A Canoun-Tchaouche,<sup>12</sup> who had just arrived from the capital, in passing my cell, said to me :

“I was to have taken you, ‘Papas,’<sup>13</sup> to Constantinople, but I have just been given other work, so probably you will be taken there by someone else.”

The information was quite accurate. My transfer had been decided upon. In making my preparations, the first thing which occurred to me was to send word to the prisoners, that they might find a means of advis-

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<sup>12</sup>Sergeant of Military Police—M. P.

<sup>13</sup>Priest.

ing the Apostolic Delegation at Constantinople of my departure, and so secure me its protection. I therefore wrote a letter to this effect to Commander Goad and another to the French Commandant, asking them to take the necessary steps to communicate with Mgr. Dolci, Apostolic Delegate to the Holy See at Constantinople. The former I charged particularly with notifying the prisoners of certain matters concerning my relations with them.

I managed to throw these letters, as before, from the courtyard onto the terrace of the English officers' prison, and hurried back to my cell. Being no longer so strictly guarded, next day I washed my clothes in the yard. I was seen from a window by the English officers, one of whom came out for a stroll on the terrace with a cigarette in his hand. Making me a sign to come nearer, he threw down the cigarette, which I immediately picked up.

Returning hastily to my prison, I sat down in a corner and opened it. I found that it contained a letter from Commander Goad, promising to do what I had asked, and informing me that the Apostolic Delegate had already been warned of my approaching

departure. Expressing his regrets at hearing of my misfortunes, and wishing me better luck, he conveyed to me the thanks of all the prisoners. Wishing to keep this last souvenir of the prisoners, I hid it, but on second thought, in view of the danger to my friends were I to be searched, I decided to destroy it.

Two days later, towards the end of November, being told that I was to leave early next morning, I asked several times to see Captain Safar before setting out, in order that I might report the theft of my clothes and other belongings. Osman Tchaouche divined my thoughts and prevented an interview. Late at night the Captain came to the barracks, however, to ask me if I were ready to start. I told him of the theft and of my suspicions in regard to Osman Tchaouche. The latter being, however, an accomplice of his, he took no steps in the matter.

### *Court-martialled*

At 2 a. m. next morning I left the barracks, which had been my prison for nearly two months, crossing the town by streets other than the main thoroughfares. At the station I was surprised to hear that the

train did not leave until nine. Mazloum had given me one more final expression of good will, and, as he did not wish me to pass in daylight before the English officers' quarters, had deprived me of the pleasure of seeing them for the last time. The train left eventually at midday. Hassan Tchaouche was my companion, and throughout the journey was exceedingly kind to me, as was, indeed, in even greater degree, a soldier named Bairam. I invited them both to take their meals at my expense.

On arrival at Ismid, I asked the kindly soldier to have tea in the restaurant, and, convinced of his sincerity, requested him to be so good as to forward, on our arrival at Constantinople, a few words I should give him for the Chaldean Vicar General. He consented, and wrote in his notebook the address I dictated. I then scribbled a few lines to Mgr. Bajari, telling him of my coming to Constantinople, that I was to be courtmartialled there, and begging him to do all he could to save me. The soldier took the letter, advising me not to mention the matter to his companion. I learnt later that he kept his promise.

Next day,— Tuesday, November the 28th, to be pre-

cise,— we arrived at Haidar Pasha. I was taken by my guards to the War Office, and brought to the quarters of the Military Commandant, whence I was transferred to a large red building adjacent. A superior officer remarked to me:

“Well, you have arrived safe and sound,” and ordered me to be taken through a long corridor to a large underground hall, full of tiers of beds for the use of the Turkish soldiers who lived like rats in this kind of cellar. From this place I was taken to a bureau where some non-commissioned officers searched me carefully, as if I had just been newly arrested, a rather stupid proceeding, I thought, considering I had passed two months in prison. The senior Non-Commissioned Officer seemed to me an absolute fanatic. As he carefully gathered together any scraps of paper found upon me, he seemed to go out of his way to find a pretext for worrying me.

A sergeant took me next to a room lighted by electricity, where I was to wait my time. A big peasant soldier, who seemed devoid of malice, was charged with the duty of bringing my meals. He also swept

the room. All things considered, I was very much better installed in the Seraskerat<sup>14</sup> than at Afion-Kara-Hissar.

Next day the governor of the prison, Captain Ismail Hakki, came to see me. He spoke very nicely to me, and took me to a room where I found my trunk, which had been opened and inspected. The Captain, without reading them, took possession of certain letters which I had received through the Red Crescent from France, written by relatives, asking for news of certain soldiers, most of whom had fallen in the fighting at the Dardanelles.

Two days after my arrival at my new prison the Captain came to inform me that a certain Mr. Victor Varthality, who had been sent by the Apostolic Delegation, wished to see me. After asking me a number of questions, his nephew asked me whether I was in need of food or money. I told him that I had no change of linen, and he brought me some.

A week passed, and then I was summoned to appear before the court martial, and was examined once more. In the course of the sitting I was asked again whence

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<sup>14</sup> War Office.

I came, where I was going, etc. My letter to the French Commandant seemed to be at the bottom of the whole matter, although the judges did not appear to attach great importance to it. After an hour's examination I was dismissed.

Some days later I was recalled and questioned anew. At the end of the interview one of the judges asked me for news of an English Captain named Does. He spoke almost cordially, and offered me a cigarette, which I declined. Then, speaking of a certain Captain Roeckel, he said:

“Captain Roeckel is dead.”

Meanwhile he fixed his eyes upon me to see what impression the news would make. Taking him at his word, I was deeply pained to hear of the death of this brave friend of mine. Later I learned that Captain Roeckel was in perfect health. It was merely a trick.

Remaining alone with my interrogator, who seemed to me to be an Arab, in that he spoke Arabic perfectly, I asked him what he thought of the papers relating to my case.

“You need not worry,” he said, “there is nothing

serious in them. Your affair is a mere bubble, which will disappear at the first puff of wind."

The sitting was then adjourned.

On December 27, Mgr. Bajari had the courage to come and pay me a visit in prison, and brought me good news of my brother, who was now in Constantinople, and about whose fate I had been anxious. He was astonished to find me so calm, for certain evil-minded persons had spread a rumor in the town that my case was serious and that I was to be executed. Some days later he visited me again, bringing with him my brother, who was much upset at seeing me in prison, and who gave me news of our family and some money.

I had to wait until the beginning of February before I appeared again before the court martial. In the meantime I was allowed to leave my room, and so, after three months of solitary confinement, had the happiness of finding myself once more among my fellowmen and of talking with them. My companions were Christian prisoners, all educated men, who for the most part had already been acquitted by the tribunal, but out of malice had not been set at liberty. In fact, only

by heavy bribes had they been able to get themselves transferred to a large room, which was clean and well ventilated. I was also to meet among them a fellow citizen of Urfa, Dr. Mirza, who during his exile at Angora had been told off to look after the prisoners of war in the camps. Thus the rigors of prison life were much softened for me, and I hoped for a happy ending to my weary martyrdom.

Wishing to have some books one day, I asked a sentry, who had been very well disposed towards me up to that time, to get me an English grammar. He consented, and I indicated a shop where he could purchase it, and gave him the money, as well as something for himself. The man treacherously informed the Commandant, who reprimanded me, leaving the sentry, however, the gratuity and the rest of the money, a typically Turkish action.

My fellow prisoners gave me an account of the atrocities to which they had been subjected at the hands of the police. One of them, Mr. Samuel, of Van, a professor at Robert College, Constantinople, after receiving hundreds of blows with a stick, had been hung up on a wall, head downwards. Another,

M. Ohannes, a proprietor of a tailoring establishment in Pera, had been arrested because he had a brother who had written and published works against the politics of the Unionist party. M. Chawache, a journalist, had been tortured to such a degree that he threw himself from his window into the street to kill himself, breaking his leg. Yet another victim had been obliged, under threat of being beaten, to remain standing motionless, day and night, for several days.

I was surprised to find in the prison the three British Naval officers, Messrs. Stocker, Cochrane and another, who escaped from the concentration camp at Afion-Kara-Hissar ten months before, only to be retaken a week later. I greeted them as they passed my barred window, asking after their health. They were even more surprised at finding me a prisoner.

On the 8th of February I was called before the tribunal, over which presided a cavalry general, assisted by the Attorney-General and about ten officers. The secretary was ordered by the President to read my now famous letter, and translated it into Turkish. He did this so badly that I was obliged to stop him several times and correct him. Finally, feeling

insulted, he obstinately upheld his own version. Although it was a risky thing to do, I arose, and going up to him, snatched the letter and continued the translation myself; an action which caused the judges to look at me with some surprise.

The chief accusation brought against me was my love for France! I defended myself desperately in Turkish, and, when at a loss for a word, broke into Arabic and French. When I had finished, the General, who was wild with rage, shouted:

“Well, then, if you are so indebted to the France you love so much, why did you remain in Turkey? Why did you accept service with her, with that Turkey which, having confidence in you, allowed you to go to the camp of the Anglo-French prisoners? You had only to go and take up your residence in France, and our country would have nurtured one less traitor in her bosom.”

Finally, the Attorney-General himself taking up my defense, pointed out that the letter was addressed to a prisoner, and one actually in the same camp; that one cannot order people to have sentiments of any particular kind, since every man has the right to think

for himself, and that I did not incur punishment for so doing. After a short homily, which I did not quite catch, the General requested me to leave.

*Free*

I returned to prison, and next day Captain Ismail Hakki came to announce my acquittal. It only remained to consult Enver Pasha as to where I was to go, since as a military Chaplain, I came under the War Office.

On February the 10th, a Sunday, the sergeant told me that I was to prepare to leave. I was free, and could go where I willed.

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Thus closed my hundred and thirty days of prison life. As I passed through the streets of Constantinople, I felt as if I were in a dream. I seemed to be awaking once more to life as from a terrible nightmare. I took a carriage to the Chaldean Patriarchate, where I met once more friends and colleagues, who were happy to know that I was at last free from the clutches of the cruel wretches who had subjected me to so long a martyrdom.

It was not until two days before my liberation that my mother at Aleppo learned that I had been imprisoned. Her anxiety was not of long duration, for two days later she received my telegram saying that I had been freed.

Notwithstanding the ease of my new life, I could not free my mind from the thought of the sufferings of the prisoners of war, and sought to convey information to responsible quarters, but fearing Turkish espionage, dared not approach the representatives of Britain and France.<sup>15</sup> Finally, I found a means of seeing a Mr. Sikes and a Dr. McLean, who were interested in the English, as was also a Dr. Frew, the head of the Anglican Church in Constantinople. Further, M. Savoye, a friend of mine, formerly a director of the Ottoman Bank at Urfa, and an old and valued friend, gave an afternoon tea at which I found M. Dugardier, the French Consul General, and M. Beauduy. I told them everything, and begged them to intervene with the Turkish authorities by means of a protest through the American Embassy, which was responsible at that time for the interests of the

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<sup>15</sup> English and French affairs were managed at the American Embassy subsequent to their entry into the war, after which Holland took charge of the affairs of all three.

Entente in Turkey. Thus they might save the poor prisoners who were liable to perish from cold, lack of care, and want of food. I also asked them to increase the sum of money which they sent to the prisoners, and which was their only means of support.

In conclusion, I desire to convey my thanks to the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Dolci; to my 'dear friend Latif Bey, a Chaldean member of the Council at the Court of Appeals in Constantinople; to Daoud Bey Youssoufani, former Chaldean Deputy of Mosul; all of whom intervened on my behalf, and brought influence to bear on their friends in order that I might be set at liberty.

## CHAPTER V

### *My Successor's Experience*

When I left the Prison Camp at Afion-Kara-Hissar, two German priests were appointed as Chaplains. They were Father Dangelmonier of the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales and Dr. Engert of the Dellinges Academy in Bavaria. They arrived early in June, 1917.

Although allowed considerably more latitude than I, they had so much difficulty with the Turkish authorities that after three months they were so worn out that they requested to return to Constantinople.

It was there in Constantinople that I talked with Father Dangelmonier on September the fourth, 1917.

Having been allowed considerable liberty, he took long trips into the country about Mardin and Diarbekir, and was able to tell me of existing conditions in that region. He had seen the terrible state of convoys of Christians deported into the desert, and testified that the persecutions were continuing.

“Half of the prisoners have been killed by the ill-treatment inflicted by the Turks,” he said, “and if the war lasts another two years, not one will live.”

I then asked him why the German Government, which, having many officers there, could not be ignorant of the savagery and brutality of the Turk, did not intervene.

“Because of its silence,” I told him frankly, “it is responsible for all that happens.”

“You are right,” he admitted. “I, myself, cannot understand its apathy, and feel so indignant about it that I am almost ashamed to call myself a German. The Germans could not prevent a general rising on the part of the people, but this systematic and continued persecution they could have checked. When I return to Germany, I shall raise my voice on behalf of these unhappy Christians.”

At my request, he willingly gave me a short report of all he knew about the condition of the Christians in Turkey.

*Father Dangelmonier's Testimony*

During this terrible world war, every nation has suffered more or less. There is one nation, however, or rather one race, which has been peculiarly afflicted, and

whose very existence as a racial unit has been threatened. I refer to the Christians of the Orient. Let us not here discuss individual responsibility for their martyrdom, but merely, in a few words, speak of what they have suffered, and what their future may be.

By "Christians of the Orient" we mean all the Catholic and "Orthodox" followers of Christ in European Turkey, together with those who are scattered throughout Anatolia, Syria, Armenia and Mesopotamia. Before the war the Christians in the East, inclusive of the Greeks, numbered over three millions. During the last two years two millions of these have been massacred by the Turks, or have perished in misery during deportation. Most of the survivors are condemned to dire want, and many, if not assisted, will die during the coming winter.

Except in Constantinople, Aleppo and a few other localities which were spared, the persecution commenced by the deportation of the rich and influential male Christians from the centers where they lived. Escorted by soldiers and police, they were taken to out-of-the-way spots and all put to death. This was the procedure followed in the towns.

In the distant villages, the Kurdish tribes could be relied upon to assist. They burnt everything and massacred all but those women and children whom they wished to keep for their own use.

Every rich and influential Christian man having been done away with, an order came from Constantinople not to molest the families of the Syrians, Jacobites and Chaldeans. This order, alas, which was only partly obeyed even in the cities, came too late for the country districts, where almost the whole Christian population had already been put to death.

One may say, in the districts where the massacres took place, there remain of the Gregorians and Armenians only some thousands, mostly widows and orphans. This means that more than a million have disappeared. The Chaldean Catholics have lost their three Bishops<sup>1</sup> and two-thirds of their people; the Nestorians, more than one hundred thousand men and the greater part of their Bishops, and the Syrians all their moneyed men and those of influence. Having given the authorities an enormous sum, the Jacobites at Mardin were not

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<sup>1</sup>The Chaldean Catholics, as a matter of fact, lost five bishops through the persecution of the Turks.

molested, but in the villages over eighty thousand of their community were slain by the Kurds.

In short, it is safe to say that two million Christians have been wiped out in the space of two years, for the deportations took place throughout the years 1915 and 1916, and even during 1917 more than forty thousand have been done to death.

One must add to these the large number of Christian women, chiefly the more beautiful, held in Turkish harems. Protestants likewise have lost most of their followers. They have, however, already organized numerous orphanages in order to save the children who have survived the massacres.

It would require several hundred pages to recount the innumerable cruelties perpetrated at the expense of these victims. They form a special chapter in the history of the war. Even in the old days of the barbarians such acts of cruelty were not committed. One example will suffice.

— A priest at Mardin was thrown into prison, where, despite his sixty-two years, he received more than three hundred blows with a stick. His white beard was torn out, and for the whole of one night he was hung up to

nails by a cord stretched out in the form of a cross. Some days later he was given his liberty by an order from Constantinople. I heard these horrible details from the priest himself.

At present there remain thousands of widows and orphans who have escaped by a miracle from the claws of the Turks and Kurds, and who are now returning to take refuge among their Christian brethren. Morally and materially, they are in a terrible condition. There are still young Christian women being violated by Kurds and Arabs and sold to the highest bidder in the bazaars as if they were cattle. And hundreds of Chaldean and Syrian families are utterly without means of support.

The Turkish army has carried off all reserves of food, and famine has begun to make itself felt among the Arabs and Kurds, who, in consequence, are preying upon unfortunate Christians. Without shelter, food or fatherland, the poor, down-trodden victims are taking refuge in the towns, where they will starve to death.

In Diarbeker, Mardin and other regions, Turkish officers nightly send their orderlies to Christian houses to carry off victims for their debauches. Right and justice no longer exist, as far as Christians are concerned. They

are outlaws in Turkey, and anyone may kill them or bring about their disappearance without a single voice being raised on their behalf. This is the present sad situation of the Christians in the Orient, of the truth of which thousands of proofs can be furnished.

### *The Future*

The future is no light matter for the Christians. Unless they obtain liberty to live, and bread to eat, they will all die of hunger and cold in those regions through which the murderers have passed. The Turks do whatever they wish with them. Quite lately they have confiscated the whole corn harvest, so that each person must ask his bread from the Turkish Commandant. The latter chases away the petitioner as soon as he discovers that he is a Christian, or, at best, makes him pay dearly for the morsel thrown to him, as to a dog.

A Bishop of Mardin said recently:

“In my town there are more than five thousand widows and orphans whom I have to feed as best I can. If assistance does not arrive for the winter, four thousand of the poor creatures will be dead next year. It is

impossible for human beings to live on roots, especially after having undergone so great a martyrdom.”

What is the duty of Christians enjoying the inestimable boon of liberty? Surely it is to give alms to these widows and orphans of the East, whose martyred parents have gone to Heaven! There is still time to save thousands of them. It only means organizing a system of relief as quickly as possible. Let us hope that the Government of Turkey will be forced to take pity upon these unhappy people and let them live. And let us hope, above all, that Europe will not delay in sending them help.”



HIS BEATITUDE THE CHALDEAN, PATRIARCH OF BABYLON

PART II



## CHAPTER I

### *Depositions Concerning the Massacres at Sairt*

In the month of October, 1917, I was preparing to leave Constantinople for Aleppo, to see my relatives whom I had left two years before, when Theophile and Philippe, two Chaldeans of Sairt, came to see me. They informed me that they had a sister, Djalila, who had been deported from Sairt and who was at that moment at Aleppo. Knowing that I intended to go there, they placed a sum of money in my hands, and asked me to give it to Djalila, and to assist her to return to Constantinople.

My first care on arriving at Aleppo was to call on Madame Djalila and hand her the money sent by her brothers, of whom I gave her news. I then made arrangements to bring her to Constantinople with me, but the project fell through, the war being then at its height, and Madame Djalila being without "nefousteressi" (papers of identity).

I asked her to give me the details of her long martyrdom. The following is the complete story she gave me

of her wanderings, and of the unheard-of sufferings to which she was subjected. The recital so vividly recalled her sufferings — for she had escaped death almost miraculously — that she sobbed bitterly.

*The Deposition of Madame Djalila*

“We learnt one day that my Uncle Fathalla and his brother George had been arrested at Sairt by order of the Government.<sup>1</sup>

This was at the beginning of June, 1915. We sought anxiously for the reason of their arrest, which so far as we could judge from what had already happened, seemed to us quite arbitrary. Obtaining nothing definite from the officials, we questioned a Chaldean medical man named Djerdjess, who was on the Staff of the Military

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<sup>1</sup>Djeudet Bey, Military Governor of Van, had been expelled towards the end of May by the Russians and the Armenians and Assyro-Chaldeans of Hakkari, and fled towards the south, crossing the river Bohtan. Entering Sairt with 8,000 soldiers whom he himself called “The Butchers’ Battalion” (Kassab Tabouri), he gave orders for the massacre of the Christians. On 25th of June he laid siege to Bitlis and he exterminated every single Christian.

The Chaldean diocese of Sairt comprises, exclusive of the Chaldeans of the town, more than thirty villages, not to count a large number of other villages inhabited by Assyro-Chaldean Jacobites, of whose number we are ignorant.

All these prosperous villages were pillaged, looted and burnt, those who dwelt therein being put to the sword. The following

Hospital, some distance from the Chaldean quarter Ain-Salib. My father-in-law, Khawadja Mansour, asked the doctor if he knew why our relations had been seized.

“Do not worry,” Djerdjess replied, “at present the Government is in need of reapers and is commandeering the services of men in every part of the town. Your relations happen to be among them. A certain number will be selected: the strongest will be sent to the fields and the remainder will be sent back to their families.”

Knowing the feelings of the Governor towards the Christian population, the explanation, far from reassuring us, only increased our anxiety. Not daring to leave our homes, we sought information from certain sure

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is an almost complete list with the number of Chaldean inhabitants:

Sairt . . . . .	2,000	Mar-Chmoune . . . . .	300
Sadagh . . . . .	2,000	Hartevena . . . . .	200
Mar-Gourya . . . . .	1,000	Der-Mar-Yacoub . . . . .	500
Guedianes . . . . .	500	Bekend . . . . .	500
Hadide . . . . .	1,000	Ain-Dare . . . . .	200
Redwan . . . . .	500	Berke . . . . .	500
Dehok . . . . .	500	Archkanes . . . . .	500
Ketmes . . . . .	1,000	Galwaye . . . . .	500
Der-Chemch . . . . .	200	Goredj . . . . .	500
Piros . . . . .	1,000	Artoun (Altahtanie). . .	500
Tentas . . . . .	500	Der-Mazen . . . . .	300
Tellimchar . . . . .	1,500	Derr-Rabban . . . . .	300
Telnevro . . . . .	500	Charnakh . . . . .	200
Benkof . . . . .	200	Artoun (Alfokanie). . .	1,000

The above names and figures were given me by Vicar General Bajari, who belongs to this part of the country.

sources. We learnt that part of the prisoners had been housed provisionally in the military hospital, and part in the barracks.

Realizing that evil might fall upon ourselves and our relatives at any moment, we lived in a state of unspeakable terror. Certain indications as well as our own forebodings revived our fears. We were quite panic-stricken and the least thing served to upset our nerves.

We learnt at length, a fortnight before the tragic events here narrated, that the Kurdish tribes in the neighbourhood of Sairt, the terror of the Christians in these regions, had attacked the town with the intention of plundering and massacring the Christians.

The Kurds armed and mounted under the command of their Aghas (Chiefs) numbered about three hundred. Part of the band had already entered the town. The mere intimation of their arrival caused us to lose our heads. We took it for granted that we should meet the fate which, as a matter of fact, awaited us. We had but one thought, that of saving ourselves. Our first act was to dig as fast as we could hiding places beneath our houses in which to deposit whatever objects of value we possessed. We also worked feverishly to provide

“dug outs” in which to conceal ourselves. These were, however, quite useless, since we had to do with men accustomed to pillage and murder. They would have known where to find us, and in case of doubt would have set fire to our houses. To our great happiness news arrived that our Chaldean Archbishop, the Right Reverend Addai Sheir,<sup>2</sup> had offered to the Mutessarif (Governor) a bribe of some five hundred pounds in gold.<sup>3</sup> In return the General sent the Kurds away. For the moment we were saved, but our mental suffering did not diminish. The terrifying impression produced by the armed Kurds remained with us.

Fearing that a hiding place in the house offered no sure protection, we left it secretly and took refuge with our friend the Bimbashi (Commandant), who lived with one of my aunts, and was friendly to the Christians. My father-in-law, a member of the Administrative Council, remained in the house, stoically awaiting

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<sup>2</sup>The illustrious Archbishop of Sairt; an Oriental scholar well known in Europe; Laureat of the “Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres” of Paris and author of several historical works. He has also published numerous studies in the “Revue Asiatique.”

<sup>3</sup>About \$2,500.00 American money.

the terrible measures which were even then being prepared.

As nothing happened for some days to justify our fears, we decided to return home. Immediately contradictory rumours began to be spread throughout the town. Some said that the Kurds had come back; others that the Russians had arrived.

A week later a Government official, Selim Effendi, a friend of my uncle's and of my father-in-law, chanced to pass our door. Seeing him from the window, my father-in-law asked him what was happening.

"The only advice I can give you," he replied, "is to remain concealed at home; for it looks as if matters are coming to a head. The situation is grave."

The Archbishop, like a good shepherd, while keeping up our courage, put us on our guard and exhorted us with words of infinite tenderness, to make use of every possible means to safeguard our lives. He himself was to be the first to feel the rigours of the barbarous régime which was to be inaugurated against the Christians. Police came to his residence and arrested him by order of the Governor. Only by means of another bribe to the Governor did he obtain permission to

remain for the moment where he was, being placed under strict supervision of several members of the police force.

The house had two exits, the chief of which was guarded by the police. As a precaution the Archbishop had summoned the Agha of Tanze, a village at some hours' distance from Sairt. The Agha, who was most friendly to the Christians, advised the prelate to save himself, and assisted him, disguised as a Kurd, to escape with some of his men by means of the second door leading to the Cathedral. My brother, Father Gabriel, who was the Archbishop's secretary, was asked to leave with him, but refused.

Osman Agha was not the only one who showed these humane and friendly feelings towards the Christians. Another functionary who greatly liked them, was the Mayor, one Abdul-Rezzak, who even went so far as to arrange with my father, certain of the political leaders of the nation and Abdul of Addai, to collect from the Chaldeans a certain sum of money with the object of enabling them to save their lives. His friendship for us brought about his downfall, and he was replaced by a certain Hami Effendi of Sairt, a cruel fanatic, who

hated the Christians. In him the Governor found an invaluable colleague in carrying out his bloody and dreadful work.

During the afternoon of the day following the flight of the Archbishop about fifty armed Mussulmans of the town laid siege to our house. They knocked at the door first, but seeing that no one opened it, attempted to force it. Failing in this, they began to batter it with blocks of stone in order to break it open. Mansour, my father-in-law, went forward to admit the attackers, who, accompanied by four of the police, invaded the house, and commenced to sack and pillage everything. We, women and children, terrified out of our lives, gathered together in one room. My brother-in-law, Moussa, and his cousins Aboud and Behnam, brothers of Naaman Effendi, concealed themselves in the attic, which had but one small opening to the roof. Kerim, my other brother-in-law, was ill with typhoid fever. Our savage visitors seeing the sick man, drew their daggers to kill him. Attracted by Kerim's cries we threw ourselves at the feet of the murderers, begging them to spare the poor invalid. No harm was done him, and the band left the room and went off to sack whatever they could find

in the house. The police arrested my father-in-law, Mansour, and took him with them.

