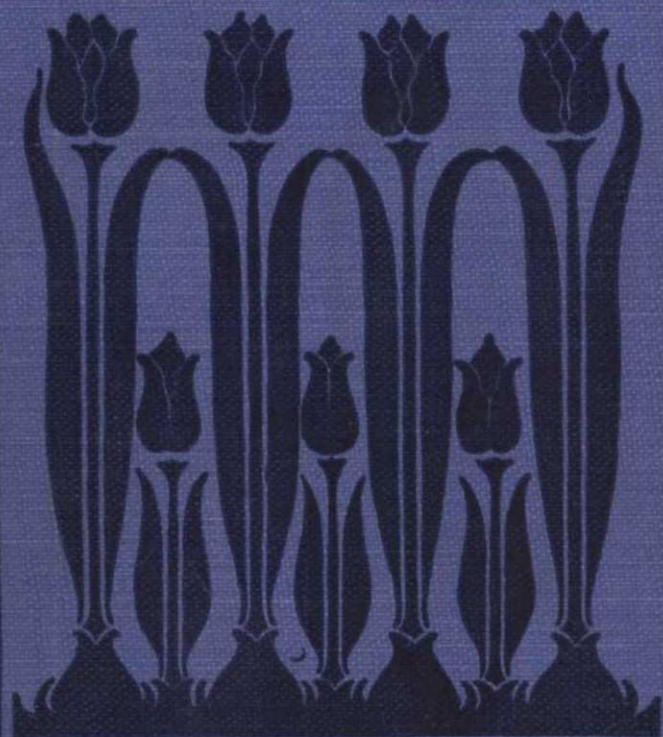


Instructor Literature Series—No. 315C

THE STORY OF ARMENIA

BY MATTHIAS HEILIG



F. A. OWEN PUBLISHING COMPANY,
DANSVILLE, N. Y.

INSTRUCTOR LITERATURE SERIES

THE STORY OF
ARMENIA

By MATTHIAS R. HEILIG

Author of

"The Story of Jerusalem," "Literature of the Bible," etc.



F. A. OWEN PUBLISHING COMPANY,
DANSVILLE, N. Y.

THE STORY OF ARMENIA

THE STORY OF ARMENIA

H. MATTHEWS & SONS

COPYRIGHT, 1920

F. A. OWEN PUBLISHING CO.

The Story of Armenia

INTRODUCTION

For some strange reason the story of Armenia is not well known. Yet no people in all history has been so conspicuously the victim of colossal wrongs, and nowhere in the annals of man do we find a nation exhibiting so constantly and consistently such uniform courage and nobility.

From earliest time the Armenians have been intensely practical—they have been called the Yankees of the East. But with it all they have shown a romanticism and ideality and culture of sentiment which have excited admiration wherever they have been understood, and which have borne fruit in a striking fidelity to national integrity, an adventurous chivalry of the highest order, and an ardent love of freedom.

Among the several educational and political societies organized by Armenians, two in particular are devoted to the program of accomplishing by fair and righteous methods administrative independence, under the protection or even supervision, if necessary, of the great Powers. These are the Tashnagtzian and the Hunchak societies. The slowness with which Christian Europe and America have responded to the appeals of these societies and others of the Armenians is a severe indictment. This booklet is not an appeal; it is not written to inflame prejudice against the present enemies of Armenia. It is a plain statement of horrible facts, with the greater portion of horrors omitted for decency's sake.



New Borders of Armenia, as Proposed After the Great World War

THE STORY OF ARMENIA

This is the true story of a real land—a land whose remarkable people have had a history more thrilling and strange than a fairy tale. The story began in the dim and distant ages of the past, when History first began to take notice of the then aged civilizations flourishing in the center of the Eastern Hemisphere—ancient Mesopotamia. The story continued while nations and races of mystery, might, and magnificence came and went, and built or destroyed the capital cities of great empires. The story is going on at this moment; for the scene of these ancient, medieval, and modern contests—wars, migrations and catastrophies—is still in the “most coveted highway of the world.”

Armenia is a buffer state—a bridge across which pass the civilizations of Europe and Asia. This land must ever be a meeting ground on which races will either exchange their wares or fight their wars, trade their ideas or test their ideals, mingle with mutual concessions or contest for rights and privileges.

A GLANCE AT THE LAND

The ancient borders of Armenia were constantly changing. At one time, during the second dynasty (the Arshagoonian) under Tigranes the Great, Armenia included Media, Assyria, Cilicia and Phoenicia. But in general its limits may be said to be from Asia Minor on the west to the Caspian Sea on the east, and from the Caucasus Mountains on the north to the Murad Su (or East Euphrates River) on the south. It is 400 to 500 miles long and has nearly the same breadth.

The interior is a most interesting plateau land, 2700 to 7000 feet above sea level, traversed by beautiful and romantic mountain chains which culminate toward the east in Mt.

Ararat, 16,969 feet high. In the pleasant and fertile foothills the celebrated rivers, Euphrates and Tigris, have their crigin. Flowing with countless twists and bends, these rivers find their way into the Persian Gulf. On their shores, tradition says, the human race sprang into existence; and the great story of mankind began. In the plains watered by these rivers the great nations of remote antiquity—Chaldea, Babylonia, Persia, Media, Mesopotamia, Syria, Parthia, and the Hittite nation—built their cities, fought their wars and left their records and ruins.

Among the mountain knots of Armenia are found many delightful lakes. Perpetual snows cap many of the rugged cones of long since extinct volcanoes. Rushing, roaring, hissing torrents and jagged volcanic hillsides alternate with gracefully undulating vales and rolling table-lands. The soil is fertile and the earth rich in copper, silver, lead, iron, alum, salt, and arsenic.

Every variety of climate is found in Armenia. The lover of a cold climate can always find ice and snow and a bracing atmosphere in the Ararat mountains. He who prefers the subtropical climate may go to the valley of the Kur from Tiflis to the Caspian Sea, and along the Upper Tigris. A climate similar to that of Southern Europe may be found on the mid-slopes of the frontier mountains. The plateaus have a very severe climate, with long, bitter winters and short summers, scorching hot during the day and cold at night.

The broad valley of the Aras is the richest in vegetation. There are vineyards and orchards, cotton, rice, hemp, and flax. Flocks and herds graze on the table-lands and a little corn is raised.

A GLANCE AT THE PEOPLE

Noah, who built an ark and saved his family at the time of the great deluge (Genesis, Chaps. 6, 7), had three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japhet. According to the Armenian legendary history, in which old traditions are curiously interwoven with Biblical lore, the Armenians are direct descendants of Haik, the son of Togarmah, the grandson of Japhet.

