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Feb 1894

In support of my statements, I quoted letters from missionaries living and labouring in the very districts in which the fighting took place, notably Marsovan itself, and who spoke in unsparing terms of the wickedness of the movement. I also quoted the action of the American Board at its late annual meeting.

As further evidence, I beg to inclose an article from the Boston "Congregationalist," giving a horrible revelation of the plans and motives of our Armenian patriots. In confirmation of these plans I find in the "Anglo-Armenian Gazette" for this month—a journal published in London, an appeal from the "Armenian Patriotic League," containing the following:—

"There will be many things wanted for the deliverance of our mother country. We will want time and money, and we will want blood. To accomplish our work, many will have to endanger their lives, be persecuted and fall victims, whether it be those who wield the sword or work with the pen."

In view of such, one is compelled to ask: Has this Armenian trouble been, after all, a persecution on religious grounds, of law-abiding, God-fearing men, or has it been a civil and military prosecution of reckless, misguided men for high treason and murder?

"Fairplay" calls his letter "The other side"—then let him produce evidence to disprove the above statements of credible men.

The Rev. Dr. Hamlin, who was the founder and first President of Robert College, Constantinople, has written the following letter to the "Congregationalist" of Boston, United States of America:—

"An Armenian 'revolutionary party' is causing great evil and suffering to the missionary work and to the whole Christian population of certain parts of the Turkish Empire. It is a secret organization, and is managed with a skill in deceit which is known only in the East.

"In a widely-distributed pamphlet the following announcement is made at the close:—

"Hunchagist Revolutionary Party.

"This is the only Armenian party which is leading on the revolutionary movement in Armenia. Its centre is Athens, and it has branches in every village and city in Armenia, also in the Colonies. Nishan Garabedian, one of the founders of the party, is in America, and those desiring to get further information may communicate with him, addressing Nishan Garabedian, No. 15, Fountain Street, Worcester, Massachusetts, or with the centre, M. Beniard, Poste Restante, Athens, Greece."

"A very intelligent Armenian gentleman, who speaks fluently and correctly English as well as Armenian, and is an eloquent defender of the revolution, assured me that they have the strongest hopes of preparing the way for Russia's entrance to Asia Minor to take possession. In answer to the question how, he replied: 'These Hunchagist bands, organized all over the Empire, will watch their opportunities to kill Turks and Kurds, set fire to their villages, and then make their escape into the mountains. The enraged Moslems will then rise and fall upon the defenceless Armenians, and slaughter them with such barbarities that Russia will enter in the name of humanity and Christian civilization and take possession.' When I denounced the scheme as atrocious and infernal beyond anything ever known, he calmly replied: 'It appears so to you, no doubt, but we Armenians are determined to be free. Europe listened to the Bulgarian horrors and made Bulgaria free. She will listen to our cry when it goes up in the shrieks and blood of millions of women and children.' I urged in vain that this scheme will make the very name of Armenia hateful among all civilized people. He replied: 'We are desperate; we shall do it.' 'But your people do not want Russian protection. They prefer Turkey, bad as she is. There are hundreds of miles of conterminous territory into which emigration is easy at all times. It has been so for all the centuries of the Moslem rule. If your people preferred the Russian Government there would not be now an Armenian family in Turkey.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'and for such stupidity they will have to suffer.' I have had conversations with others who avow the same things, but no one acknowledges that he is a member of the party. Falsehood is, of course, justifiable where murder and arson are.

"In Turkey the party aims to excite the Turks against Protestant missionaries and against Protestant Armenians. All the troubles at Marsovan originated in their movements. They are cunning, unprincipled, and cruel. They terrorize their own people by demanding contributions of money under threats of assassination—a threat which has often been put in execution.

"I have made the mildest possible disclosure of only a few of the abominations of this Huntchagist revolutionary party. It is of Russian origin. Russian gold and craft govern it. Let all missionaries, home and foreign, denounce it. Let all Protestant Armenians everywhere boldly denounce it. It is trying to enter every Sunday-school and deceive and pervert the innocent and ignorant into supporters of this craft. We must therefore be careful that in befriending Armenians we do nothing that can be construed into an approval of this movement, which all should abhor. While yet we recognize the probability that some Armenians in this country, ignorant of the real object and cruel designs of the Huntchagists, are led by their patriotism to join with them, and while we sympathize with the sufferings of the Armenians at home, we must stand aloof from any such desperate attempts which contemplate the destruction of Protestant Missions, churches, schools, and Bible work, involving all in a common ruin that is diligently and craftily sought. Let all home and foreign missionaries beware of any alliance with or countenance of the Huntchagists.

(Signed)

"CYRUS HAMLIN.

"Lexington, December 23."

Massachusetts Home Missionary Society,
Boston, Massachusetts.

In view of the revolutionary and incendiary designs of the Huntchagist revolutionary party among the Armenians, the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society enjoins upon all those it befriends to give no countenance or support to that party.

(Signed)

CHARLES B. RICE,

Chairman of the Executive Committee.

(Signed)

JOSHUA COIT, Secretary.

("Congregationalist," Boston, United States, America.)

Inclosure 3 in No. 49.

Extract from the "Methodist Recorder" of February 22, 1894.

RELIGION OR SEDITION?

Text

An Interview on the Armenian Question.

NOT many weeks ago a gentleman obtained permission to address the Methodist Council of London on the subject of the persecution of Christians in Armenia. As he was himself an Armenian and had suffered at the hands of the Turkish Government, his statements were listened to with respect and sympathy. Since that time the speaker (M. Thoumaïan) has addressed several religious Bodies in different parts of the country on the same subject with the avowed object of arousing the general sympathy of evangelical Great Britain. He has, in fact, been preaching with a good deal of vigour, and to some purpose apparently, a crusade against the Turk. Knowing something of the complex nature of the Armenian question, and fearing that M. Thoumaïan's bitter denunciation of the Turk would not assist those who are seeking to soften the heart of the Sultan towards the Christians who yet live under his rule, a representative of the "Methodist Recorder" has obtained the views of a gentleman who is even better qualified to discuss this matter than M. Thoumaïan. There is probably no one in England who, having a thorough knowledge of the Armenian question, can look at it in a more impartial light than the Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, Mr. A. J. Arnold. For more years perhaps than M. Thoumaïan can remember the Alliance has been fighting boldly, and yet with the quiet skill of the most veteran diplomat, for the cause of religious liberty in Turkey. Its sources of

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rising against the Government, it appears that the authorities are in possession of evidence showing that such a movement was really in preparation, and that the Armoudan people possessed arms and ammunition, and were in communication with Armenian agitators in other places. The ignorant peasants were probably induced to adhere to this movement by the example of Hadji Caloust, who is described as a flighty and ignorant young visionary, but has inherited the wealth and some of the influence of his late father, the leading Armenian Notable of those parts. His escape to the mountains with a band of armed followers was prompted by the knowledge that the authorities were cognizant of his doings, and about to arrest him and search his house; and I venture to express the opinion that the whole affair was one of the ramifications of that Armenian agitation which endeavours, by the creation of a mock insurrectionary movement, to induce Turkish reprisals, and to call European attention to the grievances of the Armenian people.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 73.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 9.)

(No. 131. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, March 28, 1894.

WITH reference to Lord Rosebery's despatch No. 63 of the 28th ultimo, I transmit, for your Lordship's information, a Memorandum as to the origin and tendency of the Armenian movement, which has been drawn up at my request by a gentleman who has had special opportunities of becoming acquainted with the feelings of the Armenian subjects of the Sultan.

I believe that the views set forth in this Memorandum may be accepted as a fair and unprejudiced statement of the position of affairs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 73.

Notes on the Armenian Movement.

SO far as this movement has manifested itself in Turkey during the past year, it has several peculiarities:—

1. It is not indigenous. Its active chiefs in Turkey appear to be Russian Armenians, those thus far captured belonging to a small band who came into the country in 1892, after meeting at Kars to form a definite plan of operations.
2. The form of organization among the Armenians of Turkey has been that of circles of different degrees of intelligence and knowledge. The members of the lower circles know neither the chiefs whom they obey nor any large number of their fellow-conspirators.
3. The immediate aim of the revolutionists has been to incite disorder, bring about inhuman reprisals, and so provoke intervention of the Powers in the name of humanity. Hence the field chosen for their operations is not the district where Armenians are most numerous, but a region where the Armenian element is overwhelmingly outnumbered by the Muslim element of the population.

The active support of this movement in Turkey has been drawn from among the ignorant, or from young men possessing some slight smattering of education. This latter fact explains the rooted belief in Turkish circles that the American missionaries are responsible for the movement, if not directly and wittingly, at least indirectly and culpably through their rash diffusion of Western education, without discrimination of the things which Eastern peoples cannot safely be allowed to know.

As to the mass of the Armenian subjects of the Sultan, their attitude towards the movement seems, at first sight, to be one of indifference. But thoughtful men, and those who have property interests at stake, are not indifferent. They see the hopelessness of insurrection; they do not wish to take part in revolutionary enterprises, and they condemn the methods of the revolutionists as revealed by the events of 1893. But a general and profound discontent with the present system of Turkish administration, together with

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race ties and prejudices, and possibly fear of violence, tend to prevent them from active opposition to the revolutionists. Though having no purpose of revolt, they cannot be trusted seriously to assist the Government ferreting out the disturbers. Privately, they even deplore the instructions sent from the Armenian Patriarch in regard to denouncing revolutionists to the police. They seem also to feel that the weight of their grievances justifies neutrality towards an enterprise which, however foolish and even criminal, may by chance lead to a change of their condition which shall be an improvement. With all this, the educated and sober-minded Armenians do not appear worthy of much graver accusation than that of being in political opposition to the principles of administration of the ruling party.

If it were possible to establish Courts in Turkey which would deal even-handed justice to all classes, or, this being impracticable, if it were possible to find some substitute measure which would fairly give to the Armenians liberty of person and property, with some opportunity for legitimate development, the habitual loyalty to Turkey so often remarked as peculiar to the Armenians might again be counted upon to reassert itself quite widely, to the confusion of agitators and revolutionists.

The danger of the present situation lies in its tendency to carry the large Conservative element among the Armenians over the line which separates lawful opposition of political creed from seditious conspiracy. The present Turkish policy of controlling intellectual development by Muslim standards; the inability of the officials to distinguish between harmless criticism and active sedition; their system of making indiscriminate arrests in the hope of finding somewhat that will justify the arrest; the resort not infrequently to torture in order to obtain testimony; the use made by unprincipled officials of existing excitement in order to ruin personal enemies or to extort money by means of baseless charges; and the frequency with which the official class combine to secure the acquittal of officials or other Muslims accused by Christians, have increased discontent to the point of exasperation; and when taken with the well-known peculiarities of administration which burden all classes of the population, threaten to make rebels more rapidly than the police can catch them.

Latterly, however, many causes, including the conviction of impotence, have diminished this danger, leading men to co-operate with the Government by refusing to harbour revolutionists. In Marsovan the Protestant Armenians have been induced to make a pledge of such co-operation by a formal paper, which their whole body has signed, whereas during the height of the excitement there early in 1893 they were commonly unwilling to do anything which might seem to place them in hostility to the Gregorian Armenians.

No. 71.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received April 9.)

(No. 141.)

My Lord,

Pera, March 31, 1894.

WITH reference to Sir Arthur Nicolson's despatch No. 37 of the 19th January, and to Lord Rosebery's No. 37 of the 9th February, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that I have received communications from Mr. Boyadjian, Vekil of the Protestant community in Turkey, and from Mr. Dwight, of the local branch of the Evangelical Alliance, relative to the interference by the Turkish authorities with the liberty of worship and teaching hitherto enjoyed by the Protestants.

I have spoken to the Foreign Minister and to the Grand Vizier on the matter, and have urged that instructions should be sent to the provincial Governors to redress the grievances complained of, and that general instructions should be issued in favour of the Protestants. Mr. Block has also by my instructions read the Memorandum, which forms Inclosure 1 in this despatch, to the Foreign Minister, and has handed to him a copy of the Memorandum (Inclosure 2) which states the particulars of the more urgent cases that have been brought to my notice. I have communicated a copy of this second inclosure to the German Ambassador and to the American Minister, both of whom take an interest in the welfare of the Protestant communities, and have asked their support to my representations.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

PHILIP CURRIE.

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It seems to me that Mr. Knapp's suggestion concerning the securing of freedom to emigrate for such of the people as wish to leave the country, is a method of ameliorating suffering which might be practicable. The question of back taxes is the chief difficulty. Yet the possibility of squeezing more out of these wretches than is now taken is doubtful. At all events, I would like to bespeak your consideration of the suggestion.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) HENRY O. DWIGHT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 97.

Notes from Bitlis.

(Confidential.)

It is probably a fact not fully appreciated that the depredations of the Kurds, especially of those supplied with arms and uniforms by the Government, are not merely winked at, but they seem to have secret orders from some source to plunder and weaken the Christians all they can.

2. In this city the same thing is being done by the most barefaced blackmail. Many of the men of means have already been plucked, and the business still goes on. It is merely a matter of business agreement as to terms. Houses are searched as a pretext. A few old books are taken to serve as evidence, and the man is kept until he has given as much as he is thought able to give. This business would not succeed so well but for the impression that has got abroad that there is a revolutionary movement, and men fear that they will be accused of some connection with that. They buy themselves off as cheaply as they can, knowing well that if they once get into the toils it will be hard to get out, guilty or innocent.

3. And let me say, that whatever malignant type this so-called revolutionary movement may have taken outside of the country, I am certain that in this district, at least, nothing of an aggressive nature has taken place. What movement there is, as I see it, is merely a protest against the existing order of things, called out by the hopes which were offered at Berlin that it should be different, or rather it is an attempt to send up a signal of distress from a ship that is surely sinking. . . . These people are not a warlike race. They love peace; all that they want is justice and protection in the pursuit of their lawful business, and a chance to grow and become civilized. It is a mistake to think that they long for the rule of Russia.

4. I have only hinted at some of the abuses; I have not spoken of the oppressive tax gathering system, not only in respect to the amount taken, but in the manner of the collection; the cruel beatings, the suspendings from the rafters of the houses, the filling of the mouths of the men with manure, or with viler excrements, the gathering of the women into stables and keeping them there, and threatening them with violation if the money is not paid at a fixed time, and the doing of numerous other things which only the unoccupied brain of a vile Oriental could devise.

5. There is no general massacre to startle Europe, but in the crowded prisons, on the highway, on the mountain-side, and in the plain attending their cattle, or about their work, or from the effects of enforced hunger, more are being brought to death quietly and unobserved than the victims of a general massacre would be.

6. While my work is to help elevate this people intellectually and spiritually, I cannot silently behold their distress, and see them sink and melt away. I can think of only one thing on which those who might help them can be expected to unite. The subjects of this land are not allowed to emigrate. Even a merchant wishing to pass from one district to another must give security to the amount of 50% that he will not go elsewhere, besides having to encounter delay, and use bribery to get his road-passport. Now, I make bold to suggest as a most valuable aid to these poor people that efforts be made to induce the Ambassadors to ask the Government to permit the absolutely free exit of all who wish to go. It should not be an expulsion, but the people should be allowed the choice of staying or not. It seems to me that all might unite in attempting to secure this boon.

(No. 167.)
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Inclosure 2 in No. 36.

Memorandum by Consul Graves.

ALTHOUGH for two or three years past the Government have been aware of the presence of a certain number of political agitators in the Sassoon district, their more serious attention was drawn to the fact at about the beginning of June 1893, when the Armenian agitator Damadian was captured near Moush, and taken to Bitlis, where he remained several months, being subsequently removed to Constantinople. He is supposed to have made important revelations as to sedition in Sassoon and elsewhere, and to have been released or allowed to escape in consequence.

In July 1893 hostilities occurred between the Kurds, instigated by the Sheikh of Zillan or Zileh, and the Armenian villages of Talori Nahié. The Kurds engaged seem to have been chiefly nomads from Sairt (Bohtan) and Diarbekir, namely, the Rashkotanli, Bekiranli, and (?) Badikanli tribes, who are accustomed to summer in the Sassoon and Moush mountains, but had been for some time past prevented from doing so owing to their unruly and lawless conduct. A Turkish battalion used to be stationed in summer at Kab-il-Jevs in Sassoon to keep them in order.

The Talori Armenians withdrew to a stronghold which they had prepared, and successfully defended themselves against the attacks of the Kurds, who ultimately withdrew, and retired southwards to their winter quarters.

The Governor of Gendj, Mustapha Pasha, who arrived later on the scene with zaptiehs and soldiers, arrested some of the leading Armenians, and sent them to Bitlis, and reported that the Talori people were in revolt against the Government. The bulk of the Armenians remained in their stronghold until the winter, when the troops withdrew, and they came down.

