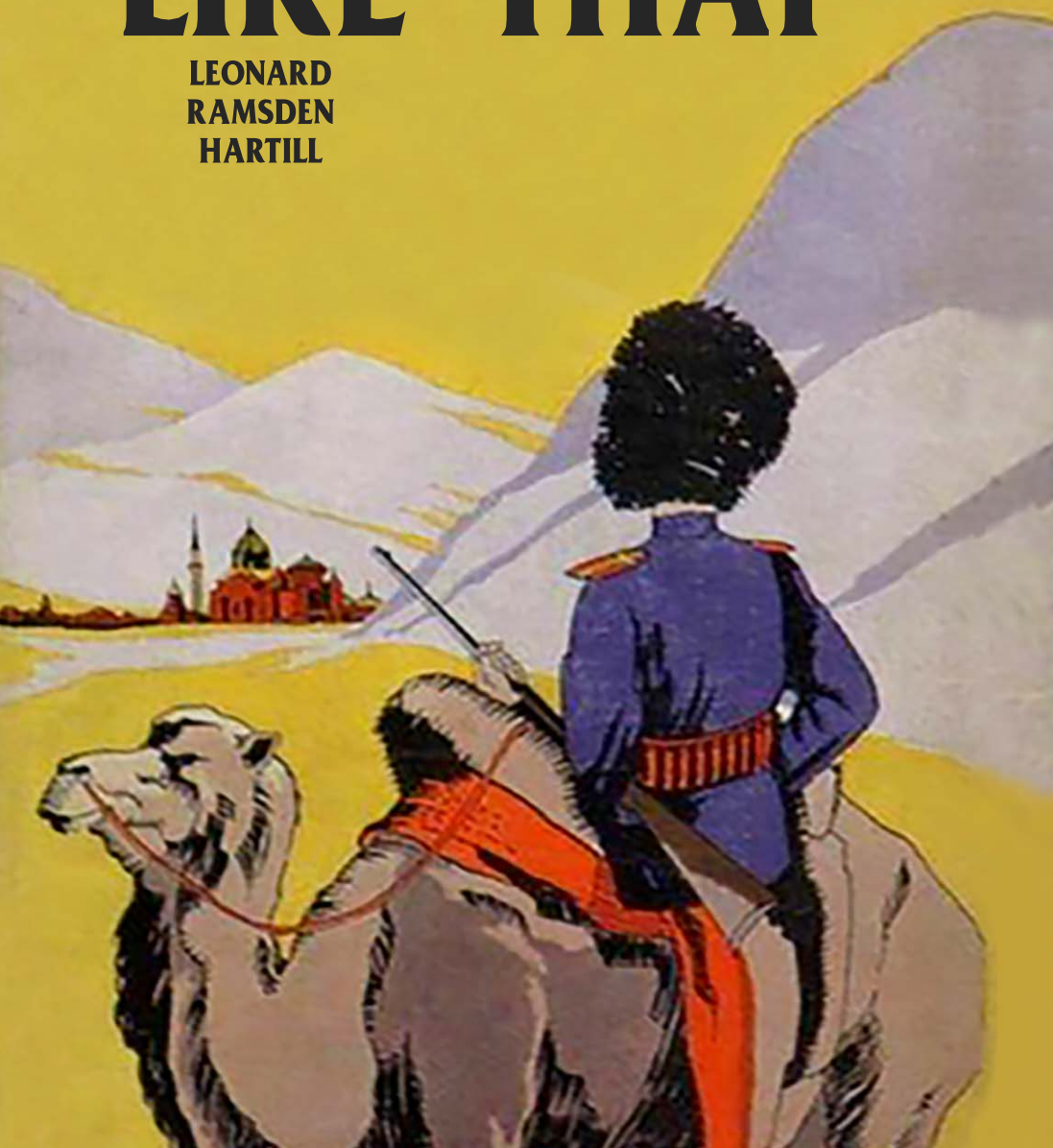


MEN ARE LIKE THAT

LEONARD
RAMSDEN
HARTILL

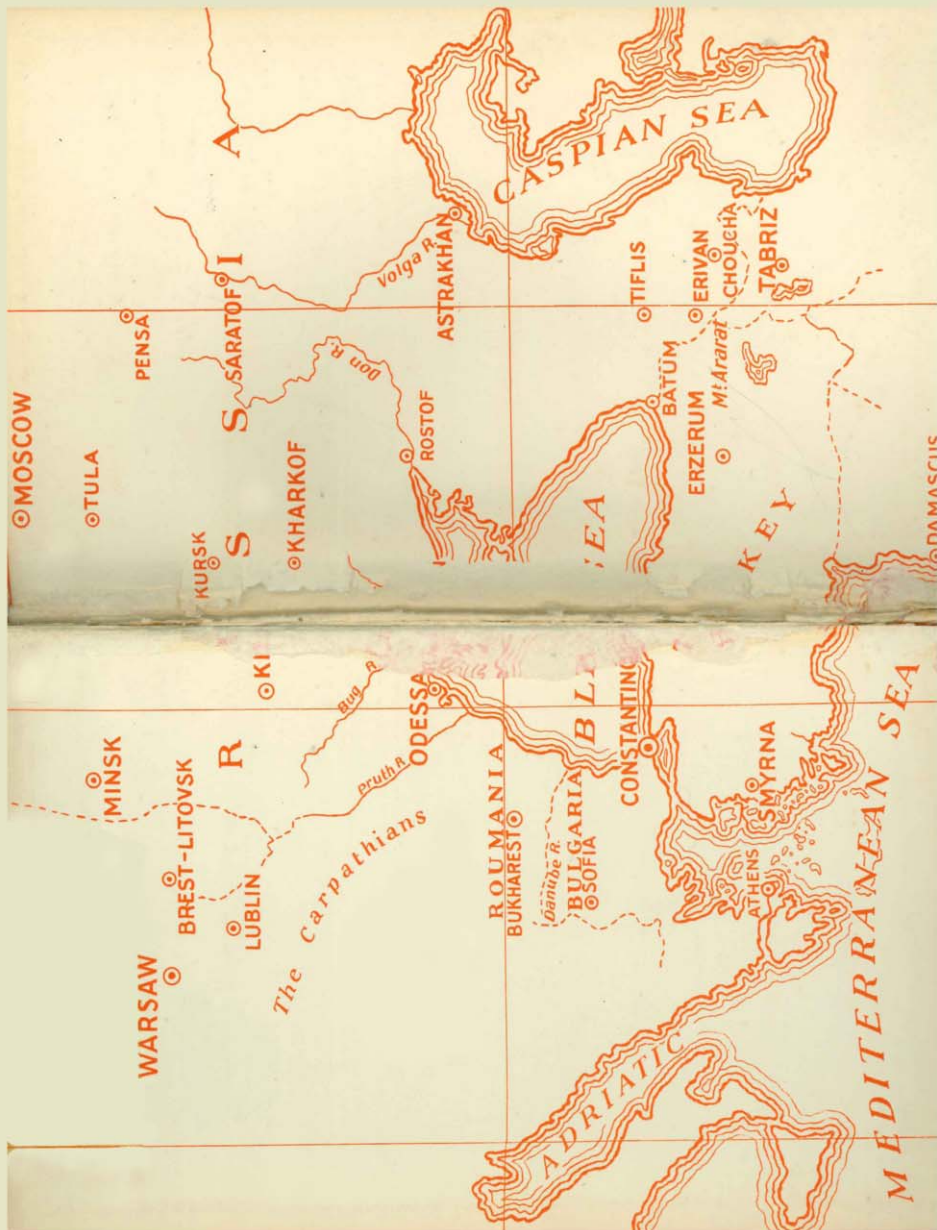


In 1922, Leonard Ramsden Hartill, an American who conducted agricultural reconstruction works in the Caucasus under the framework of the Near East Relief, met an Armenian man named Ohanus Appressian who had witnessed many ordeals in his life as a former soldier, farmer, and refugee. Appressian was among the many refugees Hartill employed during the work he carried out in the Caucasus. Through his agricultural training, hard work, translation skills, and substantial knowledge of the region, Appressian became indispensable for Hartill, and the two men eventually developed a strong bond of friendship.

Appressian would go on to become a main character in this book at hand. Throughout their time together, Appressian bluntly told Hartill the story of the sufferings, ethnic strife, mutual massacres, and the ugly face of the war in his lands between the Christian Armenians and the Muslim Tatars (Turks). Hartill compiled these recollections of Appressian and personally verified most of them, noticing that many other people in the region shared similar harrowing experiences. After Hartill returned to Indianapolis/US, he published his book titled "Men Are Like That" based on Appressian's recollections.

Unfortunately, after the start of propaganda for the genocide narrative concerning the Armenians, Hartill's book began to systematically disappear from the shelves of bookstores and libraries, and only a few accessible copies have been left, one of them being in the US Library of Congress. The systematic disappearance of Hartill's book is not surprising, as its contents put a significant dent into the one-sided, black-and-white genocide narrative. Hartill's book demonstrates that the tragic conflict between Armenians and Turks at the beginning of the 20th century was multi-faceted, and no one can claim to be a pure victim. Hartill's book thus constituted a serious threat to the radical groups who had hijacked Armenian historiography for their own selfish and ideological reasons, hence the need for the book's disappearance from the shelves of bookstores and libraries.

It was necessary to make this book physically accessible again for the sake of allowing people to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the Turkish-Armenian controversy concerning historical events. As the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), we have decided to reprint this book in February 2023 without altering its contents in any way. We hope our followers will enjoy and draw their own conclusions from this disappeared book by Leonard Ramsden Hartill.



Men Are Like That

by

Leonard Ramsden Hartill



TERAZI
YAYINCILIK

MEN ARE LIKE THAT

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TO
MARY

FOREWORD

FROM February, 1922, until March, 1924, I was engaged in agricultural reconstruction work in the Caucasus. It was during this time that I came to know intimately Ohanus Appressian whose adventures are recorded in this volume.

For a time after my first meeting with him, Ohanus was to me but one of a thousand or more refugees whom I employed for the work I had in hand. He was by no means a strikingly outstanding figure in that motley crew which, while mainly made up of peasants, included men from all walks of life. Noble or peasant, general or laborer, they were alike in that they were all destitute in the ultimate meaning of the word and in that they worked for a wage calculated as being the minimum on which it was possible to sustain life.

Ohanus came to me recommended as an "Agronom," that is, a man with a school training in the art of agriculture. I had previously had dealings with the products of Russian agricultural schools. The hopes I had entertained that these men would be of value to me in my work had not been realized. It was with no expectation that Ohanus would prove himself different from the others that I put him to work as a gang foreman at a wage of six dollars per month, paid in corn meal.

At this time I had been in the Caucasus not longer

MEN ARE LIKE THAT

than two months and as yet knew no Russian beyond a few words. My time had been so fully occupied that I had been unable to devote any of it to the study of the language. I acquire languages only by hard and persistent effort. I am not one of those fortunates who absorb them. As for Russian, there is no language less likely to be picked up casually.

To be compelled to remain dumb, because an interpreter is not at your elbow at times and occasions when there are a hundred directions to be given, is trying to the soul and a strain on your sanity. It is doubly so when at the same time every one persists in speaking to you in a language of which you understand not a word.

Having learned in our first interview that I did not speak Russian, Turkish, Armenian, Persian or the tongue of the Tartars, Ohanus refrained from all attempts at conversation except through the medium of pantomime. This was rather extraordinary and drew my attention to him, for the average man is always greatly astonished, somewhat outraged and rather reluctant to accept the fact, that one does not understand his language.

I quickly found that Ohanus was an exceptionally good worker and that he had a considerable theoretical as well as a great deal of practical knowledge of agriculture. He advanced rapidly in my esteem and within six month from the time that I had engaged him he was holding a position of responsibility with many men under his immediate supervision.

FOREWORD

In the meantime I had been applying myself to the study of Russian. As I acquired a knowledge of the language I made a point of practising its use on Ohanus. This kept him informed as to the extent and limitations of my vocabulary and enabled him in conversation with me to confine himself within the range of what I knew. And so it was that at a time when my Russian was too limited to enable me to carry on anything but the simplest and most halting conversation in that language with any one but Ohanus, with him I could talk in Russian as glibly as you please. Without his knowing a word of English he would often act as my interpreter, reducing to the Russian I understood the more involved Russian of some petitioner, much to the latter's astonishment.

At the end of my first year in the Caucasus I had gained a fair command of Russian. By this time Ohanus had become almost indispensable to me in my work, and had gained my respect and my affection. He had become my constant companion and my close friend.

From the first day of my arrival in the Caucasus I was enthralled by that wonderful land of superb beauty and inexhaustible interest. My desire to understand all that I saw was insatiable. Ohanus proved for me, truly a mine of information. Often, in explaining some point or other in reply to a question of mine, he would draw on his own experiences. For example, we were camped one night in a half-ruined Tartar mosque, the most habitable building of a de-

MEN ARE LIKE THAT

stroyed village, near the border of Persia and Russian Armenia. During the course of the evening I asked Ohanus if he could tell me anything of the history of the village and the cause of its destruction. In his matter of fact way he replied, "Yes, I assisted in its sack and destruction, and witnessed the slaying of those whose bones you saw to-day scattered among its ruins. There was a Tartar of this village. He was a man. There was no one braver than he, not even in my old Russian regiment," etc., etc.

Such glimpses into his past informed me that Ohanus had a story worth telling. Eventually I prevailed upon him to tell me his story connectedly and in detail which he did, not at one time, but as occasion offered over a period of almost a year.

I have personally verified the complete truth of most of what is set down in the following pages. I visited the scenes of many of his adventures and experiences and talked with many of the men who are brought into his narrative.

If the objection is raised that it is incredible that one man should have had so many thrilling and awful experiences and that a man could live through such adventures only by grace of a miracle, I can only reply that his story could be matched by the stories of thousands of other men who survived in the Caucasus through eight years of warfare, famine and pestilence, and that not one of these thousands lives to-day except by virtue of a miracle.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I KHANKANDI	13
II STUDENT DAYS	25
III CONSCRIPTED	33
IV WAR AND LOVE	45
V MENSCHIEVISTS AND BOLSHEVISTS	71
VI THE LAND OF ARARAT	81
VII REVOLUTIONISTS	95
VIII THE RUSSIANS DEPART	107
IX AKHALKALAKI	119
X ALLAH ALLAH A AKARBAD	128
XI THE BLACKSMITH FROM SIBERIA	151
XII THE ROAD TO ERZROOM	165
XIII THE ARAB	178
XIV KURDS AND TARTARS	196
XV MEN ARE LIKE THAT	208
XVI DAYS OF WAITING	219
XVII THE ARAB'S STORY	227
XVIII ERIVAN AND THE PLAIN OF ARARAT	234
XIX AN ANCIENT GLORY	239
XX THE PRISON	244
XXI ETCHMIADZIN	257
XXII THE WAR WITH THE REDS	266
XXIII THE FLIGHT TO PERSIA	272
XXIV THE HARVEST	295

MEN ARE LIKE THAT

MEN ARE LIKE THAT

CHAPTER I

KHANKANDI

As I travel back in my thoughts over the years of my life and review the scenes and incidents that remain in my memory, they all appear to be part of a whole from which there is no disconnecting them. I have been stoned and spat upon and defiled with filth, but a year gone, because of things that occurred when I was a child. And so it is that in telling my story it is difficult to decide where to begin, unless it is with my earliest recollections. But if I must go back to the days of my childhood, I shall not linger there. It shall be merely to touch on certain scenes and events and conditions, that better understanding may be had of the fateful years that marked the ending in all of great Russia and in all the lands under Russian sway, of the old order of things and the old way of life. For it is with the events of those years, as they affected my country and myself, that my story is concerned.

My name is Ohanus Appressian. I was born in the village of Khankandi, Shusha District, Azerbaijan, in the year 1892. I do not remember my mother.

My father was a prosperous estate owner. He engaged, on a large scale, in the breeding and marketing of sheep, cattle and swine. From an early age I assisted in the work of the estate. My companions, besides an older brother and a few other Armenians, were Tartar shepherd boys.

My country is a wild mountainous region in which there has been little advance in civilization or material progress beyond that of a thousand years ago. It is, for the most part, beyond the borders of the Western way of life. It is there the barbarism of Central Asia begins, with its queer conglomerate of the utmost in primitiveness, and with its mystically and gorgeously colored fragments of civilizations that flourished at a time when the world was yet young.

In my country there are few roads other than rough cart trails. Travel is by horseback. The inhabitants are Tartars and Armenians. The latter are really aliens in what is in fact a Tartar country. They are Christians in a numerically predominant Mohammedan population. The gulf of race, tradition and religion that has never been bridged separates the two peoples.

From among the Armenians, in the days before the World War, were made up the classes of traders and estate owners. Inasmuch as these Armenians owned the large estates and controlled the trade, they constituted a rich and upper class in the population, subservient only to Russian government officials and army officers. The significant thing in the lives of

Armenians of this class, in which my family was numbered, was that comparative affluence made the caste a controlling minority among an altogether alien and hostile people.

The Tartars were, for the most part, poor. Some of them lived in villages and cultivated small farms; many of them continued in the way of life of their nomadic forefathers. They drove their flocks and herds from valley to valley, from plain to mountain, and from mountain to plain, following the pasturage as it changed with the seasons. They ranged from the salt desert shores of the Caspian Sea far into the mighty Caucasus Mountains. Even the village Tartars are a primitive people, only semicivilized. The nomad Tartars are as wild as when, in the days of the Golden Horde, they swept through Russia as conquerors, leaving Moscow in ashes.

The old animosities between the conquered Mohammedan and the conqueror Christian, heritages of generations of warfare and conflicting religions, have lost nothing of their old virulence; and at opportune times they find expression in pillage and merciless slaughter.

I can see now that we Armenians frankly despised the Tartars, and, while holding a disproportionate share of the wealth of the country, regarded and treated them as inferiors. The fact that the Russians looked down upon all Armenians in much the same way as Armenians regarded Tartars, far from proving a bond between ourselves and our racially different

neighbors, intensified an attitude and conduct on our part that served only to exacerbate hostility.

Under the Czar, ordinarily, peace and order were maintained in Azerbaijan by bodies of Russian Cossack troops, hereditary enemies and conquerors of the Tartars. But at times, as in 1905 during the Japanese Russian War, the Cossacks would be withdrawn, or made a tool of disorder, to send Armenians and Tartars at each other's throats so that neither would be able to struggle against their common Russian oppressors.

It was during the abortive revolution of 1905 that I had my first experience with the terrible events accompanying war; and it was then I received the first lesson of the many which finally taught me this: in cruelty and savagery, men are worse than wolves. We think of the wolf pack, stricken with famine, ranging the mountains and plains in its search for prey, as the epitome of savagery; but I doubt if wolves are ever intentionally cruel. In his hate, man, when freed from the inhibitions of civilization, is equally savage with the wolf and, unlike him, delights in cruelty. The scattered bleaching bones of women and children, in countless ruined villages throughout this land of the Caucasus, are eloquent of the beast in man.

As I look back through the years and review in my mind the events of which I am to tell you, I realize that my story is to be a tale of savagery. But in it there is something also of love and devotion, of high

resolve and sacrifice; for though man is a beast, he is something more also.

I spoke of having gained my first experience with war in 1905. At that time the war between Japan and Russia had been in progress for some time. Men were taken from our villages into the army, and for a long time no word was received from them. Then gradually the truth of what was happening began to be known. Stories of disaster after disaster to Russian arms began to reach us, and there was talk of revolution in Russia and the overthrow of the Czar. There began a stirring among the people of my country, and a rebirth of hope that there would soon be an end to Russian despotism. I remember well that there were frequent meetings of men in my father's house. I would sit quietly in an inconspicuous corner of the room, and listen to interminable and excited talk, most of which I was too young to understand; but I gathered the gist of it: war with the Japanese! revolution! independence!

It was at these meetings that I heard for the first time mention made of an Armenian secret society whose purpose was to secure the independence of Armenia. The members of this society were called Dashnacks. I had no knowledge or understanding of the politics or of the racial and political intrigues of the time, but I was aware that strange men came to my father's house from far places and that these men were Dashnacks. Stories became current among my boy companions of great deeds performed by these

mysterious agents of revolution. To me, a boy of thirteen years, the name Dashnack became one of glorious though sinister significance.

Little by little, at the meetings in my home and in conversation among the members of my family, I heard less and less of revolt against Russia and more and more of the hostility rapidly developing between Tartar and Armenian. Our Russian rulers knew only too well how, in a critical situation, to take advantage of a discordant Tartar and Armenian population divided against itself; and in the exigency of an impending Armenian uprising they stirred into flames the old animosities existing between Christians and Moslems, the intolerance, the suspicion and the hate that never fully slumbered nor lay far below the surface in even the most peaceful of times. Russia, having succeeded in substituting racial animus for the spirit of rebellion, withdrew the Cossack patrols into their barracks at a time of extreme tension between the two people when only the presence of troops preserved order. Then, unmolested by these agents of authority, Armenians and Tartars engaged in a deadly feud in which many thousands on both sides lost their lives, some in battle, but more in horrible massacres in which neither the young nor the old of either sex was spared.

I had been attending school in the village of Shusha, the largest town in the district. It was about seven versts from my home. Each day I walked to and from school. Some of my companions on those walks were Tartar boys from my village. The village

of Shusha, like my village of Khankandi, had a population half Armenian and half Tartar. During the time of the disturbance it was not possible for me to attend school; and so I remained at home. Our Tartar servants left us or were driven away, and work on our estate stopped. When peace was restored and I again saw Shusha, the Tartar section of the town no longer existed, except as a pile of ruins. It had been destroyed and its inhabitants slaughtered. The same fate befell the Tartar section of Khankandi.

One day, during those troublesome times, a band of three hundred Tartar horsemen rode into our village. We Armenians locked ourselves in our houses, not daring to show ourselves. The Tartars entered the houses of their countrymen who were our neighbors. With noisy hilarity, they feasted and sang. We feared that at any moment they would attack us. A messenger was sent in haste to an army post where some Cossacks were stationed. In normal times these Cossacks would have been patrolling the district, and would have prevented any such demonstrations as the Tartars were making. Toward evening six Cossacks came in answer to our appeal for help. With the coming of the Cossacks, we no longer feared the Tartars and left our houses. The leader of the Tartars demanded to know why we had sent for the Cossacks. He said that he and his men had come solely to pay a visit to their kinsmen, and that if our village did not know better how to treat guests, he and his men

would leave at once. We told him that we had not sent for the soldiers, that they had merely happened to come to the village. This did not satisfy him, and he and his men, assuming great indignation, rode away.

An hour later a rumor spread through the village to the effect that the Tartars, on leaving, had met an Armenian woman and child on the outskirts of the village, that they had killed the child and taken the woman away with them. Our people became greatly excited upon hearing this news, and desired to attack our Tartar neighbors in revenge. During the day the Cossack soldiers would not permit such reprisal; however, when night came, this is what happened: The six Cossacks entered an Armenian house and asked for food; they were given bread and tea; they conferred and then, summoning the head men of our village, said, "During the daytime we are on duty and can not permit you to attack the Tartars; now we are no longer on duty; we are in this house and will not know what you do." Our men armed themselves, gathered together and advanced on the Tartar section of the village. There were no lights in the houses and the doors were barred, for the Tartars suspected what was to happen and were in great fear. Our men hammered on the doors, but got no response; whereupon they smashed in the doors and began a carnage that continued until the last Tartar was slain. Throughout the hideous night, I cowered at home in terror, unable to shut my ears to the piercing screams

of the helpless victims and the loud shouts of our men. By morning the work was finished.

For the grim massacres that are of such frequent occurrence in this sad country, it is difficult justly to apportion the responsibility. The causes are rooted both in ancient and in latter-day invasions and conquests. Hostility is kept alive by primitive and intolerant religious conceptions and teachings. It was fostered too by a government that sought to find profit in accentuating antipathies and misunderstandings, rather than in allaying them.

As a boy, I was taught that the Tartars were always at fault. My reading of Russian literature helped to confirm this teaching, for Russian writers have emphasized Tartar ferocity. However, I always liked our Tartar servants and workmen. Many nights I have spent guarding our sheep on some lonely mountainside, with only the stars above and Tartar shepherd boys for my companions.

The Tartars were strange in their ways and were, in consequence, interesting to me. I have been thrilled and fascinated as a spectator at their great religious celebrations, to see their men, gathered together in a circle, slash their scalps with long knives in a frenzy of religious fervor until the white gowns, in which they had arrayed themselves for the occasion, became stained with their blood, in crimson streams and splashes. Their women, witnesses of their zeal, wept and raised their voices in praise and lamentations.

Often a Tartar camel train would pass through our

village. To my child mind the wild-looking Tartars of the caravan were journeying to and from the ends of the earth; and never did I see such a caravan but my heart leaped up, and I felt a longing to be off with it, to be a Tartar camel driver and visit the world beyond our mountains.

I remember an old Tartar snake charmer who came to our house and captured a dangerous snake that had taken up its abode somewhere within the walls. The old man sat cross-legged on the floor in the middle of the room in which the snake had on several occasions been seen. He placed an empty sack at his side and then, producing a Koran, began reading aloud in an evenly pitched, droning voice. Presently the snake made its appearance, crawling slowly toward him, stopping occasionally to rear its head and wave it in gentle undulations in time with the measured rhythm of the old fellow's voice. Soon the snake approached to within arm's reach of the charmer, upon which the man, without breaking the rhythm or continuity of his reading, slowly reached out his hand until, with a snap, his fingers closed about the reptile close to its head. A moment later the snake was in the Tartar's sack.

Many such incidents, having to do with Tartars, gave color to my childhood days in Shusha. It was not until the beginning of the Tartar war in 1905 that I became acutely aware of the degree of enmity between Armenians and Tartars. Since 1905 there have been many years of war. Most of my old companions

and neighbors, Tartar and Armenian, are dead. They became the victims of battle or massacre, pestilence or famine. The villages I knew as a boy are now mainly heaps of tumbled stones and sun-baked mud. It is long years since there has been feasting and merrymaking in my father's house, since his tables have been loaded with foods and wines, and since friends have gathered, to kiss his hand in respectful greeting, as he sat in his seat of honor to receive them ere they fell to feasting and dancing. The old joyous life is gone.

In the Armenian-Tartar war of 1905 the Armenians had much the better of the fighting. Many of our men had served in the Russian Army, and were trained soldiers. We Armenians were rich and possessed arms. The Tartars had never received military training. They were poor, and possessed few arms beyond knives. It was not an organized war, the fighting being done by roving bands who raided and pillaged villages, slaying the inhabitants. Throughout Azerbaijan, events similar to those I have described were enacted. Even in the large city of Baku there was much fighting. Shortly after the killing of the Tartars in our village, the revolution in Russia was suppressed. Cossack soldiers again assumed their duties and quickly put an end to the fighting between the Armenians and Tartars.

With the cessation of fighting, I was again able to attend school, and I did so for two years longer. During this time, instead of tramping back and forth

between my home and the school each day as I had formerly done, I lived in the village of Shusha, and returned home only for the holidays. At the end of two years I had completed the work offered in the Shusha school.

