

# NORTHERN MESSENGER

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## THE ARMENIAN HORROR.

A RESUME OF THE STORY AS TOLD BY AN EYE WITNESS.

Last evening, says one of our correspondents in Turkey, I listened for fully an hour to the story of the last terrible massacre at Oorfa, on Dec. 29. To regain one's normal status after



The late Rev. Hagob Abouhaytian.

such an experience is like trying to recover from the effects of a horrible nightmare; with this difference, that the most hideous dream experiences are soon forgotten with the return to consciousness, while the impression produced by hearing the recital at first hand of such merciless torture and wholesale shedding of innocent blood from one who was in the midst of it all, and whose testimony is unquestionable, can never be fully effaced.

In my last letter a fortnight ago, I simply stated the fact of a second massacre in Oorfa, and that the victims numbered three thousand. The full details of that awful day's butchery will never be published, and even if they should be, the Christian public would not dare to read them. I have been able to secure the accompanying photographs of Oorfa, taken some months before these terrible scenes were enacted. In the following sketch I will omit all the revolting details and state simply the prominent features of the massacre.

For two months before the twentieth of December the Christian population of Oorfa experienced all the vicissitudes of a veritable 'Reign of Terror.' This was inaugurated by the previous massacres which began on Oct. 27 and dragged on for

\*Pastor of the Evangelical Church, Oorfa a victim of the massacre of Dec. 29. He was educated in America, England and Germany, and was a man of rare gifts and spiritual force.

the greater part of the interval between these dates. During all this time the Christians ventured beyond the precincts of their own homes only at the risk of their lives. Nor were they secure even in their homes. For six or seven weeks the soldiers of the government went from house to house almost daily, and after forcing an entrance, offered the inmates the option of becoming Moslems or being killed on the spot. Those who chose the former were at once taken to the governor's palace, where they were obliged to submit to the rites of their new faith, and were afterwards registered as Mohammedans. On the roofs of the homes where the inmates professed the Moslem faith a white flag was placed to announce the fact and to secure them against further assault.

All those who refused the immunities which a change of religion ensured were at once shot down or despatched with swords. Scarcely a day passed without its record of such raids upon Christian homes and their attendant horrors, and every such unvisited home was liable to have its turn whenever it might suit the caprice of the soldiery. Those who ventured into the streets were set upon by the soldiers, police or other Moslems who might wish to possess themselves of anything that might be found upon their persons. Any attempt at resistance was fatal. My informant saw the soldiers break open the doors of Christian homes and carry out their brutal purposes upon the inmates during the period of this 'reign of terror.' Every house awaited in anxious suspense its fate, until the last great day of sacrifice arrived, when soldiers and Mohammedan populace joined in the wholesale and unprovoked slaughter.

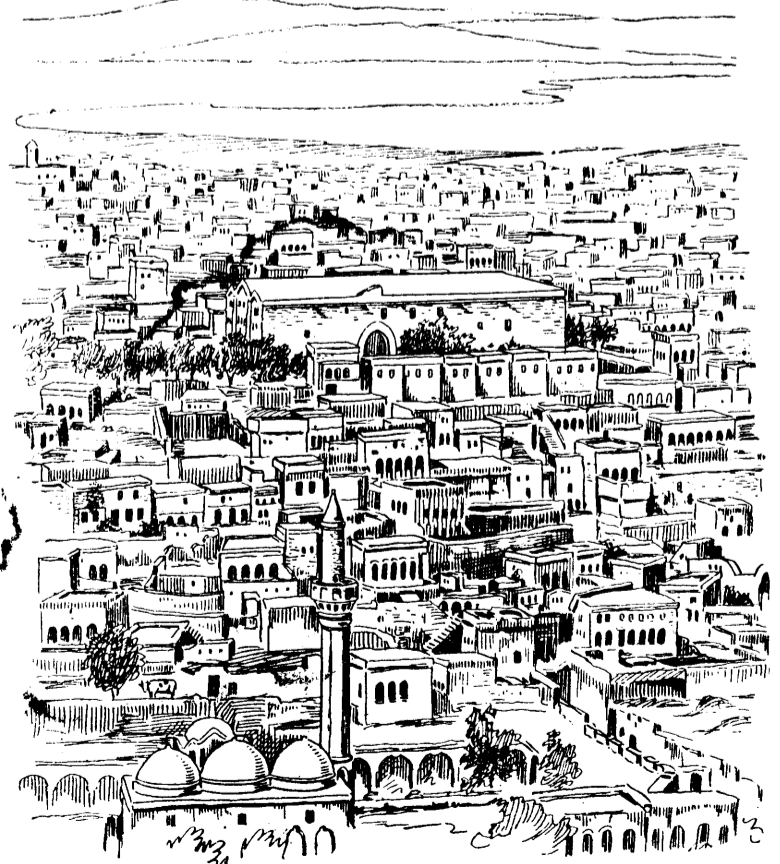
When the general onslaught began on Dec. 29, the Christians sought the refuge of their churches and every other possible place which they hoped might shelter them from the fury of their assailants. Many took refuge in wells, some under manure heaps, while others had their friends cover them under piles of charcoal. For some of these their shelter proved to be a living grave, while many others, after remaining thus concealed for three or four days, were rescued, more dead than alive, by their friends.

Two hundred and forty-six persons took refuge in the home of the American missionary, Miss Shattuck, where they are still afforded shelter and protection. Of this number eighteen are suffering from dangerous wounds, rifle shots and sword cuts. During

the six weeks immediately following the first massacre this devoted missionary heroine was obliged to keep all but constant vigil, and was unable throughout all this time to undress even once and retire to her own room for a night's rest. Any rest or sleep obtained was on a lounge, and for but short intervals, while others kept watch. Her constant anxiety was not so much for her own personal safety as for that of those whom she was attempting to succor. The zeal of the government authorities to protect this American missionary from personal violence and so avoid complications with the American Government was shown by their placing an extra guard of soldiers on the mission premises during the second massacre. The view here presented of the city is that of the Christian portion of it, with the large Armenian church standing four square in the centre. This church is built entirely of stone, and may be said to be absolutely fireproof. It was to this edifice that from fifteen hundred to two thousand of the people fled when the general massacre began on Dec. 29, and the story of what took place within its walls on that awful day will never be fully known. These nearly two thousand victims were there at the mercy of the merciless soldiers and the worse than merciless

mob. The soldiers were the first to enter, but they soon allowed the promiscuous rabble to follow and share with them in the carnival of debauchery and blood. The fiendish fanaticism of these followers of Islam reached its climax in setting fire to these victims of their wild fury. How this purpose was accomplished I am unable to state. There being no wood finishing on the inside of the church and little or no inflammable furnishings, one can only conjecture how they succeeded in transforming this multitude of human sacrifices into the great mass of bones and ashes to which they were all reduced by the following morning. That this end was attained, my informant had the most painfully convincing evidence in the fact that for two or three days afterwards a number of kamals (Turkish porters) were engaged in carrying the bones and charred remains from the church to a place close in the rear of the American mission premises, when they were dumped over a portion of the old wall of the city. In view of all this it is little wonder that we are told by our authority for this sketch, when speaking of the general state of affairs some days later, that the prevailing odor throughout the city was pestilential.

At the further end of the city may



View of the Christian section of Oorfa, Turkey, showing large Gregorian Armenian church four square standing in the centre. In this church 1,500 persons were massacred and burned on Dec 29.