Mustapha Pasha was shortly afterwards dismissed, and it is believed in consequence of correspondence between Surri Pasha, Vali of Diarbekir, and the Porte, Surri Pasha's views as to his misconduct being freely expressed. He was succeeded by Ibrahim Kiamil Pasha, of Mardin, whose misconduct while Governor of Bayazid twelve years ago was notorious.

It might have been supposed that after this experience the Bitlis authorities would this year have forbidden the entry of the nomad Kurds into Sassoon, lest their attacks on Talori should be renewed. However, they were allowed to enter, and shortly began minor acts of hostility towards the Armenians. It is suggested that the Bitlis authorities intended to make use of them for the purpose of breaking the strength of the Sassoon Armenians, whose offences were:—

1. That they paid no taxes to Government, but to the neighbouring Kurd Aghas, whose serfs they were.

2. That they were known to harbour a certain number of political agitators, such as Damadian, and had probably been denounced by the latter as ripe for a revolt against the Government.

3. That their Notables had avoided being squeezed by the Vali of Bitlis by steadily refusing his pressing invitations to appear before him at that city. And it is asserted that, apparently for the purpose of gaining credit for the repression of a dangerous revolt, and at the same time covering the traces of his own misgovernment, Tahsin Pasha resolved first to push on the Kurds to destroy the Sassoon villages, and then, if they failed, to invoke the aid of the Imperial troops in completing their destruction.

Early this summer the Kaïmakam of Koulp was sent to claim arrears of taxes from the Talori Nahié. On the inhabitants declaring that they were ready to pay Government taxes if the Government would protect them from Kurdish exactions, but that otherwise it was impossible for them to do so, he proceeded to abuse and maltreat them. They then lost their temper, fell upon him, and after administering a severe beating drove him and his zaptiehs from the district. He then reported that they were in armed rebellion against the Government, and that a large military force would be required to reduce them. About 300 troops and zaptiehs were sent to the spot, but the Armenians retired into their stronghold, and the officer in command refrained from attacking. Probably about the same time, i.e., towards the end of June 1894, an invitation of the Vali Tahsin Pasha to some of the Notables of Ghelié Guzan to come to Bitlis was disregarded by them, and a small force of soldiers who went to Shenik and Semal, in the same nahié, and arrested five of the inhabitants, were pursued by armed villagers, and four of their prisoners rescued.

The nomad Kurds have never have been allowed hostile to the Armenians about the beginning of A Shatak district by Kur Khiyan, in the Gendj district pursued them, and an aff then came to Moosh and indeed, most disproportionate Bitlis. On the pretext th appears to have been 1 7th Division were called Erzingian, Erzeroum. V Kurdish Sheikh Mehmet Kurdish irregulars to co-

Active operations we chiefly confined to the tw Nahié and that of Shatak annexed Tables. Serious and at the outset the Kur had been last year. Reg the futility of further resi

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VILLAGE

Name of Village.	Am	Li
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Yeghgart
Pourkh
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Keghekrank
Hityouk (?) Upper
" (?) Lower
Hosnerk
Enguzik
Eshhensor
Akhronk

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The nomad Kurds from the south, who, under these critical circumstances, should never have been allowed to enter the district, this year showed themselves especially hostile to the Armenians who had successfully repulsed them in 1893. Apparently about the beginning of August a raid was made upon one of the smaller villages in the Shatakh district by Kurds, variously described as Bekiranli tribesmen, or Kurds of Khiyan, in the Gendj district, and about 200 sheep were driven off. The Armenians pursued them, and an affray followed in which some Kurds were killed. The Kurds then came to Moosh and complained to the Mutessarif, and at once extensive, and, indeed, most disproportionate measures were taken to avenge them by the Vali of Bitlis. On the pretext that the Sassoon Armenians were now in open rebellion, which appears to have been believed by the Central Government, the reserves of the 7th Division were called out, troops were concentrated at Moosh and Bitlis from Erzingian, Erzeroum, Van, Kharpout, and other garrisons, while the well-known Kurdish Sheikh Mehmet was encouraged by the Vali to collect a large horde of Kurdish irregulars to co-operate with the troops.

Active operations were begun about the 19th August, and appear to have been chiefly confined to the two groups of almost entirely Armenian villages of the Talori Nahié and that of Shatakh, the names of which are given approximately in the annexed Tables. Serious resistance seems only to have been encountered in the former, and at the outset the Kurds were pushed forward to the attacks, and repulsed, as they had been last year. Regular troops were then employed, and the Armenians, seeing the futility of further resistance, surrendered, and were slaughtered in cold blood.

In the Shatakh district, on the other hand, practically no resistance appears to have been made, the troops entering the villages quietly on the pretence of protecting them from the Kurds, and then indiscriminately massacring the inhabitants under revolting circumstances of violation and torture.

About thirty-two villages are said to have been destroyed, and 3,000 to 4,000 persons killed during a period of twenty-three days, ending 10th September, when the Mushir Zekki Pasha appeared on the scene, and put a stop to further slaughter by taking over command from the Colonels Tewfik Bey and Ismail Bey, who were in charge of the military operations, and upon whom, together with the Vali of Bitlis and his subordinates, the responsibility of what has occurred must devolve, unless it is made clear that they acted under superior orders.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 3 in No. 36.

VILLAGES of Talori, Koulph Caza, Gendj Sandjak.

Name of Village.	Armenian Houses.	Armenian Inhabitants.	Observations.
Talori	250	3,000	Caza of Koulph (Gendj Sandjak) Nahié of Talori or Talcorig, about nine hours from Moush S.W. or S.S.W. There are practically no Kurds resident in this nahié. Estimated number of houses from private sources, and number of inhabitants by multiplying number of houses by 12, that being average of Garvar villages on Colonel Everett's list. Talori Village.—Some of the survivors are said to have returned, and to be now inhabiting the village.
Hartk			
Yeghgart ..			
Pourkh			
Servank			
Keghékrank ..			
Hityouk (?) Upper			
" (?) Lower	24	288	Near Talori, but not in nahié.
Hosnerk			
Enguzik			
Eshhensor ..	40	480	" " Two priests, Hatchadour and Perkis, were killed. Some of the survivors said to have returned to village.
Akhronk	30	360	(?) Caza of Gendj, district of Khirjan, about four hours from Talori.

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Inclosure 4 in No. 36.

VILLAGES in Shatakh District : two or three in Moush Caza, the rest in Sassoon Caza.

Name of Village.	Armenian Houses (oldest).	Armenian Inhabitants (oldest).	Observations.
			District of Shatakh about five hours south of Moush. All these villages are said to have been entirely ruined, except two, but rebuilt by soldiers after events of August-September 1894. Two or three of the first on the list belong to Moush Caza, the rest to Sassoon Caza.
Shenik	30	454	A few Kurd houses.
Semal	25	360	
Ghelié Guzan	108	1,618	A few Kurd houses.
Aghpi	50	385	
Khotzotz Vank	7	94	A few Kurd houses. Village said to be only partly destroyed.
Kop	15	171	
Erotzank	12	183	
*Aghbin (? Upper)	30	360	
" (? Lower)			
Hitenk.	49	424	
Dabig	10	107	A few Kurd houses.
Shoushnamerk	10	91	
Kéghashen	14	97	Said to be only partly destroyed.
*Gheliégenim	10	120	(?) Ghelin is also given as an alternative name.
*Geurmay	18	216	

No. 37.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 20.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, January 9, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a statement which has appeared in the Turkish newspaper, reporting the discovery of Armenian sedition at Van and Erzingian.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 37.

Extract from the "Tarik" of January 6, 1895.

(Translation.)

ACCORDING to a telegram from the Marshal of the 4th Army Corps (at Erzingian) two kinds of materials, procured by disaffected Armenians for incendiary purposes, have been seized, and the matter has been investigated before an extraordinary court-martial. It would appear, after inquiry, that the materials in question consist of some dangerous inflammable substances.

It is reported from Van that some seditious literature has been found in the possession of a certain Armenian bookseller of that town, named Dikran, and that he is now undergoing his trial.

* These villages are not in Colonel Everett's list. Number of houses from a private estimate. Number of inhabitants obtained by multiplying number of houses by 12, that being the average for villages on Colonel Everett's list.

Sir P.

(No. 21.)

My Lord,

WITH refer attitude of the A Beatitude has app his Bishop in Mo finding Catholic Mgr. Azarian has, and last Sunday pontifically.

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Sir P.

(No. 22.)

My Lord,

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however, consider that the report of such doctors disposes entirely of the question of Ovak's veracity, and we feel that in such a case it would be far more satisfactory if the services of an independent medical witness had been obtained.

We have pointed out to the Commission that it is now absolutely necessary to obtain the evidence of the women whom Tavo referred to as witnesses of the occurrences at Gheliguzan.

No. 179.

Sir P. Currie to the Earl of Kimberley.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 66.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 21, 1895, 6 P.M.

MR. GRAVES, referring to Mr. Shipley's telegram repeated to your Lordship in my preceding telegram, informs me that there is at Erzeroum another survivor of the same massacre who escaped wounded. Mr. Graves and his Russian colleague have seen him, and find that his story agrees with that of Ovak as to the death of the priest. He and a survivor of the Talori massacre, whom they have also seen, are to go to give evidence before the Commission at Moush. Mr. Graves fears that the Turkish Commissioners will take every possible advantage of the fact that it is impossible to procure independent medical evidence.

No. 180.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.—(Received at the Foreign Office, February 22.)

(No. 20. Confidential.)

Sir,

Erzeroum, January 28, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copies of a Memorandum which I have prepared on the subject of the effect produced upon Armenian opinion in these provinces by the recent occurrences in Sassoon.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 1 in No. 180.

Memorandum.

AS far as any public opinion can be said to exist among the Armenians of Eastern Turkey in Asia, it must be sought for among the more or less educated inhabitants of the towns. The vast majority of the agricultural population are in a very backward condition, educationally speaking, and seem only conscious of a lively sense of the insecurity and oppression under which they suffer, and of a readiness to accept relief in whatever form, and from whatever quarter, it may be offered. But the townspeople, hampered though they are by the want of freedom of discussion, and of a local press, cannot be entirely debarred from forming and exchanging opinions upon current events and their possible influence upon the future of their nationality. Very strongly marked lines of cleavage have for years past been noted among them on those subjects, and party spirit ran higher between the holders of conflicting views than could augur well for future harmony, if ever the political destinies of the Armenians were to be intrusted to themselves for management.

Broadly speaking, their parties, as they existed previous to the Sassoon disturbances, might be classed as follows:—

1. A Conservative and Turcophile party, composed of officials in Ottoman employ, and their families; of the hangers on, "Kehayas," stewards and unofficial agents of various degrees of the leading Mussulmans, who owed their immunity from oppression to the protection of their patrons, at whose expense they frequently enriched themselves; and of a certain number of higher ecclesiastics and wealthy laymen of the old school, whose large material interests depended upon the favour of the Turks. On the latter they were ready to stand in their light, and as was required of them, and they looked with disavour upon anything calculated to alter the old order of things.

under which they had individually prospered. To these may be added the Armenian Catholics, who, from their geographical distribution, had little to suffer from Kurdish exactions, while they enjoyed almost entire freedom from Government interference on political and educational grounds. They, too, had every reason to fear any change; a Russian annexation meant the loss of their present religious immunities, and an Armenian autonomy would leave them at the mercy of the Gregorian majority.

2. A Moderate Liberal party, comprising a majority of the business, professional and scholastic, classes, together with the best of the higher clergy, whose views, although too liberal to allow them to be really contented with the present position of Christians under Turkish rule, could not be called actively disloyal. They were generally quite alive to the material impossibility of constituting an independent Armenia, as well as to the danger of ultimate denationalization that perhaps awaited them in case of annexation by Russia; it was therefore their aim to avoid precipitating any violent solution of the Armenian question, and to maintain the Armenian element as such, by strengthening and developing the national Church and schools, which enjoyed greater freedom under Ottoman than under Russian dominion; at the same time, they placed their hopes for the future in the ultimate introduction of those administrative reforms which have been so often promised by the Porte.

3. A small but active revolutionary party, but scantily represented within the Turkish Empire, as it is largely composed of young Armenians who have studied abroad, and have fallen under the influence of Socialist or Nihilist propaganda, to whom may be added a certain sprinkling of political exiles and refugees, but still comprising some of the more restless spirits among the Armenians of Turkey, who are ready to assist their comrades abroad in endeavouring to realize their projects. The most prominent organ of this party for some time past has been the journal "Hindchak," published first at Geneva and subsequently at Athens by a group of agitators, to whom almost all the Armenian disorders of the past few years can be traced, and it may be more convenient to refer to this party in general as the "Hindchak" group.

Their object has plainly been, by creating an appearance of widespread disaffection, quite out of proportion to their numbers and influence, to provoke reprisals on the part of the Turkish Government and people, of a nature to draw the attention of the Powers to the manifest grievances of the Armenian nation, and the necessity for their redressal. In this, it must be admitted that they have been ably seconded by the action of the Turkish authorities themselves in the provinces chiefly concerned. Their policy appears to be merely destructive, and so long as they can upset the present régime, they seem indifferent as to what shall replace it; at least I am not aware of their having formulated any alternative scheme of government.

Careful inquiry and observation have driven me to the conclusion that the events of the last six months, coming at the end of a period of ever-increasing misgovernment and persecution, have created a complete revolution in Armenian opinion.

The "Hindchak" group may be first disposed of. It may be taken for granted that they are satisfied with the results of their agitation; its great object, namely, to arrest the attention of Europe, has been attained, whether through their own machinations or by the fault of Turkish officials, and it will be well for all concerned if they cease from further agitation, which has become purposeless, and would only serve to justify the severities of the Government.

The Turcophile party, or at least all that part of it which is not entirely dead to national sentiment of any kind, has been deeply stirred; many of its members are already in secret sympathy and agreement with their former opponents, and many more will join them if they see that the changes which they formerly combated are inevitable and imminent, being of the class which is always disposed to come over to the winning side.

As for the Moderate Liberals, their views appear to be undergoing a complete change. They declare that it is useless any longer to pin their faith upon the development of the national Church and schools, or to wait for the voluntary introduction of reforms, not only in view of the present vexatious manner in which ecclesiastical and educational questions are dealt with, but of what they believe to be the deliberate policy of the Government for the weakening and ultimate extinction of the Armenian element in these provinces. What use, they ask, will there be for church or schools, if there is no Armenian population left to fill them? And whereas, not long ago, they were strongly opposed to the idea of Russian annexation, and would have viewed the prospect, even of a temporary occupation, with apprehension,

I am inclined to think that the troops would be a blessing to the Armenians, their proper compensation for them.

However, the Armenians, and even joy, their most satisfactory result, resembling that of property, and in accordance with their Mussulman affairs. But they demand reforms without foreign control.

Erzeroum, Jan.

Consul Graves

(No. 21.)

Sir,

ON 28th inst. from Mr. Shipley; out a summary of account from the had proposed to I referred to in these then suggested the massacring a great of responsibility to Commissioners.

I lost no time. Russian and French this subject, they before discussing in general confirmation suggestion put for not, however, mentioned adoptions by emanating from Bit source, but they in chronological order may be.

My colleagues adopted, the inquiry lost before getting to the Bitlis document. Pasha and his associates the Turkish Commission as they propose to d Ambassadors, merely followed by the Commission inquiry is to establish responsibility necessary.

As an indication which they have informed his Consul indicated to them by Sassoon.

eg to fight about the school in Erzeroum

I am inclined to think that their general feeling now on the appearance of Russian troops would be one of genuine relief, and that the security thus afforded for their lives, their property, and the honour of their women, would be considered an ample compensation for having certain spiritual and scholastic restrictions imposed upon them.

However, though they might at this moment accept Russian rule with resignation and even joy, there can be little doubt that the solution to which they look forward as most satisfactory is the establishment of some autonomous form of Local Government, resembling that of the Lebanon, under which they could enjoy security of life and property, and immunity from oppression, together with equal rights of citizenship with their Mussulman neighbours, and a proportionate share in the management of local affairs. But they are profoundly sceptical of the introduction of such reasonable reforms without foreign interference, and of their execution without some kind of foreign control.

Erzeroum, January 28, 1895.

(Signed)

R. W. GRAVES.

No. 181.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.—(Received at the Foreign Office, February 22.)

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Erzeroum, February 1, 1895.

