

Near East  
Armenia

KURDS

AND

ARMENIANS.

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LONDON :

The Doré Printing Co., 8, Bow St., Covent Garden.





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It would be very difficult at the present time to clearly define the geographical boundaries of the Asiatic regions inhabited by closely intermixed Kurds and Armenians. By tracing a diagonal line from the Black Sea, in the neighbourhood of Batoum, to the Persian Gulf and passing through Suleimanieh, you will find Kurds on each side of that line. It seems as if the Kurdish population will not cease to spread until it finds no more territory before its path. It extends towards the Western part of Mesopotamia, it encroaches upon Syria, it is scattered all over the Plain of Koniah, reaching the neighbourhood of the Bosphorus. The Western and North-Western portions of Persia are belonging, as it were, to the Kurds, whilst on each side of the Turco-Persian frontier, between Suleimanieh and Bayazid, they form a compact mass which dwells over the whole boundary line, forming a zone which is lying between Persians and Osmanlis. Its propagating and assimilating power is immense. At the beginning of the Seventeenth Century Shah Abbas Mirza Khan conceived the idea of implanting Kurdish colonies in Khorassan for the purpose of repelling the incursions of Turcomans, against whom the inhabitants were powerless. The 15,000 families sent there at that time have developed now into 45,000 families, which represent in round numbers 275,000 Kurds who are settled in the provinces of Boundjour, Dereghez, and Koutchan. As for the Ottoman Empire the Kurds are extending as far as the Lower Tigris, and are assimilated to the Turcoman tribes, especially the Hamawanes. In the Suleimanieh district the Arabs, who were the original settlers, have become Kurds, and use a Kurdish dialect, Kurdish customs and Kurdish various creeds, but it should be noticed that in regard to ethnography the Semitic type has absorbed the Iranian. The same phenomenon applies to the Tairanians, who, being dispersed over the Taurus table-land have become Kurds or semi-Kurds.

Kurds and Mussulmans are inseparably linked together, albeit

the former are affiliated to nearly all sects and creeds in Asia Minor. Amongst them Shiites as well Sunnites are to be found, Kizil Bachs, whose Mahomedan religion is of a particular kind, and Gregorian Christians in the region of the Tigris, and likewise Zezidis, who worship the Devil. Apart from the non-Mussulman sections which are separated from the rest of the race by the very nature of their creeds, and which form a very small minority, the bulk of the Kurdish population is divided into large groups of various nationalities, which are distinct from one another by their ethnical character, and by their language, although it has the same origin, whilst at the same time there is between them a remarkable affinity of customs, feelings, and principles.

The Kurd is above all a Nomad ; when he ceases to be so he loses part of his strength and morals. And, whatever may be said to the contrary, the Kurd is endowed with very valuable qualities, which are supported and adorned by a natural love for his tribe. Some people are always talking of Nomad Kurds as of inveterate marauders. This is a mistake, as the true born Nomad, leading as he does a pastoral life, and regularly moving from one place to another within a definite zone, is comparatively honest. But whenever a tribe gets dismembered, and the family is scattered through the villages under the leadership of Agha s, whose hold has deteriorated, and as soon as the solidarity between the different elements of the tribe has ceased to exist, the original character of the Kurd vanishes ; he seems to be out of his own element, without means of subsistence, or if any is at hand he does not care to make use of it, as he is neither laborious nor thrifty, and, then, not being accustomed to work and saving, which are not at all necessary to a Nomad, he becomes a pillager with unruly proclivities. This is the transitory period, with all its drawbacks, between two totally different ways and modes of living. But when the Kurd wanders from the plain to the mountain and from the mountain to the plain on the ground which for centuries has belonged to his tribe, and where he finds unopposed all that he wants for his living and for his free development, without any care or onerous work, and enjoying life without any hindrance amidst his own people and on his own estate, then not only does he not plunder, but he is prone to be ostentatiously liberal and generous, and the villagers, whether Christians or Mussulmans, have never to complain of him. That sort of phenomenon I have observed amongst the Kurdish Nomads and sedentary Christians on the