I desired to continue with my education, if possible taking up the study of scientific agriculture. There was a school in Tiflis, Georgia, where agriculture was taught. I felt that I should be happy if I could prevail upon my father to send me there. When I informed him of my desire and proposed that he send me to Tiflis to study agriculture, he was so firm in his opposition to my plan that I knew it would be impossible to win his consent or help. He told me that, because of the experience I had gained working with him, I already knew as much about agriculture as the school could teach me. He had no faith in the farming that was taught in books. He desired for me, above all things, that I become an officer in the Russian Army, and wished me to continue my studies with this end in view. I, for my part, had no desire for army life and determined to go to Tiflis with or without my father's consent.

It was not an easy matter for me to arrive at this decision, for, as is the rule in Armenian families, I had been brought up to regard my father as a superior being whose word was law, requiring unquestioned obedience. How momentous a decision it was for me to follow my own bent against my father's will!

CHAPTER II

STUDENT DAYS

IT CHANCED one day that I learned of an intended journey of my uncle to Tiflis. I went to him and implored him to take me with him. He agreed to do so on condition that my father give his consent to my going. My father, knowing nothing of the plans I had formed, consented. I determined to remain in Tiflis and to enter the agricultural school there. To reach the railroad to Tiflis, from my home, required three days of fast travel on horseback. Arrived at the railroad, I was filled with wonder at my first sight of a train. A marvelous journey, that journey to Tiflis! Even as I had never before seen a railroad train, neither had I ever seen a city, nor any aggregate of human habitations larger than a small village. Tiflis, a large city with great buildings and many thousands of people, was overwhelming.

Upon arrival in Tiflis, I lost no time. I immediately set about finding the school I wished to attend. Succeeding in this, I called upon the director of the school and stated my case to him. He questioned me at length upon my school training and then informed me that I could be admitted as a student,

but would have to pay for tuition and board a fee of one hundred and fifty gold rubles per year. I, of course, had no such sum and no resources other than an appeal to my friends. My uncle gave me a little money for immediate needs when I announced my determination to remain in Tiflis and attend the school of agriculture; but he refused to assume the responsibility of helping me to enter the school, in disobedience to my father's wishes. There were living in Tiflis at the time some Armenians from my native village. One of these, the owner of the largest cigarette factory in the Caucasus, was very wealthy. In my difficulty I went to him. He advanced me the necessary money, and I entered the school.

I was a green boy, strange to the ways of the city and to the ways of my school-fellows. The latter, no doubt, found me amusing. At any rate, for a time they made me the butt of many jokes. However, I quickly adapted myself to my new surroundings, fell into the ways of my comrades and became one of them.

In my inexperience, I had entered the school firmly believing that the course of study would be extremely difficult and that my school-fellows would be learned young men in competition with whom I would have to exert myself to the utmost.

Through fear of failing, rather than in hope of excelling, I applied myself to my work with intense concentration. A few months of this and I began discovering that my schoolmates were quite ordi-

nary fellows after all and that the course of study presented no great difficulty. By this time, however, my unremitting application to my studies had become a habit and a pleasure. I continued to apply myself. The result was that at the end of three years I was graduated at the head of my class.

In consequence of my high scholastic standing, I was offered a scholarship that would enable me to attend free of cost the advanced school of agriculture at Uman, near Odessa, in Russia.

I had been somewhat disappointed with the work to which I had to apply myself in the Tiflis school. Too much of my time had perforce to be devoted to studying Latin and other subjects equally remote from agriculture. I thought that at an advanced school I would be given work more directly applicable to farming. I was, therefore, delighted with the opportunity offered me to continue with my studies, and gladly accepted the scholarship. I was to learn that even in the advanced schools the teaching of agriculture was quite remote from the practise of agriculture. In fact, in all the agricultural schools of Russia, at least before the Great War, agricultural education was highly theoretical and in no sense directed to the needs of the actual operating farmer. This condition was probably due to the caste system prevailing throughout Russia and condemning to the lowest social order all who engaged in manual work. At school it was considered beneath our dignity as students to perform the manual labor necessary in the

operation of farm implements; and so, though we saw at work some fairly up-to-date farm machinery, we could gain no knowledge or experience through actual practise with such machinery. If one desired to be a muzhik, he could do manual work and welcome; otherwise he kept his hands clean, and approached agriculture through the study of Latin, astronomy, mathematics and Russian grammar.

To take advantage of the scholarship awarded me at Tiflis, it was necessary that I report to the school at Uman without delay; and so I was unable to visit my old home before leaving the Caucasus and entering on another venture in life amid new and strange surroundings. I did, however, write a long letter to my father informing him of the success I had already attained at school and of this new and greater opportunity that had been offered me. Also I pleaded that he forgive me for having disobeyed him. Before I left Tiflis I received a reply from him assuring me of his blessing and of his forgiveness and asking me to return to his house when I desired to do so.

My life in the city of Tiflis had given me a feeling of worldly experience and wisdom. Such wonders as railroad trains, enormous buildings, throngs of people, theaters, the opera and all the hurry and excitement of city life had been an immense adventure for me, who had known only the mountains and small villages of my country. Now in reaching Uman, I took a long train journey, first to Baku, the great black city of oil, with its thousands of tall skeleton-

like towers, then along the dreary shore of the Caspian Sea to the endless plains of Russia. What a land for agriculture! The cultivation I had seen in the Caucasus had been mainly a matter of small patches of ground on not too steep mountainsides. In Russia I journeyed for days across level country, every foot of which could be cultivated. For the first time I viewed a horizon not encompassed by lofty mountains.

Dotted over the vast open country are innumerable villages, many of them immense in size, their little, conical, thatch-roofed huts covering many versts of ground. Always towering above them, veritable Gullivers among Lilliputians, are the Russian churches with their huge domes. They are in grotesque contrast with the tiny peasant huts around them.

Early in the morning, from the train window, I could see the peasants leaving their villages and streaming along the roads on their way to work in the fields. In the evening, though the train had carried me hundreds of versts during the day, I saw returning to their villages from the fields, groups that appeared identical with those I had seen in the morning, for a day of travel brought no change of people or scene.

The Russians struck me as being all strangely alike, especially the peasant girls who sold bread, cheese, milk and other food to the train passengers at the stations where we stopped. They had the same

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Early in the morning, from the train window, I could see the peasants leaving their villages and streaming along the roads on their way to work in the fields. In the evening, though the train had carried me hundreds of versts during the day, I saw returning to their villages from the fields, groups that appeared identical with those I had seen in the morning, for a day of travel brought no change of people or scene.

The Russians struck me as being all strangely alike, especially the peasant girls who sold bread, cheese, milk and other food to the train passengers at the stations where we stopped. They had the same

nian Dashnack Society, the secret revolutionary organization struggling for Armenian independence from both Turkey and Russia, between whom Armenia was held.

As for myself, I was not much interested in politics, though I enjoyed the discussions of my fellow-students; and involuntarily I gained some enlightenment as a result of their enthusiasm, though, along with this, considerable confusion of thought. Russians have a peculiar temperament. It seems to me they feel that they have solved a problem when they have succeeded only in stating it nicely, just as in practical work they are disinclined, or find it difficult, to go beyond planning a thing beautifully and completely on paper. They have a proneness for philosophical thought and discussion, and, in this diversion, a keenness that defeats its own ends, for in following an idea they must diverge into all the by-ways that present themselves. They are not content to stop at some pleasant and practical place along the road. They must have the extreme and logical conclusion, which likely enough proves to be the point from which they started.

I was happy in the life I was leading at Uman, among interesting, pleasant companions. I was making good progress in my studies, when toward the close of the first year I received a message from my father stating that it was necessary for me to report immediately to the military authorities at home, as I had been included in that year's army conscription.

Ordinarily, students are exempt from military service, but for some inexplicable reason this exemption did not apply in my case. The order calling me to the army meant the end of my student days, the shattering of my ambition.

I bade good-by to my teachers and my intimates among the students, and then, greatly saddened, returned home. My father welcomed me and did all he could to relieve my misery. His sympathy and kind words could not mitigate my plight. The fact remained, despite all he could say or do, that I had to enter the army, that I had to abandon the course upon which I had set my heart, and waste years of my life in a service for which I felt an active dislike.

The day following my arrival home I was enlisted. Shortly afterward, with other Armenian recruits, I was sent to the town of Polotsk, near Moscow. There I was assigned to the Revel Infantry Regiment.

CHAPTER III

CONSCRIPTED

THE Russian Army was recruited from all the people within the empire, other than the followers of the Prophet. As there was at all times considerable disaffection among the subject peoples, the precaution was taken, in incorporating them into the army, so to distribute them in a regiment that there would be few of any one race in any company. The bulk of the army always was Russian. This policy resulted in the breaking up of the group of Armenians from Azerbaijan with whom I had been recruited. I was assigned to a company in which I found myself without an acquaintance. There I began a new life quite different from anything I had previously known.

We Armenians had arrived at Polotsk in our native dress, one article of which is a large sheepskin hat. To the people of Polotsk we no doubt presented a strange sight. They called us *deekia lyoudi* (wild people), and asked us mirthfully why we wore sheep upon our heads. Some of us were indeed wild, having never previously experienced anything beyond the primitive and often savage life of the mountains and steppes of Azerbaijan. When we received our

uniforms we lost the distinction of our wild appearance and could then pass through the streets without provoking comment. Outwardly we became Russian soldiers. In time we began even to talk and to think as Russians. Beneath the surface, however, we remained Armenians, conscious that we were alien to the Russians. We were time-servers in the army, waiting for the day of discharge in order that we might return to our own way of living and continue again along the paths we had planned to follow.

As for me, I had wanted to be a *pomeschik* with a knowledge of scientific agriculture. I had hoped to improve upon the crude methods of farming practised in my country. I had dreamed and planned great things. Instead of treading out the grain with oxen in the ancient way, I would employ a great threshing machine. I would replace the wooden plows of my father with implements of steel. Reaping machines drawn by horses would take the place of the gangs of laborers who each year cut out grain with sickles. Our horses, cattle, sheep and swine offered room for vast improvement. There was no end to my ambition. In striving to realize my desires I had gone counter to the wishes and the command of my father, who had wanted me to become an officer in the army. Now I found myself a common soldier, with illiterate peasants in uniform for my companions. My soul revolted at the sordidness of army life, at the awful profanity of my comrades, and at the pomposity, self-importance and rigor of the officers. It was all so dif-

ferent from the quiet joy of my student days, when each hour held new interests, and passing time left me with new attainments. Now time dragged by and left me with nothing gained, while my dreams and ambitions consumed themselves.

For a time I was very unhappy. Eventually I became almost reconciled to my position. I did not know what was in store for the world. I was consoled with the reflection that I already possessed a sufficient foundation knowledge of scientific agriculture to enable me to engage in agriculture and live my life as I desired when my term of service in the army must eventually come to an end.

Drill! Drill! Drill! Every day the same. Discipline was strict. Our entire time was ordered by rules and regulations. The slightest breach was severely punished. The life was deadening, forcing one to live in well-defined grooves in which there was no room for initiative. The Russian system of training produced good soldiers in so far as it is desirable for soldiers to be mere machines giving unquestioned obedience to their officers; but much more is needed of soldiers than docility to their commanders. Above all technical knowledge is required. This we were not taught. I learned later, during the World War, which now unsuspected was about to break upon us, that even among our officers there were few who had this technical knowledge. A realization of their unfitnes came to me vividly enough, when with my comrades shoulder to shoulder in close formation, I was marched

against fortified positions into a storm of shells and machine-gun fire. It was a bitter thought, when falling back to our trenches over the bodies of dead and dying comrades, that they had been sacrificed through ignorance, perhaps because some officer could not read a map. The Russian soldier is as brave as any, and he will endure suffering, hardship and neglect with unlimited fortitude; but war on the grand scale is a matter of machines and the masters of machines, against which it is idle to impose only flesh and blood.

The Russian soldier of the old army, with his untutored mind, thought of his officers as omnipotent. His heroism could not prevail against the obvious ineptitude of his officers. Eventually the carnage, the failures, the defeats that befell in spite of his heroism disillusioned and bewildered him, producing a condition of mind full of hatred and contempt for his officers whom he had formerly held in awe and respect.

I have forged ahead of my story and must return. Life in the army during the days of peace was not without some pleasures. In my company were men, simple peasants though they were, who had keen minds and who made lovable comrades. Occasionally I received small sums of money from my father, enough to permit of the purchase of a bottle of wine when we visited the town, there to be enjoyed with my friends.

Russians have splendid voices. Their soldiers are

trained to sing. I liked the singing. We were taught marching songs, songs of the Volga, of the Cossacks, of village life, of the army, of love and of war. We sang in chorus while we marched over many versts of road. To-day the soldiers of the new army go tramping by under the red flag and I hear again the old songs; and though I was not happy in the army, the singing awakens something of longing within me.

The colonel of my regiment lived in a house situated in a large garden. I marked the neglected condition of the garden. It gave me an idea. I obtained permission to speak to the colonel. I told him of my having been an agricultural student, and proposed that I put his garden in order. He was delighted, and from that time I escaped much of the monotony of barrack life, for there was always work to be done in the garden; and so the time passed more pleasantly.

After serving six months in the army, I applied for permission to visit my home. Within two hours of the time of departure of my train I received notification that my request had been granted. I packed my things hurriedly and started for the railroad station, happy with the prospect of soon seeing again my old home. I hastened on my way. It was evening and growing dark. In consequence of the gathering darkness and my preoccupation with my thoughts, I failed to see an officer as we passed each other until it was too late for me to salute him in the manner called for by regulations, which provided that I should come to attention in front of him and then sa-

lute. As it was, I saluted him merely in passing. The officer halted me, inquired my name, and sent me back to my regiment, with orders that I report myself under arrest. Russian officers were like that.

Two weeks later I again started on my leave of absence to visit my home and again encountered trouble. While on the train en route for Khankandi I had in some manner lost my uniform belt. When I arrived in Rostov, a junction where I had to change for another train, I discovered my loss and immediately started in search of a shop where I could purchase another, for I well knew what it meant to be detected, without my belt, by an officer. All the officers in the Russian Army—so it seemed to me—were promenading the streets of the town; and before I could make my purchase I was called to attention by none other than a general. He demanded of me shortly, "What is your name? From what regiment are you? Where are you going?" I gave him the information he sought, and added that I had lost my belt and was then on my way to purchase another. He was not an unkind-looking old chap, and I had hopes that he would let me off. After pondering for a moment or two, as over a matter of great weight, he bade me to continue on to my home and to report myself under arrest upon my return to my regiment. After purchasing another belt, I continued joyfully on my journey.

I arrived at home duly. For two weeks I had a happy time there. I offered suggestions to my father

and my older brother for improvement in the manner of managing the estate, but I could not inspire them with my own enthusiasm for advanced methods. They were content to go on as they had been doing and to cling to old and proved ways. They had no respect at all for "book farming," as they called it.

This skepticism led to an amusing experience. On a visit to Moscow I had picked up a book in which was a story of the Greek hero Ulysses. I had this book with me. I knew that my brother was fond of hunting, and, thinking he would enjoy the story of the hunt in which Ulysses is wounded by the boar, I read it to him one evening.

He sat through the reading without comment. When I had finished, he said, "Read that description of the boar again." I complied thus:

"Deep in the rough recesses of the wood
A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood;
Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thunderous shower,
Nor solar ray, could pierce the shady bower,
With withered foliage strewed a heapy store!
The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar!
Roused by the hounds' and hunters' mingling
cries,
The savage from its leafy shelter flies;
With fiery glare his sanguine eye-balls shine,
And bristles high empale his horrid chine."

My brother gave a snort of contempt. "That just shows," he said scornfully, "how little you can learn from books. This ancient Greek must have been a

great hero that they wrote poetry about his having killed a pig. Here is a suggestion for you. If you accept it, you will learn more about wild boars than books can teach you. To-morrow morning we will ride over to Black Swamp and kill a wild boar, sanguine eye-balls, bristles and all."

I was glad to accept the chance of engaging in a hunt. My brother said he would make all the necessary preparations and that I had better get to bed at once as we would be up early.

I did not realize how early until he pulled me out of bed at two o'clock the next morning. At that hour my ambition was at a low ebb. It was a painful wrench, leaving a warm bed to go forth into a cold fog.

Black Swamp was about five miles distant. We made the trip on horseback, accompanied by one of our Armenian swineherds. We rode to within a mile of the swamp, and completed the journey on foot. Our way lay across a series of irrigation ditches, which we negotiated by means of a slender pole that we carried for the purpose. We would stretch the pole across a ditch and then, grasping our rifles by the muzzles to balance ourselves, would make a precarious way across it. In the dark these balancing feats were possible. On our return, however, when daylight revealed the possibilities of a slip, we went around many a place that we had previously crossed.

We finally arrived at a field bordering a large swamp. During the previous summer corn had been

grown in this field and, I suppose, the pigs formed then the habit of visiting it. Along the sides of the field and extending into the swamp was a thick growth of tall reeds.

Our technique of the hunt differed greatly from that of the classical, as we had no hounds to "snuff the tainted gale" and with loud baying drive forth the foe. Instead, we resorted to strategy, the idea being to ambush the enemy and, falling on him unawares, reduce him to pork before he could ornament one of us with any identification marks such as enabled Euryclea to recognize Ulysses.

My brother, who directed operations, posted me and the swineherd in the reeds at one side of the field, and then disappeared in the fog, presumably to take a position of advantage elsewhere.

Following the example of my companion, I lay on the ground and concealed myself by piling reeds lightly over my body. By peering through the reeds we would, when the fog lifted, have a good view of the entire field, the swineherd told me.

Then began a wait that we could not relieve by smoking or talking. There was snow on the ground. We lay on the snow, face down, with necks craned for a view of any possible adventuring porker. My neck developed a crook and a cramp. During the first hour the snow was continually melting from the heat of my body. When I shifted my position a little, the water, resulting from the melting snow, froze to me and fastened me to the ground. After the

first hour I became so cold that the snow no longer melted.

Just as the first faint streak of the welcome dawn became visible, there came an unmistakable grunt from behind us. Some Napoleonic-minded boar was approaching the field from the flank. The swineherd gave a convulsive wriggle and grasped my arm. I poked him in the ribs for quiet. From the reeds behind us came further sounds; grunts, rustlings and splashing. There was no mistake. The boar was steadily approaching—unless, instead of a boar, it was a water buffalo, for the noise being made in the reeds close at my heels would have done credit even to that lumbering animal.

My feet, being nearest to the sounds, began to tingle. I wanted to draw them up; but I also wanted that boar, and I feared that any motion on my part would alarm him. Suddenly there was a startled and reverberating grunt which stirred the hair on my head. I believe the boar had barely avoided stepping on me. I sprang to my feet and in doing so, bumped heads with the swineherd, who had leaped at the same time. Surely if a wild boar could take a fall out of Ulysses, I had already given this one every advantage demanded of me by good sportsmanship, short of allowing him first bite. There was no time to throw my rifle to my shoulder; but I thrust it forward the moment I gained my feet, and whirled around. I believe that at the time I had a notion that the beast would be charging me with his mouth open

and that, by thrusting the rifle into his mouth before firing, I would minimize the chances of missing.

But this proved to be no Greek boar such as spring to battle "impetuous with opponent speed." Indeed, on discovering us he had turned a back somersault and made away with speed as "impetuous" as you please. One glimpse I had of him as he mounted a mound of earth in his flight. I have tried in vain to convince friends that I do not exaggerate the size of that pig. Enough now if I say that he was the biggest pig I have ever seen. I attribute his size to the steady increment of time. He must have been very old, surviving through many years by virtue of his mastery of the flank attack and speed in retreat.

During the confusion of our repulse of the boar I had been dimly aware of hearing a rifle-shot. A few minutes later my brother rejoined me. He listened with evident amusement to my rather excited account of what had happened.

"Well," he said, "I got one. Come along and see it." He led me across the field, a distance of about a quarter of a mile, to where the boar he had shot lay on the ground. "What do you think now," asked my brother, "of the fierceness and courage of the wild boar?"

Remembering the monster I had recently encountered and contemplating the huge beast that lay before me, I replied, "To tell the truth, I am rather glad that their courage has degenerated since the days of the early Greeks."

My leave of absence had been for two weeks. The time expired all too soon. Reluctantly I returned to my regiment and reported to the colonel the matter of the lost belt and the general's order. "Ohanus, you are a good soldier," the colonel said. He showed me a telegram from the general informing him of the case and ordering that I be placed under arrest only in the event of my not reporting as ordered. Some Russian officers were like that.

Slowly and monotonously the days dragged on while I was serving my time in the army, until in July of 1914 came the outbreak of the World War.

CHAPTER IV

WAR AND LOVE

THE soldiers of my regiment received the news of the outbreak of war with light hearts. In our ignorance of what this war was to bring, it meant to us only excitement, adventure, travel and relief from the dullness of peace-time soldiering. There was unbounded faith in the might of the Russian Army. It was confidently felt that the war would be of short duration, ending in an easy victory. We did not know, how could we know, that a black storm cloud was rushing to cover the whole earth in its dark flame-shot folds.

The regiment was raised to a strength of five thousand men, and entrained for the frontier, there to form part of an army, under General Samsonoff, for the invasion of Germany. Everything was done in a desperate hurry, amid limitless confusion, out of which order seemed never fully to emerge. Nevertheless enthusiasm did not abate, and so in high spirits the army crossed the border and began the invasion of Germany.

Everywhere the population of the country through which we passed fled before us. For days we marched

across a great plain. The regiments were strung out in a long line, with considerable distance between them. The roads were crowded with guns and transport. Bodies of Cossacks frequently rode across our front or appeared in the distance ahead of us. Our army was an inspiring sight, apparently an irresistible force that would sweep anything and everything before it. From some vantage point of terrain affording a wide view of the country my comrades would gaze with awe at the vastness of the army of which they were a part. Then smiles would lighten their faces and they would nod confirmation to one another and say, "Our colonel is right; the war will not last for longer than a few weeks; the Germans will not fight."

One night we encamped at the edge of a wood. At daybreak we were called to arms. It was reported that the German troops were but a verst distant on the opposite side of the wood. We could hear firing in the wood. We immediately formed for battle and advanced to the attack. Soon bullets were flying and men were being killed or wounded. We charged with our bayonets through the dense brush. We came upon the supposed foe only to discover that we had been fighting with another Russian regiment that had advanced the previous day beyond the position it was supposed to occupy. It was sad, for because of this mistake one hundred Russians were killed, and four hundred wounded, by their own comrades.

When the confusion resulting from this action had subsided somewhat, we ate our morning meal and again took up our march. That day, during a halt, our colonel addressed the regiment. The substance of his remarks was that, though a great mistake had been made, we had nevertheless gained valuable experience, the fighting we had done had made seasoned troops of us, and, for this reason, it would be much easier for us to defeat the enemy. I should have enjoyed kicking the colonel, but, as a matter of fact, I, along with the rest of the regiment, cheered him heartily. When your regiment cheers it is difficult to remain silent.

Our long dusty columns of sweating, singing, swearing troops pressed on. The Russian Army's marching step is short, slow and almost effortless. There is nothing in our marching of the snap and swing that I was to see later on in the British troops. A Russian regiment in motion can be likened to the slow unruffled flowing of deep water. The weather was hot; the dust rose in little puffs from beneath our boots, and eddied about our heads. Water was scarce. We suffered from thirst. Despite regulations, canteens would be emptied early in the day. It was useless to try to husband your supply; for if you did a comrade would beg it of you, and you could not deny him.

On our march we passed through deserted villages with clean streets and well-built, substantial houses, quite different from the hut villages of Russia. Usual-

ly the Cossacks had preceded us in these villages, and had left abundant signs of their visits in the mischief they had done. When soldiers can not carry away articles to which they are attracted, they seem to gain considerable satisfaction from smashing them. I saw a group of my comrades admire a beautiful piano in an abandoned house in which we were billeted for the night. They ran their rough hands over the polished surface of the instrument, and exclaimed in wonder and delight at the fineness of the workmanship. Having admired the piano, they smashed in its panels with their boots.

During our advance, the heavens were lighted each night by burning haystacks, the work of enemy agents who in this way signaled our position. Probably because we had so far been unopposed, I felt that all was not well, that something terrible portended. I could not take confidence from the careless bearing of our officers. I knew, from my studies, that Germany was a great and progressive nation skilled in the art and the science of war, and possessing a huge army. However, I could but march with my fellows to whatever fate was in store for us. My comrades appeared to entertain no troublesome doubts, and to be indifferent to everything beyond the amusing or vexatious incidents of the day. A galling strap buckle, or a bootlace that would not stay tied, was for them trouble enough, without borrowing of the future. An officer who lost his dignity by tripping over his own sword, or by making himself slightly ridiculous in any

other way, became the butt of much amusing comment among the soldiers.

It became known among us that the army was engaged with the enemy at some point along our immense line. We could neither see nor hear anything of the battle.

The day came when we were before the German positions. The enemy was entrenched somewhere in front of us, and we were advancing to the attack. My regiment was in close formation. We kept our lines dressed, and we marched and maneuvered as though on parade. To the right and to the left of us were other regiments. A cloud of skirmishers led the way. There was the deep booming of guns in our rear. Shells, sent to seek out the enemy positions, screamed their way overhead. The foe did not reply.

We were advancing over a field of stubble. The sweat was streaming down my face. I was nervous and excited, and found myself pressing forward and treading on the heels of a giant in front of me.

"Patience! little brother," said he, turning his head. "You will be where you are going soon enough."

We Armenians are short in stature; the Russians are tall. My companions towered above me and shut out my view. I wanted to see what was in front of us, and craned my neck this way and that; but I could make out nothing except the broad backs of my comrades, the eddying dust, and the rhythmically swaying bayonets, whose points flashed and rippled in the sunlight.

Nerves became taut throughout the ranks. A shell from our guns exploded prematurely. There was a swish and a rattle of shrapnel, followed by momentary confusion among the men. An officer ran along the files and barked at us in a voice that had a hysterical pitch. Our song leader started a song, and we steadied as we fell into its rhythm and joined in the singing. It was a song of a Cossack brigand of the old days, who, having made captive a Tartar princess of wonderful beauty, idled away his time in love until his men complained of his neglect; whereupon he drowned the princess in the Volga.

We had not finished the song when we were startled by the crackling of rifle fire in front of us. Then the heavens opened; the earth heaved; and we were in hell. I was conscious of a succession of explosions. Earth splashed into my face and stung my eyes. I was thrown to the ground and trodden upon. I struggled to my feet. An officer near me was waving his arms wildly. His mouth was wide open. The regiment was stricken and in confusion. A mass of men was gathered about the colors. I ran and joined these. We formed a semblance of a line that was each moment being smashed by exploding shells.

