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# Syria During the Great European War.

Interesting Article on Conditions in the East.

(By John K. Noah.)

ists invest their money outside the

country. The presence of different

religious denominations inevitably

another sort of economic retrogres-

sion. The principal lever upon which

ing the Wan

ered to be members of a political

the Government was too strong to be

overthrown. The Turks held every-

one down with an iron rule. The de-

portation of belligerents was the next step. British and French families

were transported into the interior of the country. Belligerents, who were

students, were allowed to resume their

studies, and those of us who were at

the American Collge were confined to

the College grounds and were prevented from going to the city. To discuss politics means deportation.

Spies were roaming all over the city.

The mere mention of the word Eng-

land or France might cause a court martial. Everybody had to be very

careful, as even at College some stu-dents were acting as spies in the ser-

vice of the Government. The American College itself, in view of its po-

sition as an Educational Institution

had to be very cautious. In one instance the Principal of the College High School was deported because he

allowed a geography to be used as a

text-book which contained a description of the Turkish Government and

its despotism. On the whole the Am-

erican College was perhaps the safest place to live, in Syria. Our Presi-dent, Dr. Howard S. Bliss, a very able

man, kept the College running throughout the whole period of the war, with the exception of a couple

of weeks in 1917, when diplomatic relations were ruptured between the United States of America and Turkey. During those two weeks of sus-

pense, the whole student body and the College officials were in constant fear

however, that the action of the Un-

By the request of some of my | no business organization, and capitalfriends and for the benefit of those who are interested in Syria as a factor in this world war, I shall endeavour to give as far as possible some cause fanaticism to exist, which is of my experiences together with the ces that have acted upon every individual inhabitant of Syria in some you have a country like Syria with

A little about the country and its geographical position in the east, along with the prevailing conditions before the war, wight help to bring out the economical situation of Syria during the war as an inevitable out-

Syria proper, in which we are chiefly interested, is bounded on the north by Asia Minor, on the south by Palestine, on the east by the Euphrates river and Mesopotamian valley, of the Turkish Government. The and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Its length is almost 250 was the greatest demoralizing factor miles, its breadth is about 130 miles, and it extends along the coast for about 90 miles. Damascus, one of the der Turkish regime. Judges and gov oldest cities in the world, called by ernment officials issued prerogatives disease, starvation and economic the Arabs the "pearl of the east," is at will, releasing criminals under the the capital of Syria, and is the chief pressure of a paltry bribe offered by market of the interior. The capital the defendant's relatives or friends. connected with a railway line Law and order were only relative about 90 miles long to Beirut, the terms to be discussed in drawing thief port on the Mediterranean.

The home industry of Syria is agchief port on the Mediterranean

riculture. The Lebanon mountains, conditions. I said 'was an impossibility' because I can foresee now under the change of government a brilraising and vineyards. Cereals and liant future for the country. Syria, vegetables are only grown in suffici- although historically old, is still ent quantity to supply the local mark-The chief exports are raw silk, ducing point, will, under sound ecowool, tobacco, hemp, gums, spices, fruits, etc. The whole export trade methods, participate as a factor in fruits, etc. The whole export trade the world's commerce.

the whole import trade. In other the whole import trade. The Political Situation in Syria Durwords the influx is so great that there is a continuous importation, making the country wholly dependent on the outside for its material needs. The outside for its material needs. The advantages of its climate and soil are advantages of its climate and soil are appropriate for agriculture. Its ports, and Djemal Pasha, Minister of Martinatural outlets for foreign trade. Damascus and Aleppo, the chief mark-Damascus and Aleppo, the chief mark-the interior are two great reets of the interior, are two great re-ets of the country which the absolute authority and conducted his sources of the country which the acting policy under very strict military ormal middlemen for the trade with the Furthermore, Syria is rich in natural resources. Under modern methods the country could yield more than twenty fold its ordinary output and manufacture its raw materials for immediate consumption. Such advantages as given above would seem to the outsider ample opportunity for any country to become economically independent, but Syria has first the disadvantages of a poor credit sys-tem which stunts her local trade. Modern business methods and simple

commercial transactions are to the na-

tive speculative and risky. There i:

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been for the American College, hunhave found it exceedingly difficult to

ing events in the history of the Am- pen. The poor class could not afford To recapitulate, I would say that erican College students at Beirut was through the order of the Government, that the Turkish language should be taught and made a required subject. Belligerent students were not includered by the Turks partly Ottomans, nd the Syrians were forced to study and this last was a finishing dose which sent them all wild. It was wonderful how students kept up their studies in the midst of such excite-Turks knew that the Syrians hated them and wished them ill luck. They knew also that the Syrians would have fought and plotted against them of influence, but what prestige could if they had had the chance, but the they gain in a country whose people Government could find no evidences

o prove their disloyalty. Such was in brief the political situation which confronted us during the war at Beirut ,and the American College was our fortress, wherein we were safely guarded, and through the influence of which, many political contingencies which would have af-

fected us were eliminated. trade works is confidence, and when The Economical and Sociological Situation in Syria During the War. so many different religious sects, to trust would spell ruin to them. There The first two years of the war were is also a poor railway service, and throughout the country the means of slightly felt and, economically, only the poor suffered. In the year 1915 transportation are so few and the one could subsist daily and maintain roads, some of them mere mountain a fair standard of living on sixty cents paths, that one will not wonder that per day. It was only, however, dur-Syria during the war was greatly ing the winter of 1916 that the counhandicapped. And last but not least ry felt the first miseries of the war. Syria had the great disadvantage of t was then that deprivation and desitution began to creep slowly over hands and knees under the heavy voke the whole of Syria, particularly in the Lebanon mountains. Although whole machinery of the Government Syria was not a great war factor as European countries were, its histhat influenced the Syrian population. Lives could be bought and sold un-

tory during the war is parallel with

that of Belgium in its sufferings, from

During the winter of 1916 the price of wheat began to rise to almost dou-ble its ordinary price. The cause of this was mostly due to the damaging of all crops by a pest of locusts, which, during the past seasons, ravmillions. I remember in the early winter days of 1916 the Governor of Beirut ordered that all citizens and students should volunteer to help in the locust fight which was to take place very early one morning. The place very early one morning. The country who had nothing for themselves? No, anti-locust volunteers (which term nomical principles and good industrial some of us College students were pleased to call ourselves) marched

The American College of Beirut City we came upon millions of locusts, handicapped from flying on account try. was our domicile during the war. At of th morning dew, which caused their wings to stick. Right and left we struck out and soon the fields were strewn with harmless bodies. It

party in the interest of France. Most of the anxiety to get out of the counof the condemned were hanged inno-

cently, and under martial law in those with the Allies. The chief causes that were directdays a rumour was sufficient evidence to hang a person. The second ly responsible for the misery and remarkable event that took place starvation in Syria are similar to showed us that Diemel Book. starvation in Syria are similar to ther cause of misery. In October, business. He had already by his first stroke created quite a sensation and was both feared and admired. He carried out every policy without the Covernment starts to mo- notes), or \$88,888,888, and was issued carried out every policy without the place, the Government starts to moless, or \$88,888,888, and was issued least disturbance from any quarter of bilize and soon all the labouring the country. His part move the country was a second of the country when the country was a second of the country was a second of the country. the country. His next move was to occupy the Lebanon mountains, made an independent province chiefly through the interference of France. through the interference of France most people could not utilize their likely to be redeemed, and during the persecutions of the Chris- soil for want of a labouring class. tians in 1860. There was not the slightest attempt made to repel him. Those of the Lebanon who were not duals kept as much of the issue as slightest attempt made to repel him. called for military service and were they could collect. As soon as this He simply dismissed the members of traders of some sort, found them-the Lebanon Parliament and appoint-selves out of employment. Building amount about as large was issued ed a Turk as governor, who in turn appointed his own staff. This move upset the initiative of the whole population; if there was any second population; if there was any second population; if there was any second population as a second population and construction work stopped and very little call for manual labour was security in deposit. Both these lations if there was any second population of the populat lation; if there was any secret move- had tillable soil began now to utilize ment on foot to start a revolution, it to its utmost. They could not af- five pound, and one pound notes, and this last event furnished proof that



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ited States was not a declaration of war, and at the end of two weeks the President succeeded through his influence with Djemal Pasha to open the College and resume studies once again. Through Dr. Bliss' acquaint antee a subsistence. Communications with the whoat-fields became very ance with Djemal Pasha, the College was not sufficient per capita to guarantee a subsistence. Communications with the whoat-fields became very of the Empire, actually transferred amount of flour and other provisions at Government rates, and had it not way line was occupied by the Govway line was occupied by the Gov- took the example and seized the opernment for military purposes. There portunity to secure for themselves a was no Government tariff which reguprofessors and their families would lated prices of food stuffs. Those who tire after the war in some far recesscould afford to purchase wheat had es of the world, or in some neutral subsist during the stressing periods of to pay for it as well as the heavy country, and live at ease on blood prices of transportation. Imagine money taken from the Syrian popula-

