

Pastor and People.

ACT NOBLY.

Sometimes trustful, often fearful,
In this world of shifting wrong;
Sometimes joyful, often tearful,
Still be this our rallying song—
Ay, in sadness and in gladness,
Nobly act, for God is strong.

When oppressed by deep soul-sorrow,
Life beneath the darkest skies
Seems so drearer than not to-morrow
Holds a threat of worse surprise—
In such sadness, as in gladness,
Nobly act, for God is wise.

When our souls are tried and tempted
Some ignoble end to buy,
From the coward's bounds exempted,
Let us resolutely cry—
Evil sow not, that it grow not,
Nobly act, for God is nigh.

—Mackenzie Bell.

"Why should we wear black for the guests of God?"—*Ruskin.*

From the dust of the weary highway,
From the smart of sorrow's rod,
Into the royal presence
They are bidden as "guests of God"
The veil from their eyes is taken,
Sweet mysteries they are shown,
Their doubts and fears are over,
For they know as they are known

For them there should be rejoicing
And festival array,
As for the bride in her beauty
Whom love hath taken away,
Sweet hours of peaceful waiting,
Till the path that we have trod
Shall end at the Father's gateway,
And we are the guests of God.

—Mary F. Butts.

ARMENIA'S WOES

The Rev. E. D. McLaren, M.A., B.D., of St. Andrew's Church, Vancouver, lately addressed his people on this subject, and as it is one at the present moment deeply engaging public attention, we give our readers a large portion of his sermon.—[Ed.]

Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them.—*Luke xviii: 7.*

To the poor persecuted Armenians this promised day of vengeance must seem to be cruelly long delayed; and the wonder is that any of them have been able to retain their faith in Christianity, when all their piteous appeals to their fellow-Christians have failed to secure for them the slightest alleviation of their intolerable sufferings. Armenian persecutions renewed from century to century, have culminated at last in a series of outrages so appalling in their magnitude, so foul in their bestiality, and so fierce and fiend-like in their barbarous cruelty, as to throw into the shade all the records of oppression and injustice that blacken the annals of civilization. Month after month the fanatical Turks and the savage Kurds have plied their congenial trade of robbery and torture, and rape and murder; and during all these long weary months of pillage and lust and butchery, through mutual jealousies or cowardly fears, the Christian nations, Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Britain and America have stood still, gazing with folded arms, upon scenes of unparalleled atrocity, instead of joining, as every consideration of justice and humanity required that they should have joined, to shatter into fragments an empire that has become so treacherously unreliable, so cruelly intolerant, and so iniquitously corrupt as to be unworthy of any place in all the whole universe. Oh, for another Milton to stir with clarion blast the sluggish moral pulse of Christendom, as that blind old poet thrilled the heart of Puritan England, when, lifting up his mighty voice in behalf of the persecuted Piedmontese, he sang:

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold!

After a reference to the geography, natural resources and early historical associations of Armenia, Mr. McLaren proceeded:

The history of Christianity is closely interwoven with the history of the ill-fated Armenians. Eusebius, the Christian historian

of the fourth century, gives a letter which, he says, was sent by "Abgarus, King of Edessa, to Jesus the good Saviour who appeareth at Jerusalem." Edessa, according to tradition, is the original Ur of the Chaldees the modern Orfah, and it was here where, during last Christmas week, 5,000 Christians were massacred with exceptional brutality. It is difficult to determine when the Gospel was first preached to the inhabitants of Armenia proper; but there seems to be no good reason for doubting that "they were the first people to embrace Christianity as a whole, and make it the national faith." Certainly Armenia in its widest extent—stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean—was the early cradle of the Christian religion; and although their land has been repeatedly overrun by barbarous hordes, and their tribulations and persecutions have been almost without number, the Armenians have bravely held aloft the banner of the Christian faith for at least sixteen centuries.

Such are the people whose despairing appeals to God and man have been mingled with the roar of the flames that consumed their homes, with the frenzied shrieks of those who were being tortured beyond the power of human endurance, with the hopeless moans of outraged women, and with the mad curses and foul jests of their inhuman persecutors. In a private letter to friends in this city, a Canadian missionary in Syria, who has gone to Armenia, to assist in distributing relief to the survivors of the massacres, gives heart-rendering details of the poverty and suffering found to exist in districts where Turk and Kurd had been permitted to work their hellish will and glut their savage hate. The following is one of many instances of distress that came under his own personal observation:

"Only last week fifty-seven villagers from another district arrived. They represented eight villages. They came on foot the whole distance of about seventy-five miles. We have been sending relief to the villages in question, and asking them their errand, they replied: 'We have come to present our sad condition to you, and to appeal to the Governor for oxen, agricultural implements and seed grain, but especially for protection from the lawless Kurds among whom we dwell. We are most thankful for your aid, without which many of us would have died of starvation, but now the spring has come and we have no seed to sow, and if we had, we have no oxen to plough the soil; and if we had, we have no plows, and if we had, we have no harrows, and if we had all these we would not dare to go outside our village to our farms, lest the Kurds fall upon us; and if we could sow our fields, we have no assurance that we could reap them; and if we had, we have no confidence that the Kurds would not make a sally on us next autumn, and plunder us again. Is there no way to escape from this country? Is there no deliverance? We are willing to sacrifice our houses and lands, yes, and the very clothes we have on, if we can only find relief from this grinding destitution, oppression, anxiety, danger and insecurity.'"

This missionary concludes his letter thus: "If this letter or any part of it is used in a public way, my name and present place of residence must be withheld." A Canadian, born and reared under the shadow of the Union Jack, a British subject, dares not allow his name or even his place of residence, to be made public in connection with a plain simple statement of what his own eyes saw and his own ears heard! And yet Britain can keep her hands off the throat of the villainous power that thus terrorizes British subjects, and would gladly make their death the penalty of telling the damning truth about Turkish cruelty! The following graphic description of a scene of revolting barbarity is from the pen of Dr. Dillion, the Armenian correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*:

"In Trebizond on the first day of the massacre, an Armenian was coming out of a baker's shop, where he had been purchasing bread for his sick wife and family when he was surprised by the raging crowd. Fascinated by terror, he stood still, was seized, and dashed to the ground. He pleaded piteously for mercy, and they quietly promised it; and so grim and dry was the humor

of this crowd that the trembling wretch took their promise seriously and offered them his heartfelt thanks. In truth they were only joking. When they were ready to be serious they tied the man's feet together and taunted him, but at first with the assumed gentleness that might well be mistaken for the harbinger of mercy. Then they cut off one of his hands, slipped his face with the bloody wrist and placed it between his quivering lips. Soon afterwards they chopped off the other hand, and inquired whether he would like pen and paper to write to his wife. Others requested him to make the sign of the cross with his stumps, or with his feet, while he still possessed them, while others desired him to shout louder that his God might hear his cries for help. One of the most active members of the crowd then stepped forward and tore the man's ears from his head, after which he put them between his lips and then flung them in his face. 'That Effendi's mouth deserves to be punished for refusing such a choice morsel,' exclaimed a voice in the crowd, whereupon somebody stepped forward, knocked out some of his teeth and proceeded to cut out his tongue. 'He will never blaspheme again,' a pious Moslem jocosely remarked. Thereupon a dagger was placed under one of his eyes, which was scooped clean out of its socket. The hideous contortions of the man's discolored face, the quick convulsions of his quivering body, and the sight of the ebbing blood turning the dry dust to gory mud, literally intoxicated these furious fanatics, who, having gouged out his other eye and chopped off his feet, hit upon some other excruciating tortures before cutting his throat. These other ingenious pain-sharpening devices, however, were such as do not lend themselves to description."

Here is a passage from Mr. Hopkins' book, "Suffering Armenia":

"The slaughter which took place at Orfah on the 28th and 29th of December included some 5,000 victims and a peculiarly awful scene in the Armenian church. It proved too strong for the party of Moslems which sought to enter it and massacre the 3,000 people within or to burn it to the ground. The result was that they climbed upon the roof, got down to the galleries surrounding the interior of the church, and there poured 30 cases of petroleum oil upon the writhing mass below. Into the midst of them they threw lighted torches, and hardly a hundred escaped from the ensuing hell of fire and murder."

Another writer gives this harrowing summary of what occurred in the district of Sassoun:

"Thirty-five villages were plundered and burned; probably 1,000 were slain. Happy, however, were those merely slain. Women were outraged and then butchered. A priest who went to beg for mercy to his people had his eyes bored out, was scored on face and breast and limbs with the sign of the cross, and slowly hacked to pieces. Three children were tied together in the presence of their mothers, and one soldier, on a wager, cut off the three heads with one stroke of his sword. Sixty women and girls were confined in one church. The soldiers were turned loose among them to work their brutal lust, and when this was satiated they were cut to pieces with every possible ingenuity of torture. Children were seized by two lusty Turks and their legs pulled apart. Everything that Satan's lust, cruelty and fanaticism could suggest was done. Outrages and tortures, too vile for the pages of a book in a Christian country, were daily perpetrated."

