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SEND TO THE PUBLISHERS

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In the Realm of Higher Things

Christians Slain; Mission Burned in Turks' Empire

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Slowly the Christians of America are waking up to a realization that a crisis without precedent is upon the historic work of the American Board and Presbyterian Missions in Turkey and upon the ancient Christian churches, which for centuries have survived on this historic soil. Interest in all other mission fields is for the moment eclipsed by the amazing news from the most romantic of all mission lands, that on which the drama of Revelation itself was enacted.

Fears for the safety of American missionaries are subordinated by the news, first given to the world in this column, and later corroborated by the American ambassador, that the worst anti-Christian atrocities since the Middle Ages have been perpetrated by the Turkish government upon the Armenian Christians. Jews and other Oriental Christians are scheduled to share a like fate.

The heroic part that American government officials, and American missionaries, are bearing in Turkey at the present time is beginning to leak out by way of the Boston offices of the American board and otherwise.

Wiping Out a Nation.

Even the official statement of Ambassador Morganthau that since last May 350,000 Armenians have been slaughtered or starved has failed to penetrate the horror-calloused and war-paralyzed consciousness of Christendom. A year ago the plight of Belgium aroused the world to unparalleled acts of mercy; but if the worst that was ever feared for Belgium had come true, conditions would not be at all comparable with the atrocities that have befallen the Armenians. And the end is not yet; unless some agency intervenes, the whole nation is to be wiped out—and the Jews in Turkey are to follow.

Clear light upon the present mental condition of the world is shed by this news from Turkey. Middle-aged persons remember the spasm of horror that convulsed civilization in 1895-96, over the news of the Armenian massacres. Then it was that Gladstone, flinging official etiquette to the winds, branded the Sultan as "Abdul the Damned"—which showed a poor knowledge of Arabic, but a clear understanding of the heart of Christendom. Yet the total deaths of Armenians during that massacre amounted to not more than 50,000 persons; already, with the climax of the present holocaust of blood seemingly not reached, the number of Armenian victims of Turkish ferocity is seven

times as great. Relatively little impression has been made as yet upon civilization, because the war has seemingly exhausted humanity's capacity for extreme emotions.

America to the Rescue.

The time has not yet come to tell in full the thrilling story of what the American missionaries and American officials have done during recent months for the succor of persecuted people in Turkey. The American ambassador has set a new mark for diplomatic efficiency in altruistic service. To say that he has incarnated in himself the best traditions and ideals of Americanism is to state the case conservatively.

Some of the consuls have likewise done heroically, notably Consul Leslie, in the new American consulate at Urfa, where the British, French, Russian and Italian civilians are interned in an American monastery. The rigors of their lot in this remote city (which, by the way, is just a few miles from Haran, where Abraham lived, and where he found Rebekah, a wife for his son, Isaac) have been greatly abated by Mrs. Leslie. The consul at Aleppo also has been in the thick of the atrocities.

While some American missionaries—notably Mr. and Mrs. Floyd O. Smith of Diarbekier, have been deported by the Turks, for reasons unknown, although efforts on behalf of the Armenians is suspected; most of the missionaries have remained at their posts. Those who have been forced to leave their fields, for one reason or another, have been refused permission to return. Thus Dr. Thomas Christie of Tarsus, a veteran of several massacres, went to Constantinople to intercede for the Armenians, but the Turks would not let him go home again. Having abolished the capitulations, the Ottoman government has become severer and severer in its dealings with Americans and other neutral foreigners. Only the vigorous attitude of Ambassador Morganthau has prevented greater embarrassments.

The migration of the party of American missionaries from Van to Tiflis is a story yet to be told in its fullness. They endured great privations. Mrs. Ussher died before starting and her husband arrived critically ill; Mrs. Reynolds broke her leg en route.

Apparently all the American board property at Van has been destroyed by the Turks. In ordinary times this news—here made public for the first time—would be worth a long cablegram and first-page position in the newspapers.