

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

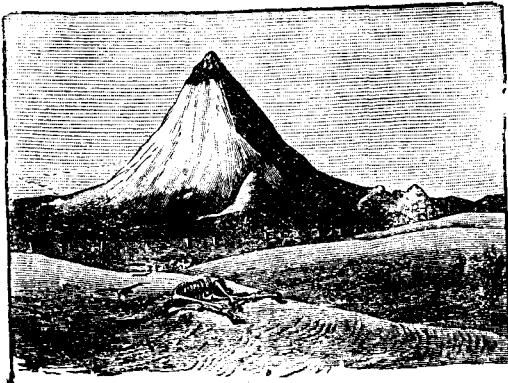
ARMENIAN ATROCITIES.

The dreadful massacres in Armenia, like the Bulgarian atrocities of eighteen years ago, have excited the horror of Europe. We glean from the press the following items respecting these peoples:

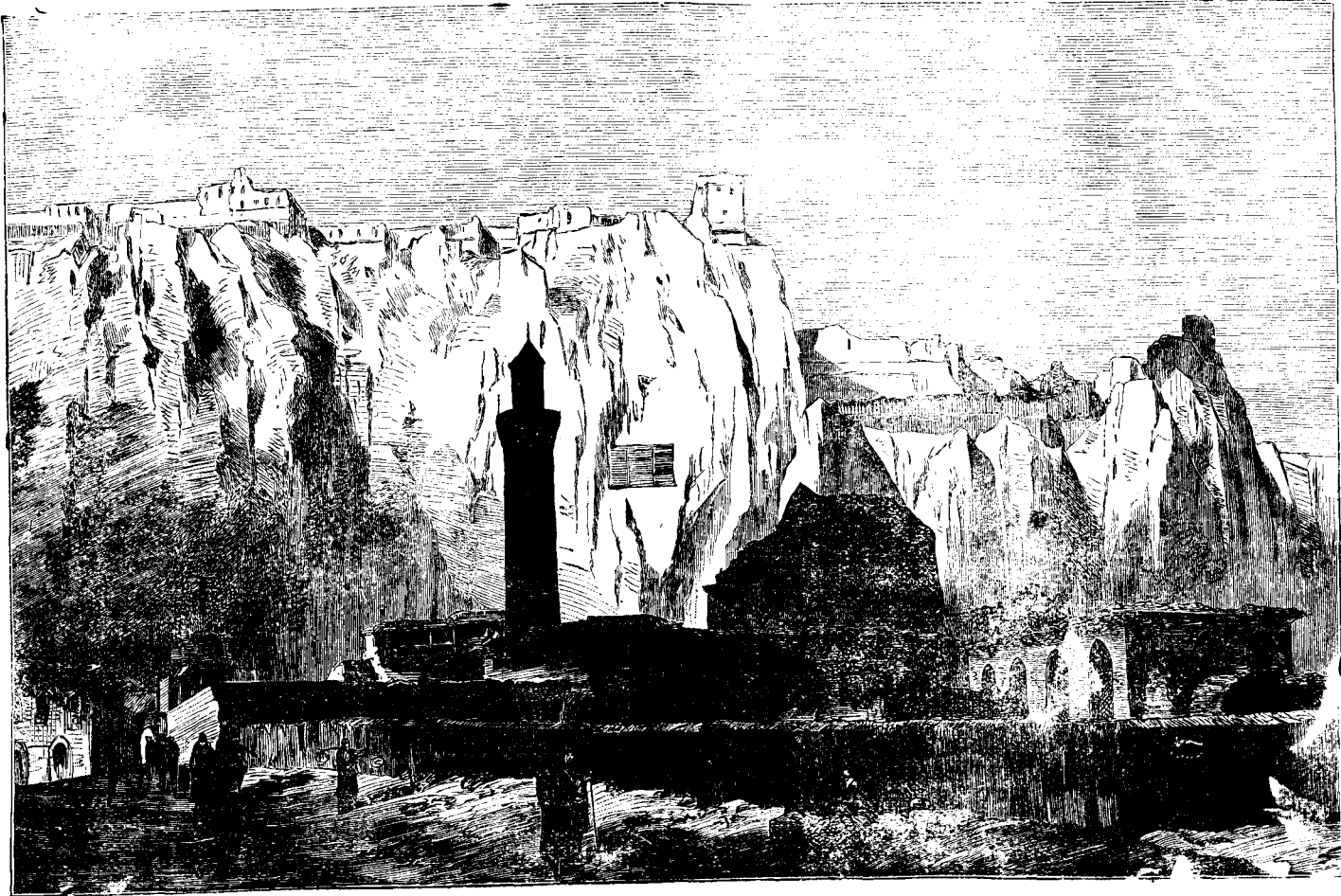
"In the rugged highlands and elevated plateaux which constitute North-eastern Turkey are scattered the last remnants of a race which once played a great part in the history of the region. The Armenians are unarmed, cowed by oppression, for centuries the unresisting prey of the savage brutality of their neighbours. The Kurd is armed, predatory and savage, and has for centuries ravaged these Armenian villages at will. When a dry season comes or when spring freshets drown the fields, the Kurdish flocks and herds perish of hunger, and their owners take the warpath, just as the English and Scottish borderers used to do in the days which Walter Scott has painted. To them Armenia is a happy hunting-ground. The soil is rich and the people well off; comfortable villages in the midst of thriving farms are encountered in every valley, and in attacking them the Kurds are encouraged by the thought that they are doing a work which is grateful to God, for the Armenians are Christians and are regarded by the followers of Ali as 'heathen hordes.' The word Kurd means a thief, a robber, a murderer, and a corsair. They flourished, probably in the same form as now, in the early ages of the Babylonian empire, and the young men served in Nebuchadnezzar's army.

ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY.

Armenia is an upland region, mostly within the present limits of Asiatic Tur-



MOUNT ARARAT, ON ARMENIAN FRONTIER, HEIGHT, 17,212 FEET.



CITY OF VAN, ARMENIA.

key, but extending also into the adjacent regions of Russia and Persia. The Euphrates and the Tigris have their origin in its highlands. Its highest mountain is Ararat, which rises more than three miles above the sea. A volcanic eruption of Ararat and a disastrous earthquake occurred in 1840. The country has great agricultural possibilities, but on account of the misgovernment of the Turk much of the land is unimproved. During the Crimean war, Sir William Fenwick Williams, a native of Nova Scotia, held a fortress of Kars for many weeks against an overwhelming force of Russians. No accurate census of the Armenians has been taken, but the number has been estimated from two and a half to twelve millions—there are probably two and a half millions in the Turkish empire alone.

The Armenians profess to be the first nation which unitedly embraced Christianity. It is even asserted that their king Abgar, afflicted with a disease like leprosy, wrote a letter to Jesus of Nazareth, and that Jesus promised to send a disciple who would cure his malady and preach to his people the Gospel of the new kingdom of God. The legend goes on to say that Thaddeus, Bartholomew and Jude were all martyred in Armenia.

The Armenians, adapting the great doctrines of Christianity, have corrupted them with the worship of saints and pictures, and with superstitious rites and ceremonies. They have 155 fast-days, and their services are performed in the ancient Armenian language now unknown to the people. We have visited many of the Armenian churches and were personally presented to the Armenian patriarch in Jerusalem.

The costume of their priests is like that shown in the cut. There are flourishing Presbyterian missions in Armenia with several hundreds of students and schools and many hundreds of members.

RECENT OUTRAGES.

"War, famine, and pestilence all at once. Pity this poor country!" So writes an American correspondent at Bitlis, in Armenia. Other letters received in New York and Boston from correspondents of unimpeachable truthfulness substantiate in general the reports of the atrocities hitherto printed. The slaughter began with attacks upon the Armenian villages by the barbarous Kurds, in retaliation for some slight resistance made against their plundering. The Kurds then sent word to Constantinople that the Armenians were in rebellion, and Turkish troops were sent to the scene at once, with orders to suppress the revolt—orders which they well knew they must interpret to mean the extermination of whole villages, if they would please the Sultan.

The whole Empire is seething with a sense of outrage; and unless something is done before long, those who are best qualified to speak dread a long period of anarchy, to be overcome simply by the absolute destruction of the Turkish Government and the entering in of some foreign power. Naturally all eyes turn to England and Russia, the two powers most interested in that region.

GLADSTONE ON THE ARMENIAN ATROCITIES. On his eighty-fifth birthday England's Grand Old Man received at Hawarden a deputation of Armenian Christians, and said: "Don't let me be told that one nation has no authority over another. Every nation, aye, every human being, has authority in behalf of humanity and justice. I have lived to see the Empire of Turkey in Europe reduced to less than

one-half what it was when I was born, and why? Simply because of its misdeeds and the great record written by the hand of Almighty God against its injustice, lust and most abominable cruelty."

AN ARMENIAN CITY.

Van, a town of Turkish Armenia, 145 miles south-east of the city of Erzeroum, near the east shore of Lake Van. Its population is about 35,000. It is in a beautiful region of fruit trees and gardens. Coarse cotton cloth is made and exported, and there are salt refineries.

A rocky hill with a ruined citadel extends over one mile; inside the citadel are vast caves with cuneiform inscriptions and other relics referred to the days of Semiramis, who, according to trad-

dition, laid out the city on a magnificent scale, and resided there in summer; hence the Armenian name, "City of Semiramis." It is situated on the celebrated salt lake of Van, the largest in Armenia, about 1,400 square miles in extent, and 5,400 feet (according to Rawlinson) above the sea level. It is surrounded by high mountains, reaching in parts the level of perpetual snow, alternating with beautiful plains.

THE OLDEST LAND IN THE WORLD.

Armenia, one of the oldest and most remarkable countries on the globe, a country once rich and populous and powerful, is, like every other land that has suffered the curse of Turkish rule, now desolate. There was a time when



ARMENIAN PATRIARCH.