Fearing to be molested by the invaders, we tried to get to the roof, taking the sick man with us, but the brigands who were prowling about all over the house in search of their prey, seeing a man with us, followed. Trembling with fright, and believing that this time his life was really in danger, the sick man fled. A police sergeant pursued him and killed him with four shots from his revolver, two of which struck him in the arm and two in the head. The unfortunate man fell, bathed in his blood.

Having carried out their fell work, and having sacked the house, the murderers made off. We came down and discovered that the poor youth was dead. We carried him out and cried bitterly as we stood in a circle around his body. Everything having been borne off, we had nothing with which to cover the corpse. Meanwhile another band came along and banged at our door. My father-in-law's brother, Hanna, a man of seventy, in his fear for us, came out of his hiding place and went to open it. A shot fired through a hole in the door struck him in the forehead and he fell dead.

Once more we fled in terror to the terrace roof. The door was forced and the murderers, entering the house, first made for Hanna's body and stripped it of all its clothes. (Here Madame Walies-Djalila's account was interrupted by her sobs, and she wept bitterly.)

The Mutessarif (Governor) lived near us, and at the time he was seated with the notorious Hami Effendi, the Mayor of the town, at a window which overlooked our house.<sup>4</sup> The two men watched impassively all that happened. Turning our eyes towards them we implored them to save us, but they remained cold and motionless. A week later, tired of hearing us weep and cry unceasingly, the Governor came to us and said: "Why do

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<sup>4</sup>We have gathered from eyewitnesses the names of the principal butchers who directed the massacres of Sairt and looted the belongings of the Chaldeans.

Hilmi Bey, Governor of Sairt.

Hamdi Bey, who commanded the Police.

Hami Effendi, the Mayor.

Ali Effendi. }  
Emin Basri. } Officers.

Fathulla Effendi.

Hadji Abdi Moussali. }  
Fardo Ibin Ibrahim. } Merchants.

Aziz Ibin Hadji Omar, a cousin of Fardo.

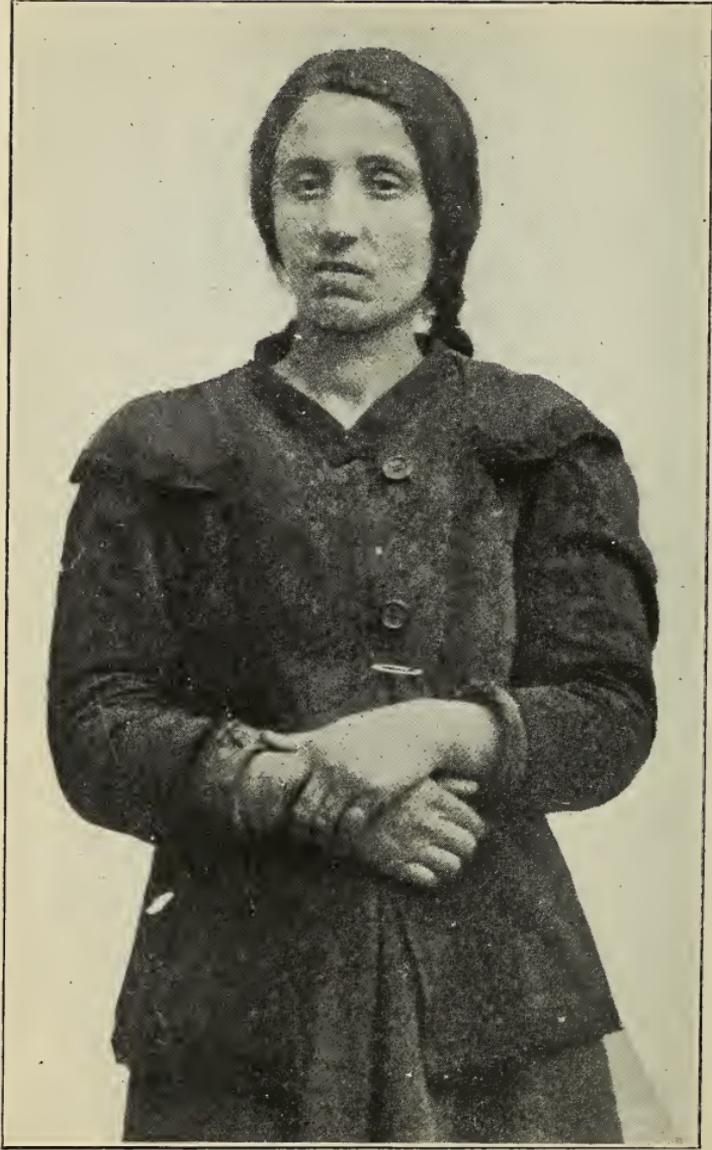
Molla Kheder.

Molla Elias.

Hadji Ibrahim Hassane.

Hamid Hagha and his four sons.

Hamdi Ibin Hadji Mamad Effendi and others.



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these people treat you so badly? If they do you any more harm, send and let me know." With that he left.

The same day, during the afternoon, Hamdi Effendi, who commanded the police, also came to the house and asked us:

"What is the matter with you, and what is all this row about?" "Can you not see what they have made us suffer?" we answered. "Oh, well," he replied, "show me the men you have hidden in the house and you will be safe. No one will annoy you further." He then departed.

We lived for a month in this state of anxiety, subsisting on a little food which remained in the bottom of some jars broken by the murderers; and especially thanks to some pieces of gold which we had buried. The brigand band had found most of the objects we had buried, but had overlooked the gold.

A water carrier, who had been in our service for several years, brought us food to eat from the market. This we pulled up to the window by means of a rope. It consisted of cottage cheese, meat and cucumbers. We had also some fowls. Our chief object was to feed some forty men whom we kept concealed in a hole

crowded together, suffocated by the heat. The looters having taken away even our beds, we all slept together on the floor. Some friends, Naaman Effendi's sisters, brought us some mattresses when they discovered our plight.

All day long bodies of men went from house to house. To better protect themselves from the wickedness of these roving bands, women, girls and children gathered together during the daytime in groups of from fifty to one hundred. We joined one another by means of the flat roofs and passed the day in silence, awaiting death at every moment, all but dead ourselves with fear. At nightfall when the marauders ceased to roam, we re-crossed the roof to our own houses and tried to gain some sleep.

A certain Yousseuf, son of Kas Chaya, during this time had concealed himself in the Chaldean Cathedral. Driven out by hunger, the unfortunate man left his hiding place one night and came to our house, where his sister Miriam was. That very night a band of persecutors arrived. We all fled to the roof in terror. Yousseuf, fearing for his life, hid himself under a mattress. One of the brigands, who was following us upstairs,

discovered Youssouf. He pulled him from under the mattress, threatening him with death. Youssouf bravely made the sign of the cross and cried aloud: "Jesus, Mary, into your hands I commit my soul." He asked to see his little nephew, an only son among seven sisters, kissed him tearfully and bade us farewell.

With us there was also a boy of twelve, called Fardjalla, who had escaped death on the first day, and whom we had hidden with our men. Worn out by the excessive heat he had come out and joined us. He, too, was seized and began to cry, screaming:

"Oh, they are going to kill me." His sister called out to him:

"Do not be frightened, dear, you will be happy in Heaven." The scoundrels then took the two poor Christian boys outside the house, and shot them before its very door.

Some days before our deportation, two Chaldeans of a rich family in the village of Berkep had come to take refuge at our house, having fled from the fury of the Kurds who had invaded their village. Seven or eight soldiers followed them in. They menaced us with their rifles, crying: "Show us your men."

After a long search the victims were found and relieved of all their money and of a golden cross which one of them wore around his neck. They were taken into the middle of the courtyard, where each was shot through the head and chest. Their bodies lay for two days in the yard. Finally we notified one of our neighbours, who sent for the municipal authorities. The latter tied ropes to their feet and dragged them away like animals, leaving our courtyard covered with blood.

A Chaldean woman named Mariam, who belonged to the Governor's household, and who was herself murdered later, came to see us and told us that we should soon be deported. This woman often came to give us news of the situation.

Before we were taken away, officers and civil police visited us at frequent intervals, ordering us to show them our valuables, so that they might know, they said, what things had been stolen, and thus obtain their return. They also promised to save us from being deported. Their real object was to discover what we still had, and to take it from us.

On the eve of our departure a woman named Suzanne, from the village of Mar-Yacoub, having heard that we

had had some men concealed in the house, brought us her son. He had been hidden in my father's house and had escaped when the village of Mar-Yacoub had been sacked, and its Chaldean inhabitants put to death. She attired him as a woman, and went with him to the spring of Ain-Salib, which was in front of our house, he carrying a water jar on his shoulder. She knocked at our door and with tears begged that we would shelter her boy, and conceal him with the others. We took him in; his mother told us we were about to be deported.

Suzanne, together with other widows from Mar-Yacoub, had taken refuge with my father, and later had entered the service of my brother, the priest, some days before his martyrdom. We asked her to tell about it, and she gave us the following account: "Police and soldiers entered the Bishop's house. They told the priest, who, in his readiness to die, had refused to hide, that Hamdi Bey required his presence at the Hospital, and took him there. I followed at a distance to find out what was going to happen to him. The priest, after a few paces, inquired of the police what Hamdi Bey wanted him for."

“Don’t you know?” they asked, with surprise. He knew then that he was going to his death. The unfortunate priest turned pale, took out a pound in gold and gave it to them. With tears I offered them in turn a ghazi (a small piece of gold), begging them to release him. They answered that this was impossible, since Hamdi Bey had sent for him. When I persisted they struck me and chased me away.

The poor priest was taken to the hospital. During the night those near heard his cries and groans for they scourged him cruelly. He repeated continually, “For the love of Christ’s sufferings.”

Among others who heard him was my cousin, Yousouf’s daughter, Saide, who lived very near by.

My daughter Eudoxia, who had been carried off by the Turks, told me later that the latter sometimes spoke of her uncle, saying: “Do you remember that handsome priest who called out ‘For the love of Christ,’ when he was beaten? The ruffian, he blasphemed even in the middle of his tortures.” Nedjiba, who was also there, for she too had been carried off, told them that my daughter was his niece. The latter began to cry

and the Kurds threatened the child, telling her that if she continued they would kill her like her uncle.

One Sunday morning in July they gathered us together, women and children, in the barracks, where we passed the night outside in the open air. Next day we were assembled in the courtyard of the Hospital, where some days before the men had been grouped. They wrote down our names and deported us together with a convoy of women who had arrived from Bitlis. We were over a thousand, women, girls and children. The last named, with a few exceptions, were under six years of age. When we left our homes we had brought some clothes, but no blankets. Four soldiers accompanied us. We were condemned to make our journey on foot, and those who by reason of age, were incapable of doing so, were massacred on the journey.

When we came to the village of Guazere, bands of Kurds fell upon us and snatched away our money, food and clothes. A woman servant of ours who carried a bundle containing our food, after having her own belongings stolen, was thrown into the river which ran along the edge of the village. After crossing the water we were lined up while the soldiers searched us and

took our money and jewelry. Like the Kurds, they threw themselves upon us, chose the girls and women who were pretty and ill-treated them.

This fate befell, among others, Salima, my sister-in-law; Naima, daughter of Reskolla Chammas Aboche; Naima, my uncle George's daughter; Latifa, whose father was Fathalla, my other uncle; Kerima, daughter of Betros Kas Chaya, and her cousin Emelda, daughter of Chamas Youssef.

Three days after the commencement of the journey a soldier named Taher Tchaouche led his horse up to me, holding it by the bridle. He demanded my little girl Eudoxia, who was then but eight years old and who was with me. I refused, and he said:

“Do not fear for her. She will be all right with me and I shall give her back to you safe and sound.”

I began to cry and scream. He snatched her from me by force, mounted, placed her behind him and spurring his horse, disappeared deaf to my entreaties.

We continued our journey on foot for several days, passing from one village to another, our babies in our arms. Finally worn out with fatigue and the heat of the





A COPY OF L. DE MANGO'S PAINTING, PICTURING THE OUTRAGE OF THE WADI WAWELA VALLEY

burning sun, we came to the end of another stage, and, as night came upon us, fell into a deep sleep.

We were now at Sôr, a large village under the administrative authority of a Kaimakam (sub-Governor), where we halted all day. The Kaimakam sent a telegram to Mardin, asking what he should do with us. The Mutessarif, or governor of Mardin, Bedri Bey, ordered him not to send us back to Mardin: he was to keep us there.

This was equivalent to an order for our massacre. We set out again over mountains and through valleys by winding roads. One of the women with us gave birth to a still-born child on the way. The barbarous soldiers obliged her to march on, despite her sufferings. The unhappy woman died on the road.

From the top of a high mountain we saw at a distance hundreds of Kurds, men and women, on the watch for their prey. Our guards led us into the famous valley Wadi Wawela. There the Kurds and their women fell upon us like wild beasts, and picking up large stones, began to bombard the convoy. The female Kurds also stoned us, and carried away whatever effects they found upon us. A Kurd came

towards me, and surprised to find I still wore a dress and shoes, tore them off me, struck me with his fists and made off.

As I ran I saw a poor woman, who was quite naked, had been wounded in the side by a dagger thrust. She was covered with blood. As she ran from these human beasts she held up her intestines which emerged through her terrible wound. Absolutely terrified, I fled, carrying my baby in my arms. At length, overcome by emotion and by fear, I fell to the ground trembling. A Kurd passed me carrying off a girl he had seized. She was Sayoud, daughter of Betros Kas-Chaya. He came up to me and asked:

“Are you a girl or a married woman?”

“Here is my son,” I replied, showing him my baby. A soldier called out: “Don’t take the women, kill them, take the girls only.” The Kurd replied that his prey was a girl, and he departed with poor Sayoud.

The soldier picked up a large stone and threw it at me. It struck me on the head. Stunned by the blow I fell face downwards, and my child, which had fallen from my arms, commenced to scream. I fainted and remained senseless for some time.

When I came to myself I found my poor baby stretched upon the ground. Worn out by crying, and burnt up by the scorching sun, he seemed as if he knew and was resigned to his sad lot. My heart was torn as I looked at my poor martyred child. Raising myself I kissed him, and after pressing him to my breast, placed him in the shade of a tree. Instinctively my hand went to my head and I found that blood was flowing from a large wound. Several Kurd women passed me carrying large bundles of clothes and other things taken from victims. Seeing me they cried to one another:

“Here is another who has not been killed. Let us take her clothes.” They approached me, and one seizing me by the feet tried to drag off my stockings. She worked in vain, so swollen were my legs. Furthermore the blood from cuts caused by stones and thorns had glued my stockings to my feet so thoroughly that it was impossible to get them off without tearing them to shreds. So they left me in peace and went on.

A moment later I saw four men approaching with large daggers in their hands. They were coming down the mountainside and in their bloodlust ad-

vanced towards me to kill me. An old man who was with them turned them away, and so saved my life. When they had gone he returned and suggested taking me to his home, but for this service demanded payment. I told him I had no money, but his eyes fell upon my child and its pitiable condition touched his heart. Taking off his Katteke (jacket) he gave it to me, saying:

“Cover up your child and wait. I shall come back soon.” Returning shortly afterwards he invited me to accompany him to the village. This I did, stammering words of thanks. He took me to his house and looked after the child and myself. His wife with her own hands treated my wounds for several days, and I, for my part, did what I could to make myself pleasant and to render them service. The village where the old man had his house was situated near Mardin, where my mother’s aunt lived. Her name was Catherine, and she belonged to the Kendir family. But I dared not ask my hosts to send me there.

A week had passed when, one day, feeling very homesick, I went into the stable attached to the house, a dark and isolated building. Throwing myself on my

knees, crying bitterly the while, I fervently begged the Blessed Virgin to protect us and to help us to regain my relations. The very next day a woman who had been deported from Sairt, and who similarly found herself in this Kurd village, discovered me and told me that she was leaving for Mardin with some ten other deported women. I had the courage to ask my Kurd protector to let me go. Touched by my tears, he acceded to my request. I thanked him and joined the others.

We started on foot, accompanied by some Kurd women. After walking some hours we arrived at Mardin, where I lived by whatever little work I could get to do, and by the help which my brothers Theophile and Phillippe sent me from Constantinople.

A year later I left Mardin with my daughter Eudoxia, whom I had found and brought back from the Kurds, going with the family of my cousin Naaman Effendi to Aleppo. There I lived for more than twelve months with a cousin who looked after me and fed me, although he was by no means rich himself, and was burdened with the care of a large family.







HALATA

## CHAPTER II

### HALATA

*The story of Halata, daughter of Hanna, a Chaldean of Sairt*

Madame Halata, a woman of 55 years of age, whom I met at Constantinople, had come from Sairt, of which town she is a native. Her sister was Madelain, mother of the Abbe Hikare, Superior of the Seminary at Charfe, on Mount Lebanon. Madelain died at Mosul on the 2nd of October, 1918, as a result of her sufferings during the period of her deportation. Madame Halata, who was in mourning for her son and a great number of her relations, visited me at Constantinople, at my request, and for several hours gave me the details of her sufferings. She was so overcome that she wept throughout the interview. Before making notes of her experience I asked if she would guarantee to give me nothing but the absolute truth.

“God be my witness,” she replied, “that what I shall tell you is only what my own eyes have seen.”

*Halata's Testimony*

It was the time of Ramazan.<sup>1</sup> The Government had enrolled from among the Moslem population the famous corps known as Tchettas.<sup>2</sup> With the chief Moslem personages of the town at their head, the Tchettas camped outside the town. The very day after I went to make bread.<sup>3</sup> On the way I saw that the Christians were being arrested, among them "uncle"<sup>4</sup> George Chammas, M. Fatho and many other Chaldeans of note. I hurried home to tell my son Abdul Kerim, a boy of seventeen, to remain within doors because of the danger. He, however, disobeyed me, saying that he was of military age, and so had nothing to fear. He went out and was arrested at once.

Those who had been arrested, in fact all the Christian men of the town without exception, were gathered together in the barracks where their money, and even their clothes were taken from them, so that they

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<sup>1</sup>The Turkish month of fasting which precedes the feast of the same name.

<sup>2</sup>A kind of Militia organized by the party of Union and Progress for the express purpose of carrying out the deportations and massacres.

<sup>3</sup>Each family in this country makes its bread in community ovens.

<sup>4</sup>A title of respect not necessarily implying relationship.

remained almost naked. They were then tied arm to arm in groups of seven. I, myself, with a Mohammedan woman named Sherine, went and saw them when they were in this condition. In the evening at bedtime they were ranged off in file, their sole clothing being their drawers. Even these were torn from the dead bodies after their massacre in the valley of Zeryabe. They numbered several thousand and were all roped together.

The hundred Tchettas who accompanied each convoy included brigands and deserters who had come out from their hiding places to take service in these regiments of cut-throats. Each Tchetta wore a soldier's uniform and carried a sword. Among these I recognized a sugar hawker, a rascal named Abdia.

My gaze fell upon M. Mansour, a Chaldean member of the administrative Council, who was weeping. He had been in his house when the brigands arrived and knocked at his door. His brother, an old man, demanded what they wanted. His answer was a shot through the keyhole of the door. It struck him in the eye and he fell back dead. Abdul-Kerim Effendi, the son of Mansour, was found and killed in a cupboard where he had hidden.

His mother Elie, who was later at the time of the deportations put to death, helped by her sisters, carried out his bloodstained body and placed it in the courtyard.

As I have mentioned before, the men of the convoy were all killed in the Zeryabe valley. From our roof we could hear the shots and see the flashes continuously throughout the night. After killing the unfortunate Christians the Tchettas pulled the bodies one upon another, cast them into ditches, and piled earth in on top of them.

*Here Halata burst into tears. I asked her if she had seen the bodies herself.*

“No,” she replied, “but Hame Effendi gave me the details. I wish I could have seen those dear innocent victims, those martyrs,” she added. “I should have cut a lock of hair from the head of each and kept it on my heart as a relic.”

*And once again she broke down.*

Next morning the Moslem population of the town accompanied by gendarmes and soldiers invaded our houses and commenced to loot them. They killed all male children of from twelve to fifteen years of age

who remained in the town, as well as any men whom they discovered hiding.

*Here Halata paused for a moment. Then she said:*

Before these things happened I was a very strong woman, but during the last two years I have become very thin, wandering sorrowfully from one part of the country to another. My heart is broken, for I have lost my only son and most of those dear to me. To add to my misfortune one of the rascals broke my shoulder with a blow.

Many of our men had hidden themselves in wells and were shot there. Others were killed in the streets, stripped to the skin, and by means of ropes dragged along the roads by their feet, their heads bumping on the stones. I myself saw all this with my own eyes. Nowhere could I glance without some fresh evidence of Moslem cruelty. Hell itself had opened in our Chaldean quarter. We looked on the Turks as very demons.

They entered our houses, pillaging and breaking everything, finally to leave rejoicing, carrying off whatever they pleased. Terrified Christian women and girls fled weeping and screaming in despair to the

roofs. Some, tearing towards the house of the Governor, screamed:

“Have mercy on us for the love of God.”

From this day forward our homes became the property of the brigands. Turkish women began to lend a hand and doubled the cruelty against us. We gathered together in tears in groups of thirty or forty.

One day the Moslems assembled all the children of from six to fifteen years and carried them off to the headquarters of the police. There they led the poor little things to the top of a mountain known as Ras-el-Hadjar and cut their throats one by one, throwing their bodies into an abyss.

*I asked Madame Halata whether what she was telling me was not exaggerated.*

“I call God to witness that it is less than the reality,” she replied.

A Turkish woman named Saiha saw the putrefying bodies of the Christians outside the town. She came to find me and said:

“Oh, the sight of those poor naked white bodies. It had such an effect on me that I could neither eat nor sleep.”

After this the soldiers went from one house to the other searching everywhere, and digging in the corners to discover whatever we had hidden. Five days later sentries were posted before our doors to prevent our going out. They told us that they were soon going to deport the women and girls who remained. Alarmed by this we arranged to forward a petition saying that we preferred to be all burnt alive where we were than to be deported. Two or three days later two government officials arrived. One of them took our names: the other, who carried a purseful of money, gave a piastre and half<sup>5</sup> to each of us, promising that we should receive this amount every day. It was only a ruse to obtain the names of all the women who remained, in order that they might be prevented from hiding themselves at the moment of the deportation; for this distribution of money was never repeated.

Five days later soldiers came again, and we were ordered to get ready to leave the town. We were taken by them to one of their ports near Ain Salib, and were crowded into little rooms, so closely packed that we were almost suffocated by the heat. There

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<sup>5</sup> Five cents.

we remained until the evening, when the soldiers ordered us to come out; and conducted us to the barracks, pushing us and striking us on the way. Here to our consternation we found thousands of Christians, who had been brought from the neighbouring Chaldean villages. Among them was a priest, Kas-Gourgius, who had been dressed in woman's clothes and veiled, as also was another young Chaldean of twenty-five, named Nasri. They were discovered, separated from us, beaten brutally with clubs, and then taken outside the barracks to be killed. Before leaving us the innocent victims bade us farewell, Nasri kissing the hand of his mother who screamed and wept.

We spent the night in the barracks. Police officials and soldiers passed in and out, and in the most savage manner snatched the prettiest girls from our midst. Because of this, next day when the soldiers came to lead us outside the town, women smeared their faces with mud to appear ugly. As a matter of form our executioners distributed to us bread, as black as pitch, so uneatable that we preferred to leave it.

Our conductors led us, poor defenceless women, along the country roads with every possible cruelty.

They thrashed us with whips, and many died victims to their barbarity. The road was strewn with the decomposing bodies of women and children who had preceded us. We wept unceasingly because of our ill treatment at the hands of the soldiers, our hunger and thirst, and the sight of our children who, tortured by the lack of food, screamed piteously begging us for bread which we could not give them. The sight of the numberless bodies which we trod under foot, and the stench with which they filled the air made us faint. We could not breathe. We knew not where to look to escape sights of indecency.

In the morning we left the town of Sairt. At midday we came to the river Gazere and in the evening to that of Bachour. As we had with us a number of little children, who were unable to walk, we asked to be allowed to hire mules. Some animals were brought to us and for each we paid five or six medjidies.<sup>6</sup> I mounted one with my goddaughter. After hardly an hour's ride a soldier struck me a blow on the shoulder with a stick, and made me get down. My com-

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<sup>6</sup> In all, at this time about \$5.00 American money.

panion, Maria, the mother of Assad and Betros, who are now in Constantinople, was killed as she rode. As they crossed the rivers Gazere and Bachour many mothers, worn out with carrying their children, and in absolute despair, threw them into the water.

When night came and darkness enveloped us, the soldiers began their terrible work. Coming among us by the aid of lighted torches they chose the more beautiful of those who remained and led them away; passing them on later to the Kurds. From 150 to 200 of the more beautiful Chaldean girls met this terrible fate, among them the four daughters of Sede Chammas-Abboche.

I myself saw them killed after they had been violated in my presence. All women who were unable to walk were put to death.

Seeing these abominations, and fearing for my daughter, I went to the Tchaouche (sergeant), and knowing a little Turkish, I begged him to accept some money, and let me escape with my daughter to the mountains and go to Sheikh Asso in the village of Telane. Five or six other women also bribed him, and accompanied me. On the mountain side were a

large number of Kurds, men and women, who awaited the passage of the Christian convoys in order to throw themselves upon them and steal their belongings. As these savages saw us advance towards them they cried:

“Waren! Waren!” We shall take you to the Sheikh.” The malicious Tchaouche, after taking our bribes, informed the soldiers that we had money. Leaving the convoy they rushed after us, and began to fire at us to turn us back. We halted, upon which they seized us and searched us, relieving us of our jewels, money and clothes.

“Now go to Sheikh Asso,” they said. The Kurds who were to take us to the Sheikh made us walk for several hours, then having halted us they fell upon us, stealing the little we still possessed, leaving us but our underwear. Seizing three of our prettiest girls they criminally assaulted them before our very eyes. The barbarians having at length left us, we walked on almost naked until night fell, knowing not whither we went.

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<sup>7</sup> “Come along! Come along!”

Next day we saw a Kurd shepherd of the village of Bekand whom I knew and who had frequently come to my house at Sairt. He recognized me, and, seeing my lamentable state, cried out and covered his face not to see me thus. He took us to the Sheikh, who, touched with pity at our condition, ordered bread and curdled milk to be given us. He also found us some old garments with which to cover ourselves.

