



Torkom.

The Story of a Struggle Against Odds.

CHAPTER I.

THE MASSACRE AT KARA-HISSAR.

THE main street of Kara-Hissar was astir from early morning, for it was market day. Some ox-carts had arrived the night before and the drivers, wearied by the day's journey, had lain down beside their carts for a well-earned sleep. But now they were awake, bantering good-naturedly or vociferously disputing the claims of rival wares. They were waiting for the opening of the booths that lined the street that they might exchange their homespun clothes and cart loads of fruit and grain for the poorer but gaudier cloths and the lamps and brooms and other luxuries that were to be found here; for Kara-Hissar boasted of a daily train each way to and from Istantbol.¹

Torkom,² as he came to his shop, looked with a haughty disdain on the poor and ignorant peasants, carefree for the moment and with no more anxiety for the future than the smallest of the heedless children among them. He, on the contrary, was hard-working and also provident. He had already laid by one hundred liras, and it was only five years since he had bought his shop from a Mussulman. They were content to reap and sow as did the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac, while he was progressive. He went regularly to the train and was one of the first to get hold of the newspaper which was published at the Great City every day. He kept in touch with the world around him, while they were content if they had a good meal and shelter from the rain. What if they did call him dog and infidel? They were the real infidels for they did not believe in Christ, while he belonged to the nation which had first accepted Christianity³ and had remained true to its faith

1. Doubtless a corruption of the Greek 'eis tēn polin. Constantinople is still frequently called "the city." Is-nik (Nicaea) and Is-nimid (Nicomedia) are Turkish names similarly derived from the Greek. Isnimid has been shortened and Germanized to Ismid.

2. Torkom-Togarmah, great grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:3), from whom the Armenians claim to be descended.

3. Dertad (Tiridates), King of Armenia, embraced Christianity about A.D. 276. Constantine the Great's "Edict of Milan" (edict of toleration of Christianity) was not promulgated till A.D. 313.