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HOW TURKS PUT
ARMENIANS
TO DEATH

By the Associated Press.

New York, Oct. 15—Buried alive of babies in trenches with the bodies of their mothers, who had been slaughtered or allowed to perish from exposure, was practiced by the Turks in their work of exterminating the Armenians, it was declared here today by the Rev. Henry H. Riggs, missionary of the American board of commissioners for foreign missions to Harput, Turkey, who recently came back to this country. A trench was dug beside a camp of American women, he said, and as they met death the survivors were forced to drag their bodies to it and bury them.

"The gendarmes said they could not take care of the babies that were left behind, so many of those were buried with their mothers," Dr. Riggs said. "When I visited this camp I frequently saw Turks wandering about among the Armenians picking out pretty girls and little children to take away to their homes. Some mothers told us that they had themselves thrown their babies into the Euphrates river rather than allow them to be taken to Moslem homes. Many more threw themselves into the river to escape a bondage of shame worse than death."

"About fifteen miles from Harput is a lake hidden from sight with many ravens about it. We were told that the Armenian exiles were being killed and left in these ravines. Two Americans investigated and brought back photographs and actual facts. They saw in a twenty mile ride 10,000 human bodies, most of them killed by the bayonet. With a few exceptions they were women and children and the mangled condition of their bodies showed the horrible fate that has been theirs."

The story of the deportation of the Armenians of Harput is one of "perfidy, violence and murder," Dr. Riggs went on, adding, "It is nearer to the truth to say the Turkish government undertook the extinction of the Armenian population." After the issue of an edict for all Armenians to go to Mesopotamia, he said, there came the arrest of all the men of standing.

"They were sent out on the road tied together in groups of two to five," he said, "driven and beaten by the gendarmes. Of the first party of 800, one young man survived to tell the story of what happened. The party was taken into a ravine and ordered to sit down, he told me. Then the gendarmes climbed up on the surrounding rocks and fired with their rifles into the crowd of bound prisoners as long as they showed signs of life."

"The man who told me the story succeeded in getting his knife and cutting himself loose. As he made his dash for liberty he was followed by a volley of shots but got away unscratched. All of the other men of that and similar parties were ruthlessly butchered. The women and children were then started on the road toward Mesopotamia in companies of two or three thousand. By indirect routes they were forced to wander about until the summer heat and disease wasted away the majority. No transportation was provided. I saw one old man, who had traveled 200 miles, start out to go the remaining 250 miles carrying on his back his pack of quilts and clothes and on top of that his aged, palsied wife, who could not walk."

"Often the routes chosen took the people over waterless deserts where thousands perished from thirst. I passed through such a region where thousands of bleached skeletons each side of the way told the story of a waterless journey across the plains in August."

"The people who passed through Harput from the north usually spent two or three days in camp within sight of my home. The sights we saw there can never be forgotten. They were absolutely without shelter, day or night, from heat or cold. The air was unspeakably foul from dead bodies lying near. As we approached the women and children came around us like hungry wolves all restraint lost in the one desire for a piece of bread."

"The sick and dying lay around under the blazing sun with no one to care for them, waiting for the end. One place I saw a row of twelve dead women and children who had been lying in the shade of trees. With them was one little baby still alive. The shade had shifted and the burning August sun had fallen on them and killed them. A long trench was dug beside the field where these people were obliged to dig and fill it. As soon as one died she was dragged to the trench."

In January, 1916, Dr. Riggs said, there were 485,000 deported Armenians in Mesopotamia, while in May 1917 the most careful investigation showed only 112,000 survivors, more than three quarters having perished from famine, pestilence and massacre in fifteen months.

"The only bright feature of this terrible picture is the help that has actually reached a fraction of these people through relief funds from America's ever ready generosity," Dr. Riggs said.

"In Harput of were able to give daily rations of bread to nearly 5,000 widows and orphans. If more money had come there were 20,000 within reach equally in need. Upon the rupture of diplomatic relations, the Turkish government confiscated our food supplies and many of these people perished of hunger." Since then, however, Dr. Riggs continued, arrangements have been made to continue the relief work through neutral agents who are disbursing the funds and supplies gathered through the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief in New York city. The question of saving the remnant of the Armenian race, he said, can be solved only by American generosity.

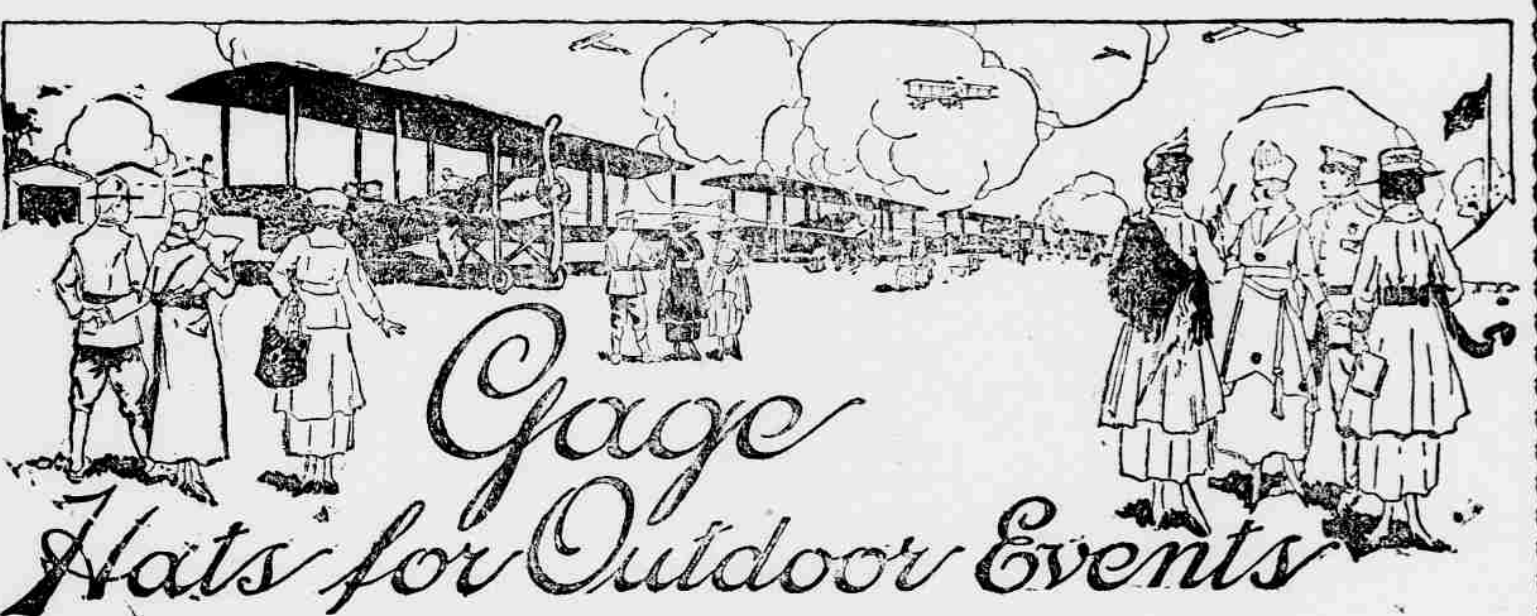
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"The Armenian men are dead," he said, "and the women have been crushed and cannot long survive the terrible experiences through which they have passed. But there are 400,000 orphan children, most of whom are begging their bread today. The hope of the future is in gathering together these remnants and saving them for the seed of the future Armenian race. These children look to us today. If they can be fed and housed and educated for the next ten years they can constitute the leading progressive element in the life of a new Turkey as their fathers did in the old."