tablelands, south of Lake Van, where Nestorians and Armenians have lived harmoniously and happily together with the Hartouschi Kurds, although the latter are not renowned for gentle manners. Indeed they are rough, but only when they have to defend the land which belongs to them against any enemy. In ordinary times they refrain from encroaching on neighbouring pasture lands and molesting villages. At Farashin, for instance, near the source of the Khaboor, I met at the house of Hatji Bey, a powerful Hartouschi chief, about one hundred guests, of whom more than half were Christians. And this happens all along the road followed by that tribe from Mesopotamia to the hills of Bach-Kalla. In the same region at a place called Nordouz I could quote the names of small wandering tribes which are composed half of Kurds and half of Armenians. Moreover I saw on the tableland of Takou, one of the highest *yaila* of the country, Armenian and Kurdish encampments side by side. These people were shepherds, possessing innumerable herds, and never any dispute arose between them. That place is the very type of what a Kurdish locality really is, where tribes keep and maintain their power and aristocracy, as opposed to the so-called Kurdish regions where Kurds, although forming the majority of the inhabitants, live somewhat wildly, leading an existence which they do not understand themselves.

This is a social far more than a political or religious question, and no doubt, when at last it is mastered, the deplorable misunderstandings which are now the cause of so many conflicts will cease. It is an indisputable fact, which I intend by-and-by to illustrate by means of statistics, that the majority of the population in the north of Asia Minor is formed by Kurds. It is a fact which was well understood by the British Government when, in 1885, the British Consulate was established in Kurdistan. Great Britain was the first amongst the European Powers, and even in the East, to discover, that the Kurds were not a *quantité négligeable*, as, before that time, no one paid any serious attention to these tribes, the importance of which was totally underrated. They began to be noticed in full light by the Christian Powers under the reign of Sultan Mahinoud, when the reforms known by the name of *Tanzimat* were introduced. The Kurds, who were the absolute masters of that country, realised that a mortal blow had been struck at their anarchical feudality, and that henceforward all the subjects of the Sultan would have to live on a footing of equality. From

that time Europe perceived that the Kurds were really in existence.

The great Kurdish agglomeration, where organised and powerful tribes are still to be found, may be defined by a line west of Suleimanieh, winding up to the hills of the Balek country, south of the Rewandouz, from thence to the confluence of the Khabour and the Tigris ; the same line extends to the west, round the wooded region of Karadja-Dagh, and including the district of Virancheir and part of the Ourpa District ; then it turns to the North East in the direction of the Palou Mountains, and crossing the Euphrates it follows through the Bingueul Dagh, the Russian frontier, up to the West of Alashghed. This delimitation includes : the Upper Euphrates in its Oriental branch, which is called Mourad Sou, the Upper Tigris, the valleys of the Great and Small Zab and the whole valley of Khabour.

Beyond that line, which may be described as marking the boundary of real Kurdistan ; the Kurdish population becomes less dense, although in many places it continues to form the majority ; but cohesion does no longer exist in those regions, the Kurds not feeling as much at home there as they do on Eastern Taurus or on the Djoudi Table Lands. For one who has known the Sireklis, who are spread all over the country of Diarbekir, it seems almost impossible that people of the same race should be found on the banks of the Tigris, and yet they are Sireklis too, having emigrated to the Tekman region on the Upper Araxus. The pastoral characteristics of the race have almost vanished ; the people, in miserable villages, having to suffer, like any other sedentary population, from the scourge of bad harvests and financial difficulties, without having any commercial instinct or foresight which are the best shields of some other people in Asia Minor against poverty and distress.

