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The Plight of Armenian and Assyrian Christians



Report of Public Meeting organised by
the Lord Mayor's Fund, held at Central
Hall, Westminster, on December 4, 1918

Speeches by

His Grace The Archbishop of Canterbury

His Grace The Archbishop of Athens

The Rt. Rev. The Lord Bishop of London

The Rt. Rev. Mgr. Henry J. Grosch

Athelstan Riley, Esq.

Basil Mathews, Esq.

and others

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THE PLIGHT OF ARMENIAN & ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS

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1 NEW STREET SQUARE, E.C. 4

THE PLIGHT OF ARMENIAN AND ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS



A PUBLIC MEETING was held at the Central Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday, December 4. His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury presided, and was accompanied on the platform by His Grace, Meletios, Archbishop of Athens, the Lord Bishop of London, the Right Rev. Monsignor Grosch (to represent Cardinal Bourne), the Rev. Dr. Fort Newton (of the City Temple), Mr. Athelstan Riley, Mr. Basil Mathews, Mr. Edmund Bourne, Mr. F. W. Pittman, Mrs. Cole, Miss Hickson, Lt.-Col. Gregory, V.D., and the Rev. Harold Buxton. There were also three members of the Armenian delegation and an Armenian priest.

After the meeting had engaged in silent prayer, the Rev. Harold Buxton read letters of regret for non-attendance and of sympathy with the objects of the meeting from the Lord Mayor of London, Viscount Bryce, O.M., Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Aneurin Williams, M.P., Sir George Lloyd, Governor of Bombay, Professor Rendel Harris, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., the Rev. F. B. Meyer, the Rev. Canon Mason, Chairman of the Syrian Mission, and others.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said :

My friends, we are a little denuded to-day of the speakers for whom we had hoped, but we had no thought at the time this meeting was announced that an election would be in progress, and that those who were candidates would be almost compelled to be elsewhere. The fact of such a meeting as this being held or having to be held with

such a story to tell in the twentieth century of the Christian era is a matter, to my mind at least, of deep humiliation to the Church and to the world. It ought to be impossible that we should be faced to-day by conditions such as those for the needs of which we are here to make appeal. It is a confession of human wrong-doing and of our weakness in face of human wrong-doing which puts men and peoples to shame. We have passed at this moment through the greatest war that history has known, with the largest aggregate of horrors and bereavements that we have ever been called upon to share, and now that the fighting is at an end—please God, for ever!—we are faced by another world-wide problem, the outcome of the war, or in main part the outcome of the war, that is to say, the provision of actual necessities of the simplest and most elementary kind for vast populations both near at hand and far afield. I have no expert knowledge of these matters, but we are told by those who have that we are in near prospect of conditions of the very gravest kinds as regards the giving even of the necessities of daily food to the peoples of Poland and Serbia and Belgium, in part at least of Holland (it is not impossible), and of France, and of parts of Germany. If that be so, it is perhaps not surprising, though it is lamentable, that we should in some degree as a people have made little of—I will not say overlooked—the needs, even more terrible and urgent, more horrible in their character, and not less vast in their extent, which appertain to peoples further away from us, but for whom we as Christians have a special responsibility, and admit from them a special claim. You all know, more or less, the facts of the terrible position with which we are confronted to-day. The barest reminder in outline is all that is needed. For long generations—for centuries—there has been persistent and continuous misrule and cruelty on the part of Turkish governments over Christian peoples. Christians under Turkish rule have been having a hard and difficult time. We bring no charge against the individual Turkish soldier or the individual Turkish peasant. We are speaking of Turkish government and rule, and of the orders which are issued by high authority, and which are ruthlessly carried out by obedient men. Of these Christian popula-

tions the Armenians, Greeks, and others have been often before the world's notice as regards their needs. The Syrians, or Assyrian Christians—the Nestorians as they are sometimes called—have been less often before the world as regards their particular needs, yet it is they whose horrible trials and difficulties and sufferings have specially necessitated our gathering to-day, though we are appealing for all these other Christian populations as well.