It was in the Ararat mountains that the ark rested when the waters subsided. The great scholars are not in agreement regarding the racial origin and the geographic starting

points of the various branches of the human family. Mr. Rawlinson thinks Armenia the early home of the Aryan race. Herodotus said that Armenians were an offshoot from the Phrygians, who at first lived in Macedonia. It has been suggested that the Armenians were a branch of the great Hittite nation, since many ancient Armenian and Hittite forms of architecture and many characters in the carved inscriptions on ruins are strikingly similar. The Armenians are classified as an Iranian branch of the Indo-European family. Usually the racial origin and relationship of a people can be determined from the type and character of its language. But the language is unlike any Indo-Aryan or Semitic language known to scholars.

The Armenian of to-day is a little above middle stature, yellowish brown in complexion, with straight black hair large nose, and wide, high brow. He is alert, intelligent, adaptive, and a natural tradesman and artisan. The women are frequently handsome, with fine dark eyes and regular features.

Notwithstanding the repeated invasions and long occupations by foreign peoples, the Armenians were always able to retain their racial integrity. Because of the never ending persecutions to which Armenia has been subjected, a large number of Armenians are scattered through Russia, Persia, and India. They are also found in the great commercial cities on the Mediterranean, in the capitals of western Europe, and in America. In 1900 it was estimated that only one million resided in their native land, and almost two million were to be found dispersed among the nations. Foreign peoples now domesticated in Armenia (or at least before the World War) are the Turks, Kurds, Tartars, Greeks, Jews, Gypsies, Nestorians (in the mountains of the Persian frontier), and Georgians (in the northern parts).

Physically, intellectually, industrially, and morally, the Armenians are the equals of the best of the world's races. Their home life is beautiful; their business life exhibits consummate tact. In educational culture they reach the highest rank; in moral courage and consistent national and religious loyalty they are unsurpassed.

EARLY HISTORY OF ARMENIA

The city of Van has always been an interesting and beautiful place. It is here that scholars have found traces of the first records of Armenian history. Nishan Der-Hagopian, an Armenian patriot, has written recently of this old city. "Few cities in the world are so ideally and beautifully situated as Van," he says. "Before the War she lay like a rainbow across the heart of an exquisite garden valley, set in a framework of vine-clad foothills, flanked by superb mountain ranges. Beside her, in crystal purity, stretches Lake Van, embosomed in a verdant plain, surrounded by an exceedingly beautiful mountain chain, which culminates in the north in the sublime monarch of western Asia, Mt. Ararat. In Van were churches and schools and monasteries, beautiful homes, beautiful gardens, fine business places, streets and boulevards."

Upon the rocks that face Lake Van, and upon the ancient altar stones and the columns of the ruins, are found inscriptions in the cuneiform characters of the Assyrians, written in the ninth century B. C. These literary relics tell very little, but they are standing proofs of certain otherwise obscure movements of the great nations of that era, and unquestionable evidence of the existence of an organized people in Armenia at that early date. It is possible that before the ninth century B. C. the inhabitants of the land of Armenia (called the kingdom of Ararat or Biainas in those early ages) had no system of written language. At any rate the Assyrians introduced their cuneiform characters when, early in the ninth century B. C. under Assur-nazir-pal and again under Shalmaneser, their conquests spread into this northern region. While the Van inscriptions are in cuneiform, the language is not known. No ancient language has even a resemblance to it. And were it not for the frequent use of ideographs, the writings would never have yielded their secrets.

The early chronicles are very hazy. Semiramis seems to have invaded the land during his campaigns. There are records of a revolt of Barvir against Sardanapalus. A new regime was established about 840 B. C. by Sar-duris I, son of Lutipris, who appears to have displaced Arame, the earlier antagonist of Shalmaneser II.

This Sar-duris had a grandson, Menuas, who was a great builder and conqueror. He claims to have defeated the great Hittite nation, according to the inscription on the cliff overhanging the Euphrates river near Palu. It was probably a detached tribe of the Hittites. Menuas' son, Argistis I, inherited his father's love of conquest. He had inscribed on the rocks of Van the campaigns he made year by year, and the record of the spoils he brought home. He claims to have overthrown the Assyrian forces in Armenia. His son, Sar-duris II, continued his father's conquests and extended the borders of his country as far as Cappadocia. But soon after this the great Tiglath-pileser III came into Armenia and led his Assyrian hosts in triumph to the very gates of Van. Constant wars were waged until 645 B. C. when Sar-duris III made an alliance with Assur-bani-pal.

The Armenians had crossed swords with such illustrious conquerors as Sargon, Esarhaddon and Sennacherib. And now, when a period of quiet might have been enjoyed, came the great waves of emigrating Scyths and Kimmerians from Asia. They devoured everything in their path. Following this disaster came the Aryan Phrygians, according to the classical authors. These Phrygians, if not the founders of a new Armenia, at least injected new blood and character into the nation. It was with a new and revived Armenia that Cyrus the Great had to deal when he made a conquest of this land in 546 B. C. And though he conquered Tigranes I, this intrepid and tactful monarch in a short time became the trusted ally of the great Persian.

FROM ALEXANDER THE GREAT TO THE THIRD CENTURY A. D.

Having fallen under Assyrians, Medians, and Persians, sometimes losing almost all of their independence and at other times retaining most of it, the Armenians encountered the Greeks in 328 B. C. and were conquered by Alexander the Great. Here ended the dynasty founded by Haik, of which Vahi was the last king.

Within six years after the death of Alexander the Great, the Armenians shook off the Macedonian yoke. During the twenty years of war between the successors of Alexander, Seleucus I (Nicator, 358-280 B. C.) received that division

of the conquered empire which included Syria and a part of Asia Minor. He built many splendid cities, among them one on the Orontes river which he named Antioch. In 287 B. C., Armenia and nearly all of Asia Minor submitted to the Syrians. In 190 B. C., having remained tributary to the Seleucidæ for a century, the Armenians brought about the appointment of Artaxias for their governor, by Antiochus III ("the Great"). This Syrian ruler, Antiochus, was clever and waged successful wars against Egypt and Rome until defeated in 190 B. C. by Scipio at Magnesia. Taking ad-



Armenia and surrounding nations after the death of Alexander
(Fourth century, B. C.)

vantage of these defeats, the Armenian Artaxias proclaimed his country independent. In Lesser Armenia (southwest of Armenia Major) the example of Artaxias was followed by the governor Zadriades.

It is interesting to note that at this time the great Carthaginian, Hannibal, now an exile, sought and found a refuge in the court of Artaxias, for whom he drew the plans for the interesting city of Ardashat.

About this time from the north of Persia the nomadic tribes of Scythian descent, called Parthians, began to emigrate. Fighting always on horseback, with warrior and horse both clad throughout in scale armor, discharging their arrows backwards in pretended flight, as well as forward in direct attack, they presented a brilliant and formidable array.

The talented king of the Parthians, Mithridates I, spread his empire over all of Syria and Armenia, and established his brother, Valarsaces, on the Armenian throne. (150 B. C.) Such was the plastic statecraft of the Armenians, and such their power to appease and assimilate their conquerors, that, though many times overpowered, they were never overcome and crushed. Persian satraps, Grecian governors, and Parthian princes were irresistibly drawn to their cause, and made every recognition of the moral stamina of this indomitable race.