Without wishing to extol the Kurds, although it seems to be the fashion now to charge them with all kinds of outrages and to describe them as most savage hordes, I may state that I know them thoroughly, as I have seen them closely, and lived with them for months. I met the first Kurdish tents one day's distance from Angora, and since then I never lost sight of them until I arrived in Lazistan. I saw on my journey through Galatia, Cappadocia, Mesopotamia, and the districts which are situated in a northern direction towards the Black Sea, sometimes Turks and at other times Armenians, Arabs, Chaldeans

Greeks and Kopths, but I never was one day without seeing Kurds. I was thus enabled to observe that the Kurds belonging to the Great Nomad tribes are harmless, whilst the Kurds settled in villages are sometimes to be blamed and often to be pitied. In my opinion it is not absolutely necessary to look at humanity from an exclusively religious point of view. The idea of impugning systematically the Mussulmans in the name of I do not know what principle, and merely because they are Mussulmans, strikes me as being quite out of place in this philosophical and tolerant century. In the present condition of the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire, nothing is more unfair and wicked than to try and create privileges for the sole benefit of one special population. I should like to see such questions considered more liberally and from a higher standard. When I only knew Anatolia by what was published in European papers or said in the Clubs at Pera, I must own that I shared some of the widely-spread opinions which appeared logical because brilliant and delusive. I had a somewhat vague notion of an Asia which must have been laid waste and given up to rapacious marauders, of periodically ransacked Christian villages, where anyone who was not a Mohammedan could not possibly live, and I thought that I understood then the great crusades undertaken on behalf of the oppressed, the appalling stories circulated by itinerant preachers, and the emulation of so many people who seem so anxious to play the part of victims whereby they may secure a handsome income. Well, I do not pretend that on the Anatolian Tableland every one is happy ; it is about the same there as it is even in the most civilised countries where the Government is proceeding smoothly, and where almost every day some new progress is recorded. And whatever the admirers of the Turkish Empire, who would let us believe that everything is as well as it can be beyond the Bosphorus, may say to the contrary, I am of opinion that there is a crisis in Asia Minor, that some modifications are necessary, some of which are gradually carried on whilst some others are prospective. But a great fact, which appears in a vivid light to all who have travelled through Asia Minor, is that happiness, as well as sorrows, are the common lot of every people, whatever their race and their creed. Any other estimate of the difficulty merely displaces the question without settling it. Everyone knows that the Turks are not exterminators. All the different people under the Ottoman rule have been able to preserve their own traditional way of

living, with their special features, manners, hopes, and creed. After so many centuries they are still integral, more integral, no doubt, than they would be if they had been independent, but also with intestine quarrels, or with struggles against a foreign enemy belonging to the same religion. I will not quote names, but it would not be difficult to mention a certain people which having been most corrupt and devoured by its own vice, owes its salvation and the flattering advantage of being able now to consider itself a nation, to the Ottoman conquest. And if the Turks did not exterminate the conquered nations at a time when no one would have asked them to account for massacres, what use is it now to ascribe tendencies to them which are in opposition to their own interest and character?

I have travelled much, and I do not know of any country where greater toleration prevails than in Turkey. A collection of isolated facts which have happened at more or less long intervals of time, and in regions more or less isolated from each other, may, when cleverly compiled under the form of a general report, help to the making up of a crushing Blue Book. Until now it never occurred to any one in Europe to select from any Police Record all murders, rapes, and robberies committed in one town during a defined period, and to draw the conclusion therefrom that the said town is exclusively composed of brigands and murderers. Yet these are the proceedings employed in regard to the Turkish Empire when some busybodies want to interfere with Turkish affairs. Instead of sifting the question thoroughly and of taking into account the social condition of the country with a view of remedying by logical means some unavoidable evils under particular circumstances, the critics are busying themselves with such compilations to which they are careful to add gross exaggerations, coarse language and serious charges, which, while redundant and fetching, fail however to bring about a solution, and are often the cause of conflicts. It has become an easy task, one which is well received by the public, to shriek in the name of humanity; such shrieks are always resounding, and if hollow they are noisy. They are more eagerly listened to by sympathetic crowds than logic and reason and impartial statements which require a full knowledge of facts and a thorough mastery of the subject. It would be interesting to ascertain how many really searching and substantial papers have been published on the Armenian Question since it is debated in the English Press. Amongst