The servitude in which Christian populations under Turkish rule had groaned for centuries was replaced some thirty or forty years ago, under that monster of iniquity, Abdul Hamid, by a policy of massacre. The difficulty of Christian peoples had been a continuous one, and the Turk had complained time after time of what he called a "disloyalty" on the part of people whom he was ceaselessly persecuting. But he then exchanged for that former policy a policy of massacre, and decided that there should be no Armenian or Nestorian or Christian question, because, so far as he could bring it about, there should be no Armenian or Nestorian or other Christian to arouse it. A deliberate plan of extermination was set on foot, and for years was carried out. During the war matters reached a point almost incredible in its horror. First there came to the poor Christian populations who had survived what had gone before exactions intolerable in their severity, and then, because those exactions could not be enforced or the money paid, there came torture of the vilest and most awful kind. Then there came the fear that Christians, after so suffering, should be enlisted in the Army. They were enlisted, and speedily put into what are called labour battalions, the point of that being that they should be disarmed, and so on occasion be the objects of a massacre against which, had they been ordinary soldiers, they might have defended themselves. We have records of all this, compiled largely from American sources, by the devoted labours of American consuls, missionaries, and workers. These records are stored in the archives at Washington, and the facts are placed beyond doubt with a horrible detail, blood-curdling to those who read. The massacres which afterwards ensued, carried out among men who had no power of resistance,

and no physical strength to escape, are literally incredible but for the sources from which the information comes. Some of you will have read in detail the story told in Mr. Arnold Toynbee's book on *Armenian Atrocities*, to which Lord Bryce has given his imprimatur and his name. Others will, perhaps, have read three articles in the last three weekly issues of *Land and Water*, by Mr. Henry Morgenthau, the former diplomatic agent in Constantinople, written for the American Government, and setting forth the events in detail. They are literally incredible but for the source from which they have come and the authentication which is given to the narrative. They describe unspeakable horrors, tortures, massacres, the selling for a few shillings of girls to Turkish soldiers, and the consequent terrible things which have ensued. A population civilised and intelligent, and a little while ago, notwithstanding all its troubles, prosperous, is now reduced to a condition almost impossible to describe without seeming an exaggeration. We read of 24,000 massacred in three days; another time 55,000 bodies were counted by the American representatives, who saw the preparations made for their burning. Altogether at least 600,000 persons—some say a million persons—have been done to death under a system of horrible misrule and intolerable and unspeakable cruelty, which, it amazes one to find, has not stirred the world even more than it has done. These are not the high-flown or overwrought descriptions of emotional men. I refer you to the books I have mentioned to see, where the authority is given, how quiet and cool and careful it is, and how capable the story is of refutation if refutation were possible, which I am afraid it is not. Of the Assyrian Christians on whose behalf we are speaking, not principally, indeed, but markedly, to-night, it is said that probably one half of the whole have perished, including the Nestorian patriarch, Mâr Shim'un, and large numbers of his people, done to death under that system. And what is to be said about the young women and girls of those once happy homes baffles description.

But there are still, notwithstanding all this—and it is most amazing that it should be so—no small number of old men and women and little children, and a sprinkling

of younger men and women, who for some reason or other have escaped or avoided all these horrors. They are now alive. They are gathered in large numbers, in absolute destitution, with the prospect that though the warfare of the Turk against them is at an end, the warfare of famine against them is to take its place, and that they will die by famine instead of by sword. To say these things in our quiet homes here is almost a terrible task because it makes one feel, as I said at the beginning, that we ought to be ashamed of the possibility of such things happening at all at this time in the history of the world and of the Church of Christ. What amazes me as I read these things is the courage, the persistence, the pertinacity, alike in patriotism and faith, of these people, who might, many of them, have saved something at least of the life which has been destroyed had they consented to abandon the faith which has come down to them from their fathers. It is a solemn thought for Christian folk at home to compare that pertinacity, that determination, that loyalty to what they hold, in the face of all these horrors, with our own courage and our own loyalty in the normal conditions of Christendom. Their present condition of fear, destitution, misery, and famine is beyond all doubt. Read if you will—and it is worth while reading in detail, and is purchasable for a few pence—the report in Hansard of the debate in the House of Lords on November 13, and the fuller debate in the House of Commons a few days later, on November 18. You will there find some of these blood-curdling details—though not too much of that—but you will also find a description of the conditions with which we are confronted, and the assurances upon which we are to rely that the Government is awake to the gravity of the matter. These discussions dealt, and rightly, not merely with the sufferings of these peoples, but with the future rule and government of their provinces. We are not dealing with that to-night; we should only distract our thought if we entered into a discussion of that subject. But you have in the documents I have cited Government information showing the Government's acceptance of even the worst of the story which has been unfolded, and I am glad to remind you that we had conveyed to us on those occasions a definite promise from