There are tears in my eyes now as I tell you this, not that so many of my old comrades died that day, but that we, a tattered remnant of the momentary survivors, did form a line and follow our colonel forward. It was for a short distance only, but we went forward. We were soon swept away. There was no

regiment left, just a few scattered men in the awful wreck of what had been a regiment. Some stood about as though dazed. Others rushed wildly away, I with them. I soon had to throw myself face downward on the earth, for there appeared in our rear a black river of heaving earth with a spray of flames. We were hemmed in with a barrage of high explosives. For a long time I lay there hugging the ground and groveling closer and closer to it. Each moment I was expecting to be blown into atoms. The barrage lifted. I went on and soon was in company with other soldiers, retracing our steps along the way we had so confidently taken but a short time before.

Our army was in flight. Guns and transports were abandoned. The roads were blocked. Officers labored to bring order out of the chaos. Fresh regiments were brought up and marched through us to cover our retreat. There was fighting on three sides of us, for we were as if in a bottle, with the enemy each day making smaller the neck of the bottle to prevent our escape.

It was a terrible battle. In it many died. Some lived. Some are still alive; and I am one of these. But I can tell you little enough about it, for in a great battle one can see but a small part of what is happening. I am told that this particular battle raged along a line extending, roughly, from Riga to Warsaw, and that there were hundreds of thousands of men engaged in it. In my mind it consists only of the ineradicable memory of that first overwhelming blast

of death which in an instant all but wiped out my regiment; of that blast and of our last effort to reform and charge, the last gesture of a dying regiment. The regiment died in fact, for, when we reached Mlawá, where our retreat ended, of the five thousand men who had gone to form the regiment only two hundred and fifty survived. Not an officer lived. Our colors had been saved—and in the Russian Army the soul of a regiment is embodied in the colors. While they remain, though the men have all perished, the regiment can be revived; and so it was that in a short time the regiment was again recruited to its full strength.

During the reorganization of the regiment I was promoted to a sergeancy and assigned to the duty of drilling recruits. New regiments arrived almost daily, from distant parts of the empire, on their way to the front. An unending stream of recruits, pouring in upon us, had to be trained and equipped.

When my regiment was again brought up to full strength and whipped into shape, we were moved to a position near Lodz, where the German and the Russian Armies, strongly entrenched, confronted each other. In places the opposing trenches and earthworks were separated by a distance not greater than a stone's throw. This front was inactive when my regiment arrived, and remained quiet for several months. Russian and German soldiers fraternized. We of the Russian Army would meet the German soldiers between the lines. Some of the Germans had

cameras. They took photographs of us and gave us copies. We gave them sugar, of which we had plenty, in exchange for cognac, cigars and chocolate.

I am convinced, in the light of subsequent events, that this fraternizing was, on the part of the Germans, a deliberately planned aid to their intelligence service, that it was one of the means they employed to obtain information of our strength and dispositions. The extent of their knowledge concerning us was always a source of amazement. They liked to parade their information. If my company went to bathe, the Germans, upon our return to the trenches, would inquire, by shouting over to us, if we had enjoyed our bath. They knew the names of all our officers, what regiments we had, and where each regiment was stationed. It seemed that they were fully informed of everything we did or intended to do. They were clever. They knew their business. Their spies were everywhere.

Even though there was no fighting, I found life in the trenches to be far from a pleasant experience. Lice, filth, mud and monotony about describe it. The officers became irritable and the men sulky. My captain was an old army officer. His lieutenants, however, were inexperienced men only recently commissioned, probably from clerical positions in civilian life. The incompetence of the lieutenants threw a greater burden of work and responsibility upon the non-commissioned officers.

We did not spend all of our time in the trenches.

After endless days of living in mud and filth, until we were foul and dirty beyond recognition, we would be relieved and sent to some village in the rear. There, after cleaning up, we would spend most of our time drilling until we had to return again to the trenches.

For a time I was stationed back of the lines in a little village, a dreary place of squalid huts, of streets ankle-deep in dust or mud, of shorn poplar trees, of manure piles, of broad-faced, heavy, dull, slatternly women, and dirty children. But it boasted the distinction of a stone house, a mansion amid such surroundings. Here lived Nina Andreovna, young and beautiful, reputed to be the widow of a rich merchant.

For a time the little village, this mere gray dot on the rolling plain, was brought from obscurity. It was astride a highway that a shift in the battle front caused to become an important artery of supplies, along which flowed all the paraphernalia of war and endless lines of men.

When the first warm days of spring had thawed the ground, drivers cursed and belabored straining beasts as they struggled to drag heavy guns and loaded carts through the black, bottomless mud. Men marched, their feet sodden and heavy with the mire they could not shake from their boots. In the heat of summer the mud turned to dust that whirled about in the winds of the Polish plain, and, mingling with the sweat of hot weary soldiers, turned again to mud, and blackened and streaked their faces and clothes.

In the home of Nina Andreovna officers stationed in the town, or passing through it on their way to the front, found a welcome and refreshments. They vied with one another for favor at the stone house. Another shifting of the front returned the village to its old obscurity, marooned it in the loneliness of the plain. But still, officers, who had found entertainment there at the hands of the lovely widow, revisited the stone house as occasion offered.

I had been in ignorance of all this—for the world of a sergeant is not that of a commissioned officer—until I was ordered by my captain to report to regimental headquarters, where an officer, a stranger to me, told me the story and added that the woman was suspected of being a spy. Then he instructed me in the part I was to play. “You will be quartered in the stone house,” he said. “Your duties ostensibly will be to check up on any soldiers who may wander into the village; but in reality you will be there to keep Nina Andreovna under observation and to learn, if possible, whether or not our suspicions are justified. You have been chosen for this duty because you are an educated man and an Armenian. It is well known that, as with the Poles, there are many rebels and revolutionaries among the Armenians; but we have faith in your loyalty. If this woman is a spy as we suspect, you, being an Armenian, will be the better able to gain her confidence.”

Spying, particularly when it involves gaining a person's confidence and then betraying it, is not a noble

thing, but it seems to be necessary in time of war. As a plain soldier I could but obey orders.

I am not proud of what followed, for in acting, as I thought, for the best and in accordance with the dictates of my heart, I deceived, or at least strove to deceive, a woman (I doubt now whether I succeeded), and in the end betrayed the trust that had been reposed in me by my superiors. Yet, even now I do not see what other course was open to me.

Some women exert a strange power of attraction. Such a woman was the one upon whom I had come to spy. She was, perhaps, five years older than myself, but the disparity in our ages detracted nothing from the fascination she held for me. She was tall and slim and radiant. Her blue eyes were alight with intelligence. Always I remember her smile. It was like sunshine rippling among flowers.

At first my hostess was distant and apparently indifferent to my presence in her house. The day I arrived I showed her the written authorization that had been given me. She questioned me and seemed satisfied with my professed reasons for being there.

She was a woman of wealth and social station, whose company was sought by officers of high rank. I was in the uniform of a common soldier, an intruder and, no doubt, unwelcome. With such a gulf between us and on the basis of such a relationship I could make no personal approach to her. In time, however, as I was at pains to avoid trespassing needlessly upon her, she became friendly and affable. In days of war

the great can graciously condescend to the lowly who, for the nonce, are wearing the uniform of their common country and are fighting against a foreign foe.

I took advantage of her condescension to tell her something of myself. I wished her to know that I was a student and of good family. In this way I overcame the barrier of social difference that my uniform, denoting lack of gentleman's rank, had imposed between us.

Nina Andreovna was the first woman I had known who was wholly of the West, who was completely free from that Oriental subservience of women to men which is so marked a characteristic of the women of my own people. Perhaps because of this I found a delight in our association that was altogether foreign to anything I had known, or imagined possible, in the relationship of man and woman.

I found myself forgetting my mission. I was trying only to please her; I was trying to gain her favor for itself alone. At times, it is true, I tried to draw her out, with the object of learning if she was in communication with the enemy. I told her of my early life and of my experiences in the army. I professed great dislike for my officers, for army life in general, and for war in particular, and hinted that I was a member of the Armenian revolutionary society.

My efforts were clumsy, or Nina Andreovna was extremely cautious, for she divulged nothing not in keeping with her claim of being a patriotic Russian. I lost all suspicion I might have entertained concern-

ing her. I was content in finding happiness in being more and more in her presence. In fact I became indifferent as to whether or not she was a spy. It was sufficient for me that she was Nina, whom I loved with all my being.

If I did not succeed in gaining her confidence, mine was the greater triumph in that I gained her heart. I believed then that I did so succeed, though in the dark days of pessimism that soon followed I realized that her love had been feigned, the better to dull my senses and to extract information from me.

It came about, as our intimacy increased, that I took my meals with her, whereas at first I had eaten by myself. It was then that I came under the full sway of her personality and completely lost myself in a rapture of adoration. I had no hope that I could attain to a relationship of greater intimacy than I then enjoyed, for I realized that Nina possessed far more than I would ever be able to offer her. At the time I could offer her nothing, for I was a soldier. At any moment I might be recalled to my company. I might be sent to serve the Czar somewhere at the ends of the earth.

I was young then and with little experience. My heart was soft, I was sentimental. I took a morbid and pitiful pleasure in picturing myself dying on some field of battle and while dying thinking of Nina.

My sorrow for my sad plight was effectively replaced with joy. Nina had, no doubt, been long aware of the state of my feelings toward her. Often

she would laugh at me, apparently without cause, and sometimes at something or other that I said or did she would run her hand through my hair and say, "Ohanus, you are a nice boy."

Toward evening one day an officer in a captain's uniform drove up in a car to the house. He left the machine standing in charge of its soldier chauffeur and ran up the steps leading to the front door, there to be greeted with enthusiasm by Nina Andreovna, who had hurried to meet him. The chauffeur left the car, and found his way to the kitchen with a directness that bespoke previous visits.

An hour or more passed, but still the officer remained. I strolled about the grounds, the while keeping my eye on the car to be aware if the visitor should depart. Lights flared through the dining-room windows, and then curtains were drawn across them. It was evident that the officer was to stay for dinner.

Suddenly the purpose for which I had been sent to this house occurred to me. Was I not there as a spy? Was it not my duty to learn all I could of what went on in the stone house? In that way I reasoned with myself, while knowing in my heart that through no nobler motive than jealousy I was about to do something contemptible.

From one of the windows came a narrow line of illumination where the covering curtains failed to meet. I walked quietly to below the window and then, raising my hands grasped the stone window-

ledge and drew myself up until I could see into the room through the aperture between the curtains. I could remain in that position for a few moments only, as all my weight was supported by my fingers on a smooth stone surface. The time was sufficient for me to see a strange tableau that I could not understand.

The table had been set. There was a soft radiance to its silver and snowy linen, imparted by the candlelight. Nina Andreovna and the officer were standing with their backs to the table. His left arm was across her shoulders. During the moment of time that I hung there I saw them raise their hands high, each holding out a glass, and, to all appearances, drink a toast to the portrait of a gentleman, that was suspended on the wall. My fingers weakened under my weight, loosed their hold, and I fell to the ground.

I did not again attempt to see into the room. I walked into the village and spent several hours sitting in a wineshop. I was aflame with jealousy. It did not interest me that they had drunk to a portrait.

When I returned to the house the officer had gone, along with his car and chauffeur. Nina welcomed me as usual and then laughingly remarked, "It is too bad that my poor soldier has to run and hide whenever one of his officers appears." She summoned a servant and ordered that dinner be served to me. I protested against this, as I had eaten at the wineshop in the village.

"Very well," she said, "then I shall sing for you,"

and, going to the piano, she played and sang the beautiful Letter Scene from Eugen Onegin. This was a favorite of mine. I had first heard it at the opera in Tiflis while a student in the agricultural school there. I believe Nina played and sang well. To me her voice, even while she was only speaking, was exquisite, but I am no judge of Russian music. My ears are attuned to the altogether different music of my own people. It is only when I have heard the same piece of Russian music played over and over again, as had been the case with the Letter Scene, that I discover its beauty.

That night I was in no mood for music. I wanted only to know what the relationship was between Nina and the officer whom I had seen with his arm across her shoulders. Without premeditation I blurted out the question, "Who was the officer who called here to-day? Is he your lover?"

Nina had finished singing and sat with her hands resting on the keys of the piano. She whirled around and faced me. I think all the blood drained from my face as I became instantly conscious of my temerity in having asked such a question, for there had been really no intimacy between us beyond the gracious friendliness of her attitude and my own silent adoration.

For a time that seemed an age she sat and looked at me. Then she laughed, laughed merrily, and, standing up, ran her fingers through my hair, and said, "Ohanus, you are a nice boy." Obeying an im-

pulse, I took her in my arms. She did not resist, but pressed her lips to mine.

In the intense happiness that was now mine I had no further thought of the officer who had visited the house. For two weeks I lived as in a beautiful dream, its joy troubled only by the knowledge that at any time I might be recalled to my company and to the trenches.

Then one day I sat in the dining-room where tea had been served me, drinking and awaiting with impatience the return of Nina, who had gone to the village. By chance I raised my eyes to the wall opposite me and noted there, as I had many times, the portrait of a gentleman, the same painting to which Nina and the visiting officer had seemed to drink a toast as I spied upon them. The memory of this incident returned to me. For no assignable reason I went to the portrait and examined it closely. The painting was fastened, not hung, to the wall. There was something peculiar about one of the eyes. It seemed to me that this eye had been painted so life-like as to take on the appearance of being in relief. I mounted a chair and touched the eye with my finger. The eye moved. I pressed hard against it, and then the whole canvas swung out from its frame. Behind it was a telephone. Astonished and shocked, for I well realized the import of my discovery, I swung back the painting and hastened away.

For hours I wandered over the fields, lost in bitter unhappiness, not knowing where my steps led me. I

had a plain duty to perform and knew that I had not the strength to perform it, except in part. But duty troubled my thoughts little enough. It was the wreck of my own happiness that concerned me.

I returned to the house at nightfall, late for the evening meal, which was awaiting me. Nina Andreovna chided me for my tardiness, and we sat down at once to eat. Throughout the meal I sat silent and abstracted, a prey to misery. After dinner a Polish maidservant withdrew our chairs to an open window, through which we could see across the broad undulating plain. The candles in the room were extinguished, and here, as was our custom, we sat in the gloom of the long northern twilight.

My companion complained at my silence. "Ohanus, you are dull to-night. You are like a muzhik who has worked so long that all thoughts have fled." She laid her little hand upon my shoulder. I took it in mine and kissed it. I lighted a candle and placed it on a table beneath the portrait that concealed the telephone. I returned to the woman I loved, put my arm about her, and drew her head gently to my shoulder. "Nina," I said, "if occasion necessitated it, could you leave here to-night and lose yourself? Could you find friends with whom you would be safe?"

I heard distinctly the catch in her breathing as she disengaged herself from my arms and asked, "Why, what is the matter? Why do you ask?"

"The matter is," I replied, "the question of the whereabouts of the end of the wire that leads from

the telephone concealed behind the portrait. Dear, you must know. You can decide if I am needlessly alarmed. To-morrow morning at the latest I must report my discovery. I am a soldier and can do no less. Can you find safety to-night?"

Nina Andreovna stood quiet, breathing deeply. She shuddered as she turned to me. Even in the dim light I noted lines of thought and care in her face. She faltered, "It could be arranged." I drew her to my breast. She clung to me, and I held her close. Then gently and reluctantly I tore myself away. I kissed her hand and bade her farewell. I went to my room, where I remained sleepless throughout the night. In the morning she was gone. I have not seen her since. I reported my discovery of the concealed telephone, upon which an officer arrived with a squad of soldiers and took possession of the house. The flight of Nina Andreovna resulted in considerable puzzled speculation, but no suspicion attached to me. In fact, I was highly commended for what was known of my part in the affair. The praise stung me and made me more wretched.

I rejoined my company. A few days later I was given a squad of men and detailed to guard a point on an important road. *Furgons*, loaded with wire, were continually passing during the day on their way to the trenches and returning empty. I was required to stop each *furgon*, inspect the driver's pass and check his load. After five o'clock in the afternoon, the road was closed. One afternoon a few minutes

after five, a *furgon*, loaded with wire, drove up. I stopped it and told the driver, an aged bearded Jew, shabbily dressed, that the road was closed and that he could not proceed. He begged me to let him pass, pleading that he was late because of the delay in loading, that he had come a long way and that his horses were tired. It was easily seen that, as regarded the horses, what he said was true, for the poor animals stood with heads sunk to their knees. The wire was needed at the front. I decided to permit him to continue and demanded his pass. This he did not have. He said he had been carrying it in his hat and that, when he had removed his hat to scratch his head, the wind had blown the paper away. I ordered him to turn back. He pleaded with me and, after drawing me aside out of the hearing of my men, finally offered me money, upon which I placed him under arrest. I then had the *furgon* searched. Hidden beneath the wire we found a pood of gold. Some weeks later, in consequence of the affair of the stone house and of this matter of finding the gold, I received a letter from the Czar thanking me for the service I had rendered the fatherland. That was all, but then, in those days, just a letter from the Czar was a great reward and recognition.

Perhaps the long period of inactivity, the comparatively peaceful life of the trenches and camp that we had been living before Lodz, had caused our officers to become careless and negligent of precautions. At any rate our army again met with disaster. The day

had been quiet as usual. My regiment had been relieved from the trenches and was stationed in a village a short distance in the rear, a matter of a few versts from the front lines. That night we were called to arms and to battle. The enemy had rushed our trenches. Many of our units, both at the front and in reserve, were surrounded. Even as my regiment assembled, shells began falling and bursting within the village and taking toll of our numbers. There was the utmost confusion all about us, though the regiment was steady enough. My regiment was a glorious regiment, probably the best in the Russian Army. In the darkness we were aware of great numbers of men rushing about, of units in flight or in retreat from the front, and of tremendous explosions and bursts of flame. We were hardly assembled, when the enemy was upon us, and we were engaged in a mad fight. We lost all order and formation. We broke into groups. We went wild in a fury of combat. Men laughed and sang and cursed and raved. The Germans are great soldiers, but we showed them that night what Russians could do. With rifle butts and bayonets, with our naked hands, with our fists, with our boots, and with our teeth we fought them and pressed them back. The village was in flames. We were attacked from the rear. Pressed from all sides, we battled our way through the streets of the burning village, and in sheer savage fury cut our way out.

Then began a long retreat during which we were

engaged in many battles. Our retreat ended only when we reached Minsk. From five thousand men the regiment had shrunk to less than five hundred.

At Minsk we again underwent a period of reorganization. The men had become savage with discontent at the endless slaughter that brought them only defeat. The belief was commonly expressed among them that they were being betrayed by those in command. They wanted only to return to their farms and villages. Already they were developing that frame of mind which later caused them eagerly to embrace revolution, to cast aside all discipline, and to treat with appalling savagery their not less savage, if more cultured, former masters.

The war continued. My regiment was again recruited to strength and again thrown into the conflict. There were campaigns and battles in the heat of summer and in the terrible cold of Russian winters. There were advances and retreats, victories and defeats, new officers and new comrades for old. Fresh men were always being poured into the army to replace those who had fallen. Then came new ways of fighting and killing; airplanes, grenades, trench mortars, tanks, bigger guns and poison gas. In these innovations we were far behind the enemy.

Eventually I was taken from the line and sent to an officers' training school, where I taught horsemanship to boys, mostly clerks from Petrograd, Moscow and other large cities.

Russia had an inexhaustible reservoir of men from

which to draw to replace those who fell in the ranks, but a great scarcity of men possessed of the education necessary to an officer, hence the necessity for resorting to these boys who could at least read and write. Some of them, as cavalry officers, would soon be commanding men bred in the saddle and grown old in the army. The same need was the cause of my being entered shortly in the school as a student. There for three months I studied diligently the prescribed courses.

Upon receiving my commission, I was ordered to the Forty-Eighth Regiment of Infantry, at that time stationed at Odessa, headquarters and base of the army on the Roumanian front. On joining my regiment, I was assigned to the duty of drilling and training recruits. I labored at this aggravating task for several months.

Colonel Soboloff, our regimental commander, was an officer of the old school. He could kiss a lady's hand with really superior charm and grace, and no one could equal the flourish with which he would draw his sword on parade, a gesture that seemed, as he performed it, to proclaim him a champion challenging the world to combat. I mention this because it is in one or the other of these postures that he returns to my memory. When he was drunk, which fortunately he was most of the time, something inherently kindly in his disposition mastered him, and he was a generous, affable commander. When he was sober, he was a fussy, unreasonable despot in a per-

petual state of irritation, unable to reconcile himself to the demoralizing effect of the war on regimental organization.

One day Colonel Soboloff summoned me to him. I was kept waiting in the anteroom to his office for almost an hour, all the time wondering what was wanted of me. He made his appearance at last, escorting a lady. I came to attention and saluted. He kissed the lady's hand in the inimitable way that characterized him and then motioned me in.

When I stood before him, he explained that there was need of a man who understood the Tartar language to undertake a mission among the Tartar tribes of the Caucasus. "I know you speak Tartar, but I am not sure you speak it well," he said. I did some rapid thinking, concluding that I would as soon undertake such a mission as not. I assured him that I spoke the language well, saying that, inasmuch as I had been born and brought up in a Tartar country, I was as familiar with that language as with my own, which was indeed the case. It is usual for the Armenians of Azerbaijan to speak Armenian, Russian and Tartar with equal facility.

Without going into greater detail or explaining the nature of the mission, he asked if I would undertake it. I agreed to do so. He expressed satisfaction, and added that he himself knew nothing of the details, except that I would first have to attend a school where, for several weeks, I would receive special instruction. With this he dismissed me. I had no illu-

sions regarding the dangers involved in a mission to the Tartars; but great as the risk might be, I reasoned that it would be not less great at the front, to which I would probably be sent if I declined to volunteer for the mission.

I was naturally curious as to what it was intended that I do, and speculated continually on the subject. The English had been defeated at Gallipoli. The Russian Army was not making much progress in its invasion of Turkey. I concluded that, owing to these successes of the Turks, the Tartars were ripe for rebellion against the Russians, and that my mission had something to do with this situation. My curiosity was never to be satisfied, for I was not sent on the mission. Without warning, a few days after my interview with my colonel and before I had been assigned to the school where I was to receive special training, the old world of Russia came to an end, consumed in the fires of revolution.

CHAPTER V

MENSCHIEVISTS AND BOLSHEVISTS

I REFER now to the revolution of Kerensky and the Mensheviks. Bolshevism was yet to come. It was unheard of at this time. Besides, to the vast majority of the people of Russia, Lenine, Trotzky and the other leaders of the extreme communists were not even names.

The first intimation I had that something was amiss was in the disappearance of most of the officers. Those of the commissioned personnel who remained were, like myself, of the lowest rank. Our higher officers had received early word of the revolution, and, fearing the effect that the news would have on the soldiers, had fled for their lives or gone into hiding. Their discipline had been harsh. The punishments meted out for the slightest offenses were often needlessly severe. In the face of the hatred engendered by them and now liberated, they were fearful and helpless. As I did not receive word of the revolution until it was also known to the men, I could not escape; but this did not greatly matter, for I had been living with the men almost as one of

them, and as I had never oppressed them, I had little to fear.

As soon as the announcement of the revolution was received, each regiment formed a committee from among its members for the conduct of regimental affairs. The first act of these committees was to abolish all distinctions in rank and all discipline. Thereafter there was no saluting, no drills, no lessons, no confinement to post. Old non-commissioned officers and the few commissioned officers of us who remained attempted to continue some sort of military organization. The task was a difficult one because we could not order the men to do anything. Each day the demoralization grew greater. The men more and more spent their time in town, idling about or engaging in never-ending arguments. At first they made but tentative advances along the path of unrestraint that the revolution had opened to them. At that time, before the revolution had gathered momentum, I believe a great commander could have held them to his will, and for better or worse could have turned back the torrent of revolt. But there was no such commander, and as each day the realization of their new-found freedom grew upon the soldiers, they became more and more unruly. Vodka became available in some way, with much resulting disorder.

The town militia had disappeared, probably in fear of the soldiers, who had an antipathy for them. Students and civilian volunteers maintained order in Odessa as best they could.

The committee of my regiment made me regimental commander. This was an honor that I should have chosen to escape, as it centered attention upon myself at a time when I preferred to remain in obscurity. It gave me responsibilities without any real authority. In the army all authority is backed by force. The maintenance of discipline is simplified and authority is given confidence when recourse to the guardhouse and even to the firing squad is possible. What little I could do had to be done by persuasion and subterfuge.

From the outset there was a number of very troublesome men in the regiment, who made things trying for me. They were always dissatisfied and always complaining. I encouraged these men to return to their homes. As a special favor I granted them indefinite furloughs; and so that problem was solved. In some such way I solved each new difficulty as it arose, with a solution sufficient for the day, scarcely considering the future.

If I remember rightly, it was about three months after the outbreak of the revolution that Kerensky, who had become the head of the provisional government, visited Odessa. He was received by the populace and troops with wild enthusiasm. As his car proceeded through the city, the crowds smothered it again and again with flowers. Kerensky gave an address in the open, at which the army and the whole population of Odessa gathered to hear him. What a crowd that was, a packed mass of humanity extend-

ing far beyond the possible range of even Kerensky's splendid voice!

The people, eager to receive whatever message he might have to give them, listened to him with reverent attention. He was a great orator and probably never spoke better than on that occasion at Odessa. He held us spellbound as with appealing eloquence he pictured the dark Russia of the past and contrasted it with a vision of the new Russia of the future. He spoke of the war, and of the need for us to be mindful of the enemy battering at the gates of the fatherland, and pleaded with us to stand firm in its defense and in support of our allies.

When he had finished we had a rebirth of faith and enthusiasm, and we were fired with the desire and determination for victory. It is extraordinary what effect words eloquently spoken can have upon one. For my part, I forgot for the time being that I was an Armenian and not a Russian.

For a time following Kerensky's visit there was a return of some military spirit to the army. Some of the old officers reappeared. Many units were sent to the Austrian front to undertake an offensive there. All attempts, however, to reestablish real discipline among the troops failed because of an order of the provisional government which in effect took all power from the officers and bestowed it upon the soldiers' committees.

Soon there began a propaganda for rebellion against the provisional government. The wildest

measures of social reform were advocated, and as a means of obtaining these a war of extermination against the ruling classes. The burden of the propagandists was: peace with Germany and Austria, the division of the land, and war against the capitalist masters. The word "Bolsheviki" was applied to these extremists, while the supporters of the provisional government were called "Menschieviki."

The sailors of the Russian fleet had taken possession of the ships. They granted themselves such shore leave as they desired and mingled freely with the soldiers. Extremist or Bolshevik doctrines found ready favor with the sailors, who were instrumental in spreading the virus among the soldiers.

What was to happen was beyond foretelling. Things looked bad and I began casting about in my mind for a possible way to return to my own country. A Russian revolution within Russia was purely an affair of the Russians. I did not care to see myself in the rôle of a victim, yet in the event of my remaining at my present post I would become that without doubt. I was ill with the intensity of my longing to return to my home. Day-dreaming, I would imagine myself at home again, managing our flocks and herds, riding my horse in the mountains and meeting old friends. To be at peace, to have security to work and to live, was the burden of my desire.