various travellers who have lately been through Asia Minor one only, Mr. Lynch, has written on the matter, and it is to be wished that anyone approaching the subject should expatiate upon it with the same passionless and unbiassed judgment as this distinguished writer, who contributed such remarkable articles to the *Contemporary Review* a few months ago on that question. Although I do not agree with all he says I cannot help owning that Mr. Lynch did not waste his time during his travels to Erzeroum, Van, Moosh and Bitlis, and that his conclusion is both instructive and commendable. Another writer, Mr. Richard Davey, who recently sojourned in Constantinople, studying all the texts in regard to the affairs in Asia Minor, has just written an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, which in my opinion is far-reaching, as he boldly exposes the part played by the British element in the Turco-Asiatic conflicts. The article in question is noteworthy for its fairness and impartiality. Great and influential English Reviews, however, with contributors boldly expounding their opinion, are less in touch with a certain portion of the public than some small Boston papers, for instance, which are replete with reports about the Turks cutting open the head of an Armenian, wherein they introduce poisonous and maddening flies, a kind of torture which causes the greatest indignation amongst those who are simple enough to believe such wild stories. And the detractors of the Porte are always sure to be successful slanderers when they vituperate the Kurds, whose very name seems to have become synonymous with savage cruelty.

In the Azerbaijan district, which is situated on the North-West of Persia, the Christian population, whether Armenian or Nestorian, is as closely intermixed with Kurds as in the Province of Van. Yet there are scarcely any reports of pillage and massacre in that region, where, by-the-by, the Persian authority is scarcely felt, the consequence being that there is no cause for repression. And is there any difference between the Kurds on the shores of the Ourmiah Lake and the Kurds living on the banks of Lake Van? Certainly not, although in my opinion the former might become more dangerous than the latter because they are more independent, and have always been certain of escaping punishment whenever they have committed any misdeed.

Having a personal knowledge of what is going on in both regions I may safely state that their condition is about the

same. Here and there misunderstandings and quarrels arise, of which no one is afraid in Asia—local riots, and on the other side administrative shortcomings and excesses on the part of the authorities, which are, by-the-bye, more frequent in Persia than in Turkey. This is the ordinary condition of affairs in Asia, a condition which is amenable to modifications and which, as far as the Turkish Empire is concerned, has already been sensibly improved, a fact which is demonstrated by Consular Reports and on the evidence of the inhabitants themselves. But in regard to Persia it has not become the fashion in London of attacking the Shah; no one dreams of taking hold of paltry doings which occur beyond the frontier, and of grossly exaggerating them, whilst the slightest incident which happens in Asiatic Turkey is made the most of for the special purpose of hurling abominable charges at the Turks and creating a tremendous uproar.

In Kurdistan Armenians and Kurds cannot live one without the other, both peoples so to speak complete each other. I do not know what would become of the Armenians if the Kurds disappeared all at once. The latter are in general neither agriculturists nor traders—they hate and despise trade—nor emigrants, nor even industrious. In the Bazaars, principally Armenian, of Bitlis, Van, Erzeroum, etc., the shops contain only stuffs and all sorts of goods for the use of the Kurds. The wool or cattle, or the scanty harvest are taken by the Armenians. At times of scarcity the Christian will sell his corn at extortionate prices to the forestaller, and meantime the Kurd dies of hunger. This year, for instance, though the harvest has not been too bad in the North of Anatolia, the scarcity has not totally disappeared, as many villagers were not able to sow, because they had eaten the seeds that had been given to them. Well, I can declare, as I saw it with my own eyes, that the Armenian villagers of Ava near the Plain of Erzeroum, were this year in full prosperity. They have made last Autumn large profits out of the sale of their corn at two and three *pisastres* the measure; whilst at a short distance from that place, on the southern slope of Palandonkiam, the Kurds are actually dying of hunger. The Kurdish Chief of Medrek pointed out to me last September seven Mussulman towns, entirely without bread. At Medrek, in the centre of the country, only seven inhabited houses remained. The other families had emigrated to the Vilayet of Sivary. The Kurds, who are represented as being

so wild and such plunderers, would only have to cross the pass at the foot of which they live, and they would find themselves in the middle of the marvellous plain of the Upper Euphrates, where it would be easy for them to take in the Armenian granaries, the wheat of which they are in want, or else to commit outrages, as famine is a bad adviser. Yet they prefer to suffer silently in their barren mountains, dying of hunger in the snow, and never has a complaint been made at Erzeroum on the part of the Christians against the two Kurdish tribes which live near the source of the Avarus. It should be noticed, moreover, that these tribes are strong, being formed into two regiments of auxiliary cavalry, the chiefs of which reside at Medrek and Kullen. The Kurd is more of a consumer than of a producer, whilst the Armenian is very clever at manufacturing and at selling. The only industry of the Kurds is the manufacture of carpets, but it is turned to profit, not by the Kurd, but by the Armenians, who enrich themselves thereby.