Who are responsible for this sickening record of blood-curdling atrocities? Primarily and mainly, Abdul Hamid, the Sultan of Turkey. Of this there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. He had only to lift his finger and the outrages would have ceased. But his sympathy with the persecutors was openly displayed when, after the first massacre in Sassoun, he despatched a special messenger to the infamous Yekki Pasha, the commander of the Turkish troops "with a message of thanks, and a very high decoration set in brilliants." This act of the Sultan—a deliberate and open defiance of the Christian sentiment of Europe—should have awakened such a storm of righteous indignation as would have swept his accursed Government from the face of the earth. Russia, bullying, lying Russia, must shoulder a large measure of the ghastly responsibility. Had she been permitted to reap the fruits of her victory over the Turks in the war of 1876 she would no doubt have greatly ameliorated the condition of the Christians in the Turkish empire. But when her aggressive ambition was checked by the other European powers,

she exhausted those arts of unprincipled intrigue of which she is such a consummate mistress, in order to thwart their humane and philanthropic efforts, and deliberately sacrificed the poor Armenians upon the altar of her national greed. No one doubts that the Sultan's dogged refusal to yield to the solicitations or even to the threats of the other European powers was due to the fact that he knew he had Russia at his back. France and Germany will not be held guiltless in the day—that will surely come—when God calls the various nations to account for their share in this awful tragedy. If, instead of the unconcealed hostility of France, and the cold indifference and suspicious distrust of Germany, Great Britain could have counted upon the hearty co-operation of them both, the Russian bear would have been compelled to retreat to his northern lair, and the atrocities that have horrified the world would have been brought to a speedy termination. Our own motherland is not free from blame, and yet we may say with truth and pride, that Great Britain is the only European nation that has ever shown any sincere desire to correct the intolerable abuses of Turkish misrule and secure at least a measure of justice for the Christian subjects of the Sultan.

A single word, uttered with the emphasis of a united European voice, would instantly have terminated the lawlessness and oppression that have culminated in the horrible atrocities of the past two years. But to the eternal disgrace of Christian Europe, seventeen years have passed away and that word is still unspoken. Of course, the difficulties that confronted the British statesmen were almost overwhelming. The gravity of the situation could hardly be exaggerated. A few weeks ago, in the Imperial House of Commons, when Sir Robert Reid spoke with eloquent indignation of Christians being massacred on the Island of Crete, almost under the mounds of British cannon, a member of the Government replied that a single spark from one of these guns might have set all Europe aflame. Well, Europe richly deserves to be set aflame. Only a baptism of fire will purge away those selfish jealousies and unholy ambitions that have made her a silent spectator of outrages that are simply devilish. More than once in her long career Britain has had leaders who would have faced all odds in such an emergency as this, and fired upon Constantinople with "a magnificent scorn of consequences." At one time it seemed as though Britain was almost ready to take the decisive step, and champion the cause of humanity, single-handed. But just at this critical juncture another nation has to step in and burden its soul with a share of the awful guilt. President Cleveland's message to Congress on the subject of the Venezuelan boundary relieved the terrible tension of public feeling in Great Britain, caused by the reports of the Armenian atrocities; and the outburst of anti-British feeling in the American republic, evoked by that message, effectually tied the hands of the British Government and gave the deathblow to Armenia's hopes of British intervention. Better that a hundred Monroe doctrines should have been torn to shreds and a hundred strips of British territory, such as that in dispute between Britain and Venezuela, should have been lost forever, than that the escutcheons of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations should bear for all time to come the bar sinister of illegitimate ambition, involving them both in the black disgrace of turning a deaf ear to the piteous cries of a helpless community, slowly being ground to powder between the upper and nether millstone of Turkish fanaticism and bestial Kurdish ferocity. Our brethren of the United States must share with us the guilt and shame of whatever responsibility for the sufferings of the Armenians may fairly be laid at the door of Great Britain. Like us, they must stand with bowed heads and listen meekly to Watson's burning words of scornful indignation:—

Never, O craven England, nevermore
Prate thou of generous effort, righteous aim!
Betrayers of a people, know thy shame!
Summer hath passed, and autumn's threshing
floor,
Been winnowed; Winter at Armenia's door
Snails like a wolf, and still the sword and flame
Sleep not; thou only sleepest; and the same
Cry unto Heaven ascends as heretofore,
And the red stream thou mightest have staunch-
ed yet runs;
And o'er the earth there sounds no trumpet's
tone
To shake the ignoble torpor of thy sons;
But with indifferent eyes they watch and see
Hell's regent sitting yonder, propped by thee—
Abdul, the Damned, on his infernal throne.