the Government. Lord Robert Cecil said: "Of course we recognise the tremendous claims that these people have from every point of view on the sustenance and protection of this country and of other civilised countries in Europe, and if I do not dilate upon the suffering and horrors it is not for want of sympathy, but because the subject is very well known, and I trust that the sentiments of the British Government are equally well known on the matter." On this matter, Lord Robert Cecil went on, the Government was deeply anxious. They felt the demand of humanity, and, apart from that, they would be exposing themselves to the indignation of the country if they were to allow further atrocities to take place when they had the power to stop them by military means. In addition to that, we have the promise from the Government of substantial support afforded to us. The supplying of these needs is not to be carried out without great expense, and even such smaller sums of money as we can collect will go far to meet some of the immediate necessities, now that it is possible—as it was not a little while ago—to communicate with these regions. We have upon us an obligation as a Christian people to see that these our fellow-Christians are relieved from a condition of intolerable distress and misery, to the extent to which that can be relieved by such supplies as we can send. Let the matter be pushed forward, talked about, outside people reminded of it, and let us know that no effort is being left untried. Under the guidance and chairmanship of the Lord Mayor funds are coming in, and aid will go forth. But let us see that the task is not neglected or belittled as regards the definite responsibility upon ourselves. Only to-day we have learned that the sum to be aimed at is £50,000, every penny of which will go directly to relief, the expenses at home being separately met. The funds will be administered through British consuls and other responsible persons. General Marshall reported on November 18 last that he had collected 40,000 Syrians and Armenians at Bitlis, and the principal requirements, in addition to transport, were sanitation, hospitals, and nurses. Anyone who will read the accounts I have spoken of will agree that this is to put it mildly indeed when we consider the dire condition of these

people, and I commend the appeal to you, and believe that I shall not commend it in vain (applause).

The Archbishop of Canterbury then introduced the Archbishop of Athens—the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan—whose own people, he said, had in some degree been reduced to distress and suffering, though, of course, it was not mainly of the people who belonged to Greece that they were thinking at that meeting. But the Archbishop was one of the foremost living authorities on the Eastern Churches; he could speak in their name, and they gave him that night the welcome he deserved.

HIS GRACE, MELETIOS, ARCHBISHOP OF ATHENS, then delivered a speech in Greek, which was interpreted. He said :

The Archbishop of Canterbury, brethren in Christ : it is with great emotion that I am amongst you at a meeting on behalf of those who were persecuted by the Turkish cruelty. I have been in Jerusalem and in Damascus and other places, and have seen with my own eyes the sad results of Turkish savagery. I recall the order made by Sultan Hamid for the massacre of Armenians. The sad impressions I gathered from the atrocities committed in those times will follow me to my tomb. A few years later I heard while in Jerusalem of other massacres which had been committed against the Christians in Syria. These massacres were not made by Sultan Hamid, but by the Young Turk party, who proved to be greater tyrants than Sultan Hamid himself. They resulted in the worst misfortune to the poor peoples of Assyria and Armenia and the Greeks of Asia Minor. I read with horror of the atrocities committed by the Turks against the Armenians and Assyrians. No more can be told us. I have seen the results with my own eyes of the atrocities committed by the Turks against the Greeks who were coming to Greece as refugees to avoid the Turkish cruelties. In Salonica, Piræus, and other places some 300,000 refugees gathered who had left their homes and taken refuge in Greece. They were only a remnant of those who had been persecuted by the Turks, incited by the Germans. Under the pretext of military precaution, the Turks sent away to exile the

Greeks, and sometimes they sent them, not out to Greece, but into Asia Minor to die there. People who were prosperous only a short time before suddenly became destitute of everything, and lost even their own lives. The Turks were out to destroy the Greeks altogether; there was to be no Grecian question in the East. The Grecian people were put, the old men in one train, the women in another, the children in another, and orders were given for the trains to go to different destinations, and thus the Grecian people were dispersed, so that members of the same family could not find one another again. When the time of deliverance came the mother called for the child and the child for the mother, and they could not meet. The greater number of the children were placed in Turkish homes so as to bring them back to the faith of Islam. You understand, therefore, what is your work. It is yours to help stop the tears of those who are crying, and to put balsam on the wounds of those who have suffered. It was your soldiers who gave to them deliverance, and now it is your part to contribute to their final happiness. Your work is sacred, and God will bless it (applause).