The barbarous Parthians proved to be generous and progressive. The new king, Valarsaces, busied himself building new cities and improving old ones. He made some valuable and just laws, and showed himself anxious to reward merit and to honor talent.

His great-grandson, Tigranes II (Digran), was a real conqueror, and made himself master of Syria and many Parthian provinces. During his reign Lesser Armenia was annexed to Armenia Major, thus extending the empire from the Orontes to the Caspian.

But at this point (65 B. C.) the mighty empire of Rome began to rear her great stature skyward, and to look over the eastern horizon, and to take a more decided interest in the political life of Asia Minor. Mithridates of Pontus, the father-in-law of Tigranes II, became involved with Rome in what was known in Roman history as the Third Mithridatic War; and Tigranes went to the assistance of his father-in-law.

Rome was approaching the zenith of her glory and power at this time. Among the ambitious and talented statesmen of this period was Pompeius (Pompey), who as early as his seventeenth year won fame in the Social Wars, against the faction of Marius. Because of his brilliant military exploits he was the idol of the people and army, and was made Consul in 70 B. C. After ridding the Mediterranean Sea of pirates, he sought fame in campaigns against the principalities in Asia Minor.

Lucullus had been successful in these campaigns at first; but by 66 B. C. Mithridates had regained all he had lost to the Romans. Pompeius was now made commander in the East for an indefinite term. No Roman had ever enjoyed such a power and privilege. He drove Mithridates out of Pontus and into the bordering Armenia. (Pontus was the region just south of the eastern half of the Black Sea.)

Tigranes laid his crown at the feet of Pompeius and was allowed to retain Armenia. Pompeius continued a remarkable conquest, not stopping until he had subjugated Syria and Palestine. As for Tigranes, he remained faithful to his truce with the Romans as long as he lived.

Upon the death of Tigranes in 55 B. C., his son Artavasdes became king. He made the mistake of adopting a rather too independent policy. Provoking the suspicions of Mark Antony, who was then ruler of the East, he was brought to Alexandria, where he was eventually beheaded by Cleopatra in 30 B. C.

Then followed in Armenia a long period of nominal Roman supremacy, but of actual anarchy and civil strife. For two hundred years Armenia was the battle ground of wars and counter wars between Rome, Parthia, Egypt, Syria, and the independent Armenian principalities.

Yet, despite it all, the national spirit of the Armenians grew and crystallized, and the longing for an independent national life increased. The Armenians were willing to learn from the various nations with whom they came in contact. The luxuries of the East, the culture of the West, the learning of the South, the heroism of the North, became their stock in trade. They built fortified castles and temples of oriental splendor. From the rich caravans and river argosies they bought materials with which to make the most vivid and beautiful costumes. Their dress was "beautiful enough to transform even the most ugly." Fur was extensively used; and for ornaments, gold chains, earrings, and necklaces of pearls and rubies were worn. Herodotus speaks of the soldiery of the Armenians as being very picturesque and efficient, with arms "like those of the Phrygians." The cavalry clad in iron armor, and mounted on the famous Armenian horses, charging gallantly, made a reputation as "the best cavalry in the world."

In the district of Coghtn, a delightful vineyard locality,

a group of minstrels sprang up, who went about from one carnival to another, or even to the castles of the wealthy, singing the legends of the old Armenian gods and reciting tales of many human heroes. Festivals, holidays, and banquets in honor of the gods were frequently and greatly enjoyed. This sort of thing helped to foster a national consciousness and race pride.

At the beginning of the Christian era the Armenians had learned to prefer the civilization of the Greeks and Romans. Yet prudence suggested yielding much to Persia, a rising and ambitious empire at this time. However, Armenia was destined to look for a new order of social, religious and personal life—to surrender her spiritual life not to Greece, nor to Rome, nor to Persia, but to Judea! She was destined to take a step that would involve stupendous perils and tragedies, and which would eventually make of her the greatest martyr state in the world!

THE ARMENIANS ADOPT CHRISTIANITY

Long before Christianity became the state religion of the Armenians (301 A. D.), the faith had been implanted and had been growing among the people in general. Persia obtained control of Armenia in 232 A. D.; a massacre of the royalty followed and only one heir to the throne escaped—Tiridates, a son of Chosroes. He fled to Rome; and obtaining favor there, he was helped by the Romans to the Armenian throne in 259 A. D. His first royal act was to persecute the Christians. Among many other Christians, St. Gregory, called “the Illuminator,” a prince of the Arsacid family, was cast into prison. But Tiridates, supposing himself to have been cured of a serious malady by the saint, embraced Christianity; and so did most of his people.

Now the Persians were Zoroastrians—that is, “Fire Worshipers”—and they resented the introduction of Christianity as the state religion of their neighbors. As a result Armenia became the theater of an almost uninterrupted warfare between Persians, Armenians, and Romans. Whenever Persia got the opportunity, she imposed heavy tribute and inflicted cruel persecutions upon the Armenians. And Rome, under Emperor Maximianus, according to the early Christian historians, declared war against Armenia for this one cause

alone—that the detested Christian religion had been adopted. But relief in this quarter came when Emperor Constantine became a Christian, about 313 A. D.

THE CHARACTER AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF EARLY ARMENIAN CHRISTIANITY

The Armenians had ample opportunity to forecast the tragic consequences of adopting a religion hated by their political adversaries. Their choice was deliberate. They became the heroic champions and defenders of an exalted life-principle with a clear consciousness of what material advantages they forfeited. They have remained for fifteen hundred years the advocates of Christianity, loyal and constant, even through periods of persecution and depression, when, had the Armenians failed the whole cause which they defended might have failed.

There are three outstanding features in connection with Armenia's acceptance of the new religion. First, she did not wait until Christianity had been adopted by Rome or Byzantium, nor did she wait for the approval of imperial Rome, nor for the consent of Persia. Secondly, the Church which Armenia established was and has always remained an independent Church, "in spite of persistent overtures from both the Roman and the Greek Churches, and the practical advantages which might naturally have accrued from alliance with either." Thirdly, the Church in Armenia assumed at once a very democratic character. The clergy were always elected by popular vote.

In the ninth century a sect called the Paulicians came out of Armenia into Thrace. They were called "Cathari" or Puritans. Later, in the twelfth century, their principles found expression in the Albigensian or Waldenses movement in Languedoc, France. A struggle was brought about by the crusade against the Albigenses by Pope Innocent III (in 1208), in which the "heretics" were practically exterminated. Their spirit, however, lived on. Thus the first germ ideas of the great Reformation and Renaissance of the sixteenth century may be traced back to the Armenians, who were the first to insist upon the principle that the individual has a right to a free conscience and a right to be heard in civil and religious matters.

EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY UPON THE ARMENIAN
ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT

It was a tremendous trick of fate to put such a people in such an environment as that in which we find the democratic and loyal-natured Armenians. In weakness and in strength, in pagan days and after their conversion, in peace and in war, the Armenians have stood up for their ideals. History does not record a similar instance of such constant devotion to heroic principles under such continuously desperate circumstances.

One regrettable fact in connection with their adoption of Christianity is their destruction of the old harmless relics of pagan glory—the elaborate altars and temples, the images and golden statues, the libraries and invaluable old records.

But in the place of the pagan arts a noble Christian art sprang up. This energetic and practical people showed an unusual talent architecturally and musically. And in literature they displayed the true fruits of the new spiritual and intellectual creativeness which the new religion had inspired in them.

Early in the fifth century they had completed the translation of the Bible (the famous "Armenian Version"); and with miraculous rapidity and thoroughness a classic Armenian literature sprang into being. It was written in a new alphabet (ascribed to Miesrob, and consisting of thirty-eight letters), invented because the alphabets formerly used by them, the Syriac, Greek, and Pelhevi, were considered inadequate fittingly to set forth this wealth of new thought which cried for extensive and intensive expression.

To the Armenians' zeal in literary study, translation, and creation, we owe the preservation of some precious things of which the originals have perished—such as Aristotle's "Philosophical Definitions," the "Chronicles" of Eusebius, "Homilies" by St. Chrysostom and Basil the Great, and some of the works of Philo, Bardesanes, Faustus of Byzantium, and Lerubna of Edessa.

AS DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH

The marked preference which the Armenians showed for western ideas and alliances, as well as the startling awakening and progressiveness which the adoption of Christianity had effected, provoked the bitter hostility of Persia.

In the middle of the fifth century Persia demanded of Armenia that she renounce Christ and worship Fire. King Hazgherd (or Yesgerd) of Persia and his huge army swarmed over the borders and declared a religious war. His decree was: "All peoples and tongues throughout my domain must abandon their heresies and worship the Sun." When the grand vizir, Mihermish, wrote to the Armenians making some absurd charges against Christianity, the Armenians replied, saying among other things: "No one can move us from our belief, neither angels nor men, fire nor sword. Here below we will choose no other God, and in heaven no other Lord but Jesus Christ."

It was an easy matter to collect an Armenian army. A Holy League was formed. It originated in a popular movement. It was a democratic action. The war was considered a people's war.

On the plains of Avaraye (or Avarair), by the river Dughmood, not far from the beautiful Van, the armies clashed. (451 A. D.) Prince Vartan Mamigonian, in command of the Armenians, after kneeling in prayer, thus addressed his men: "Soldiers, as Christians we are averse to fighting, but to defend our religion and our freedom we must fight. Surely our lives are not as valuable as the life of Christ. If He was willing to die on the cross for us, we ought to be willing to die in battle for Him."

Immediately the order to charge was given. Though greatly outnumbered, the Armenians rushed into battle with such fury and determination that they swept the haughty Persians from the field. Unhappily, Prince Vartan was mortally wounded. Persia never again attempted to force her religion upon Armenia.

POLITICAL ENTANGLEMENTS BEFORE THE CRUSADES

At one stage of the strife between Rome and Persia over Armenia, Theodosius the Great ceded to Persia the eastern

part of the country which was thence called Persarmenia.

The western part was annexed to the Roman empire. Arsaces IV, then the nominal king of Armenia, was appointed governor of this western part; and the Persians, hoping to conciliate the people, made Chosroes III of the Arsacid family governor of Persarmenia. The Arsacid rule ended in 428 A. D. when Ardashes IV. was dethroned by Bahram V of Persia. From this time until 632 Persarmenia was ruled by Persian "marzbans" or governors.

Armenians, east and west, realized that while they looked to the western civilization for stimulation and encouragement, the Byzantine government and church were none too friendly,—indeed were oppressively unfriendly. But, prudent as ever, the Armenians insinuated themselves into the confidence of their foes,—and to such an extent that for several centuries, it is perfectly correct to say, the Eastern Empire was not so much Greek as it was Armenian in character.

Emperor Leo (who reigned 717-741), called the "Isaurian," also the "Image Breaker," was an Armenian. He was a disciple of the Armenian Paul, after whom the protestant sect, Paulicians, was named. To this Leo, western civilization owes a great debt.

It happened that the Moslems (a religious and political empire at first, made up of the converts to Mohammedanism in Arabia, Egypt, and Syria), had become a terrible menace to both Persia and Byzantium. * Moawiyah, becoming Caliph in 661 A. D., established the seat of government in that notable city, said to be the oldest in the world—Damascus. One of his ambitions was to rule the sea. He built a fleet on the Mediterranean which he placed under an "amir-al" or commander (whence the English term "admiral"). For seven successive years he threatened Constantinople with this navy.

Under Soliman the Great an attempt was made to take Constantinople (717 A. D.). With 120,000 men, the largest Moslem army ever collected up to that time, he traversed Asia Minor and appeared before the great Byzantine capital. He was supported in his attack by his fleet of 1800 ships.

But, though Leo the "Image Breaker" had no appreciation of art, he had considerable military genius. It was at this siege that the famous "Greek fire," an explosive whose flames were difficult to extinguish, was used, with decisive

effect upon the Arabs. Leo was too resourceful for Soliman. Only 30,000 of Soliman's trained troops reached home again. For more than twenty years Leo held the Moslems back, and in 739 A. D. he destroyed another large Moslem army.

For two hundred years thereafter the empire was free from Moslem attacks.

During this time the Armenians rallied around a powerful native family, called Pakradoonian, or the Bagratidæ, claiming descent from King David of Judea. If we can judge from the magnificent ruins of Ani, the capital city of this (the third) Armenian dynasty, the prosperity and splendor of this period must have been marked.

In 885 A. D. Aschod I obtained a certain degree of freedom from the Persians. But the Greeks, masters again in the Byzantine empire, began a policy of jealous hostility toward the Armenians whose church organization had split with the Greek church and would not reunite. The Greeks went so far as to league themselves with the Moslems against the Armenians. In 1045 the Pakradoonian dynasty began to fall; and with it fell again the Armenians' hope of an independent expression of native genius and national life.

It will be recalled that the first Armenian dynasty began with Haik and ended in 328 B. C. in the rule of Vahi. The second dynasty, the Arsacid (or Arshagoonian), began 150 B. C. with Valarsaces, and ended with Ardashes IV in 428 A. D. The third dynasty, the Pagratid (also called Bagratid or Pakradoonian) began about 743 A. D. and continued until 1079, when Cakig II was assassinated and the Greeks took control of Armenia.

ARMENIA IN DESPERATION

While the Greeks were maliciously rejoicing in their victory over the Armenians, a new foe was appearing on the eastern horizon. The Byzantine empire was soon to regret the downfall of the strong Pagratid dynasty.