The Armenian is always ready to come to the rescue of the Kurd. As soon as a Kurdish village is established, some Armenians—hailing from no one knows where—are sure to be found; they at once open a kind of shop, which they style the “Bazaar.” If the Armenian did not exist the Kurd would invent him. If he is poor, he has need of the Armenian for many small industries of which the Kurd is incapable. If he is rich, he secures the services of an Armenian *Zaraf*, who acts as a banker money-changer, or business man. To tell the truth, the Turks do exactly the same. Nothing less of a financier than a Turk, when he wants to invest his money, he has recourse to the Armenian. Everyone recollects the noise made last year about the troubles at Yozgad, which some people considered as an Armenian City. A century ago the Chapan Aglou, a rich Turkish family possessing immense flocks, founded at Yozgad a village which soon became a town. Ahmed Pasha, the chief of the Chapan Aglou, brought with him his Armenian *Zaraf*, one Armenian, for it was necessary to provide for the expense of installation and to manage the estate. Attracted by the prosperity of the new town, some Armenians from Sivas came to Yozgad for commercial purposes. They form now a third of the population, and the Bazaar belongs to them. It was under Armenian’s direction that the magnificent mosque of Yozgad was built, and the management of this Mussulman establishment remained in the Armenian family until a few years ago. Such was the prestige and power of the Armenians under the auspices of the Chapan

Aglou, that it is said of a member of this Armenian family who interfered with the internal service of the mosque that he used to strike the Hodja when the latter failed to do his duty. I could mention many cases of the kind, and all those who know anything about the Turkish Empire are aware that I am strictly correct. The Kurds in the Bohan region with Mustapha Pasha, the successor of Beder Khan, at their head, provide means of subsistence for all the Christian population which dwells in the depth of Kurdistan. In Revandouz and Sulemianieh, where there are no Armenians, the Kurds protect the Jews. It is thanks to the Kurds that the precarious Jewish colonies settled on the left bank of the Tigris, and which are the remnants of the Babylonian Captivity, and of the vanquished of Samaria, are allowed to thrive. The Armenians in Asiatic Turkey have adopted Turkish customs, and have much more closely assimilated themselves with their rulers than the Kurds, who, however, have one affinity with the Turks, *i.e.* religion. Whilst the Kurds have preserved their native customs, the Armenians have bent to the Mussulman rules, dividing their dwellings into a Selamlik and a Harem. The Armenian women are more heavily veiled than Turkish ladies, who try to diminish the thickness and the size of their veils. In the Towns of Anatolia an Armenian lady would think herself dishonoured if she allowed even the tip of her nose to be seen. An Armenian who does not speak Turkish is not to be found, whilst the Kurds who are ignorant of the Turkish language are legions. I have known at Adeljervas on the banks of Lake Van an Armenian family which had inherited from their ancestors who formerly lived in Egypt a piece of the Tunic of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet. With the piece of cloth was a firman, by which Ali exempted this family and its collateral descendants from all taxes and public duties for ever, as a reward for some surgical services. Well, there are to-day in the neighbourhood of Adeljervaz forty-five families enjoying these advantages. Each Sultan confirms the original firman, and each member of the family possesses a copy of that firman which is delivered to him by the Cheikh-ul-Islam, and which serves him as a passport and a means of keeping away the tax-collector. The Convent in the Island of Aghtamar on Lake Van still possesses a firman of Mahomet himself, granting them great privileges. The Katholikos of Aghtamar whose jurisdiction is so limited, is, however, laden with honours and prerogatives by Ottoman Sovereign, the income of this religious institution being considerable. Such an amalgamation of interests and such reciprocity of needs are only to be found in the