Kerensky again visited Odessa. He received delegations from all parties and groups who wished to see him. I joined with other Armenians in the army in a

petition to be assigned to the army of the Caucasus, where we would be in or near our own country. This petition was favorably received. As soon as I could arrange my affairs, I started for Tiflis where general headquarters for the army of the Caucasus was located.

I wished to see as much as possible of what was going on in Russia and so planned my route to take in a number of the large cities. I intended to stop over a day or two in each of these. My first destination was Kharkov. When the train arrived there, a battle was being fought in the streets of the town. A new revolution had commenced, headed this time by the Bolsheviks.

If the train I was on could have proceeded, I would gladly have forgone my intended stay in Kharkov and have continued my journey, but the rebels, having seized the railroad station, were blocking the line. Soldiers of the provisional government commandeered the train. The passengers were forced to alight. At first they refused to do this, volubly voicing their indignation and engaging the soldiers in wordy argument in typical Russian fashion. The soldiers in the end won the argument by throwing some of the passengers through the windows.

I made my way into the town, perhaps having some half-formed idea of reporting to the commanding officer for duty, but in certainty wishing that I were out of the mess and in reality casting about for some way of escape. Hotels and shops were closed,

and an exodus of people was in progress. I asked questions, but every one was too excited to give me any information. Sounds of firing came from different directions and seemed to be working in toward the center of the city. I decided to get in off the streets and so hammered on the door of the first hotel I found. I raised such a row banging away with the hilt of my sword that at last I was admitted.

To my surprise I found that there was a number of officers in the hotel. Their attitude toward the fighting in the city was that of indifference. They said that since it was a fight between two groups of revolutionists both equally vile, there was no reason they could see for involving themselves in it.

Before the day was done, all or most of these officers paid with their lives for the blindness that affected the Russian upper class as to the difference between the two revolutionary factions, the Menschevists and the Bolshevists. I have since talked with men who were in Petrograd when the Bolshevists made their coup. They assured me that there were enough officers in the city to have suppressed the uprising, independent of the aid of any loyal soldiers, if they had had the will to do so. Lack of initiative or mere indifference as to the result of a struggle between two revolutionary groups caused them to remain neutral and so lost them their country and many of them their lives.

The fighting within the city resulted in a complete victory for the Bolsheviki. The force opposing them

disintegrated or joined with them. At the first report received that the extremists had conquered, I left the hotel and joined the crowd in the street. I had no faith that the victors would treat with mercy any officers who might fall into their hands and I did not like the hotel as a hiding-place. My fears were well founded. A systematic hunt was made for officers, and wherever found they were killed. I had not participated in the battle, but I was in the uniform of my rank, and had I been found, it would have proved my death warrant.

I hurried rapidly away from the hotel avoiding the directions from which came sounds of firing. I turned a corner and collided with a tall figure in the uniform of a captain. This man had evidently been running, for his breath came in gasps. He grasped my arm and exclaimed, "Hide yourself!" and bounded away. There was a confused uproar of shouting from up the street. I looked and saw a crowd of soldiers, and many men armed but not in uniform. I took to my heels, turning again toward the hotel I had left. As I ran I noticed a bakeshop across the street. The baker was calmly going about his business of making bread. I crossed the street, entered the shop, and explained my plight to the baker. He was, fortunately for me, a man of kind heart. He consented to hide me. He did this by having me remove my tunic and put on a baker's apron that covered me from my neck to feet. He sprinkled me lib-

erally with flour and put me to work. I never worked with a better will.

Ivan Kostelen, the baker in whose shop I found refuge, was an example of the not uncommon, peculiarly philosophical type of lower class Russian. What he lacked in education was more than compensated for by keenness of mind. He often chided me for what he called my lack of understanding when at times I expressed myself bitterly regarding some incident of the revolution in Kharkov. A man was beaten and kicked to death on the street in front of the bakery. We both were witnesses of the killing. I was filled with fear and rage at what I had seen, and I spoke bitterly to Kostelen of the utter brutality that had been displayed. He stroked his beard and said, "No, it is not that. I know." He tapped his forehead with his forefinger. "I can't explain it," he continued, "only if I were not an old man, I without doubt would be out there enjoying the excitement of the revolution. I am a kindly man; I would not hurt any one; and yet if I were with comrades who kicked a man, I think maybe that after a time I would add my kicks to theirs."

From time to time Red soldiers and armed workmen entered the shop, but they did not detect me beneath my disguise. I worked and lived in the bakery for one week, seldom venturing on the streets. Through the aid of Kostelen and under the guise of an Armenian workman, a baker desiring to return to

his own country, I received a pass that enabled me to continue my journey toward the Caucasus.

Whatever trains were running were crowded with soldiers. Crowded! I mean that all space, even on the roofs of the cars, was occupied. Civilians could ride only on sufferance. A rudely written sign posted in the car in which I left Kharkov read: "Soldiers will please not throw passengers from the train while the train is in motion. Do not give the revolution a bad name abroad!"

Train service was absolutely disorganized. The army in Russia was disbanding of its own volition. Mobs of soldiers took command of the trains and forced the crews to run them regardless of dispatchers' orders or other railroad rules and regulations. At every station a fighting, frenzied mob strove to board the train on which there was not room for another person. There was not a bit of glass left in any of the windows of the cars, for the windows provided the only means of entrance and exit. The aisles were so jammed that it was impossible to pass along them. All on board the train suffered from thirst and hunger because it was rarely possible to leave the train to obtain food or water with any assurance or likelihood that you would be able to reboard it. Eventually to my great relief I arrived in Tiflis, where I reported at military headquarters. A few days later I was assigned to the Two Hundred and Twenty-third Regiment of Infantry, then quartered in Severski Barracks, Alexandropol, Armenia.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAND OF ARARAT

I WAS again in Armenia, the land of Ararat, where the world was begun anew. For two months I enjoyed a period of rest and quiet. The freedom from the great nervous strain I had been under at Odessa, following the outbreak of the revolution, was an indescribable relief. It is true the revolution was rapidly spreading to the Caucasus and things were becoming chaotic, but I was now among my own people and I had a feeling of assurance, a feeling of belonging, that was quite different from the saddening consciousness of being an alien, of being buffeted about, but still outside of the whirl of events, that was always with me while in Russia. As the revolution developed and took hold on the Russian Army, amid the natural fears of the people in Armenia a cross-current of hope arose again, openly voiced by our leaders, that in the difficulties of Russia would be found the long-desired opportunity of establishing an independent Armenia.

The Two Hundred and Twenty-third Regiment of Infantry, with which I was serving, was almost exclusively Armenian in its personnel. As I have stated before, this was a departure from what was usual in

the Russian Army. A number of the officers were from the Shusha district, Azerbaijan. They were old family friends whom I had known in my school-days. They welcomed me to the regiment and gained for me entrance into the social life of Alexandropol.

For a time, while at Alexandropol, there was seldom a night when it was not possible for me to be present at a feast. My opportunities in this direction were limited only by my powers of endurance. In an Armenian home, a party, a feast, a celebration, or call it what you will, serves to mark some important family event; such as a wedding, a birth, a christening, or a name day. As Armenians marry young and have large families, these joyous occasions are of frequent occurrence. A party lasts from early in the evening until eight or nine o'clock the following morning. Throughout this time there is scarcely a pause in the consumption of food and drink. Immediately following the marriage ceremony, or christening, or other rite, the first course of refreshments is served. This consists of all manner of sweets, cakes, candies, honeyed pastries, fruits and sirups. An elaborate *hors d'œuvre* follows: fish, both raw and cooked, caviar, cheese, salami, wurst, olives, green onions, pickles and so on in endless variety. A proper start having been made and appetites developed, the substantial foods are served, course following course throughout the night. Roast poultry and suckling pig, chestnuts and mushrooms, beef and veal, lamb and game, wine and spirits are served. The glasses are never allowed

to remain empty for a time longer than is required to fill them. It is a pleasure to recall the good things which we Armenians who were prosperous had in such abundance in those days. Since then we have had only hungry years.

At a feast the women wear their native costumes, adorned with the family wealth in the form of elaborate headdresses of gold coins, heavy gold bracelets, and multiple necklaces of seed pearls. It is not uncommon for a headdress to contain in gold coins the value of two thousand gold rubles.

The master of the house sits in the seat of honor. He proposes and responds to toasts and, in general, directs the talk and the merrymaking. His position is that of a czar.

The women do not sit at the table with the men. They banquet in another room; though, as the night wears on, formality is to an extent discarded and women join the men.

There is music and dancing and singing. Professional musicians supply the music, and sing the songs of the country, the guests frequently joining in the singing. Men and women dance, sometimes singly, sometimes as many together as can be accommodated at one time on the floor. During the dancing all who are not participating keep time with handclaps.

The Russians laugh and say that, in respect to our dancing and music, we Armenians are Oriental. That may be, for Armenia has been subjected to Oriental influence for many centuries. Possibly to the uniniti-

ated our dancing consists merely of meaningless motions, and our music, as the Russians would have it, of doleful wailing sounds. But to Armenians every motion of the dance has deep significance, for in it is portrayed the life of our people. Our music does not consist of sounds without meaning. It tells a story. It recites the history of the country and expresses poetically the daily round of work. There are songs and music of the seasons, of birth and of death, of hope and of despair. There are songs of the sheep and of the cattle, of plowing and of seeding, of harvesting and of threshing, of all the pleasures and tasks in the lives of our people.

It was at a marriage feast, shortly after my arrival in Alexandropol, that I met the girl who later became my wife. The daughter of Hamperian, a rich contractor, was to be married. I had been invited to attend the ceremony and the feast. I anticipated having a splendid time, for Hamperian had prospered greatly furnishing supplies to the army. He was bound to honor the occasion of the marriage of his daughter in splendid style.

On the evening of the wedding I was detained at my work by a number of vexatious details. Sarkus Moravian, a playmate of my boyhood and like myself a lieutenant in the Two Hundred and Twenty-third Regiment, was to accompany me. As I struggled with the completion of a number of reports he twisted his mustache and stamped and fumed with impatience. When I finished my work, a phaeton was or-

dered and we started. By this time Moravian's impatience had apparently completely evaporated, for as we were passing a wineshop he proposed that we stop there and have a bottle of wine. "For," said he, "if we continue on now, we will arrive in the middle of the ceremony and cause confusion; and, anyway, the ceremony is always boresome."

I assented to this suggestion, and so we left the phaeton and entered the wineshop. There was a number of officers present, who greeted us cordially and invited us to drink.

It was a pleasant place. There was good wine, good music and there were pleasant companions. Nothing would do but that we must join in the singing of several songs to the accompaniment of a great deal of drinking. A Russian officer present required no urging to show his skill in a Cossack dance. This inspired a Georgian to demonstrate a dance of his country. The Armenians responded with a dance in which at least a dozen engaged. My companion was full of zest. He snatched a guitar from a musician and played and sang a Persian song that aroused a howl of mock agony from his hearers. He finished his song and then, springing to a table that teetered and swayed perilously beneath him, performed a Cossack dance, amid shouts of enthusiasm.

It had become known that we were going to a wedding that night. When we were leaving, it was insisted that we take with us the musicians who had been playing in the wineshop. We had lingered over

long and drunk too much, for the idea of taking the musicians, once it was presented to us, seemed excellent. And so amid the general laughter, handclapping and shouted good wishes, my companion and myself, with three musicians and their instruments, climbed into the phaeton and proceeded.

To the accompaniment of music from our musicians, our own singing and the pleased shouts of people in the streets we made our way to our destination. Our arrival, in such a state of hilarity and with such ceremony, was received with enthusiasm. The orchestra that had been engaged for the feast came out to greet us and added its music to that which we had brought. Guests flocked about our phaeton, helped us to alight, and escorted us within. Our little indiscretion had proved a triumph.

Moravian and I hastened to pay our respects to our host. This essential formality accomplished, we were free to enjoy ourselves.

As we had planned, we were late for the ceremony, but the festivities had only begun. The women feasted in one room, the men in another.

The room of the men was arranged with long tables down its sides and across its ends, leaving the center of the room vacant for dancing. In a corner of the room, at a table of their own, were grouped the musicians.

The bride, flushed and radiant, circulated among the guests. Assisted by a number of women, she supervised the serving of the food. I noticed the half-

averted, self-conscious glances that she frequently directed toward the groom, who was seated at her father's side. She was elaborately gowned in our native costume, a thing beautiful to see and, I regret to say, seen now more and more seldom with each passing year. I suppose it must soon become a thing of the past, displaced by the cheaper, less beautiful but more fashionable modern dress. It is sad that this should be so, for the costume of our women, besides being a work of art, is quite rich in historical significance.

Briefly, the costume of the bride consisted of a tight-bodiced dress cut high at the throat, with very full skirt, loose sleeves that billowed at the shoulders, and a headdress made of a piece of black velvet, to which gold coins had been sewed in such a way as closely to overlap one another and to form two thick bands of gold about the forehead and down the sides of the head to several inches below the shoulders. Many strings of small pearls were about the bride's neck. Broad, thick bands of gold encircled her wrists. Diamonds gleamed from her fingers.

Perhaps there is some justification for the charge often made by Russians that such a display of gold and jewels is barbaric. However that may be, I have seen at the opera Russian women who were even more bejeweled, and without the justification that we Armenians can plead, of a custom arising from necessity—the necessity, that has been ours through hundreds and hundreds of years, of keeping our surplus wealth

in a form quickly available, easily portable and easily hidden.

The feast progressed in the way usual with Armenian affairs of this sort. There was music, singing, dancing and speech-making, while all the time the tables were kept piled with food and drink.

There was among the guests a famous orator, Arshag Tartarian, at that time mayor of Alexandropol. He had just sat down, amid great applause, after making an eloquent speech, when a girl whom I had not previously seen or noticed began to dance. Usually, when one girl begins a dance, others soon join with her, unless it happens that the first dancer is recognized as an artist.

Such was the case with this girl. There were cries of recognition from the musicians. A different quality, something more stirring entered the music. Those on the floor drew back to make room and formed a circle about the dancer. Those who were at the tables, myself among them, stood on their chairs to see over the heads in front of them.

From earliest childhood I had seen our dances performed. I had seen any number of girls dance charmingly and correctly. But I now witnessed something different. It seemed to me that all that was beautiful in the spirit of our race took embodiment in the slender form and transfigured face of the girl who danced. I was aware of the circle of spectators silent for the first time that night, and of their white faces gleaming in the light of candles, of the deep shadows and

the smoke-darkened walls and rafters of the room, of something strangely new and haunting in the pulsing of the music.

The theme of the dance was woven from the materials of an old legend of the Caucasus. It told the story of a girl, who through the machinations of a jealous rival for the love of a prince, absent in the wars, was entombed alive in the walls of a castle.

The art of the dancer was complete. With quiet gestures and subtle movements of the body, she told the tale of love, hate, intrigue and terrible tragedy, with greater eloquence and emotion than words can hold. When she had finished, there were a few moments of silence, as great a tribute as the storm of applause that followed.

By this time the night was well advanced. Formality had in part been relaxed. Many of the women were mingling with the men and sitting at tables with them. The girl who had danced took a place at the side of Arshag Tartarian, the orator and mayor of Alexandropol.

I made inquiry, and learned that she was Tartarian's daughter and that her name was Markouie. Tartarian had come originally from Shusha, my native district, and knew my family well. This made it a simple matter for me to congratulate him on the score of his daughter's skill and then to address myself to the girl. I moved to a chair next to hers, and seating myself, remarked apropos of her dancing, "Never before have I seen any one dance so well.

While you danced I truly lived in the story you interpreted."

Her father placed his hand on his daughter's arm and leaned toward me. There was a smile of pride and affection on his face. "My daughter," he said, "is an artist." He settled himself back in his chair and beamed on Markouie. He again leaned toward me. "I can tell you why; it is because she is in love with her country and people, more so than you and I could be for she sees beauty everywhere and in everything, and treasures it while that which is ugly or sordid keeps no place in her memory."

"Perhaps," I interrupted, "your daughter can explain."

Markouie was shy and diffident in a way characteristic of well-bred Armenian girls. She was reluctant to discuss herself, but under the urging of her father, who was obviously proud of her, she ventured an explanation.

"The theme of my dance is very beautiful and very sad, a story that I love and into which I put all my heart. I become, indeed, the story itself." Markouie was evidently self-conscious. She hesitated between words and then paused as if at a loss for anything further to say. I wished her to continue. She interested me greatly and, further, I enjoyed hearing her talk for the limpid quality of her voice made soft and bird-like our ordinarily harshly spoken Armenian.

I took up the conversation. "You, no doubt, know many dances. Do you find that there are some that

you do not dance well, those, perhaps, whose stories you do not love?"

Her father sat smoking, regarding her with kindly eyes. She nodded her head, swaying the strings of gold coins pendant from her headdress.

"Yes," she said, "there are dances that I can not perform well, as I know. I think it is because they interpret times and scenes and events that are entirely outside of my experience and knowledge. Of course one can not love or feel or enter into something one does not understand. It is different with a theme of familiar things, a peasant legend, for instance. Then I see the village brown and old, a part of the plain in which it merges, or against a mountainside, scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding rocks and boulders.

"I see the smoke rising in the early morning in many white clouds. I see the men and oxen going to the fields; I hear the pipes of the shepherds, the lowing of kine, and the bleating of sheep, all the work and play, the joy and suffering of the peasant's world. It all becomes a part of me, my heart swells with love. It is then that I can dance."

Tartarian brought his hand down on the table with a resounding smack. "She is her father's daughter," he exclaimed. "I did not know she had it in her. How she can talk!" Markouie was abashed by this outburst. She flushed and hid her face in her hands.

At that moment there was a diversion. Our host was proposing a toast. Markouie slipped away from

the table and left the room to join the rest of the women. The feast continued until the morning sun, entering through the windows, warned the revelers to be about their tasks of the day.

I did not see Markouie again that night, but I did see and talk with her on many occasions during the following three or four weeks. Such meetings were not manifestly by design. I was careful not to seem to seek her and avoided calling on her in her home, for I did not wish to put myself in a position that would lead to marriage. The memory of Nina Andreovna, whom I had last seen standing thoughtful and sad in the stone house in far-off Poland, was still warm and sweet. Because of her I treasured something in my heart that was as sacred and comforting as a belief in heaven and an infinitely loving God.

My precautions availed me little for I had met and talked with Markouie but a few times when her uncle proposed to me that I marry his niece. In Armenia marriages are commonly arranged in this way, the emissary, however, negotiating between the parents of the principals rather than between the principals themselves, a method impossible in my case, as my father could not readily be reached. I replied evasively hoping to put him off and at the same time not wound his pride. He seemed to dismiss the matter at the time, but after that lost no occasion to broach the subject again and again.

I was conducting myself with discretion and as the course of events was soon to take me from Alexan-

dropol nothing would have come of my meeting with Markouie, had I not met in a tavern a man recently returned from America, where he had been engaged in wine growing at Fresno, California. He had many interesting things to tell about America and we sat talking for a long time. Markouie's uncle entered the tavern and joined us.

The man from America proposed that we drink in what he declared was the American way. He termed it "Bottom up." It consisted in draining one's glass at a single breath and then in placing the glass upside down on the table in proof that it was empty, with the exclamation at the conclusion of this feat, "Bottom up!"

"Bottom up" proved effective in developing in me a joyful good humor. The man from Fresno left the tavern, and the uncle of Markouie and I sat and faced each other across a table. I leaned back in my chair and regarded my companion kindly. He sat fingering his long string of amber. I did not feel the usual irritation that his presence had previously aroused in me. At that moment when I was feeling most at peace with the world, most compassionate and generous, he again brought up the subject of marriage and urged that I call upon his niece. Once having made a formal advance, there could be no retreat on my part. Markouie's family was wealthy and highly esteemed. I would be unable to raise any objections. There also occurred to me the reflection that I had reached the age when men ordinarily marry and that

I very likely would never again meet a girl who combined so many advantages of person and family as did Markouie. I knew no girl for whom I could care as much as I did for her. I consented to call at her home. Within a month we became engaged.

It was necessary, of course, for me to secure my father's consent to the marriage. It was not improbable that he had already arranged a marriage for me; it was likely at any rate that he had a girl definitely in mind. As I was unable to secure a leave of absence, I was not able to lay the matter before him personally, but I did succeed in getting a message to him. He replied that I was free to marry and added that, inasmuch as I had not consulted him in selecting a wife, he refused responsibility. He softened this brusque reply measurably by sending with it a sum of money. The way having thus been cleared, Markouie and I were married.

At the time I was married Armenia was prosperous. There was an abundance of food in the country. Great stores of supplies of all kinds had been accumulated for the use of the Russian Army. The peasants received high prices for all they produced. The shopkeepers had become rich, as had also the "contractors," so called, that is, the middlemen through whom the peasants marketed their crops. Soon there began a series of events which plunged the country into inconceivable misery; invasions, massacres, internecine war, pestilence and famine, until it seemed that the Armenian people must cease to exist.

CHAPTER VII

REVOLUTIONISTS

IN ORDER to throw light on what is to follow, it is necessary that I interpolate here some account of Armenia and its people and of the Armenian revolutionary federation, known commonly as the Dashnack party.

This organization was founded in 1892 by Simon Zavarian and Christopher Mikaelian who were at that time students studying at Petrofsky Razumovskaya, an agricultural institute near Moscow.

The object of the society was at first, ostensibly and perhaps actually, to organize relief for the Armenians who were being oppressed under Turkish rule. Whatever the original intentions of the founders, the society soon became an avowed revolutionary secret organization, having for its aim the freeing of Armenia from Turkish and from Russian rule and the establishing of an independent Armenian Republic. The party increased rapidly in membership and soon had ramifications throughout both Turkish and Russian Armenia. A party journal *Droshack* (Banner) was published at Geneva.

From the Armenian point of view Russian Armenia

was badly governed by the Russians. It suited the Russian policy to keep the people in ignorance and the country backward economically and socially. The Russians, it is true, built a railroad through the country and a number of hard surfaced roads; but this construction was dictated by military considerations. Russian ambition was fixed on obtaining Constantinople. Armenia was to the Russians merely a step toward the attainment of that goal. Some of the roads built by the Russians ran as straight as the flight of a bullet to the Turkish border, where they stopped abruptly. Beyond their point of termination was a wilderness of desert and mountains. Any purpose the roads could serve in the economy of the country was merely incidental to that for which they were built, the military invasion of Turkey.

I stress this point because Russians boast that they are responsible for the only developments in modernization that are to be found in Armenia, and they instance the military roads and the railroads as proof of the progress and benevolence of Russian rule. I think it is important to understand that such benefits as accrued to Armenia were incidental and not intentional. Armenia under the Czar was in fact a victim of imperial exploitation. However, as a rule, good order was kept throughout the country and there was security for life and property.

Turkish Armenia was far more backward than was Russian Armenia. Such education and culture as were possible of attainment by Armenians living un-

der Turkish rule was due to the generosity of America, France and Germany. These countries established schools and colleges in the Turkish province for the benefit of Armenians.

Turkey was sunk in barbarism. Turkish Armenians could not rise above the level of their masters. Under the government of the Turks there was no security for life or property from one day to the next. Armenians were oppressed and restricted in every way and often were the victims of massacres at the hands of the Turks or the allies of the Turks, the Kurds and Tartars. For this reason there was more need for some force to oppose the government in Turkish Armenia and more justification for extreme measures than was the case in Russian Armenia. In consequence the Dashnack organization developed more rapidly in the former province.

Within a few years, following the beginning of the movement, an invisible government of Armenians by Armenians had been established in Turkish Armenia in armed opposition to the Turkish Government. This secret government had its own courts and laws and an army of assassins called "Mauserists" (professional killers) to enforce its decrees.

Ramifications of the organization took root everywhere throughout Turkey and to a lesser extent in Russian Armenia. Its strongholds were the American, German and French schools and colleges in Turkey. In perhaps every one of these, chapters or branches existed, usually under the guise of literary societies.

It was from among the students of the schools and from the Armenian members of the faculties that the leaders were recruited.

The Dashnacks were in continual open rebellion against the Turkish Government. The Turks took severe measures to stamp out this society but without achieving any great success because they had nothing tangible against which to direct their rage. It was as though they were battling with the air. The Russian Government joined with the Turks in this effort, for while Russia had no love for Turkey it was not in the Russian plan to see an independent Armenia thrown across the road to Constantinople, to say nothing of the dislike of the Russian governing class for revolutionary movements of all kinds.

Russian fear of revolution was even greater than Russian greed. This was shown when for a time it became the policy of the Dashnacks to stir up trouble between Russia and Turkey in the hope that Russia would conquer Turkish Armenia from the Turks and unite it with Russian Armenia. The Russian Government would have nothing to do with any movement inspired by revolutionaries, even when, as in this instance, the intention was to give Russia a pretext for seizing additional Turkish territory.

In 1896 the Dashnacks engineered a general revolt of Armenians in Turkish Armenia under the mistaken belief that European nations would intervene and secure independence for Turkish Armenia. The Turks were absolutely merciless in putting down this revolt.

The massacre of one hundred thousand Armenians was but an incident of its suppression. England intervened to the extent of extorting certain concessions for herself from the Turks. The revolt was suppressed; nevertheless the Dashnack party continued to exist.

The Dashnacks were fanatics and as ruthless as the Turks were merciless. In planning the great revolt of 1896 the leaders knew full well that they had not at their command the strength necessary to success and that the Turks would retaliate with indiscriminate massacres of Armenians. Their one chance for success lay in European intervention, and to secure this they counted on the inevitable massacres that the Turks would perpetrate.

The revolution in Russia in 1905 following the Japanese-Russian War made it seem possible for a time to secure the independence of Russian Armenia. The Dashnacks took advantage of this situation and extended their revolutionary activities into the Russian province. They instituted a campaign of terrorism and employed threats and force in securing contributions to the party funds from rich Armenians. A wealthy man would be assessed a stipulated sum. Refusal to pay brought upon him a sentence of death.

Every member of the party was pledged to carry out orders without question. If a man were to be assassinated, lots might be drawn to select an executioner or the job might be assigned to one of the *mauserists* of the party.

The revolution in Russia was reflected also in the adoption by the Dashnack Party of certain socialistic principles. However it retained its own national aims and remained entirely independent of the Russian Socialistic Party. The introduction of socialism caused a split in the ranks of the Dashnacks that has never been mended, one branch remaining purely nationalist and the other national socialistic even to the present day.

The Russian Government through its agents, in order to suppress the revolutionary movement in Russian Armenia and in other provinces in 1905 when her hands were full with revolution at home, incited a Tartar-Armenian war throughout the Caucasus, some of the events of which I witnessed as a boy in Shusha, and which I have already described.

Since its conquest by the Russians, Russian Armenia has been the spearhead of the threatened Russian advance to Constantinople. A pretext for the invasion of Turkey by Russia was usually available in the never-ending disturbances in Turkish Armenia that frequently reached a climax in the wholesale massacring of Armenians by the Turks. Although these disturbances were frequently fomented by the Armenian Dashnack Society, it must be remembered that the society had its genesis and justification in Turkish misrule.