RT. REV. MONSIGNOR GROSCH, representing Cardinal Bourne, said:

Your Grace, my lords, ladies and gentlemen, I have the honour, as his Grace has said, to represent at this meeting his Eminence Cardinal Bourne, who has asked me, in the first place, to express his entire sympathy with the objects of this meeting, and his very sincere hope that the object we have in view may be fully realised. He bids me in particular to thank the administrators of the Lord Mayor's Fund for their generous gifts to the Patriarchal Vicar, Monsignor Manna, of Van, in Northern Persia, and also for the special help which they have extended to the Lazarist missionary fathers who work there. I shall not go beyond the limits of my brief if I express on behalf of the other archbishops and bishops in this country who are in communion with the Holy See their entire sympathy with this meeting also, and their desire that it should be a great success; and with them, I need hardly say, are associated the clergy and faithful laity

subject to their jurisdiction. We are met—and I take it as a special privilege that I should be allowed to stand on this platform and address this assembly on so noble a cause—we are met not actuated by any mere political thought or interest. We are servants of religion and of humanity, and in the name of those two great things we are here to appeal to our fellow-countrymen and to the English-speaking people throughout the world on behalf of a sorely tried and persecuted innocent race. We are not met, ladies and gentlemen, with any smug confidence in the entirety of our own virtues. We have our faults, our national faults perhaps, and for some of them we have had to pay pretty dearly. But we have also—let us say it with all humility—our virtues, and amongst those virtues there is certainly one which not even those who love us least will deny us—the virtue of being ready when the cry of distress reaches us to give out a generous and a helping hand. This characteristic of ours is allowed by all. It is something that has come down to us amongst other noble traditions in our country from the grand old days that are past. It is a national inheritance. It belongs to us, and we must prove ourselves worthy of those who have gone before us, and worthy of ourselves. *Noblesse oblige*. We are compelled by the very character which we have gained, and properly gained, and held before the whole world, to come in in no niggardly manner, but with hands full and overflowing to the help of these our fellow-Christians in their unutterable need.

In 1916 the Rev. Harold Buxton, the secretary of that Fund to whom we all owe so much, stated that up to that time more than 500,000 Assyrians and Armenians had been massacred by the Turk. In the House of Commons on November 11 last it was stated that that number had now reached 800,000, an increase—a ghastly increase—of 300,000 massacred in a period of two years. But, ladies and gentlemen, if the story had ended with the massacres we should not be here to-night, at least not for the same purpose as we are. Those who escaped the massacres fled to the mountains and to the plains beyond, and there since four years they have been existing upon what your Society—what the Lord Mayor's Fund—could give them, and

what the British Army could spare of their already none too great rations. They have been existing upon charity, and charity is loud in her call now that they should continue to exist, and that their existence shall be less terrible and suffering that it has been in the past. If there has been a great deal of money contributed to this cause, a great deal more must be contributed in the future. We must not sit down quietly and contemplate what we have done in the past. What are we to do? I take it that, in the first place, the Government, which, as his Grace has said, already acknowledges its obligations, must be kept to its word. We miss Lord Robert Cecil from this meeting, and we must make it understood of the Government that the change of personnel in the Foreign Office shall mean no change of policy. Turkey must go (loud cheers). Delays are dangerous, and sometimes desperate, and the delay with the Turk has brought about the desperate condition in which the Armenians find themselves to-day. It sometimes happens, I believe, that statesmen utter words of wisdom, and even great ecclesiastics have been known to give advice that was salutary at times, and the delay which has happened, and which has been the cause of this that we now deplore would never have been had the words of wisdom of the great Christian statesman, Gladstone—(applause)—and the sound advice of the not less great ecclesiastic Cardinal Manning—(applause)—been listened to a generation ago. The Turk would not have been able in that event to have used his fangs during the last thirty years. Thanks be to the mercy of God, and thanks to our glorious navy and our incomparable army and our great allies, the Turk is now in the dentist's chair. And I think we may trust Mr. Lloyd George, and M. Clemenceau, and President Wilson (cheers) and Marshal Foch to bring off a successful operation. I don't think the Turk will find a use for his fangs in the future. We must convince the Government of the need of acting speedily and effectively. Let us have no delay. Let us have some deeds—apply the thing to yourselves—and less words. Let us have the deeds, and let us have them at once.