Having allowed us time to sleep, Sheikh Asso summoned us next day and said he was going to send us to Bekind. "I am forced to do so," he added, "because to give hospitality to Christians would be to bring me into grave displeasure with the Government. I shall give you four men to take you to your destination. When you get there give them each a little money lest they kill you."

We set out again. A Kurd horseman appeared, dismounted, clutched a daughter of Issa-Chore named Challe and stabbed her in the breast with a dagger. The poor girl fell back on the burning sand bathed in her blood. She died two days later after a long agony. The horseman wished to kill us all, but was prevented by our escort. On our arrival at Bekind one of our

Turkish guards went to the village and warned a Christian woman, Amina, who had been forcibly converted to Islam, and who came to meet us. She gave us some money to pay the guards and took us in for the night. Her husband, Sopki Hamza, who was a soldier, was at the front. Amina hid us in a stable, but her Kurd neighbours, who got wind of the matter, informed the Mudir, who had us arrested. The Mudir recognized me.

“Why have you left the convoy?” he asked us.

“Because the Kurds wished to shoot us,” I replied.

“Where are your clothes?” (We were in rags.)

“The Kurds took them from us,” I told him.

He then called four gendarmes and ordered them to take us to the place where the Chaldeans of Bekind had been massacred and kill us there. Looking on death as a deliverance, we did not even move to ask him for our lives. The soldiers seized us with our children, eight persons in all. After two hours' march we had almost arrived at the place of slaughter, when a soldier in the distance called out:

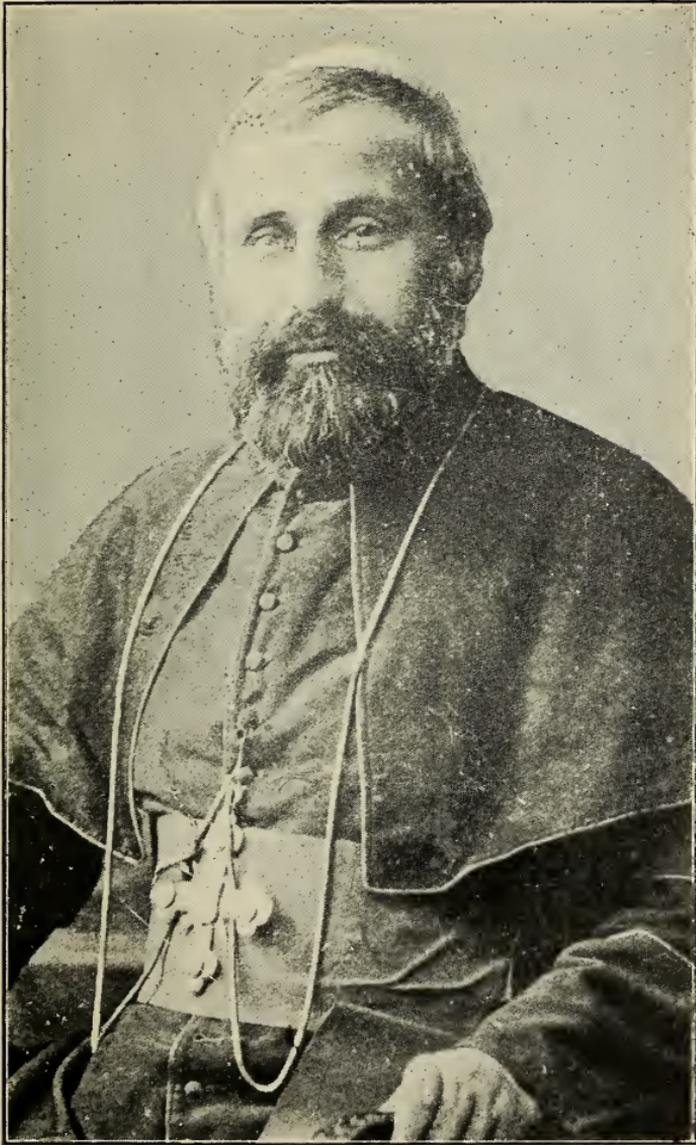
“Return, the Mudir has sent for you.”

On our return to the village we threw ourselves at the Mudir's feet begging him to spare us.

"You owe your lives," he told us, "to my brother, Sabri Effendi, who knows Halata, and who learning that I had sent you to your death asked me to spare you."

We remained a week in the village, living on alms and lodging in a stable. A new governor had come to Sairt, one Bayram Fehmi Bey. Learning that I could cook, he sent for me. My daughter had stayed with Amina. I went to Sairt and immediately joined the household of the governor, and my poor companions who had expressed a desire to accompany me obtained shelter elsewhere. The Turks, learning of the presence of Christian women in Sairt decided to kill them. One of my companions was strangled, the other being stabbed. I myself saw their naked bodies lying abandoned in the street, covered with blood.

Archbishop Addai had also been pursued by the Government. Some Kurds, however, subjects of Osman, Agha of Tanze, chief of the tribes Hadide and Atamissa, great friends of the Archbishop's and protectors of the Christians, disguised him as a Kurd and



RT. REV. ADDAI SHEIR, ARCHBISHOP OF SAIRT



got him away by a secret door of his residence. For some days he remained with his friend the Agha, but a regiment learning of his flight, attempted to trace him. Knowing that the Kurd chief had concealed him they summoned him to surrender the Archbishop, set fire to his house, and threatened him with death. The Agha fled with his family. The Kurds who remained, tired of the struggle, were obliged to indicate the hiding place of the prelate, whom the soldiers seized and killed with eight shots. I saw his Episcopal ring on the finger of an officer. The Archbishop's secretary, Father Gabriel Moses George Adamo, was arrested, beaten and savagely done to death at the same time, as well as a Chaldean police officer named Yacoub Effendi.

Before the arrest of this priest the parish priests of several villages in the environs of Sairt took refuge in the church of the town, flying from the massacres in the villages. Among them were Father George, parish priest of Berke; Father Hanna, parish priest of Sadagh; Fathers Moussa, Thomas and Youssef, who had charge of the Church at Guedyanes, and Father Michael, parish priest of Der Mar-Yacoub. They

were all seized and massacred. Seven days after their arrest the poor priest of Sairt, Father Azar, who had hidden himself in a well, was killed with every refinement of torture.

I remained six months in the service of the Governor at Sairt, with whose predecessor I had also worked. It was the latter who had ordered the massacres, but he had sent me home a week before the tragedy.

The Mohammedan populace was jubilant at the extermination of Christians in the towns. Mullah Elias, who lived in a house near that of the Governor, and other personages such as Mullah Kheder, Mullah Ahmed and Mullah Taher, participants in the massacres, told me that the people of Sairt would no longer allow a single Christian in the town, and that if ever one dared to enter he would be killed. Sometimes I passed before our great cathedral, now a stable filled with manure and utterly changed, but the sight of it upset me and made me weep.

The Chaldean cemetery likewise had been desecrated, the tombstones had been uprooted and many of the graves profaned.

The Pasha left Sairt and I had to accompany him to Mardin, where we stayed four days. There an officer brought me the two daughters of Madame Kannoun. They had formed part of the Chaldean convoys from Sairt and told me that they had been taken at some hours' distance from Mardin, where the Kurds fell upon them and stoned them. We remained for some time half dead among the rocks when other passing Turks found us still alive and took us to Mardin to put us up for sale. Mar<sup>8</sup> Israel, the Chaldean Archbishop, brought us back.

From soldiers and Kurds who had come to the Governor's house I learned that the women and children of the Chaldean village of Redwan, near Sairt, had been gathered together in one place and burned alive with petrol.

On the 20th of August, 1916, I received the following letter from my daughter, who had been carried off by the Turks near Sairt, of which I have the original:

“ Dear Mother :

I have received the letter you sent me care of Refik, also the two and a half pounds. If you only knew the state in which I am you would cry day and night. I

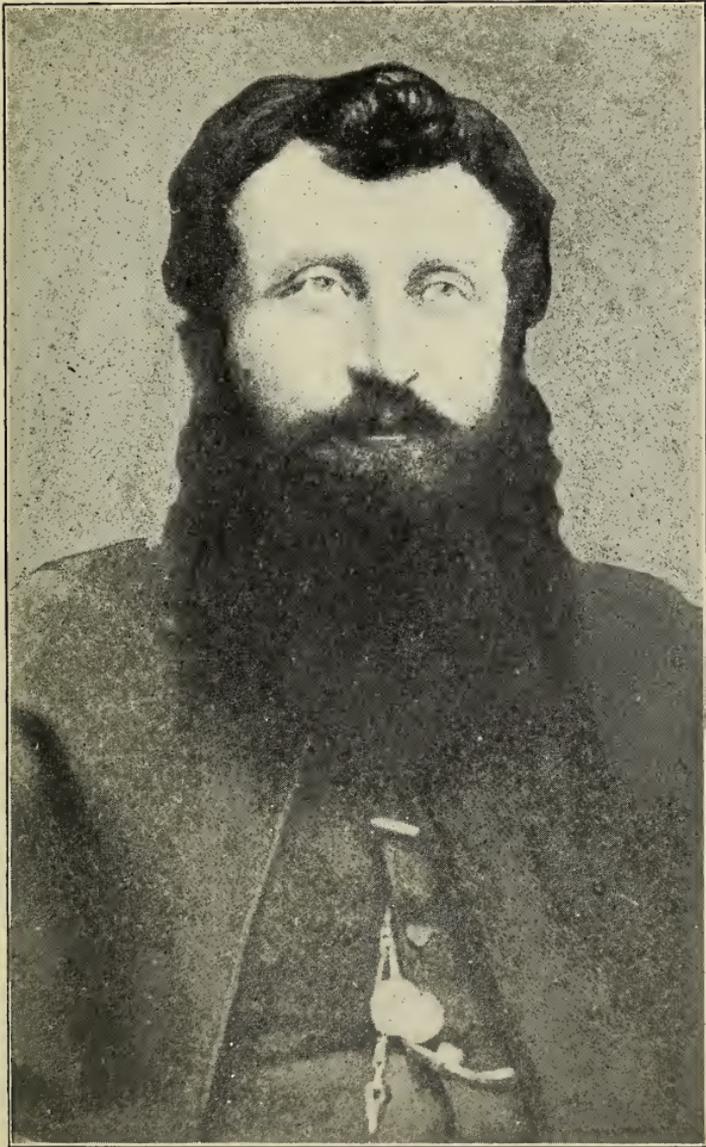
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<sup>8</sup> Mar is the Chaldean title for Bishops.

am in the midst of Kurds and go from village to village to get a crust of bread. At the present moment I am at Berke. I have to walk barefoot, and am clothed in rags. Refik Effendi, who saw me, took pity on me, and being an old friend of the family, sent me to Sairt, not wishing to see me beg in the villages. I do what work I can get in order to live. I cannot tell you how utterly miserable I am. Have pity upon me! Am I not your daughter? When you get my letter, send me a little money and a shawl with which to cover my head. I must resign myself to my sad lot, waiting with impatience until you send me help. Refik Effendi is doing all he can to assist me. If he can get me a permit to travel, I shall rejoin you as soon as I can. But alas, it is very difficult. How are you, mother, dear? Send me some news of yourself at once.

Your unhappy daughter,

RAHEL."



REV. GABRIEL ADAMO, SECY. TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF SAIRT



KARIMA (AGED 13)

## CHAPTER III

### *Karima (aged 13)*

Certain Moslem citizens of Sairt came to Constantinople in 1918, bringing with them some Chaldean girls who had been abducted from their families. Being short of money and unable to provide for their victims, they desired to get rid of them. One of the number was Karima, aged thirteen. Learning that she had relations in the city, they sent her to them. She returned barefoot and clad only in a chemise and a bathing dress, in which costume I photographed her. Latif Bey Tabib, a prominent Chaldean, and a member of the Court of Appeal at Constantinople, interviewed the child, who gave him the following account:

\* \* \* \* \*

At the time of the massacres I was just ten years of age. My father, Djerdjis, was an employe in the Government administration of the State Monopoly of Salt, a branch of that of the National Debt. Our family was composed of my mother (Jane), my three brothers Kerim (the eldest, aged eleven), Youssouf

and Latif, and my grandfather, an old man named George.

Four years ago, at the end of the spring, our house in the quarter of Ain-Salib was attacked one day by twenty bandits. Despite their prayers, my father and grandfather were stabbed to death forthwith, and my mother, brothers and myself carried away to a place they had chosen. After murdering my relatives, and throwing their bodies into ditches outside the town, the Kurds took me away to the village of Zewida with other Chaldean girls of my own age. I was kept there for a year. At night some of the Kurds insulted me. I dared not resist for fear of being killed.

A year later I returned to Sairt with a Turkish lady. Believing he would take pity upon me and give me something to eat, she had me taken to the house of Abdul Ferid, the man who had sacked our home. Abdul Ferid, however, sent me away. A Chaldean lady who acted as nurse in the house of a Turk named Tewfik, with another Christian woman called Mahbouba, interceded for me that I might be employed there in carrying water.

One day, while I was carrying my pitcher to the fountain, a soldier named Abdullah, a water carrier

from the hospital at Sairt, took me home with him by force. His mother, Fattoum Hanem, led me to the place where the poor Chaldeans had been slain and said to me: "If you are not obedient you will be put to death like your co-religionists."

The place was an awful charnel house, where one could still see the bones and hair of the victims. On our retreat Fattoum asked: "Did you understand what I said, you dirty infidel?"

I was frightened and dared not reply. When the water carrier, Abdullah, returned home he subjected me to every kind of outrage. For three long years I had to put up with the devilish caprices and illtreatment of his mother. Finally famine began to be felt in the town. All except the murderers such as the chief brigand Abdul Riza, ex-deputy of Seert, suffered in consequence: for the latter had stored up a large part of what had been pillaged and stolen from the Christians. Abdullah the water carrier at length seeing that it was impossible to support his family, told his mother to take her children with her and beg from door to door. The woman, however, resolved to leave for Constantinople.

I cannot recount here the sufferings I underwent

during the three months of this terrible journey, both from hunger and from Fattoum and her children. On arriving at Constantinople the old woman handed me over to another Turkish lady who happily knew a relation of mine, Zeki Chorize. At my request she went to see him, and he received me into his home, where I still remain.

Thousands of Chaldeans were cruelly massacred in my part of the country. Many of the girls are in the hands of the Turks and Kurds.

The names of my murdered relatives are as follows: My mother, her brothers Tewfik and Boulous, and her sister Hilane; my three brothers Kerim (the eldest, put to death at the instance of the ferocious Abdul Ferid, who looted our house), Yousuf and Latif; Djerdj is my father, and his brother Pition and sister Khatoun, grandfather George; lastly both my grandmothers Rahel on my mother's side and Suzanne on that of my father.

All the objects of value which we possessed, such as watch-bracelets, gold chains and earrings, were stolen by Abdul Ferid who is now at Sairt.





STERA AND WARINA

## CHAPTER IV

### TWO CAPTURED SISTERS

#### *Stera and Warina*

Early in 1915 I found myself at the Chaldean Vicariate in Aleppo, when a young lady came to see the parish priest. Her language and manners savoured of one who did not belong to the district. I asked the parish priest who she was, and he replied that she was a Chaldean of Sadagh, aged eighteen, named Stera, and that she had a sister called Warina. They were the daughters of Kas Hanna Chammas. The Governor of Sairt had taken them to his house during the massacres. Here they remained until the Governor left for Aleppo, on his way back to Constantinople. She was an eye-witness of the massacre of the Archbishop of Sairt. She is now married to a young man of her village who is employed on the Bagdad Railway, Yonan, the son of Abdullah.

So interested was I in these details that I went to see her, photographed her with her sister, and begged her to give me the following résumé of her history.

*The Deposition of Stera*

The Kurds came and attacked our village, sacking and plundering whatever they could find, and killing all the inhabitants; among others, all my relatives. My sister and I, remaining unprotected, were carried off by the marauders and taken to Aine, a mountain spot a day's journey from Sairt. Later on our abductors took us from village to village.

One day when we were at Sairt I was present at a horrible scene, the chief figure in which was His Grace, Mar Addai, the Chaldean Archbishop of that town. He was in a pitiable state, pale and thin. The soldiers began by jeering at him, pulling his beard and striking him with their rifle butts, firing their revolvers into the air in front of him. They then took the Archbishop outside the town, and, having slain a servant of his protector, Osman Agha, killing him with a fatal blow on the head, the butchers cut off the head of the Archbishop in order to show it to the Governor.

My sister and I remained with the Kurds, after which we were sent away to a village named Gawate. The Governor of Sairt searched for us there, and when he found us, kept us in his house. Our new master soon

after left for Mosul where he remained some days. His wife seized this opportunity to visit her relatives at Karkouk, and took us with her. On our return via Mosul, we left for Constantinople. When passing through Aleppo, where we made a stop, we were guarded by a servant girl while in the streets.

One day while taking my usual walk with the servant, this time without my sister, when passing the entrance to a street in the Saliby quarter, I noticed a crowd emerge from a building. Curiosity led me to ask the reason.

"They are Christians coming out of a church," I was informed.

This utterly surprised us, because I had always been told by Turks and Kurds that Christians and churches no longer existed. I then began to take good note of the streets through which I passed, in order not to lose myself if I went out alone. On returning to the house I made up my mind to take to flight.

Next morning the servant girl wished to make me go out, but I pretended to be ill, and she went by herself. Profiting by the unexpected solitude, I took my little sister by the hand and, free as the birds, we ran off,

making directly for the street where I had seen the Christians coming out of the church. I entered and spoke to the priests, telling them that I was a Chaldean, and that the Turks had kept me a prisoner since the massacre of my relatives. They took me to the Chaldean parish priest, Father Michael Chaya, to whom I told my tale. The latter confided me to a family of Sairt related to the Aboche family, with whom I was acquainted.

Meanwhile the most extraordinary happenings were going on in the Governor's house. The whole place was upset by the general search for us. The Governor, who did not want to lose us, communicated the news of our flight to all his bodyguard, giving out that we had stolen a hundred pounds from him when we left. He dared not admit that I had been carried off and treated like a slave. Happily we were well hidden in the house which had offered us hospitality, and the police did not succeed in finding us. We were saved.

## CHAPTER V

### *In the Desert*

Louis Ganima, a Syrian of Ourfa, took service with the Bagdad Railway Company in order to avoid military duty. Being engaged up and down the line during the deportations, he had an opportunity of seeing all the abominations which were practised, and, at Aleppo, in May, 1918, gave me the following account of what he witnessed, offering his word of honour as a guarantee of the truth:

In the autumn of 1915 there arrived in the neighborhood of Mohammadi-Khan, an almost desert spot between Waren-Chehir, Urfa and Ras-el-Ain, convoys composed of 10,000 women, girls and children. These caravans had come from Erzerum, Kharput, Sairt, Diar-bekir and Mardin, and remained several days in the neighbourhood of Mohammadi-Khan.

For the first few days the soldiers were busy plundering their victims of whatever they had left. Without clothes, suffering from cold and hunger, two thousand

died from sickness and exposure. Several hundred, rendered mad by thirst, threw themselves into the empty reservoirs, common in this desert country, and there died, while a large number of others were killed by the Kurds and thrown in on top of them. Thirteen reservoirs were filled in this manner. Several thousand Christians who remained were surrounded one day by five hundred armed Kurd horsemen and one hundred and fifty police. Having gathered the unhappy wretches together in a place edged with the long dry grass which grows so abundantly in the semi-arid region, the persecutors set fire to it. Before doing this they plundered their victims of all they had.

The unhappy people, terror-stricken at seeing the flames approaching them, realized that their end had come. Those who made their way through the flames were met by an equally deadly rifle fire. Thus were exterminated some thousands of human beings, all indeed that remained of the above-mentioned convoys.

After this awful holocaust, Kurd women and children arrived with sieves and sifted the ashes of the dead to see if they could find gold, since it was a regular prac-



*(From a Painting)*

THE BURNING OF THE BODIES OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN BY KURDISH WOMEN, TO RECOVER  
THE GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE SWALLOWED

tice of the Christian women to swallow pieces of money for future use.

*A Heroine of Mardin*

I was employed on the local managing staff during the construction of the Bagdad Railway as far as a point between Arrada and Tallerman. One day while I was in a Kurd village the mayor, taking me for a Turkish medical man, began to speak to me with some freedom, and asked me my name. To make him think I was a Mussulman, I replied "Assad Effendi." Being sure that I was a Moslem, he commenced to take me into his confidence, and gave me the following story:

"I once had some business relations with a Christian family of Mardin, named Djannandji. At the time of the massacres I was witness of the arrival in the village of a convoy of women guarded by Circassians, who proceeded to put the women up for sale, as if in a slave market. Among them I noticed an exceedingly beautiful girl named Kalmouni, belonging to this family, the Djannandji, and did all I could to rescue her from the hands of the brigands. I bought seven of them, including Kalmouni, and took them to my home. They had

all come from Mardin, and I was acquainted with most of their relatives.

At first I tried to console them. Then my son fell in love with Kalmouni and asked my consent to their union. I put the matter before the beautiful girl, who, however, declared that she would rather die than marry a Moslem. Several times I reasoned with her, but in vain. I then threatened her, saying that I should kill her unless she accepted my son, but it was all quite useless.

One day, when there was no one in the house, I had them all stripped and placed in one room. Then I began to threaten them.

‘You have all got to marry Kurds,’ I told them.

I swore at them, threatening all with death unless they listened to me, and on their continuing to refuse, assaulted them. Next, to frighten the girl I wished to give to my son, I shot three of her companions. Kalmouni, quite impassible, encouraged her companions, exhorting them to resist. Seeing so much blood flow, I was a little touched, and spared the others.

Coming back to the beautiful Kalmouni, I continued to threaten her. She, however, boldly insulted me, saying:

‘You are a coward to treat women in such a way. You are unworthy to be called a man.’

Furious at her words, I drew my revolver to kill her.

‘By the bread you have so often eaten at our house,’ she cried, ‘do not kill me as I am.’

In her modesty, being unclothed, she begged me at least to allow her to die with her back to me. ‘Kill me now,’ she said, as she faced the wall. At her words I hesitated; and, remembering my old time friendship with her family, decided to spare her. Then, fearing that the brave girl would one day ruin my reputation by recounting how I had treated her, I shot her in the back and killed her.”

### *A Scene of Horror*

One day I found myself at Amuda, a station on the Bagdad Railway near Nisibin. There I met in the house of a Kurd a very beautiful girl from Nigda, named Leucintag, who had been deported. She belonged to a very good family, and spoke French perfectly, having finished her studies under the care of the French nuns. She gave me the following account of her experiences:

“As one of a convoy, I came with my father and

mother to Ras-el-Ain, whence, one month later, I was deported to a spot in the desert with fifteen thousand others. A crowd of Tcherkess, Turks and nomads fell upon us and massacred the convoy with their swords, clubs, daggers and other weapons.

An Arab snatched me from the hands of the brigands and saved me. Later, seeing a chance of making money, he sold me for five pounds <sup>1</sup> and an agal <sup>2</sup> to a Bedouin chief of the tribe of Shammar, whose headquarters were in the environs of Nisibin. I was given the Arab name of Ayyouche, and my face was tattooed with all kinds of symbols. After staying there some time, I resolved to escape, and succeeded in leaving the village unseen.

I took the road to Mosul, walking by night and hiding by day. After three days of this, worn out with fatigue, without water or bread, I saw a group of men in the distance, and took them for wandering Arabs. On coming up with them I discovered that they were Christians who were being deported to Mosul. The convoy was divided into three parts, two of which were destined respectively

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<sup>1</sup> \$25.00 American money.

<sup>2</sup> A headdress in the shape of a crown made of several loose rings of coarse hair.

for Sendjar and Mosul, the rest returning again to Ras-el Ain. I remained three days with the last named party, living on what they could give me. The object of the Turks was to cause the death of all the Christians, who were dragged unceasingly from one place to another that this might be brought about.

The convoy reached Tall-Halif, and then later again to Rais-el-Ain, which adjoins a little water course called Djirdjib. We were taken to large reservoirs or cisterns which are to be found in these desert places. Here the soldiers, with the assistance of some Tcherkess, cut the throats of the Christians, one after the other, and threw them into the cisterns. I was about the thirtieth to suffer, and received a sword stroke on the head, after which I lost consciousness. On coming to consciousness, I found myself in one of the reservoirs. My first realization was a blow I received from a body thrown in on top of me by the butchers for overhead the massacre continued.

The wound I had received on the head was not serious, for the murderers, in their haste to get through the large number they had killed, threw them into the cisterns without even troubling to finish them off, and I felt

the unfortunate people near me moving in agony. I had lost a great deal of blood, but tried to find a way of saving myself, and of not being buried under the bodies which rained down upon me. Every time, therefore, that a corpse crashed into the cistern, I was obliged to hoist myself upon it, lest I should be buried under the avalanche of those who followed. The poor wounded victims were struggling, and I felt them quivering under me. Their moans and groans made me shudder, but the instinct to preserve oneself is strong.

Toward evening, the butchery being over, I found myself at the top of the cistern, almost on a level with the ground. There I spent the night, losing blood from my wound and unable to get out.

Next day passers by, moved by curiosity, came to look into the cisterns. An old Arab of the Baggara tribe saw me and took me to his tent. I was married to his son, with whom I remained some time, when he sold me for eighteen medjidies<sup>3</sup> to a certain Hussein, son of the mayor of the village of Amuda, who was about to go to Ras el Ain. The latter married me in his turn, and I am still with him."

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<sup>3</sup> About \$18.00.

When the unhappy Leucintag told me her story it worried me very much to think that, though an official of the Bagdad Railway, I had no power to come to her assistance, nor to that of any other of my own religion.

*The Railroad Official Finishes His Story.*

At Tel Halif I encountered another girl named Hayghanouche, who had been forced to live with a Turkish Captain who commanded a labor battalion engaged in the construction of the Bagdad Railway. She had been given the additional Mohamedan name of Khadidja.

The girl had belonged to a convoy of 4,000 women, girls and children which had arrived on the banks of the Tigris at a point between Djezire and Mosul. The order for the massacre of this convoy had not yet been given by the government of Der-el-Zor. Nevertheless as soon as it reached the river the soldiers separated the rich from the poor, took the latter aside and put them to death, in order to frighten the richer victims into yielding their money. Only a thousand survived, and these were despoiled by the soldiers of most of their possessions and abandoned.

Twenty days later, no longer having any means of subsistence, the unhappy victims of the deportation began to sell their clothes, and the little they still possessed. They finished by killing the beasts of burden, and even went so far as to resort to cannibalism.