ON 28th instant I had the honour to transmit to your Excellency a telegram from Mr. Shipley, reporting that the President of the Commission of Inquiry had read out a summary of documents furnished by the Bitlis authorities, containing an official account from the Turkish point of view of the occurrences in Sassoon, and that he had proposed to begin the inquiry by summoning and examining all the persons referred to in these documents. Mr. Shipley, with the concurrence of his colleagues, then suggested that the charges against the Imperial troops of burning villages and massacring a great part of their inhabitants should be taken first, leaving the question of responsibility to be examined later, but this suggestion was not accepted by the Commissioners.

I lost no time in communicating the sense of Mr. Shipley's telegram to my Russian and French colleagues, but as their Delegates had not reported to them on this subject, they were obliged to telegraph to Moush, asking for direct information before discussing it. The Russian and French Delegates have now replied, giving a general confirmation of Mr. Shipley's account of the President's proposal, the counter-suggestion put forward by them, and its rejection by the Commissioners. They do not, however, mention, as Mr. Shipley does, that the version of the Sassoon occurrences adopted by the Commission as the basis for its inquiries is an official account emanating from Bitlis, which we can hardly help regarding as coming from a tainted source, but they merely state that the President proposed to take the occurrences "in chronological order," without saying what the authority for such chronological order may be.

My colleagues and I feel that if the President's method of procedure is definitely adopted, the inquiry may be diverted into side issues, and much valuable time may be lost before getting to the real facts, in examining a number of witnesses referred to in the Bitlis documents, who have no doubt been duly primed in the interests of Tahsin Pasha and his associates. At the same time, it would be difficult to contest the right of the Turkish Commissioners to conduct the inquiry in the chronological order of events as they propose to do. We have therefore agreed to telegraph to-day to our respective Ambassadors, merely expressing regret that the suggestion of our Delegates was not followed by the Commissioners, as, in our opinion, the main object of the whole inquiry is to establish whether the alleged massacres took place or no; the question of responsibility necessarily remaining for later consideration.

As an indication that the Commissioners do not adhere absolutely to the principle which they have thus laid down, the French Delegate yesterday (31st January) informed his Consul here that on that day they heard the evidence of a witness indicated to them by the Delegates with respect to the whole of the occurrences in Sassoon.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

R. W. GRAVES.

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for countless crimes, was promoted to high honours, and to-day receives a salary from the Government. A few weeks ago some of his men arrived in a village. They had with them two girls, who managed to get a five minutes' talk with an Armenian villager. They begged him to tell every Christian he met that they were brought from Sassoon, and that twenty of their companions were in the harem of Hussein Pasha. By the way, there are at least seven or eight girls from Sassoon in different harems in this city. Not long ago two were in the house of the First Commissaire of Police, and one in an army doctor's house.

Emin Pasha, of the Adcljevas district, is another noted Chief. Not long ago he called an Armenian merchant, to whom he was owing 400 liras. He said to the Armenian, "You must give me a note to the effect that my debts to you have been paid." The man protested at first, but seeing that it was a question of his money or his life, he yielded, and lost his 400 liras. The merchant presented his case to the Government, even to the Sublime Porte, but never received an answer. A certain Kurd, Sultan by name, was owing another merchant 45 liras, but he so intimidated the man in his shop opposite the Government building that not only was the debt cancelled, but 15 liras in cash was counted out into the hand of the Kurd. This happened at the large town of Arjish last summer, and the man sent a telegram of sixty words to the Governor of Van, but no notice whatever was taken of the matter.

These Kurds not only have *carte blanche* as to the property and lives of the Christians, but as to the sanctity of their homes as well. In many villages no Christian dares refuse his daughter or wife to any Kurd. In a village near Arjish, a certain Dervish Bey ravishes women, in open daylight, in the presence of their husbands.

Special facilities were afforded the writer for collecting exact statistics in regard to the districts of Shadakh and Norduz. Within the past ten years between 80 and 100 Christians have been murdered by the Kurds in these two districts, and hardly one of the murderers has been brought to justice. And from only fifteen villages out of the whole fifty-one the number of sheep stolen during the past fifteen years has amounted to 12,000.

The following items taken from the records of a few villages scattered through the province give an absolutely correct idea of what is happening in all:—

Lim.—Twenty-seven Armenian houses, 240 men and boys, pay in taxes 100 liras, 40 kilehs in wheat, tithes (worth 30 liras). In the same village eighty Kurdish houses pay not a para in taxes. Last year the various zaptiehs going there used up 40 kilehs of barley, not paying for anything, killed 200 hens, and used butter, clover, &c., in proportion. The Rais harvested last year 50 kilehs of wheat, but when winter came he had but 20 kilehs left. Last year the Kurds forced the Armenians to give 500 days' work, thus obliging them to leave their own fields to take care of themselves. Last year the village shepherd was attacked by Kurds and killed, 290 sheep were carried off, 30 were run through with swords, while the fat tails of 10 others were cut off; 20 stacks of wheat and 10 of flax were burned to the ground, and a large amount of wheat carried off.

Kurrelle.—In 1893 one man killed. In thirteen years 1,100 sheep and cattle have been stolen. During five years the Kurds have burned or stolen nearly 300 chaps of wheat (150 liras' worth). Last year they came and cut down fifty trees, all that the village had. Four years ago these villagers had 4,000 sheep, to-day they have barely 1,500. They are obliged to pay the Government in kind and cash, besides which Khalil Bey (Hamidieh) and Shakir demand their share yearly.

Vesek.—In 1891 Kurds stole 1 horse and 10 sheep; in 1892, 3 donkeys; in 1893, 158 sheep and 29 head of cattle. Complaint made to Government, result, Kurds two months in prison.

Hindustan.—Thirty-five houses. Eleven years ago Minas Manoogian killed by the Kurds. Complaint made, but in vain. Ten years ago Shakolu stole 150 sheep, imprisoned two months and let go. Ten years ago Mehmet Agha stole 24 sheep, not punished; Ali Agha stole 35 oxen, 70 liras fine imposed, which Pharsi Kyatib Osman, a Government official, appropriated to himself. Nine years ago Mehmed Agha stole 195 sheep. The same year Ayib Khan Bey entered the village church on Easter night and stole all the church vessels; arrested, fined 56 liras, but the money never was paid, and he was let go. Same year many thousand bundles of clover burned; four years ago 505 bundles. Last year 135 sheep were stolen; all the church silver and vestments stolen, worth 500 piastres. Through complaint to the Government, a font, worth 100 piastres, was returned. Sheep, cattle, and grain besides were stolen.

Pertag.—In 1885, 550 sheep, 35 lambs, 2 donkeys, 15 chaps of wheat stolen. In 1891, 45 sheep, 6 lambs, 8 chaps of wheat. In 1893, 110 sheep, 2 donkeys, and other

robberies, to the amount of 3,000 liras, and 300 sheep were robbed.

Astvadzashen.—In 1883, 1 man killed. In 1885, 3 stacks of wheat stolen. In 1886, 1 man killed. In 1887, 1 man killed. In 1888, 1 man killed. In 1889, 1 man killed. In 1890, 1 man killed. In 1891, 1 man killed. In 1892, 1 man killed. In 1893, 1 man killed. In 1894, 1 man killed. In 1895, 1 man killed. In 1896, 1 man killed. In 1897, 1 man killed. In 1898, 1 man killed. In 1899, 1 man killed. In 1900, 1 man killed. In 1901, 1 man killed. In 1902, 1 man killed. In 1903, 1 man killed. In 1904, 1 man killed. In 1905, 1 man killed. In 1906, 1 man killed. In 1907, 1 man killed. In 1908, 1 man killed. In 1909, 1 man killed. In 1910, 1 man killed. In 1911, 1 man killed. In 1912, 1 man killed. In 1913, 1 man killed. In 1914, 1 man killed. In 1915, 1 man killed. In 1916, 1 man killed. In 1917, 1 man killed. In 1918, 1 man killed. In 1919, 1 man killed. In 1920, 1 man killed. In 1921, 1 man killed. In 1922, 1 man killed. In 1923, 1 man killed. In 1924, 1 man killed. In 1925, 1 man killed. 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Chief. Not long ago he 0 liras. He said to the y debts to you have been estion of his money or his ed his case to the Govern- r. A certain Kurd, Sultan timidated the man in his lebt cancelled, but 15 liras pened at the large town of s to the Governor of Van,

roperty and lives of the many villages no Christian ge near Arjish, a certain of their husbands. fact statistics in regard to years between 80 and 100 icts, and hardly one of the a villages out of the whole n years has amounted to

ges scattered through the in all:—

boys, pay in taxes 100 liras, ge eighty Kurdish houses ng there used up 40 kilehs sed butter, clover, &c., in but when winter came he nenians to give 500 days of themselves. Last year sheep were carried off, 30 rs were cut off; 20 stacks a large amount of wheat

100 sheep and cattle have tolen nearly 300 chaps of a fifty trees, all that the , to-day they have barely ash, besides which Khalil

892, 3 donkeys; in 1893, rnment, result, Kurds two

Manoogian killed by the hakolu stole 150 sheep, Agha stole 24 sheep, not h Pharsi Kyatib Osman, a go Mehmed Agha stole e church on Easter night e money never was paid, er burned; four years ago urch silver and vestments overnment, a font, worth ere stolen.

aps of wheat stolen. In eep, 2 donkeys, and other

robberies, to the amount of 100 liras. In 1894, 5 large bins of wheat broken open and robbed.

Astvadzashen.—In 1883 robberies of houses by Kurds living in the village amounting to 3,000 piastres, also 30 cows and donkeys. In 1893, the Headman's ("Rais") girl was abducted; 8 chaps of wheat and robbery to 1,000 piastres. Additional, in 1883, 1 man killed. In 1884, 1,000 bundles of clover burned and 100 loads of straw. In 1885, 3 stacks of wheat and 800 bundles of clover burned.

Vosqipag.—In 1880, 60 mule-loads of household goods and 40 oxen carried off, 1 man, Murad, killed. In 1881, 70 cattle and 50 oxen. In 1882, 100 sheep, 200 cattle. In 1883, 200 sheep. In 1884, 48 cows. In 1885, 12 oxen and 2 horses. In 1888, 6 oxen, 2 men wounded. In 1893, 13 chaps of wheat. In 1894, 2 oxen, 44 sheep, 3,000 bundles of clover, 200 chaps of wheat.

Upper Haigutsore.—Fifteen villages. A summary: In 1894, 324 chaps of wheat, 995 sheep, 1,200 bundles of clover, 4 cattle wounded, 1 man killed, 4 cases of rape. In 1893, 120 chaps of wheat, 950 sheep, 30 cattle, 33 liras cash. In 1890, 500 sheep. It ought to be added that this valley, only three hours from the city, is the best-protected district in the region, owing to its position, and the fact that its population is largely Christian. The taxes and tributes are very heavy indeed, and the plan evidently is to reduce the people as fast as possible to the condition of other villages in the remaining districts.

Adeljevas District.—This is the finest wheat-raising district of the province, and has been reduced by the Kurds to the last stages. Peshnagumere, the largest village, which used to pay taxes to the value of 1,000 liras, has been entirely deserted within the past year, and hardly a house remains standing. Four other villages adjoining it have been entirely deserted, while every other village has been depleted. During last Lent Hussein Pasha, with 120 horsemen, made a general raid on the district, pillaging, ravishing women, and committing outrages generally.

6. *Prospects for Crops.*—By careful inquiry, the writer finds that, on an average, a little more than half of what was sown last year has been sown this year, owing to poverty and fear of Kurds.

7. *Finances.*—Nothing is clearer than that financial ruin is imminent. And is it any wonder, in view of the above facts? Every harvest several hundreds of acres are burned to the ground. Villagers are robbed till they have barely enough to live through the winter. Money is an impossibility with them. To pay their taxes they are obliged to borrow at high rates of interest. The roads are unsafe for the villagers, for travellers, traders, or for caravans bringing goods. In the city itself merchants and artisans are robbed by unpaid Turkish officials, till both profit and capital are exhausted, and in order to pay their liabilities they go into bankruptcy. This process is going on every day.

The writer saw recently, in the hands of a foreign Consul, a document signed by more than 300 prominent Turks and Armenians of a large town in the district, asking for protection of life and property.

The following is a careful and accurate summary of the taxes and tithes paid to Kurds and Government by the Christians of the districts of Shadakh and Norduz, as over against what is paid by the Kurds to the Government. In these two districts there are 51 Armenian as against 100 Kurdish villages. The nominal taxes of the Kurds average 2,777 piastres, but it is extremely doubtful if they really pay even that amount, while the Armenian villages average 10,949 piastres, which they must pay somehow, or turn Moslem. In addition to this, each Armenian village pays as tribute to local Kurdish Aghas in kind and cash to the value of 2,690 piastres, and besides this, Shakir, the brigand chief, demands as his tribute from each village 1,000 piastres. So that, disregarding the amount of which these villagers are robbed yearly, they must each provide somehow payments in cash and kind to the value of 14,639 piastres, while for the whole number of the 51 villages the sum reaches 8,000 liras. Is it any wonder that in three years more than 200 families have moved away?

The entire revenues of the Province of Van are said to be 300,000 liras, of which smm the Christians pay five-sixths. They pay a road tax, but roads are never repaired; they pay money for protection, but there is no protection.

They pay for the salaries of officials, who are seldom paid. They pay an education tax, but the money is all turned into building Turkish mosques and sustaining Turkish schools.

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Inclosure 3 in No. 65.

Substance of a Letter from the Catholicos of Akhtamar (near Van) to the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople.

PLUNDER by Kurds in 1894-95 in District of Khizan (Vilayet of Bitlis).

Villages.	Names of Kurds.	Property stolen.
Khager ..	.. Adeh, of Khoros ..	1 measures of wheat.
" ..	.. Rashid Muradian ..	4½ " "
" ..	.. Jangoyan Bashir ..	2 sheep.
" ..	.. Spardgertsí Sharaf ..	2 " "
Mehmedents ..	.. Adeh, of Khoros ..	9 measures of wheat.
" ..	.. Rashid Muradian ..	9 " "
" ..	.. Farhizian Golpigtsi Tofan..	7½ " "
" ..	.. Osmanian Tahir ..	130 sheep.
" ..	.. Tossoyan Ahmed ..	42 measures of wheat.
" ..	.. Sheikh Saïd Ali ..	155 " "
Droshents ..	.. Khatigian Ibrahim ..	15 sheep.
" ..	.. Osmanian Tahir ..	80 " "
" ..	.. Ustintsi Mehmed and Murad ..	60 " "
" ..	.. Rashid and Malak Amaryan ..	55 " "
Anabad ..	.. Adeh, of Khoros ..	6 measures of wheat.
" ..	.. Rashid Muradian ..	40 sheep.
" ..	.. Kochoyan Mehmed ..	6 measures of wheat.
" ..	.. Khalid Bey, of Patiar. and Broyan Ali ..	6 " "
" ..	.. Spardgertsí Arasstsi Mustafa ..	500 piastres.
" ..	.. Bouskantsi Tafur ..	1 mule.
Veghents..	.. Tajdo and Ahmed, of Bitlis ..	300 piastres.
Dee ..	.. " " " " ..	8 sheep.
" ..	.. Adeh, of Khoros ..	160 piastres.
" ..	.. Jangoyan Bashir ..	300 " "
" ..	.. Osmanian Oseh.. ..	35 measures of wheat.
" ..	.. Koshoyan Mehmed ..	75 sheep.
" ..	.. Tajdo and Ahmed ..	200 piastres.
Sourp Khach Monastery	Adeh, Ali, Sefetin, Moussa ..	4 sheep.
		15 measures of wheat.
		60 sheep.
		60 piastres.
		18 sheep.
		74 hens, 11 cows; another time all the village cattle and 400 piastres.
		400 piastres.

Plunder by one Kurd, Mamch, an outlaw who killed an Armenian, was imprisoned for a time in Bitlis, escaped, and now goes about unnoted:-

From Khager..	..	..	..	..	8 sheep and 140 piastres.
" Mehmedents	..	..	..	..	600 piastres and 1 mule.
" Droshents	..	..	..	..	300 piastres.
" Veghents	..	..	..	..	5 sheep and 200 piastres.
" Noreshen	..	..	..	..	968 piastres and 10 sheep.
" Dee	100 piastres and 31 sheep.
" Anabad	520 piastres.
" Mandents	2 sheep and 1,200 piastres.

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Money extorted from the people of the same district by Ismail Effendi, Cadi of the district, and Said Effendi, Head of, 1891-95:—

							Piastres.
Khagev	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,360
Mehmedents	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,695
Broshents	..	..	..	..	..	..	750
Bakhour	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,400
Kadinok	..	..	..	..	..	..	680
Nam and Khadzuss	..	..	..	..	..	..	970
Anabad	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,750
Veghents	..	..	..	..	..	..	680
Noreshen	..	..	..	..	..	..	445
Dee	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,540
Sourp Khach Monastery	..	..	..	..	..	..	390
Mehmedents	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,000
Voiz	..	..	..	..	..	..	7,560

PLUNDER and Extortion of Money in Spargherd (Ispartout in Kiepert's Map), Bitlis Vilayet.