The next thing, I take it, we must do is to arouse the

conscience of our fellow-countrymen as to the enormity of the iniquities which have been committed. I do not think the country really does know. I think that if the country really did know there would go from end to end of it a huge wave of horror and of hatred that such a thing as has been done could be done in these times. But something better would go through the country—a greater desire to extend generosity, hands would go deep into pockets, and money would be forthcoming, and that would be the most perfect kind of sympathy and the most perfect expression of horror our countrymen could give. Once let the British people know there is a real need, and I believe that success will attend the efforts of those responsible for this Fund. And let me say, your Grace—a less indulgent Chairman than you would have extinguished me before this—that we have asserted the principle and sealed it with our best blood—the principle, namely, that whenever the weak is trampled upon by the strong, it is our privilege and our blessed duty to come to the help of the oppressed. Every just law of man, and every law of God, which is above all, urges us to use all legitimate force that we may to impress upon our fellow-countrymen not only the horror of what has happened, but the demand which is made upon them at the present moment to alleviate the sorrows and sufferings which that horror has induced. We must do something to propagate in this country and in America the news of the horror, and to appeal to the people of those countries for real and generous help. If I were asked what I thought might be done by this Fund I would say that half-a-dozen men or women or men and women might be found who should go up and down the length of England—and make its breadth too—and by their voice arouse the people of this country to a consciousness of their duty in the presence of this great need. I believe that if the need were known, and if the voices of eloquent and well-informed and really interested men and women were to be heard in this country the result would be the supply in generous measure of the needs which we come here tonight to appeal for. Then send forth your crusade of charity through the country. I am quite sure of a victory for the cross. I am quite sure that the crusade of charity

preached in this land would bring an abundant sum of money which it would be the highest privilege and the delight of the heart for those responsible for this Fund to send out to our suffering friends in Armenia. Because I believe the people of this country will answer the call now made to them, and because I believe that the Government if properly urged will do what it has undertaken to do, I move the following resolution :

That this meeting, realising the urgent needs of the thousands of destitute and starving Assyrians and Armenians on the Turko-Persian frontier, desires to press upon the British people the necessity of supplying as far as possible adequate support in their present straits, and calls upon the Government also to take its full share in this work of humanity.

(Subsequently the Chairman, in response to a suggestion, interpolated the words after "frontier" of "and of other Christian populations who have suffered under Turkish rule," and in this form the resolution was afterwards carried.)

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON said :

I shall only occupy the time for exactly three minutes. I was pressed by the Rev. Harold Buxton to come here, although I knew that you had so fine a platform you did not want me. But I really could not bear such a burning appeal to be made in my diocese and not be here. I have heard his Grace make many speeches, but I have never heard him make a more impressive appeal than he has made to-day, and it has been backed up by those fine words from Monsignor Grosch. There are three resolutions in my mind, as in everyone's mind, I think. The first is that the people who have done this thing shall be punished. I put it at considerable length in Westminster Abbey on Sunday that unless we punish the wrong-doer, we shall be called to account before God in the day of His visitation. The second resolution is that never again shall the Turk be allowed to rule one single soul in this world. I am thankful to say I was with our armies when they shook the last fist at the Turk before he gave in.

That fist was shaken at Kavallo, and just up to Adrianople on the other side, and it was that last shake that brought down the Turk. The third is a resolution to respond to the appeal which has been made. Is there any appeal greater than this? It is an appalling need. I agree with every word Monsignor Grosch has said. I wish I had the time to go on a crusade with a fiery cross from one end of England to the other. Let me say also that all this talk about the gentlemanly Turk is the greatest rot in the world. Too many people are running down the character of the Armenians (hear, hear). It is simply done in the interests of those who are persecuting them. The Armenians I look upon as a most oppressed and deserving body of people, and I will do my little best to help on the Fund and appeal to everybody else to do the same (applause).

The Bishop of London then formally seconded the resolution which had been moved by Monsignor Grosch, and it was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

MR. ATHELSTAN RILEY said :

I am very glad that the Bishop of London has spoken before me, because the fact that he has seconded the first resolution, which I was down to do, enables me to transfer myself to the second resolution, and the second resolution is what I want to impress most earnestly upon this meeting. It runs as follows :

That, further, the attention of the Government be drawn to the urgent necessity of providing security of life and honour, and a just administration for the Assyrian and Armenian peoples, free from Turkish control.