found enough to scrape along, and in of Turkish paper money were: some cases kept up a meagre existence after having mortgaged every piece of property they had. The poor grew in proportion to the amount that became poorer, the rich, ed, but Egyptians, who were consid- though the latter class found them- ket. selves oftentimes drawing heavily on their resources. Who was going to against gold, became a piece of merhelp the poor man? The Americans chandise, and was bought and sold in "fed up," as our boys would put it, started a Red Cross relief committee, the market according to prices regulated this last was a fairble and the last was taken up by the Government and not by private persons, and especially not Fourth:—The example studies in the midst of such exercises the midst of such exercises and starvation stared everyone in the face, you found the College in all its activities in full swing. The College and item is a selfish one, and instead of appealing in full swing. The College and item is majority of the students in general were in favour of the Allies. The The example of some representatives of the law, who brought to an end the corruption of paper to do not by foreigners. The argument was a selfish one, and instead of appealing to the feelings of the natives it only created bitter hatred. The Americans were in favour of the Allies. The Syrians hated the Government failed to do so, and on which the exchange value of the law, who brought to an end the corruption of paper to do not be in the face, you found the College in all its activities in full swing. The College and item is presentatives of the law, who brought to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentatives of the law, who brought to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presentative to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presented to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presented to an end the corruption of the law, who brought to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presented to an end the corruption of the law, who brought to an end the corruption of paper to do not be presented to an end the corruption of the law to an end the corruption of the law to an end to an end the corruption of the law to an the Government failed to do so, and on which the exchange value of the was starving the people outright. Their policy was to acquire a sphere

> hated them and their tyrannical rule. Like every other Turkish enterprise their relief associations in Beirut and Beirut and Syria:-Lebanon disappeared, soon after they were exposed, like highly volatile chemicals. Practically all the pro- ade. eeds of the relief funds were coniscated. Individual members of the Government who were the chief exeutors of the relief committee, retained enormous salaries for themselves. The Ministry in Constantinople granted them permission to obtain wheat

and other provisions from the interior at military prices, very moderate comparison with the market prices. The upper class, a few of the selfish rich citizens found in Beirut, associathemselves with Government offic adopted. cials and purchased wheat at Govern-

upon. People could be found dying the way of help, we did do, but a must die. It is a social law. These

helpless victims of starvation and to can ourselves, marched disease were a burden on society. For streets of Beirut and down into the streets of Beirut and down into the pine groves, situated at the south of the city. Armed with flat cudgels, the city. Armed with flat cudgels, by them was creeping over the countries of the city.

Financial and Other Conditions. up.

As British subjects, I assure this pitals were full, nurses were at a premium and were asked everywhere, and I know some who demanded as high as \$50 a night to sit with and administer to patients. About for the article was specially written, is exceedingly obliged to Mr. Noah for his valuable contribution, which is of an exceedingly high excellence and interest.] per cent, of the population of Lebanon and the coast districts died that

> Lack of specie currency was anlatter part of the war most indiviconsisting of twenty pound, ten pound, in March, 1916, the Turkish Lira pound) depreciated to ten per cent. f its face value. It was then that resham's law began to work. (Bad money drives out good money). All the gold and small subsidiary coins began to flow out of the market. The oney press began to work and as fast as the Government could print the money they began to circulate it until the whole issue amounted to

about Ltg.150,000,000 or \$666,666,666. The money began to depreciate gradually year by year until in November, 1918, it depreciated to 93.75% of its face value. The purchasing value of articles then, was regulated both by the law of supply and demand and by Shopping was a very interesting sight in Beirut. Imagine, if one wished to make a purchase of a complete out-fit, one would need to have about one's person, or more preferable on the person of a hired porter, a big pile of bulky Turkish notes which rarely were of large denominations and very dirty to handle. A suit of clothes cost between Ltq.40 and Ltq.50 or \$200; boots \$50 a pair. I am wearing a suit of clothes at the present moment which cost me \$180, and a

pair of boots which cost me \$50. The Government used many devices to stop the depreciation of its paper money, and issued orders making it legal tender at face value for all transactions, but all to no avail. Some citizens were deported for changing gold for paper and carrying on a trade in the exchange mar-ket, but even this step could not stop it: economical laws had to work. The officials themselves traded with the

then for yourselves what would hap- tion. to buy bread; the middle class just the chief reasons fer the depreciation richer was printed and dumped on the mar-

Fourth:-The example of some re

money was printed, made it deterior ate quickly and after a few months' circulation it became so dirty that no decent person would finger it. The causes of the high prices of food articles and other materials in

First:-No foreign importations in to the country, due to military block-

Second:-Immense exportation o wheat to Germany.
Third:—Influence on the market through the constant demand of food stuffs for the Army, and the demand for luxuries by high officials for elaborate receptions.

Fourth:-The non-convertible paper money which, as against gold, became worthless as a media of exchange. It stopped trade, and in many cases caused the bartering system to be

Such were the conditions of Syria ment prices and sold it to the poor at high market rates.

In the beginning of 1917 one loaf of bread weighing about one half a pound, was sold for 50c., and was made of everything else but wheat.

