

First Victim of Turk Assassins Arrives in City

Girl Bears Tattoo of Mohammedan Slave—Tells of Horrors.

Broken in health, her nerves shattered, her mind distressed by fearful memories, a 20-year-old Armenian girl arrived in Minneapolis yesterday—a refugee from the tortures of the Turks.

Like thousands of her race, she was for months the slave of the cruel murderers of the Near East, allies of the Germans. Like many others, she is the sole survivor of her family in the East. She has come to Minneapolis, to make her home with a brother.

The girl's name is Vartanousch Karagheusian. Her brother is John N. Karagheusian, a rug buyer for a downtown store. He lives at 211 Fifteenth street west.

On the girl's right thumb is tattooed a blue cross, mark of Mohammedan slavery. The mark was placed there in 1915, just before she was driven from her home with eight relatives, among the thousands of Armenian women who were deported to Aleppo by the Turks. From July to October that pitiful company staggered along the road to Aleppo, driven ceaselessly onward by Turkish guards. Their food they found only in the vegetation along the march. For weeks they lived on little beside grass and leaves; for three days at a time they went without water. Today the girl subsists only on liquid food, her digestive system is so shattered by her terrible experiences.

One by one the marchers dropped along the way. The girl's mother died in her arms, victim of the murderers of a race. One by one the girl's other relatives succumbed. She alone

of the entire family survived the horrors of the march. And meanwhile the women were horribly mistreated by the Turks. "We were their slaves," the girl says.

Her family lived in Cevaz, Turkey, but now she does not believe anyone who formerly lived in the village is alive, except herself.

"Through the help of a girl friend," she told her brother, "I escaped from my Turk guards and found work in a Turkish hospital at the Zahleh base. I nursed wounded soldiers there for several months.

"When the British captured Jerusalem, I disguised myself as a Turkish soldier by stealing the uniform of one who had died in our hospital. In this manner I managed to escape to the British lines."

While working in a soup kitchen, she met an Armenian in the French army who had visited America and knew her brother. The soldier immediately communicated with Mr. Karagheusian in Minneapolis, who enlisted the aid of the Near East Relief commission and arranged for the girl's transportation to this country.

Two Other Refugees.

Two other Armenian women who had been through similar experiences in Aleppo, were on the transport with her. They were Mrs. Araxie Hatchigain, who is searching for a sister in California, and Mrs. Marian Balarjaian, who has a husband in Milwaukee.

John Karagheusian met his sister when she landed from the steamship, in New York, early last week. It was the first time in 12 years he had seen her. It was an affecting scene, the reunion of the two there at the gate to her haven of refuge. The girl's dark face, lined by her suffering, quivered under the stress of the reunion, and she burst into hysterical weeping as her brother took her shaking form in his arms, to clasp to his heart the beloved sister who had escaped from the dead in the blood-soaked Levant. She was safe at last with her kinsman.

Miss Karagheusian's memories still haunt her. She shrinks still as under the lash of the Turk. Her narrative, given last night briefly through an interpreter, plays pitifully upon her emotions. Her face is clouded as by ineffaceable sadness, and all her brother's efforts, in New York and here, seem almost fruitless to bring her to realization that this is another world, a land of security and happiness. Yet under all her veil of memories there seems to be discernable at times a tragic joy at her deliverance, which gives her brother hope. It is a hope magnified now by new knowledge of the significance of the girl's escape—which is veritably an escape from Islam.

A copy of a secret Turkish circular dated November 28, addressed to the provincial authorities and bearing the seal of the minister of the interior, reached Washington, D. C., yesterday, according to a dispatch, ordering the forcible conversion to Islam of the few Armenians who have escaped deportation, massacres and death by privations and sickness.

"The non-deported Armenians and those whose deportation has been stopped and who have returned to their homes are to be made converts to Islam," the circular says, "and Armenians who have thus been converted may get back the property which has been confiscated from them.

"All houses of which the Armenians have been dispossessed should be conveyed to those Armenian women and girls who have been married to Mohammedans.

"All Armenians who have thus been converted en masse should be allowed to settle in Mohammedan villages and cities where they should not constitute more than 5 per cent of the local Mohammedan population."

Policy Not Modified.

Miran Sevasly, representative in the United States of the Armenian national delegation, to whom the authentic copy of this circular was sent, said in discussing the circular:

“The present government of Constantinople has not modified in the least its policy towards the surviving Armenians. It is following in the footsteps of Sultan Hamid who was in the habit of decorating distinguished foreigners and their wives in Constantinople while he was organizing mas-

sacres in the interior of Asia Minor and Armenia.

“It would be a delusion to accept any of the pompous statements issued from Constantinople by the sultan and his acolytes. Those encouraging statements of the kind to be published in the American and European press are

not serving the best interests of humanity and civilization. The sooner the Allied and associated powers impose their conditions upon the Turks the better it will be for the peace of the world.”

Transcribed from a clipping in the collection of Lucy Kanian Desteian, Minneapolis, daughter of Arman P. and Vartanoush Karagheusian Kanian.