It was not the strength of Turkey but the unwillingness of the governments of Europe to see Russia in command of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles

that held the Russians at bay. It required only a situation in which the great European nations would be powerless to intervene to start the Russian invasion. In anticipation of this longed-for opportunity the Russian Government kept a large army in instant readiness in Russian Armenia. Great army bases were built and strategic positions, chief among which was the city of Kars, were strongly fortified.

Russian administration did nothing to develop the resources of the country either in its people or industries, existing or potential; and the great mass of the population lived, as it had always lived, in a condition of extreme primitiveness, ignorance, squalor and poverty.

Ruins of the dwellings of the ancient Armenians testify that there has been no improvement in the homes of the peasants during the past thousand years. Now, as in the remote past, the houses are one-storied affairs with walls built of undressed stone, and floors sunk several feet below ground level. The roof of a house is constructed of soil and sod, supported by a few brush-covered rafters. A pit in the center of the floor serves as a fireplace; a hole in the roof permits the smoke to escape. Windows are nonexistent or a rare luxury.

Too often the live stock share these semisubterranean huts with the family. In the summer when the live stock is kept in the open, conditions are bearable; in the winter they are bad beyond description. The door is kept tightly shut. The only ventilation is

that provided by the hole in the roof intended for the escape of smoke. In this almost air-tight chamber the family lives shut in with the cattle, sheep, chickens and dogs. Naturally there are many diseases epidemic among the people and the animals; measles, typhus, smallpox, malaria and tuberculosis being very common. In whole villages there is scarcely a person not suffering from trachoma.

The only fuel used, because it is the only fuel available, is dried animal manure, and the use of this is confined almost exclusively to cooking. The body heat of the animals occupying the huts with the people suffices for heating purposes except in extremely cold weather when a *kuzzi* or *toniz* is used. This is a large stool covered with a quilt or carpet. Fire of dried dung is placed in a pot and put beneath the covered stool. The members of the family keep warm by sitting around this contrivance, with their feet beneath the quilt.

The people live on the floor. Chairs, couches and beds are a rarity. For sleeping purposes a mattress protected by a grass mat is spread on the dirt floor. During the day the bedding is folded and placed in a corner. The bedding is always damp. For this reason rheumatism is common, especially among the women, as they spend a much greater portion of their time in the house than do the men. In their persons the people are extremely filthy. Vermin are a commonplace.

Hard work in the open throughout the summer en-

ables the peasant to survive. He arises at daybreak, eats a piece of bread washed down with a glass of vodka, and goes to his work in the fields. At about eight o'clock he eats a breakfast of bread and water. At midday he has a lunch of bread and *matzoon* or cheese. In the evening he finishes whatever remains from lunch and then returns to his home. Just before going to bed he dines again.

Women occupy an inferior status in the household. They take their meals with the children apart from the men. In the home, food is served in a single clay pot from which all help themselves with their fingers. At the end of the repast should anything remain in the pot, it is customary to offer it to the bachelor present if there be one. The host presents it to him with the admonition, "Clean the pot well if you wish for a brave wife."

A typical village in Armenia exists largely independent of the rest of the world. Every man is his own mechanic. He builds and maintains his own house. The building materials are wholly indigenous to the locality; and so while the houses of all villages are alike in that they represent almost absolute minimum of shelter and comfort necessary in a home, they differ in that the houses of one village may be built of rough stones and those of another of sun-dried mud. In sections where clay suitable for tile-making is available, the houses are usually roofed with tiles. It is typical of the economic condition of the country that tile roofs are never seen elsewhere

than close to the claypits. Tiles are never transported to districts where clay suitable for tile-making is not found. This is explainable in the mountainous nature of the country, which makes transportation both slow and costly. Away from the railroad, goods are carried on oxcarts and pack animals. As a consequence there is comparatively little intercourse or exchange of goods between different sections of the country. Each distinct region has therefore developed an economy sufficient unto itself and peculiar to itself.

Each village grows sufficient bread grains for its own needs. Fat-tail sheep supply meat, milk, cheese, wool for knitting, sheep-skins for warm overcoats, hats and bedding. It is necessary to obtain outside the resources of the community only a few articles and these mostly luxuries, such as tea, sugar and tobacco.

There is almost as great a diversity of climate in the small area that constitutes Armenia as in the whole of Europe. Climatic conditions, particularly rainfall, determine the type of agriculture, which in turn determines for the peasants, in their primitive mode of life, the architecture of their houses, their food and clothes and to a great extent their social customs and institutions.

Armenia is an old, old country. The origin of our people is unknown, though Armenian mythology credits us with being direct descendants of the voyagers in the Ark. There is a small village at the foot of

Mount Ararat which most Armenians believe to have been built by Noah. Mythology aside, there can be no doubt of our extreme antiquity as a people in this land of Armenia. Our occupancy through thousands of years has left its record plainly written in the ruins that dot the country, in the very rocks of the mountains.

The Armenian people have never known liberty, for even in the days of our independence the country was divided among a number of petty kings continually warring among themselves and holding the common man in serfdom; while during the past seven hundred years, during which time so many peoples have gained freedom and progressed far in civilization, we have been a conquered people under the galling yoke of Arab, Persian, Mongol, Tartar, Turk or Russian.

The conquerors have left an indelible Oriental stamp upon Armenia and her people. It is to be seen in our customs, dress and manners, our music and dances, our art and literature. There is one fundamental difference, however, that has served to mark us from the Oriental peoples with whom we are surrounded. I refer to the fact that we are Christians, it is said the oldest Christian people in the world.

The Armenian people were converted to Christianity during the third century of the Christian era. Since that remote day, wave after wave of pagan and Mohammedan peoples has swept across the country, reduced it and imposed the rule of the conqueror upon

it; but still the country has remained Christian. By virtue of their religion the Armenian people have remained to their non-Christian neighbors alien, suspected, despised, hated and oppressed; and for the same reason they have retained their identity and unity.

Such was Armenia, a country of culturally primitive people isolated among the mountains of the Caucasus from all friends and allies, and surrounded by alien and hostile nations and races, when Bolshevism invaded the Caucasus, and the Armenian people, with no experience in self-government, divided among themselves into warring factions, were thrown upon their own resources upon the breakdown of the Russian administration.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RUSSIANS DEPART

NEWS of the Bolshevik revolution reached the troops of the Caucasus Army, at that time engaged in operations against the Turks. The Bolshevik doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man, with its corollary, immediate peace, and liberty to all to return to their homes at once, there to share in the division of wealth that the revolution was to secure, made an irresistible appeal to the soldiers who had struggled in a theater where warfare was particularly arduous and cruel. When the Russians and Turks engage in war against each other, they discard the conventions that seek to make war more humane, and both sides revert to the practises of the days of the Mongol hordes. The responsibility for this certainly does not adhere to the poor devils of soldiers, whether Turk or Russian, who are the immediate instruments. Russian literature has little of good to say for either Turk or Tartar but rather abounds in stories of Turkish and Tartar savagery and cruelty. The Russian taught to expect nothing else from these hereditary foes, often anticipates savagery with savagery.

As disaffection and revolution gained strength in

the army, the soldiers turned against their officers. Those who did not escape or accept the revolution were slain. Then began a movement of troops from the Turkish front and from wherever in the Caucasus Russian troops were stationed. Without formation, order or discipline they streamed across the country, making for the railroad in a wild scramble to return to Russia, eager to share in the promised division of the land and wealth and a fancied Utopia.

Reaching the railroad the soldiers seized trains and forced the crews to operate them regardless of any railroad rules governing the right of way. Of course this resulted in many train wrecks in which thousands of soldiers were killed. The men of the Tartar and Kurdish tribes in the mountains followed close on the heels of the demoralized soldiers, looting and slaying and gathering up abandoned arms and munitions.

The railroad from Armenia to Russia passes through the Tartar country of Azerbaijan, which, like part of Armenia, had been under Russian rule up to the time of the revolution. The Azerbaijan Tartars wrecked trains, made war on the retreating Russians and massacred all who fell into their hands. The sense of humor of the Tartars led them to stand a frozen body of a Russian soldier against each of the telegraph poles along the line.

The Two Hundred and Twenty-third Regiment of Infantry with which I was serving was almost exclusively Armenian in its personnel. In common with other Armenian units in the army it retained its or-

ganization and continued under the discipline of its officers. Outside of these units there was no force of law or government in the country. The Russian officials fled or went into hiding.

The only organized group in the country and therefore the only group even remotely capable of taking over the direction of affairs and establishing a government was the Dashnack Society, the old Armenian revolutionary secret society. The Dashnacks took advantage of the circumstances to assume the responsibility of government. On May 28, 1918, they declared Russian Armenia a republic.

The difficulties that confronted the new government were so varied and so great that failure on its part might well be excused on the ground that the impossible could not be accomplished even though its members had been the wisest and most experienced of men. As things were, the members of the Dashnack Party were without administrative experience; consequently the government they instituted quickly proved itself incompetent to rule by legitimate means.

The members of the government had been revolutionists working in secret and outside the law. When they became a legally instituted, recognized governing body with the destiny of Armenia in their hands, they proved incompetent to do better than resume the terrorists tactics that had characterized their fight against the Russian and Turkish Governments in their outlaw days.

The outstanding feature of their rule, now that

they were in power, was, as in the old days, trial and execution without a hearing. A man evoking the displeasure of the government or of some official would be tried and condemned without arrest or preference of charges against him. The method of execution was for a government *mauserist* to walk up behind the condemned man in his home or on the street, place a pistol to the back of his head and blow out his brains. This simple way of getting rid of those who were undesirable in the view of the government was rapidly adopted outside the government and soon became a common way of paying debts.

My people, now that they had an opportunity to choose for themselves, were anything but unanimous in their opinions as to what sort of government they wanted. In fact every one who did any thinking at all on the subject, upon coming to a conclusion peculiar to himself, was willing to fight and intrigue to give it expression. The government *mauserists* were kept busy. Many of the official executioners became known to opponents of the government and met the fate they had meted out to others, as indeed did members of the government. Retaliation in kind was the easiest and most natural response to brutality and injustice.

In war, killing is a drab dirty affair without much of romance or of the dramatic, but attendant upon the killings that were so frequent at this time in Armenia were occasional incidents of lurid dramatic quality.

One day during the first winter of the revolution in

Armenia I had been many hours in the saddle in company with a fellow-officer. We had been visiting near-by villages in search of supplies that we might requisition for the army. The day had been bitterly cold even for the Armenian mountain country. We arrived in the outskirts of Alexandropol in the first dusk of evening just as snow was beginning to fall. A high wind was soon whirling the flakes about in bewildering swirls that made it almost impossible to see or to keep one's direction. We were fortunate in having gained the town from the exposed plain before the fury of the storm broke upon us. In order to thaw out and to learn the news and the gossip of the day we made our way to a wineshop popular with officers and members of the local government. The place was crowded and hummed with talk. Men in groups lounged about, others were seated at tables, all were engaged in animated conversation. In a corner of the room a number of musicians played and sang. After the cold of the outdoors the air in the low-ceilinged, crowded room seemed insufferably hot. It was heavy with tobacco smoke, the fumes of spirits and the reek of food.

All the tables in the place were fully occupied except one at which sat a single figure. My companion and I, responding to the greetings of friends, pushed our way to this table and took places at it. Casually I greeted the lonely drinker, ordered a bottle of wine and then in an abstracted way began studying his appearance. He was obviously a Russian, a tall man,

thin but huge of frame. A straggling, tangled beard fell to his breast. I noticed his eyes with their decided Tartar slant. They glittered half concealed beneath heavy brows. He had thrown his heavy sheepskin coat over the back of the chair on which he sat. He wore high boots, a black astrakhan hat and a black smock girdled with a silver Caucasian belt from which was suspended a long dagger in a silver sheath. He was seated sprawled at the table, his chin supported in one cupped hand, while with the other he toyed with a wine-glass.

I had but time to make these observations when an acquaintance called to me from another part of the room and beckoned me to him. I excused myself to my companion and made my way to where he was seated. He rose and, grasping my arm, whispered to me, "Ohanus, be on your guard! That is Feodor Levitsky at your table. I can tell you what is an open secret. He is under sentence of death and hasn't a chance to live through the night. Do you think it is for nothing that he has a table to himself in a crowded drinking place?"

I was not acquainted with any one of the name of Levitsky. I inquired who the man was. "I don't know," was the reply, "and for the matter of that I doubt if any one else does. He drifted into the town several weeks ago, apparently a refugee from Russia." My friend slapped me on the back, said to me, "Watch out for yourself," seated himself and called to a passing waiter.

I returned to the table I had left. I intended to extend the warning I had received to my companion, but immediately became so engrossed in the words of the Russian, who was speaking, that I did not think to do so. He spoke in the language and with the voice of an educated man, gesticulating the while with his glass from which he took occasional sips that served to punctuate rather than interrupt his remarks.

"My friend," he was saying to my companion of the day, "you have said enough to reveal your soul to me. In the revelation I recognize a soul akin to my own. In me you see a man in whom burns an intermittent flame of genius. I have traveled a long road. Always it has led me deeper and deeper into the pit, but the knowledge that I possess a great genius though a genius futile, helpless, useless, because chained by strange insurmountable inhibitions, has abided with me. This is the source of my most poignant sorrow."

A look of sad wistful hopelessness settled across the Russian's countenance as for a moment he ceased to speak. The room became silent. All present had turned to watch and listen. For the first time he drained the glass he held in his hand, refilled it with cognac from a bottle that he had before him and then settled back in his chair. Slowly his face lightened as he resumed speaking in his soft throaty voice. With his long arms, the fingers of his hand widespread, he gesticulated appealingly, eloquently as he spoke:

"I have traveled a long way to this which is com-

plete failure, but always hope has accompanied me, hope born of fleeting moments during which the fire of genius that is within me has flamed brightly, revealing to me the solution of a problem, as a lightning flash reveals the countryside to a benighted wayfarer. If such fleeting moments could be prolonged into only a few short years, what heights might I not achieve?"

He fingered his glass of brandy, then raising it high and centering his gaze upon it, he said, "This is the key that unlocks the prison and for a swift passing moment gives me command of the world. I am here to-night, perhaps at the end of my road. I have been marked for death. I have waited here for hours and may have to wait other hours. Out there in the cold and storm"—he swung his arm in the direction of the door—"a wolf awaits me. The cold must eventually give him decision to enter here. At what moment will he choose to do so? In this glass I hold the key that can unlock within myself such understanding, strength and decision as will enable me to meet and triumph over any situation, but only for a fleeting moment, a mere minute of time. You recognize my position. It is to choose one minute of the many, one minute of invincibility, to select as that minute of supremacy the very minute that the wolf will choose to enter here to make his kill. Outside of that short time for which it is possible to liberate my genius, my cursed intelligence will in any emergency recognize so many possibilities and probabilities that a decision will be impossible."

The Russian sipped his cognac and continued speaking: "I do not know how it has been with you, but to me life is rich and sweet, like good food in my mouth. I love it all, even the toil and hardship and the simple things. I love the earth itself, its myriad, pungent, sweet odors, the sun and the rain, the heavens, and our boundless Russian steppes and mighty rivers. I love the companionship of men, their talk, their work, their play, the songs they sing, and above all songs sung by the lowly." He leaned back in his seat and began singing in a rich baritone a plaintive Cossack love-song. A guitar player among the musicians struck a tentative note or two and then accompanied the singer.

The song ended, the Russian bowed his head over the table. There was a low applause of handclapping and a mutter of "Bravos!" followed by a stirring and a hum of voices in the room. The Russian raised his head, looked about him dully for a moment, and then saying, "As well this minute as another," drank several glasses of cognac in rapid succession. Rising to his feet he turned his back to the table and faced the door. Again there was silence in the room, and all eyes were centered on the tall strange figure standing at the table. His pose seemed to change without movement, taking on an attitude of expectancy. Suddenly the door was thrown open revealing the person of a notorious and youthful *mauserist*, known to us all. At the same instant a blazing automatic appeared in the hand of the Russian. The figure in the door-

way slumped to the floor, writhing convulsively. Still holding his pistol in his hand, the Russian stepped to the door and then turned to us a face transformed—it was the face of a commander. He swept the room with a glance, made a low bow, stepped over the body in the doorway and disappeared.

A cold wind bearing eddies and gusts of snow entered the tavern through the open door. Shadows scurried crazily about the walls as the flame of the lamp flickered in the draft and almost expired. There was a breathless silence and then a sudden confusion of voices and movement as the chairs and the tables were pushed aside and a rush was made for the door.

I never again saw Feodor Levitsky. He may be dead or still playing a part in the drama of the revolution. During the short time that I was in his presence I felt the attraction of a wonderful personality. I should like to meet him again.

Before getting on with my story I shall relate an episode in order more nearly to complete the picture I have drawn for you of Armenia in those days, an episode that had its counterpart wherever in Russian Armenia Christians and Mohammedans were neighbors.

There was a comparatively large Mohammedan population in Russian Armenia, mainly Tartars, who were for the most part peasants, living very much as Armenian peasants lived in villages of mud and stone huts. Some groups of Tartars were nomads or

semi-nomads, who grazed their flocks in the mountains and moved from place to place in the eternal quest for grass. In addition to these two groups there were wealthy and cultured Tartars, who resided in the larger towns; so that in every important town there was a Tartar quarter. Such was the case in Alexandropol.

With the break-up of the Russian Army and the assumption of authority by the Dashnack Party, the Tartars were subjected to insult and oppression. The Tartars of Alexandropol petitioned the government for passes permitting them to go to Turkey. Their petition having been granted they loaded their effects on ox-carts, and abandoning their homes started for the border. The road from Alexandropol to the nearest accessible point on the Turkish border lies through a ravine close to Severski barracks, where my regiment was quartered.

The presence among them of these Tartars offered the Dashnacks an opportunity too good to be missed for assuaging to some extent the implacable hatred that they bore for all things Moslem. Memories of Mohammedan massacres of Armenians, of generations of Turkish oppression, of the ghastly traditions of a thousand years of struggle between Christian and Moslem in the very vortex of which Armenia has existed would not down.

Soldiers would not have served the purpose of the government; and so the authorities stationed a gang of their gunmen, reinforced with such of the riffraff

of the town as could be recruited, in the ravine through which the Tartars must pass.

Slowly the train of ox carts lumbered along through the snow, the carts jolting and the loads swaying. Boys ran along the line of oxen, encouraging them with shrill Tartar cries, and belaboring the beasts with sticks. In the carts, the women, veiled as is the Tartar way, held children in their arms. Wrapped in blankets and huddled among the goods that burdened the carts they sought protection from the wind and cold. A few old men plodded along on foot.

Across the road through the ravine a barrier had been thrown. The leading ox team reached this barrier and halted. The gunmen and other ruffians concealed among the rocks opened fire. Women and children leaped and scrambled from the carts, screamed, ran and sought vainly for safety.

This massacre was not complete. The Armenian soldiers in the near-by barracks, hearing the firing and the turmoil, hurried to the scene and drove the butchers away in time to save some few of the Tartars. That same day the abandoned Tartar quarter of Alexandropol was looted and completely destroyed.

CHAPTER IX

AKHALKALAKI

THE government instituted by the Dashnack Party, in spite of its general ineptitude, showed commendable energy in organizing a national army, in securing from the nations allied against the Germans recognition for Armenia as an independent country, and also in negotiating a large loan, I believe from America.

The Russian soldiers retreating through Armenia on their way to Russia carried their small arms with them. The Armenian authorities were very desirous of securing these to equip their newly organized national army. To this end the Russians were intercepted wherever possible and disarmed. When feasible, the arms were taken from them by force. When the Russians were in large bands and an attempt to disarm them would have resulted in a battle, such equipment and ammunition as they would sell was purchased from them. For a time I was busied with this work and in training recruits. It was during this period that I married. I had been wed but two weeks when I was sent on a special mission to Akhalkalaki.

The town of Akhalkalaki is situated far back in

the mountains, many versts from a railroad, at a point close to where the border of Armenia joins with that of Turkey and Georgia. It has long been an important Russian military post, the base of an army ever in readiness to strike for the Turkish coast towns along the Black Sea. A company of Russian troops, without their officers, had remained at this strategic point, terrorizing the town and the surrounding country. My mission was to rid the district of these marauders and to secure the arms and munitions and such other supplies as had been left by the Russian Army. To effect this I was given a command of fifty men.

I secured sleds to transport my men and supplies. Between Alexandropol and my destination were a hundred versts of mountainous country traversed by a military road that wound its way through deep valleys and around the bases and spurs of mountain peaks, struck straight across level plains, and scaled high mountain passes.

My wife accompanied me. It was winter, and the weather was bitterly cold. To touch a rifle barrel with the naked hand was to have it stick to your flesh. The sleds whined shrilly with every movement. Men and horses were so covered with frost that they looked gray with age, for the moisture in their breath froze and clung to them. That stretch of country is treeless and barren. There is not a bush, nothing to relieve the universal whiteness except some mountainside too steep to retain snow, showing its rock

ribs, black, through the otherwise all-covering blanket of winter.

At night we found refuge in one lonely village or another. In the unsettled condition of the country the people were terrified at armed men and regarded us with suspicion, but perforce had to give us the shelter we sought and required. Our horses shared the village huts with us, in common with the villagers, their cattle, dogs and chickens.

At night it was necessary to post sentinels, for one did not know at what moment a band of brigands or of lawless Russian soldiers would raid any particular village. The cold was so intense that it was impossible for a man to endure exposure to it for longer than two or three hours. I had my sentinels relieved at short intervals; but in spite of this I lost two men through freezing. Since I was the only commissioned officer, the whole burden of the undertaking was on my shoulders. My nights were spent going from post to post to see that my men on sentry duty did not abandon their posts to seek shelter in some hut; but that they kept moving, and did not doze, so falling victims to the cold.

On the evening of the fourth day we arrived in Akhalkalaki. After finding quarters for my wife and seeing to the comfort of my men I consulted with the chief of the town to gain from him such information as he could give me concerning the Russians. He was obviously relieved by my presence and eager that something be done. With his people he had been

living under a reign of terror. He was harassed and fearful; but in spite of his eagerness to be relieved from the strain under which he had been living and conducting the affairs of the town, he had the honesty to advise me against attempting any offensive measures.

“These Russian,” said he, “outnumber you at least two to one and are well armed.” He further informed me that the Russians had fortified themselves in a tower, close to the army barracks, which were a few versts out of town.

I had little confidence in my own men, who were only partly trained as soldiers; but I had no respect at all for utterly undisciplined men such as these Russians, without officers, must be. If I delayed matters, the renegades would learn of my presence; and as my chief hope of success, at not too great a cost, lay in taking them by surprise, I forthwith determined to make the attempt that night.

As soon as it was dark I gathered my men and started toward the barracks and the tower, where according to my information the enemy was posted. The darkness made it unnecessary to take any precautions against being seen until we were within half a verst of the tower. I then halted my company and sent several men on whom I felt I could depend for this purpose, to reconnoiter. In a short time my scouts returned and confirmed the information I had received to the effect that the Russians were occupying the tower. They advanced the additional infor-

mation that a sentry was on duty at the gate. From where I was with my men I could see the windows of the tower agleam with lights, evidence that the soldiers within were awake and active. I reasoned that I had best wait until they had gone to sleep; so I deferred my advance. For an interminable time we waited there in the cold, my men huddled together seeking warmth in contact with one another, and I pacing back and forth a short distance from them and feeling the cold entering my very bones.

Eventually the last window darkened, as the lights within were extinguished. I waited longer, as long as I dared, there in the grip of the bitter cold, then advanced my men closer to our objective, but still kept them at a distance sufficient to avoid risk of arousing the sentinel.

In my command was a man of the mountains of Zangazour. I recall his name now; it was Tourkazarian. He was respected by his comrades for his strength and fearlessness, and was reputed to have been the leader of an outlaw band that had troubled the Russians for years. I wished to make a prisoner of the Russian sentry who was posted before the door of the tower, if possible without harming him, necessarily without permitting him to give an alarm to his comrades.

I called Tourkazarian to me and stated the problem to him. He shifted his rifle to the crook of his elbow and drew a long knife from his belt.

"Captain," he said, "in the old days there was a

time when the Russians tried to close our Armenian churches. They stationed a soldier at the door of each of our churches and would not permit any one to enter. Guarding the entrance to some of our churches were several soldiers; and yet one morning they were all found dead. It is the simplest and safest way. I will undertake with pleasure to remove our friend who guards the tower and leave his comrades within none the wiser."

I had a mental picture of that Russian soldier pacing his round before the door of the stronghold in which his companions slept. He was thinking perhaps of his home in some far-off Russian village on the wide steppe, buried in the snow, quiet and peaceful beneath the stars. I revolted at the thought in the mind of my mountaineer. I had been too long comrade with Russian soldiers to consent to his plan.

He listened to my protest and then answered: "Very well. Permit me to choose two men to accompany me, and I will try capturing him without his making an outcry; though the risk is great and I can not assure you of success."

I announced my intention of making one of the party; but he demurred at this on the ground of my inexperience in such matters. There was nothing other than for me to give him his way. Having selected his men he departed in the direction of the tower.

I moved my men cautiously in, with the object, in the event of an alarm being given, of being able to

rush the position of the outlaws before they could organize themselves for defense. We had halted perhaps two hundred yards from the tower when one of the men who had accompanied Tourkazarian returned and reported to me that the sentry had been secured. I immediately proceeded to surround the tower with my men, directing them to maintain perfect silence. I found Tourkazarian sitting on the prostrate form of a Russian soldier whose head was muffled in a sheepskin coat. The mountaineer assured me that the Russian had not been harmed.

My men bunched before the door of the tower. Cautiously we opened it and peered within. A wall of darkness prevented our seeing anything. I struck a match. The tiny flame, dispelling the darkness revealed a room empty of men but containing a great many rifles and belts of ammunition, arrayed along the walls. A stairway descended into the room from the floor above, from whence came the unmistakable sounds of sleeping men. What followed was very simple. I stationed men at the foot of the stairs and took possession of the rifles. By this time the Russians were astir and beginning to show themselves on the stairs in great excitement. They were helpless, as we had possession of their arms. A threat to fire at them was sufficient to drive them back into the room from which they had emerged. I forced the sentry we had captured to join his companions. I then had the stairs barricaded.

Within a few hours the Russians above began

shouting inquiries as to our intentions. For two days I paid no attention to them. During this time their shouts for information changed to appeals for food and water. I wished them no harm, desiring merely to subdue them. After starving them and denying them water for two days, I decided that this had been accomplished. I consented to receive a committee from them. This committee readily agreed for all to leave the country immediately if set at liberty. Accordingly, it was so arranged. I commandeered *furgons* from the town and had the prisoners conveyed to a point on the railroad in Georgia. From there they had to shift for themselves. As they were without arms to secure by force the necessities that their lack of money made it impossible for them to purchase, in all likelihood they had hard going before they reached Russia.