The terrible Turk had begun his rueful role on the world's stage. The Mongolian tribes from Mongolia and Tartary in northern Asia began to migrate westward, devouring and plundering as they went.

Armenia had stood as a barrier to hold back the heathen menace from western Christianity. By weakening the

Pagratid kingdom the Byzantines had not only crushed a people whose standard of culture was far in advance of their own, but they had knocked down their own first line of fortifications—"the advance guard of western civilization in the East."

The way was now unprotected. The Turks would find the road to Constantinople opened by the Greeks themselves.

Thus the Armenians might reasonably have gauged the situation. But with an amazing tenacity of purpose they resolved to attempt again to defend the principles and religion so dear to them. Rhupen, a feudal mountain prince, related to the Pakradoonian kings, established another Armenian kingdom in the Taurus mountains, near the Mediterranean Sea; and made definite, open alliance with Italy.

For three hundred years the Rhupenian dynasty defied the attacks of Arabs, Turks, and Greeks. Its government was liberal and democratic. Marco Polo, the great traveler, said of it: "It was governed with much justice and economy. Payas, the port, was the magazine of all the precious merchandise and wealth of the Orient." When the Rhupenian line came to an end for want of an heir, a French prince of Lusignan was invited to the throne.

It was this little mountain kingdom of the Rhupenian dynasty (called Lesser Armenia or Cilicia), which, regardless of the danger, openly aided the Crusaders in every way.

It was an inspiration to the Armenians to realize that Christian Europe was coming to the rescue of Christians in Asia. It seemed as if their dreams were coming true. Surely, this was the deliverance they had hoped and waited for! At last Christianity was vital enough in the West to be a dynamic rule of action. At last Christian sympathy was strong enough to become the incentive which spurred the consecrated crusaders to

"....direct their course
With countless infantry and horse"

toward the Holy Lands, defiled by pagan Saracens. At last a champion had come to the rescue of those who had been cruelly persecuted for disputing the advance of the enemies of Christ. With joy they welcomed the gayly accoutered heroes from England, France, Germany, and Italy, and lent them

food and men and horses and guides through the mountains and over the deserts. And hope burned high!

“Now in the churches cold and dark
Once more shall burn the taper’s spark.”

Alas, what a crushing disappointment it must have been to this nation of age-long crusades to see European knights make failure after failure; relax gradually in their determination to conquer; and finally give up their once high and holy ambition and slink back, defeated, abandoning the Christians of Asia to their fate!

Islam triumphed. In the middle of the fourteenth century the Kurds held the southern parts of Armenia, the Persians held the northern, and the Ottoman Turks (who had become intolerant proselytes to Mohammedanism) occupied the western.

Hemmed in and overrun with enemies, her resources exhausted and deserted by those she had risked all to help, Armenia made one last stand in the year 1375, at the battle of Gaban. Her brave king, and the last to sit on an Armenian throne, Leon (or Ghevond) VI, was captured, the battle lost, and a nation erased from the world’s geography. Leon spent six weary years in captivity in Egypt. Then, being ransomed by the Spanish court, he traversed all of Europe vainly endeavoring to impress upon the people and governments the advisability—if not the necessity—of making one more and mighty crusade against the great enemies of Christianity and civilization in the East. He urged and pleaded until his death in Paris, in 1393.

All this time the Moslems were drawing nearer and nearer to Constantinople.

A PEOPLE WITHOUT A COUNTRY

Armenia in the palmy days of Tigranes II or during the triumphs of the Ani kingdom, was the home of a culture and an art that rivaled the best of Europe and Asia. Her people were educated, sensitive, and aggressive.

All the great human virtues and vices found expression among the Armenians. The very topography of the land lent itself to romance. Lords clashed with lords; and these rivalries and hostilities hastened somewhat the final over-

throw of the kingdom. The happier side of life was not absent. Hunting parties, gay festivals, extravagant feudal house parties, elaborate weddings—all gave light and color to the social life of this heroic people.

But many a house which withstands the raging floods is destroyed by the all-devouring flames. It was so with Armenia. In her pagan days there were tremendous contests and cruel invasions. And while Armenia in this early period was guilty of the same crimes as were her enemies, she survived the assaults of her more powerful neighbors and developed a civilization in spite of depressing ages of Oriental tyrannies. In her early Christian days she still was able to treat with her enemies so as to obtain, in many cases, a virtual autonomy. But when the Turks and Mongols from Central Asia reached Armenia and made her industrious and intelligent people their victims, there was no appeal which could be made to the conquerors' clemency and chivalry—they had no such qualities. The Turks possessed no literature, practically no religion, and no culture of their own. Conquest for the sake of plunder was their greatest delight and satisfaction. The hope of loot and pillage was the controlling passion and the motive of all their activities. They murdered, robbed, tortured, enslaved, and violated all the laws of social decency as a matter of policy. They were militarists and terrorists who combined with a huge conceit an intense and irrational contempt for people of other races. It was no crime to defraud and slaughter aliens.

For three hundred years the Armenian nation was virtually buried. Yet the race, like the Jewish race in its age-long dispersion, adhered to its traditions, language, and customs, and lost nothing of racial identity and very little of religious loyalty.

Wherever the intellectually inferior Turks in the last six centuries have been fortunate enough to let their prudence master their pride, they have placed Armenians in executive and administrative positions. Thus in a humble way, it may be said, the conquered have often actually governed the conquerors.

But from the fourteenth century to the World War the Mohammedan Turk has imposed every kind of abomination and barbarity upon the Armenians. They have been banned from the army and forbidden to own arms. Their word has

been refused in courts of law. Their women could be seized at any time. They have been taxed to the uttermost. Their property has been confiscated at the pleasure of covetous Moslems.

Naturally, as many as could leave their native land have done so. They have settled in large numbers in Russia, Italy, France, England, British East India, and America. And wherever they have made their new home, these once war-loving and ambitious people have been distinguished for their peaceable and industrious conduct. However, when they found themselves among friends fighting for freedom or for any noble and righteous principles (as in Poland and Hungary), they became the energetic champions of the cause at stake.

THE COMING OF THE MONGOLS

In the middle of the thirteenth century Armenia suffered its first Mongol invasion, when Ogotai descended upon eastern Europe and western Asia.

In the middle of the fourteenth century another devastating wave of barbarian emigration swept westward from central Asia. The Mongol, Tamerlane (1336-1405), whose proper name was Timur-i-Leng, and who attained to the rank of the great conquerors, was born at Kesh. After an adventurous and stormy but successful youth, he organized internal affairs and then set out from his native heath to win fame by conquest.

He repeated the Mongol conquests of a century before. Persia and Georgia fell before him; and in 1390 he conquered the Tartars. When he came before Swas, the beautiful city of the Armenians, the citizens, anxious to win his good will by non-resistance, sent their children to meet him with garlands of roses. He trampled the roses and the children under the iron-shod hoofs of his horses. A huge pyramid of skulls soon marked the spot, in a place called to this day, "The Black Field."