East amongst Armenians and Mussulmans. As there has been so much talk lately about Sassoun and Moosh it ought to be observed that in that region the Christian element is almost equivalent to the Mussulman, and therefore it cannot be said that the former has been absorbed by the latter. The mountaineers have but imperfect ideas on the subject of their respective religion. In certain districts one cannot say where the Armenian ends and the Kurd commences. They are of the same type, they have the same costume, the same superstition, the same places of pilgrimage. The mosques are as scarce as the churches; there are, however, *Ziarets*, which are sacred spots, marked either by a stone or a tree, where the Mussulman women as well as the Christians go to draw pitchers of water, or to tie fragments of their garments.

In the Schatak I found myself one day in a camp, where Kurds and Armenians were living together. The women could easily be distinguished; the Armenian females by their high head-dresses covered with sequins, by their flowing skirts, and by an inveterate disposition to turn their backs as soon as they were looked at; the Kurdish women by their drapery tightened at the waist, with their long plaited hair reaching to the ground, their ornaments, and their faces entirely uncovered. But how to distinguish the men? They all wore the same wide trousers of some kind of coloured silk, which is called *chal*, and the same fur vest on their shoulders, which is peculiar to the inhabitants of the Upper Tigris. Under the tent of the Kurdish Chief, Ali Hag, where I was taking some rest, all the notables in the camp were assembled. Wishing to ascertain their condition I had to interrogate them. One of them replied that he was an Armenian, but the old Ali Agha interposed and said "Mussulman or Armenian, never mind! Here below we are all the sons of God."

When one gives himself up to dreary political considerations and moves within the restricted circles of Diplomacy from which no definite solution can be obtained, for they are as a fact the tools of events which dictate the line to be followed, and which bring forth accomplished facts, it seems easy enough to settle the most tremendous difficulties. But when one sifts thoroughly these things, and these problems which are caused by the juxtaposition of races, and by the shock of fatal events then, I say, the question becomes exceedingly complicated.

I shall always defend myself against the reproach that I entertain any animosity against the Armenians. I am on

terms of close friendship with all the great Armenian families, residing in the localities which are situated on the itinerary of my last journey to Cesarea and Diarbekir, to Murdin, and to many other places. I have lived with Armenians of high standing, who, before granting their hospitality to me and mine, asked the consent of the authorities, a consent which was never refused. And at any place where I lived, either with an Armenian or a Mussulman, all the Christian Notables of the locality used to flock, some to make my acquaintance, and others to speak of their own business, none of them showing any fear of being indiscreet. I could quote many cases where in regard to local questions between Armenians and Turks my neutral intervention was favourable to the former.

When I left Constantinople I was warned that no Armenian would be allowed to approach me, but nowhere did I notice any sign of such a prohibition. I was even present at some exclusively Armenian meetings, where not one Mussulman had been invited. The Armenians of Yozgad are well aware of the part I have played in that town on the morrow of the events of 1890. All the Armenian Prelates in Anatolia, whether Gregorians or Catholics, will bear witness of my attitude. I had with them the most cordial intercourse, and was thus enabled to learn all that I wanted, inasmuch as no impediment was ever put by the Turks in my way. The greater part of my visits I paid alone, and wishing to give free scope to my interlocutors I often used to let them provide me with an Armenian interpreter of their own choice. Under such conditions I succeeded in carrying on a minute inquiry.

