

TURKS ARE TOLERANT PEOPLE

But Are Cruel in Matters of Putting Down Rebellion—
Armenian Massacres Are Not Over—Harrowing
Tales of Cruelty.

Special Correspondence.

Damascus, Syria, Nov. 29, 1900.—I am now writing about Hama or Hamath.

In King David's day we hear of Hamath and that King Toi of that place congratulated David on his victory over the King of Zobah, and in the time of Solomon the kingdom of Israel extended to this point but for a short time only. In 2 Kings, 18, 34 we read of its capture by the Assyrians. The Greeks on their conquest according to their custom of changing the names of important places, gave it the name Epiphania, by which name it is known by early Christian writers, but falling into the hands of the Arabs very shortly after the death of Mohammed, they restored the old name of Hama by which it has since been known. Since that time but before the time the Turks controlled this part of Syria it has played quite a part in history, having at different dates been in the hands of the Crusaders, the Assyrians and sometimes having native kings of its own.

The city seems to have made some growth of late years, and with its irrigated lands along the bottoms of the Orontes, it forms a pleasant contrast to the treeless fields by which it is surrounded. The way of raising water for irrigation is peculiar. They have large undershot wheels from thirty to sixty feet in height, which scoop up the water, and deliver it at a height of the wheel, into a ditch supported on high stone arches. These wheels are high centuries old, have distinctive names of their own, are constructed entirely of wood, and the creaking going on day and night, can be heard over a mile away.

I visited a mosque that was formerly a Christian church, being converted into a mosque about the year 430. In the open court of this building, there is a small temple erected of granite columns, the character antedating our era and of which the meaning is unknown.

ENTERTAINED BY A GREEK.

During the day we stayed there we met a young man, the son of a Greek orthodox priest, who prepared a reception for us in the evening. His wife's father and friends could speak only Arabic and Greek, with the exception of his sister (a school teacher, who had learned German in Beyrout). Brother learned his testimony to him in Turkish, while Elder Herman testified in German to the truth of the Gospel to the sister. This young man was so pleased with the Gospel that he wished to take a journey to Aleppo, a two weeks' trip, to talk with the branch there, but we advised him to stay, and promised to send him some tracts. We found some here who knew a little about Mormonism, and President Hittler, who stopped here for a day or two some years ago, was remembered. About three-fourths of the population are Mohammedan and they have the reputation of being extremely fanatical. Just before leaving we notified the military authorities, as they requested us to, and they sent a cavalryman to accompany us, but not waiting for him to go to the barracks for his horse, we started on the road, a large crowd following us. On the outskirts of the city

I rode ahead up a rather steep and long hill, Elders Herman and Booth following. After having gone a couple of miles, finding my companions were not in sight, I went back some distance, when they came in view. I found they had walked up the hill, and the crowd of perhaps about 200 picking up rocks from a macadamized road in course of construction, had subjected them to quite a heavy shower of stones, and they had been struck repeatedly, though not seriously, but one of the stones had gone through Brother Booth's wheel, breaking a spoke. Though most of the crowd were in accord with the picking, they were not entirely so, some of the better disposed taking the part of the brethren, saying the rock throwers had natures like animals, and drawing their sticks to protect them. We were soon on a good piece of road, and after traveling a short distance sat down and awaited the appearance of our soldier, who came up, his horse all covered with foam, thinking we had got into trouble. The road here is as good as can be found anywhere. It has lately been built from Hama to Tarabulus, by a French company, who use very large wagons on it.

We stopped for a short time at the small city of Reshpa, built of black basalt rock on a hill, close to which is a bridge across the Orontes.

A VERY ANCIENT CITY.

This city, Reshtan, was built by Seleucus Nicator, and was built 2300 years ago, to check the encroachments of the dwellers in tents. This part of the country, as in the days when Reshtan was founded, opening as it does to the east on the Syrian desert, has been more or less subject from the earliest times to raids from the desert nomads. It is reported that the peasants of some of these places, are yet compelled to pay blackmail to the Bedouin Arabs to save themselves from plunder.