Tamerlane conquered everything between the Indus and the Lower Ganges. Later, loaded with loot, he took Damascus, conquered Egypt, and at last, at the famous battle of Angora, captured Sultan Bajazet and routed his army.

But the Mongols had less individuality than the Turks.

They commingled with the Turks and gradually disappeared as a nation.

THE MURDEROUS TYRANNY OF THE TURKS

The migration westward of the Mongols and Turks is one of the sad tragedies of history. They spoiled what gave promise of being very delightful and romantic stories in Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Armenia.

The Arabs were intelligent and adaptive, and had built up a very imposing material civilization in the Near East while Europe was apparently rotting away under ignorance, superstition, and irreligion.

Bagdad, founded by Al-Mansur in 762 on the Tigris (33° N. Lat. by 44° E. Long.) was the seat of the Abassides caliphate, and became the greatest city in the world in wealth, importance, and magnificence. Six hundred canals ran through Bagdad. One hundred and five bridges spanned the Tigris within the double walls of this great city. Many thousands of mosques lifted their glistening minarets heavenward. Thousands of baths, bazaars, markets, inns and palaces—prosperous, extravagant and gay—made this a place every whit as delightful and fascinating as the stories in the Arabian Nights have described it. The caliph's palace contained all the splendor which the North, East, and South could contribute and combine in one edifice.

In the eleventh century the Turks arrived. They looted until they were surfeited. What they left, their near relatives, the Mongols, devoured in the thirteenth century. Bagdad was sacked and nearly ruined.

The Turks, by reason of great numbers, unparalleled brutality, and a zeal born of passionate greed, swamped and trampled under foot the prosperous and progressive Arabs. To this day the Turks exclude the Arabs from all share of government control, and whenever there is a sign of a revival of learning, art, or industry among the Arabs, the Turks are sure to thwart it.

The Kurds preceded the Turks into northern Mesopotamia and Armenia. For centuries they have been lawless shepherds; but when in a lower altitude, among the people of the plains, they are peaceable farmers. Repeatedly the Turks have deliberately licensed the Kurds to plunder and

kill the Armenians, and have supplied them with the necessary firearms.

The Greeks, by virtue of political prestige, were leaders of cultured Christian civilization until Constantinople was conquered by the Turks in 1453. For a period of four centuries the Turks smothered Greek culture and imposed intolerable burdens and humiliations upon Greek citizens.

This Ottoman empire did not spring into being at once as a huge, rapacious Frankenstein among nations; but, starting with a handful of robber Turks in the thirteenth century, it grew gradually, though quite rapidly. It conquered first a few square miles of territory near the eastern borders of Armenia. It expanded in 300 years until it extended from Mecca and Bagdad to a few miles from Vienna. Besides overrunning Persia, Arabia, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, the Ottomans destroyed in Europe the free Christian dominions of Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Hungary.

This disastrous conquest by an unprincipled and inferior race was made possible by a ruthless militarism, of which the method of conscription is a typical feature. The custom of training alien children is another example. Children were demanded as tribute or hostages from conquered Christians and others; and these were brought up as zealous Moslems and were trained in the barracks to be soldiers. These "Janizaries" (the word means "new soldiers") filled with lust for blood, and "divorced from every human relationship except loyalty to their war-lords," became the most formidable soldiers in Asia and Europe. The Ottoman empire continually bled its victims in this manner; and in cruelty and extent its acts as a vampire state are unparalleled in all history. This barbarous institution was formed by Sultan Orkhan in 1330 and was not dissolved until 1826. This may be called the first stage in the development of Turkish tyranny.

The second stage may be called the stage of exploitation. It was military still, but was a period of weakening. As nation after nation won back independence and the horns of the Islam crescent began to fade away, Turkey, instead of trying to make her subjects contented, resorted to more and more cunning, violence and treachery.

Finally, in desperation she adopted the policy of setting

one subject nation against another. Instead*of strengthening all of her empire with good laws and just government, she endeavored to maintain her grip by making her subjects more wretched and impotent than herself.

What may be called the last stage of Turkish tyranny appears in the Young Turks' regime. But of that we will deal later. In every stage the Armenians suffered terribly, particularly in the last.

TWO GREAT ARMENIANS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Of course there was no such thing as a rich class in Armenia during the six centuries of Turkish dominance. And in their reduced circumstances it was difficult to get more than the rudiments of an education. History was a sealed book to them. Their masters literally did not allow them to discover the past glories of their national and literary life. They were a proscribed race. Every symptom of awakening or aggressive intelligence was promptly dealt with. Every display of talent and enlightenment was a signal for fresh persecution.

However, through this weight of oppression there emerged many prominent figures from time to time during the eighteenth century. In Persian Armenia there arose a man whose words and works were typical and expressive of the spirit and sentiment of the Armenians. For, really, the desire and hope for an independent nation had never completely deserted this courageous race.

Israel Ori was a "melik" (hereditary prince) of the province of Karabagh. This province was one which had been allowed to retain considerable self-government. Ori became a leader among some bold and freedom-loving spirits who made repeated efforts to escape paying tribute to Moslem conquerors. Ori was sent to the courts of Europe to ask the great powers to give help or protection to the revolutionists in Karabagh. The revolt was not to be limited to this province, but was to carry relief and liberation ultimately to all Armenia.

For twenty years Ori used every talent and ounce of energy in trying to win a promise of help from the Christian princes. But repeatedly he found those he interviewed so

devoid of true Christian chivalry that he could not excite in them any real disinterested charity. However, at last, he succeeded in persuading Emperor Leopold and Peter the Great of Russia to give their consent to help. Something very significant might have resulted, had not the Russo-Swedish war interrupted the project.

Another spirit typical of this age of awakening was the monk, Mekhitar. He was a convert to the Roman church.

It must be understood that Armenian Christianity until 1439 had been independent, and rather severely simple in its forms and doctrines. It resembled the Greek church in its doctrinal features. The Roman church made overtures for union in 1145, 1341, and, with partial success, in 1439, when the Armenians outside of Armenia accepted union and recognized the papal supremacy. This gave rise to two fanatically opposed parties, which condition added not a little to the general misery of the nation.

Mekhitar went to Venice and by the Pope's sanction founded the convent of St. Lazar. This soon became a notable seat of learning. Surrounding himself with Armenian brethren, Mekhitar began a work of greater importance than he and his patriotic associates imagined it to be at the time.

Their first tasks were the translating and editing of the ancient writings of the Armenians which they had managed to obtain in their manuscript form. They wrote historical works; they systemized the grammar of their language; and they made dictionaries. Later they put into Armenian the great works of the classic authors and of medieval and modern writers.

Their efforts met with such success that in half a century they had brought to the Armenians the story of their own ancient splendors, achievements, and sufferings; also all the riches of western civilization, the theories of philosophy, education, religion and fine arts, and an understanding of the culture of the West—and with these, a burning desire to emulate all they learned.

