

## The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, Sept. 10, 1896.

### Hope for Armenia.

THE Turkish sky is cloudy, and prognosticators see an early and a ruinous storm. The clouds cannot break too soon. Too long has the insufferable Turk been allowed to practise his inhuman cruelties and to bring the Christian nations into discredit and disgrace. He is unfit for self-government and has ever ruled by the tranny of the poisoned cup and the sword. Christianity and moral enlightenment have had in him a mortal foe. He has been faithless, treacherous and perfidious to his allies and implacable to his foes. Standing as sponsor Europe is responsible for his persecutions in Armenia, and the blame ought to be pressed home. And in no small degree is the government of the United States at fault for the inactivity of Britain in behalf of the Armenians. It will be remembered that when British public feeling had been roused to a nervous pitch on account of the slaughter and spoliation in unhappy Armenia, and when Mr. Gladstone wrote his famous denunciation, and Lord Salisbury was talking threateningly to the Sultan on public platforms, and by official protests, that, at that time, the President of the United States launched his famous (or infamous) Venezuelan message which harrowed the feelings of civilized Christendom at the prospect of an Americo-British war. The poor Armenians were for the time all but forgotten and the new situation had to be faced. The more enlightened Americans themselves see now, in the light of recent events, the disastrous effect upon Armenia of that war message. Speaking, not long ago, to an audience numbering many hundreds, Rev. Mr. Fay Mills, the noted evangelist, expressed some plain truths to the American people. He, with most thoughtful people, who have followed the course of events, feel that President Cleveland's action saved the Sultan, and exposed the Armenians to continued suffering. Thus the two great English speaking peoples bear a heavy load of responsibility in the matter and that fact seems to be dawning upon them gradually but forcibly.

The disgrace to the European nations is only heightened by the reasons that have been put forward to excuse non-interference, viz.: the jealousy among themselves of each other; the distrust of the nations in an equitable division of territory in the event of the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire; and finally the money interests involved. The principle of international equity as well as international amity ought to prevail in Europe when the cause of humanity calls for co-operation. Instead of jealousy, and diplomatic impotency there ought to be a readiness to act in concert to protect their wards from the murderous ravages of the Turk. Yet a callousness unparalleled in the annals of this century has been displayed until once again public patience is about exhausted. Mr. Gladstone's bitter epithets are again flying abroad and none too strong

has been his denunciation of Abdul Hamid as that "assassin who sits on the throne at Constantinople." The immediate cause of the present outbreak has been the huge massacre of Armenians in Constantinople following the Ottoman Bank affair, thus described by the *London Spectator*: "One of the bloodiest deeds in history has been committed in the face of Europe, yet Europe can find nothing better to punish the perpetrators than refusing to put candles in the windows on the Sultan's fete day. In the September massacres of the French revolution not one fourth of the slaughtered of Constantinople were killed, yet England sighs and does nothing. Even that one little heroic act, when a handful of British blue jackets with fixed bayonets kept a horde of savage Turks from butchering Christian victims in a public street, was the unauthorized act of a British charge d'affaires, which, but for the national outcry, might endanger his official position. "Are you aware you are on foreign soil?" demanded the angry Sultan. "Wherever we are," Mr. Herbert coolly replied, "we will prevent outrages." To-day everyone demands that something be done." The *Standard* calls for amputation. At least let Armenia have autonomy like Crete under strict European guarantees. The *Spectator* realizes that Russia's policy is rather to leave Turkey to more complete putrefaction, but a strong demand arises for the immediate deposition of Abdul Hamid. When the Czar meets Lord Salisbury at Balmoral he may be induced, now that Prince Lobanoff is dead, says the *Spectator*, to abandon Lobanoff's policy of maintaining the status quo and worrying England.

### The Plebiscite on Prohibition.

One of the most important announcements of the new Government was the assurance given a few days ago to the deputation from the Temperance organizations that they would as speedily as possible redeem their pledge to take a plebiscite of the whole Dominion on the question of Prohibition in such a way that it should be entirely separated from all other issues. To some extremists even this may seem to be a shirking of the plain duty to pass prohibitory legislation without waiting for any further expression of opinion. But in the divided state of opinion that obtains within the party supporting the government it is all that can be hoped for in the meantime, and gives the promise of leading to something practical if the vote should prove to be in favor of decided action. It is perfectly true that the plebiscites already taken in Manitoba and Ontario have accomplished little or nothing owing to the uncertainty of jurisdiction. But now that the Privy Council has virtually set that at rest and made it certain that the Dominion Parliament has the right to prohibit, any clear expression of public opinion can hardly fail to be followed by corresponding action.

No government or parliament would dare to disregard the popular demand. The practical importance of the vote can therefore hardly be overestimated. Should the result be adverse the cause of temperance would receive a check that would be felt for many years to come. Should it even be favorable but with a small majority the chances of real success would be small.

Now we are satisfied that the real sentiment of the vast majority of the people of the country is in favor of prohibition. The result in the two provinces of Manitoba and Ontario, is a sufficiently fair proof of that. But it is not safe to assume that the vote will be all right if it is left to take care of itself. The manifest seriousness of the consequences that will follow to the traffic will make its friends work for it as they have never done in any preceding contest. It behoves the temperance organizations to take up