One girl, seeing the sufferings of her parents, said to them:

“Do not die of hunger; kill me and eat my flesh!”

Hunger and thirst caused such atrocious sufferings that they fought one another for pieces of flesh torn from the bodies of those who had died, and after roasting them, ate them.





HIS GRACE, ARCHBISHOP OF DIARBEKIR

## CHAPTER VI

### *The Massacres of Diarbekir*

Hanna, a Chaldean, came from Diarbekir to Constantinople at the beginning of the winter of 1918. He had been present at the massacre of Diarbekir, and his brother and relatives had fallen victims to the barbarity of the Turks. The following is the account he gave to Mr. Latif Bey Tabib, a prominent Chaldean of Constantinople, by whom it was transcribed:

#### *Hanna's Testimony*

Hamid Bey was Governor of Diarbekir at the beginning of the massacres. Among the more important of his cruelties was the shooting of the poor Chaldean villagers of Carabache, near Diarbekir, on the charge of having fled without permission to the Vilayet of Erzerum.

Now this was absolutely untrue, the poor wretches not having left their houses since the issue of the decree mobilizing the soldiers. So concentrated and numerous were the volleys that the bodies of the vil-

lagers were blown to bits. To complete the atrocity, other Christians were obliged to load the shattered remains into carts and transport them to the cemetery. The Governor, Hamid Bey, and the civil inspector, Nadji Bey, witnessed the execution with every evidence of satisfaction.

Owing to an order from Constantinople, Hamid Bey left his post precipitately in March, 1915. His sudden departure gave rise to a very natural fear among the Christians, and they urged the Archbishop to ask the Governor the reason. The only answer he received was:

“You will know later on.”

Dr. Rechid Bey succeeded Hamid. The newcomer took his quarters at the Governor's residence, having as his guard a body of forty Tchettas, Circassians like himself.

Rechid Bey's first care was to organize a militia composed of local men of prominence, some of whom were:

1. Rechid Bey, the Governor.
2. Bedri Bey, Governor's Military Secretary.

3. Yassin Agha Zade Chewki, Commander of the Militia.

4. Djemil Pacha Zade Moustafa Bey, Lieutenant-Colonel.

5. Hadji Baki Effendi, Captain.

6. Direkdji Tahir Effendi, Captain.

7. The son of Ali Haito Said, Lieutenant.

8. Moussoulli Zade Mehmed, a furrier.

9. Attar Zade Hadki Effendi, President of the Committee of Union and Progress.

10. Djerdjiss Zade Youssouf, who was blind in one eye.

11. Djerdjiss Zade Abdul Rahim Effendi.

12. Tahir Agha Zade Azize.

13. Deputy Feizi Bey, one of the most influential members of the committee, and one of the chief instigators of the massacres.

14. Pirindji Zade Sidki Effendi, the most cruel of all, a relative of Feize Bey.

15. Veli Bey, son of Veli Baba.  
noble.

16. Memdouh Bey, a bloodthirsty ogre.

17. Tcharkhi Zade.

18. Mehmed.
19. Hafize.
20. Abdul Latif.
21. Mardilli Emin Effendi.
22. Hafize, son of Terradj Youssouf Agha.
23. Emin Agha,
24. Yahia Effendi

Tyrants of the Chaldean village  
of Tcharokia.

25. Kassab Hedjo, a butcher by trade, executioner of convoys.
26. Cheikho, his brother.
27. Kassab Hadji Suleiman, a butcher.
28. Seerdli Bakal Hayo.
29. Serradj Youssous Agha.
30. Zaza Alo Effendi.

Having called a council of all these scoundrels, the Governor issued a decree that within three days, under heavy penalty, Christians were to deliver to him whatever arms they had in their houses. Each gave up every weapon he possessed. A large quantity of arms and dynamite were brought from the Seraglio and barracks. Photographs of these theatrical prepara-

tions were taken and published in pamphlet form as a means of propaganda. The Christians were then subjected to appalling tortures to oblige them to admit that they had arms concealed in their homes. Their nails were torn out and they were shod with iron like horses.

The second act of the tragedy commenced with the carrying off of those soldiers who were Christians. A proclamation was made to the effect that soldiers who had a profession or trade would be employed in the town, and that unskilled workers were to be used for the construction of roads. The skilled men quitted their homes to take up the work assigned them, and the fifteen hundred assembled for road work were massacred a month later. Not one escaped death. The slaughter took place in July, 1915, at Kara-Djouroun and Kara-Bagh; two hours' journey from Diarbekir. The murderers were the police of Diarbekir; prominent among whom were the smuggler Emin Gazal and Khalil Tchaoush, a fruiterer of Tahta-Kale.

Among the Chaldean victims whose names I know are the following: Keriakos Tadjer; Boutros Nedme Boutros, the son of Amsih; Stephen Hadad; Hanna

Boureudji of Sairt; Hadji Vierim, son of Joseph, a watchmaker; Shamoun, son of Stefane, headmaster of the Chaldean School of the Province, and Rizkalla, a fruiterer, etc.

Those who had not been sent to the work of road mending were arrested in their homes, handcuffed and taken to the Tashnak Café. Prior to their being led off like sheep to the slaughter-house, they were inspected by the Governor. Then with the more prominent Christians of the district they were thrown into prison to the number of about seven hundred.

One of the bloodiest of the murderers, Feizi Bey, being determined that all the Christians should be slaughtered, went with Rechid Bey to the telegraph office and sent a wire to the Central Office of the Committee of Union and Progress, demanding the extermination of the poor wretches.

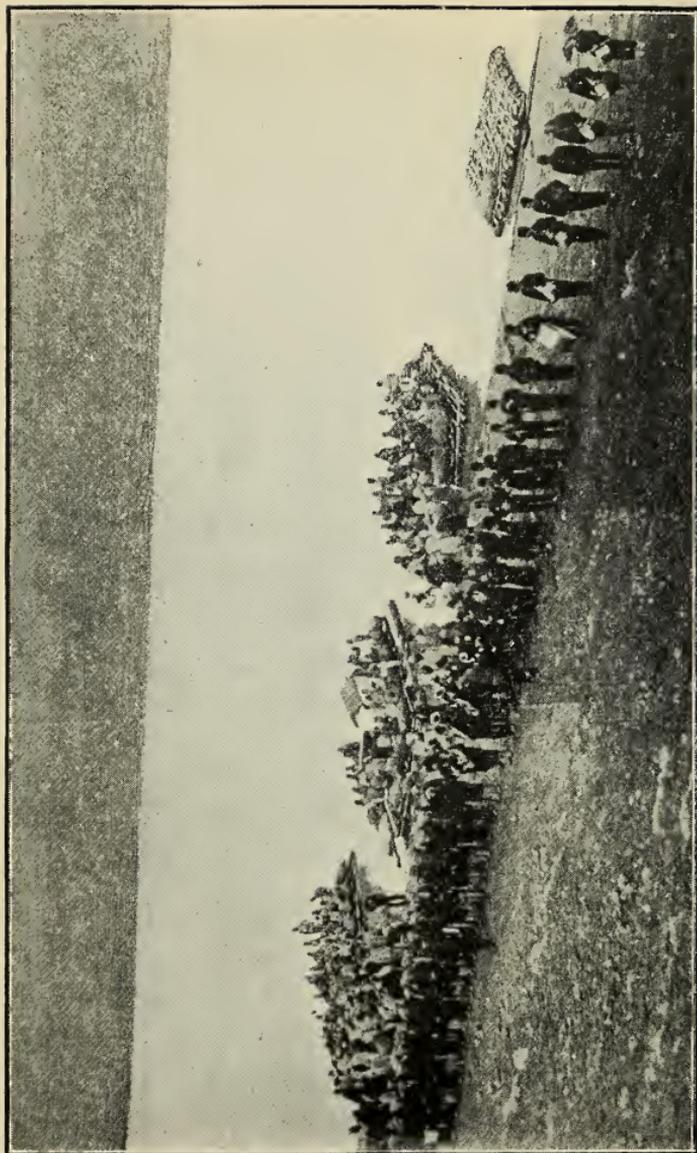
He obtained the necessary order by pretending that if the Christians were not punished the Turks, who had taken fright and barricaded themselves in the mosques, would not dare to return to their homes.

The presence on the Tigris of several kalleks<sup>1</sup> had

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<sup>1</sup> Rafts.





THE FAMOUS TIGRIS RIVER RAFTS

On rafts similar to these the leading Christians of Diarbekir were taken into mid-stream and drowned

given rise among the Christians to considerable uneasiness. The Turks, however, hypocritically explained that the Kalleks were to be laden with corn for the province of Mosul. The falsity of this statement was soon proved, for one dark night the seven hundred prisoners just mentioned were embarked and taken towards a place called Pelikan, where they were hurriedly landed, being assured that they would be taken safe and sound to Djezire, and thence to Mosul.

As soon as they had landed a heavy volley killed a large number, and a trick was employed to exterminate the rest. The officer in command gave out that this volley was due to a mistake.

“Let no man lose his head!” he cried, “March on!”

The survivors, taking him at his word, obeyed, but hardly had they started when a second fusillade wiped out the whole convoy. Falling upon their victims, the executioners stripped them of everything. The booty was a rich one, for before their departure, the Christians had been told to take with them all their gold and silver in order to meet the expenses of their long journey. The rapacious cruelty of the murderers even caused them to telegraph for monetary assistance

to the relatives of the victims, a trick which brought the brutes more money.

After this hecatomb the assassins returned to the town to complete the series of crimes they intended to perpetrate upon the remainder of the Christian population. They began by dividing the Armenian and Chaldean quarters into zones, to each of which was assigned a guard of executioners. The houses in each quarter were invaded, and the old men and women ordered to leave at once with their children. Nor was the injunction forgotten that those who wished might pay for carriages. Those who could not mounted on donkeys. Kurds of the villages which were the personal property of the notorious Churki Bey were charged with the formation of these sinister caravans. The poor victims were advised to take with them all the household objects and utensils they could carry, as they would need them en route.

They did not have to wait long before they met their sad fate. A large part of the convoys were massacred in the villages of Churki Bey, and the rest near the bridge of the town. Their property naturally remained in the hands of their murderers.

Meantime a reprieve was accorded by the central office at Constantinople to the Assyro-Chaldeans, but unfortunately was of use to few. The Chaldean Archbishop, seeing that in spite of the pardon the Chaldean families were being deported and handed over to the executioners, with great courage made every possible effort to diminish the rage of the murderers. At grave risk he approached the Governor and the deputy, Zulf Effendi. The latter hypocritically assured him that no measures would be taken against those of his nation. Deputy Zouffi Effendi himself extorted L. T. 200 in gold<sup>2</sup> from me as the price of the life of my brother Joseph, who was handed over to the executioners notwithstanding. For four consecutive months the holocausts continued.

The sinister Governor Rechid remained a year at his post. On the day of his departure a hundred and fifty debtors to the state were gathered together; and as a farewell compliment were massacred at Siran Tepe, a place a few minutes' distant from the barracks at Diarbekir. Of these several were Chaldeans of my acquaintance, among whom were Hanna and Riz

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<sup>2</sup> \$1,000.

Kalla. The loot pillaged and stolen from the unfortunate victims was collected in certain large Christian houses before being divided among the brigands. A large number of pretty girls were carried off and sent to the harems. Archbishop Sulieman, the Metropolitan, sent L. T. 1500<sup>3</sup> to the bloody Rechid to preserve the lives of those who remained of his nation. All he could obtain was the concession that a small part of his community, instead of being massacred, were sent to a spot near the town of Fiskia, where the men were employed in road mending. Needless to say, the Archbishop himself had to pay for the ration of bread issued to the workers.

The churches in the Chaldean villages were all sacked, plundered and reduced to ruins. Those which were spared were turned into hospitals or stables.

Governor Rachid is said to have sent to Constantinople eighty bales of loot taken from the Christians. The remainder he gave to his friends, among whom were Deputies Feizi and Zulfi.

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<sup>3</sup> \$7,500.





MICHAEL AND HIS BROTHER

## CHAPTER VII

### *In the Tents of the Bedouins*

Some days before my departure from Aleppo, early in June, 1918, I learnt that friends of mine named Boyadji had just received into their house a grandson of theirs, a boy of twelve, found among the Bedouins in the desert. He was of very good parentage and was called Michael Keshish-Oghlou. His little brother, aged nine, had also been recovered some months before by his uncle. I went to see the child and found him very thin and suffering from a stomach affection, brought on by his privations. I asked him to tell me how the Bedouins had taken him away with them, and what had happened to him. He had almost forgotten his own language, but spoke the Arabic of the Bedouins perfectly and made use of that language to give me with great simplicity the following story:

#### *Michael's Story*

“One morning our executioners took all the men and threw them into prison, where they remained for a long time. One day I went to the prison where I

found that all who had been shut up had been massacred and thrown into the river.

The Turks then proceeded to collect all the women, girls and children whom they intended to deport, and formed them into convoys which were sent along the Mardin road.

My mother, sister, little brother and I joined four convoys of three hundred people, among whom were twenty old men. We marched along, anxious and worried. When far from the town the blue uniformed soldiers and turbaned Kurds who accompanied us began to sharpen their daggers before our eyes. Then they rolled up their sleeves and commenced. Ten minutes sufficed to cut the throats of the old men who were the first to suffer. Next, by way of a change, the soldiers took ten of the prettiest girls and put them to death. They fell upon the dead and robbed them of their clothing. Women and girls were placed in groups of ten; twenty-five yards from one another, killed and thrown into a cistern. Not even the old women were spared. Ten of the prettiest girls were kept back. A consultation was held between the Kurds and the soldiers, and the latter decided not to

slay the children, but to hand them over to the Arabs and Kurds of the neighbourhood. Word was sent to them. They came, made their choice and carried off their prey.

It was my lot to obtain as my master a Bedouin Arab named Ahmed. The Turkish sergeant had chosen another boy for him, but he had shown a preference for me, and took me to his village, Wardessess, which lay beyond the railway station of Derbezye near Mardin. With Ahmed I remained three years, looking after his camels and guiding his cattle when they were moved from one place to another. I was dressed by my master in a white robe like the Arabs of the district, and went barefoot. At the time when the Bedouin acquired me he was well off, but later he suffered somewhat from poverty. His daughter took from me a cross and prayer-book, as well as certain small belongings which I had with me. The prayer-book she tore up, the rest she kept.

My master's wife was very kind to me, but I was not happy with them, and ten days after my arrival tried to run away. A Bedouin woman saw me and ran to tell my master, who recaptured me. He even

fired his revolver at me, and the shot grazed my head-dress. He did not wish to kill me, but only to frighten me and prevent me from running away another time.

I was given very little to eat, merely some black bread and a little milk. Tired of living like this, I began to worry my master, begging him to let me leave, saying I had relatives at Aleppo, whom I should like to see.

He was deaf to my appeal, but said he would send me back to my people at the end of the war. At length, one day, wearied by my petitions, he seemed to change his mind. We were taking some goods to Nisibin. There the Arab recognized by chance two of my uncles, Alias and Joseph Boyadji, who worked on the Bagdad line, and told them that he had with him a nephew of theirs. He asked them to take me away then and there. My uncle, Alias, wasted no time but accompanied the Arab into the desert and entered the tent. He came towards me, but I must have been much changed, for he did not recognize me at first. I knew him, however, and embraced him warmly. After saying good-bye, we left for Nisibin, the Arab's daughter, Adla, coming some distance with us in order

to obtain a present from my uncle, who gave her thirty medjidies<sup>1</sup> in silver, two large silk shawls, and some boots and stockings. My uncle kept me for some time at Nisibin until he found a chance to send me back to Aleppo.”

*Little Wahida*

About the same time when visiting Mr. Antoun Roumi at Aleppo, I met Wahida, a little Chaldean girl of Diarbekir, aged twelve, who was related to Madame Roumi. Her mother, a survivor of the massacres, had been unable to support her, her father having been killed by the Turks and her home plundered. I asked her to tell me what she had seen and she gave me the following details:

\* \* \* \* \*

My father, Naoum Abid, was a Municipal Commissioner, who in fear of being killed concealed himself during the arrests. One day the Patrol came to our house, and, under pretence of buying brandy, which we sold, induced us to open the door. They entered, and, after searching every hole and corner of the

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<sup>1</sup> Thirty dollars.

house, found my father and carried him away to prison. Mother and I began to cry.

Some days later a warder came to tell me that my father wanted to see me. I went to him immediately. Father kissed me fondly and cried, asking me how mother and my little brothers, Michael and Suleiman, were, and how they were bearing up. He cried again and I did what I could to console him. When I had been three hours with him, a policeman took me away from him upstairs to a room in an upper story which overlooked that in which my father was kept.

Through a window I saw policemen go into his cell. Executioners, armed with clubs, and soldiers who used the butts of their rifles, struck my father terrible blows. They hit him on the head and made him cry out, and then gave him many blows with their daggers. They put out his eyes with a knife which had a sharp point and cut his stomach open. I wept and cried for a time and then I opened the door and ran away.

I rushed home, crying, and told my mother what had happened. She became hysterical and began to tear out her hair. My little brother ran to tell all our relatives the terrible news, and all began to mourn.

Mother, foreseeing what would be in store for us, soon made plans for us to flee. Like a brave woman, she gathered all her children together, and by crossing from one terrace roof to another we finally found a safe place in which to shelter. In this way she saved us from death. When the storm had passed we returned home and found that all our furniture had been stolen.

Not being able to live in an empty house, and having no money or other resources, my mother had to take service in Turkish families at Diarbekir in order to support us. But not earning enough to feed us, she was obliged to send some of us to my uncle Petioun, at Aleppo.



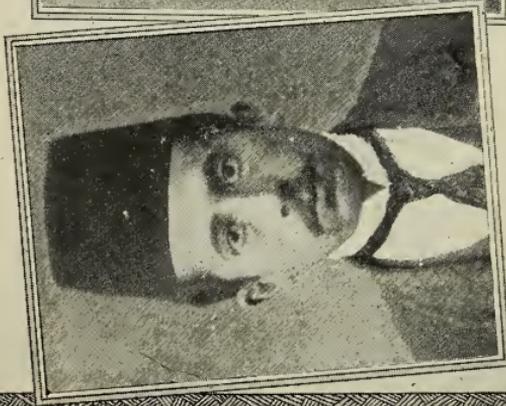




NAMAN EFFENDI



JERGIS KASHISH  
ASSYRO-CHALDEAN  
EYE WITNESSES



HANNA SHAMOUN

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Massacre of Lidja*

Naaman Effendi is one of the survivors of the large and well-known family of Moussa Guerguis Adame of Sairt. His brothers, cousins and uncles were all massacred. He himself escaped death owing to the fact that he was the manager of the local office of the Administration of the Public Debt in the Cata<sup>1</sup> of Lidja, in the Sandjak<sup>2</sup> of Maaden Arghane. He is now at Aleppo. I am indebted to him for the following account of what happened at Lidja at the time of the massacre.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lidja, which is governed by a Kaimakam, is a town of about twelve thousand inhabitants, a seventh of whom are Christians. It is situated eighteen hours' journey from Diarbekir.

In the spring of 1915, the Kaimakam, Anisse Bey, recruited a militia among the Turkish population, ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Administrative district.

<sup>2</sup> Subdivisional regions of the Vilayet or province.

pointed officers and put the regiment through manoeuvres.

A few days later the Turkish Government ordered all arms in the possession of Christians to be collected in the church, the name of each owner being engraved upon the weapons, under the pretext that it would be returned. These arms were then distributed to the militia.

One day on a given signal sentries were posted before the doors of prominent Christians, patrols mounted guard to prevent resistance, and all Christian officials were dismissed by the Kaimakam.

The following day fifty of the more important Christians were summoned before the Governor and imprisoned, chiefly out of sheer hatred, but also to extort confessions. The torture, known as the "Falaka"<sup>3</sup> was inflicted until blood was drawn. This consisted in beating the soles of the feet. Some had their hands pierced, particularly wherever they bore tattoo marks symbolical of Christianity. The finger nails and beards of others were torn out. I learnt these details from relatives of the victims, who dis-

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<sup>3</sup> Bastinado.

covered them in this condition on taking them their food.

At a later date these unfortunate Christians were roped arm to arm in couples and taken outside the town by the militia. Word had been sent to the Kurds, who met them at Dashta-Gisse, some distance from Diarbekir. Here they were plundered and put to death, their bodies being flung into the numerous caves in the locality.

This task performed, the Turks imprisoned other Christians, tortured them as they had the earlier victims and murdered them outside the town after stealing all they had.

A priest I knew well was one of those in the second convoy. On his way to prison street urchins insulted him, treating him as they would a beast of burden. His colleague, a priest, eighty years of age, was tortured in the most terrible manner and executed.

Once again the prisons refilled. Relatives of the victims were told that the unhappy men could be saved for a certain payment and rushed home to collect all the money they had. Captain Suleiman Effendi in particular enriched himself by this means.

It was his habit to "release" prisoners for two or three days in order to re-arrest them later.

Thus the town was cleared of all male Christians, even to boys of ten. The neighbouring villages were surrounded one by one by Tchettas and Kurds, who arrested the men, bound them and cut their throats in the ravines and caverns, after plundering them in the usual way. The Christians of the region were of the Armenian or of the Assyro-Chaldean or Jacobite denomination. Some of the villages whose inhabitants were put to the sword were: Foum, Chim-Chim, Djoum, Tappa and Naghle.

After the deportations and massacres, if a Christian was found in the town, having succeeded in hiding and so escaping the slaughter, he was immediately put to death in the street by the populace, who carried his body as a trophy through the various quarters of the town. In the fields outside Turkish urchins played football with the skulls and bones of the Christians.

After all this butchery the Turks took a month's rest. It was the Feast of Ramazan. As soon as the month elapsed, however, the deportations recommenced with even greater vigour.

This time women and children were carried off, put to death without pity and thrown into the river, the girls being taken away by the Kurds and the Turks. Children who became exhausted from fatigue or hunger on the way were left on the roadside where they soon died. The more beautiful girls were kept for a week by the Turkish officials in town and then passed on to their friends.

It is interesting to note that the former Kaimakam of Lidji, who had refused to carry out orders to organize the massacre, was recalled to Diarbekir after the formation of the first convoy. He was told that he was to be promoted, but on the way was put to death by orders of his superiors for lack of enthusiasm in his work. The Kurds buried him by the roadside and the executioners on their return to the town gave out that he had been killed by Armenian revolutionists. I passed his grave with my family some days later.

The same tragedy was enacted at Henne, a village six hours' distant, and administered by the Government at Lidja. It had a Christian population of four hundred families, all of whom were in very easy circumstances, many of them having made their fortune in

America. Here the same scenes took place. All the men, two or three hours after dark, or at daybreak, were seized, bound, plundered and then taken to a distance and massacred. So many ropes were required for the work that a public crier gave orders that the townspeople were to provide a stipulated quantity, the official reason being, however, that it was needed in the transportation of provisions for the army.

The women who remained alone after the seizure of their menfolk, assembled in their houses in groups of twenty or thirty, trembling with terror. In the evening military patrols entered under pretext of making requisitions, chose the prettiest girls and carried them off by force.

Before the organization of the militia, its future head, Ibrahim Bey, had come to Diarbekir, to return, by favour of Rechid, Governor of Diarbekir, with the rank of Commandant. Absolute obedience in matters civil and religious was to be required of the soldiers, but when they enrolled, the populace had not the faintest idea of the tasks they would be called upon to perform.

After massacring the convoys, the Turks returned

to the families of the victims, assuring them that the Government had reprieved their male relations, who were now safe in a certain place, but, they added, in need of money. Thus they obtained new sums. Several women even accompanied the soldiers in order themselves to bring the money to their relatives, only to be robbed and murdered on the road.

The priest of Foum was arrested and dragged by the beard through the streets to prison amid the hooting of the urchins.

The Mayor of Pasur was taken to Lidja under the pretext that he was killing soldiers who passed through his village. He was hung up by the feet, head downwards, until death released him, in the lavatory of the Governor's house, at the mercy of those who used the spot. Kaissarli Said Mohammed Alim Effendi, son of Hadji Ahmed, one of my employes, gave me the details of this latter incident.

A Christian sergeant named Ohannes, a convert to Islam, one day went to say his prayers at the Mosque. Despite his apostasy, he was killed as he emerged.

During the massacre men's heads were attached by way of ornamentation to trees in the gardens.

Even the sick were not spared, but were snatched from their beds and dragged through the streets, their relatives in great distress accompanying them to give all possible assistance. The pitiless Turks would not allow the poor wretches to die at home even.

Turkish matrons<sup>4</sup> accompanied the female convoys, asking mothers to entrust their children to them. Moslem women then robbed the poor little things of their clothes and abandoned them by the roadside.

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<sup>4</sup> Lady.



HIS GRACE, THE ARCHBISHOP OF DJEZIRE  
Martyred by the Turks

## CHAPTER IX

### *What Happened at Kharput*

At the end of 1918 I met, at Constantinople, Djordjis Toumas Keshishe, a business man of Kharput, who had been an eye witness of the massacres which took place in that town. I wrote down the following account, word for word, at his dictation, and, the better to authenticate the details of his narrative, obtained his signature to my notes.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Turks commenced by arresting certain men of note, in particular the schoolmasters. Among others, they seized Oshous Yussef, Professor at the American college and editor of the "Murched,"<sup>1</sup> the Assyro-Chaldean organ of the town. If I remember rightly, this was at the beginning of May, 1915. Those arrested were imprisoned for a fortnight. Their houses were searched, but happily nothing of a compromising nature was discovered. The dwellings of the Assyro-

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<sup>1</sup> "Monitor."

Chaldeans or Jacobites were also subjected to the same measure.

Meanwhile, Sabit Bey, Governor of the town, betook himself to Erzerum, where, on a pretext that there was an epidemic of typhus, he closed all the schools. From Erzerum he returned as far as Mezre on a Friday some days later.

Taking up his quarters at the Seraglio,<sup>2</sup> he held a council which lasted for over an hour, during which time Christians were forbidden to enter the building. I happened to be with friends in the courtyard of the church, where I had hidden to escape military service. While there I noticed armed soldiers making their rounds. Towards nine o'clock I saw them leading off an Armenian whom they had arrested. In the evening my little brother Yohanna, a boy seven years of age, came to see me at the church, saying that my father was asking for me.