THE REST OF THE WORLD IN THE DARK AGES

It is necessary to consider in connection with Armenian history, the conditions prevailing in the rest of the world. In the middle ages Europe was in a constant turmoil of war.

The feudal system that prevailed made war very easy. Religious and moral sentiment took its tone from the chivalry of the age. As the medieval towns gained power, and guilds arose, and civil wars undermined the power of kings and lords, political developments occupied the people's whole attention. There were almost no discoveries and inventions in Europe during the dark ages. However, Ibn-Yoonas, an Arabian astronomer, invented the pendulum in the tenth century. Gunpowder, invented by the Chinese, found its way into Europe. The compass, perhaps another Chinese discovery, was introduced for navigation in European waters. During the fifteenth century the art of printing, (also in use earlier in China) was developed in Europe. This was the master key to all kinds of progress. It was followed by many apparently independent inventions. Oil painting superseded wax painting, and the foundation of the Renaissance art was laid. Copper engraving was used first in 1460.

In the sixteenth century there began to appear such great names as Leonardo da Vinci, Giordano Bruno, Michael Angelo, Titian, Galileo, Descartes, Bacon, and Shakespeare. Clocks and scientific tools, telescopes, microscopes and the thermometer appeared. A bolting machine was invented for sieving flour; and white flour took the place of the more wholesome whole wheat flour. Forks took the place of fingers; and tiles and wooden floors replaced straw and earth. And greater things were in store. Columbus had found a new world; and the mighty reform movement in religion and politics and the social order was gathering momentum. The Armenians were not only keenly alive to all these changes, but in every stage they kept abreast of the vanguard of western civilization. It was the only nation consistently, eagerly, continuously interested in, and insistent upon progress. But the Armenians seem never to have been conscious of their superiority. They idealized the Europeans. They looked to the West for help. And this persistent hope in an impotent, selfish, unchivalrous Europe is the greatest irony in the long succession of tragedies which have afflicted this martyr race.

THE NEAR EAST QUESTION

The most pathetic phase of Armenian age-long suffering is the last. Compared with the horrors and unbelievable

degradation of the recent Turkish misrule, all the former persecutions and disasters were feeble rehearsals. From the days of the courtly discussions between Charlemagne and Harun-al-Raschid, the question in the Near East has changed very little. It still concerns the balance of power, what to do with the Moslems, and how to protect the rights of Christians.

Russia in 1774 assumed the character of Protector of Christians of the Near East. Her motives were ulterior and sordid; but to some extent the results of this move were beneficial. The rest of Europe was indifferent to the outrages perpetrated in Armenia. Politics had divorced Christian sympathy. The Near East situation had become a mere politico-economic speculation. The great Powers were anxious for a partition of the Near East; and this became the new phase of the old question: how best to divide it. Now the Armenians by the middle of the nineteenth century had become so involved with Turkish political and industrial life that it seemed the wisest thing to help to preserve the Turkish empire, and to try to reform it. Consequently the Armenians bent all their energies to saving and reforming Turkey. The 1876 reform constitution was, however, vetoed by Sultan Abdul Hamid. The suicidal policy of oppression was continued. Conditions grew so intolerable that the Armenians would have struck for liberty had they possessed the necessary arms and wealth.

But the Russo-Turkish war (1876-1878) gave the Armenians their chance. The adviser of Alexander II in this war was the brilliant Armenian, Loris Melikoff. His influence may be traced in the treaty, after the Russian victory, according to which the "Sublime Porte" (the modern name for Turkey in diplomatic parlance!) "engages to carry into effect, without delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security from the Kurds and Circassians."

England, fearful of Russia's growing power, insisted that the treaty be annulled. It was; and Armenia's advantage was lost. But England made haste to sign a separate treaty, distinct from the general treaty of Berlin, with "The Sick Man of Europe," in which Turkey promised England to make the necessary reforms. And now Turkey began a policy of

impoverishment with a view to the total annihilation of Armenia. Taking advantage of the jealousies of the Powers, the crafty Sultan referred one to another, when his actions were called into question, and went right on making his taxes higher, his persecutions severer, and his outrages more diabolical. Appeal after appeal was made to the Powers, but to no avail. Armenians lived in constant and abject terror.

Patriotic societies sprang up here and there for self-defense. In some cases they obtained arms and were able to resist the assaults of the Turks. But this resistance gave excuse for the most fiendish and colossal massacres of all history (1895-1896). No form of lewdness and barbarity was too gross for the savage Turks. Scenes too terrible to describe were enacted every day. Women with their children in their arms hurled themselves from the cliffs or housetops, rather than be made prisoners of the vile foe. The Euphrates was choked with the bodies of matrons and maidens who had given up life rather than honor. This monstrous iniquity shocked the world. Yet nothing was done. Even gallant, liberty-loving, justice-doing America was afraid to interfere in foreign affairs.

GERMANY AND THE TURKS

And now the Sultan and the Prussian Kaiser seemed about to solve the Near East question. The Turks saw that they needed Prussian help to preserve their tyranny. The Prussians saw 70,000,000 Turks and Magyars for sale as cannon fodder. "This seemed to put world dominion within reach."

The blood of slain Armenians had hardly soaked into the ground before Germany, under Emperor Wilhelm Hohenzollern, openly declared herself the friend and ally of Turkey! Simultaneously Russia began a reactionary policy according to which one of her aims was to procure "Armenia without the Armenians." The Tartars were incited by the Russians to a religious war. But the Armenians had sufficient arms to resist, and in a short time this persecution relapsed.

The Young Turk movement deceived all the world, save the Armenians, into thinking that at last Turkey would reform. This movement had been gaining strength for several years, and at last triumphed in 1908. But the "Revolution" which deposed Abdul Hamid was not a real revolt.

The people had no part in it. It was a machination of a German-trained military clique. The Young Turk was not only like the old, but he was worse.

The stage was all set in 1914; and the Turk, as he waited for the curtain to rise, lay dreaming of the hour when the hated Armenian would be no more, and the Sublime Porte with the Imperial German Government would divide the riches of the Near East and spread the Turkish dominion into the Orient.

The ultimate destruction of the Armenians had been decided upon; but the Young Turks sensed the advisability of winning the Armenians to the support of the Central Powers first. They promised the Armenians Kars and other northern provinces with a qualified autonomy, if they would attack the Russians. The Armenians very nobly refused.

And now came overtures from Russia and the other Powers, offering, promising, appealing, urging! One hundred and sixty thousand regulars and 200,000 volunteers responded to Russia's call; but did so a little too eagerly. It alarmed the timid Russians. It was decided to scatter the Armenians over the front.