The question seems exclusively topographic on the face of it; but although in certain cases it appears to be so it, cannot be solved from that point of view. It is impossible to draw a line between these two antagonistic races, one of which is a pastoral population living on the hills, whilst the other is an agricultural community which inhabits the valleys. Both hills and valleys being so closely intermixed it would be as difficult to modify the condition of the two races as to try to level the Kurdistan. Facts would go against such an attempt, as for instance the highest portion of the Taurus Tableland is mostly inhabited by Armenians, whilst the lower part is owned by Kurds, and moreover I know some localities where Kurds and Armenians are completely and absolutely mingled together; such is the case on the mountains at Sassoun and in the valley at English Sou. On my

return journey I made it a point to note all the particulars of the smallest localities, and I was often perplexed. It happened to me more than once to observe numerous groups of villages, some of them being Armenian, others being Kurdish, whilst here and there a village was Kurdo-Armenian, and another exclusively Armenian again, and sometimes the guides and the very natives made mistakes, contradicting one another in the middle of that confusion. This intermixture is undeniable and it would be easy to demonstrate it with map in hand. If one crosses a series of Armenian villages some Kurdish place or encampment is always in sight, and if it is not detected at once the Armenians take care to point out the depression of the ground where the Kurds are concealed. But on the other hand if one passes groups of Kurdish villages on the Anatolian high tableland not one single Armenian village is to be seen either near or afar.

The Armenians being above all an agricultural race are fond of their land, and even when they are compelled to emigrate in consequence of bad seasons they invariably come back to their homes. But as soon as their pecuniary situation improves their instinct of trade leads them to emigrate with the most extraordinary eagerness, the nearest town always attracting them, and if they can afford it they will proceed from that town to Constantinople, and from thence they will go abroad. As for Asia Minor, whilst the Kurd is spreading and encroaching everywhere the Armenian remains cantoned in small groups planted here and there on a vast foundation of the Mussulman element.

The greatest and most important Armenian agglomeration is to be found in Constantinople. And what are the Armenians doing in the Turkish capital? They take up all the trade, they invade the financial establishments, and they crowd the offices of the Ottoman Administration. But not so with the Kurds, who, when away from their mountains, are at a loss to know what to do with themselves. It is rather surprising to find that whenever the Armenian Question and the reforms are discussed the Kurds are not thought of, or at any rate are treated with contempt, although they form such an important part of the Asiatic population.

The means proposed for the improvement of the situation in Asia Minor would only make it worse, as it seems to me that people want to get rid of an Armenian difficulty by provoking a Kurdish Question, which, if it breaks out, will be far more

formidable and complicated. And as to the settlement of the difficulty the various solutions which have been proposed are unpractical and unacceptable. For instance, what is meant by the appointment of a Governor-General for the Armenian Provinces with the assent of the Powers? Let us know first where the Armenian Provinces are to be found. And again what is meant by a mixed gendarmerie officered by Europeans? We have already seen that sort of gendarmerie in Eastern Roumelia. And indeed the police, if not the gendarmerie, is a mixed force, as everyone is aware that a considerable number of Armenians belong to the Turkish Police, and it is not of them that their countrymen have the less to complain. There is another suggestion. It has been proposed that Kurds should be disciplined and officered by Europeans. The idea is, however, so ridiculous that I do not think it worth consideration.

Now let us study another proposal for the settlement of the Armenian difficulty. It consists of the reorganisation of the Ottoman Courts in Asia Minor. What do you want to reorganise? The Turkish laws which have been re-modelled and made very similar to the European codes are working exceedingly well and therefore there is absolutely nothing to say against the organisation of the Turkish Courts in that respect; and as for the way they are constituted and managed it is as well to recollect, if you want to reform them, that these Courts are amenable to the Turkish Ministry of Justice, where the Armenians are actually filling the principal posts and situations. And this is all that the so-called reformers have been able to find and discover; but depend upon, if such reforms as these would lead either to a war or to a general rising of the Kurds, or even to both calamities. Is such an appalling result the object of the present agitation? If so, I must be allowed to state that it would be impossible to find better means of achieving that end. I do not pretend to say that something ought not to be done with a view of putting an end to the Asiatic crisis, and to give satisfaction to everyone. It is not for me to settle the Eastern affairs with a stroke of the pen, but if political bias and personal interest, as well as private ambition are put aside, and really peaceful and humanitarian views adopted, then the proper remedy to a deplorable state of things will be found.

The following are a few statistics which may enlighten the public. They are taken from the *Salnamé* (Directory of the



Vilayets), and also from Cuinet's valuable book, *Turquie d'Asie* and as regards the number of Kurds I give it from my own experience and from information taken on the very spot, and which I intend to publish very shortly in detail.

