

TURKEY COAXED TO KILL

Armenians, It Is Alleged, Are Deliberately Provoking Cruelty.

THE MASSACRE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Unusual Method of Presenting a Petition Led to Bloodshed—Preposterous Conduct of the Hunchagist Leaders.

A private letter from Constantinople, received in this city, puts on the Armenians themselves the blame for the harsh treatment they have received from Turkey. This letter reads:

"The theory of the Armenian Hunchagist revolutionary party seems to be that its special work is to enlighten the world on the true character of Turkey. Leaving aside chimerical schemes for revolt against overwhelming numbers, they limit their operations to exciting the Turk until he shows himself as he is. They hold that Turkey is a wolf in sheep's clothing. If they twist the tail of the beast, he will forget and stain the snowy fleece with blood every time; although the fact that he needs a white fleece for the preservation of his disguise is perfectly well known to the reputed wolf.

"Another illustration of the working of the plan, and of its success, has now been made, this time in Constantinople. The Hunchagists have succeeded in coaxing the Turk into killing about 150 Armenians in the streets of the city, under circumstances which must remove all illusions as to the degree of civilization so far attained by Turkey.

"Toward noon on the 30th of September a band of several hundred Armenians set out from the Patriarchate at Koum Kapou, in Stamboul, to take a petition to the Grand Vizier at the Sublime Porte, about a mile and a half away. Such a method of presenting petitions is not unknown in Turkey, and is not commonly resented at the time. But the Armenian revolutionists doubtless hoped that this proceeding would be, and perhaps took some pains to insure its being resented. This is not clear, for the testimony is very conflicting as to what really took place. At all events, they took pains to let the Grand Vizier know that they were coming to see him in a friendly way, and on that Monday morning the entire city knew that the Armenian demonstration was to take place that day. As to the Grand Vizier, he simply staid away from the Sublime Porte until the affair was over. By 1 o'clock in the afternoon it was known that the Armenians had set forth, had encountered a column of cavalry in the street, had killed the officer in command, and had been dispersed by the sabres of the troops. Some twenty Armenians had been killed and wounded. It was also known that there had been two brushes between smaller bands of Armenians and the police at the doors of the Sublime Porte, where the police remained masters of the field and several Armenians were killed.

"The demonstration was over; it had failed to present its petition, and it had caused blood to be shed. But none could blame the Turks for putting down with sharp promptness a riotous demonstration, and none could charge them with unparadonable violence in doing this. The blame all fell upon the Armenian Hunchagists for having devised and carried out so preposterous a plan of demonstration.

"Then came the revelation of the wolf in a manner that exceeded the dearest hopes of the Armenian malcontents. Sassoun was copied on a small scale. Monday afternoon and evening the police arrested every Armenian found on the streets in any part of the city. They searched their prisoners, and every one who had anything that could be called a weapon about him was sent up to the Police Headquarters. Others were allowed to go free, as a rule.

"At the Ministry of Police the first batches of prisoners were simply bayoneted as soon as they arrived, without more ado. Later arrivals were beaten with clubs. If they died it did not cause much regret, and if they were simply stunned they were sent at once to the hospital as wounded in the riot. Not that this was the fate of all the prisoners taken on the streets that day. There must have been a distinguishing mark of some kind put upon their clothes when arrested. For some were killed as soon as they arrived, some were merely badly beaten, and some were simply locked up and let go again after a day or two. In one room where fifty men were locked up one had not been beaten at all. It is declared by some of the prisoners that some men were beaten to death with clubs after undergoing their examination, but there are no means at present of verifying this testimony.

"The common method of procedure was for the police to bring a prisoner to the great gate of the Ministry of Police and to tell him to cross the court and go into a certain door. The court was full of police, and as soon as the prisoner entered they attacked him with clubs. The prisoner would run for the inner door, and if he reached it he was measurably safe. But the blows that had rained upon his head and shoulders often left him bleeding, and sometimes shattered his skull.

"Meantime, in the city, the Softas of some of the theological schools had appeared on the streets armed and carrying heavy clubs. These clubs, by the way, seemed to be of uniform pattern, as if prepared beforehand for such an emergency. In the early afternoon the Softas contented themselves with attacking prisoners in the hands of the police. When they saw a prisoner being carried through the streets they would make a rush at him and strike at his head with their clubs. In many cases they killed the prisoner, and the police escort would thus be set free to seek another victim. Toward night it became noised

the police did not molest people who killed Armenians, and a good many ruffians besides the Softas took to hunting Armenians on their own account.

"The murder of Armenians on sight by any one who felt like it continued in some parts of the city all night, and through the most of the day on Tuesday. In nearly every case the victims were beaten to death—that method of proceeding made no noise. But the police made no arrests for these murders, even when they were present in force. As early as Tuesday morning the police said that they had received orders to kill no more, and in the afternoon the Government issued a proclamation saying that order had been restored in the city and that the criminals would be punished by the Government, so that others might go to their business, whether Moslems or non-Moslems. This was intended as a suggestion to the Moslems to stop killing. But it had the effect of remonstrance with a tiger which has tasted blood.

"The Softas, or other Turks of the lower class, would halt a man in the street and ask him: 'Are you an Armenian?' If he answered yes, or betrayed himself by his speech, the club or the knife would be brought into use. These things were done mainly in the byways, but the effect was to produce a fearful panic among the Armenian population. The shops were closed, the houses were apparently uninhabited, and any man who ventured forth to buy food did so with the terror of one who will incur capital punishment on discovery. Most of the people killed seem to have belonged to the poorer classes. Boys of fourteen or fifteen were sometimes killed as cheerful as men. Sometimes the Turks killed a Greek by mistake, and then the police felt obliged to make reparation by expressing regret and explaining that the man had been mistaken for an Armenian.

"By Tuesday afternoon, in the remoter parts of the city, the Turks began to show a disposition to break into houses and shops. After nightfall mobs of the rabble fell upon the lodging houses of workmen, killing all the inmates without mercy. The police looked on, but did nothing save to bring up scavenger carts and carry off the bodies when all had been finished, and to try to clean up or cover up the ghastly pools of blood. Women were rarely hurt, although there were two or three cases of fearful brutality in attacks on women. Wednesday morning it looked as if the Mohammedan rabble were about to make a general attack on all Christians. But by this time the foreign Embassies had informed the Porte in a friendly way that these doings are likely to be condemned by the world. As soon as the authorities learned this they stopped the murders; they are willing to do anything as a general thing, if they can only find out what is deemed wrong by Europeans, to avoid hurting the European conscience. The final act of the drama was the distribution of meat and money to the Softas who aided in this work. It was the act of imperial regard which was intended either to reward the Softas or to calm their resentment at having been stopped in their work of punishing the Armenians.

"It will take some time for the Turks to lose the impetus toward a general attack on Christians, which they acquired during the three days of this license. It is true that some of the more sensible among them see that the Hunchagists set a trap for them, and that they walked right into it by thus allowing a Sassoun massacre on a small scale. But the majority of Turks hold that this slaughter of Armenians was justified because some of the race were guilty, and they congratulate themselves upon the lesson which they have given to the Armenians, even while admitting that the Hunchagist leaders who planned the riot for the sake of the massacre of Armenians sure to follow, were not captured, and cannot be found."