My unique position as the only officer in Akhalkalaki gave me complete command of the town and of the district. In accordance with instructions I received when I left Alexandropol, I issued an order calling to the colors all men between the ages of twenty and thirty. For three months I busied myself governing the district and in training the recruits my call had brought in. I had little time to myself and little time to devote to my wife, for there was always some problem requiring settlement or some difficulty demanding adjustment. There was no one to whom I could shift part of the burden. As the townspeople and the peasants became assured of my

fairness and gained confidence in my judgment, they brought more and more of their troubles to me. But submerged as I was in a multitude of duties, I was nevertheless happier in my work than I had been at any time since putting on the uniform of a soldier.

My wife's father was a leader in the Dashnack Party and head of the government at Alexandropol. Probably it was due to his influence that I was given a free hand. I delighted in the opportunity afforded me of doing constructive work and took the greatest joy in seeing order emerge from the chaos in which I had found the district. I made great plans and sought to realize them by hard work and the tact essential in my position. My plans proved no more substantial than a dream, for they crumpled to nothingness when I received a message from Alexandropol, via courier, informing me that the Turks had invaded the country, and ordering me to report at once with my entire command.

CHAPTER X

ALLAH ALLAH A AKARBAD

I HAD no illusions as to what the outcome of this new war with Turkey would be. It was obvious that standing alone, as we were, without the support of Russia, we could not, even were we Armenians united in purpose and effort, hope to contend successfully against the Turks. As it was, we were divided among ourselves. We were poor in material resources, and worse than all else, our people had been taught from earliest childhood to fear the Turks. For too many years Armenian mothers had lulled their children to sleep with songs whose theme was Turkish fierceness and savagery.

During the long winter nights, when the snow lies deep in the mountains, time hangs heavily in the isolated villages. With the coming of dusk following the short winter day, the family gathers about the embers of the fire remaining from the preparation of the evening meal. From without comes the howling of wolves, far carrying, rising and falling, a call from nature utterly savage and wild, never failing to arouse a tingling of the nerves though it be ever so often heard. The village dogs bark angry fright-

ened defiance. Their hair bristles, and they growl savagely, but as the call from the wild sounds nearer and nearer, their tails droop, their growls become half whines and they sidle close to the huts of their masters.

At such times are told the stories and traditions of Armenia as passed on from parents to children, traditions burdened with tales of havoc, of oppression, and of massacres whose victims were Armenians.

During the long ages in which Armenia has been in the vortex of the struggle between Moslem and Christian, not a village or valley, not a mountain pass or river ford, but has been the scene of some fanatical or vengeful slaughter, the memory and terror of which are kept green in song and story. And so it is that the child in its mother's arms learns that the roar of the storm in the mountains is the thudding of countless hoofs of Turkish horsemen, the wailing of the winds is the mournful cry of the dying, and the crashing of thunder the Moslem battle call, "Allah Allah A Akarbad."

When one remembers the length of time during which we Armenians have been an oppressed people, and knows our traditions, is it to be wondered at that we should have developed something of a slave psychology which manifests itself in many disagreeable traits, or that we should possess—perhaps I should say, be possessed of—a heritage of fear and hate where Turks are concerned? This inheritance explains why our men, when in contact with Turkish

troops have often lost heart and broken in panic, and why in moments of victory against Turks or Kurds or Tartars, they have been remorseless in seeking vengeance.

Knowing my people and knowing also how pitifully weak we were as a nation, I was sure that with a renewal of the war, the best we could hope for was to carry on for a short time, conducting a guerrilla warfare among the mountains until perhaps help should reach us from abroad. Such a struggle is always hard and cruel. The old men, the women and the children are abandoned to the mercy of the invaders. Prisoners are too great a hindrance to the free movement of guerrilla bands that depend for their safety on their ability to travel far and fast; consequently all captives are slaughtered. Medical supplies, hospitals and physicians are unavailable. A serious wound means death. When one takes to the mountains he lets himself in for a hard life, days and nights spent without shelter in the bleak cold uplands, with only such food as can be gleaned from a ravaged country. Always there is the heartbreak that comes of fear and longing for loved ones whose fate is unknown.

With a heavy heart I gathered my men and abandoned Akhalkalaki to whatever fate was in store for it, and made my way by forced marches back to Alexandropol. The city was a scene of confusion and terror. During the early days of the war, when the Russian troops invaded Turkey, large numbers of the Turkish population abandoned their homes and fled

before the Russian advance. The Armenians dwelling in these regions welcomed the Russians as liberators and saviors. They found security with the Russians. They did what they could to open the way for their protectors.

The capture of a town by the army of the Czar meant a reversal in that town of the old relationship between Turks and Armenians. It was then for the Armenians to be arrogant and for the Turks to be humble.

When the Russian Army in the Caucasus disintegrated on the advent of Bolshevism, the Armenians in that part of Turkey which had been invaded by the Russians remained where they were. Now they were fleeing before the advance of the Turkish Army. In their flight the refugees continually added to their numbers the Armenian populace of the country through which they passed. At the time of my return to Alexandropol, the vanguard of the refugees, a pitiful human flotsam in the tide of war, had already reached that place. A haven was not to be found there, for the Turks were pursuing closely and Alexandropol could not be defended. And so, joined by the larger part of the people of the town, they were forced to resume their flight in search of rest and security.

The Armenian people were in flight. They were a nation on a march that had no destination, that was merely a blind seeking for safety from a terror that pursued them. In their passing they left behind

a blighted country in which nothing consumable remained. Every abandoned house was destroyed, torn down to secure fuel—and there were few houses not abandoned. The few wooden rafters that support the dirt roof of the hut of an Armenian peasant were sufficient inducement to cause its destruction.

In every village there remained a small residue of the inhabitants, mainly old men and old women, and children who elected to remain and trust to the mercy of the Turks. When the Turks arrived, they would find a country almost deserted of its inhabitants and apparently utterly without resource of wealth or even of food; but in every village, there would, in fact, be buried stores of grain and treasure. In secret caves and in secluded mountain valleys cattle and sheep would be held in concealment against the day when the invader would retire. There is an art in survival, an art that Armenians have mastered through bitter experience. It constitutes the Armenians' defense against invasions and conquests and attempts at their extermination. It consists, mainly, in clinging until death to the pitifully little of worldly wealth needed as a nucleus for a new start, a few sheep or cattle, a few poods of grain to be used as seed.

The main body of our troops in Northern Armenia was stationed at Karaklis, a town situated on the railroad about sixty versts from Alexandropol. It is the third largest town in Russian Armenia. On the approach of the Turks toward Alexandropol we fell back to Karaklis, there joining with our main force.

In this movement we took with us three thousand Turkish soldiers who had been captured by the Russians and left on our hands when the Russians abandoned the struggle. During our retreat to Karaklis two thousand of these poor devils were cruelly put to death. I was sickened by the brutality displayed, but could not make any effective protest. Some, mercifully, were shot. Many of them were burned to death. The method employed was to put a quantity of straw into a hut, and then after crowding the hut with Turks, set fire to the straw. One thousand of these prisoners were spared because it was known in Europe that we had inherited a large number of them from the Russians, and that no doubt an accounting would have to be made for them some day. The thousand who were spared were later liberated, as we had no means of caring for prisoners. No doubt they again took up arms against us; so in a way the killing of the two thousand was justifiable.

As was bound to be the case, the Turks soon took full measure of vengeance for this atrocity. Every verst of the road from Alexandropol to Karaklis became witness to reprisals. In one village a church was crammed with Armenian peasants, and then set on fire. All perished.

Our army took positions in the mountains near to Karaklis and awaited the coming of the Turks. We did what we could in preparation, strengthening our positions with entrenchments, gathering in and drilling recruits, and collecting such supplies, arms and

munitions as were to be had. However, the time allowed us was too short to do much; particularly there was not time to transform peasants fresh from their villages into trained soldiers. Within three weeks of our arrival in Karaklis, the Turks were driving in our advanced posts.

Karaklis is hemmed in on all sides by mountains, through which there are only a few passes practicable for the advance of an army. We held these passes, and had we been a reasonably large army of well-equipped, disciplined troops, we could have kept the Turks back indefinitely.

The enemy was well led. Instead of making frontal attacks on our position, the Turkish commander left his heavy equipment in the rear and worked his troops into the mountains, where they penetrated to our rear and threatened our line of retreat. The battle lasted for three days, finally breaking up into a number of isolated engagements, and resulting in our being driven through the mountains to a point considerably beyond the town. We could do no more; we again retreated, this time to Dilijan, a town about thirty versts beyond Karaklis.

My wife had accompanied me to Karaklis from Alexandropol. The Turks, during the three days of fighting, had surrounded the town, though remaining at a distance from it. Therefore, the city, though not yet invaded, was cut off; and my wife was a prisoner along with the rest of the inhabitants who had not fled before the battle.

At Dilijan we held a general council at which our commander, General Nazarbekoff, expressed it as his opinion that there was no possibility of our being able at this time to contend successfully against the Turks. He pointed out that they were too greatly superior to us in numbers, arms and munitions. He advised that we bury our arms and seek safety as best we could.

Nazarbekoff was an able general, a soldier who knew his business. It would have been well had his advice been heeded, but we had accompanying us many officials of the Dashnack Party who, if they were not soldiers, were at least eloquent pleaders of any cause they chose to champion. These officials injected themselves into the council, with impassioned pleas. Ignoring all military considerations they urged that the struggle be continued and that, if need be, we, as true patriots, give our lives for our country. Dramatically they reviewed the whole course of Armenian history from remote ages to the present, and made to live again our heroes, patriots and saints. They swore by the stones of Armenia's ancient ruins to die rather than give up the fight.

Without stopping to consider in just what way we could help our country in giving our lives, or to realize that nothing would please the Turks better than to have all Armenians die, a large part of the army was so worked upon by the oratory of the Dashnacks that it resolved not only to continue the struggle but actually to return over the road we had just followed

in retreat from a disastrous battle, and attack the Turks in Karaklis.

Gathered with your comrades in security and under the spell of eloquent speakers, it is easy enough to accept the thought of dying for your country. The process of dying, however, is in reality quite a different thing. In war it often means going without food, through long weary days of marching, labored climbing over mountains, heat, cold, rain, mud, wounds, suffering, being shot at, and then perhaps death at last in some hole where you have been crouching for hours, reflecting on the utter finality of death, as far as this world is concerned. Some such considerations must have begun to work in the minds of the men, for by the time we were prepared to return to Karaklis, the army had lost fully half its numbers through desertion. As for myself, I had remained sane to the folly of the enterprise, and yet was willing to undertake it, for it offered me a chance of rescuing my wife.

Despite the desertions that had robbed us of half our strength we set forth on this mad adventure. Our scouts brought us the information that the enemy had not yet occupied the town, though they had it closely surrounded. It was evident that the Turks were consolidating their gains, and that they were probably awaiting reinforcements before continuing their advance. They had no means of knowing our strength, or of being sure that there were not some units of the old Russian Army ready to oppose them.

The drive upon Alexandropol and thence upon Karaklis was but one of several such advances that the Turks were making into the Russian provinces of the Caucasus. With their uncertainty as to the situation, they probably felt the need of establishing proper contact among their different armies.

At this time the Turks were in command of the railroad line as far as Kalagaran, a place about twenty versts beyond Karaklis. At Kalagaran, the railroad passes beneath spurs of the mountains, through several tunnels, and along the bottom of a deep canyon. A high pass in the mountain here made access to the railroad possible to the people of the rich and populous valley of the Gilga Chi. Kalagaran was then a position of great natural strength and of great strategic importance.

Our plans of operations called for a surprise assault on Kalagaran, a similar one on the Turkish positions along the railroad below Karaklis, and an attack with our main body of troops on the Turkish positions in the hills before the town.

With a properly equipped and trained army, this plan could have been carried through successfully; but for such an army as ours, it called for too great a degree of precision in coordination of effort among the different units, and an accuracy and immediacy of information as to the progress of the action impossible of attainment with only runners to keep the command in touch with developments.

It took several days for our different units to take

their assigned places where they would be within striking position of their respective objectives. During this time we had several brushes with the enemy, minor affairs of outposts and patrols, which, though of no importance in themselves, no doubt served to warn the enemy that something portended and to keep him alert.

My command formed part of our main body. The attack was scheduled to take place at daybreak. The night previous we had advanced along the Karaklis-Dilijan road to within a few versts of Karaklis, and then debouched from the road into the mountains which here are covered with a heavy growth of beech and oak, one of the few bits of forest in Russian Armenia.

At the first glimmer of dawn we began our advance, working our way cautiously through the forest and ever higher into the mountains. Soon we began hearing rifle and machine-gun fire to our right and to our left, punctuated with occasional crashing reports of light artillery. My company was by this time isolated on a steep rocky ridge that descended on three sides to forested valleys, from one of which we had climbed.

I could discern a group of our soldiers working its way along the valley to our left. The sounds of firing increased in volume and seemed to be coming more and more from our rear. The morning was well advanced, and while there was a battle being fought around me, I had not yet made contact with the

enemy. I was at a loss what to do. I had decided to push on and gain the summit of the ridge along which I had been climbing, when through a sudden burst of firing in the valley my attention was attracted to the soldiers there. They had been ambushed and those who had not already fallen were in flight. I could give them but a moment's consideration, for immediately after, my scouts, sent forward to prevent my command from being ambushed in just such a way as had occurred to the Armenians in the valley, came running in, and Turkish soldiers appeared above me on the ridge. I had no further worries about not making contact with the enemy.

The Turks immediately opened fire. I formed my men in a line across the ridge and had them lie down behind rocks for shelter. This they did in good order, and opening fire in their turn drove the Turks to cover.

The Turks in the valley to our left having disposed of the Armenian soldiers there began climbing the side of the ridge toward our position, making it necessary for me to station men to hold them off. This gave my line, roughly, the shape of an inverted L. We were being attacked from two sides. We held this position without change for several hours, engaging in a sniping contest from behind rocks that covered the ground. Neither side suffered greatly. We had grenades and a single light machine-gun. We used the grenades to advantage in bombing the enemy from the side of the ridge. The machine-gun dis-

couraged the Turks above us from attempting to rush our position.

The enemy's fire grew hotter and our casualties began to mount. My command had numbered sixty men. By the middle of the day ten of these were out of action, either killed or badly wounded. The survivors were becoming panicky. The sounds of battle had worked around until they now came definitely from our rear, indicating that the main body of our troops was either surrounded or in retreat.

The Turks above us appeared to have been reinforced, for they began a determined advance, dodging from rock to rock and keeping up a continuous fire. Our wounded became conscious of a change in the situation and begged not to be abandoned. A bullet struck a soldier who was crouching at my side behind a boulder. He slumped to the ground, a broken huddled heap. For a moment he lay there without movement, then flopped about convulsively, screamed horribly and died. Our machine-gunner leaped to his feet, his face covered with his hands. Blood streamed through his fingers. He staggered about. A bullet struck his head with a loud crack, and he pitched to the ground. At that moment the Turks charged us with cries of "Allah! Allah!" I shouted to encourage my men and sprang to the machine-gun. I trained it on a group of five or six soldiers who were bunched together and rushing wildly toward us. In my excitement I could not aim correctly. I saw dirt and leaves kicked up in front, to

the left and to the right of them by the bullets from my weapon. The machine-gun kept jamming. Here my training rose superior to my excitement, for my hands automatically freed the jams. Some of my men threw down their arms and fled. The contagion of fear spread. I tried to stay the flight, but was borne along with it; so with the Turks after us we went pell-mell over the side of the ridge, down into the valley, in the direction of Karaklis.

It was now each man for himself. After a time of breathless running I found myself alone and clear of pursuit. From the sounds of distant battle now grown fainter I judged that the day had ended disastrously for us, and also that I was somewhere within the Turkish lines surrounding Karaklis.

I hid myself for a time in a dense copse to recover my breath and strength and to take stock of my situation. On reflection, two possible courses seemed open to me: the one offering the lesser risk, to await for night and then worm my way through the Turkish lines, not a difficult feat; the other, to enter Karaklis before the Turks did so, and to conceal myself there, an undertaking that was bound to be fraught with great risk. I decided, however, on this latter course because my wife was in the town and I hoped that I might rescue her.

Night was well advanced by the time I reached the town. On the way I had spoken with other Armenian soldiers who, like myself, were seeking safety. I questioned them on the events of the day and found they

could tell me nothing aside from incoherent accounts of isolated engagements in which they had participated. I was too weary to be cautious and entered the city boldly. The streets were deserted, all the houses locked. There were no lights burning. The Turks had not yet put in an appearance.

My hopes were high that I had yet time to find my wife and escape with her. I had left her in the home of an acquaintance. I arrived at the house and hammered on the door. For a long time there was no response, though the noise I made aroused the barking of dogs along the street. When the door was finally opened, an old woman appeared, who informed me that the family had left. She knew nothing of my wife and could give me no further information. I was crushed and helpless, for I was certain that my wife was somewhere within the town, and I could not bring myself to leave without her. Perhaps the following morning I would be able to find her, I thought. I decided to remain for the night.

For a time I wandered about through the deserted streets, not knowing just what to do. A momentary flash of light such as is made by the striking of a match caught my eye through the window of a house I was passing. I knocked on the door. After a time the door was opened and I was admitted. The house was occupied by a man and his wife. He explained that he was old, long past military age, too old for the road, and that as his wife was not much younger they had decided to remain and trust to the mercy

of the Turks rather than endure the perils and hardships of flight, of stealing through the Turkish lines, and if successful in this, of facing the world with nothing and with no destination.

He was greatly agitated by my presence. His wife sat and wrung her hands and swayed backward and forward emitting low moaning sobs. I asked him to conceal me. He protested that he could do nothing for me. I doubted him and made no motion to go. After a time during which we sat silent in the dark room, he said, "Come, I will show you a hiding-place."

He led me from the house, through a maze of narrow streets, to a dilapidated hovel. My guide holding my hand led me to a corner of the hut where a stairway descended into a cellar. He preceded me down the stairs. When I had followed him he struck a match, and pointing to the floor above my head explained that it was double. He showed me how by removing a board set loosely for the purpose it was possible to make an opening through which one could squeeze one's self in between the two floors. He gave me a packet of bread, wished me well, and left. I ate the bread, wriggled my way in between the two floors and slept.

I awakened. It was morning. Daylight streamed through the cracks of the floor above me. The Turks had entered the town. Shots, cries and screams assailed my ears. Fear gripped my heart when I thought of being caught where I was. My impulse was to

crawl out of my hole and rush into the open to meet whatever might await me there.

Somewhere in the town my wife was hiding, probably, like myself, in some dark filthy hole, with dust and cobwebs in her eyes and mouth. Rage seized me. I sobbed aloud from sheer helplessness.

Throughout the day I lay cramped in my narrow prison, and in terror of discovery. I strained my ears to catch and interpret the sounds of the tragedy that was being enacted within the town. I heard the rumble of artillery wheels over the cobbles of the street, the rhythmic tramp of marching soldiers, military orders given in Turkish, scattered rifle firing, and the laughter of Turkish soldiers. Close to the hut there was a harsh shout from some one, a woman's shriek. Each sound conveyed a picture to my mind of what was happening without. Several times during the day the boards above me bent beneath the weight of some one who entered the hut. At such times I hardly dared breathe and for the time forgot my discomfort. The day wore on; darkness came. My lips and throat were parched and swollen. It was necessary that I secure food, and, especially, water. Neither could I longer remain inactive and endure the agonies of uncertainty as to the fate of my wife.

With infinite pains to avoid making a noise that might attract the attention of any one who happened to be near I let myself down from my hiding-place into the cellar, and then after waiting with my every sense on edge, trying to determine if the way was

clear, I crawled out of the cellar and through the hut. I cast myself on the ground, close beside the door. I became conscious only of the sound of running water. I crawled toward it and came to an irrigation ditch, where I drank my fill. Hidden in a clump of tall weeds I lay still. I listened, and from what I could hear tried to gather an idea of the situation within the town. Turkish soldiers patrolled the streets. I could hear the shrill whistles with which they signaled to one another. I could hear also Turkish voices and laughter coming from the houses. The enemy was making merry.

There was no use in my remaining where I was, and so I moved on without being very clear in my mind as to how to accomplish my object: news of my wife. In a dark alley I stumbled over something. I investigated and found it to be the body of an Armenian soldier. If I were captured while wearing my own uniform, my chance for life would be nil. The poor fellow lying dead in the road had nothing more to fear. I removed his uniform and donned it; transforming myself in appearance to a common soldier. The cloth was stiff with blood and much torn, but I was glad to make the substitution. My own uniform I threw into the darkness.

I had scarcely finished making this change of clothes when I heard the tramp of soldiers and a command in Turkish. A patrol was almost upon me. The street was a narrow passage between stone walls, just about of sufficient width to permit of the passage of

an oxcart. I drew myself to the top of the wall and dropped over it into a garden. I lay still waiting for the Turks to pass. They stopped where lay the dead soldier whose clothes I had taken. A light flashed. There was some comment over the fact that the clothes were gone from the man's body. A voice of authority exclaimed contemptuously, "Vultures are abroad. They prey on their own kind. Come along!" The patrol passed.

At the head of the garden I could discern through the darkness the form of a house. I went warily toward it. It proved to be a typical Armenian dwelling of one story. As the floor of such a house is sunk below the surface of the ground, the walls outside are low and the roof easy of access. Noiselessly I climbed to the roof, and going to the hole that is always to be found in the roof of an Armenian peasant house for the escape of smoke, I listened. From the pitch darkness of the room below came the sound of labored breathing. I called softly in the Armenian tongue, "Brother! Brother!" There was a slight stirring but no reply. I called again. "Brother!" A voice answered, "Who is it that calls me brother? What do you want?" There was a hopeless despair in the voice, a quality, a nuance, a something I can not describe, that caused me to catch my breath. My heart turned cold. I strained my eyes in a vain effort to see something of the speaker. "I am an Armenian soldier seeking succor and news of my wife," I replied.

A mournful laugh came to me from below. "You seek help from me to whom even God would give no help." I heard steps in the room, as of some one moving about, then a sound that I recognized as that made by the striking of steel on flint. A tiny stream of sparks streaked the darkness, followed by a pinpoint of mellow light that gradually widened and brightened, as the ignited tinder was blown to a flame. There was a spluttering, and immediately the room was illuminated. A candle had been lighted.

The room below me, a simple peasant dwelling without windows and guarded by a single heavy door, was in confusion. An old gray-bearded man with swollen features and a bandaged head stood swaying and gazing up at me. He held the candle in his trembling hand. He righted an overturned bench, pushed it beneath the aperture in the roof, and beckoned to me to descend. This I did.

As I stood in the room trying to brush off some of the mud and dirt that clung to the uniform I was wearing, the old man placed the candle in a niche in the wall, staggered to a corner where on the floor some blankets were spread and sat down. He groped beneath the blankets for a moment and brought out a roll of *levosh* (whole wheat bread baked in thin sheets), and handed it to me. I was famished; and so eagerly taking this offering I sat myself on the blanket beside him and ate.

When I had finished the bread I turned to my host and asked him about the events of the day. He re-

garded me dully, then waved his hands as though including within his gesture the whole world, and answered, "The *askars*."* Then he bowed his head in silence and seemed to sleep. With a start he aroused himself. He gripped my shoulders with his gnarled old hands, and peering into my eyes as though he sought to find something there, whispered close to my ear in a frightened voice, "I had a daughter!" He gazed wildly about the room, then all expression died from his face. With a groan he sank back and buried his face in the blankets.

The thought of the weary road that this poor peasant had traveled through life, to meet at its end so bitter a grief, brought tears to my eyes. I questioned him further, my voice broken with my own sobs, but could get no response from him. For a long time, perhaps for an hour I sat and brooded. Occasionally the old man mumbled deliriously and unintelligibly.

Every moment of my stay in Karaklis was fraught with danger of discovery and capture. I knew of a deep irrigation ditch that carried water from the hills to the gardens of the town. If I exercised care in keeping myself concealed beneath its banks, it would serve me as a road of escape through the lines of the Turks. My fears no less than my reason urged me to make haste and escape while I could; but my mind would never again be at ease if I did not make another effort to find my wife, who was somewhere

* Turkish soldiers.

within the black seething hell of misery that lay around us.

I rose to my feet, blew out the candle, and going to the door opened it an inch at a time until I could peer out. I could distinguish nothing in the darkness, nor did I hear any sounds near by. I stepped through the door and closed it behind me. I was again in the garden. I made my way around the house. As I expected I found that the house faced on a street. There was a wall built flush with the house and parallel with the street. I found a gate in the wall, but dared not open it for fear of attracting the attention of some sentry. I drew myself to the top of the wall and cautiously looked over. At the end of the street, to my right and perhaps a hundred yards distant, a group of soldiers was gathered about a fire. Near by, the street was strewn with furniture. As I watched a chair was fed to the flames.

I crawled along the top of the wall toward the next house and away from the fire. This house was occupied by soldiers. I could hear their voices, but could not distinguish what was being said until one spoke loudly, requesting less noise, that he might sleep, as he had to leave early in the morning with a convoy of prisoners. Another voice mocked him and chided him with being too old to enjoy the fruits of victory.

"They are wise," the mocking voice continued, "who select such as you for the task that will be yours to-morrow."

There was a loud laugh, and the voices sank to a murmur. Then I distinctly heard a request made in broken Armenian by a Turkish voice, to be served with tea. A woman's voice, unmistakably Armenian, replied, "Immediately!" I was startled, and moved imprudently. A stone under me slipped from its position. I clutched frantically at it to prevent its falling. With a crash a whole section of the wall gave way, and I was flung into the street amid an avalanche of stones and dust.

Panic-stricken I got to my feet. In a confused way I was aware that I suffered pain. The thought came to me that this was the end, that in a few moments I would be lying dead and mangled in the mud of the road. I tried to run, but had no sense of direction, and must merely have staggered about. I heard a shout, I was aware of a shock and a flash of light, and then I fell into darkness.

CHAPTER XI

THE BLACKSMITH FROM SIBERIA

I AWOKE to the consciousness of an excruciating headache. When I closed my eyes it seemed as though I were falling endlessly through space. When my gaze rested on any object, that object immediately resolved itself into a point around which the world whirled smoothly at great speed. Dimly and indifferently I was aware of the presence of men close to me, that I was lying on a wet stone floor, and also that there was a beam of sunlight from a barred window that cut across the room like a sword of silver. Water was poured between my lips. As I gulped it, an electric thrill coursed through my whole being. I drank and drank, then I lay back and closed my eyes and must have slept.

The next thing I remember was that I was awake and in darkness. My head ached. I slept again and again woke, this time in full possession of my senses. The agony in my head had abated. I sat up and immediately had to grasp my head between my hands, as the movement had brought momentary resurgence of the pain.

When I could open my eyes again, I took stock

of my surroundings. I was sitting on a rough stone pavement, in a corner of a large room. The walls were of stone. A single small window, close to the ceiling, barred but without glass, afforded light. The room was crowded with Armenian men, mostly soldiers. So closely were we packed in that it was only with the greatest difficulty that any one could move about.