Whilst I was collecting information about the topographic situation of each tribe and its movements I have obtained an exact notion of the number of families and tents, and also of the houses in each village. This has enabled me to collect all the necessary facts for the purpose of drawing the map of Kurdistan, with the names of all the communities and tribes. The reader will find at the end of this sketch the tables of the Armenian population as compared with the Mussulman in the vilayets where Armenians are in number and where they are to be found intermixed with Kurds, including the vilayet of Trebizond, where Kurds are merely passers by, and also of the vilayet of Mossoul, which forms an integral part of Kurdistan, and where no Armenians are to be found. The relative number of each race is moreover to be found in the grand total and not in each locality, as for instance there are 47,200 Armenians at Trebizond, whilst at Mossoul there are 50,000 Kurds :—

	Mussulmans.	Armenians.	Others.	Total
Adana ... ..	158,000	97,450	147,980	403,430
Aleppo ... ..	792,450	49,030	154,270	995,750
Angora ... ..	763,120	94,290	35,463	892,870
Bitlis ... ..	254,000	131,390	13,230	398,620
Diarbekir ... ..	328,640	79,130	63,680	471,450
Erzeroum ... ..	500,780	134,960	9,950	645,690
Koniah ... ..	989,200	9,800	89,000	1,088,000
Mamouret-el-Aziz ... ..	505,440	69,020	650	575,110
Mossoul ... ..	248,380	69,020	51,900	300,280
Sivas ... ..	839,510	170,430	76,060	1,086,000
Trebizond ... ..	806,700	47,200	193,800	1,047,700
Van ... ..	241,000	80,000	109,000	430,000
	6,427,220	962,700	944,980	8,334,900

Let us turn now to the vilayets where Kurds form the greater number of inhabitants.

Sivas ... ..	260,000	Kurds.
Erzeroum ... ..	240,000	
Mamouret-el-Aziz ... ..	237,530	
Van ... ..	210,000	
Diarbekir ... ..	202,730	
Bitlis ... ..	150,000	
Aleppo ... ..	144,000	
Angora ... ..	100,000	
Mossoul ... ..	50,000	
Adana ... ..	39,600	
Koniah ... ..	11,000	
Trebizond ... ..	11,000—1,645,280	

It will be found from the above that it is only in the villages of Adana and Trebizond that the Armenians outnumber the Kurds, and it ought to be noticed that in that total neither the Christian Kurds of the Tigris valley (about 400) nor the Yezedi (30,000), the Hamawans (1,200), the Sarliis (1,000), the Chabaks (12,000), the Avchars (10,000), nor certain Turcoman tribes, are included, the aggregate number of which is 60,000. And then a rather large number of Kurds who, having settled in towns, have intermarried with Turkish families, have of course disappeared within the Turkish population.

If it be true that in the vilayet of Van the Kurds are in the proportion of 2·6 to every Armenian, it is not the same in regard to the Sandjak (Province) of Van, where the Armenians number 64,990 as against the Mussulmans, (the Kurds included, who number 61,000 ; it is, indeed, the only Asiatic province where the Armenians have a majority over the Mussulmans generally.

When people speak of Asiatic districts inhabited by Armenians one may fancy that those places are exclusively inhabited by Armenians, and their exclusive property. This is not true, as even if we do not take into consideration the rather obsolete theory that the Turks are invaders and conquerors (although they belong to a race which occupied the region of the Upper Euphrates some centuries before the Iranian immigration), it does not appear that the Kurds are so autochthons as the Armenians, and therefore the latter cannot pretend to dispose of the destiny of a country where they have not a numerical majority. And considering that the Kurds are generally Nomads, and that when they are not wandering they neither inhabit cities nor become traders but villages, it is manifest that the greater part of the land in Kurdistan belongs indisputably to them.

However paradoxical my opinion may appear I cannot but state that the best way of settling the so-called Armenian Question would be to secure the support of the Kurds.

S. XIMÉÑEZ.

LONDON, 4TH FEBRUARY, 1895.