Among the Bedouins, robbery and plunder are not counted crimes in the way we count them, but they have quite a regard for life, and will not kill unnecessarily in accomplishing robbery. Anything their tribe can take and are able to keep, is to them in their right, and if not kept in check by a strong hand, their greed in regard to property may be summed up as follows: them the simple plan.

That they should take who have the power. And they should keep who can. From Reshtan following a road on which it was a pleasure to ride we arrived at night at Hama, the region of Aram Zobah mentioned 2 Samuel 8, 34. This place, once possessed a famous temple to the god of the sun, and the people fought against the Romans in the beginning of our era. It was quite an important place during the times of the Saracens, and was at one time captured by the Crusaders. It contains about 30,000 inhabitants, including many Christians. This is the city for watermelons, stacks like houses being piled in the market place. Watermelons are grown to a great extent in northern Syria and are of varieties more solid than we generally grow in America. They have very good keeping qualities so that melons can be purchased as late as Christmas. The seeds are also eaten after being roasted, and it would be thought wasteful not to save the seed. When you buy a melon they generally bring a tray with it so that the seeds can be saved.

After leaving Hama the country be-

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came very rocky and picking our way on a trail between rocks was rather fatiguing. We stopped for dinner at the village of Hama, with a Turkish gentleman, who wished us to stay over night. The family of this gentleman once owned sixty villages in this locality, though at present he only owns two villages. They carry water on the backs of donkeys from springs twelve miles away to this village, but in the coming year they expect to complete a ditch, and do away with the work of the donkeys have done for hundreds of years past. The Turkish civil engineer in charge invited me to go over the ground with him, and stated that they were utilizing for a portion of the way a rock conduit constructed in the time of the Romans.

Continuing still over very rocky ground we passed Kara, a small town with a fine mosque that was once a Christian church to Nebk.

This city's name (Nebk) is that of a thorny bush, that grows in Palestine and southern Syria, and of which the crown our Savior was crowned with in derision was composed. It is a village of about 2,000 population and has quite a number of orchards. Resting here, it being Sunday, we called on a Mr. Stewart Crawford, an American Presbyterian missionary, who treated us very friendly and invited us to stay at his place, he also returning our visit came to the khan. This gentleman, though perfectly willing to discuss the political condition of "Mormonism," did not care to talk on the trial, policy, and in reply to Elder Booth's offer to furnish him some of our tracts said he would be very pleased to receive them, as they would be of use to him in combating our principles.

Mr. Crawford stated at the time of the Armenian massacres there had been trouble between the Mohammedans and Christians in this part of Turkey. But stated that quite a number of Druzes had been killed at that time. This may seem strange to many as the Druzes are nominally Mohammedans. In regard to the Armenian massacres of five or six years ago, a great many are of the belief that they were on religious grounds. Many of the Armenians themselves think so, and many of them, like martyrs when having the privilege of accepting Mohammedanism or death, chose the latter. The Turk, however, is tolerant of nearly all religions provided they do not come in contact with his ruling power, and there is no political or other aspirations to contend with. When, however, rebellion is feared, their methods are extremely cruel, and the people are given over to be murdered, to rapine and robbery, as in the case of the Christian Syrian massacres of 1860, the Bulgarian massacre of twenty years ago, and the late massacres in Armenia.

It is a horrible thing to think of when you do in the country north of here, people who have been plundered, and whose fathers and brothers have been killed with clubs or shot down in the open day, and that by fellow townsmen and neighbors.

MASSACRE IS NOT SETTLED.

Matters are not yet settled in portions of Armenia. I read in the London Times of November 3rd, a most harrowing description of the condition of things in the Lake Van district, near to the Persian frontier, describing conditions there the correspondent states: "There

is not a virgin left, all women had been subjected to assault, all had been plundered of their winter provisions and clothing, and many had feared would starve to death, and some had already done so. But in this district Christian and Mohammedan have got along in peace for thirty years past.