His Grace has told you that few people, in this room at any rate, know the country, and know those Christians whose fate we are considering this afternoon ; it has been my fortune to know both it and them. I wonder how many people there are who understand the difference between the Armenians and the Assyrians. If you look at the map of Turkey in Asia, and take

a big slice off that empire, in the north-east corner, there, roughly speaking, you will find the Armenian Christians, and then if you want to find the Assyrian Christians you must follow down that great chain of mountains which separate Turkey from Persia, running right down from Mount Ararat to the district of Bagdad, and in those mountains and in the plains of Mosul on the one side and in the plains of Persia on the other you will find these Assyrian Christians. You will also find in these mountains the Kurdish tribes. I do not know whether many of you were brought up on the classics, but if you were you will remember what Xenophon found in his march to the sea with his ten thousand men, namely, that the most troublesome people he encountered in that progress were the Kurds, and exactly what they were in Xenophon's time they are to-day, robbers, fierce and cruel, though now, of course, they are Mohammedans. These Christians, both Armenians and Assyrians, live under Turkish rule, and I want you to realise what Turkish rule means, in normal times, in ordinary times, without any war, without any excitement. What is the condition of these Christian peoples holding the Christian faith in these vast tracts of Asia Minor? It is no exaggeration to say, ladies and gentlemen, that no man's property is safe, no woman's honour is safe, and no Christian's life is safe—all that in normal times. Let me give you just one illustration. I remember when I was there, many years ago now, I was entertained at dinner by a Christian bishop, and not very long after—three or four years after—that Christian bishop was travelling with his archdeacon and six or seven of his people in these mountains, when he was set upon by the Mohammedan Kurds, and the whole party were murdered. Every single one of those people had on his breast when the bodies were found the sign of the cross—the sign of the cross had been slashed on the breast in contempt for the Christian religion. It is not everybody who can say that he has had dinner with a Christian martyr. That bishop was not a very learned man, he was a poor man, but he was killed because he was a Christian. And when we pass further west, to a great city like Constantinople, which calls itself a civilised city, what do we find, or what did we find

a few years ago, in times of peace? We found, only a few years ago, wholesale massacres of the Armenians of Constantinople.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, when Turkey is at war—or was at war—what was the policy? It was a policy of absolute extermination of the Christian peoples, it did not matter whether they were Armenians or Assyrians, or whether they were of the nationality of the Archbishop of Athens whom we are so proud to see on the platform to-night. As the Turks say, "It was black pigs, white pigs, all pigs." Every Christian was regarded as the same. The policy of extermination was carried out partly by deportations, so that thousands—literally thousands—of men, women, and children were torn from their homes, and dragged through Asia Minor. If you read the reports his Grace has referred to you will be filled with horror. Stark naked and dying on the road, these people were driven from one side of Asia Minor to the other. Great rivers actually changed their course because they were choked with corpses. And that has been going on within the last two years. At the present moment the people of this country are very much excited about the Kaiser. They are calling for the Kaiser's head. I am not here to defend the Kaiser. But I am here to say that if we are moved by the atrocities which are under our eyes more or less, in Belgium and France, those atrocities in Belgium and France do not equal the tenth—not the twentieth—part of what has been going on in other parts of Europe and in Asia Minor. If it comes to asking for heads, there are other heads besides the Kaiser's. What about Enver, the leader of the Young Turks? If there was ever a man responsible for these frightful cruelties, it is Enver Pasha. Is he not to be brought to trial? We know the names of most of these scoundrels. A confidential paper of the Greek Government was put into my hands the other day. There are the names of the men who ordered the massacres, who ordered the violation of the women, and if we are going to ask for the head of the Kaiser, it is only the beginning, ladies and gentlemen, if justice is to be done (applause).

I turn to the question of what is to be our policy, and that brings me to my resolution. This resolution I did not

draft, but I most thoroughly agree with it. It is a very curious thing, but you will find that the Turk has always been traditionally popular in this country. Talk to the average Englishman, and you will find that he has always something to say for the Turk. I know the Turk very well indeed. I have come across him a great deal, and let me tell you what the difference between the Turks is. When the Turk is a servant and the under-dog he is a very good fellow. If I wanted a servant in travelling I should certainly choose a Turk. He is a very decent fellow when in that capacity. But he is an absolutely impossible person as master. The Turkish government is impossible. Lord Bryce—I wish he was with us to-night—has dinned it into the ears of the British public for years and years and years that the Turkish empire must go. That is the only possible solution of the question. We must now take the opportunity of for ever ending the Turkish rule for Christian peoples. (Applause.) Once you get the Turk as the under-dog you will find him as decent a fellow as the Mohammedan of India or Egypt. But what about Turkish government? It is a curious thing that nobody wants the Turkish government—not even the Mohammedans themselves. Why was it that the king of the Hejas rebelled against Turkey and became our ally? His people are the Mohammedans of Mohammedans. They include the people of Mecca. But they could not stand the Turkish government. It seems to me a most unfortunate thing—one of the most unfortunate things in history—that only a few years before the war Italy should have taken such a fancy to that desolate country called Tripoli. That was the place for the Turkish government, there with the Sahara behind, and the Mediterranean in front, and no Christians to oppress. I only hope that in the general shuffle we may give the Italians some compensation, and let the Turk, if he still wants to rule, go to Tripoli. There will be no relief for these unfortunate people of whom we are thinking to-night until we have made an end of Turkish rule and internationalised or brought under the control of some Christian power Constantinople, which is the hot-bed of all this tyranny. And, I do not know whether it is a popular or an unpopular thing