Villages.	Year.	Property stolen.
Horug	1891	{ 500 sheep. 100 piastres.
Verin Godents	"	{ 100 "
Janjvants	1894	{ 600 sheep. 100 piastres.
Sepkar	"	{ 100 "
Ogand	1893	{ 100 "
Janjvants	1894	{ 100 "
Nerpan	"	{ 60 "
Nerkin Godents	"	{ 60 "
"	"	{ 150 "
Nerpan	1893	{ 150 "
Luvare	"	{ 200 "
Tagh	"	{ 100 "
Pazents Monastery	"	{ 50 "
Hargents	"	{ 50 "
Geghstu	"	{ 60 "
Pazents	"	{ 150 sheep. 200 piastres.
Dalare	"	{ 100 sheep. 250 piastres.
Dossou	"	{ 100 sheep. 350 piastres.

Oppressions of Armenians in the same district, 1893-95:—

Meleon, Stepan, Simon, and Vartan were bringing wheat, together with some Kurdish companions. At a point on the road the Kurds who were armed attacked the Armenians, killed them, and carried off the wheat. This was in 1893.

In 1890, the Fafirs of Tagh killed Reiss Khalo and his son, and carried away all his property.

The village of Sozvants, which was entirely Armenian, is now three-quarter Kurdish; the Kurds have secured everything, and use the remaining Christians as their slaves.

The Kurds of Sdabgants have entirely driven out the Armenians from their village, and now have complete possession of all their fields.

In the village of Badanantz, the house of Shakeen, who was a very wealthy man, was three times robbed, and finally completely ruined. This was done by a Kurd known as Mahmed.

The village of Huisp was robbed by Khurshid Bey, five persons were forced to become Moslems, and all the rest fled.

In the winter of 1894-95, a large number of men from this district went away from their homes to find food for themselves; in the spring they returned to their homes, but ninety of them were seized by the Local Government. They were tortured very severely, and after a long investigation were released, but, in the meantime, fifteen had died from the effects of ill-treatment, and the remainder became beggars.

A certain Mokhsi- the district and asked He was well received, placed, so that on the buried, and a stone be The same day after 1 house, and then going impoverished.

The Mudir of Sp Governor of the district in 1895.

This spring Mamp the Catholicos. He ha as he had spent the tin local officials, made fu necessary papers, &c.

In 1893, Mehmeh kidnapping the boy of the sum demanded to t Mehmeh also robb poverty.

List of Persons Mur

Gorenantsi Sarkis
Saso Yegazarian
Lozan, of Khopar
Mohsi Krikor, of
Avedis Hohnanes
Puto, of Adzgord
Vartan, of Sourpkh
Bogos, of Sourpkh
Sarkis, of Manno
Avedis, of Naman
Tavit, of Pakhur
Dazgo, of Hurant
Harootune, of Hu
Aslan, of Veri Go
Harootune, of Go
Gafro, of Keghe-s
Nahabed, of Gais
Manoog, of Sumbo
Two sons of Sharo
Bogos, of Agoun
Melik Krikorian
Khachig, of Bitlis
Harootune Gaspari
Khosdegh Muradin
Sarkis, of Sumbo

The Kurds burned t to the Government. On a tree, then burned, and Not one of the abov to justice.

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A certain Mokhsi-Harootune, of the village of Veri Godents, went to the Sheikh of the district and asked for better protection for his house, which was a very wealthy one. He was well received, but in the cup of tea offered him a dose of strong poison was placed, so that on the way back to his village he died. The following day he was buried, and a stone bearing a figure of the cross placed at the head of the grave. The same day after the ceremony Kurshid Bey came with his men, robbed the house, and then going to the grave polluted it. The house has become completely impoverished.

The Mudir of Spargherd seized Reis Safro and Avedis and sent them to the Governor of the district, who took £ T. 30 from them and let them go. This happened in 1895.

This spring Mamprey Vartabed, of Akhtamar, went to Spargherd on business for the Catholicos. He had papers from the Catholicos, but none from the Government, as he had spent the time from his boyhood in the monastery. He was arrested by the local officials, made fun of, and £ T. 20 were taken from him as the price of the necessary papers, &c.

In 1893, Mehmeh robbed the village of Verin Horug, and one day succeeded in kidnapping the boy of the village priest, and demanded a ransom. The father took the sum demanded to the Kurd, but on the way home the boy suddenly died.

Mehmeh also robbed the priest of Nerpan, and reduced him to the last stages of poverty.

LIST of Persons Murdered in the Districts of Khizan and Spargherd in the Years 1891-95.

Murdered.	Murderers.
Gorenantsi Sarkis Aga	Neighbouring Kurds.
Saso Yegazarian Darentsi	Kasim and Khalut, Beys of Khoulp
Lozan, of Khopan	Ditto.
Mohsi Krikor, of Veri Karason	Ditto.
Avedis Hohannesian, of Veri Karason	Bachir, of Khoros.
Puto, of Adzgords	Mehmed, of Ardgords.
Vartan, of Sourpkhach	Amo Bazhar Kerabtsi.
Bogos, of Sourpkhach	Ditto.
Sarkis, of Manno	Tafur S-lim, of Davnass.
Avedis, of Nannam	Kurds of Busgants.
Tavit, of Pakhur	Amelia Goleh, of Gavness.
Dazgo, of Hurants	Topo, of Khoros.
Harootune, of Hurants	Malak and Ahmo, of Khoros.
Aslan, of Veri Godents	Jevahir, of Geej.
Harootune, of Godents	Ditto.
Gafro, of Keghess	Mehmeh, of Gabarz.
Nahabed, of Gaiseri	Kurds of Burnashen.
Manoog, of Sumbone	The Beys of Sumbone.
Two sons of Sharo, of Sori	Ditto.
Bogos, of Agoun (Kavash)	Sheikh Mehmed, of Gout.
Melik Krikorian (Mukus)	Abdul Gafur, of Varendents.
Khachig, of Bitlis	Unknown.
Harootune Gasparian, of Dzakhogh	Mehmeh, of Gabarz.
Khosdegh Muradian, of Dzogoun	Servant of Shiekh of Khizan
Sarkis, of Sumbone (head of monastery)	Son of Sheikhi Bey.

The Kurds burned the mill belonging to the monastery. Sarkis went to complain to the Government. On his way back he was caught by these Kurds, shot, hung from a tree, then burned, and finally thrown into the river.

Not one of the above Kurds, though well known as murderers, has been brought to justice.

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LIST of Persons who have been forced to become Moslem in the Provinces of Khizan and Spargherd, 1891-95.

Abducted Persons.	Abductors.
Manooshag Shahoyan, of Darents ..	.. Khalut Bey, of Khoup.
Itchan Moudigryan, of Darents ..	.. Kerim, of Khoup.
Yeghissabet Avedissian, of Hegvets ..	.. Khalut, of Pronts.
Sesse Vartanian, of Palasore ..	.. Servant of Mustafa Bey, of Gotass.
Nazeh Sakissian ..	.. Ditto.
Tro Bedrossian, of Nerkin Karasu ..	.. Moussa, servant of Kaïmakam.
Turo Mouradian, of Nerkin Karasu ..	.. Mahmoud, of Nerkin Karasu.
Meto Khazarian, of Buronts ..	.. Pireh Bey, of Buronts.
Asmine Sarkisian ..	.. Selim Bey, of Buronts.
Khorig Muradian ..	.. Saïd, of Buronts.
Sesseh Gorossian ..	.. Andali Bey, of Buronts.
Sesseh Mirzoian ..	.. Hamdo, of Bousgants.
Shamam Minassian, of Namats ..	.. Kerim, of Sherets.
Basseh Ganjoyan, of Dee ..	.. Hassan, of Bulonts.
Kanbeg, of Parse ..	.. Tafur, of Bousgants.
Basseh Asloyan, of Anabad ..	.. Abbeyt, of Parse.
Sister of Bedros Maksoudian ..	.. Abdullah, of Parse.
Khazal Hohannesian, of Kaserik ..	.. A Kurd of Bulonts.
Manoog Hovhannesian ..	.. Sheikh of Khizan.
Basseh Ganjoyan, of Dee ..	.. Shendo, of Burnashen.
Murad Yeretsian and family ..	.. Sheikh of Khizan.
Rhazal Mardanian, of Mandents ..	.. Policeman Moussa, of Bitlis.
Manooshag Knachadourian, of Nam ..	.. Bakir, of Nerkin Karasu.
Simon Gahvantsi ..	.. Sheikh of Khizan Gakav.
Gakav Hagopian, of Makhour ..	.. Mirza, of Gakav.
Zardare Dzagoyan, of Uran ..	.. Melik, of Khoros.
Khafshey, of Uran ..	.. Abdul Hait, of Khoros.
Khorig Hovkannessian, of Ogehi ..	.. Sheikh of Khizan.
Khaban, daughter-in-law of Murad ..	.. Gol Mehmed, of Gavnos.
Bakhehagul, of Shin ..	.. Ibrahim, of Gulpig.
Iskoshi, of Shin ..	.. Mehmed, of Gulpig.
Khazal Krikorian, of Dee ..	.. Saïd, of Gavnos.
Saroun's daughter-in-law ..	.. Servant of Sheikh of Khizan.
Daughter-in-law of Krikor, of Gabents ..	.. Beys of Buronts.
Kohar, of Sourp Hatch ..	.. Jangir, of Bousgants.
Kohar, of Dee ..	.. Ibrahim, of Bousgants.

A large number of families moved away from the village of Khandag, leaving eleven families. The tax-gatherers insisted that they were to pay their own taxes, as well as of those who had moved away. This being impossible for them to do they chose the only remaining alternative, and all became Moslem.

The District of Mukus or Moks (Van Vilayet).

The oppressions, murders, and forcible proselytizing in the district of Mukus, if all were told, would fill a volume. In a word, it is sufficient to say that this district has been all but emptied of its Christian inhabitants.

The taxes of those who have moved away are demanded of those who remain, although their fields have been all seized by the Kurds. Those who remain are entirely unable to give their own and the taxes of those who have moved away. They are beaten, imprisoned, and wish to emigrate, but are prevented from doing so, and turned back to die in their desolate homes. This is a matter of indifference to the Government and the gendarmes, whose cruelty is well illustrated by the way in which they treated two Headmen of villages. Abdo, son of Ali Abbass, and Mustafa, of Van, two zaptiehs, put two Headmen, Tukho and another, in a closed room and filled it with smoke. Tukho died and the other is very ill.

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The condition of this district of Mukus can be understood by the fact that several have been forced to become Moslem since January 1895. Their names are:—

Vosko Avedian, of Subgants.
 Sahag Garabedian, of Subgants.
 Sahag's wife, Khumar, of Subgants.
 Sahag's children, Darimo and Garabed.
 Nergiz of Dzardants, her brother, Bedros, and son, Bogos.
 Daughter of Manoog, of Budnot.
 Okhan's daughter, of Dzakhogh, entirely against her will, by Moussa, a relative of the Sheikh. After a short time he killed her, and carried off a daughter of Oyhan, of Dzok.
 Sulto, wife of Aslo, of Sebb, was carried off to Abdul Kerim.

This year (1895) the Christian inhabitants of Aring, Dzapants, Komants, Kuchokhs, and Demgar have all emigrated, leaving their women and children in Shedan district in Shattakh (Van Vilayet). Zaptiels met these emigrants, but pitying them somewhat, and taking something as a bribe, allowed them to pass on out of the district.

This information in regard to Mukus was received from Der Mardiros in letters dated the 30th April and 12th May.

The District of Rushdoniats (Van Vilayet), 1892-95.

In 1892, all the haystacks of Nareg were burned down the night of the Sultan's illumination. There were in all 10,000 bundles, valued at 30,000 piastres (= about 272l.).

In 1894, in the same village, the flour mills were burnt and 20 kilés of wheat carried off. A kilé was then worth 380 piastres (3l. 9s.).

In 1894, Kurds carried off from the same village all the rugs of Sahag, all the furniture of Mokhsi Hovhannes Jalalian, and 3 bales of merchandize from a shop. They also robbed the house of a man from Khizan, who was living in Nareg at the time.

In 1894, the Kurds burned the house, barn, and stable of Mokhsi Khachadoorian Harootune, of Mokhrapert. The sheep were also burnt.

In 1894, all the wheat (about 200 "chaps," valued at 8,000 piastres), belonging to Reis Krikor, of Arpert, was burnt by the Kurds.

In 1894, the haystacks belonging to Reis Harootune, Rasho, Goleyan Khazar, of the village Turshogh, were burned, containing 2,600 bundles, and valued at 7,800 piastres. They also carried off sixty sheep.

In 1893, from the same village, the Kurds carried off forty-two sheep.

In 1893-94, they robbed Der Tomas of sixty sheep, and after tying the eyes and mouth of the priest they plundered his house. They also carried off 130 lambs belonging to the village, and robbed a girl whom they found in a field of the gold ornaments on her head.

In 1893 and 1894, Yusuf, of the tribe of Dudere, and some Kurds of Getsan, robbed the village of Agoun of eight oxen, seventy-five sheep, and all the church furniture, silver, &c.

In 1894, they robbed the flour mill belonging to the monastery of Sourp Tuma.

A few days ago the Kurds carried off eight beehives belonging to the monastery of Sourp Sahag.

In 1893-94, the haystacks of the village of Belu were burnt. They contained 4,000 bundles, valued at 1,300 piastres; also several bins of straw. Der Hovhannes' straw was also burnt. The house of Usta Margos was robbed of all he possessed.

In 1895, all the wheat belonging to the monastery of Sourp Hagop was carried off.

In 1894, in the village of Hahkt, 1,600 bundles of hay were burnt, which belonged to Der Kabriel.

In 1894, in the village of Pailknere, five stacks of hay and much straw were burnt; also 105 sheep were carried off.

In 1893, in the village of Pakhvants, 4,000 bundles of hay were burnt, and in the spring of 1895, forty-six sheep were carried off.

In 1894, Fakhr Ibeyt and his men robbed Khaboyan Hagop and Avedis of forty-two sheep and their house furniture.

In 1894, the men of Mirza Aga, of the tribe of Dudere, robbed the village of Erigde of four oxen and seventy-five sheep.

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In 1894, Abdul Gafur and Fakhr Ibeyt robbed the house of Aslo Mardirossian, and burned 1,200 bundles of hay belonging to Vartan Nakhoyan and Dilboyan Haroutune.

During the years 1892-94, the Kurds entered the house and wounded the sons of Safo, Avedis, and Manoog. Two smaller children died suddenly in the house the same day from fright, as it was supposed. This was done by the servants of Saïd Bey. In the same village another house was robbed, and fifteen sheep were carried off. In addition to this, the straw bins of Reis Safo, Der Krikorian Parsegh, and Markhass were burned by these Kurds.

In 1893, ninety-five sheep were carried off from the village of Badagants. The same year Mokhsi Hagop's two oxen were stolen, and in 1895 the Dudertsi Kurds came and carried off ninety-five sheep from the same village; also all of Pakhan's house furniture.

In 1892, these same Kurds carried away 114 sheep, two horses, and burned 1,900 bundles of hay.

Again, in 1894, they burned the barn of Reis Hagop; also his haystacks and wheat, amounting to 150 "chaps." This was at the time when Fakhr Yusuf killed Reis Mardo.

In 1893, the Dudertsi Kurds carried off from Karadash twelve head of cattle, and at another time seventy-two sheep. The following year the Vosdantsi Kurds carried off twelve head of cattle.

In 1892, the son of Sherif, Gozo, killed the son of Der Mardiros.

In 1895, all the wheat of the village was burnt; also 3,600 bundles of hay.

In 1892, a woman was raped by a zaptieh on the road.

The oppressions in Shattakh (Van Vilayet) are numberless. The principal town, as well as some of the villages, is evacuated. What has been said about Mukus applies equally well to Shattakh. The list of murders and oppressions in this district is very long in my record. We have not a minute list of all the murders and oppressions during 1894-95, but the following is a list of those records before that time:—

In 1893, five well-known Armenians of the central town, Tagh by name, were killed. At this place the Kurds are not able to do much harm, but the conduct of the Government is unspeakable. Last Easter Sheikh Mooss, a captain in the army, drew a cross on the head of his dog and paraded with him in the streets in order to incite the Christians. Tahir Aga, of Pesantasht, and his companions carried away 150 sheep and killed a man in the presence of two Turk-zaptiehs.