Meanwhile, those who had been drafted to fight with the Turks were deliberately placed in exposed positions where they were killed by Allied artillery. But the hour had come for the complete settlement of old scores against the Armenians. No one could interfere now. The great powers were too busy with war in Europe. As soon as the Armenians could be rendered defenseless the Turks would quietly extinguish the nation. An attempt was made in 1915.

A scheme was perfected to execute as many males as possible and, with the pretense of deporting the women and children to settlements in the desert to the southeast, to murder them also. To a large extent the plan was a success. A million and a half of Armenians were shot, bayoneted, starved, drowned or tortured to death. It was the most ghastly and cruel mass-martyrdom ever enacted! The agonies suffered by the women, aged men and children during the pretended deportation are past description. Robbed, beaten, tied in groups and shot or thrown into the river, refused shelter and food, deprived of their clothing, and subjected to every bestial violence and degradation, the miserable columns of humanity moved out into the desolate wilderness and thousands fell by the way.

Many Armenian cities resisted, notably Van, which held out for four weeks against a German-led Turkish army, and was finally rescued by the Russians.

As soon as possible the Armenians all through the Near East united their efforts and held the front against the Turks. By the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, (March 3, 1918), Russia was to cede Armenia to the Turks. The Armenians utterly repudiated the treaty and continued to fight. The Tartars arose against them again; and the Georgians, their allies, had to surrender; but the Armenians fought on.

Lord Roberts has said of the Armenians: "they threw themselves into the breach which the Russian breakdown left open in Asia, by taking over the Caucasian front, and for five months they delayed the Turks' advance,—thus rendering important service to the British army in Mesopotamia."

WHAT WILL BECOME OF ARMENIA?

In reply to President Wilson's note, the Allied Powers made public, on Jan. 11, 1917, the aims they had in the war. Among these were: "The liberation of the peoples who now lie beneath the murderous tyranny of the Turks" and "The expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, which has proved itself so radically alien to Western Civilization."

Gladstone, one of the few statesmen who have expressed their honest aversion to this treacherous people, once said: "Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying away themselves, bag and baggage, from the province they have desolated and profaned."

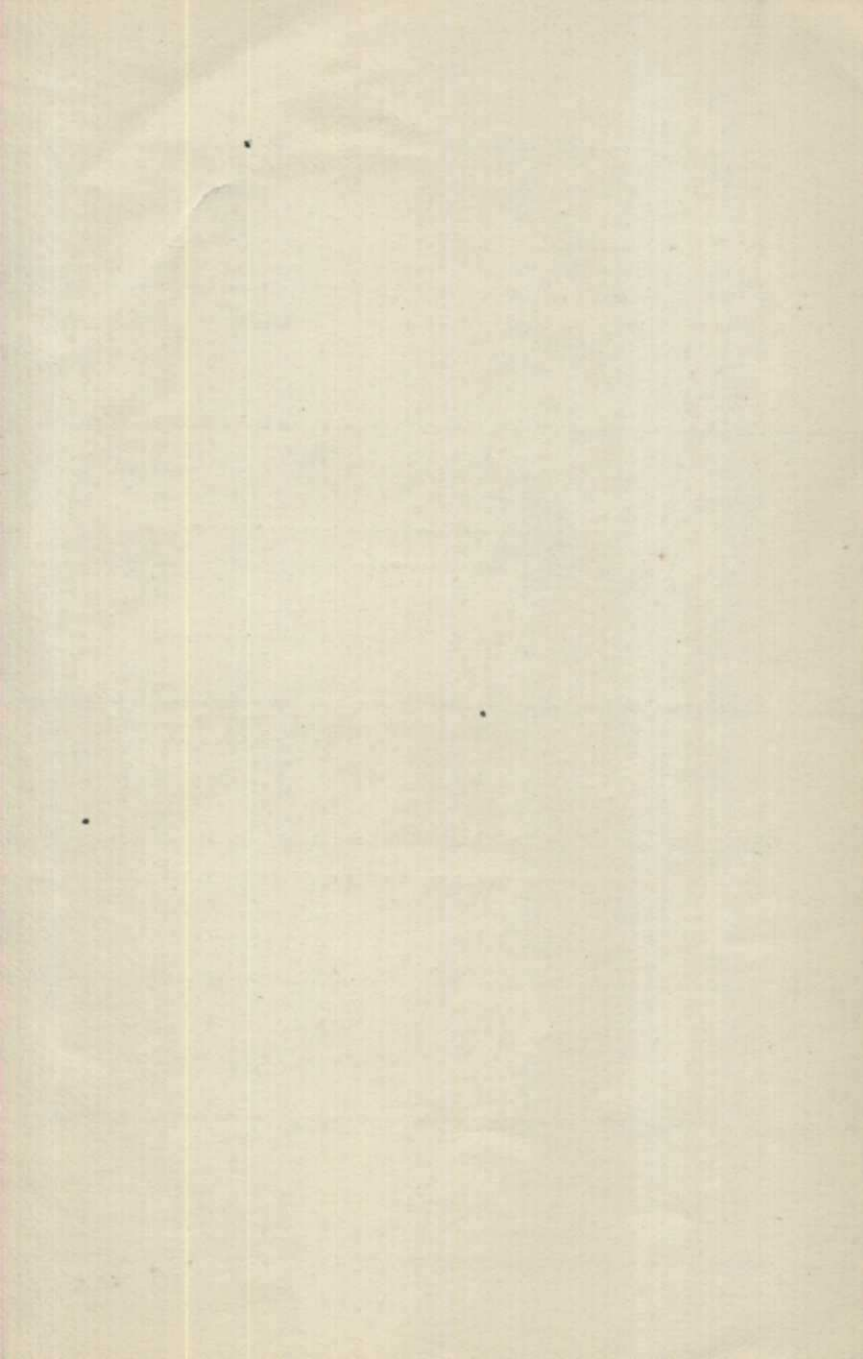
Considerable publicity has been given to the destitution and misery of the Armenian survivors. The terrible havoc wrought in beautiful Armenia, and the pitiable condition of the refugees returned to their destroyed homes, have excited the pity of the whole world. Many tardy champions appeared after the conclusion of the World War asking Christian America to send its dollars, and begging the Powers to intervene to make Armenia and her sister states really free and safe. The response of the so-called Christian nations was prompted less by principles of abstract right than by considerations of prudent international diplomacy.

The Pagan character of modern international relationships

has been shown very clearly in the treatment which Armenia and other small and persecuted nations have received.

A brighter day, however, is dawning for Armenia. Henry Morgenthau, formerly American Ambassador to Turkey, once stated that the World War could not be considered as a successful victory for the Allies, had not their strong arm broken from off the neck of suffering Armenia the cruel yoke of the unspeakable Turk.

The extraordinary endurance of the Armenians under persecution, their faithfulness to national traditions and loyalty to their religious ideals, are all pledges of the future solidarity of the race.



**This is
One of Two Hundred Volumes
of the
Instructor Literature Series
Library Edition**

SEND FOR FULL CATALOGUE