On Monday, November 19th, after traveling over a stony district for some time, we came to a long canyon with a beautiful down grade road of many miles, then to the little city of El Kuteh which is situated in a valley about ten miles long by four wide, the streams emptying into a salt lake at the lower end of the valley, after which crossing some low hills we found ourselves on the eastern slope of the Anti Lebanon mountains, with the desert at its foot, and Damascus with its millions of olive, fig and other trees showing in the distance. For eight or ten miles we rode along a road bordered on each side with orchards, the orchards being principally olive, and then entered Damascus, a city which stood when the children of Israel left the land of Egypt, and the generally reputed oldest city in the world.

THOMAS P. PAGE.

A COLLEGE OF COMMERCE.

An interesting discussion carried on in the columns of the Cornell Alumni News on whether a college of commerce is properly included among the departments of a university. Oddly enough the negative is represented by a graduate in civil engineering, who declares that the proper university education "aims at general improvement of the intellect and the discovery of Truth and Beauty as means of elevating the character of men and increasing the capacity for happiness in the race." The retort after admitting that a "Business College" would have no place in university education because "it trains a man narrowly to a specific vocation declares a college of commerce the equal of the college of law or theology, and seminary on this sweeping proposition: "Whatever calling in life rests upon the thorough acquisition of a systematized and organized and therefore scientific body of knowledge, requiring a whole field of human activity, and therefore to be acquired by 'practical experience,' is fitly represented in one of the professional colleges of the many sided university." And all this discussion is over the theoretical desirability of a school which Cornell has no money to institute.

OBITUARY.

Died, at Kanosh, Millard county, Utah, March 22nd, 1901, James Abraham, born at Abersychan, South Wales, November, 1828. Married Martha Phelps in November, 1852, by whom he had eleven children, four boys and seven girls, eight of whom are still living. Two sons, and six daughters, were present at his demise, except Naomi, the wife of Bishop Reynolds of Luma, New Mexico.

Brother Abraham was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the year 1848 by Elder John A. Jones. His first ordination in the Holy Priesthood was in 1850, after which he labored as a missionary in his native land for several years. And in the year 1856 he with his wife and two children, emigrated to America, crossing the ocean in the sailing ship Underwriter. He worked in Pennsylvania until he came on to Utah in 1861; lived in Lehi for three years, then went on to Frovo Valley, where he staid one season. He came on to Kanosh in 1865, settling on what was then called Corn Creek.

He was an ever faithful man, never neglecting a known duty; he traveled much as a home missionary in this State or Zion, and was ever ready by day and by night to go forth to bless and comfort the sick. His testimony to the truth of the Gospel was borne in humility and power at every opportunity; his self-abnegation was ever manifest and he was constantly sought after as a comforter to the afflicted.

He labored faithfully as a Priest, an Elder and a Seventy, and as a High Priest and member of the High Council in the Millard Stake of Zion for many years. Until some years since he was ordained a Patriarch by Apostle P. M. Lyman. For a number of years he was a sufferer from an hereditary disease, (asthma), to which he at last succumbed.

Most of the people of Kanosh attended the funeral, which was presided over by Bishop C. F. Christiansen, and a number of Elders testified to the worthy life, and good works of the deceased and gave comforting counsel to the mourners for a good man passed away.

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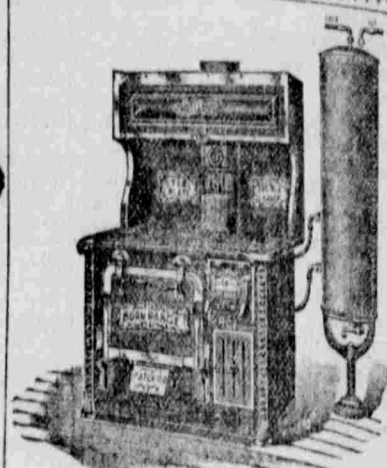
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