In 1893, the Kurds of Diniss carried off from Shidan 640 sheep.

The above-mentioned Tahir and Abdal carried away from Narr seventy sheep. They killed Reis Sharo and wounded seven persons. They came again the same year, and carried off 160 sheep and four guns. In the same year, Tahir and Abdal carried off from Verin Daren 120 sheep.

In 1891, Ghiravli Mehmed carried away from Aregh 105 sheep.

The celebrated robber, Shakir, who has plundered Shattakh, Norduz, and Haigatsor, and who has killed more than eight Armenians, in 1895 robbed the people of Gajet of fifty sheep and forty rolls of "shal" cloth.

In the same year, thirty-five sheep were carried off from Sevdighin by Ghiravli Ali Khan, Hassan, and Jangir. Shakir also took from those villagers £T. 9 and two rifles.

The Kharushdantsi Kurds attacked Gajet and took 900 sheep, wounding seven persons, and killing two, Mesrop and Sarkis.

In 1893, Mehmed Aga robbed the same villagers of seven copper cauldrons, forty sheep, and forty measures of butter.

In the same year, the Kurds burned more than sixty beehives belonging to Sagtsi Darmo, and abducted Pokhan's daughter-in-law.

During 1893-94, Malo and Tamas Khalilantsi Kurds carried off from Gagsi (?) 4 oxen, 60 "chaps" of wheat, 30 measures of hemp, 26 of linseed oil, 2 cows, 20 donkeys, and killed a man, Mukhitar by name. The same Kurds carried off from the village of Hinants 8 sheep, 16 "chaps" of wheat, 9 measures of linseed oil, and a cow, and wounded a woman. They also carried off from Jenag 10 "chaps" of wheat, 44 sheep, 2 dogs, 10 measures of hemp. They killed a woman and her child, wounded Hagop Tomayan, and carried off his wife.

Giravli Ahmed killed Reis Mukhitar of Dzezdants, plundered and carried away 30 "chaps" of wheat and 180 sheep. All these events took place in 1893.

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In 1894, Khavushdantsi Kurds carried off from Khumar sixty sheep, burned Reis Hagop's house and all in it, and Gulo's haystack; latter's brother was wounded.

In 1895, Jangir burned in Jagaspar eight stables, and in them 400 sheep.

In 1894, Shakir carried off from Aiki forty sheep, six rugs of felt, and twelve measures of wool. The same year he robbed Dzagavank of 180 sheep, and killed the shepherd. In 1893 he robbed Mardiros of Arikom of 300 sheep, and kept his brother's daughter eight days in the mountain.

In 1892, Shakir carried away 100 sheep from Makiosk, and robbed a well-to-do Armenian of all he had.

In 1893, the Kurds of Eshat carried off from the same village 800 sheep and four oxen, and wounded a man.

In 1892, the Norduz Kurds carried off from Hashgaven 300 sheep, six oxen, and two buffaloes, and killed Mardos' brother. The Government demands taxes on sheep which have been carried off by Kurds.

In 1893, Shakir took 20 mejidiés (3l. 6s. 8d.) from the people of Armashad, and twenty sheep the following year, and boasted that in 1894 he stole 1,000 sheep from Armenians.

LIST of Desecrations in Khizan (Bitlis Vilayet), Mukus, and Haigatsor (Van Vilayet).

Abaranits Sourp Khach Monastery	..	Now dwelling of Talir.
Sourp Khach, in Mamadan Monastery	..	Occupied by Khizan Sheikh (Kurd).
" Asdvadzadzin, in Sorva Monastery	..	" Shibli.
" Ghiragos, in Sparzherd Monastery	..	" Kurds.
" Asdvadzadzin, in Pazents Monastery	..	" "
" Kevork, in Sherin Monastery	..	" "
" Asdvadzadzin, in Kuva	..	" "
" Garabed, in Abgants	..	" Cholo and Shara' kinsmen of the celebrated Beder Khan Bey.
" Minas, in Nanavants	..	
" Asdvadzadzin, in Agutasht	..	
" Naragatsi, in Goochokh	..	
Two shrines in Hin	..	" Hin Kurds.
" churches in Vostan	..	One in ruins, the other a mosque.
Sourp Harootune (Devé Boyun)	..	Occupied by Hin Kurds.
" Asdvadzadzin (Garader)	..	
Zagu Monastery (Shattakh)	..	Desecrated by Tamas and Mulo in 1893.
Sourp Kevork (Junug)	..	

The chapel in Iki in Shattakh was desecrated by Shakir and his men in 1893; Sourp Stepanos by soldiers in 1891, and Sourp Asdvadzazin the same year. Some Kurds pulled down the church of Sourp Kevork, and occupied its lands. Sourp Asdvadzazin in Khosp was abominably desecrated by Kurds in the night of the 7th April, 1895, just before the people went there for special services. This was done by polluting all figures of the cross, and even the altar itself. The church of Mulk was desecrated; also the church of Karavants by Kurds from the same village in 1892. The same Kurds destroyed the church of Govgants. The Kurds of Mulk buried three of their dead in a field which belonged to the church, and after that occupied it as a cemetery. They had also seized a field belonging to the monastery of Charahan Sourp Nishan. There is no monastery either ruined, deserted, or occupied which is not, directly or indirectly, under the influence of some Kurd. As has been shown, the lands of many of them have been occupied. If the present condition continue, it is plain that all lands pertaining to monasteries and churches will pass into the possession of Kurds.

The District of Haigatsor (Van Vilayet), 1891-95.

The Kurds of Gusnents plundered the village of Hindustan, and carried off 240 sheep and a herd of cattle.

In 1893, a Kurd, Ahmed Aga, and his men from the village of Khach, plundered the village of Khek, and carried off all the cattle, and the following year all the sheep. The monastery of Khek was robbed by Said Oglou of a horse and saddle, and of £ T. 2 and sixty sheep by Mohri, son of Fundi.

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In 1893, Omar Aga and his men from the village of Shamman, in the district of Norduz, carried off all the sheep belonging to the village of Abradents. About thirty oxen and cows, also 218 sheep, were driven off from the monastery of Khek.

The son of Chok Rasho, Ali by name, besieged the house of Mokhsi Hagop Aga, and tried to shoot him, but Hagop Aga redeemed his life by paying £ T. 2 and four "chaps" of wheat. Again in 1894, Ali tried to shoot Hagop Aga, but he managed to make good his escape.

In 1893, Ahmed, son of Khalif, of Gavergun, killed Gabriel Hampartsoumian, of Hangushdan, while the latter was at work in his field. Kelim, of Vostan, was Ahmed's accomplice. Kelim has also been the accomplice of the celebrated Shakir in his many crimes.

In 1893, some Kurds carried away Reis Adom's three oxen, loosening them from the plough; also three oxen belonging to Kalost Pahkanian.

In 1891, Khalid, son of Chok Rasho, carried off two horses and one mule belonging to Reis Ravo Azizian, of Veri Biginguerd. In the same year, Janghir Aga carried off forty-six head of cattle, and in 1893 four cows, eight oxen, and one buffalo, with the help of Abdul Rahman, of Vostan. In 1891, Chok Rasho's son, with five companions, entered Reis Ravo's house, and robbed him of 1 "chap" of wheat, 50 piastres, and 2 rolls of "shal" (cloth). During the same year, Janghir Aga wounded Reis Ravo with two sword cuts, and carried off 4 "chaps" of wheat. In 1892, Hassan and Ahmed, of Gavergan, robbed Reis Ravo of thirty-two sheep. During the same year, Moula Sherif and Fage shot and wounded Abraham Aga Herachian, and burned his barn full of hay.

In 1893, the Kurds of Veri Biginguerd carried off thirty-six sheep from the village of Khosp. The year following, the celebrated robber, Shakir, drove off 275 sheep from the same village, and took also 3 "chaps" of wheat. In 1893, Panos, the Reis of the village, barely escaped with his life from a murderous attack made on him by a son of Sido Gloz.

In 1893, Shakir took by force 10 mejidiés (3l. 6s. 8d.) in money from the village of Khek, and 2 "chaps" from Gugzi. The year before he entered the village of Asdvadzashen with eighteen companions, all armed with Martini rifles. He made an attempt to kill the Headman, but the latter hid himself in the "tonir" (an underground oven for baking bread), and thus escaped. He wished to plunder the village, but was at last persuaded to leave after he had received many gifts. In 1894, Shakir carried away 80 "chaps" of wheat from the village of Ghem. The Sheikh of Gorundasht takes 70 "chaps" yearly from the same village. During 1893-94, Shakir robbed the inhabitants of Kiziltash of £ T. 15 in money, and carried off their horses from the pasture, together with many sheep and 24 "chaps" of wheat. In 1892, Shakir and his men besieged Kiziltash, and only after receiving many gifts was he induced to leave. These same men attacked Mokhsi Pakhan on his way to Akhpag, wounded him, robbed him of £ T. 100, and carried away his horses. In 1894, they burned five stacks of hay, and drove off all the sheep of Kiziltash. In a word, the oppressions of this village have been so great that some have been compelled to move away.

On the 14th May, 1895, Tahir Aga, of Shattakh, stabbed and fatally wounded Mokhsi Hohannes Pakhanian.

In 1893, Godz, of Hirj, and Ammar, of Bijinguerd, carried off 100 sheep from the village of Kortz. In 1894, Tafur carried off forty sheep, while Khalaf stole eight oxen the year previous and killed the son of Aziz. The Sheikh of Garandasht collects as his yearly due sixty "chaps" of wheat from this village. Tafur, the celebrated robber, who lives in Karavank with eight other Kurdish families, collects from each village in Haigatsor from 4 to 30 "chaps" of wheat each.

In 1894, Shakir robbed the people of Kertz of fifteen "chaps" of wheat, and Bultents of seven "chaps." All the inhabitants of this latter village are practically the slaves of the Kurd agas living in Vostan.

Omar, of Artamed (two hours from Van), son of (?), secretly placed a Martini rifle in the house of an Armenian, and immediately called some zaptiehs, who searched the house, found the rifle, took several things that struck their fancy, and imprisoned the Armenian. Being encouraged by his success in this venture, he grew bold enough to take from 100 to 500 piastres from each village of Lower Haigatsor. Besides, he was able by threats to obtain wheat, ploughs, or whatever else he wanted. Several times the villagers complained to the Government about this man, but no heed whatever was taken of their protests.

It is usual for the Turks of Artamed to give feasts to one another in the Armenian villages, and always at the expense of the villagers. Often these feasts, or rather

orgies, last for days, and are the scourges of the country, beating the Armenians into submission.

Last Christmas service in the little church at that they left the people have almost they not only fail the whole yield is

The villages oppressed by the Turks away. Already these same Turks of Khorkom. In Krikorian, of Sou Amirkhan Adzoyan.

In 1893, in the year following 1894, Hohan Man Durdyan, Sherif of His friends immediately accused the Armenians £ T. 400.

In 1892, Tafur, same year, thieves men. From this thirty to forty "chaps" of wheat. Aga, of Bijinguerd, the house of Shakir. He took the bride, and left so amounted to about stable of Moorad guarding their wife. took from these a Deeran tribe drove carried off 350 sheep tribe the famous S.

In 1894, Said 240 sheep and but Ali carried off 330 wife of Mukhtar,

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orgies, last for days. Moussa Rustem Effendi, Hyder Effendi, and Dervish, a soldier, are the scourges of Lower Haigatsor. These men, and others from Artamed, by cruelly beating the Armenian villagers, get money, wheat, hay, trees, and whatever else they want.

Last Christmas Eve, when all the Christians of Mashgaldag were gathered for service in the little church, Said Aga, son of Mustafa Bey, of the same village, rushed into the church and fired off his revolver several times. The people were so terrified that they left their prayers unfinished, and fled to their homes. In this village the people have almost entirely ceased to cultivate their orchards and vineyards, because they not only fail to enjoy the products, but are often obliged to pay far more than the whole yield is worth as a tax to the Government.

The villages of Khorkom, Kiushk, and Ishkhanikume have been so much oppressed by the Turks of Artamed, that the inhabitants are already planning to move away. Already the majority of Sourp Vartan have gone away for this very reason. These same Turks burned last year forty "chaps" of wheat belonging to Der Simon, of Khorkom. In the same year they burned all the wheat belonging to Baghdasar Krikorian, of Sourp Vartan; also a barn of straw in Mashgaldag belonging to Amirkhan Adzoyan.

In 1893, in Khorkom, a barn belonging to Nishan Der Simon was burned, and the year following, all the wheat of Mardiros Yaghmainyan in the same village. In 1894, Hohan Manoogian, of Artamed, was killed in his bed. In 1894, the nephew of Durdyan, Sherif of Artamed, went out hunting, and was accidentally shot and killed. His friends immediately took the body and threw it into an Armenian graveyard, accused the Armenians of the murder, and demanded as blood-money the sum of £T. 400.

In 1892, Tafur carried off twenty-four sheep from the village of Dzuvustan. The same year, thieves stole an ox from the village of Pertag, and severely wounded two men. From this village Tafur has been accustomed to receive yearly, since 1885, thirty to forty "chaps" of wheat, and in 1894 he took 120 "chaps." In 1893, Narur Aga, of Bijinguerd, stole 110 sheep from this village. The same year Tafur entered the house of Shadagli Garabed, in this village of Pertag, during some marriage festivities. He took money from many present, stripped off the ornaments of the bride, and left some of the people almost devoid of any garments. This robbery amounted to about £T. 80. In 1893, these same Kurds carried off two oxen from the stable of Moorad Akhayar, and after cruelly beating two young men who were guarding their wine press, polluted the place and went their way. Igit, the nephew, took from these villagers sixty lambs. In 1891, several Kurds from the Mehmed Deeran tribe drove off three oxen with their burdens, and at a time previous to this carried off 350 sheep from the same village. In 1894, the Graveli Kurds, to which tribe the famous Shakir belongs, carried off thirteen oxen.

In 1894, Saïd, the son of Ali, of Khorit, carried off, from the village of Hindostan, 240 sheep and burned six large stacks of wheat. The same year, the son of Shkavatli Ali carried off 330 sheep. In 1895, the son of Pasha Bey, of Zerinak, violated the wife of Mukhitar, of this village.

In 1894, Mehmed Perauli carried off twenty-five lambs from the village of Norkegh, which is occupied by a Mudir and several zaptiehs.

My dear Brother,

We did not consider it necessary to give in this Memorandum all the circumstances, although, of course, these details, if given, would have made the terrible picture more graphic. Only bear in mind that beating, mutilating, and murdering people, violating women and girls, and desecrating the holy churches of Christ, are the commonest of crimes committed by Turks and Kurds. Some of the murders have been committed by horrible mutilation of the body, others by hanging, some by burning alive, and still others by placing a quantity of powder in the abdomen and exploding it. The rapes committed have been simply without number.

It must be borne in mind that what has been written in this account is only a single leaf from the forest of persecution. I have been able to get comparatively little information from the villages and districts mentioned, and, for lack of accurate data, have been obliged to leave altogether the districts of Karchigan, Dimonorik, and Antsevanetik. The country has been devastated; many of the villages are in ruins. Here and there you find a few half-ruined churches and many graveyards, which are often used by the Kurds as farms and gardens. In this state of affairs the

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Armenians are compelled to emigrate in the face of great difficulties. Alas, the Armenians, who through all these centuries have cultivated their fields, have built their homes, and erected their churches, are obliged to bid them all farewell, and go away to foreign lands in order to eke out a miserable existence. It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine the wrongs which cause these poor people to take their babies on their backs, and go away to be safe from their oppressors. An emigration of this kind means trudging along barefoot for days and weeks, asking alms along the way, and being exposed to countless dangers.

Besides these cruelties of the Kurds, there are oppressions at the hands of the Turk authorities, which are imposed under the veil of the law. The tax collectors, for instance, inflict terrible punishments on the villagers, because many of them are unable to pay. They try often to sell their fields, but no one is ready to buy them. When, after selling some of their cattle and household utensils, the taxes are still incomplete, the villagers are often imprisoned for months. Would that you knew the number and real condition of the Christian prisoners, and the unjust and wicked treatment they receive at the hands of the Moslem Judges.

We are in danger of losing heart, observing the former lenient course of the Patriarchate, and we ask you now, dear brother, to take this Memorandum as a petition written by the oppressed, and show it to the Sublime Porte. Hasten to do whatever is necessary, because this current of oppression threatens to overwhelm the life, property, honour and faith of these Armenian villagers. Who knows whither this helmless ship will finally drift? We know that all these outrageous atrocities are perpetrated with the deliberate purpose of obliterating the Armenian villages.