Leaving the church, I discovered to my surprise that all the Christians I met were in great alarm. I arrived home to find my aunt and other relations weeping, and learned that my uncle Barsom Keshishe, a

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<sup>2</sup> Government House.

tradesman, had been arrested. My father, white as a sheet, and very much upset and worried, was speechless in a corner. Not until an hour later did he break silence.

“ I was in the market place,” he told us, “ when the Governor came with the Commandant to Government House. There they had a long discussion. A quarter of an hour later the market place was surrounded by the militia, who picked out all Christians over fourteen years of age, arrested them and put them in prison; among them my poor brother Bersom. I managed to save myself with great difficulty, thanks to Kevork Agha, who foreseeing that a general arrest was imminent, advised me to flee. A few minutes later he himself was arrested, savagely knocked about and taken to prison. From a distance I witnessed also the arrest of two brothers, Boghos and Marderos Chatalbashe, Abraham Tasho and many others. I myself was twice arrested in the street, but Providence willed that I should be set at liberty.”

Next day about eight o'clock a public crier announced from the top of the citadel:

“ Christians, know that he who does not open his

shop as usual will be courtmartialled and condemned to death. Why are you afraid? You run no risk. Take courage!"

My father having little confidence in the words of the public crier feared to open his shop. I thought of going myself, but changed my mind, and my uncle, taking the keys, went to open the premises.

Before many hours had passed we learnt that all tradesmen in the market place had been arrested. During the day police agents and soldiers came to our house with a list of names on which figured that of my father whom they intended to apprehend. My mother went to the door and declared that all the men were out. As a matter of fact we had all fled by the roofs to the Bishop's residence, where we found Bishop Mansour in his room, praying. Since our presence might cause his arrest, we left his house, my father taking refuge with Minasse Agha Chatalbashe, and my cousin and I concealing ourselves in the house of Ashour Effendi.

Some time later my mother arrived in tears to say that the soldiers were coming every few minutes to worry her, declaring that at all costs they must have

her husband and her sons. They said that they wished to take my father to Government House to ask him a few simple questions, after which he would be released. Fearing that the savages would harm his wife and family, my father bravely decided to return to the house. There he met the soldiers who were waiting to take him. He begged them to allow him to change his clothing and to embrace his children before he left. One of my aunts appeared with her baby in her arms. In her exasperation she said to the soldiers:

“ You cowards, you have snatched my husband from his home to take him to Mezre! Now you want to take my brother-in-law! Are you not afraid of the anger of God? What have these innocent people done that you should treat them in this way? ”

“ Do not be anxious! ” hypocritically answered the soldiers. “ Your men will soon be back home. ”

Meanwhile the populous Christian quarters were emptied, only a few young people remaining. Almost all the men were taken to Mezre, where they were shut up to the number of fifteen hundred in a large building called “ Kirmisi-Konak. ” No one was allowed

to speak to them, but their relatives were permitted to bring them food.

As the Turks said that they only required the Armenians, the Bishop (of the Assyro-Chaldeans), with two prominent members of his congregation, Elia Effendi Tasho and Bedik Zade Arakel, went to see the Governor, the Commandant and the Deputy, and begged them to spare his flock since they were not Armenians and belonged to no political party. Bedik Zade, a very influential Moslem, who was present, asked the Governor with tears in his eyes:

“Why do you treat this unhappy people in this way? They are absolutely guiltless!”

The Governor and his friends then promised to refer the matter to Constantinople, and obtain pardon for the Assyro-Chaldean community. Some days later a favourable reply did come from the central authorities and thus the Assyro-Chaldeans were spared. In spite of the order, however, the Governor failed to release the fifteen hundred of our co-religionists who had already been apprehended with the Armenians and taken to Mezre. All, without distinction, were put to death

outside the town. Happily my father was still in prison at Kharput.

After these events the public crier announced that the Christian inhabitants of each quarter were to quit the town in turn and take the road to Urfa. The Assyro-Chaldeans were to leave on Wednesday. As my father was "Moukhtar,"<sup>3</sup> he was released from prison to assist in the census of our quarter. On its completion, notwithstanding the order that the Assyro-Chaldeans should be spared, he was reincarcerated.

The public crier repeated the order for the deportations, and the five hundred and fifty-six Armenians and Assyro-Chaldeans in prison were released to accompany their families into exile. By good fortune the public crier announced one day that the Chaldeans could remain behind. The happiness of our community can be imagined. There were rejoicings everywhere, and our leaders visited the Governor and made him a present of L. T. 500 in gold. At the same time they begged him to transmit the order of the central authorities for the sparing of the Assyro-Chaldeans to the suburbs in which a great many of them lived.

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<sup>3</sup> Head of his quarter ; i. e., something like an Alderman, ward.

We next went to see the Mudir<sup>4</sup> of one of those suburbs, who had come to town and asked him in view of the order to spare the Assyro-Chaldean villages. Hoping to gain his favor, we made him presents. He promised to do so, but on returning to his village the barbarian put everyone of them to death, even to the women and children. In the little town of Adyaman, hardly a trace of the Christians remained, all of them having been hacked to death with axes and thrown into the river which watered the locality. The priests in particular had been tortured with indescribable savagery. The following are the names of some of the places inhabited by the Assyro-Chaldeans: the town of Malatia and the villages of Chiro, Aiwtoš and Guarguar.

Three months after the tragedy just recounted, the Governor being absent, all the Assyro-Chaldeans were rearrested one night and sent to the Kirmisi Konak.<sup>5</sup> A knock came to our door. It was Abdennour, a fellow Christian who wished my father to come to his house. This he did, and on his return he told us that

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<sup>4</sup> Mayor.

<sup>5</sup> The Red Palace.

a Turk had been to Abdennour making enquiries for him. It was a tradesman with whom my father had had some dealings, and to whom he owed some money. This the creditor was hastening to claim as he had learnt that all the Assyro-Chaldeans were to be arrested next day. My father's words terrified us, and we felt that this time all was over. At dawn my father, my cousin David and I fled and hid at the bottom of a well, requesting our relatives to dig a hole and bury all our valuables and merchandise in a corner of the garden. Every moment we expected the arrival of the wretches who were to lead us to our deaths. At length towards mid-day a relation who was in the secret of our hiding place called down to us from the opening of the well:

“Come out.

“There is nothing to fear. The massacre of the Assyrians has been stopped.”

During the massacres of Kharput I lost my uncles, Barsom Keshishe, Boghos and Mardiros; my cousins Nouri and Ohannes, and also Ashour Youssouf, Donabet and Kework Kerbez, who were otherwise related to me.



## CHAPTER X

### *Rape, Loot and Murder!*

One afternoon a month before I left Aleppo in May, 1918, I paid a visit to the Chaldean Vicariate. While I was there a lady entered wearing the uniform of a Red Crescent Hospital Matron. She saluted the parish priest, and, not knowing Arabic, spoke in French, I serving as interpreter.

The lady, a Chaldean from Diarbekir, was the daughter of Zeki Hardji Daoud of that city, and had just arrived at Aleppo from Caesarea. She told us of her deportation and long wanderings and sufferings, and in the course of conversation I learnt that she had relatives in Aleppo, members of the family of Antoun Effendi Roumi, ex-Manager of the Regie<sup>1</sup> at Mardin, one of my friends. I took her to the house of this gentleman, who was surprised to see her at Aleppo, and whose wife was happy to be able to offer her hospitality.

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<sup>1</sup> Manager of Government properties, such as tobacco, salt, etc.

Learning that I was soon leaving for the capital, the lady wanted to come with me in order to rejoin her relations. Consequently the parish priest, Madame Roumi and I set about trying to obtain her a traveling permit. In this we succeeded, and I left with her for Constantinople. I noticed that whenever we passed through a railway station and saw a police officer she trembled, fearing once more to fall into their hands.

On our arrival at Constantinople she gave me the following account of her sufferings, which I here faithfully record:

*The Deposition of Madame Habiba Turkoghlou, a  
Chaldean Lady*

It was during the afternoon of Saturday, July the 18th, 1918, that we were informed that all Christians were to be deported from Trebizond. We were at Totz at the time, a village three hours' journey from Trebizond, whither my family had fled during the bombardment of the town by the Russians. Very much upset by the command, we returned to Trebizond the next day, and were granted four days in which to make our preparations for deportation.

At that time Dr. Crawford, a missionary, was stationed at Trebizond as Director of the American College. To him and his wife a large number of families turned, begging them to take care of their children during their absence. After strenuous efforts, he obtained permission from the Vali, Djemal Asmi.<sup>2</sup> The parents paid the necessary amount for the support of their children, and even left their jewels in Dr. Crawford's care. Dr. Crawford also tried to protect a number of young women by admitting them under the guise of teachers.

But, even in the American College, these children were not safe.

The whole town was terror-stricken. The Christians were in tears, and their cries resounded everywhere. Trebizond was a city of mourning. A crowd of breathless women was running about the streets, pursued by soldiers deaf to their prayers. The men had been torn from their homes and taken to a monastery called Astvazatzin. On the 13th of July, five days before the order for the deportation, all men who were Russian subjects and all the members of the

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<sup>2</sup> Vali, in Turkish, corresponds to Governor.

Tashnaktzagan Committee were collected and placed on board a motor-boat, treated with great harshness, and told that they were to be taken to Sinope or Constantinople to be tried by courtmartial. All were men of position. Once well out to sea, they were thrown overboard and drowned. We learnt of their sad end when some days later we found about four hundred of their bodies on the seashore.<sup>3</sup>

This awful tragedy threw the inhabitants into a condition of indescribable terror. In their desperation some burnt their houses; others threw themselves into wells, and many committed suicide by jumping from roofs and windows. Not a few, some women among them, lost their reason. They knew, poor wretches, that their turn would come inevitably, and that they would be put to death without pity.

We ourselves were advised by Madame Hekimian, whose husband was an army doctor, to leave our child with the American mission. She promised to look after it well, since, being the wife of a soldier, she had the right to remain. We followed her advice, I

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<sup>3</sup>A number of boats set out from Trebizond in this way packed with men. They invariably returned a few hours later absolutely empty.

in person leaving my little Dico, then a baby of fifteen months, at the mission with a sum of money to defray the expense of his keep.

On the night of this fatal day some Turkish merchants came to our house and had an important secret interview with my husband. The mysterious conference lasted half an hour, after which my husband came to me and said: "We have found a means of saving ourselves; by embracing Islam."

His words made me speechless with anger. "Never shall I become Mussulman!" I cried. "You are free to deny your faith if you will."

All my family tried to persuade me. My husband, quite broken down, asked me tearfully:

"Do you want to be the cause of our losing all?"

I arose much moved and went to see the Turkish merchants in the adjoining room. They in their turn tried to convince me.

"Come to your senses and save your family," they urged.

These men are now in Constantinople. Their names are Osman Loutfi and Osman Effendi Keurzadé.

I told them my final answer was that I would rather die than deny my faith.

“I leave my husband free to adopt your religion,” I added, “but, for my own part, I refuse to become a Mohammedan.”

Reminding us of what the Turks had had to suffer at the hands of the Christians, according to their story, the men departed after warning us that the former would certainly and cruelly revenge themselves upon the latter.

On Thursday, 21st June,<sup>4</sup> early in the morning, we learned that the houses of the Christians had been surrounded by the soldiers in order to prevent all intercommunication between them. From this we realized that the hour of our sad fate had struck. Foreseeing that we should be deported, we made our preparations accordingly. Meanwhile the order came for us to quit our homes. We left the house, and my husband, having a presentiment of what was to befall us, cried like a child. Friends of the Committee of Union and Prog-

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<sup>4</sup>On Thursday, 1st July, all streets were guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets and the carrying off of the Armenians from their houses began. (Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Lord Bryce.)

ress<sup>5</sup> consoled us, saying that we would return soon.

A large convoy was formed and we started. Some of the poor victims carried blankets on their shoulders, others mattresses, in fact all kinds of household goods and utensils. Our first stop was at Déguirmendéré, half an hour outside the town, where we caught up with thousands of men and women who had preceded us. The soldiers obliged us to march on foot, preventing us from making use of carriages or other means of transit. Two officers were in charge of the convoy, Captain Bechiktachli Aguah Bey, a man of thirty or thirty-three years of age, and the Lieutenant, Trabzounli Hadji-Khalil Zade Faik Bey, about twenty-five.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Head of the Committee at Trebizond was Nail Bey.

<sup>6</sup> "Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire," by Lord Bryce — Blue Book, page 299. Extract from an interview with Comm. G. Gorrini, late Italian Consul-General at Trebizond, who left Trebizond on July the 23rd, 1915, in the interval between the Italian declarations of war against Austria-Hungary and against Turkey.

"It was a real extermination and slaughter of the innocents, an unheard-of thing, a black page stained with flagrant violations of the most sacred rights of humanity, of Christianity, of nationality. There were about fourteen thousand Armenians at Trebizond — Gregorians, Catholics and Protestants. They had never created disorders, nor given the police any occasion for anxiety.

"When I left Trebizond, not a hundred of them remained."

Those who composed the convoy were searched before it set out. Even small penknives were taken from us on the ground that they were weapons. The ruffians told us that these offences to our modesty were nothing compared to what the Bulgarians had done to their women.

Orders were brought to the effect that the officers in charge were to get us to Djeziré in the Province of Diarbekir, and to do it within twelve hours. This meant that we were to be killed on the way, since it was manifestly impossible that the journey could be accomplished in that time, Djeziré being more than a month's march on foot.

### *On the Road to Calvary*

We left Déguïrmendéré at four o'clock in the evening, in a torrent of rain. Our convoy numbered over 5,000. We were escorted by soldiers, who herded us like a flock of sheep. In the lead was Captain Aguah Bey, while Faik Bey brought up the rear of the sad procession of terror and death.

Four hours' walking brought us to Hadji-Mehmed. It was still raining when we halted at a small café at

the path which leads from Trebizond to Erzerum. There we were separated from the men and gathered together in groups. I entered the café with Madame Mari Arabian, a woman who had also left her child at the American Mission, and there we passed the night. She was in a condition of complete nervous collapse. During the night I saw her raise herself with a start, and, unbuttoning her dress in a mechanical way, present her breast to the baby she thought she had at her side. Almost delirious, she then sighed and fell asleep, making a movement as if she were kissing her child. This touching scene of motherly tenderness upset me so much that, thinking of my own baby, likewise confided to the care of the mission, I could not refrain from weeping.

The men who had been seized at Trebizond and shut up in the monastery at Astvazatzin, on May 1st, rejoined us at this point and were added to our convoy. At eight in the morning we started off again and gained a road between two streams, some hours from Hadji Mehmed. Some of the younger prisoners in despair threw themselves into the water and were drowned. Midday saw us at Yessir Oghlou. There

were a few carriages there, and by means of bribery the few children with us were put into them to be sent back and placed in charge of the American Mission.

At four o'clock we left Yessir-Oghlou, numbering then about six thousand men and women, and reached Boklou-Khan on foot. At this place three or four women lost their reason owing to the description the soldiers, with exquisite cruelty, gave of the sufferings in store for us.

Hateful as these butchers were to us, we were obliged to care for the comfort of the two officers in charge, offering them every kind of food and drink which we possessed.

Leaving at eight o'clock next morning, we continued our journey all day on foot, rain falling for an hour and a half. At three in the afternoon we arrived at Zeghané, a telephone station at the foot of a snow-capped mountain of the same name. Our guards wished to compel us to pass the night there, but the officers of whom we took so much care listened to our incessant petitions and allowed us to pass the night in the shelter of a village an hour ahead. Here the

whole convoy proceeded. For L. 7<sup>r</sup> we obtained refuge in houses, and the bakery was opened so that we might buy bread. Our family and nine others were permitted to stay in a so-called hotel, an old tumble-down house.

That evening at nine o'clock the lieutenant sent for my husband and asked him to act as an intermediary in a rather delicate matter. He had fallen madly in love with Keghanoushe Arabian, and wished my husband to intercede with her relatives on his behalf. This request was a hidden command, and had to be obeyed. Finally, as a way out of the difficulty, my husband replied that the matter did not depend on him, and that the officer himself could address the parents of the girl next day. We were puzzled how to act in the matter, and could not sleep all night, for if the matter fell through we were lost. Next day we held a family council and agreed to give up the girl, thinking that this might help the rest.

We passed a night at Keuprui-Bachi, and, in the morning, started for Daldaban. Keghanoushe was handed over to the officer, who returned with her to

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<sup>r</sup> \$35.00.

Trebizond, accompanied by Madame Gaizak Arabian and Madame Kelerian, who had each given L. T. 500<sup>s</sup> to accompany her.

We noticed that our two officers had disappeared. The soldiers turned back and ordered the drivers of the vehicles to stop. Fearing some danger, I got out and advised my husband to do likewise, but he refused. Twenty soldiers surrounded me and ordered me to get in again. They pushed me, dragged me by the arms and even threatened me with their bayonets. My terror got the better of me, and I became violently ill. Seeing me in this state, one of the soldiers, by way of helping me, made me rejoin the convoy. I had to walk, and became separated from the carriages, the occupants of which were robbed of their money by the soldiers.

On our arrival at Daldaban, after a march of three hours, we were assailed by urchins, who, seated on garden walls, threw stones, dung and every kind of filth at us. Women stoned us, screaming in their hatred:

“Get along, you Christian pigs! You are being properly treated now!”

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<sup>s</sup> \$2,500 American money.

As we came to the foot of the mountain we noticed that it was occupied by the Tchettas, brigands, who intended to take our lives. With them was the Mutesarîf<sup>9</sup> of Gumush-Hawe, a place half an hour's journey distant, with his staff. The Tchettas, aided by soldiers, closed in upon us, and the commanding officer ordered the men to be separated from the women. The officers, who had disappeared at the time the occupants of the carriages were being plundered, now reappeared, and, falling upon us like hyenas, separated us from the men with the utmost violence, even using the butts of their rifles.

Our sufferings and misery were at their height. After all the privations we had undergone; the bestial sights at which we had been present; the violations, murders and massacres we had witnessed, we were physical wrecks, and our whole nervous systems broke down. The separation of the men from the women was the last straw. We plodded along like cattle, brainless, stoically waiting to be finished, or begging God to end our sad existence by death.

The savage separation, or rather sorting out, of men

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<sup>9</sup> Deputy-Governor.

and women gave occasion for a thousand scenes, each more cruel than the other. When the male flock had been herded at some distance from our convoy, the brigands, ready for their work of slaughtering whole Christian populations, approached us and searched our baggage and belongings for rope and string. With these cords they tied the men in couples, arm to arm, and led them away. Frozen with horror, knowing that they went to their death, we tore our hair and many fainted. Our dear comrades continued their dreadful journey to the place of slaughter, where fifteen hundred were shot.

But our martyrdom did not end with this. It had but begun. The butchers, proud of their work, returned in our direction. Soldiers drove us along like beasts into wild, open country, where, in some places, we noticed ruined houses. Nor did they even give us time to take our belongings. The cowards, knowing that we were at their mercy, and that no voice, however feeble, could be raised in our defense, subjected us to the most awful sufferings. The blows we received were nothing to the thrusts, which flung us down, bruised and wounded, upon the ground. One person, whose leg was broken, was actually ordered to arise and continue the

march. It was asking the impossible. But the sufferer had to attempt it, or die under the blows of rifle butts and bludgeons.

I need not speak here of the attempts made against our honour.

Crowded together in this wild spot, and starving, for we had had nothing to eat, three thousand of us spent the night in a penetrating drizzle, the sky our roof, the wet ground our bed. In our despair we moaned and wept, losing courage more and more.

Even during the night we were persecuted. Armed police filed through our ranks, using electric torches to find the most beautiful among us, and carrying them off for their orgies. Young girls, after being taken to a distance, were often massacred, after having been assaulted. Two or three hours' later the soldiers returned to seek other young women. At a loss to invent other means to make us suffer further, they would not even let us retire to a distance to satisfy the needs of nature. Not even the days of Nero saw horrors carried out with such extreme cruelty.

On the morning after this awful night we suddenly saw Madame Kalarian, her child, and Madame Arabian

run breathless and terror-stricken out of a garden, as if they were being pursued. (It will be remembered that these women had paid a large sum for permission to leave the convoy). When she reached us, Madame Kalarian was at the end of her strength. She was ready to fall from starvation. All we could find to offer her was a piece of dry bread. This being insufficient to restore a woman in her state, one of my companions offered her her breast. This the poor woman took gratefully, and this restored her strength, as it would that of a little child. We were greatly touched. The officer, for fear of being compromised, had released Madame Kalarian and Madame Arabian, who had fallen into the hands of the Governor, who had put them through a series of questionings. He had them shut up in a room with police agents, who had subjected them to the most shameful outrages. Keghanoushe, the young so-called wife of the officer, had been kept by the Mutessarif as a prostitute. The poor child was only fourteen years of age.

One hundred and fifty girls and ten teachers belonging to a group of young women confided to the care of the American Mission, had been deported from Trebizond

with a number of boys from fifteen to nineteen years of age. Four days afterwards some of the more handsome girls were chosen and carried off. The remainder, together with the boys, were shot down there and then, or otherwise done to death.

At 8 o'clock the convoy left the desolate spot. It was now composed only of women, all the men having been put to death. Lest we had not suffered sufficiently, Turkish and Kurdish women and children accompanied us, with all kinds of buffoonery, chasing us along the sides of the road.

Eventually we reached a mill, after a three-hours' march. Captain Aghah Bey was no longer with us, having left us when our men were taken away. The lieutenant, who had rejoined us, however, came with two Tchettas and searched us all. I was the first victim. I had L. T. 320 on me, my mother-in-law had L. T. 200, and my sister-in-law L. T. 200, in addition to our jewelry. All this money belonged to me, but I had distributed it among my relatives in order that it might be carried more easily. Having taken everything, Lieutenant Falk Bey, in derision, gave me sixty paras (three-pence) for expenses, and promised to return me my

money at Erzindjan. In this way, he said, it would not be stolen by the brigands, who infested the country through which we were to pass.

During the search, we had to suffer a thousand cruelties, receiving the usual blows with rifle butts, and our hair being torn from our heads. One of my former pupils at the school at Trebizond, where I had taught from 1911 to 1913, before my marriage, had her two plaits completely torn out. Several women were entirely stripped, under pretence of being searched. Many swallowed their gold in order to use it later.

Early in the proceedings, when they came to search me, they said:

“When your husband was being bound, in order that he might be put to death, he admitted that you had all the money on you. He told us to take it from you, so you had better give it to us if you wish to save his life.”

It was only a trick to obtain my money.

In the evening, after the search, we left the mill, in a disgusting state of dirt, not having washed since we left Trebizond. Sleeping on the bare ground and thinned by privations, we were veritable human rags.

While we were skirting the river near the mill a woman named Madame Katchian tried to drown herself by jumping into the water. She was pulled out.

As we left a village, its inhabitants followed, shouting insults after us and throwing stones.

“Get along, get along,” they cried. “You are all going to be exterminated soon.”

They snatched from the envoy by force fifty girls and women and carried them off. We noticed the bodies of several men and young people stuck in the mud at the edge of this same river. They had been stripped. They probably belonged to Baibourt, chief town of the Province of Trebizond, and had been put to death in this way.<sup>10</sup>

By six o'clock we were at a large village named Keussa, when we saw a considerable number of men shut up in a mosque and in yards, guarded by soldiers. Their isolation from their families caused them acute suffering, and, on seeing us, they called to us and waved

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<sup>10</sup> At this time there were to be seen daily floating down the river Yel-Deirmeni to the sea numerous mutilated bodies completely stripped, among them those of women whose breasts had been cut off. “Treatment of the Armenians,” p. 293, by Lord Bryce.

their handkerchiefs from the windows. They wished to communicate with us by letter, but it was impossible to get near them.

We were crowded into large yards kept for cattle. Suddenly we heard a bang. It was the explosion of a bomb. Lieutenant Faik told us, for our consolation, that they were killing some men after the German system. This was to line men up in files of ten and fire one shot through all ten; and also to gather a number of men together in a room and then destroy it with a bomb.

"The explosion you have just heard," he remarked, "means that a good number have been executed."

Terrified, and expecting the same fate, we wept, tore out our hair, and, hoping thus to disfigure ourselves, even our eyelashes and eyebrows. The madness of despair had taken possession of us.

### *On the Mountain of Sebicore*

In the morning at 8 o'clock Faik Bey appeared and called out, "Haide, merchandise hazirlansin" <sup>11</sup> and left with nearly five thousand other deported villagers, women, children and old men. At 10 a. m. a panic arose in the

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<sup>11</sup> "Get ready the merchandise. We are off."

convoy. Cries of despair were heard everywhere. We believed that the slaughter had begun. Like a frightened herd, we scattered on each side of the road, running into the ploughed fields. I was plodding through the sticky soil when I discovered that in my wild rush I was tramping under foot a poor little baby. I shall never forget the screams of the unfortunate mite. Several infants had been abandoned in this way when their mothers had to take to flight. Some, indeed, foreseeing their tragic end, to stave off a lingering death, had provided themselves with poison.

The soldiers chased us with bayonets and obliged us to assemble again, saying we had nothing to fear. In our terror we found it impossible to believe them. We learned eventually, however, that the cause of the panic was the pillaging of the poor peasants who had just joined us, and that their cries had caused the trouble. Many in despair during the panic had swallowed poison, some of whom died.

In this state of terror we continued our journey, and came to the mountain of Sebicore. It took an hour and a half to climb it. Two hundred of the villagers, who brought up the rear with their carts, were first despoiled

and then killed by the soldiers. Likewise several persons, after being plundered, were murdered and thrown down the slope of the hill. When we reached at last the summit of the mountain a troop of fifty soldiers from the barracks which guarded the Erzindjan Road, threw themselves upon us and relieved us of the rest of our belongings, scarfs and utensils. They treated in the same way the villagers of the new convoy.

During the night the soldiers profited by the occasion to steal women and girls, with whom they went off into the mountains.

Next day at 8 a. m. we restarted, not, however, by the mountain path but over the rocks. Although hungry and dying of thirst we were not allowed to drink at a spring we passed. Our feet were swollen and began to bleed, as we were barefoot. On arriving at the foot of the mountain half an hour's journey from Erzindjan, we stopped in a meadow worn out and incapable of suffering further, we cried out:

“Kill us all here. We can do no more. We do not wish to live. We want to die.” Our appeal was unheeded, and we passed the day and the night where we were. Turks from the neighbourhood came to

trade with us and to sell us food. Bread cost L. T. 1<sup>12</sup> a small loaf, and a glass of water twenty piastres.