to say, I believe we should never rest until we have made it perfectly clear that the Turkish government in Europe is ended for ever, and that the cross is again set upon the great Christian church of St. Sophia. (Applause.) And we must see to it that the grievous yoke which these plundering and bloody hordes from Asia have imposed upon Christendom for four centuries is smashed beyond repair. (Applause.)

Mr. BASIL MATHEWS.

I want to second the resolution which Mr. Riley has proposed, and to second it with all the emphasis I am able to command in respect of those last four words, "free from Turkish control." My first passionate interest in the Armenians and the Assyrian peoples began in the months just preceding the war, when I was walking in the streets of Tarsus, the city of St. Paul, with that magnificent, great-hearted Christian woman of America, Mrs. Christie, the wife of the President of St. Paul's Institute in Tarsus. She is, I believe, one of the great women of the world. We turned into the little courtyard, and there we heard voices belonging to quite a strong-lunged party of Armenian children, boys and girls, coming through the window. We went into the room and found there a little Armenian kindergarten, and from that kindergarten Mrs. Christie called out three little five-year-old children, all bearing practically the same name, though two of them were boys, and one was a girl. Their tragic story was then told to me. Five years before that date the rifles were handed out at the Turkish arsenal at Tarsus, and a ruthless massacre of Armenians began. The Turks sped to the Armenian quarter, the door of house after house was bashed open, the rooms entered, the treasures looted—if a business house the safe was blasted open with gunpowder; men, women, and children were slaughtered, and then the house was set on fire. It was really an attempt to destroy the whole Armenian life of Tarsus. The Armenian women, learning what was happening, fled for their lives down the streets of Tarsus, all of them making by one instinct for the gates of St. Paul's Institute, which were

flung wide open to them, and they filled the *campus*, the stables, the dormitories, the class-rooms, the missionaries' house, until actually that night three women were sleeping under the grand piano and two on the top of it! Here was the one place where they could remain in safety, and while the mothers were in there, and the fathers were being massacred outside in the streets of Tarsus, these little baby children were born, and because of the compassionate affection that they received in this place of refuge, the boys were called Christie, and the girl Christine. These two boys and the girl to whom I was introduced at Tarsus were born during that terrible time. They would be nine now. I met at the same time a boy nine years old and talked with him, and this was his story. The Turks had entered his house, bayoneted his father and his elder brothers, thrown them out on a heap of corpses in the road, and had thrown out this little boy with them. He lay there as though dead through the hours of light upon the heap of his slaughtered relatives, and then, when darkness fell, he crept away to that same place, the missionary college of St. Paul's, where he has been brought up by Mr. and Mrs. Christie as a second father and mother. During these latter days, when we have been hearing of these horrible massacres, knowing as I do that they began on the Cilician plain, of which Tarsus is the centre, I am haunted by the memory of the faces of those three innocent children and of that boy of nine in the certainty in my own heart that none of them have escaped the filthy violence of the abominable Turk.

I stand here to-day full of a passionate conviction—having gone through the Turkish empire from the shores of the Dead Sea, travelling across Cilicia and Asia Minor to Smyrna, and having seen how everywhere that the trail of the Turk appears, human life in all its best elements withers—that the rule of the Turk must go. (Applause.) I will not go into detail, as I had a mind to do, because the time for closing this meeting is already upon us, only I want to say that the facts laid before us are as incontrovertible as they are diabolical. One element in those facts is vouched for by the Germans in Aleppo. The German educational missionaries in Aleppo have written

that in the compounds next door to their school were crowded girls, women, and children, practically naked, some of them lying on the ground, in a state of exhaustion and famine. Out of two or three thousand women, only forty or fifty living skeletons were left. "The prettier ones have become the victims of their gaolers' lust, while the plain ones have succumbed to blows, hunger, and thirst." Every day more than a hundred corpses were carried out of Aleppo, and now there were left—said these German missionaries—forty or fifty emaciated phantoms crowded into the compound opposite the schools. Some of them were women out of their mind. They had forgotten how to eat. They could only groan and wait for death. The German Christians went on to appeal to their own government to stop this systematic deportation and butchery.