We ask you, then, to take seriously into consideration this Memorandum, and consider its contents well. We have reason to believe that a renowned and intrepid Patriarch, like yourself, can apply an immediate remedy to the evils of the oppressed Armenians. We pray that you may be gifted with wisdom and strength.

(Signed) KHACHADOUR, *Catholicos*.

Akhtamar, May 1895.

No. 66.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 15.)

(No. 454.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, July 9, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the murder of Armenians from Russia by Kurds.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir,

Erzeroum, June 29, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to information received from Alashgerd, a party of seven Armenian labourers, all belonging to Toprak Kaleh, returning from Russia, where they had been at work, succeeded in passing the frontier surreptitiously about a week or ten days ago, but were intercepted before reaching Toprak Kaleh by a band of armed Kurds, and killed. The names of five of them are given in the appended list.

At a somewhat earlier date a similar party of twenty-one men are said to have been slaughtered by Kurds between Yondjalou and Kara-Kilisseh in Alashgerd. With them was said to be one Armenian revolutionary agent, who alone was armed and defended himself.

It would appear as if the Kurds, who have been called on to assist the troops in holding the frontier against armed Armenian bands, as reported in my despatch of the 13th instant, take advantage of the situation to rob and murder labourers and other

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Sir P.

(No. 456.)

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Sir P.

(No. 457.)

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Inclosure 1 in No. 129.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

Sir,

Erzeroum, July 11, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency copies of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting upon the condition of the districts of Shattakh and Norduz, south of the lake of Van, which he has just visited. The deplorable condition of affairs therein described goes far to confirm the more specific charges of misgovernment contained in the appeal of the Catholicos of Akhtamar, which formed the inclosure to my despatch of the 26th June, and which dealt principally with the districts visited by Mr. Hallward.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 129.

Vice-Consul Hallward to Consul Graves.

Sir,

Van, June 28, 1895.

LAST week I paid a visit to the districts of Shattakh and Norduz, which are under a Kaïmakam residing at the small town of Shattakh, a long day's journey to the south of this. They are very mountainous districts, and contain a mixed population of Kurds and Armenians, together with a few Nestorian villages in the south of Norduz. The Armenians have been dwindling away in the last few years, owing to the increased lawlessness of the Kurds and oppressions of the Government. The central town is still entirely Armenian, though many families have emigrated in the last two or three years. There is now a garrison of about 200 soldiers, commanded by a Major, reinforcements having just arrived at the time of my visit.

It is difficult to convey any adequate idea of the present state of these districts, but the situation may be summed up by saying that the Christians live under a régime of organized brigandage of the worst and most intolerable description. Their lives, honour, and property are entirely at the mercy of the Kurds, especially those of the Ghravli tribe, one of the worst of whom, a notorious murderer and robber named Mehemet Aga, formerly an outlaw, is now a Government official, occupying the position of "Nufuss Naziri," or census taker, at Shattakh. He is a great friend of Captain Sheikh Mooss, who paraded the dog with the sign of the Cross on it through Shattakh (*vide* my despatch of the 15th May last); the dog, I may add, went about the streets in this way for four days. Sheikh Mooss shares the plunder of the Christian villages with Mehemet Agha.

There are families of this tribe of Kurds settled all about the Shattakh and Norduz districts, and they prey unchecked on the Armenians. One of them is the well-known outlaw Shakir, who was convicted of killing four Armenians in August 1893, and who has been robbing and plundering ever since. A zaptieh told me that no order had been issued for his arrest, but that it could easily be effected if the Government wished.

Another of the tribe, one Moussa, is a corporal of zaptiehs. He is in the habit of making free with the women of the village of Dzidzants. Some time ago one of the villagers, Mukho by name, objected to his proceedings, and Moussa accordingly got a brother of his, who is an outlaw, to kill him; he was first horribly mutilated, and then killed by having gunpowder exploded on his stomach.

The principal wealth of the Armenians of this district was derived from their flocks, and from the native stuffs they make from wool and goats' hair, in which they formerly did a considerable trade. Now the greater part of their sheep and cattle have been stolen by Kurds, and they have no security to go and trade either in the villages or neighbouring towns; they are consequently all reduced to the most miserable poverty, while large numbers have left the district. Out of 200 houses in the town, 150 have no flour of any kind, but live chiefly on herbs and cakes made of clover-seed, chaff, or flax. In the villages I passed through there was no bread to be found, and the people had a famished, poverty-stricken appearance painful to witness.

One of the four men mentioned above as having been murdered by Shakir was a certain Aziz, who, a few years ago, refused £ T. 100 for an Arab horse he had; his widow and five children now live by selling the milk of a single cow. There are many other such cases.

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R. W. GRAVES.

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Van, June 28, 1895.
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The Armenians of Shattakh are of a more courageous and independent character than those of Van, and formerly managed to hold their own pretty well against the Kurds. They do not ask the Government, they say, to protect them, but only to let them protect themselves; they are now not allowed to carry arms (though they were formerly), and are consequently entirely at the mercy of the Kurds.

There are six young men from the village of Sevdigheen now in prison in Shattakh, nominally on some political charge, but really because they, on several occasions, successfully defended their flocks against Kurds. The crops of that village are already mortgaged for taxes.

Taxes are collected in the most oppressive and merciless manner: sheep, worth 40 piastres, are seized and valued at 10 piastres; no delays are allowed, and villagers are made to pay the taxes of others who have emigrated. The collection of taxes is generally accompanied by curses and ill-treatment on the part of the zaptiehs.

The following will serve as instances of the depopulation of the Armenian villages: Gajet contained 200 houses, now there are 40; Gagbi contained 200 houses, now there are 70; Dzidzants contained 80 houses, now there are 20; Gaspar contained 30 houses, now there are 10; Merzeg contained 8 houses, now there are none; Agruss contained 30 houses, now there is 1; Bagh contained 20 houses, now there are 3; Jenug contained 30 houses, now there are 7; Sharur contained 25 houses, now there are none; Nerkeen Darents contained 20 houses, now there are 2; and Makiushk contained 30 houses, now there are 10.

Sharur was deserted by all the inhabitants, except two brothers, fifteen years ago; they remained till quite lately, but were at length obliged to flee.

Merzeg and Agruss are occupied by Kurds.

The families which remain are practically the slaves of the Kurds, who make them work for them, rob them of every kind of property, and violate their wives with impunity. Complaints to Government produce no effect whatever, and the extent to which the Kurds are encouraged may be judged by an incident which occurred lately at Dzidzants.

A zaptieh was sent to bring twenty men from there to Shattakh on some business. He started with them and they met a Kurd, who demanded so much wool from each of them; the zaptieh agreed, and they went back and sheared the required quantity of wool off their sheep and gave it to the Kurd. They then started again and were met by a second Kurd, who demanded so much grain-seed from each; the zaptieh agreed, and they returned and gave the seed. They then started a third time and were again met by a Kurd, who demanded so many sheep from the village; the zaptieh made no objection, and they returned and gave the sheep. Finally, they went to Shattakh the next day.

The difficulty of doing any business, even apart from the danger of robbery by Kurds, is illustrated by the case of a certain Avedis, a man of about 65, who, in the autumn of 1893, went with £T. 40 to buy goods at Sairt. Arrived at Bitlis, he was accosted in the street by a spy, who demanded £T. 2 of him, threatening him to injure him in case of refusal. Avedis refused to pay, and a few days after left for Sairt. A little way outside Bitlis he was seized by zaptiehs and taken to an empty house, where he was left four days without food or drink. He was at length discovered by some one and taken to prison, thence he was sent back to Shattakh, where he remained in prison till two or three weeks ago, when he was sent to Van, where he is now in prison. He has not yet been tried, and does not know what he is charged with.

One point merits special attention. These people are openly told by both Kurds and zaptiehs, that if they want peace and quietness they must turn Moslem; in fact, it is obvious by the intention of the Government to leave no Christians either in that district or in that of Mukus, where the state of things is every whit as bad. This plan will undoubtedly be successfully carried out at no distant date, unless a most decided change is effected. Things have been getting worse and worse in the last few months, and starvation is now in very near prospect for large numbers of the people, so that they have absolutely no alternative but to turn Moslem, or to emigrate. The former alternative, though naturally favoured by the Government, is hateful to the people, who, on the whole, cling with extraordinary constancy to their religion; the latter course is both difficult and dangerous for men with families, and is by no means encouraged by the authorities. It is to be hoped that some issue will ere long be found from this painful dilemma.

I have, &c.

(Signed) C. M. HALLWARD.

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Inclosure in No. 60.

Vice-Consul Fitzmaurice to Mr. Herbert.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Birejik, June 27, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to report that the notorious Ourfa local magnate, Hussein Pasha, so prominently connected with the massacres there in December last, yesterday passed through Birejik on his return to Ourfa.

It was confidently expected that the Ottoman Government had intended to punish by permanent exile the principal ringleader of the Ourfa massacres; but his being allowed to return now gives the death blow to any hopes that the chief actors in the 1895 massacres would receive a small portion of their deserts. The result, as regards the Christian populations, in whose hands the industry and commerce of the country chiefly lie, is that their lost confidence cannot be restored for a very long period of years, while, as regards the Mussulmans, whose ignorant fanaticism has hitherto been restrained by the wholesome dread of swift retribution from within or without, the impunity which has attended last year's massacres has given them the conviction that at last they have shaken off the trammels of foreign intervention, and that they are now witnessing the revival of the good old days of Islam, when the treatment meted out to the subject Christians was dictated solely by the so-called interests of the dominant Mussulmans.

The recent upheaval of fanaticism, emboldened by impunity, and accentuated by a feeling of exasperation, the outcome of general misgovernment, is so great that I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction that a declaration of war, or the armed intervention by one or more foreign Powers, within the next few years will be the immediate signal for a wholesale massacre by the Mussulmans not only of the Armenians, but of the entire Christian population of the interior.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. H. FITZMAURICE.

No. 61.

Mr. Herbert to the Marquess of Salisbury. -- (Received July 20.)

(No. 570.)

My Lord,

Therapia, July 16, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the disturbances which recently took place in that town.

Dr. Dwight, the head of the Bible House at Stamboul, has written to thank me for the protection afforded to the American Mission by Major Williams, and to express his admiration for the coolness, wisdom, and skill with which Major Williams warded off the catastrophe which, according to the American missionaries, threatened the whole population of Van.

I have not failed to bring the excellent conduct of the Turkish officers and soldiers, as reported by Major Williams, to the notice of the Porte, but I do not propose, in the absence of instructions from your Lordship, to specify the names of the persons mentioned by Mr. Williams, nor to suggest that they should receive some special mark of appreciation from the Sultan for their services.

I have, &c.

(Signed) MICHAEL H. HERBERT.

Inclosure in No. 61.

Major Williams to Mr. Herbert.

Sir,

Van, June 28, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to submit herewith my Report on the late events:--

As I have constantly shown in my despatches the state of tension between the Christian and Moslem population of this district has for some time been gradually and

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surely increasing, principally owing to the succession of outrages committed by the revolutionary party. This tension has been further accentuated by the unwillingness or impotence of the authorities to punish the Kurds, and by the open differences between the civil and military authorities as to the best means of checking this revolutionary movement. Both parties realized the gravity of the situation. The Vali was of opinion that he could make it so uncomfortable for the leaders that they would leave the country, while the opponents of this policy were for attempting to seize the leaders at once, regardless of consequences. As will be seen from the rough map I attach, local circumstances were all in favour of the rebels. The "gardens" of Van consist of a perfect maze of narrow streets, in which every house has communication through its garden with the next at hand. In this sort of "rabbit warren" the leaders lived almost openly, secure in the conviction they could easily escape if pursued. They were constantly seen both by soldiers and police, wearing occasionally a sort of uniform, and always armed and covered with belts of cartridges. What wonder is it that the Moslem population became excited, and that the position became almost intolerable. This state of tension culminated on Sunday night, 14th June.

About midnight a Lieutenant's patrol of regular infantry was attacked, and the officer and one soldier badly wounded. Two stories are current, one, that the patrol was met by a party of Turks smuggling salt, who mistook them for revolutionists; the other, that they were fired on by a party of Armenians in ambush. The true story will never be known, needless to say the latter version was the one which obtained credence, and the fury of the Mussulman population became uncontrollable. As to how the outbreak actually occurred I am unable to speak from personal observation, as I was occupied in seeing after the safety of the American ladies who were taking a holiday in a monastery about 3 miles away, and of the Honourable W. Thesiger, who was staying at a small camp we had established on the mountain about 5 miles off. In his haste to return he had to leave some of my things and the tents at a monastery, which has since been burnt. I hope that Her Majesty's Government will either grant compensation or obtain it from the Porte. About 11 A.M. on Monday, 15th June, firing began in and near the city, and in those parts of the gardens where the Christian and Moslem quarters meet. It continued until about 4 P.M., and several houses were burnt. I believe the disturbances were begun by a mob of Turks, gipsies, and zaptiehs, the latter being almost entirely out of hand during the whole week, and responsible for much that has happened. It must, however, be remembered that these men keep themselves, and as they have had no pay for months, it can hardly be wondered at that they took this opportunity of plunder. After the firing had ceased I went to see the Vali, and pressed on him the necessity of strong measures to restore order. The authorities seemed to be paralyzed, but I found regular troops posted in the main streets to try and preserve order, but they all said they had been fired on by the Armenians from fortified houses. Next morning firing began again in one or two directions. I immediately hoisted the Union Jack on the American Mission, and posted some soldiers there with one of my cavasses. I then went out and brought in refugees from the dangerous quarters, in all about 600, and I found that in one quarter alone a Mahomedan named Omar Agha, with the assistance of his friends, had saved nearly 1,500 people, whom he eventually brought to the Mission. In this work of mercy, which went on daily, I was most ably seconded by the Honourable W. Thesiger, and he was most active and useful in arranging to feed the vast multitude we soon had on our hands. I also went daily to see the Dominican Fathers, and was able to be of some slight service to them as regards their protection, and I relieved them of a large number of refugees who might have been a source of some danger to them.

On Wednesday matters had so developed that it became clear the revolutionists had fortified in a very skilful manner certain houses which cut me off from the town. I therefore had to make my way alone through this zone, picking up an escort outside it from the nearest guard. And here I may say that I invariably received the most courteous and willing assistance from all the officers and men of the regular army. No one here has had the same opportunities of seeing their behaviour as I have, and though I have seen irregularities and heard of crimes, among the latter a most horrible case of murder and robbery by a guard, which I am investigating, I can confidently say that, considering the want of discipline and system in the Turkish army from the superiors downwards, their behaviour under great temptation has astonished me.

It would be a graceful and politic act if you could ask His Imperial Majesty the Sultan to mark his appreciation of the services of two Bimbashis named Halim Effendi and Emin Effendi, and of the officer of my guard, Mulazim Osman Effendi, a lad just out

of the Military School. I have also seen civilians who present themselves as Arab Effendi, and great danger we have. A Council of the Government was made and save the town of the Ambassador's Government in an attempt to get rid of the Kurds.

On Thursday fortified posts of affairs were conducted days, by which time Russian and a Bul American. I fancy of their numbers be to 600 or 700. They had obtained the country by Pe each Society reports details to show the children, but pure blood unarmed a near their position me yesterday. These miscreants, for their father's

On Friday a Dragoman being During the night morning it was clear was now surrounded town was the scene a total of about situation was now

We had another Representatives of the regular troops the mass of people during the night morning, Sunday to be placed round accident nearly killed

Going down their way towards tremendous excitement an attack on the done by Kurds. they had not reached 5 o'clock the General really gone. It the next few days.

Tuesday a under my care, in answer to my what is called a seething mass of

As I write One party is said others who are to say, young lad loss of life and property of Van, I believe [953]

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of the Military School. Some notice also taken by His Imperial Majesty of those civilians who preserved Christians, such as Omar Agha, Bakir Agha, Chauish of Redifs, Arab Effendi, and others, would do much to help the Christians in the future. The great danger we had to face now was the imminent arrival of the tribal Kurds, and, at a Council of the two Generals and the Vali, at which my presence was invited, a suggestion was made that, if possible, terms should be made with the rebels so as to try and save the town. I proposed a scheme, which was approved subject to the sanction of the Ambassadors and the Sultan. I was most careful not to commit Her Majesty's Government in any way; but it was most necessary to do something to gain time to get rid of the Kurds.

