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Armenians Killed With Axes by Turks

Harrowing Account by President of Anatolia College

The slaughter of all the Armenian Faculty members of Anatolia College, Marsovan, Northern Asia Minor, with 1,200 others, by Turkish peasants, whose pay for the work was the privilege of stripping the clothing off their victims' bodies, was described by the Rev. George E. White, President of the college, upon his return to the United States in the autumn of 1917. The massacres were committed at night by the order of the Turkish Government, he said, the Armenians being sent out in lots of hundred or two hundred to their doom and their bodies rolled into prepared burial trenches.

"One group of our college boys asked permission to sing before they died and they sang 'Nearer, My god, to Thee,' then they were struck down," Dr. White said. The number of Armenians who have been massacred is estimated by the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief in New York City at from 500,000 to 1,000,000, while there are a million still living in need of immediate aid. Dr. White, who is now living in Minneapolis, was ordered to leave Marsovan by the Turkish Government. He was formerly pastor of the Congregational Church in Waverley, Iowa.

"The situation for Armenia," he said "became excessively acute in the Spring of 1915, when the Turks determined to eliminate the Armenian question by eliminating the Armenians. The Armenian questions arise from political and religious causes.

"On the pretext of searching for deserting soldiers, concealed bombs, weapons, seditious literature or revolutionists, the Turkish officers arrested about 1,200 Armenian men at Marsovan, accompanying their investigations by horrible brutalities. There was no revolutionary activity in our region whatever. The men were sent out in lots of one or two hundred in night 'deportations' to the mountains, where trenches had been prepared. Coarse peasants, who were employed to do what was done, said it was a 'pity to waste bullets,' and they used axes.

"Then the Turks turned on the women and children, the old men and little boys. Scores of ox carts were gathered, and in the early dawn as they passed the squeaking of their wheels left memories that make the blood curdle even now. Thousand of women and children were swept away. "Where? Nowhere. No Destination was stated or intended. Why? Simply because they were Armenians and Christians and were in the hands of the Turks.

"Girls and young women were snatched away at every turn on the journey. The girls sold at Marsovan for from \$2 to \$4 each. I know, because I heard the conversation of men engaged in the traffic. I know because I was able to ransom three girls at the price of \$4.40.

"The misery, the agony, the suffering were beyond the power of hearts to conceive. In bereavement, thirst, hunger, loneliness, hopelessness, the groups were swept on and on along roads which had no destination.

"I received word from Ambassador Morgenthau that our premises would not be interfered with. Next morning the Chief of Police came with armed men and demanded surrender of all Armenians connected with the college, girls' school, and hospital. We claimed the right to control our grounds as American citizens. More than two hours we held them at bay. They brought more armed men. They again demanded surrender of the Armenians. I refused. They challenged me for resisting the Turkish Government. They said any one who did so was liable to immediate execution.

"They broke open our gates, brought in ox carts, and asked where the Armenians were. I refused to tell. They went through the buildings, smashing down the doors. Then our Armenian friends, feeling that further attempt on our part to save them would bring more harm probably than good, came forth, professed themselves loyal Turkish subjects, and offered to do what was required.

"An ox cart was assigned each family, with a meagre supply of food, bedding, and clothing. The mother sat on the load with her children about her, the father prepared to walk beside the cart. I offered prayer, and then the sad procession, carrying seventy-two persons from the college and hospital, moved away.

"These teachers were men of character, education, ability, and usefulness, several of them representing the fine type of graduates from American or European universities. The company went in safety for about fifty miles. Then the men were separated from the women, their hands were bound behind their backs, and they were led away. The eight Armenian members of the staff of instruction of Anatolia College were among the slain. The women and children were moved on and on. No one knows where, and no one knows how many of them are still living.

"The Government officers plowed the Armenian cemetery in Marsovan and sowed it with grain as a symbol that no Armenian should live or die to be buried there. No Armenian student or teacher was left to Anatolia College, and of the Protestant congregation in the city of 950 souls more than 900, with their pastors, were swept away. It was a Government movement throughout - a movement against the Armenian people.

"These things are typical of what took place through the six provinces of the Turkish Empire known as Armenia. The Armenians are the Yankees of the East - the merchants, manufacturers, capitalists, artisans, and among the vest of the farmers. One-quarter of a million people succeeded in escaping into Russian Caucasus, and among them American representatives have done wonderful work in caring for the sick, giving bread to the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for orphans. Probably a million more went to Syria and Mesopotamia, where they have been dependent upon American relief, which is helping this worthy people to pull through alive.