Next day we crossed the town amidst the shouts and insults of the people, who stoned and spat upon us. One Turkish lady, however, it is a matter of note, threw us from her roof many loaves of bread, and, assisted by little girls and children, by means of cords lowered us pails of water to quench our thirst. When we thanked her warmly she replied:

“My friends, I am doing no more than my duty.”

The convoy camped in the Christian cemetery of the town, where the soldiers sold the girls to the Turkish and Kurdish civilians for from five to ten piastres each.<sup>13</sup>

Fifteen days had now elapsed since we left Trebizond. We found the Christian quarter in Erzindjan had been completely destroyed. Only ruins remained. The enormous cemetery was filled with the remains of deported victims from convoys which had passed before us. On the ground lay scattered in many places scalps, arms and feet.

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<sup>12</sup> Approximately \$5.00.

<sup>13</sup> From 25 to 50 cents.

Further out on the plain we saw those who had been deported from Erzerum, all the men in magnificent tents. Near them, and well treated, were their horses and their wagons.

Sobs were heard throughout our convoy as we saw these men alive and comfortable, while our husbands had been killed and we ourselves reduced to so terrible a state.

The men of Erzerum soon came to us with large sacks of bread, meat and cheese, which they distributed among us. I was given two loaves by M. Kosrof, an employee of a branch depot of a company formed at Trebizond by my husband and two other merchants. I recognized him and it cut me to the heart to be obliged to accept alms from one of our former employes.

Many women in despair made their way into the town and gave themselves up to the Turks to become wives or servants in their harems. Others were taken off to houses of ill fame, which had been opened by the Governor since the deportations.

Next day, towards evening, we heard a noise in the distance and found its origin to be the convoy com-

ing from Trebizond, which had left a day after we had, and which now joined us at the cemetery. In its ranks were many girls who had been left with the American missionaries, among them my sister-in-law. They told us that they had suffered on the way the same treatment and atrocities as ourselves.

We left the town at 7 p. m. and halted an hour and a half later between the mountain and the Euphrates. At eleven Kurds fell upon us and stole whatever we still had, once again making off with women and girls. During this time Faik Bey, indifferent to what was happening under his eyes, was occupied two paces away in preparing a meal, two girls from the convoy at his side.

In the morning some of the women and girls who had managed to escape from the Kurds, rejoined the convoy before we departed. On the way we saw innumerable bodies in the Euphrates, at this place the river to a width of over thirty feet was tinged with blood. The sight terrified us.

At midday ten Tchettas followed us on horseback, and, carving a way through the convoy with their huge knives, made off with some of the girls. Again

the unhappy convoy became a prey to panic. Some threw themselves into the river, but, afraid to die, swam back. Others hid themselves in the mountains and rejoined us when the brigands had disappeared. One woman, at the end of her strength, cried out in Turkish:

“Allah sen Yetish!”<sup>14</sup>

At these words a soldier took a large stone and threw it at her head, saying:

“Kiafir, Khenzir, Gaour, allahin Var issa seni kour-tarsin.”<sup>15</sup>

Before we reached Kamakh at the bridge of Adjem Keuprusu, the Mudir of Gemerek arrived, dressed as a Tchetta. He gave full power and liberty of action to the police agents, who thereupon began their foul work upon us. The Mudir himself carried off Gayane Gotoghian, a girl who was related to my husband, of whom Faik Bey made him a present. I remember particularly, also, the mother of six children. Some of the soldiers carried her off to ill treat her. She

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<sup>14</sup> “My God, come Thou to our help!”

<sup>15</sup> “You vile infidel! You dog of a Christian! If you have a God, let him come and deliver you.”

defended herself, and in their fury they seized her with her children and threw them all in the river, where they were drowned.

At Kamakh ten other persons and I petitioned Faik Bey to leave us in the town to work and sew so that we could get a loaf of bread a day to keep us from starvation. But our request was not granted. Faik Bey was worrying about getting away to his fiancee, Miss Arabian. For the purpose, he had a permit made out for himself, stating that he was ill, and left, taking with him his fiancee's two sisters, after previously muffling them in veils.

A corporal, Mahmoud-Onbachi of Riza, then took command of the convoy. He had been imprisoned for theft, but had been released and attached to the deportation units. Now his own master, he and his soldiers gave themselves up to every kind of immorality and barbarity at the expense of the women and girls.

We left Kamakh, and after being attacked on the road by a troop of Kurds, came at dusk to a spot full of briars and thorns. Here we were obliged to spend the night under the stars. I was now in a state of

utter terror and without food or drink. I had lost sight of my mother-in-law and sister-in-law, but dared not look for them for fear of being seized by a soldier.

Early in the morning we took to the road again. To appease our hunger we pulled up weeds and roots and ate them, while to staunch our thirst we threw ourselves like a flock of sheep upon a muddy little babbling rivulet, whose waters were heated by the rays of the sun. Again we started after a few minutes' respite.

Corporal Mehmed then demanded of us my sister-in-law that he might work his wicked will upon her, threatening to take her life if we refused. On receiving our definite refusal he said:

"I shall know where to find her. Give me a piastre. The cartridge with which I shall kill the wretch will cost that much."

As Mehmed was momentarily occupied with other matters we profited by the delay to disguise my sister-in-law as a peasant, covering up her head lest he should recognize her.

It must be remembered that all who lingered on the road were put to death. The vicinity through which

we were now passing was littered with corpses, fragments of human bodies, leg bones and putrefying skulls, indicative of the passage of other convoys before our own.

At nightfall we reached a mountainous place where the soldiers alarmed us by telling us that we should be attacked and killed by the Tchettas, adding, however, that they would protect us if we gave them money. I got up in the night and, under cover of the darkness, made a collection. We gave the money to the soldiers and continued our journey in the morning.

### *A Ray of Hope*

When we arrived at Mezguep-Tchai, between Egin and Kharput, a spot between two mountains, the gendarmes fired their rifles into the air, and even on the convoy, simply for their own amusement. A troop of ten Tchettas called "Mangha," under the command of their chief, Saadi Bey, nephew of Ahmed Riza Bey, appeared on the mountainside. A soldier chosen by Saadi Bey, as public crier, announced that by order of the Minister of the Interior,<sup>16</sup> those women who

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<sup>16</sup> At that time Talaat Bey.

knew a trade were to separate from the others and go to Kamakh. Fifteen other women and myself were engaged as dressmakers and sent to the town. Many others cried and begged us to get them engaged by interceding with the Kaimakam, Sub-Governor, but they were asking what was impossible. I left the convoy with regret and parted from my relations with tears. We made the journey in a single night,<sup>17</sup> being forced to run almost all the time lest it should be seen that women of the convoy were re-entering the town.

At Kamakh we were handed over to a rich Turk, Halil Bey, a Deputy of Erzindjan, who had become chief of the brigand Tchettas of this region, who were charged with the duty of killing all the men of Erzerum and Kamakh. He gave us a room in his house where we slept four nights on the boards without bed or blankets. We gained our livelihood by sewing, being subjected to daily mental torture by the anything but assuring news which was given us as to our fate.

Three days after our coming to Kamakh there

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<sup>17</sup> Normally a three days' journey.

arrived a convoy of a thousand little children, with some girls and young women. This convoy, which was composed of the children left with the American Mission, had numbered when it left Trebizond, five thousand children from three to ten years of age. The poor little things, having made the whole journey on foot, were ill and in a pitiable state. Many had died from sickness and exhaustion on the road. The unhappy little innocents, frail and defenceless, what a martyrdom they suffered at the hands of their cowardly executioners! The sick were placed in one room. The rest were condemned to set out again on foot. We remained forty days in Kamakh, daily witnessing the arrival of convoys of deported.

One day we heard that the Governor of Erzerum, Tahsin Bey, and the Sub-Governors of Erzindjan and Gumushkhana were coming to dine with the Deputy of Kamakh, in whose house we lived. My companions and I were ordered to make the necessary preparations and to lay the table. When we entered the dining-room we saw exposed in the room the beard

of the Archbishop of Erzerum, with the skin torn from his face. The Deputy had perpetrated the horrible outrage upon the Archbishop to revenge himself because he said the prelate had slighted him on the occasion of a visit paid to Kamakh. The Archbishop in passing with him through the streets of the town had preceded him. This the Deputy considered a lack of respect.

The Deputy had in his house seven large chests of empty cartridge belts. All the bullets had been used for the slaughter of Christians, and the ex-Deputy kept these trophies as a souvenir of his exploits. The chests had been sent, it was said, by the Committee of Union and Progress, and the wife of the Deputy showed all this to the guests with pride. During the dinner one of those who had been invited declared that in February, 1916, all the Christian soldiers working in the trenches had been brought to a place two hours from Kamakh and there put to death.

This is not the last of these horrifying details. Here is another characteristic act of goodness on the part of a magistrate. The majority of the sick children abandoned in the town were wandering through the

streets in search of a morsel of bread. The Judge of Kamakh said that they were ragged and unpleasant to see and had them all thrown into the Euphrates.

As regards ourselves, among other trials we were solicited every day to become converts to Islam and marry Turks. One morning they insisted and threatened us, and half of us were sent back to the convoy. Being in some danger myself, I fled and took refuge in the house of the Deputy. I knew that he would protect me, as I had rendered him many services with my needle and in the management of his household.

During our stay at Kamakh every time a convoy passed my companions and I covered our faces with our veils and approached to see if by chance among its victims there were any of our own relatives.

One day a group of soldiers came to the yard. We approached them and heard groans from the flat roof above. On mounting thereto we found a young officer ill from typhus, lying in the snow, his limbs frozen and gangrenous. He was a chemist from Constantinople, named Armenak Papazian. Delighted to see Christians again, he begged us to save him. Every even-

ing, he said, Turks came and threatened to throw him into the river. In spite of the great danger we ourselves ran, we decided to save the young man, and, taking a woman's dress with us, went to him and robed him in it, bringing him away to the stable of a Turk whose wife was an Armenian. She begged her husband to take him in, and for twenty days we tended him. He recovered from the typhus, but gangrene having spread in all his limbs, the poor man died in atrocious suffering.

The Turk had agreed to keep him on the premises in the hope that some day his guest might be able to do him some service. Learning of his death, and fearing that it would be discovered that he had given protection to a Christian, he called upon us to take the remains away immediately, threatening us with the police. We implored him to wait until dark. At dusk, with a woman friend, I carried the body of the poor Christian into the yard where we lived, which was adjacent to that in which he lay. During the night we dug a grave eighteen inches deep and buried young Papazian, saying some prayers over his grave

for the repose of his soul. Dogs, attracted by the smell of the body, came and scratched up the earth. Fearing to be discovered, we then took some large stones and threw them upon the grave the better to safeguard the poor man's body from profanation.

I lived for eleven months at Kamakh, ever in a state of misery, perpetually seeking for a relation among the people who formed the convoys passing through the town. On the 15th of February a woman who had been deported came to me and said that some girls from Trebizond, named Arabian, were in prison and wished to see me. Without loss of time I muffled myself in a "tcharchaf"<sup>19</sup> and went to them. One was Keghanouche, who had been betrayed by Faik Bey. The latter having been eventually court-martialled, the girls had been forced to rejoin the convoy. We found them in a pitiable state owing to the outrages they had suffered on the road at the hand of the soldiers. Thanks to the support of the Deputy, we were able to save them and keep them with us. We became separated later, and I do not know what has since become of them.

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<sup>19</sup> Turkish veil.

*My Little Dico*

Notwithstanding my own preoccupations and sufferings, I had never forgotten the baby I left at Trebizond. A month after I came to Kamakh I began to write to a Turkish doctor called Mehmed Aouni, who had gone to the American Missionaries and had taken my little Dico into his home and adopted him. I wrote to him without receiving a reply, then sent telegram after telegram, but without result. The doctor remained deaf. One day I learnt that Aouni had left for Constantinople, taking my child with him.

Erzerum fell on the 16th of February, 1916.<sup>20</sup> The Kurds attacked the town of Kamakh. The Turks, however, spread the report that it was assailed by the Christians, who were abetting the Kurds in their misdeeds. This caused our persecutors to redouble their rage against us. Mussulmans, flying before the Russians, took refuge in Kamakh, and the panicstricken inhabitants began to forsake the town. Meanwhile the Red Crescent was installed there, and tired of life and worried to death I decided to put in a petition to be allowed to enter the Red Crescent Hospital as a

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<sup>20</sup> To the Russians.

nurse, hoping little by little to be able to reach Constantinople and see my child again.

My request was granted, and I joined the staff of the institution, of which I became later the matron. I did everything I could to have other Christian women with me, and was able to engage ten whom I either picked up in the streets where they were dying of hunger or whose release from prison I brought about.

A month and a half after I entered the hospital orders were given to remove it to Caesarea. We left, wearing Turkish veils in order not to be molested by the Turks. Our sixteen days' journey took us through districts which, formerly flourishing centres peopled by Christians, were now only ruins. I counted more than twenty such settlements of which the chief were: Korou-Tchai, Zara, Sivas, Kodjy-Hissar, Shar-Kishla, the tomb of the women and girls of Samsoun, Gemerek, and others.

We arrived at length at Caesarea, through which we passed to reach Zindjirdere, a village one hour and a half beyond the town. Here before the war a young

Swiss lady, Mlle. Kerber, had opened an immense orphanage, which was the home of five thousand boys. She left for Switzerland at the beginning of the European War, and her former pupils for the most part were exterminated by the Turks. Most of the furniture of the establishment was stolen, and the huge and comfortable building was transformed into a hospital. Doctor Burhaneddine, head of the Red Crescent Hospital, in which I worked, and of which I have been made matron, treated us with great consideration. Touched and encouraged by his kindness, one day I expressed to him my astonishment at seeing a Turk treat Christians so well at such a time as this.

Surprised by the boldness of my statement, he replied:

“It is the Red Crescent Society which compels us to be affable towards the nurses; but I am a Young Turk, and, if it rested with me, I should have exterminated every Christian, even all the children as well, until not one remained.”

A fortnight later this miserable Young Turk doctor was charged with having stolen L. T. 3000.<sup>21</sup> He left

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<sup>21</sup> \$15,000.



HABIBA IN HER UNIFORM AS MATRON OF THE  
MILITARY HOSPITAL



for Constantinople, and was replaced by Dr. Salaheddine Bey.

After Dr. Burhaneddine's departure, I learned that he, as if we belonged to him, had promised us to his friends, that we might serve as playthings in their Bacchanalian orgies. As soon as I heard this I put on my Turkish veil and boldly went to the house of the Sub-Governor, whom I apprised of the facts, declaring that we should be obliged to put an end to our days rather than give ourselves to these brutes. Luck and our courage alone saved us in our difficulty, for the Sub-Governor, being hand in glove with the doctor's friends, we could hope no good from him.

I was consumed with a lingering desire to see my child again. I longed to cover him with kisses. It was for him that I lived and endured my martyrdom. While, indeed, I had taken service with the Red Crescent, it was only because I foresaw that this institution was a stage by which I could reach my little Dico, whom I wished to snatch from the hands of Dr. Aouni. Despite the fact that the doctor had written to me in the month of June — the only letter I had received from him — that my child had died of dysentery, and that he

had been buried at Tchoroum, my maternal instinct told me that my baby lived. Nevertheless, doubts sometimes overcame me.

The Governor of Sivas, who was on his way to Caesarea, was invited one day to dine at the hospital. He chatted with me for a few moments, and seemed to take an interest in my fate. I told him my history, and begged him to save my child from Dr. Aouni.

Sezai Bey, the Governor's brother, was at this time Assistant Director at the Prefecture of Police. To him the Governor wrote, instructing him to order Dr. Aouni to surrender my child. Sezai Bey gave the necessary orders, and the police requested my mother, who lived at Constantinople, to come and claim the boy. Dr. Aouni refused to give him up. Police agents broke open his door and took the child by force. He was saved!

I longed more than ever to return to Constantinople and take my baby in my arms, but certain duties kept me at the hospital. Many convalescent patients needed my help. At this time the institution had fifteen hundred beds and was one of the most important hospitals behind the front. One day, Enver Pasha, passing through our town on his return from a review of the

troops, paid a visit to the hospital. As matron, I had to make one of the reception committee. After inspecting the different wards in which the soldiers were being treated, he congratulated me on their order and cleanliness.

Suddenly he asked me point blank whence I was.

"I am a Chaldean," I replied, "and my husband belonged to Trebizond."

Enver Pasha asked calmly what had become of him.

"Deported," I said.

"Have you never had any news from him?" he asked.

"No."

"No news?" he insisted.

"None."

Quite unmoved, and as if nothing had been said, he thanked me for my care of the soldiers, and left me L. T. 10<sup>22</sup> by way of reward.

Many of our young nurses at the hospital had been subjected to insult. Powerless to protest, and indignant, I resolved to leave. My resignation was not accepted at first and when I insisted, the authorities became irritated

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<sup>22</sup> \$50.00.

and handed me over to the Governor, who, instead of offering protection, wished to give me to his friends.

On account of my obstinate resistance, he had me thrown into prison on a charge of having become a member of a secret society. There I remained, without money and helpless, despairing of seeing my child again; for I did not expect to live. I became seriously ill.

A young tradesman named Membre Hissarian, a convert to Islam under the name of Djenab Chehabeddine, with the assistance of Dr. Demirdjian, whose other name was Mahmoud Chevket, found a way of sending me a bed and some money. Twenty-three days I had been in prison, when, aided by Arif Hikmet, formerly M. Archak Moscovian, they succeeded in obtaining me my liberty.

I returned to Caesarea, and with some companions hired a room in the Christian quarter. At first I suffered a little from privation, but a Lebanese priest, who had been exiled there, Father Antoun Hadji Boutros, helped me a great deal. He assisted my companions and myself to live, and, thanks to his efforts, I overcame my difficulties.

Still full of my plan for seeing my baby, I returned once more to the charge and forwarded request after request. At length, I demanded permission of the Ministry of the Interior to go, as I said, to see my relatives at Aleppo. It was Constantinople, however, I had in view. Being a Chaldean, the necessary permit was eventually sent me by the ministry, and I left Caesarea on the 17th April, 1918.

You know how I came to Aleppo, and left there with you for Constantinople, arriving on the 17th of June, 1918, a date ever memorable to me, in that it was the third anniversary of my separation from my darling Dico.

My martyrdom had been long and hard. In the deportations I lost many most dear to me. God had willed that I should be spared for the supreme task of saving my child from the hands of his kidnapper. Henceforward, I have but one object in life, and that is to bring up my son.

PART III



MAR SHIMOUN

## CHAPTER I

### *In Hakkiari and Persia*

Prior to the war, about 100,000 Assyro-Chaldeans lived in the mountainous region of Hakkiari, which is in the county of Van, on the frontiers of Persia and the Caucasus, but in Turkey. They lived there in semi-independence, for many generations, in comparative safety from the continual persecution of Islam, suffered by their brethren of the plains.

They lived under the administration of their chiefs who were known as Meliks, and whose form of government was extremely primitive. Over all was a supreme chief called Mar Shimoun, who lived at Kotchanes, a small town in the hills.

They were surrounded by Kurds, who continually fought between each other, for they are of many tribes, all of whom are hostile to Christians. They were, therefore, compelled to carry arms at all times, not only to impose respect, but for their very existence. This war-like life instilled in them a martial spirit, and they were

a very brave and virile race. The Turkish Government tried from time to time to subdue and disarm these people, but the soldiers of "The Sick Man" invariably returned decimated in numbers, and disarmed.

When war was declared, the Assyro-Chaldeans mistrusting the good faith of the Turk, and hoping the day had arrived when his rule would be broken, joyfully joined the ranks of the allies. In retaliation the Turks arrested all those of the race who were away from their mountain fastnesses at the time. Among them was the young brother of Mar Shimoun, who was in Constantinople, and him they executed.

For several months they were kept busy keeping at bay the regular army of the Turks which attacked them in numbers greatly superior to theirs.

They fought all the tribes of Kurds which the Turks hurled at them, and until the spring of 1915 defeated them in every instance; but in that year the Governor of Mossul, Haider Bey, gathered together an immense army in a last attempt to crush the Assyro-Chaldeans of the hills. His army was composed of 40,000 regular troops of the Turkish army reinforced by the massed tribes of the Kurds, who attacked from the south, and by an

auxiliary army of 20,000 regular troops who attacked from the north.

After several months of fighting against immensely superior numbers, our brave warriors were surrounded and cut off from all communication with the Russians, who being unable to break the blockade, could not send them supplies of any kind; so that before long their ammunition gave out and the country's food supply ran very low. The vanguard did actually manage to force the Turkish lines, and the world was once more a witness of what is described so graphically in the Bible; an entire people moving from the land of their birth to escape the oppression of the infidel. The Turks and Kurds fell upon them, and kept up an incessant guerilla warfare, never failing to kill any unfortunate child or woman who left the lines through fatigue or sickness, so that the people lost heart, and the lines of communication becoming broken, the enemy had little difficulty in splitting up the exodus into many parts.

Large numbers of the people were slaughtered, and the remainder, after terrible hardships and indescribable sufferings, reached the Russian lines on the Turko-Persian frontier, and joined their fellow citizens, the Assyro-

Chaldeans of Persia, who were on the plains of Ourmia, Salmast, and Khoy.

These plainsmen to the number of about 60,000 decided to join the allied army, and indeed 3,000 had been fighting with the Russians since the autumn of 1914. They fought under the command of Generals Tchernizaboff, Andrewiski, Siminoff, and Lewenowsiski until the year 1917.

When the Bolsheviki obtained control of Russian affairs, and discontinued the war against Turkey, the Assyro-Chaldeans were officially requested by the Allied Governments to take charge of the Turko-Persian front deserted by the Russians. This front extended from Serai to Bashkala, and from Oushnou to Soudjboulak.

The importance of this request can be the more easily appreciated when it is remembered that the object in view was the safety of the British army, which was now open to attack by the German and Turkish forces should they succeed in crossing the plains of Khoy, Ourmia and Saldous. The British lines at the time extended from Kirmanshah to Bagdad.

In six different engagements the Assyro-Chaldeans defeated the combined forces of the Germans, Turks and

Kurds, and by holding them in check enabled the British army to fortify their positions and establish lines of communication between Kirmanshah, Hamadan, Kasavine Enzeli. This they did with an army of 25,000 men, until Mar Shimoun with his principal leaders and assistants were killed by treachery.

Simko, the leader of the Kurds, invited Mar Shimoun to a discussion of peace terms, and on the appointed day he attended the conference with three hundred of the leading men of the Assyro-Chaldean army. Terms of a peace treaty were discussed and agreed upon, and the meeting broke up, apparently with the Assyro-Chaldeans the gainers by the pact.

As Mar Shimoun and his assistants were passing through the streets of the town the housetops were filled with people, and at a given signal, when the Assyro-Chaldeans least expected treachery, a fusillade belched forth upon them. Of the entire retinue only a few escaped to tell the story.

Maddened by the treachery of the enemy, the Assyro-Chaldeans were rash in their attacks upon the Kurds, and they captured many of their villages and holdings so that the Kurds were compelled to send reinforcements.

In time, however, their munitions and supplies fell short, and the repeated promises, made to them in messages brought by aeroplane from the British headquarters, not being fulfilled, the Assyro-Chaldean army experienced grave difficulties.

Until the 30th of July, 1918, they held out; but on that day they turned south with their families, and attempted to reach the British lines. The Kurds and Turks fell upon them, and fully one-half were killed during this terrible retreat.

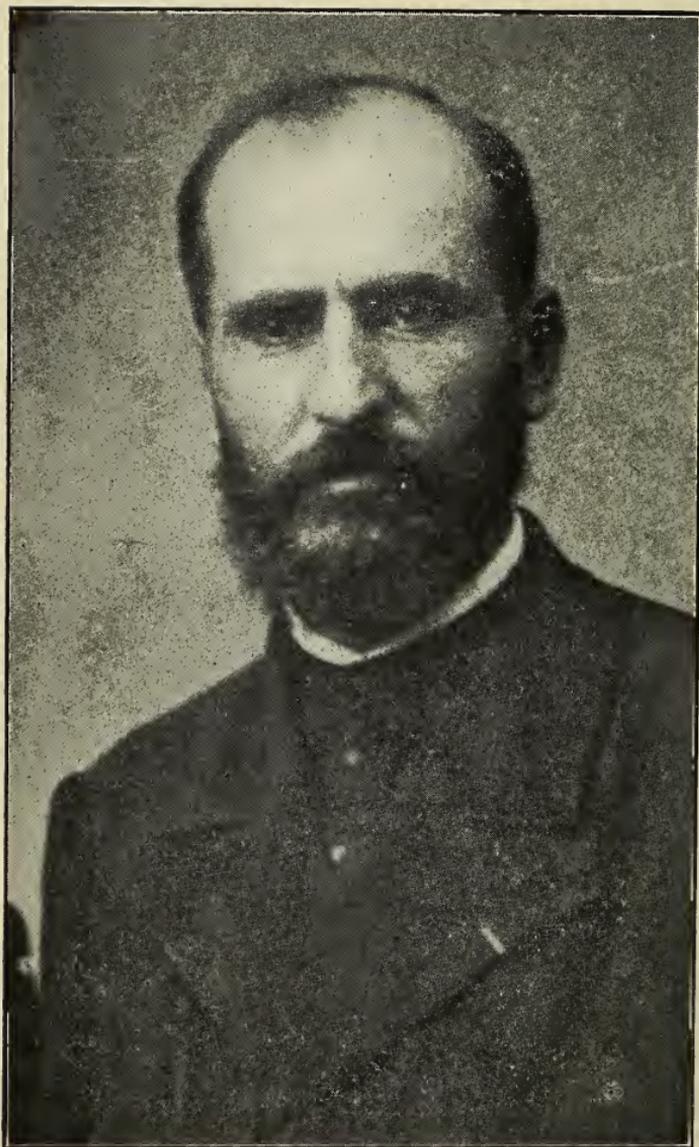
The British army advanced to meet them, and escorted the survivors in safety to Baguba.

Out of this entire nation which so warmly espoused the cause of the Allies, less than 50,000 reached Baguba, the remainder having either died on the battlefields or during the retreat.

Following the withdrawal of the Russian army, the Assyro-Chaldeans who had fled into Russia at the time of the first exodus, were reduced to the very lowest straits, and were in dire want.