On Thursday, with Dr. Reynolds, of the American mission, I visited two of the fortified posts of the revolutionaries. I was astonished to find how intelligently their affairs were conducted. They told me that they hoped to be able to hold out for ten days, by which time reinforcements would arrive from Persia. The leaders I saw were a Russian and a Bulgarian, together with Armenians, naturalized subjects of Russia and America. I fancy there were in all about twelve or fifteen of these outsiders, the rest of their numbers being made up from young men from Van, their total numbers amounting to 600 or 700. Those I saw were mostly well armed with Russian rifles, which they said they had obtained by local subscription among the Van Armenians and introduced into the country by Persia. They appeared to have distinctive uniforms, which differed for each Society represented, viz., Huntchak, Tashnak, and Armenist. I enter into these details to show that those people were no patriots trying to defend their wives and children, but pure and simple rebels. I have ample proof that they murdered in cold blood unarmed and inoffensive Mahommedans, who were unfortunate enough to come near their positions. The Armenian owner of one of the fortified houses came to see me yesterday. He tells me that a certain old Turk coming to draw water was shot by these miscreants, who buried him in the garden. The old man's sons are now looking for their father's body, and my applicant wants to know if I can advise him.

On Friday we again saw the leaders. The Persian Consul-General and the Russian Dragoman being of the party, fresh proposals were made, and practically accepted. During the night, however, one of the rebel houses began hard firing, and in the morning it was captured and burnt by the troops, the defenders escaping. The town was now surrounded by many thousand Kurds. The village of Shabagi just outside the town was the scene of a horrible massacre by Kurds and Mahommedans, 180 men out of a total of about 225 were killed, and all the surrounding villages pillaged. The situation was now pretty bad, the tribal Kurds were now close by demanding the rebels.

We had another consultation with the Generals, and it was decided that the Consular Representatives should send a joint letter by me, and that, if they did not surrender, the regular troops would attack at all costs, endeavours, however, being made to protect the mass of people under my care. Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Thesiger saw the leaders during the night, and informed me that they had resolved on flight. Early next morning, Sunday, I carried the news to the Pashas, who gave orders for a strong cordon to be placed round the positions heretofore held by the rebels, and here a most untoward accident nearly lost us all.

Going down to the Vali's to ask help against some Kurds who were making their way towards my house from an unguarded corner, I found that there was tremendous excitement. It was said that the rebels had not really gone, but had made an attack on the Moslem quarters, burning some houses. As a matter of fact this was done by Kurds. Saad-ed-din was the only man who kept his head, though he thought they had not really gone. I stayed at the Office, and, to my great joy, at about 5 o'clock the Generals came and told me they were satisfied the main body, at least, had really gone. It is needless for me to enter into all the anxieties and suspicions of the next few days.

Tuesday a determined attempt was made by Kurds to plunder the houses under my care, but we managed to turn them, and Saad-ed-din, who came himself in answer to my bugler's calls, cleared the place. I then made the Armenians write what is called a "Mazbata" in this country, and that evening we began to clear the seething mass of humanity out of the Mission premises.

As I write we are gradually and surely settling down. The rebels are broken up. One party is said to have been cut to pieces on the Persian frontier. Troops are after others who are on the mountains near. Some have been caught, principally, I am sorry to say, young lads, who have been led away by their rascally leaders. As regards the loss of life and property, I am afraid we shall find it bulks very large. In the gardens of Van, I believe, about 500 Armenians and 300 Turks have been killed, and many have

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been wounded; several officers and men have been killed and wounded; 150 of the best Armenian houses in Van have been burnt, and many more pillaged. The sketch map shows the part of the Christian quarter I have managed, thanks to the authorities, to save from pillage and fire. The reports from the villages are heartrending, but I hope and believe they are exaggerated, though at the best the number of men massacred by the Kurds must be very large, many have also most probably embraced Islam to save their lives.

June 30th.—Just as I am closing I hear that a large body of Persian Kurds are over the border. A report has also been received that a number of armed Armenians from Salamas are marching towards Bashkaleh. All this delays the pacification of the country. However, troops are expected to-morrow, and I hope and believe all will soon be quiet.

A few Kurds came this afternoon and killed a villager near the town. I went to the Vali, who at once gave me a few troopers of his escort; but when I went out the Kurds had gone. Infantry are now on the way to take up positions, which should effectually protect the villages.

Finally, I would beg to be allowed to bring to the notice of Her Majesty's Government the services of the Hon. W. Thesiger, who is living with me to study Turkish. He has shown himself to be possessed of tact and pluck during these trying times.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. WILLIAMS.

No. 62.

Mr. Herbert to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 21.)

(No. 290.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, July 21, 1896, 11:20 A.M.

I HAVE received a telegram from Mr. Fitzmaurice reporting the arrival at Birejik yesterday of a battalion of regulars, and the excellent effect this has produced.

No. 63.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. Herbert.

(No. 203.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 25, 1896.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 527 of the 6th instant, forwarding a telegram from the Acting British Consul at Aleppo relative to the threatening attitude of the Mahommedans at Aintab.

I approve your action in calling the attention of the Grand Vizier to the state of affairs in that town.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 64.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. Herbert.

(No. 204.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 25, 1896.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 540 of the 8th instant, forwarding telegraphic correspondence with Mr. Fitzmaurice in regard to the proceedings of the Birejik Commission, and reporting the representations you have made to the Turkish

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Consul

(No. 21.)
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1896.

The announcement that Shemshi Pasha had been reinstated caused great rejoicing here. I have heard that a massacre had been planned for the day of his intended departure. There is no doubt that the liveliest apprehensions were entertained by all classes here on the news of his dismissal, except, of course, the black-guard element I have referred to before.

The news, however, received on the 27th that he is deprived of command of the troops is equally serious, and perhaps more significant. The bulk of the people here do not appreciate the importance of this, and confidence continues unabated.

Shemshi Pasha will, however, resign the Governorship unless the command of the troops is restored to him. My colleagues and myself agree that he has no other course open to him.

Disorders will occur which he will be powerless to check, and which will be made an excuse for punishing him for standing well with the Consuls.

I am now inclined to believe that Zekki will not dare to promote a general massacre here, at any rate at present. He knows that he has been accused of wishing to do so, and that should such an event occur, the storm that would be raised would be too much even for him.

There will, however, be no security for Christians in Asiatic Turkey as long as he is here. My French colleague and I are perfectly at one on this point.

Men are worth more than measures in this country. We feel that the very first step, if an advance towards the amelioration of the present state of affairs is to be made, must be to get rid of the man who was decorated for his share in the Sasun massacres, who has opposed with all his power every honest official in this country, and who has been at the bottom of and has protected the authors of every Kurdish outrage.

The shortsighted and cruel policy of using the Kurds to terrorize and keep under the Armenians is execrated by every right-thinking man, whatever may be his creed.

Turks sometimes openly declare that the Armenian revolutionists are right, that the wrongs inflicted on their people are past endurance, and loudly denounce the Sultan and his Government.

They recognize that their country is being ruined, that this must come, and I believe there are those who hold the idea that they should stop short at nothing that will bring the whole edifice in ruins about their heads, and the Sultan with it.

I was asked by the Vali to enter into communication with the revolutionists, and make them an offer of a free pardon if they would surrender.

I did not succeed in seeing any of the men themselves. I fancy they feared they would be compromised with their party if they were known to have any relations with me. Further, they admitted a fear that diversity of opinion among themselves would be caused by an interview. My messages, however, reached them. I also saw the sister of Dikran Diroyan, a noted malcontent, who has given the Government a great deal of trouble, and who led the band, about thirty strong, that broke through about 400 Hamidieh that had surrounded them.

Some weeks ago this girl, who is credited with being a noted revolutionist, appealed to me for protection, and I spoke to Shemshi Pasha and the Muavin on her behalf.

After the failure of my attempts to see Diroyan himself, I sent for her, and explained to her that if these men, whose presence armed in the gardens was a menace to peace, provoked disorder of any sort here, they would only harm their people and their cause. I warned them of the danger they stood in of betrayal, and of the probability that if in resisting arrest they were to kill a soldier or two, the mob would get out of hand, and the scenes of last June here be repeated. Further, they only had it in their power under present circumstances to do harm. I pointed to the reinstatement of Shemshi Pasha as a sign that better days might be hoped for, and promised to telegraph and ask your Excellency to support his proposal to offer a free pardon provided they would surrender, and would give what I considered satisfactory guarantees of an intention to behave as peaceable citizens.

The girl pretended she knew nothing of her brother or his whereabouts. This, however, was only natural. I have been told that she accepted my invitation with his consent and that of his comrades, and went straight to them after our conversation.

That evening twelve are reported to have left, and yesterday I heard that Diroyan had left the gardens, and was assembling his band with the intention of

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2 M

returning to Persia. I can form no opinion as yet as to the truth or otherwise of these rumours.

The population, however, still continue to see in Shemshi Pasha's presence here a guarantee of security.

Mr. Allen is doing excellent work in buying and distributing cattle to the villagers; and sometimes seed.

In one or two districts people who had left are returning to their homes on hearing of the help that was being given. Should better days come, I am told by those who know the people that most of them would return to their deserted villages.

A further proof of the feeling of security in the districts is that within the last few days villagers have been coming and asking for cattle.

If the Mushir triumphs eventually, this desirable condition of affairs will cease to exist, and the people will again be plunged into the misery from which they are just emerging.

With all their faults, it is but fair to remember that they are the fruits of oppression; these people are thrifty and industrious to an exceptional degree, and have shown a power of endurance of cruel misfortunes that is nothing short of marvellous. They do not appear wanting in courage, and certainly not in intelligence. With good government they might become valuable citizens, and a source of power to the State.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. ELLIOT.

No. 136.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 627.)

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the deplorable condition of the Armenians in the Ardjish district of the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 136.

Vice-Consul Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 46.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that since writing my last despatch, No. 45, I have seen the Muavin of Van, who has just returned from the Ardjish district, north of the lake.

He gives a pitiable description of the state of the Armenians still left there. They are absolutely slaves, and in return for working for their Kurdish masters, get but just enough to keep them alive. Their gardens destroyed, their goods taken from them, cattle turned into the crops, children huddle naked in the empty houses, and any man who dares to object has his eyes gouged out.

On Saturday last, the 28th, there was very nearly being a massacre in Ardjish.

Some Kurds were looting a passing caravan. Shots were fired. An alarm spread that the Armenian revolutionists had come. The Kurds rushed to arms and mounted. The Christians began to flee, and some blackguards ran through the bazaar calling out that now was the time for those who loved the prophet.

The soldiers who had been fired on by the Kurds were, fortunately, annoyed. The ringleaders of the disturbance were arrested and detained, in spite of the wish of the mob to have them released. They were chiefly Hamidieh officers.

The news of the dismissal of Shemshi Pasha from the command of the troops had reached the Kurds before this incident, and their rejoicing over it was great. Jekki is a King among them; they recognize no authority but his. The opinion is

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Sir P.

(No. 629.)

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(No. 40.)

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The pass from Shattakh to Van is still open for pack animals, but owing to fear of being shut up in Shattakh the drivers demand practically prohibitive rates.

The poverty in Shattakh is greater than any I have seen elsewhere. In every village are numbers of nearly naked people. Food is very scarce. The seeds of a wild plant called goringan are collected and eaten by the people. These, however, afford but little nutriment and are injurious to health. The appearance of the people leaves no doubt as to the reality of their distress.

A certain amount of cloth has been distributed, but only to the most needy. If funds had allowed, three times as much might have been given with advantage. The great difficulty has been about food. About one-third of what we estimated as the minimum necessary has been purchased locally. For the rest the high cost of transport prevents us sending any over.

The local officials are co-operating and appear desirous of rendering all assistance. They are, however, powerless to deal with the root of the evil, the lawlessness of the Kurds. As an instance, the Kaïmakam of Shattakh sent a detachment of troops to arrest two noted Kurds. The Officer in Command did not wish to carry out his orders, though it was in his power to have done so, and returned with nothing effected.

Very few sheep are now owned by Armenians, and but little cattle except those distributed by the relief. The contrast between Kurdish and Armenian houses is very striking. In the former, wheaten or barley bread, curds, cheese, milk, bedding, clothing, warmth, and all that constitutes comfort for the rural population of this country. In [? the latter], little but millet, walnuts, the seeds spoken of above, a few filthy rags and bits of carpet or felt, is about all that is left. Kurdish sheep now feed in the Armenian pastures, and are folded at night in Armenian villages. This latter is, however, rather a boon, as the heat of the animals' bodies helps to keep the rooms warm and their dung serves for fuel. It is for this reason that the sheep and cattle in this country are under the same roof as the inhabitants.

The loss of their sheep is a most serious deprivation. An important part of the people's food is the milk, cheese, and curds. Millet bread, walnuts, and goringan seeds alone form a miserable diet, especially for the young and weakly. Without wool they cannot renew their clothing. The loss of the warmth afforded by the presence of the animals as mentioned above is also serious during the long bitter winter of these parts.

I have visited villages where formerly there were several thousand sheep, and where now hardly any are left.

Milk and ordinary supplies are in most Armenian villages, in Shattakh at any rate, unobtainable.

Kurds are settling in Armenian villages, appropriating their lands and pastures, and making the inhabitants serve them.

A little firmness would soon put an end to this, but there is little chance of this firmness being exhibited as long as the hands of the Executive are tied as they are at present.

In Meuks the poverty struck me as not being nearly so great as in Shattakh. The people of Meuks generally leave in large numbers in the beginning of winter, and go to Russia or elsewhere to work or beg, returning in spring to cultivate their lands. This has been stopped this year, presumably on account of the troubles caused by the Armenian revolutionists on the frontier, and the poverty that exists is largely due to this cause.

The people of Meuks owe their somewhat better condition to the protection and help afforded by Mortoolla Bey, a Kurd. Mortoolla Bey is the son of Khan Abdal Bey, of the family of Badar Khan Bey, of Jezire.

I was his guest for four nights, and was much struck by his advanced and liberal views. He is not liked by the Local Government officials and Kurds, who are somewhat afraid of him. He protected the Armenians of Meuks during the disturbances of last year, and has helped the villagers with seed and cattle. Whilst I was with him he fed daily twenty or thirty poor women and children.

I had heard him most highly spoken of by all the Armenians, and had been told that the best way of relieving distress in Meuks was to send what money could be spared to him.

He is disgusted with the state of affairs in Meuks, and contemplates selling his property and leaving it for good. Should he do so it will be a misfortune for the Armenians in those parts.

Meuks can now only be approached from Van on foot over high passes deep in snow. It was thus impossible to do anything but take money over.

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PHILIP CURRIE.

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PHILIP CURRIE.

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Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 7.)

(No. 577.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, November 3, 1898.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Captain Elliot, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, respecting the state of the Armenians in the Arjisch and Adeljivas Cazas and the oppression of the Kurdish Pashas.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 61.

Captain Elliot to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 26.)

Sir,

Van, October 14, 1898.

I HAVE the honour to report that during my recent visit to Arjisch and Adeljivas I had opportunities of noticing the miserable state to which those districts have been reduced by the oppression of the three Kurd Pashas, Hosein, Emin, and Haji Semir.

These men's conduct has frequently been brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Embassy, and representations were made on the subject, with the result that they were ordered into exile.

They, however, returned from Constantinople early in the summer rewarded.

Hosein Pasha, the worst of the three, was promoted from Kaïmakam to Mir Alai.

On my way to Adeljivas I met refugees from Karakeshish, a village close to the lake in the eastern part of that caza. They had left their homes owing to the exactions and threats of Hosein Pasha's men.

Everywhere I heard the same story. The Armenians paid the taxes, cultivated the fields, and Hosein Pasha carried off the crops.

One morning his men had even the insolence to commence cutting down the trees in an Armenian village close to my camp. My zaptieh informed me that the Government were afraid of Hosein Pasha, and dared not interfere.

In this particular instance the Kurds went away for a time, but doubtless eventually carried out their orders, which were to cut down 150 trees and take them to a village about 3 miles off, where Hosein Pasha meant to build a sheepfold.

It is not to be supposed that the Kurds perform any manual labour. They merely stand by while the Armenians cut down their own trees, or, if trees are not handy, pull the timbers out of their own houses, and carry them to where they are desired.

Similarly, when their crops are taken possession of, they have to cart them to wherever they are ordered.

Hosein Pasha wants to get more Armenians to work for him on these terms, but the refugees who are being turned out of Russia are naturally not anxious to return to their villages in his district. When he can get hold of them he sends them to the villages, and makes them work by threatening them with death if they refuse.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Armenians there are merely the slaves of the Kurds.

The three Pashas doubtless found their visit to Constantinople very expensive, under the circumstances under which it was made, and the means they are resorting to to indemnify themselves for their outlay make life intolerable for the miserable creatures in their power.

When south of the lake I noticed that the Kurdish exactions bore heavily on the Armenian villagers, as the Kurds there claim the right to levy tribute on their "rayas," as they style the Armenians, who had as well to pay every para of the taxes due to Government.

Bad as the state of affairs there is, it cannot be compared with what exists in the districts now referred to.