I disengaged the elbow of the man next to me from where it had been resting in my ribs and questioned him concerning our plight. He turned to me in evident surprise and said, "So you are alive. I thought you were dead and have been using you as a pillow. It is God's will. Why didn't you stay dead? Now, you have to die all over again." He laughed and pulled at his beard. I asked him how I came to be where I was. He looked at me interestedly and said, as though he had not heard my question:

"In your case it doesn't matter for you came to life again. When I die, I will be dead forever. Do you understand? Forever. The end." He screwed up his face and clenched his fists in his effort to express something that was probably only half formulated in his mind. "Of what good is the hereafter," he went on. "That is God's business. This spring I sowed a field of barley. Am I never to see or know if it is growing well? I had a colt that is ready for the saddle by now. Will the colt be here after I am gone? I was going to build a house. It would have been the finest house in my village. I had finished

hauling the stones. I love to build, to make things and to do good work, better work than any one else. I like to fit stones snugly and smoothly together, to make a strong plow, to mow a field smooth and clean. I am a blacksmith, a master mechanic." He stopped his talk, and with his elbows resting on his drawn-up knees, supported his chin in his cupped hands and gazed unseeing into the farthest corner of the big room.

A soldier, a mere youngster, sitting close to my feet, touched my arm and tapped his forehead with his fingers, at the same time by a nod indicating the blacksmith. The boy explained to me our situation. He told me that for three days Karaklis had been given over to the Turkish soldiers and the Tartars to do with as they pleased. There had been a great deal of killing, women had been maltreated, many girls carried away, and everything of value that could be found, stolen. He said that for two days and two nights I had lain where I was, sometimes quietly, as though dead, and at other times raving in delirium. "As for us who are here," he explained, "I only know that every day soldiers and young men found hiding in the town by the Turks are added to our number, and that every morning a group is taken away to return no more."

The withdrawals from our prison greatly exceeded the arrivals. On the third morning there were not more than fifty of us left. On that day a Turkish officer entered with a guard and selected about half

of us, including myself. We were marched out. Each of us was given a *foont* of bread and were set to work cleaning the streets. We picked up the bodies of many dead and loaded them on oxcarts along with the refuse of the streets. Turkish soldiers drove the carts out of the town, probably to empty them in some near-by field or ravine.

On the outskirts of Karaklis stands the finest mansion in all Armenia, the property of a wealthy Armenian woman. It is situated close to the road, in a large garden, the whole being surrounded by a high stone wall.

At the end of the day, just as darkness began to gather, our working party arrived before this residence. I noted idly that it was occupied by Turkish officers. I could see several of them seated on the veranda. Our guards now ordered us to fall in. They marched us down the road a short distance and across some fields to a rocky ravine. In the ravine they halted us in a group and then disposed themselves behind rocks. I understood what this meant, as did my companions. We had served the purpose of the Turks by the work we had done that day, and now we were to be executed. The spot was well chosen for the purpose. The wolf-like sheep-dogs of the district would save the Turks all trouble in the disposal of our bodies.

In the emergency my mind acted quickly. I realized that my only chance was to make a break and dash for the cover of some huts that were near by.

I saw clearly, also that if I were the first to run I would inevitably be the first to be shot, for by dashing out alone I would attract the attention of all the Turks to myself.

I stood poised for flight watching my comrades, whose eyes were fixed on the Turks. I saw that my fellow-prisoners were wavering unsteadily in the ranks, uncertain what to do. One man darted away. A rifle cracked and he fell. As though the rifle-shot had been a signal, every man but myself started running. I threw myself face down on the ground. There was a crashing volley of shots. I immediately sprang to my feet and darted toward the near-by huts. I took no note of what befell my comrades, but ran with all my might. As I reached the line of Turks, one of them thrust at me with a bayonet, but I swerved in time to avoid the stroke. Twisting and turning, I was among the huts in a minute. I cleared them, plunged across a shallow stream, and reached the shelter of the walled gardens of the town. The door of a house stood invitingly open. I sprang inside and closed the door after me.

I must have appeared a terrifying sight to the old man who arose and confronted me. I could see that he was no less agitated than I myself. Peremptorily I demanded that he hide me. Doubtless something of my desperation showed in my face and voice, for without attempting evasion he showed me a covered opening leading to a cellar. Descending, I threw myself on the ground, completely exhausted. Soon

the old man appeared with bread and tea and a blanket.

I knew well enough that in the cellar I was about as effectively hid as an ostrich with only its head buried in the sand. I was safe where I was only if the house was not searched, but I was too weary to care much, and so I wrapped the blanket around me and lay down. For a time I thought of my wife and of the pleasant times we had enjoyed in Akhalkalaki, and then I slept. In my sleep I dreamed of Nina Andreovna, she of the stone house in far-off Poland.

I was awakened the following morning by some one kicking me in the ribs. I looked up and saw several *askars* and the old man who lived in the house standing over me. No doubt the old fellow had betrayed me to the Turks in fear of the consequence to himself in the event of my being discovered by a search party.

I tried to talk to the *askars*, but they paid no heed to my woes and quickly hustled me out of the cellar with kicks and blows. The streets were deserted by all save soldiers, who paid no attention to me or my guards. The sight of a prisoner had, no doubt, become too commonplace to attract their attention. I expected to be returned to the prison that I had left the day previous. Instead of that, I was shoved into a yard where there were some three hundred other men, Armenian soldiers and civilians. I noticed among them several who had been my companions in the prison.

One of these was the man who had used me as a pillow, under the impression that I was dead. He spied me and immediately elbowed his way toward where I had seated myself in a sunny angle of the wall that surrounded the yard. He regarded me curiously as he took a place by my side and commented that I had again returned from the dead. "But this time, my friend," said he, "you have returned as a donkey. We are all donkeys now, all of us, and we will soon be on the road to Erzroom, each with a donkey's load on his back. Along every verst of the way we will leave behind us something of such hope, courage and strength as we now have." He began fingering his tattered garments, drawing the edges of the torn cloth together, and gazing sadly at the result. I fain would have said something to cheer him, but my heart was so heavy with my own troubles that I could do nothing more than place my arm across his huge bowed shoulders in sympathy and brotherhood.

He rested his chin on his hands, his elbows on his knees, and not looking at me he talked as though to himself: "Years ago I worked for the Russians on the building of the road that leads to Erzroom. In the morning of each day I would take my seat beside a pile of large stones. All day long I would break the large stones into small pieces. One at a time I would place them between my feet to hold them steady and strike them with a hammer until they crumbled. By the time night had come the pile of

large stones would be gone, and in its place there would be a pile of small stones all ready for the road builders. The stones that I broke then will soon be cutting my feet. I can not understand why it should be or how it can be though if I could twist my mind in a certain way it would all become clear."

Having stopped talking for the time being, he picked up a small length of wire from the ground, hammered one end to a point between two stones, and then deftly twisted it in his strong fingers, fashioning it into a serviceable safety pin with which he fastened the edges of a rent in his coat. I had watched the operation carefully. Long after I practised until I had acquired the knack of making such pins, an accomplishment that was to prove of great value to me.

He had apparently noticed my interest in the shaping of the pin, for he held out his huge calloused hands for me to view and explained "I am a blacksmith, a master workman in iron." His thoughts seemed to wander for a moment, then he sighed deeply and continued: "Oh, to know again the feel of a hammer in my hands and to hear the ringing of the anvil as glowing iron takes form beneath my blows. Even when I was a small boy and before I had any training I did much of the blacksmith work for my village. I was still but a lad when my father put me to work with a smith in Alexandropol. Sahag Apkarian, my master, was a clever workman, but when I had been with him for two years I had become

more skilful than he. I left his shop and traveled here, there and everywhere. I have seen much of the world.

“I was in Azerbaijan during the Tartar War of 1905. I was working then in a little village near the Persian border. There were as many Tartars as Armenians in the village. Each group tried to exterminate the other with the result that each became besieged within its own section of the town. It was then that I showed my skill. I made a cannon, a huge gun to lift which required four men. I made balls for it. With my cannon the Armenians could knock down any of the Tartar houses and so they were able to drive the Tartars out.

“We Armenians held a great celebration over our victory and I was much lauded. During the celebration a number of men trundled the cannon about the village, occasionally firing it until, in their enthusiasm, they charged it with too much powder which caused it to burst. Three men were killed. This unfortunate incident caused a considerable abatement of my popularity, so that when peace came I returned to my native village.

“Soon afterward I married. I had great ambition. I worked hard, and, having saved sufficient money for the purpose, I opened a blacksmith shop in Alexandropol. My wife continued to live in our village while I worked in the city. No one else could do such good work as I or finish a job so quickly. I was kept busy and was becoming rich. It was a

supreme joy for me to go to our village home each Saturday night and on nights preceding holidays. I had a stallion, a white Arab stallion."

Here the blacksmith placed his hand on my knee and leaning toward me lowered his voice as he said: "You know of Barbarian, the lame bandit?"

I nodded assent for I had heard many tales of the doings of this desperado who for a number of years had been a terror in the region of the rainy mountains until he was captured by Cossacks and exiled to Siberia.

"Well," continued my companion, "my horse had been the favorite mount of Barbarian. You would be interested to know how I became the possessor of so famous an animal. That is a secret. If it had been known I would probably have accompanied the stallion's old master to Siberia. I could tell it now, but I judge there is not time as we will very likely be moving from here within a few minutes. When I was to go to my home and to my wife in the village a boy from the village would bring my horse from the village to my shop in Alexandropol. I arranged that the boy arrive early with the horse. Then I would tether my beautiful Arab to the door of my shop so that none who passed would fail to see him. While I worked at my forge he stood there saddled and bridled, arching his neck and tail and pawing the ground with a gentle impatience. His saddle and bridle were rich with silver and his saddle cloth was of blue and gold. Russian officers were forever try-

ing to induce me to sell the stallion to them, but I had no need to sell. Also it would not have been well for me to have done so, but that is part of the story of how the stallion became mine.

“In my village I had a good house and a garden. I had sheep and chickens and pigs and a cow. My wife was beautiful and I loved her greatly. The people of my village envied me my prosperity. I enjoyed talking with them and treating them to vodka when they came to my house to see me. My native village is on the side of Mount Allagoz, overlooking the plain surrounding the city of Alexandropol. A small stream lined with willows winds its ways through the village. My garden was bordered by this stream. When I was at home it was customary for me to spend the evening sitting in my garden beneath the willows talking to the many neighbors who came to see me. The village priest never failed of being one of these. I was deferred to and respected. I was a big man. Was it not a pleasant thing to sit thus in one’s garden drinking and smoking with one’s friends? By peering through the trees I could look across the plain to where the lights of Alexandropol shone in the dusk of the evening. I could see the steeple of a church that stood not far from my forge and from that I could locate the place where I worked during the week. That also added to my contentment. Then there was my wife. It completed my happiness as I saw her occasionally and discreetly showing herself while I sat among my friends.

“It would have been better if I had remained at home in my village, tilling the soil and living in poverty as others did. I will tell you why. My wife found a lover. I did not know until my neighbors told me. After that I watched her closely, while pretending to be at work. One day I found them together and I killed them both. I killed them with blows on their heads from my smith’s hammer. The Russians do not understand such things. They sent me to Siberia. I tell you this because of the road to Erzroom. There is another such road in the Russian north that I traveled on my way to prison. There is this difference—then my guards were Russians, not Turks. They were indifferent to suffering that they did not have to share. They were brutal, but only because they were men, and not because they were Russians and I an Armenian.”

The blacksmith slipped off his coat, showing his bare back to me. The flesh was raised in ridges crossing and crisscrossing. Involuntarily I exclaimed, “The knout!”

He nodded confirmation. “Yes, they put me to work in the mines. I could find no content. They fastened me to a post with chains, and whipped me until I became unconscious, not only once, but time and time again. I was a murderer. What would have passed unnoticed in a prisoner of lesser crime was marked against me as a grievous offense.

“Master workmen are always in demand. They discovered my skill and put me to work at a forge.

That was better. I found peace, if not happiness, in gazing into the leaping flame of my fire as I sent the air whistling through it. I was able to forget many things while listening to the ringing of the anvil beneath the blows of my hammer. I escaped further beatings. When the war came, I was sent to the army. When the army revolted, I returned to my village."

I commenced reciting some of my own experiences, when the gate of the yard was thrown open and a Turkish officer entered. He was a tall thin man, neatly uniformed and wearing the usual military fez of the Turkish officer. The ends of his mustache were waxed to sharp points. In his belt was a pistol slung from his neck by an ornamental cord. He had an open note-book and a pencil in his hand. We had all risen on his entrance and stood now, every face turned to read in his some inkling of our fate.

Several soldiers had entered the yard with him. At a word from the officer they began leading men out through the gate. As each man left, the officer made a notation in his book. My turn came. Though I moved briskly, I was nevertheless shoved from one soldier to another until I found myself in the street, standing in line with many others.

On the street was a number of oxcarts loaded with boxes of ammunition. Soldiers were removing the boxes and placing them along our line, one at the feet of each man. I knew from experience that such boxes weighed a pood each. They were awkward

things to carry. I felt sick at the sight of one of the infernal things lying at my feet.

When all had been arranged, an order was given, and each of us picked up his assigned box of ammunition. Another order, and we started on that dreary march.

CHAPTER XII

THE ROAD TO ERZROOM

A FILE of soldiers, with bayoneted rifles marched on either side of our column. An officer, the one with the waxed mustache, was in command. He was mounted on a splendid Arab stallion. The horse pranced impatiently, as its rider held him in while our line filed past.

There were many soldiers on the streets of Karaklis as we passed through the town at the beginning of our march. Some of these looked at us with what I thought was sorrow at our plight. Others jeered and spat and shouted curses. Many of the men in our company were civilians, mostly past military age. Their homes were in the town. One of these, the man walking at my side, sobbed heart-brokenly and almost collapsed. A soldier urged him on with a kick. While we were still in town, there was frequent confusion in one part of the line or another, and we would come to a momentary halt. Blows from rifle-butts and kicks dealt by our guards would overcome the disorder, and we would proceed.

There was one incident of our march through Karaklis that did much to dispel my gloom and give me

hope and courage to carry on. It was the appearance of a man in the doorway of a house. I recognized him as a soldier in my command while I was in Akhalkalaki. During a brush with mountain Tartars he had been severely wounded. His wound left him so crippled that he could never again be of service as a soldier, consequently he had been discharged and sent home. I knew that he was a Turkish Armenian and that he had served with the British in Mesopotamia.

He had been the only man wounded in my command at Akhalkalaki. My wife had interested herself in him, and provided him with comforts and delicacies, and had generally looked after him until he had recovered sufficiently to be discharged. I remembered that his name was Hamadian.

I caught a sign from him as he stood in the doorway, the slightest nod of his head, once repeated, followed by his pointing backward into the house with his thumb. I leaped to the conclusion that my wife was with him. I longed to stare at the house, to seek some further sign from him, but dared not do so. For a time I had more courage with which to face the future. As my burden grew heavier and my feet, back and arms became weary, doubts assailed me. Perhaps he had not signaled me, or, if he had, maybe it was merely in recognition of his old captain.

That first day's march was a short one, for we had started late, but at its end my feet were cut and bruised from the sharp stones of the road over which

we had passed. We stopped that first night on the edge of the road, close to a deserted village. Some of us were tolled off to go to the village, with guards, to procure wood. Our task finished, we were served with a *foont* of bread apiece. There was a stream of water close by at which we could drink.

Our guards built several fires, around which they gathered to eat and talk. A tent taken from an ox-cart was erected for the use of the officer. I could not but notice the spirit of camaraderie among the Turkish soldiers as they sat around their fires. Except that they were less boisterous and less given to horseplay, they might have been men of my own company. They courteously helped one another to food and tea, passed tobacco and papers one to another for the rolling of cigarettes, and deferred to one another in conversation.

They were simple peasants recruited from the villages of Turkey. Their talk was of simple homely things, of their villages, of their crops and flocks and not at all of war. Among themselves they appeared to be kindly patient men. Yet I knew that they could be unspeakably cruel, with a detached indifference to suffering in their victims that could only be the result of non-recognition on their part that they were dealing with human beings. Also, I had known them to fight and slay with a wild ferocity that is perhaps a heritage from their not distant, savage ancestors.

The Turks dispersed from about the fires and arranged themselves to sleep. They wrapped them-

selves in blankets and lay on the ground, forming a circle about us captives. Farther from us and forming a wider circle, sentries stood guard. The fires burned low. I pillowed my head against the box that had been my burden during the day, closed my eyes and slept.

In the days that followed, while I was on the march, I lost track of time. It was a hard, hard way. We were barefooted and in rags. For food we were served with a *foont* of bread a day. Once we came to the carcass of an ox that had died by the wayside. Our guards mercifully permitted us to halt our march and feast. We tore it to pieces with our hands and ate the raw flesh.

At times we traveled over the military road, where the sharp stones cut our feet. At times we trod native roads, ankle-deep in mud. At night we slept on the cold ground, without covering. We were continually beaten, and often I heard prayers from my comrades, requests for death, that they might be delivered from their misery. Time passed. We staggered along. If a man weakened and could go no farther, he was shot and left where he had fallen, and so each day our number diminished. Our way lay through several Tartar villages. In passing these we were subjected to the indignity of being pelted with stones and filth by the women and children. The very dogs in the villages understood that we were aliens, degraded creatures. They sprang upon us and had to be beaten off by the soldiers.

One evening we halted on the roadside, somewhere beyond the city of Kars. The soldiers made camp. We prisoners threw ourselves on the ground in exhaustion and ate our bread in silence. Night came on. I lay on my back, gazing up at the stars, so far away, so serene and peaceful. The thought came to me that I was at the end of my strength, that I could not continue this march another day. A few hours before two of my comrades in slavery had sunk exhausted. Kicks failed to arouse them, and so they were shot. I felt that their fate would be mine on the morrow. It were better by far to die than to attempt to struggle along any farther. I thought of my wife, and of my soldier standing in the doorway, nodding and pointing. It would be easier to die if only I could be with my wife again for a time and know that she was well. Suddenly my mind grew beautifully clear and my thoughts lucid. With this change came a resolution to attempt to escape. I had no thought but that the attempt would end in failure and death; yet I resolved I would again seek for my wife.

In preparation, I moved to the outer edge of our group and there composed myself as though to sleep. The night wore on; the fires of the guards died down to glowing splashes of light. Voices ceased, and there was silence save for the occasional tossing of some sleeper, or the tread of a sentry.

I felt myself to be supersensitive. Every sound, every movement in the camp, registered itself dis-

tinctly in my mind, with a clear significance of what it was or portended.

When I judged the time was opportune, I began to move. I wormed my way along the ground, an inch at a time, one moment drawing myself forward with infinite caution, the next lying perfectly still, with my ears strained for the slightest sound. I kept my body curled, as nearly as I could, in the shape of a ball, so that if I were seen, I would in the dark be mistaken for one of the numerous rocks with which the ground was strewn.

After what seemed an age, I arrived at the circle of sleeping Turks. They were disposed in groups of three or four at considerable intervals. Beyond them were the sentries. More slowly, if not more cautiously, I continued my progress. A glowing and winking light at a distance to my right, a light that could come only from a cigarette in the mouth of a smoker, informed me that I had at last reached the line of sentries. He, whose cigarette I could see, finished his smoke. I saw the glowing point of light describe a parabola in the air and burst in a shower of sparks as it struck the ground. I heard the tread of a sentry. The sounds were approaching me. My heart labored; I could breathe only with difficulty. I felt my nerves humming as though they were fine wires drawn taut, vibrating in the wind. I could endure the strain no longer. I sprang to my feet and, bending low, darted away into the darkness. I was aware of a shout, the report of a rifle, the crack and hum of a bul-

let passing over me, and a confusion of other sounds. For once my self-possession deserted me and in the grip of terror and the passion to put distance between myself and the Turkish camp, I fled through the night. When my breath was exhausted so that I could no longer run, I walked.

I remember falling and finding myself in my exhaustion unable to rise for the moment, continuing my progress on my hands and knees. I was brought to reason when I beheld a mountaintop illuminated by a flaming banner of light that presaged the coming of dawn. I was then able to see that the darkness which had shielded me in my flight was already being routed by the advance of day and to realize that it was necessary for me to find a hiding-place. It was time for me to use my head as well as my legs if I were to make good my escape. I decided to rest for a short time. As I sat there, there came over me such weariness as I had never known before; and to my mind came a desire for oblivion, that I might be free from the bodily anguish that I suffered. I fell from the boulder and lay sprawled on the ground. I felt myself sinking into unconsciousness and was indifferent to the peril of my position; and then there came to me, perhaps from God, a resolution to proceed. Somehow I got to my feet and with torturous difficulty dragged myself along.

I do not know how long it was after that, but presently I came to a road. I remember gazing at a ribbon of highway and then of being aware that to

one side of the road and within a few yards of me was a culvert. Only a few yards distant was a place of concealment, a place where I could rest, where I could permit the black wave of blissful unconsciousness that surged at my mind to engulf me. I would walk to that haven, but I could not move my legs. I smiled at my attempt to cover so vast a distance, and, as I smiled, tears rolled down my face. I collapsed and fell prone; and then I found that I could still crawl, not as you might picture a man crawling but as an injured worm crawls.

That day and night, also the following day, I remained in the culvert. I could not travel during the daytime, for I was in a Tartar country occupied by Turks. I could expect to meet with no one other than an enemy. To be captured by Tartars would be worse than being captured by the Turks, for the Tartars have a nasty way of torturing a prisoner before they kill him; such as flaying a poor devil alive, or sitting him on a sharpened stake, the latter torture an ancient custom of the Tartars preserved from the day of the Tartar hordes. The East is like that. Customs are not easily abandoned.

I spent the second day in the culvert waiting for darkness. In trying to decide what course to take, I weighed the different possibilities. I might seek refuge with friends or relatives in Alexandropol, but I knew nothing of what fate had befallen that city after our army had abandoned it. Possibly the entire population had been massacred. There was a

chance for me to reach Erivan, where, I considered, in all likelihood there was still an Armenian Army. To do so I would have to cross the Arpa Chai and a shoulder of great Allagoz, a long journey through hostile territory. At the time when I made my dash for freedom from the Turkish camp I had intended to return to Karaklis and seek my wife. Now that I was comparatively free I considered other courses of action, but finally I chose to adhere to my original plan.

With the coming of night I crawled out of the culvert and started on my return. There was a journey ahead of me of over two hundred versts through a country occupied by the Turks and inhabited by Tartars. I could travel only by night if I would avoid detection and capture, and I had to provide myself with food along the way.

I had not eaten since my escape. The pangs of hunger were sharp and insistent. I was weak, and my head swam. My first need was food. My chances of securing this were scant as long as I remained within the region of Tartar population. I might manage, I thought, to steal something from a Tartar village, but the risk of doing so would be too great except in extremities. It was necessary that I reach a district where there were Armenian villages. I was confident that I could make my way into such villages and beg sufficient food for my needs, even though they were occupied by the Turks. I decided that I must depend, in the meantime, upon finding the carcass of an

ox or horse. The Armenians in their flight from Turkey had passed in great numbers through this section of the country, leaving many of their animals dead on the road.

I had greater good fortune than I had even dared hope for. On the first night, within two hours of the time I set out upon my return journey, I came upon a train of oxcarts standing for the night. The oxen, unspanned and tethered to the wheels of the carts, were contentedly chewing hay. The drivers were sleeping. No guard was being kept, except for two men and a boy who were nodding and smoking over a fire.

I reconnoitered the camp, with the caution of a wolf. A lamb, tied to a wheel, signaled its presence to me by its bleating. That lamb provided me with food for three days. I had no means of making a fire, and so had to dispense with the formality of cooking.

By the time I had finished the lamb I was in Armenian country. From then on I begged my food in villages. Most of the inhabitants had fled, but in every village a few remained. These were the very old and the very young. In every village I heard stories of outrage and slaughter differing little even in detail. None to whom I appealed refused me food, however meager the amount proffered. They could ill afford to part with even the little they gave.

Begging for food, traveling by night, hiding during the day, I reached Karaklis before daylight on the

eight day of my journey. I was indeed in a pitiful condition. My clothes consisted of a few rags. My beard and hair had grown long and wild. I can not describe how filthy I was.

To enter Karaklis and reach the house where lived my former soldier was not difficult. The Turks were lax in their guard, perhaps because there was no longer an Armenian force that they had need to fear.

When I stood within the house of my soldier, I gazed, without speaking, into his eyes. In my suspense and anxiety I could not find words. He too stood without speaking, regarding me sadly as he held a lighted candle between us. Then for a moment a smile played across his features. It sent a wave of hope through me. He turned and entered a rear room. A moment later my wife rushed forth and threw herself into my arms. She wept with happiness that I had returned to her and with pity at my sad state. I too shed tears and knew not whether from joy or grief. I felt again something of the terrible weariness that had possessed me the night I escaped from the Turkish camp. I sat on a bench before a table and buried my head in my arms. Markouie with an arm across my shoulders, tried to soothe me and give me hope and courage.

The events of the days I had spent in slavery on the road to Erzroom paraded through my mind, horrible pictures that I could not efface. Once again I felt that I had spent the last of my courage and endurance. Markouie sat at my side and pillowed my

head on her shoulder. She crooned to me gently as a mother might to a frightened child. From the street sounded the shrill whistle of Turkish sentries, as they signaled one to another.

For sixteen hours I slept as only a man can sleep who is utterly wearied in mind and body. When I awoke it was evening. My friend, Hamadian, was absent. His wife served me with tea, bread and honey. My wife and I talked over our situation until his return, some hours later. He explained to me that he was serving the Turkish commandant as an interpreter, that he had known the commandant in Turkey and in Mesopotamia, and that they were old friends. He had found my wife on the street the day following the retreat of our army after the first battle for Karaklis, and had taken her into his home. It was a fortunate chance that he knew and was on friendly terms with the Turkish commandant, for not only did this acquaintance secure his own safety, but it also enabled him to give protection to my wife.

It is strange that a man can be at the same time pitiless and generous, cruel and tender. Many instances in the war furnished such examples. The people of numerous villages in the neighborhood of Alexandropol were slaughtered regardless of age or sex. A Turkish officer, riding into a village at the head of his men, saw an Armenian girl and fell in love with her. Because he loved her his mind was turned from violence. He spared the town and its people and became the protector of what he had come to destroy.

He wooed the girl, won her love and married her.

Until late that night Markouie, Hamadian and I discussed various possibilities in an attempt to determine the best course for my wife and me to follow. My friend was confident that he had enough influence with the commandant to secure passes for us to Erivan. I could hit upon no better plan that promised success with less risk; so, reluctant as I was to surrender myself to the Turks, at whose hands I had suffered so much, I finally consented to his plan. It is hard to make a decision when life hangs on its outcome.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ARAB

HAMADIAN lost no time the next morning in informing the Turkish commandant of my presence. When, shortly after he had left the house, a soldier entered and commanded that I follow him, I felt that my friend had acted with a precipitation that had regard only for his own safety. I was led to the commandant's headquarters. He had established himself in a building formerly used by the Russian officers as a clubhouse. Without delay I was shown into his presence.