In order to seek aid from the Allies, delegates were sent to Paris, and it was from one of these delegates—





THE REV. LAZAR GEORGES

the Rev. Lazare George, of Khosrova—that I obtained the following document :

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In the month of August, 1914, before Turkey entered the war, the tribes of the Kurds, the Beïzadés, Tchékaks and Harkâïs, urged by the Turks, attacked at different times the sunny plains of Ourmiah and Salmas, hitherto occupied by a Russian detachment formed of the three Regiments, the fifth and the seventh Caucasian *tirailleurs* and the Chirvan Regiment of the Imperial Guard. At the time, numerous proclamations were appearing in the town of Ourmiah, endeavouring to force the Russians, by means of threats, to quit the country.

In face of these facts General Dagoutchaëff and Colonel Krondpiatiéff, at the order of their Commander-in-Chief General Bakhitonoff, invited the Assyro-Chaldeans of the region to volunteer to assist the Russians in defending the Perso-Turkish frontier. This invitation was accepted instantly.

Towards the end of August there took place the battle of Sîry, a Chaldean village situated on a mountain, fought about twelve kilometres southwest of the town. In this battle, the Assyro-Chaldean volunteers, assisted by two

companies of Russians, put the Turks to flight and made seventeen prisoners, amongst them a Turkish officer grievously wounded. This left no doubt in our minds that Turkey had had the intention, even before the declaration of war, of attacking Russia. The same fact was revealed in the subsequent battles of Mavana, where Lieutenant Baioff and several Cossacks of the detachment were killed, Sangar, Djarbache, and Toura Dioudaé the Montagne of *Juifs*.

When Turkey officially entered into war with Russia in the month of November, the Assyro-Chaldeans were considerably worried as to their future.

#### 1915. *The First Flight*

On the 2nd of January, 1915, Enver Pasha, at the head of two Army Corps of Turks cut off the right wing of the Russian Army, south of Kars, and took possession of the town of *Sarikamiche* and the whole of the railway. The Russian detachment, which formed the left wing, received secretly the order to fall back on *Djoulfa*, unknown to the Christian inhabitants. The next day at dawn the countryside was completely evacuated. Our Assyro-Chaldean volunteers, attacked everywhere by the

Kurdo-Turks from the east, defended themselves valiantly under the leadership of their intrepid commander, *Raphaël Khan*.

From the direction of Urmia one heard the cries and lamentations of the Christians abandoned by the Russians, and left to the mercy of the Moslem fanaticism of the Persians, Kurds and Turks. About a third of our Christians from Urmia and Salmas had time to flee in the rear of the Russian army, and made towards the Caucasus mountains, when hundreds of women and children perished by the roadside. It was in the bitterest part of winter, and the cold, the snow and the mud rendered the roads impassable in many places. Mothers abandoned their children in order to be relieved of their burden; children, fallen into the snow and mud cried after their parents who were lost. A French missionary, Georges Decroo, Superior of the Lazarite Mission at Salmas, devoted himself entirely to the care of these poor refugees. On horseback and on foot, returning often many miles in the mud and in the snow, fetching bread and clothing to distribute among those in the worst plight, this brave and indefatigable priest gave

himself no rest, day or night, and at Djoulfa he sold his horse to buy bread for the refugees.

As for the Assyro-Chaldeans who had remained at Salmas and at Urmia, more than twelve thousand had been massacred by the Persian inhabitants and by the Kurdo-Turks. Fourteen thousand found refuge in the American Mission, and five thousand in the French Mission at Urmia, and remained there captive for four months, until the return of the Russian troops.

In this interval the greater part of our combatants died in the trenches. One hundred and sixty of our valiant volunteers fought for several days in the village of Gogtape where they were defending a population of more than 2,000 persons against 3,000 Kurds supported by both Persians and Turks.

It was then that Doctor Packard of the American Mission, accompanied by one of our native doctors, undertook to leave Urmia to intervene on behalf of the population of this village. He was preceded by the flag of the United States as he approached the Kurdish chiefs. As a result of his parley, our volunteers consented to lay down their arms, and to join the 2,000

Assyro-Chaldeans that the brave Dr. *Packard* led into his residence at Urmia amongst the other captives. Massacres, meanwhile were taking place at Gulpachan, Gogtape, Ada, Khosrowa and at Haftevan. Everywhere the houses were pillaged, several were burned and destroyed and the greater part of the schools and churches suffered the same fate.

At Khosrowa, a town of some 7,000 Chaldean inhabitants, the Kurds dressed themselves in sacred vestments, and paraded the streets on horseback, some in chasubles, some in copes, and one of them in surplice and stole, wearing even the Bishop's mitre on his long Kurdish head carrying the pastoral cross, in the midst of which profanations our martyrs were conducted to their death in groups of fifty to sixty persons. These things were done by the order of Djavdet Bey, son of Tahir-Pacha, who with all his staff occupied the French Mission of the Lazaristes at Khosrowa. In one of these convoys an old man of seventy-five, named *Isaac Terrâkh*, not being able to walk, the Turkish soldiers took him and placed him on the back of a priest, *Israel Bi-Sava*, and so led him to the place of his death where he was executed with

seven hundred others. The bodies were thrown into pits where they were torn by birds of prey.

The perpetrators of these horrors then returned to *Van* laden with rich booty plundered at Khosrowa, where Djavdet Bey boasted without shame to the Rev. Father Bernard Gormachtique, Superior of the Dominican Mission, that he alone had brought from Khosrovva both gold and precious objects worth more than \$125,000.

The village of Patavour was pillaged by the Kurds of Ismael Agha Simco who lived there during the occupation of the Turks at Salmas.

At Ourmiah more than 500 Assyro-Chaldeans, amongst them a Bishop and five priests, were brutally dragged by the Turkish troops to the French Mission in spite of the prayers of Mgr. Sontag, Apostolic-Delegate, and conducted to the Toura Dioudae where they were martyred.

At Gulpachan, more than one hundred and fifty young men were led to the village cemetery and shot by the Turkish and Persian soldiers. Three hundred persons, men and women with their children, were burned alive in the church at Ada.

So fanatical were the Mussulmans that they paid the

Turkish officers for the privilege of killing the Christians themselves.

Whilst the refugees were crossing the bridge over the river Araxe a woman, harassed with the fatigue of having a child on one arm and a heavy package of clothes on the other, and wishing to disembarass herself of the latter threw her load into the river. What was her dismay in perceiving that she had just thrown her son in place of her burden!

It was in the month of April, that is, over three months later when the Russian troops re-entered Salmas, and a little later Urmia. Immediately they gave orders for the burial of the Christian corpses throughout the country-side, and for cleaning the streets. At the same time they forced the Mussulmans to give up within twenty-four hours all the Christian women and young girls retained in their harems.

That part of our Assyro-Chaldean nation composed of several tribes governed by the chief called Meliks who, for some centuries, have led an almost wandering and autonomous life in the ravines and mountains in the vicinity of the Persian frontier, had often to sustain sharp attacks and disastrous conflicts with the Kurdish

tribes from the district of Hakkiari. Their quarrels, which arose, perhaps, out of a question of pasturage, or the ownership of flocks of sheep brought thither by one or the other, ended more often than not in bloodshed and the destruction of entire Christian villages.

These massacres were only arrested, in fact, much later, through the intervention of Russia and England.<sup>1</sup> At the commencement of the war, those of our tribes from the mountains of Turkey, took arms against the Turks at the request of the Russians. For more than four months from April 1915 these heroes sustained attacks from 10,000 Kurds, and fought heroically against the regular army of the Turks, which had come from Mossul in four battalions with artillery. The Assyro-Chaldeans were expecting reinforcements from the Russian Army Corps which had been promised them by General Tchernozouboff commanding the troops from Azerbeïdjan. That aid arrived too late, however, and a great part of the population from Tkhuma, Barwar, Amedea and from the neighbourhood of Zakho, Botan and Sairt were put to death. Those who survived strug-

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<sup>1</sup> In 1895, during the Christian massacre 55,000 Assyro-Chaldeans lost their lives.

gled valiantly against an enemy ten times their strength in numbers. Against 126,000 this small army defended a population of 47,000 and led them in safety to the plains of Urmia, Salmas and Khoy.

During this flight the intrepid Malik Khochaba from Tiari, seeing a large convoy of girls and young women whom the Turks were carrying off, took with him a handful of brave men, and dividing his forces attacked the Turks from two sides. In this encounter, this hero, commanding men as brave as himself, completely vanquished the Turks, and delivered from their grip 2,600 women and girls, whom they led back to the neighbourhood of Bash-Kale and Deir, where the 47,000 refugees were encamped. During this terrible fight, Malik Khochaba lost only six men.

On the day following this battle there Mar Awraham Chemounaïa, Bishop of Kotchanes, died. He was the brother of Nemrod Bey Chemounaïa, who with his sons, was assassinated through the intrigues of his own family. More than 70,000 Assyro-Chaldeans from Hakkari perished; partly by the terrible massacres, partly through fatigue and hunger, and through the different maladies inseparable from war.

On their arrival at Salmas, the state of the survivors was lamentable, and the Russians, authors of these tragedies, had little desire at first to burden themselves with these unhappy victims whom they had engaged in the war. It was again the brave Larapiste Decroo who ameliorated their sad lot. He it was who proclaimed everywhere against the Russians, telegraphed and wrote on several occasions to the Russian Grand Duke Nicolas, Viceroy of the Caucases, saying that these unhappy people had suffered through the fault of the Russians, and that it would be an injustice to abandon them at this juncture. He collected the sum of 70,000 roubles and so saved the people from famine.

The town of Khosrowa was strewn with corpses. Streets, gardens, pathways, fields, were filled with them. M. Decroo turned into a cemetery a large field near the church at Savra, where he had charge of a mission. The convent of the Sisters of Charity was full to overflowing with the dying.

One evening this brave missionary saw a young girl stretched in agony on the ground. He took her, placed her in the courtyard of the Sisters of Charity, and went to seek dead leaves for her to lie on, and to cover her

from the cold of the night. Scarcely, however, had he filled his arms with dead leaves, than he felt with his hands the cold bodies of two dead refugees, who had sought a bed in the leaves.

It would be impossible to recount all the horrors that overtook these starving wretches. Forced to eat even the cats and dogs of the village, they were glad to strip the trees of their bark to satisfy their hunger. Some months later the Russian Administration of the Red Cross took their case in hand, and managed to save the few remaining refugees.

### *Our Situation in 1916*

Towards the beginning of the year 1916, with the consent of Mar-Shimoun and the national council of Salmas, the Russian leaders and the French officers organized into groups the volunteers in the Assyro-Chaldean army, the right wing of which was commanded by David Shimoun-ayia, brother of Mar Shimoun, and the left wing by Agha Petros Elie.

This army crossed Bash-Kale and attacked the Kurdish chief from Hakkiari named Suto, the Intendant of Sheikh Abdul-Kadir. They defeated the Kurds and returned

with considerable booty in the shape of merchandise, sheep and cattle, which had belonged originally in 1914 to the Assyro-Chaldeans. This famous Suto, who came from the town of Ouramar, in the fertile country drained by the great Baba, one of the tributaries of the river Tigris, was in 1915 the Attila of Hakiari, and burnt and pillaged over forty villages of the Assyro-Chaldeans of Hakiari and put to the sword some 50,000 from Tekhuma, Tiari, Barvar, etc.

Some hundreds of Assyro-Chaldeans from Salmas and Urmia enlisted voluntarily in the Assyro-Chaldean army, and excelled in military exercises. All the Assyro-Chaldean battalions were formed by the commencement of 1917, from which date began the saddest era in the history of our nation, and that on account of the Russian revolution which destroyed the discipline of the soldiers, and rooted out patriotism from their hearts.

During the Russian revolution the whole of the Caucasian front wavered, from Khanikina to Ravandouze, Margavar, Targavar, Bash-Kale, Van, Erzeroum and Trebizond. It was at this time, moreover, that the Allied representatives arrived at Salmas and at Urmia in order to discipline the Assyrian army. When, in the

month of October 1917, the power of Kerensky fell into the hands of the infamous Bolsheviki, the new Russian leaders gave orders for the troops on the Caucasian front to return into Russia, saying that, so far as they were concerned, the war was over, and that their representatives had already surrendered at Brest-Litovsk. The hitherto brave and well-disciplined Russian soldiery were, at this stage, irrecongnisable. They became transformed into bandits. All the property of the State was abandoned, munitions, provisions and equipment alike. They fled in disorder, burning and destroying bazaars in their wave of anarchy, everything indeed which presented an obstacle to their return. I myself saw at the Persian town of Djoulfa a Russian soldier exchange his rifle with a Mussulman for a glass of wine. Another gave his horse for a small piece of *halva*.<sup>2</sup>

After the flight of the disorganised Russian army our Christians and our army remained surrounded by Persians, Kurds and Turks, all old and cruel tyrants and pitiless enemies of our Assyro-Chaldean nation. The English army in Mesopotamia was too far removed, and

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<sup>2</sup> Oriental sweetmeats.

the plight of our Armenian neighbours was equally as difficult as our own, so that there remained but two alternatives. Either we must follow the Russians and take refuge with all our nation in the Caucasus, or we must hold to our engagements with the Allies to defend the Caucasian front against the Turks, and live or die in the attempt.

For the first alternative, our national Assembly wished to quit Urmia and Salmas and to send all the Christians to the Caucasus, but the representatives of the Allied Powers deterred them. Thus Captain Gressi, acting on behalf of England; Lieutenant Gaspela of the French Military Mission, sent by his chief Colonel Chardigny, and Dr. Canjole, Chief Medical Officer of the French Military Hospital, acting on behalf of France, Dr. Sheidt, the American Vice-Consul, M. Nikitine, Russian Consul, and General Karpoff, who was stationed at Urmia with his staff more than 200 Russian officers, called together our National Assembly, composed of all our chief people under the presidency of Mar Shimoun, the leader of the Assyro-Chaldeans from Hakkiari, and asked them to undertake the defence of the Turkish front abandoned by

the Bolsheviks. Captain Gressi rose and said that he had just come from organising the Caucasus front, of which a part, from Trebizonde to Erzeroum, would be guarded by the Georgian army, from Erzeroum to Van by the Armenians, and from Bash-Kale, Salmas, Enzel, Wurmiah, and Suldonze to Savouch-Boulagh by the Assyro-Chaldean soldiers. To the latter he promised, should the armies be victorious, money, equipment, munitions, reinforcements and self-government. An agreement was drawn up and signed by all the representatives.

The Russians had left us eight guns and several machine-guns and ammunition. The French gave us 20,000 Lebel rifles, whilst several French officers, together with the few Russian officers who had remained behind, set about organising our Assyro-Chaldean army, the numbers of which had grown to more than 20,000. One half of the army was commanded by Agha Petrus Elie, and the other by the brave Malik Khochaba from Tiari.

The year 1918, full of glorious battles, was at the same time full of terrible distress, sacrifices and massacres for our people.

*The Massacres by the Persians*

Our Assyro-Chaldean nation accepted the demand of the Allied representatives, *without any political pact* to safeguard its future. She wished to serve the cause of the Allies unconditionally, and she entered into the war with a joyous heart.

Before commencing the recital of our military engagements, however, it would be as well to say a word on the treacherous treatment which we, as a nation, had received, from the most remote times, at the hands of the Persian government.

The Governor-General of Azerbeïdjan, like the Crown Prince of Persia, resided at Tabriz, the second largest town after Teheran. The Governor who administered Ourmiah and Salmas, inhabited for the greater part by Assyro-Chaldeans, would bribe his chief and, together with his satellites and paid servants, would periodically visit the districts under his charge and pillage the Christians, making them pay large fines without any cause, on merely trumped-up pretexts; putting them in prison and exacting from them large sums of money in order to impoverish and ruin them. He had, in other words, simply bought his appointment in order to amass wealth.

During the last century missionaries, first American then French, arrived in the country, and protected to a certain extent the Christians. This protection, however, did not put a stop to the fanaticism of the Mohammedans of Azerbeïdjan. On the contrary it redoubled the provocations and injustices of every imaginable kind against the Christians whom the Persians called *Guiavours* (infidels). At last these repeated injustices obliged our Christians to quit the country and scatter themselves in Russia, and elsewhere.

Thus, from day to day, the number of our Christians diminished in these parts, giving place to the Mussulman.

It often happened that bands of Kurds from the Turkish frontier would attack various Christian villages around Tiargavar, Margavar, Urmia and Salmas, pillaging, burning and massacring the inhabitants. The Persian government, not only did not seek to defend our Christian communities, although they were their own subjects, but even excited the Kurds to repeat their brigandage and atrocities against the Christians. On these occasions, so long as it concerned the Christians, the Persians, Kurds and Turks acted as one people and joined issue. All the while our people were ill-treated, plundered and put

to death by the Persians, before they fell victims to the Kurdo-Turks.

Let us now return to the commencement of the year 1918. The Governor of Urmia and Salmas, a man named Idjlal-ul-Mulk, perceiving the Allied representatives to be organising the Assyro-Chaldean army, began to send unfavourable reports on the situation to his commander at Tabriz. It was at this time that the Bolshevik leaders had given the order for the evacuation of the Caucasus front by the Russian troops, and that the Assyro-Chaldean army had given their pledge to the Allied representatives to take their place on the evacuated front. The Governor of Urmia, Idjlal-ul-Mulk, seeing his opportunity, sent for the members of the Assyro-Chaldean Committee and told them to lay down their arms, and not be deceived by the Allies, above all by the mad English. Our people replied that they had nothing against Persia, except that she appeared incapable of defending the Christians, even her own subjects, against the attacks of the Kurdo-Turks, and that the events and the massacres of 1915 were in themselves sufficient proof of this. The Governor replied that he himself would accompany them to Mossul and demand

the protection of Khalil Pasha. The chiefs of our nation, however, seeing through the ruse which was planned for their undoing, would not hear him, and refused to leave the Allies. It was then evident that the government of the province of Azerbeïdjan was associated with Turkey in giving aid to the German agents at Tabriz, who were working against the cause of the Allies. Thus, at the beginning of February, both our armies at Urmia and Salmas were attacked at the same time by Persian soldiers and Cossacks from Tabriz, belonging to the Azerbeïdjan brigade.

Mar-Shimoun wrote at this time two letters to the Governor of Urmia and the Governor-General of Azerbeïdjan at Tabriz, to be communicated to the Crown Prince of Persia. In these two letters Mar-Shimoun declared that he harboured neither suspicion nor hostility towards the government or the inhabitants of Azerbeïdjan, and that he would defend this nation, which had taken refuge on Persian soil, against the attacks of the Kurds and Turks. He asked of them hospitality for the winter, until the spring, when he would leave the country and return with his people to Russia or elsewhere.

For reply one saw every time four or five of our soldiers either despoiled of their arms or killed outright in the bazaars of Urmia. The Persians did not even stop at this; they collected *en masse* and surrounded the Christian quarters with the intention of massacring the people, in order to take their part in the holy war which had been proclaimed in Turkey. Seeing no other means of saving our Christian people from annihilation, the leaders of our army received the order to defend themselves. On the morrow the town of Urmia surrendered, and we were masters of the whole of the plain of Urmia. In the meanwhile Mar-Shimoun repaired to Salmas, ignorant of the design of the Governor of Azerbeïdjan, who had given secret orders to Ishmael-Agha-Simco, the terrible chief of the Kurdish tribe of Schakaks, to invite Mar-Shimoun under pretence of an offer of reconciliation in order to assassinate him. Simco, having succeeded in convincing Mar-Shimoun that he himself was a friend of the English and that he had undertaken to defend for them the Turkish front from Khanassour to Bach-Kalé, invited him to Kohné-Shaper to collaborate over the undertaking. Mar-Shimoun repaired thither with 300 horsemen. The moment, how-

ever, that he turned his back on Simco to mount his carriage, he and his valiant followers were brutally assassinated.

After the murder of Mar-Shimoun the government of Tabriz sent 4,000 infantry and 2,000 horsemen, hoping once and for all to finish off the Christians. To their surprise, however, they were completely beaten and were driven off in disorder.

Spring had just commenced, and the whole of the south of the Caucasus had recently become occupied by German and Turkish troops. Our army was thus surrounded on all sides by the bitterest enemies ten times their strength in numbers. They were forced to fight, at one and the same time, the Turks, the Kurds and the Persians. Salmas, after numerous battles, was no longer able to withstand the shock of Ali Ihsan's army, which alone numbered 12,000 regular soldiers. But a handful of the population of Urmia was able to escape; the rest, more than 9,000 in number, were massacred, stoned to death, sawn in two, steeped in petrol and burnt alive. All the Christian villages of the province of Salmas suffered the same fate; schools and churches were devastated and burnt to the ground; women and young girls

were carried off by these enemies of Christianity and retained in their harems.

At Diliman, several hundreds of women were stripped of their clothes and forced to march up and down the streets in groups. There they were given one hour's grace in which to become Moslem, the alternative being death. All immediately fell to praying for strength to die. All were martyred.

Other groups who had fled in the direction of Ourmiah were arrested on the way, the men shot, and the young women carried away. One little baby was seen playing with the blood which flowed from his mother's breast. Other little children, suffering from hunger in the valleys, climbed the hillsides and sought again their mothers lying dead by the wayside, astonished that they would not awaken.

Urmia sustained the brunt of the attacks from the Kurdo-Turks and the Persians for eight long months. After fourteen battles our little army at last beat the Turks, in spite of the superior numbers of the enemy, which were no less than ten times greater than their own.

The bravery of these sons of Assyria and Chaldea has been recognised by the Allies and by the entire world.

The enemy himself has learnt to respect this ancient nation, oppressed though it has been for centuries. For eight months our nation served as an advanced-guard to the Allies in the north-west of Persia, repulsing the attacks of Kurds, Turks and Persians. For a year and a half they were strategically an aid to the British, who, during this time, were moving across Persia from Kirmanshah to Hamadan in the direction of Baku.

Towards the 10th of January of this same year, 1918, an English aeroplane brought us a letter in which the Commander-in-Chief of the British troops in Mesopotamia said, "We are aware of all your exploits and your bravery against the Turks. Resist yet three or four days more, and we will arrive with help. . . . We are at Sahin, Kalé, and Bidjar. . . ." Two weeks passed without any indication of the promised help, and during this time we were attacked from the north by Ali Ihsan Pacha with his 12,000 soldiers, from the east by Kheiri Bey with 8,000 Turks, from the west by the Kurds, and again in the east by the Persians commanded by the famous Majddul-Saltané, who was actually a prisoner of the English.

Our General, Agha Petros, then took with him 1,500 horsemen, overcame the forces of Kheiri Bey at Suldouze and turned in the direction of Sahin-Kalé, beyond which lay the British army. Two days later, on the 2nd August, the remainder of the army, worn-out, decimated, without munitions, again beat the Turks towards the east of Urmia and fell back with more than 80,000 men, women and children in the direction of Hamadan where other British troops were known to be. The Christians who remained at Urmia, to the number of 16,000, were massacred by the Mussulmans of the country and by the Turks. Amongst these martyrs were Mgr. Sontag, the Apostolic-Delegate, the Bishop Thomas Audo and several priests. Some hundreds of women and young girls were carried off by the Persians and the Kurdo-Turks, under whose power they must still be. The Sisters of the French school at Urmia, having taken refuge in the church of the Mission, were dishonoured in the very sanctuary itself, by the Persian soldiers from Archad-Himayoun. Dr. D. Israel, a member of our National Committee, was hanged at Urmia by the order of the Turkish Commandant Kheiri Bey, who moreover, shot all our wounded who were lying at the American hos-

pital, in spite of the efforts and protestations of Dr. Packard. The French military hospital, which at that time was under the authority of the Chief Medical Officer, Colonel Caujole, who, however, had had to leave Urmia some time before the arrival of the Turks, was completely despoiled by the Persian Mussulmans from Tabriz. They took away by force from the French all their goods, arms and gold.

Thus the Persians from the province of Azerbeidjan were openly against the Allies and were ranged on the side of the Turk. Their famous Majd-ul-Saltane, who on two occasions cut off the retreat of our unhappy refugees, telegraphed from Miandal to Tabriz that he had that day sent to hell 2,000 *guiavours* (Christians). On the following day that despatch was published in the paper "Tadjaddud," the official organ of the social-democratic party at Tabriz. This same Majd-ul-Saltane surrounded at Sahin-Kale 3,000 refugees, all of whom would have been murdered but for the timely arrival of the brave Colonel Azaria Tamraz with a handful of horsemen, who thus saved them from certain death.

More than a half of our Christians perished from fatigue, hunger and thirst during this unhappy flight

from Ourmiah to Hamadan. The comforter and guide of the refugees at this time was Dr. Sheidt, the American Vice-Consul. Unfortunately this man, so helpful and powerful, succumbed on the march and died at Sahin-Kalé.

At Hamadan the Anglo-American committees set about succouring our scattered and worn-out refugees. About 52,000 were concentrated at Bakouba, not far from Bagdad. The remainder were scattered about in the different villages of Persia, Kirmanshah, Hamadan, Kazvin, Becht, and Tabriz. 20,000 were in the Caucasus; that is to say, 7,000 at Tiflis, 5,000 in the surrounding villages as far as Kontaïs, 2,000 at Elisa-Vetpol, 6,000 in the villages of Erivan. All these refugees were from Urmia and Salmas and from the mountains of Turkey. More than 30,000 found refuge in the north of the Caucasus at Vladicaucasus, Armavir, Rostow, Novorossik and Ekatherinadar.

The sufferings our refugees passed through are beyond imagination. Their numbers diminished day by day. Without shelter, warm covering or hot food, such contagious diseases as malaria and typhus made terrible

ravages amongst them. None dared to think of the numbers to which they would be reduced before they were able to return, if ever, to their respective hearths.

For myself, as a military chaplain in the Russian detachment at Azerbeïdjan, I was an eye-witness of all the horrors and atrocities committed by the Turks. Fourteen of my own family, including my mother, fell victims to massacre or disease.

The Mussulmans of the country, after having pillaged my home, destroyed it. My sister Anna, having seen her husband Joseph, her son John, her brothers-in-law James, Lazarus, Nicholas, Thomas and Issa, her cousins Paul Warda, Joseph Basile, and Mary, and her aunt Rachel shot before her eyes, was led captive by the Turks from Salmas to Urmia, and from there returned with other captives to Khosrowa, where she received help and succour from a Kurdish chief from the neighbourhood of Salmas who happened to be a friend of the family.

The following is a letter sent to the Abbé Decroo from Tauris by the hand of M. Jean Djoumma, a Chaldean of Khosrowa.

“Tauris, 3rd May, 1919.