For miles I rode over plains at the foot of the Sipan Mountain, which once produced the best corn in the vilayet. The crops are not irrigated, but the rich volcanic soil yields a return of ten- to fifteen-fold, equal to, if not exceeding, that of the best irrigated land near Van. It was from here that most of the food supply of Van used to come.

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Most of this is now uncultivated, and numerous large villages, once surrounded by trees and gardens, are deserted and in ruins, or else occupied by Kurds and a few miserable Armenians.

Hosein Pasha is seizing all the grain he can lay his hands on, and hoarding it in the hopes of sending the price up, as there is a prospect of scarcity in the spring.

I told the Vali what I had seen, and he said he would seize Hosein Pasha's stores. He also said that when the Armenian question was settled the Government would proceed to deal with the Kurds, but that they could not manage both at once.

Tahir Pasha has certainly dealt with the Armenians with admirable moderation and good sense, and has won their confidence. In this respect I have little fear for the future if he continues as he has begun.

He will, however, find the Kurd question a much more difficult one, and unless his Government is really in earnest he will come to grief over it as his predecessors have done.

If His Imperial Majesty imagines that the Kurds are loyal to him he is very much mistaken. They talk with contempt of him and his government, and when troubles shall arise in these parts they will take care to be on the winning side.

The loss of revenue the present policy entails is enormous, and will continue to increase. That it is persisted in can only be attributed to timidity.

The villages in the statement inclosed have not been selected. They are merely those I passed through or near, and about which I made inquiries.

The list, imperfect as it is, may serve to illustrate what I have stated above.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 61.

STATEMENT of Effects of Kurdish Oppression and Outrage on Armenian villages north of Lake Van.

Name of Village.	Caza.	Former Condition.		Present Condition.		Remarks.
		Number of Houses.	Number of Sheep.	Number of Houses.	Number of Sheep.	
Asruf ..	Arjiseh ..	200	3,000	22	None	These four villages were pillaged, and many of the inhabitants massacred by Emin Pasha. At Kenzee but 11 escaped out of about 300. All the bodies were thrown into a pit and covered over with earth, many being purposely buried alive.
Zagzakh ..	" ..	60	1,200	10	40	
Judbkiah ..	" ..	80	1,500	Deserted		
Kenzee ..	" ..	60	1,500	11	None	
Norshin ..	Adeljivas ..	100	2,000	15	80	These villages owe their present condition to Hosein Pasha. It is true he disregarded the orders he received to massacre the people, but the price of his protection can be seen from Table. Many Kurds objected to killing the Armenians, because they are supported by the labour of the latter. Armenians were killed by Hosein Pasha, but not in so wholesale a manner as by Emin Pasha.
Peshnakiumir ..	" ..	100	1,500	Deserted		
Karakeshish ..	" ..	60	800	40	100	
Sipan (Upper) ..	" ..	60	1,500	40	100	
Sipan (Lower) ..	" ..	50	1,000	32	50	
Norshinjuk ..	" ..	80	1,000	25	80	
Kocherin ..	" ..	80	950	60	30	
Khoranz ..	" ..	80	850	45	130	
Pergot ..	" ..	65	1,000	40	150	
Aren ..	" ..	120	1,800	70	150	
Aranchkus ..	" ..	130	2,500	60	250	
Archira ..	" ..	45	650	15	50	
Totals	1,370	22,750	485	1,210	
Percentage of population left	35.4
" of sheep left	4.36

There used to be upwards of 100 Armenian villages in the two cazas. Above list only includes a few, being those I passed through or near.—G. S. E.

(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

(No. 244.)

Sir,

I HAVE received relative to the claim Armenians.

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Sir N. O. C.

(No. 587.)

My Lord,

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(No. 34.)

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No. 50.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 13.)

(No. 519.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, November 8, 1899.

IN the interesting despatch, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van gives an account of the general condition of affairs in his district.

Van itself has been perfectly quiet and free from revolutionary disturbances during the summer, and Major Maunsell states that the Armenian inhabitants have turned their attention entirely to the revival of commerce and the rebuilding of their houses, and that an excellent effect has been produced by a recent Imperial Order releasing a batch of thirty-three Armenian political prisoners.

The price of bread, however, remains high, and relief will again be necessary in the form of seed.

Along the Persian frontier there have been raids by Kurdish tribes against the inhabitants on the Turkish side of the border, the chief culprits being a Haideranli Chief and the Khan of Maku Azerbaijan, both of whom are said to be completely in Russian hands, and beyond the control of any Persian authority.

Major Maunsell gives a discouraging account of the state of the Nestorians on the Turkish side. Their Patriarch, Mar Shimun, is described as a feeble and apathetic Prelate, who is content to see his people enticed into the Russian fold without making an effort to keep them in hand; while his brother, Nimrud, is actively engaged in supporting the Russian propaganda. Her Majesty's Vice-Consul pointed out to Mar Shimun that the Ottoman authorities would assuredly resent a wholesale conversion of Turkish Nestorians to the Russian Church, and that their position would be rendered very dangerous if they allowed themselves to be tampered with by the Russian agents who are preparing to cross the frontier. The Patriarch showed little desire to avert the evil.

It is evident from Major Maunsell's report that the Russians are employing every means to gain influence and strengthen their position in the Nestorian country on both sides of the border, and it is to be feared that this tendency will be found to increase so long as the Turkish Government continues to make life intolerable for the Christian communities in those regions by leaving them unprotected against the assaults of the Kurds and the rapacity of the tax-gatherer. Among the most active of the Russian Agents is a certain Kasha (priest) Tuma of Ashitha in the Tiari district of the Hakkiari, and I have thought it right to cause the Grand Vizier to be informed unofficially of his proceedings as reported to me by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 50.

Major Maunsell to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 40.)

Sir,

Van, October 24, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to forward the following general report on the condition of affairs in this vilayet.

In the northern Kaza of Arjish, the collection of taxes from the Armenian villages directly by Government officials and not by farming them to Hussein Pasha, is being carried out successfully. Recently, a slight affray took place between some of the protecting zaptiehs and Hussein Pasha's men, in which two of the latter were killed.

The Vali's orders are very definite on this point, and zaptiehs and officials in any part of the vilayet when dealing with Kurds and brigands are instructed not to hesitate to shoot if necessary.

This has had a most salutary effect in keeping order.

Hussein Pasha has complained to Zekki Pasha, but so far the Vali's action has been upheld.

Husni Pasha, the Military Commandant here and practically the representative of Zekki Pasha, supports the Vali when troops have to be moved, &c.

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Hussein Pasha has throughout this summer committed no outrages on Christian villages and has chiefly been engaged in intertribal fights.

Jaafer Bey, Chief of the Sheveli Kurds just north of Van, since he was forced to return some cattle raided from the Monastery of Varak in the month of July, has also been quiet.

The Kaza of Mahmudie (Serai), close to the Persian frontier, has again been attacked by Persian Kurds who raided a Yezidi village near Serai.

They had also managed to appropriate some Government arms belonging to the Hamidieh on this side of the border.

The chief aggressors are:—

Tahir Khan, with a section of the Haideranli living in Persia.

Multeza Ghuli Khan, the Khan of Maku, with some sections of Jellali Kurds, a tribe also divided between Turkey and Persia.

Also some sections of Shekak Kurds from the south.

The Khan of Maku has been educated in Russia and is completely Russianized. He is reputed to be very rich.

Tahir Khan is also completely in Russian hands.

These Chiefs practically represent the sole Government of the region round Maku and the extreme north-west corner of Azerbaijan, and the Persian authority is really non-existent.

The Kaimakam of Serai took vigorous action on the occasion of this last attack, a fortnight ago, moved troops out of Serai and collected Hamidieh from the four neighbouring tribes.

Ultimately, however, by threats of a return raid into Persia, and also by appropriating some sheep belonging to Haideranli on this side of the border, Tahir Khan was induced to restore the property raided from the Yezidi and also the Government arms.

Sheref Bey, on the Bashkala frontier, has been quiet since the attack by revolutionists on him last July.

Throughout the summer the town of Van has been perfectly quiet and free from revolutionary disturbance, the Armenians turning their attention entirely to the revival of commerce and the rebuilding of houses burnt during the late disturbances.

The upper part of the main avenue of Van, most of the houses of which were burnt, has now almost entirely been rebuilt. The large Monastery of Dere Kilisse, in the gardens, has also been rebuilt.

Two days ago, by Imperial order, thirty-three Armenians, political prisoners from the late disturbances sentenced to various terms of penal servitude, have been released. This has had an excellent effect in the town.

Unfortunately the entire want of rain during the summer, and a harvest rather below the average in consequence, has resulted in the price of bread remaining very high, and in some parts of the vilayet seed relief will again be necessary this winter.

I recently visited Bashkala and Kochannes, the residence of Mar Shimun, the Nestorian Patriarch.

I heard that the Rev. Mr. Heazell intended to go to Tiari for the winter, and anticipating that there might be difficulties in the way of this scheme I thought it best to go and study the question on the spot.

Lieutenant-Colonel Massey, on a visit from Erzeroun, accompanied me.

The attempts by the Pères de France and the Catholic priests here to convert the Nestorians seem to have lapsed entirely this year, owing to want of funds. Nimrud, Mar Shimun's brother, who had chiefly supported this movement, seems now to be inclined to intrigue with the Russian party.

He is a most dangerous intriguer and a man of considerable address and cleverness, and will no doubt eventually bring his compatriots into trouble with the Turkish authorities.

He constantly spreads groundless rumours to discredit Mar Shimun with the Government. For instance, while visiting Van in the spring he tried to induce the Vali to believe that Mar Shimun was intriguing to bring over the Russian priests.

The Mutessarif of Bashkala has been completely won over by him, and on recently passing through Kochannes he refused entirely to see Mar Shimun, and would only meet Nimrud.

As the former is the proper constituted and recognized Head of the Nestorians, this was, I think, a very short-sighted policy on the part of the Governor of Bashkala.

I had a long interview with Mar Shimun in which I endeavoured to impress on him that, owing to the wholesale conversion by the Russian priests at Urmia, a crisis was

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approaching in the history of his people and their religion, and it was most necessary for him to bestir himself, and take a more active interest in affairs if he wished to preserve both.

I impressed on him that if the Russian proselytes came over this side of the border, and people here became converted in any numbers, the Turkish Government would become seriously disturbed at what they would call hostile community suddenly created in their midst, ready, perhaps, to attack their military positions in rear, and might take reprisals in the form of a massacre either partial or complete.

I asked him if he thought that many of his people would be likely to come over to the Russian Church if pressed, but, of course, I obtained no direct answer, but from his looks I judged he thought very many of them might if the opportunity offered.

He complained that the Turkish Government had permitted the Kurds to raid numerous villages this summer and commit excesses unpunished, also that his salary from the Government was in arrear, and some minor points about zaptiehs being supplied to Kochannes, &c. I thereupon urged on him the necessity of visiting the Vali in Van, the Representative of the Ottoman Government, where by personal intercourse he would be able to do a great deal, and would be sure of a favourable reception. On my return I promised to explain matters to the Vali and pave the way for his arrival. Also, should disturbances eventually arise owing to Russian advances, the Government would scarcely be able to accuse him of complicity, as he could point to the fact of his visit to Van as a proof of his desire to claim support from Government. He gave me a half-hearted promise that he would come, which, up to the present, he has not fulfilled, possibly owing to the break in the weather and the approach of winter.

Mar Shimun is now a fairly old man, and appears to me to be thoroughly apathetic and likely to fold his hands, and simply wait for whatever events may turn up without attempting much to change the course of them.

The Russian power is tangible and close to him, and I should think he is just as likely as any of his Urmia people to run to it for protection, fancied or otherwise, if occasion offered.

There is a certain Kasha (priest) Tuma of Ashitha, in Tiari, who for some twenty-five years has been inducing Tiari people to look to the coming of the Russians and disregard Mar Shimun's authority. He has for some time past been in Russia and is practically a Russian agent now. He proposes to return to Tiari this winter bringing with him several boxes of presents, &c. The Russian priests in Urmia asked the Turkish Consul in Tabriz to give him a passport, which was refused, and he now intends to cross secretly at some point of the frontier.

If this man reaches Tiari, his arrival will certainly have a most dangerous effect on the ignorant people there. I have warned the Vali of the danger of the man's appearing there, and he promises to have the frontier carefully watched. There seems to be conclusive evidence that Nimrud has been endeavouring to pass this man across the frontier, and has sent some of his servants to Diza for the purpose.

Mr. Browne and Mr. Heazell finally left for Tiari, but I received a telegram yesterday from the former saying that he had been robbed of all his baggage by a celebrated Nestorian brigand, a "Malik," or Headman, of Tkhub district, called Baboo.

I at once went to the Vali, who telegraphed to Julamerk for zaptiehs and assistance to be sent to recapture Mr. Browne's effects.

Mr. Browne seems to have continued his route to Tiari.

He mentions in the telegram that this attack is without doubt by Nimrud's instigation, which is most probable, as he has done everything to prevent their mission to Tiari.

Seeing the amount of mischief this man has already done and seems likely to do, I would submit to your Excellency the advisability of having him exiled or temporarily removed from Kochannes.

A few days ago a telegram reached me from Diza from Mr. McCoan, an American missionary from Urmia, who stated he wished to tour in the Nestorian country but was stopped by the Government. He asked my advice, and I suggested that it would be better if he came to Van, where he could confer directly with the Vali, explain exactly where he wished to go, &c., and also be in more direct communication with the United States' Consul in Erzeroum and his Minister in Constantinople.

With reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 10th September, I now find that M. Maefsky, the Russian Vice-Consul here, did not actually visit Kochannes, but turned off through the mountains to the westward.

This year there have been a certain amount of raids on Nestorian villages, and

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lifting of cattle, chiefly by the Uramar Kurds, on the east side of the Nestorian country.

They have not been, however, so serious as the attack on Lewin last year.

On inquiry, I find many of the raids are owing to the attacks by Nestorians of Tiari on the Uramar men; in fact, it is difficult to say who began it. I have asked Mr. Browne and Mr. Heazell to try and explain to the Tiari men the great mischief done by stirring up these raids.

Tiari is separated from Uramar by the mountain district of Diz, so the Uramar Kurds revenged themselves on the latter, which they found defenceless, the worst outrage being an attack on Cursin village, in Diz, where eleven men were killed.

The Bashkala Government are inquiring into the matter.

On the north side of Tiari the relations of the people this year with Hajji Agha, Chief of the Hartoshi Kurds, have been friendly, and no serious outrages have been committed.

I have recently also paid a visit to the Caza of Shattakh, a large district south of Van.

It has a very energetic Kaïmakam, well liked by both Christians and Moslems.

A number of nomads, chiefly the large Miran tribe under Mustapha Pasha, a Hamidieh officer, occupying in summer the hills round this Caza.

This year Mustapha Pasha has been particularly quiet, and no outrages have occurred.

This, the Kaïmakam assures me, is due to special instructions received from Zekki Pasha.

Recently the Kaïmakam attacked the Khalilan Kurd tribe in the Bohtan Valley below Shattakh, who have long refused to pay taxes, and who have committed many outrages.

He removed the greater part of their cattle and sheep as payment for arrears of taxes due, and has now reduced them to complete submission.

The Cazas of Kawash and Karchikan, south of the lake, have been free from outrage this summer, the only difficulty being the poverty of the people in these mountain districts.

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 13.)

(No. 521.)

My Lord,

Therapia, November 8, 1899.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 238 of the 27th ultimo, respecting eight Armenians stated by the Armenian Relief Committee to have been arrested at Mardin for no offence except that they were discovered to have assisted in the distribution to their distressed countrymen of relief contributed from England and America.

The case of these men had already been brought to my notice by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, who reported that they were in gaol awaiting trial on what seemed to be frivolous charges, their real offence in the Vali's eyes being doubtless that they had been connected with the distribution of relief.

On receipt of Mr Jones' despatch I took an opportunity to speak very strongly to the Grand Vizier, pointing out that the fact that eight relief agents had been arrested by the Vali's orders afforded strong presumption that Mr. Jones' explanation of the reasons for their imprisonment was correct, the only alternative supposition being that the Vali was effecting arrests on a wholesale scale which there seemed to be nothing in the situation at Mardin to warrant. I warned His Highness that I might be constrained to let it be publicly known that the Vali was persecuting those who had distributed relief, and I pointed out the deplorable effect that would be produced if the public were aware that Armenians had been arrested for no other reason than that they had helped in a charitable work which had enjoyed the sanction of the Imperial Government and the co-operation of the local authorities.

His Highness said he could not believe that the Vali had caused the men to be imprisoned without good ground. He promised to call on him for a report as well as for the documents on which the charges were based.

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