Now, fellow Christians, ladies and gentlemen, just multiply the horror of this scene by a thousandfold. Think of men slain and women raped along the roadsides. Think of gentle, trained nurses being dragged away from the hospitals in which they were ministering to the Turks themselves—driven out into the country to die. Think of innocent people beaten and dragged and thrown into the rivers, of children taken up by the legs and hurled against rocks, and, as a background to all this, the burning villages and the sum of atrocities piled up with every imaginable barbarity and filthiness. And still, even after all this, you would go short of the absolutely cold and historically accurate facts of the case. That being so, there is nothing before us but to liberate these people and all Christian people for evermore from the horrible rule of the Turk. We Britons went into the war for a great and a worldwide ideal—the ideal of small nations having the freedom to control themselves and to be masters of their own destinies. We were drawn in by Belgium. But you cannot limit the application of an eternal principle geographically. You must apply it not only in Belgium but all through Europe, and not only in Europe but in Asia. We have fought the war for that principle. Our brothers, our sons have died for that principle. And we have won the war on that principle, and now there stands before us the Peace Con-

ference. The end of the war is only the beginning of the conference. The end of the conflict is, in fact, only the beginning of the conquest. The end of the destruction is only the beginning of the reconstruction. And what is going to happen? What will take place at the Peace Conference? Now, it is absolutely useless to build any city of God other than foursquare and complete. It is of no use setting up Belgium at one corner, and Serbia at another corner, and Poland at another, each of them as a free nation, if you are going to leave a great and ruinous breach at the fourth corner, where Armenia ought to be. (Hear, hear.) There are at work in subterranean, sinister, unclean ways international financial interests that are trying to pull the strings of the Peace Conference, so that for the sake of the gold which is invested in Turkey Armenia shall not be set free. And there must go forth from this meeting a clarion call to that Peace Conference that even though all the gold in Turkey were the investment of the peoples who would be at the Peace Conference, it must be swept aside as nothing, for human lives and souls are at stake, and Armenia and Assyria must be set free for evermore. (Applause.)

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Lieut.-Col. GREGORY, V.D., said :

Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is a special privilege for me to be allowed to address you this evening, and I am only going to take up a minute or two of your time. The original intention of my speaking was to propose a vote of thanks to our Chairman for the able way in which he has conducted this meeting, the impressive statement he made at its beginning, and not only for the eloquence which he himself imparted to the subject, but the way in which he encouraged subsequent speakers to bring out their eloquence also. But before asking you to accord a vote of thanks to the Chairman I should like just to say one or two words on another point. As I am the only speaker to-day who is an Armenian, I think I ought to convey to this meeting the gratitude of the Armenian people for all that Great Britain has done to relieve them under the un-

speaking hardships and barbarities which they have had to endure and which have been so eloquently referred to by His Grace. I have been connected with the Lord Mayor's Fund as its Honorary Treasurer from its very inception, and the sympathy and generosity which has gone to the raising of over £100,000 for my little-known people is truly marvellous, especially in face of the stupendous call on British purses from numerous other distressed peoples much nearer to you than my own. We Armenians will ever remain grateful and thankful to you, not only for the saving of our distressed people at the moment, but also for the saving of our national life, which I hope is coming. That is all I need say to you in expressing the deepest gratitude of the Armenians all over the world; and now I ask you for a vote of thanks to our Chairman for his presence here to-day to help us and to stimulate us to do our utmost for the cause we all have at heart. This vote of thanks I will ask you to pass with acclamation.

The vote of thanks having been passed with acclamation,

The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said :

I do not want to be thanked to-day. This is a very sacred thing indeed to me. I have been interested in the Eastern Christians for more than thirty years, and my interest was never more acute than it is at the present time, when the sufferings which these people are enduring are such as are beyond all words to express in their terribleness and sorrow, or in the significance and the lesson which they ought to have for ourselves.

A question was handed up from the audience asking whether Parliamentary candidates should be catechised as to their views on this question, and His Grace in reply said that he thought it would be an extremely good thing to stimulate them to take an interest in a subject of such importance and urgency.

The meeting concluded with the National Anthem.

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