Misery and starvation provided during the war has been practically wiped out, but the future, a brilliant one, lies before it. The change of Government that will take place powers. Misery and starvation prevailed ernment that will take place now as a result of this war, will be a welcoming change to the Syrians of Syria as on the streets. What we could do in well as the Syrian emigrants of this continent and elsewhere. For over quarter of a pound of bread to the poor dying, half-starved woman or child on the cold damp streets of Beirut was no comfort. Their days were over—their cases were hopeless. Hot soup, comfortable bedding and good nourishment was well at the few decades put all its resources into four centuries Syria has suffered unaged and swept over vegetation in less. Hot soup, comfortable bedding and swept over vegetation in and good nourishment was what they millions. I remember in the early needed, but who was going to give it play, and the beautiful Lebanon

above article is a son of Mr. Kaleem Noah, of this city, and during his studies of Beirut, having left St. John's in 1909, was for the period of the late war held to be a domiciliary prisoner. Mr. Noah holds the degree of Bachelor of Commerce, conferred by the American College at Beiru which is incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, and is gov-Readers, those were the thoughts erned by a Board of Trustees of that came to most of us who looked American millionaires. The College starvation in the face, who were drivis managed by a faculty of teachers, ders.

Association, corresponding to our Red Cross, bought the locusts by the pound, and those who supplied them selves with bags soon had them filled aroused the harred of the Syrian population was the hanging of sixty of her best notables, who were profered to be members. were strewn with narminess bodies. It is starvation in the face, who were drivism anaged by a faculty of teachers, was a great harvest for the poor. The covernment, under the Red Crescent they could and who were doubly pundent being Dr. Howard S. Bliss, son

### Why You Say It.

At Sixes and Sevens," or "at vari-

ances," is probably traceable to the fact that if you write the numerals they all agree in height until you come to six and seven, the former of which goes above the other figures, the later below. Hip, Hip, Hurrah!"-Few of those who raise the English cheer are aware that they use a phrase associated with the persecution of the Jews. "Hip, hip!" was originally a war-cry adopted by German knights in the olden days when they were engaged in a Jew-hunt. place of refuge being sacked, they were all put to death, amid shouts of "Hierosollyma est perdita!" (Jerusalem is destroyed), the initials of which form "Hep." Hence "Hip." The Baker's Dozen," or commonly known as thirteen, originates from Italy, though there it is called "a cobbler's dozen." There is a tradition that in Italy there was formerly a law compelling cobblers to put twelve nails round the edge of a boot heel, and that when the nails were cheap a thirteenth was to be driven in the centre for luck! In a Trice" comes from the Spanish "tris," or third. A trice is the sixtieth part of a second of time. The hour is divided into sixty minutes,

the minute into sixty seconds, and the second into sixty trices, or thirds, from the Spanish "tris." Not Worth a Straw" means to imply that a thing is worthless, but the original saying was "not worth a rush." In the days before acreets it was the custom to strew the floor with rushes. When guests of rank were entertained fresh rushes were spread for them; but folk of lower degree had to be content with rushes that had been used, while still humble persons had none, as not even being "worth a rush." 'Hallo!"-"Hallo!" have curious origins attributed to them. Philology teaches us that names were not born

outright, but were the outcome of more or less slow growth, and it is said that "Hallo!" comes from the fact that the people of Carnwood Forest, Leicestershire, when they desired to hail a person in the distance, called out "Halloop!"—a survival of the times when one cried to another, "A loop! A loop!" (meaning "Well! Well!")—An-

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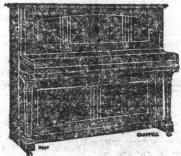
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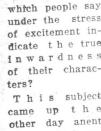
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What People Say



a story which on was

acy of her own breakfast table invio-

The Tray Went Crashing Down The

Stairs. Now one morning when the naid was carying the breakfast tray ipstairs she stumbled and fell. The the stairs breaking a goodly part of the hostess china, the maid hersel cut her hand on a broken tumbler and bruised her knee. Whereupon the aying guest came to the door in her peignor and seeing the accident cried out, "And now I shan't have any resh egg this morning" (the hostess was in the habit of procuring two ablutely fresh eggs from a neighbou or the guests's breakfast.)

Not a word of anxiety for the poo ittle maid, not a word of regret for he broken china, just a thought fo er own comfort.

The Hostess Was Indignant. Naturally the hostess was indig

ant. Who wouldn't be? And naturally she was inclined to regard that as a revelation of char-At first I greed with her. But after-

vards I wondered. And the basis of my wonder his. Sometimes in moments of exitement I have heard myself say hings that I didn't mean at all; hings that surprised me; trivial hings that really bore no relation to

my true emotions. Haven't you sometimes had that Derience? And wouldn't you hate to be judged