My dear friend,

The recent events of 1918 have at last forced us to abandon Salmas, and to depart from Urmia. The wise M. Miraziz, . . . as well as almost all the inhabitants of Khosrowa and Patavour, have gone to the Mission under the protection of Cacha Taddeus.

We commenced our last flight at five o'clock in the evening, the Turks and Kurds not daring to raid the evacuated districts until four o'clock in the morning on the following day. Learning of our precipitated flight they set out to pursue us with all their force. We first came into touch on the road leading from Tchimani to Kabagh-Tapé, near Ali-Abad, a little village off the main route. There they massacred more than 500 persons, principally those who had lost their way in the darkness in the Karassiuvi near Dapdapi. Amongst the killed was Youhanna Shamasha, of the Bishop's suite, in whose *droga*<sup>3</sup> were all the Bishop's possessions and those of Casha Ishoo, together with the sacred vestments of the church. Everything disappeared. Amongst the other massacred were the following: Paul Sina (my

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<sup>3</sup> A two wheeled wagon.

neighbour), Petrus Kadou, Orika Murada with his wife and child Isaac and his son-in-law Paul Tchoban, Paul Badal Hassan with his father and his mother, Joseph Panos with his brothers Lazar and Thomas and all their families. . . .

A second band of Kurds had in the meanwhile set out by the mountain path in order to cut off the road to Guiadug, and they succeeded only too well. All the *gardouni*<sup>4</sup> and *arabani*,<sup>5</sup> more than 600 in number, were overthrown. The only bridge that spanned the river was destroyed. All was lost! The cries of our poor people were heard in the mountains like the sound of thunder.

Many were later massacred at Guiadug, amongst them Paul Kianun and his family, Peter Ishmael, Babé Tir-rakh, etc. Before Djabbal we were saved from a similar massacre by a great storm, which broke over the country.

Arrived at Urmia, we heard in the distance the sound of the guns of the Turks, which were firing from the mountains of Syria. The army, just arrived from Salmas, immediately left again to take up a defensive

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<sup>4</sup> Wagons.

<sup>5</sup> Carriages.

position. Happily the Turks retired. From the four villages of Salmas, over 1,100 persons had reached Urmia, and of this number 700 found refuge in the house of Mgr. Sontag, who had great confidence in Archad-Himaïoun. Yet the latter proved to be the first to fire on the Delegate.

The cause of our flight was Agha Petrus, who had written to Mar-Shimoun at Salmas, advising him to commence the attack on the Turks, who had retired on Kara-Tape, and promising that he would reinforce him with 3,500 men. The attack began. Agha Petrus came two days later with only 300 men. Arrived at Salmas from Schakar-Yazi, he retook the road to Urmia, whilst Mar-Shimoun's men advanced steadily.

We rested at Urmia a month and thirteen days. On the 18th July we again retreated towards Suldouze, Bidjar and Hamadan, from which place we were advised by the British to make for Bagdad. During the night I took my party and regained the highway leading to Kazvin and Teheran. The march from Urmia to Teheran lasted 48 hours, during which time we lost many women and children, who fell out by the roadside and had to be left. Our doctor David died at Bidjar.

M. Sheidt, the American Vice-Consul, died at Sahin-Kale, where the terrible Madjd-ul-Saltane with his band of Turks had massacred over 2,000 persons. It was from this place that he had telegraphed his despatch, 'I have to-day sent to hell 2,000 *guivours*.'

This Madjd-ul-Saltane was finally arrested at Batoum by Father Georges. It would be too long to tell it all in detail, but it is a romance more interesting than that of Telemachus.

I am sending you with this letter a list of those who set out with me from Urmia, and are now either with me here or at Tiflis, and another list of those who are still alive and are at Khosrowa. Those whose names you do not find have either died or have been massacred.

Our Bishop whom we all thought had disappeared with the Turks, is said to be actually at Diarleetris. With him there are four priests.

I was very glad to receive news of M. Franssen. I have heard that my sister Badji is dead. On arriving here I also learnt that my mother had died. There only remains Victoria, my niece, poor child!

Mira Yacoub Zacharia died at Teheran. He always said that he intended to set out for Salmas, even though

it meant travelling on foot during the winter time, and now unhappily he is dead. The wife of Shimoun Visvissou and that of Jacob Issa-Khan died also at Teheran. I intend to leave for Salmas with my own people as soon as safeguard is assured us by the Allied consuls. I hope that this will be within a month.

The relations between Simco and Father Stephan are good, but one cannot say whether they are not merely superficial. To-day we received a letter from Bakouba in which our Christians announce their intention of returning to Urmia with an army of 14,000 Chaldeans and Armenians, under the command of the British. There are at Bacouba 160 persons from Salmas, men, women and children. The Mussulmans at Urmia fled, I hear, as soon as they heard of the approach of the British troops.

Michael Nicholas Beïzadé died at Cazvin, whence 80 people from Salmas set out yesterday for Tauris. . . .

Mahmed-Ali Khan has been murdered by the Armenians, his own subjects from Dirichki, and Simco has married Mahmed's daughter Saëd-Lachker. Ahmed Agha, brother of Simco, is living at Gulizan.

You know all the horrors suffered by our Christians during the massacres. Our women were burned alive, others were sawn to pieces, men, women and children were crucified or hacked to death. So great indeed were the horrors that the barbarous Turks were astonished to find at Urmia Mussulmans more barbarous than themselves. Bishop Thomas Audo, a French missionary in Chaldea, and M. Dinkha were led naked through the streets of Urmia before being martyred. My heart is torn, and I cannot tell you all the cruelties and the different tortures invented by the Mussulmans for our thousands of martyrs. . . .

Au revoir!

JEAN DJOUMMA."

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On the 20th of March, 1919, I addressed a personal note from Tauris to Ismaël-Agha Simco, the chief of the Kurdish tribe of Shakaks. I advised him, to look well to himself, as I intended coming to see him. I reminded him incidentally that he must know that Constantinople was now in the hands of the Allies. I added a prayer that he would urgently care for the many women and

children who still remained captive at Urmia and Salmas, and besought him to defend them from the grip of the Persian Mussulmans, if he did not want his little affair spoilt by the Allies. Simco replied on the 14th April, but I have since received, on the 10th May, the following letter :

“ Very dear friend,

After having offered you my most cordial salutations, with the hope that you are in perfect health, I hasten to tell you that I have received your honoured letter of the 20th March, duly and in good time. I am truly glad that you intend to come to Salmas to visit me, and I pray to reply at your earliest convenience to inform me on what day you may be leaving Tauris, in order that I may send my horsemen to meet you. Come, however, as soon as it is possible for you to do so. In the meanwhile I beg you to believe that I am guilty of no crime.<sup>6</sup>

You know that we, from the days of our ancestors, have hated these Persian infidels, in whom I admit I have been deceived. On your coming I will show you that I am in no way to blame. I have never

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<sup>6</sup> Presumably in connection with the assassination of Mar-Shimoun

forgotten the benefits and the kindness that you and your brother have ever shown towards me.

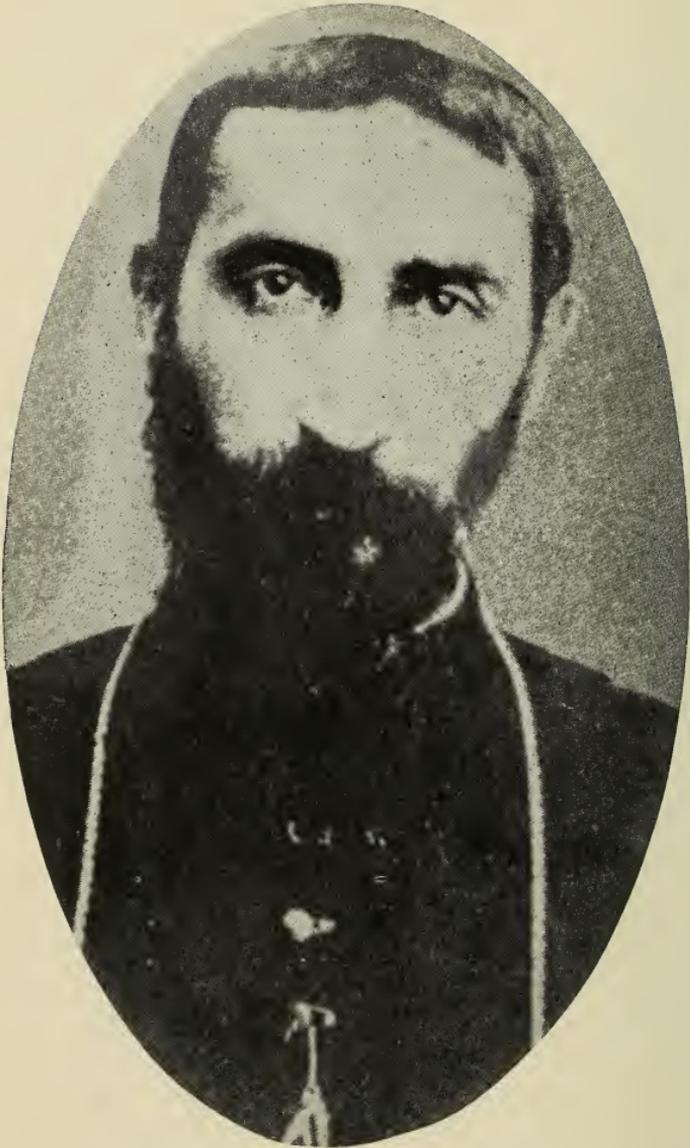
I have brought together all your Christians in one place, and have placed them under guards so that no one shall molest them. I have helped them all I could, and you are free to write to them. As for your sister Anna, do not worry on her account. I have helped her with money, and she lacks nothing, and is well. Do not allow yourself to have any doubts as to her welfare.

Although this letter must necessarily be brief, I am glad to send you this good news.

Believe me,

Your very dear friend,

ISMAËL SALAR-EL-ACHAIR."



THE RT. REV. PIERRE AZIZ, BISHOP OF SALMAS

## CHAPTER II

### *The Experience of the Rt. Reverend Petros Aziz, Chaldean Bishop of Salmas*

I received a letter from The Rt. Rev. Suleiman, Archbishop of Diarbekir, written near the close of the year 1918, in which he told me that on Wednesday, the 20th of November, the Bishop of Salmas, Pierre Aziz had arrived at his house.

He was accompanied by five priests, five women and one child, all of whom were Chaldeans from Persia. He stated that they were in a lamentable condition owing to the hardships they had been forced to undergo, and that, though alive, the ravages wrought by hunger, thirst and exposure were only too apparent.

He said that they had been imprisoned for two months in Persia, and had then been deported, being forced to cover on foot the entire distance from Urmia to Diarbekir which took them 57 days.

They arrived in rags, without covering of any kind for their feet or heads, and infested with vermin.

“After having had them medically treated,” the Archbishop wrote, “we provided them with clean linen; and

they are now in the Bishop's house awaiting an opportunity to go to Mosul. We are anxious to clothe them decently before sending them on, but the linens we gave them were borrowed from poor people who happened to have a little, and other garments we have absolutely none. Moreover we really have not the food these poor, creatures should have.

I regret to tell you that the poor Bishop of Urmia, Thomas Audo, who was shot in the face, through the cheek, by a Mohammedan has succumbed to his injury and has died from blood poisoning."

When the Patriarch came to Paris last February (1920), I crossed from London to see him, and had the honor of meeting the Bishop of Salmas, who accompanied him on his mission to Europe. He visited London with the Patriarch.

During this visit he told me all about his experiences in Persia, and upon my request gave me the following chapter, which I publish here with his permission.

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I have limited myself in this memoir to the description of the last massacres at Salmas and Urmia. To tell the story of all the misfortunes this sad war has caused us, would be to write a volume. I have, therefore, mentioned neither our first

tragic flight of January fourth, 1915, nor the massacre of fifty-six Christians of my diocese and their priest who were not able to flee with us. I am ignorant of the total number of those massacred at Urmia; but do know that eleven of our Catholic priests were killed there.

I have written here only that of which I have been a witness.

The Christians, who took flight on the eve of the Turkish occupation of Urmia, and who went to Bakouba, near Bagdad and to Hamadan, knew nothing of what followed their departure. The Christians who remained at Urmia were all killed.

It is needless to state that both Urmia and Salmas are in ruins.

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When the Turks occupied Salmas on the 21st of June, 1918, all the Christians of the province fled towards Urmia. Being their Bishop, I went with them. I rode on horseback, and my baggage was in my carriage.

Some Kurds caught up with us. They killed both my servant and my coachman, and took possession of my baggage.

Others of our Christians from Urmia to the number of several thousands were surprised by the Kurds of Ismail Agha, otherwise known as Simko, who exterminated them all.

At Salmas, Ali Ihsan Pasha ordered massacred two Lazaristes; one of my priests, who was with them; and

all the men, women and children, except the young women and girls who had been previously carried away by Persian nobles. A certain Temour Agha, an intimate friend of Simko, was the moving spirit of these abductions.

A month after our flight to Urmia, to be exact, on the 31st of July, 1918, the city was occupied by the Turkish army. The previous evening, the Assyro-Chaldeans and the Armenians with all the refugees fled in the direction of the camp of the English armies.<sup>1</sup>

But a number of us remained behind, including Bishop Sontag, Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Thomas Audo, Chaldean Archbishop of Urmia, and myself, the Bishop of Salmas, a great number of our priests and almost a thousand people. We all took refuge at the Delegation, which is at the same time the mission of the French Lazaristes.

Amongst us were also a number of Mussulman families of Urmia, who had taken refuge at the mission since February, although hostile to the Christians. Bom-

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<sup>1</sup> Namely the Assyro-Chaldeans of Mar-Shimoun, the Armenians of Van and almost all of our Christians from Urmia and Salmas.

barded by the batteries of the Chaldean army, they had escaped from the hot pursuit of their enemies and sought refuge in the foreign missions of the Americans and French. The Delegate hoped that the kind hospitality that he had given, and the numerous services he had rendered to these refugees, all notables of the town, would one day be useful to the Christians.

Among these Mussulmans, was a certain Persian functionary, called Arshad Humayoun, a fanatic and very wicked. I think he was Chief of Police at Urmia. On the day when his co-religionists resolved to massacre the Christians, whilst the streets were resounding with the howls of the Mussulmans encouraging each other to the Holy War,<sup>2</sup> this man and his suite arrived at the French Mission. He decided that if the Mussulmans succeeded in their design, this house would be his share. If they did not succeed and the Christian army gained the victory, he would be safe from all danger. In time, Archad Humayon learnt all the secrets and hiding places of the mission house.

Sly and deceitful, he swore by the Koran that if ever the mission were menaced by the Turks he was ready to

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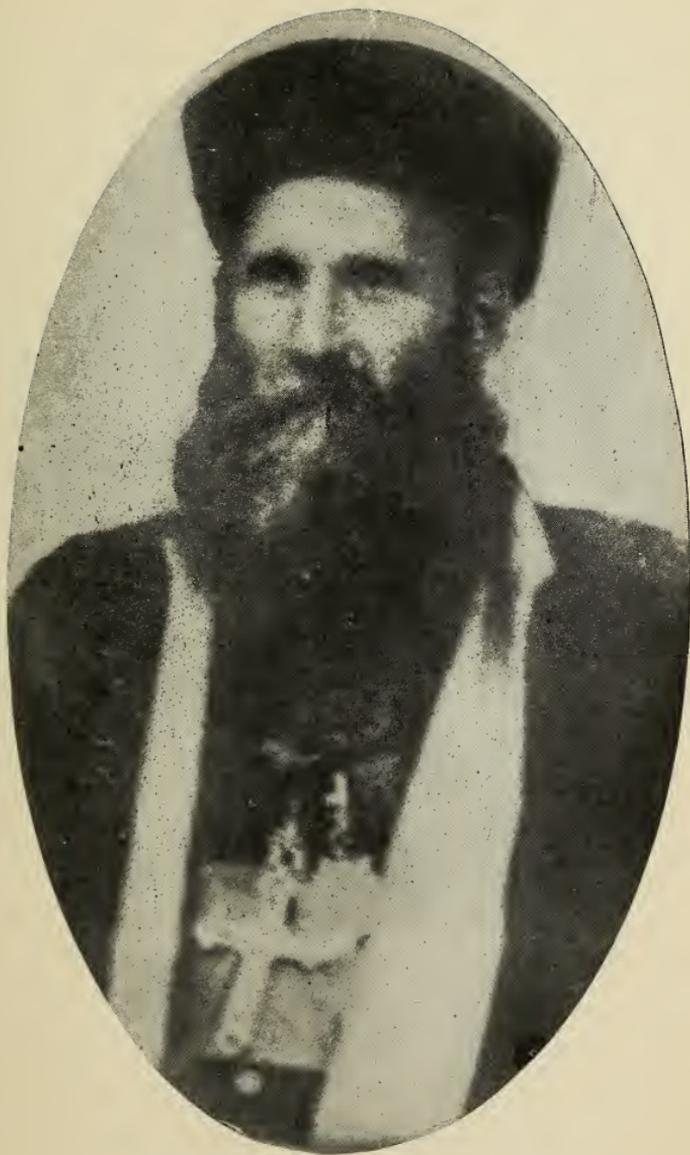
<sup>2</sup> The Jihad.

save it at the price of his blood. Yet it was he who was the cause of the massacres.

When the Fourth Corps of the Turkish army, commanded by Salah-Eddin Pasha, prepared to enter Urmia, the "Chettas" arrived first as scouts under the command of a certain Saleh Effendi.

Now it was that Arshad Humayoun hastened to find the Persian Governor of Urmia and had him grant him a party of his men to take possession of a certain house full of armed and dangerous Armenians. He meant the French mission where we were and where he had just been.

We three Bishops were assembled in the room of the Apostolic Delegate on the ground floor of the house. Breakfast had just been served. Suddenly, a commotion was heard at the door. The Delegate left the room to find out what was happening. At once we heard two shots, and two of Arshad Humayoun's servants came to inform us that the Delegate had been killed. It was they, themselves, who had assassinated him by the orders of their master, as was certified by some women who, having been in the courtyard of the mission, had been in a position to see it all.



THE RT. REV. BISHOP OF URMIA

At the same time, Father Dinkha, Lazarist, was massacred at the door of another house, where for six months he had kept, by the order of his superior, some Mussulmans who had taken refuge there to escape from the Armenians.

Soon Arshad Humayoun himself appeared. We reminded him of the promises he had made to come to our aid in such circumstances. But, instead of fulfilling his word, he ransacked the house from top to bottom, searching for every bit of money we might possess, and all that the Chaldeans of Salmas, of Urmia and elsewhere had committed to our trust.

He had hardly gone, carrying off his booty, when a Persian from the village of Balar entered and demanded money. Archbishop Audo advanced to protest with him. The villain took aim and fired and the Bishop fell. As for myself, to escape death, I had to give up my pectoral cross, my ring and my purse.

Then came Saleh Effendi to ascertain on the spot if there really were Armenian rebels there, as he had been informed by Arshad. We implored him to save us. He promised, but he also demanded money. One of the priests with us promised it to him if he would accompany

him to the house of a notable Mussulman where all his belongings were stored. Whereupon we all went out together from the French Mission, Archbishop Audo, whom we thought dead, arising and accompanying us.

Arrived at our destination, Saleh Effendi went in with the priest and left us in the hands of four Kurdish soldiers. The latter commenced to torture us in the hope of extracting money. They tore out our beards and began to lash our heads with a whip. They cut off one of Father Paul Sliwa's ears. And me they promised my life if I would return with them to the French Mission and give them anything that might still be there. Two Kurds went with me.

At the mission, a horrible sight met our view! In the courts, the corridors and the rooms, a crowd of infidels, men and women, armed with guns and sabres were murdering men, women and children, after having completely stripped them. They did not shoot them, but cut them down with sabres and stiletos.

The few individuals who escaped informed us later that my secretary had been knocked down by blows of a cudgel. Having first stripped off his clothes, they tore his beard so violently that a piece of flesh was torn

out. They finished him with blows on the head with a mace.

The young girls were carried off, Archad Humayoun reserving the prettiest for himself.

It was in the middle of these horrors that I arrived at the French mission. Everything was pillaged, and I could find nothing to offer to the Kurds, to whom I made excuses. Their fury was about to burst, when, happily, a Turkish officer, a certain Zuhdi Bey, arrived and asked me who I was. I replied that I was the Bishop, originally from Mossoul. "I know Mossoul," he replied, and began to speak Arabic. The Kurds dared not ill-treat me before an officer.

I implored the latter to save me. He invited me to follow him, and we went out to rejoin the companions we had left at the Mussulmans' gate. We met Saleh Effendi, who ordered Zuhdi Bey to conduct us before the Commandant.

They made us walk for two hours along the roads with bare heads and feet; and, to make us keep up with the chief, who rode before us, they drove us on with blows of their whips and the stocks of their rifles. The poor Archbishop was exhausted.

The Persian Governor of the town, Idjlal-Elmoulk, before whom they conducted us, did not even deign to look at us, as we squatted in the courtyard at the foot of a wall, eating a morsel of bread we had begged on the way.

An hour later, they put us in prison, and we passed an infernal night, lying on the pavement.

Next day, they took us before the Commandant. There we found three others of our priests and a hundred Christians. The Commandant ordered us to be imprisoned.

Archbishop Audo was taken to the American hospital outside the town, his condition being very grave.

During our detention, the massacres continued, for the Turks had granted three days and nights to the Persians to take their revenge on the Christians, and every night the whole week we could hear the noise of the carts carrying off the bodies which were thrown into ditches to hide them.

In prison, they gave us only enough bread to assuage our hunger. The examinations began. Against me they could allege nothing very serious except this: that Father L'Hotellier, Lazariste, had said that I had fled with my

secretary to escape from the Turks, and that therefore I must be culpable to be obliged to fly. I replied that in my position as Bishop I was obliged to stay with my flock, and since my people took refuge at Urmia, I was obliged to follow, and that I was myself a Turkish subject. Besides, I had another reason for undertaking this journey, I had to consult the Pope's representative, residing at Urmia, to receive his instructions. When I mentioned the name of the Delegate, Bishop Sontag, they questioned me about his murder and the pillage of his house. The judge, Akram Bey, asked me the most minute details about this affair; and next day arrested Archad Humayoun and his servants.

Finally, the order was given to transport all Christian prisoners to Salmas. We were in all five hundred persons.

After an hour of forced marching, we arrived at a village, where they made us encamp for the night, in a field close to the tents of the Turkish soldiers. We had neither beds, nor coverings and exhausted with fatigue and hunger, suffered from exposure.

The next morning, we were preparing to begin our march, when a telegram arrived from Urmia, ordering my priests and myself to be returned there. We were

needed to give testimony in regard to the money, stolen from the Delegate.

Again, therefore, we were imprisoned at Urmia, and from that time on, we had no more news of our companions, the other prisoners. At one time we heard they were at Salmas, helping with the wheat harvest, and at another that they had been deported to Van.

Mgr. Audo had remained at the hospital. Although he received medical attention, he was ill-treated by the soldiers, who struck him on the head and otherwise maltreated him, so that when one day he came back to prison, he was a pitiable sight. Too ill to stay with us, he was taken back to hospital, where a few days later he expired.

One day an officer of high rank visited us. Learning that I was originally from Mosul, he spoke to me in Arabic and asked the cause of our detention. I explained our case. He exhorted me to present a petition to the Council of War that I might prove my innocence and demand my liberty. Pretending that I was ignorant of the Turkish language, he invited me to make it in Arabic, and he would himself translate it. I learned

later that this officer was an Arab of Damascus, named Ibrahim Edham Bey, and that he was Chief of Staff. My petition made a good impression. I asked to be sent to Tiflis or Taurus, and the commandant promised Edham Bey to send us to one or other of these towns.

But affairs dragged on slowly and the promise was not fulfilled. We learned at last, to our consternation, that they were sending us to Van.

A certain Ahmed Bey, originally of Egypt and whose acquaintance we had made in prison, gave us a letter of introduction to his friend, Adham Fazly Effendi, a man of considerable influence at Van. Ahmed Bey wrote to his friend,

“I recommend to you these reverend and learned persons. They have rendered great services to the Musulmans of whom they have saved many thousands from being massacred by the Armenians. You will, therefore, do all in your power for them.”

The Governor of Van, Haidar Bey, refused to receive us and assigned us as our habitation a village three hours distant from the town, where the Armenian prisoners were.

As we could not remain one night at Van, it was impossible to deliver my letter to Adham Fazly Effendi. The officer who guarded us, questioned us most minutely on our affairs, and in turn we asked him if he knew Adham Fazly Effendi.

“I know him very well,” he said to us, “what do you want with him?”

“We have a letter for him from Urmia.”

Great was our joy when he said laughing that he was Adham Fazly in person. We gave him the letter, and from that moment we became the object of his care.

He was the chief of the prison guard established in the village. Immediately, he ordered the best house prepared for us, offered us tea and furnished us with everything that we needed. He spoke a little literary Arabic and was delighted to converse in the language of the Koran and even to hear me recite some verses of it by heart.

But this did not last long as five days later, came the order to transport the prisoners to Diarbekir. We were obliged to be of the number. Adham Effendi accompanied us as far as Bitlis and procured for us every comfort possible. In the boat he installed us in the

best place and at Tatuan he provided us with a tent, and put two policemen at our disposal.

He did more. Whilst we were waiting for the beasts, which were to carry us to Bitlis, he preceded us in order to choose a suitable habitation. Indeed, he prepared the functionaries for our reception that everywhere we were received with benevolence. Adham Efendi was unwilling to leave us until he had confided us to another person as well disposed towards us as himself. This man was a Christian. He was Dr. Joseph Neema, of Beyrouth, a member of the Turkish ambulance.

We left Bitlis in company with the Armenian convoy. On the way, a great number of these unfortunates, especially the women and children, fell dead of exhaustion, and the road was strewn with corpses.

While we slept at the quarters of the soldiers before arriving at Garzan, the guards whom the governor had given us, took to flight, carrying off a great part of the baggage. The last part of the journey was made on foot, and at Garzan, we heard the news of the Armistice.

When we arrived at Diarbekir, we found our Chaldean Archbishop, The Right Reverend Suleiman Sabbagh. He gave us an enthusiastic welcome, furnished us with

clothes and food and gave our invalids all the medical comforts they needed. In spite of his extreme poverty, he showed the greatest liberality.

At last, thanks to the exertions of our Chaldean Patriarch, we were enabled to reach Mossul, where we arrived on March second.