I found myself in a small room which, except for a few chairs and a table, was bare of furniture. The commandant was seated at a table. Behind him, on the wall, was a large Turkish flag. A soldier stood guard with bayoneted rifle, just within the door through which I had entered.

I recognized at once that the commandant was not a Turk but an Arab. His skin was almost as black as that of a negro, but his hair was straight and his features were regular. Without speaking to me but eyeing me the while, he deftly rolled a cigarette and accepted a light from the soldier who came hurrying to

him with a burning match. I felt that not the most minute detail of my appearance escaped his scrutiny. I could not read the expression on his face.

It was a critical moment in my affairs. My fate lay in this man's hands. Perhaps because of that, his every feature impressed itself upon my memory. He had a broad forehead, a hawk beak of a nose with flaring nostrils, and eyes set wide apart, black and with a Mongol slant. His mouth was large, with thick sensual lips, but cleanly carved and purposeful over a protruding, rounded chin. It was a strong savage face, expressing eager intense energy and passion.

I stood before him, barefooted and ragged. No doubt my hopes and fears showed in my countenance. For a time he continued to regard me in silence; then gesturing with his cigarette, he spoke: "It is sufficient for me to know that you are the friend of my friend, for that makes me your friend. Beyond that I do not ask who or what you are. I have been given to understand that you desire a pass through our lines for yourself and your wife. You will receive such a pass soon. In the meantime you are at liberty." He rose, clasped my hand and dismissed me.

I hurriedly returned to my wife to acquaint her with our good fortune and to rejoice with her.

For two days I remained in the house awaiting further word from the commandant. I did not venture on the streets, as I thought it best not to make myself conspicuous. On the evening of the second day my

host brought me a bundle of clothes with the compliments of the Arab. The bundle contained an Armenian soldier's uniform and a pair of shoes. There was also the desired pass, more important than all.

We started on foot the following morning in company with three Armenian women who had also secured passes. For escort we had a squad of soldiers, who were to see us safely to the next military district. To the commandant of this district I bore a letter given me by the Arab.

Our way lay along the Russian military road that connects Karaklis with Dilijan. For the first thirty versts the road winds through a beautiful valley which lies between wooded mountains. The valley is well cultivated and contains numerous villages, Armenian, Molocan and Tartar. The Molocans were Russians who because of peculiar religious beliefs were exiled to the Caucasus by the old Russian Government. They were pacifists. They refused to bear arms in war. In recognition of their peacefulness the Turks and Tartars spared them and their villages; so the Molocans continued to live in peace and security, while all other people in the world about them waged war. Their pacifism, however, while it protected them from worse things did not save them from all vexations. During the Great War and the revolution, whoever happened to be in power in the country forced them to contribute labor and supplies, reducing them from their usual prosperity to comparative poverty.

The Armenian villages we passed on the road were deserted. The Tartar villages were in ruins. Several versts out of Karaklis we passed a tribe of Tartars encamped by a stream. The Tartar women were busy washing clothes, but when they saw our little group approach and recognized us as Armenians, they left their work and pelted us with stones. They shouted that they knew me and had seen me participating in the massacre of Tartars that had occurred in 1905. Of course, this was nonsense, as I was at that time only a small boy. It was only by making a show of preparing to fire into them that our guards kept the Tartars off.

A mob of women wild with hate and clamoring to kill is an unlovely thing. The Tartar men took no part in the attack on us. They reasoned, I suppose, that the Turkish soldiers who were guarding us would make very short work of them, whereas they would be reluctant to use extreme measures against the women.

By midday we arrived at the village that was the headquarters of the Turkish commandant to whom I bore the letter. This was as far as our escort was to accompany us. At military headquarters, explaining that I had a letter for the commandant, I asked that I might see him. I was informed that he was away on business and that it was not known when he would return. An officer took the letter and our passes. After examining the latter, he returned them to us but retained the letter. He then advised us to

continue our journey without waiting for the return of the commandant.

Our guard of Turkish soldiers turned back, and as we had no other choice in the matter, we continued on our way. We had not covered ten versts when we were overtaken by seven Tartars on horseback. When I saw these men galloping after us, I had an uneasy feeling that developed into a conviction that they had come for me. I instructed my wife to proceed to Erivan, if such were the case. There we had friends who would care for her.

We had reached a place where the valley through which we were traveling narrowed to a mere canyon. The road was cut in the side of a mountain that on one hand rose high above us to a serrated peak and on the other pitched downward to where a stream rushed along with its waters beaten to gleaming foam against the rocks in its course.

The Tartars overtook us, at full gallop. With a great scattering of dust and stones, they drew their horses back on their haunches and immediately surrounded our little group. My wife pressed close to my side. The other women crowded together as though for mutual protection. One of the Tartars, a huge fellow with red hair, urged his horse toward me until he was at my side. He looked down at me with a smile that displayed his teeth through his red beard and that did nothing to reassure me. Evidently the leader of the band, he took the part of spokesman.

“It is necessary,” he said, “for you to return with

us. The commandant, to whom you had a letter, has returned and wishes to see you."

I realized the futility of protestations. Whether this statement was true or not, I knew if I refused, I would there and then precipitate violence in which my wife and the other women would be involved.

I signified my willingness to return with them. I said good-by to my wife and started back with the Tartars. My wife implored that I be not taken from her and she attempted to follow, but the other women restrained her by force. There on that lonely mountain road I left her calling to me, with the tears running down her face and her arms outstretched toward me.

Although I was on foot, I had to keep up with the Tartars, who were mounted. Four of them rode before me and three behind. They trotted their horses and forced me to run. When I lagged, they struck me with whips. I suffered greatly, for I became weary and exhausted of breath. I felt in time that at each additional stride my lungs would burst.

We arrived at a place close to the village where I had that day delivered the letter. The Tartars drew up their horses and consulted among themselves for several minutes in low tones that I could not hear. I dropped to the road to rest. All too soon they forced me to my feet. Leaving the road, we crossed a field and entered the edge of a wood. The Tartar horsemen dismounted. The one with the red hair, leaving the others, walked a short distance away and, drawing

a dagger, ordered me to come to him and be killed.

It sounds laughable in the telling, but it was just like that, the red-haired one inviting me to come and be killed, the others standing close to me, grinning. The actual experience, however, was far from being funny. I realized that they were up to some Tartar game that would afford them a world of amusement and would end with my death and mutilation.

Of course, I would not voluntarily approach the Tartar who held the drawn dagger, and I stood where I was. For a time I was horribly afraid, so much so that my fears alone served to root me to the spot where I stood. My tormentors appeared to be in no hurry and stood looking, with broad smiles, at me. Then my fear changed to a feeling of weary indifference and the conviction that life was not worth living after all. I felt it was very sad that this was so, when life might be so beautiful. I became aware of birds singing in the woods. I saw the sunlight spotting the ground beneath the trees, yellow sunlight that moved and flickered among deep shadows. A soft wind stirred the leaves. It was not the time or place for hate or murder. I wanted to be left alone, I wanted to forget everything of the past, to lie down, and rest, and never again to see hateful things. Particularly, I wanted to blot from my sight and memory the huge Tartar who, with his white teeth gleaming horribly through his disgusting beard, stood smiling and awaiting me with a bared dagger in his hand.

I know not how long I stood thus, when suddenly

one of the Tartars struck me with a whip. I started to speak. I was pushed violently and fell. Even as I was falling there came to my mind, like a flash, memories of my old Russian regiment, memories of how in great battles, when we were surrounded and almost overwhelmed by the enemy, we had gone mad with rage and the lust of battle and had torn our way through all opposition. Fear left me. I wanted only to kill. When I fell, my hand had come in contact with a sizable stone. Clutching this, with a yell, I sprang to my feet and hurled it with such force at the Tartar nearest me that he was knocked down. Immediately I became the center of a struggle, in which I bit, kicked and clawed. I heard a shout in Turkish and was sent crashing to the ground with several Tartars on top of me. Until I regained my feet I did not know what had occasioned my overthrow and was expecting to be attacked again. It came to me while I was on the ground that the Tartars would have time to draw their daggers and make short work of me before I could close again with them. As I got to my feet, expecting each second to feel their steel between my ribs, I saw a Turkish officer sitting on his horse. It was he who had shouted and had overthrown us by dashing into us with his horse. He pointed to me with his scimitar and demanded an explanation of what was going on. The Tartars joined loud voices in misrepresenting the facts and in calling on Allah to witness the truth of their statements. The Turk fingered his scimitar significantly and bade

them be silent. They stopped their clatter. I was winded and had to gasp out my words, but they came none the less rapidly for that. I told my story truthfully, stressing the point of my having had a letter to the commandant.

The Turk led us back to the road, where we found another Turkish officer evidently of high rank. He listened to the report made by the first officer and ordered us to follow into the village. We arrived at the office of the commandant. The two officers entered. With the Tartars, I was detained outside the office, under guard of several soldiers. Within a few minutes an orderly summoned me within. The superior officer, who proved to be the commandant himself, was seated at a table with an open letter in his hand. He shook hands with me, expressed regret at the treatment I had received from the Tartars, and told me that the letter he held in his hands proved the truth of my story. "Now," he said, "for the Tartars!" He led me out of the office into the yard. The Tartars were lying on the ground, bound hand and foot. Standing over each of them was a Turkish soldier armed with a large stick. Tartar women, who in their eagerness to see what was going on had thrown back their veils, were peering over the wall that enclosed the yard. At an order from the commandant the soldiers began beating the Tartars. The latter squirmed and screamed. The women raised a great uproar with their shrieks and pleadings that mercy be shown their men. The punishment continued until I

thought it must be the intention of the commandant to have the seven men beaten to death. He invited me to take a stick and flog them. I could have found no pleasure in doing so and begged to be excused.

As the flailing progressed, the commandant became incensed and execrated all the Tartars, even those of past generations. Perhaps he had had trouble with Tartars—he evidently hated the breed. I surmised that it was because of the pleasure he obviously derived from giving vent to his hatred that he was having them so thoroughly thrashed, rather than because of the indignities they had inflicted on me. At last order was given the soldiers to desist. The Tartars were ordered to prison. They had to be carried away.

After I had been given food the commandant asked what he could do for me. I told him that if possible I had better return to Karaklis, as I was in no condition to undertake again the journey to Erivan. I reasoned that I would be unable to overtake my wife, and that after the events of the day I would be a marked man, that the Tartars would surely waylay and kill me just as soon as I was no longer under the protection of the Turks. When I expressed my desire, he informed me that a wagon-train was leaving for Karaklis within the hour and that by going with it I would be assured of protection.

While I waited to depart, I talked with the commandant. He had the size and build of a wrestler. As he talked he twisted his cropped mustache with one huge hand and then the other. Each of his hands

was as large as both of mine. Upon learning that I had been in Russia at the outbreak of the revolution, he showed great interest. He questioned me closely about the events in Russia at that time.

As though in explanation of the invasion of Armenia in which he was then participating he said: "You know my government is not now conducting a war against Armenia. At the treaty of Brest-Litovsk the Russians ceded to Turkey the districts of Kars, Eri-van and Batoum; and we are merely occupying that which is ours by treaty." I had no desire to engage with him in a political discussion, and so refrained from retorting that the Russians had no right to cede what was not theirs. Instead, I said that I wished only for the ending of the war, that I might return to my home in Azerbaijan.

When the time came for my departure, he wished me a safe journey and expressed the hope that there would soon be an end to war, so that we could all live in peace and security.

The Arab Karaklis commandant was of course astonished to see me again. When he heard the story, he despatched an order commanding that the Tartars be brought to him. He then summoned his interpreter, my friend, Hamadian, and placed me in his care.

The next morning I was sent for by the commandant. As I passed through the yard in which the building containing his headquarters was located, I noticed standing there under guard those Tartars who had attempted to kill me. An orderly announced my

presence, and the commandant came out into the yard. He greeted me and then inquired of the Tartars which one of them was leader of their band. The one with the red beard, he who had invited me to come and be killed, was shoved forward by the others. The Arab looked him up and down for a moment. "In attempting to murder a man who was under my protection you defied the authority of a Turkish officer." Saying this, he drew a pistol. The Tartar looked confused and turned his eyes toward his companions. He was about to say something, but before a word could escape his lips, the Arab had sent a bullet into his head. The Tartar fell as though struck with an ax. His companions appealed for mercy. The Arab glared at them for a moment, and then ordered them to return to their village and never again offend him. In a panic of terror they crowded through the gate of the yard, the while casting fearful backward glances toward their dead leader and his executioner.

The Arab silently surveyed the scene for a few moments. Chickens scratched about in the dust of the yard. Near by a dog was barking. A cart rumbled over the stones of the street. Impassive as statues, the guard of soldiers remained standing at attention. The dead Tartar lay with his head in a pool of mud and blood, his beard still setaceous and now crimsoned.

The commandant, beckoning me to follow him, entered his office. He seated himself, gestured me to a chair, rolled and lighted a cigarette, inhaled deeply,

and spoke: "That finishes that, and now, my friend, for you. We have established an automobile service between here and Akstafa. A car leaves here to-day; and as I must go to Akstafa myself, I will be able to see you through our lines, after which you should have little difficulty, for the country beyond is deserted."

Within an hour we were whisked away, and it was not long before I had thanked the Arab for his kindness to me, had bade him good-by, and was again, on foot, making another effort to reach Erivan.

There are times when, in an effort to accomplish some seemingly simple thing, one is beset with continued misfortune and difficulty, until it seems that one is battling against the flow of fated events. It had been that way with me in Karaklis. There are other times when one's goal is attained as easily as plucking a fruit from a tree. So it was with me in this journey to Erivan. I had expected to be confronted with every imaginable obstacle, and instead I found no difficulty beyond the long walk involved.

Upon my arrival in Erivan I found that there was still an Armenian Army there. I reported to military headquarters and told my story. I was instructed to make a detailed written report. When I had completed this, I was given a two weeks' furlough. I spent this time in Erivan. I sought throughout the city for my wife, but could find no trace of her, until one day a man who had recently arrived from Dilijan came to me with tidings of her. He brought me the

good news that she was safe and living with friends in that town.

At the expiration of my furlough I was ordered to Novo Bayaset, there to join the first regiment. Novo Bayaset is a village on the shore of Lake Sevan. It is a large village as mountain villages go, a designless confusion of low stone huts crowded together on a narrow shelf of comparatively level land between the waters of the lake and the tremendous mountains of Zangazour. It was not an entertaining or otherwise pleasant place in which to live for any great length of time. Since there were no other accommodations, soldiers and officers were quartered in the houses of the peasants. We had to content ourselves with such food as the peasants would or could provide. They were our commissary. It was a hardship on the peasants and also on the officers. I spent two months there doing very little work and profiting by the opportunity for rest and relaxation. During this time the news reached us that English troops had come to the Caucasus and were driving the Turks out of the country. This was in 1918.

We next heard that all of Armenia, with the exception of the district of Kars, had been freed and that my regiment was to proceed to Alexandropol, where it was to join with an English force that had driven the Turks out of Alexandropol and was about to advance against the great fortress of Kars. Cheerful and rejoicing, we marched to Erivan and there took train to Alexandropol.

The English were in possession of the town. The English soldiers were black men from India, though their officers were white. They were fine troops and splendidly equipped. They had everything in abundance, including artillery, machine-guns and tanks, doctors to care for the sick and wounded, medical supplies, blankets, everything in fact that we Armenians had so badly needed.

In the advance on the Kars the English troops went ahead. The Armenian forces followed them. The Turks did not fight, but merely retreated before us. In this way we entered the ancient fortified city that had once been the capital of an Armenian kingdom, that had been the scene of innumerable battles and sieges, and that still was the keystone in the defenses of the country.

Great swarms of peasants who had come out of their hiding-places on the retreat of the Turks followed our army as it advanced. They were gruesome creatures that had been men, women and children—now only the semblance of such—starved and in rags, their emaciated bodies covered with festering sores. They dogged the footsteps of the army, scavenging and thieving. They entered into the city with the army and immediately began plundering the stores that had been left by the Turks. The attempt on the part of the English commander to prevent this resulted in *mêlées* in which several English soldiers were injured. The looters were emboldened by the fact that the soldiers were under orders not to shoot

or use their bayonets upon the refugees. Finally, two soldiers were killed. This so enraged the English commander that he gave orders that all robbers be shot on sight. A number of peasants were killed on the day this order was given, but following that there was no further trouble.

Everywhere the Turks retreated without fighting before the advance of the English, until the former had abandoned all of their conquests and Armenia was free of hostile invaders. The English were just in their treatment of all people. They protected Moslems equally with Christians. They even put Turks and Tartars in positions of authority in districts where Moslems predominated. This policy was greatly resented by the Armenians.

As long as the English remained in the country they were the real government and authority. The government formed by the Dashnack Party was a government in name only. The English did not remain for long, however, and when they left, the Dashnacks again had full control.

There was a recurrence of jealousy, hate and disension. Many men were murdered by their political foes. No one of importance was free from espionage, or knew but that at any moment he might be executed by some *mauserist* with a mandate from a secret tribunal. Terrible vengeance was taken upon Tartars, Kurds and Turks. Their villages were destroyed and they themselves were slain or driven out of the country.

The Molocans and Dukabors, those peasant exiles from Russia on behalf of their strange religion, were much oppressed. They had been the most industrious and the most prosperous of the peasants in all the Caucasus. They lived in communal villages, held most of their property in common, and worked in cooperation with one another. They worked hard; they practised thrift; they prospered. Their houses were far superior to those of the Armenian peasants, and their cattle and horses were the best in the country.

The horse of the Armenian peasant is not much larger than a pony and is used for riding only. Farm work is done by oxen. The exiled Russians used huge draft horses for their farm work and in consequence could accomplish a great deal more and do much better work than could the Armenians. The great strength of their horses enabled the Russians to plow with iron plows that broke the soil deeply and turned it over; whereas the Armenians used an implement but little in advance of a pointed stick with which they could merely scratch the surface of the soil. When it became necessary to plow deeper than this, in order that the soil produce at all, they had recourse to a great wooden plow requiring eighteen oxen.

During the war the Molocans and Dukabors were not molested in their persons by the Turks or Tartars. There are two reasons for this: first, being Russians they are not hated by the Mohammedans as the Ar-

menians are; second, as they have no churches in their villages and since they will not fight, the Mohammedans do not believe that they are Christians.

The fanatical Dashnacks hated the Turks above all others and then in order of diminishing intensity: Tartars, Kurds and Russians. The Russian exiles were defenseless and easy game, and the government continually requisitioned against them for equipment, supplies and the services of their men and horses for work of all kinds. It is true that the needs of the country were great. Requisitions had to be made, not however in the spirit of persecution that characterized the methods of the government.

The stupidity of the government's courses was later manifest when Bolshevist propaganda began to make itself felt. By that time the persecuted Russians were eager to accept any road of escape from the power of the Dashnacks, and so they welcomed Bolshevism and gave aid to the agents of its propaganda.

Regardless of whether or not they made the best use of their power and opportunity, the Armenian people under the leadership of the Dashnacks were again masters in their own land, which was as it should be. As for myself, I was doing very well. My wife had rejoined me from Dilijan, where a son had been born to us. I gave a feast in Kars to celebrate our reunion, and the birth and christening of our son. We named the boy Serajev.

CHAPTER XIV

KURDS AND TARTARS

SHORTLY after my wife had rejoined me, I was given a small independent command and assigned to the village of Kagisman, where it was my duty to guard the roads and the surrounding country from robbers. At that time the people who had fled before the Turkish invasion were returning to their homes and villages. They came from wherever they had found refuge: from distant places, from secret caves, and from lonely mountain valleys. Wearily they dragged themselves back across the bleak uplands of Kars. Many who had participated in the flight would return no more, and these, the survivors, had paid a bitter price for life. The privations they had suffered showed in their faces and mien, but gone was the expression of hopelessness and terror that had marked them in their going, for now they were returning to their homes. The war was over. Hope beckoned them on.

Kurds and Tartars continually swept down from the mountains or crossed the Turkish border and fell on isolated Armenian villages. The returning refugees were easy prey for them. The raiders traveled

fast and it was impossible to tell where or when they would strike a blow. The best we could do was to patrol the roads and station a guard in each of the villages we thought would most likely be attacked.

Topographically most of Armenia is ideally arranged for the operation of bandits. Everywhere close at hand throughout the country are great mountain ranges. These mountains are continuous with the mountain ranges of Turkey, Persia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. They are a base of operations and furnish a secure retreat for robber bands. Armenia is bounded on all sides by Moslem nations, the border inhabitants of which are for the most part Kurds and Tartars, peoples who through all time have followed banditry and regarded it as an honorable profession. War affords them great opportunities. While the contending armies are strong they raid and plunder under the guise of partisans of one side or the other. If, as happened during the Great War, the armies of both sides are weakened through defeats and demoralization, the bandits frankly make war on their own behalf. Different bands coalesce until an army is formed. A strong man comes to the fore who leads the army to conquests of wide territory. Such was the case following the Great War, when outlaw bands of Kurds conquered a large part of Persia and for a time threatened to overthrow the Persian Government. To this day the tribes of Kurds who make their homes on the slopes of Mount Ararat are unsubdued, and it is seldom that a month passes but a raiding

party of these wild nomads crosses the Arax River into Armenia and, falling on some luckless village, murders a number of the inhabitants and makes off with their cattle.

Let us suppose that it is night in an Armenian village, a village such as is typical of the country. In daylight it appears an earth-colored, amorphous blot of huddled huts at the foot of a desolate mountain. There is silence over the village, broken only by the occasional barking of restless dogs. Within the huts the people sleep stretched out on the floor or on a low wooden platform. The air is heavy and pungent with the odors of cattle and sheep. There is the soft rhythmic sound of bovine chewing. A cock bestirs itself on its perch for a moment; a lamb bleats and is answered by its dam. Under cover of night a band of horsemen are approaching the village. They ride in silence, save for the thud and clink of the animals' hoofs against the stones of the road. At a distance from the village the horsemen halt. Low-voiced orders are given, and the band divides into a number of groups, each to take an assigned station. In the east a rent appears in the black coat of night, and western mountain peaks are a gleam. The stars fade and day dawns.

The riders of the night have disappeared. Men and horses are concealed, some behind great boulders that have rolled from the steep mountainsides out onto the plain, others in deep gullies worn in the ground by the freshets of countless years. Within the village

there is a stirring of life. The sleepers rise and roll up the blankets and sheepskins which are their beds. There is an impatient crowing of cocks, the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. There are the voices of children. The women light fires of dried dung and prepare the morning meal. From every hut issues a streamer of white smoke. The streamers join, and rising in the still morning air, obscure the mountain-side. Women and girls go with clay pitchers to the brook. They milk the ewes and the cows. Boys herd sheep and cattle preparatory to driving them to pasture, and the men prepare for their work in the fields.

Dawn is yet but a promise of the coming day. Night still trails its shadow along the base of the mountain, whose peak is already alight. A shepherd's pipe sounds sweet and shrill and then is silent. All the village becomes hushed in the troubled consciousness of a new and menacing note. Then audible and understood comes the thudding of galloping hoofs. A cry of alarm is raised, to be repeated in panic voices. There is a wild scramble for the shelter of the huts. A whirlwind of mounted men breaks upon the village. The riders flourish their sword-like daggers, fire their rifles, shout the glory of their God and his prophet, and slay all who come in their way. They remain for only a short time, but when they are gone, the cattle and sheep, the wealth of the village, have departed with them. Here and there lie the bodies of the slain, a shepherd boy with his flute still gripped in his hand, a girl with her water-jug lying broken be-

side her, an old man huddled between the wheels of his oxcart.

I had been at my post in Kagisman only a few weeks when I received instructions to secure the submission of a Tartar village that was situated out of my district. My orders informed me that the Tartars were a menace to a neighboring Armenian village. When an Armenian and a Tartar village are adjacent to each other, you have a situation that gives rise to much trouble in times when the country is disturbed. The stronger takes advantage of the opportunity to oppress the weaker. The weak retaliate or are said to have done so, and are massacred. A job of cold-blooded butchery requires some justification, however slight; although it is remarkable how easily and quickly the necessary hate, envy and resolution can be engendered. Since I did not apprehend any difficulty from the Tartars, who, considering the location of their village, were probably in greater need of my protection than were their Armenian neighbors, I took with me but eight men. I established myself in an Armenian village that was barely four versts from the Tartar village. I sent two of my soldiers to summon to me for a conference the head men of the Tartars. My men did not return. I waited until the following day, and then, taking the rest of my men with me and bearing a white flag as evidence of our peaceful intentions, I started for the village where presumably my men were being detained.

As we approached the village we were fired upon.

I had not sufficient force to make an attack and so retired. I despatched a messenger to Kars to communicate the details of the situation to headquarters. It seems that, on receipt of my message at headquarters, the Turkish consul at Kars was informed of the trouble, for a few days later he arrived on the scene. He went to the Tartar village, and on his return reported to me that my men were safe, but were being held as hostages. He said that the Tartars wished to leave the country and go to Turkey and that, if permitted to do so unmolested, they would not harm my envoys. I had no way of stopping the Tartars if they undertook to leave and no authority to give them permission to go to Turkey. In view of this I was compelled to send another messenger to Kars requesting reinforcements and fuller authority.

The following morning I learned that the Tartars had abandoned their village during the night. I immediately rode over to the village and entered it. I found my men dead. What tortures they had endured may be left to the imagination. I found them with the skin removed from their bodies. They had been flayed alive. Some Tartar chief would have a highly valued pair of saddle blankets.

Incidents such as the above furnished the Dashnack Government with the needed excuse for undertaking a war of reprisal against the Tartars. This war quickly developed into one of extermination. Horrible things happened, things that words can neither describe nor make you understand. The memory of

scenes I witnessed and of incidents in which I participated still makes me feel sick. But war is always horrible, for it liberates all the fear and hate and deviltry that are in men.

As the Turks had solved the Armenian problem in Turkey by slaying or driving the Armenians out of the country, so we now proceeded to solve the Tartar problem in Armenia. We closed the roads and mountain passes that might serve as ways of escape for the Tartars, and then proceeded in the work of extermination. Our troops surrounded village after village. Little resistance was offered. Our artillery knocked the huts into heaps of stones and dust, and when the villages became untenable and the inhabitants fled from them into the fields, bullets and bayonets completed the work. Some of the Tartars escaped, of course. They found refuge in the mountains, or succeeded in crossing the border into Turkey. The rest were killed. And so it is that the whole length of the border-land of Russian Armenia from Nakhitchevan to Akhalkalaki, from the hot plains of Ararat to the cold mountain plateaus of the north, is dotted with the mute mournful ruins of Tartar villages. They are quiet now, those villages, except for the howling of wolves and jackals that visit them to paw over the scattered bones of the dead.

In the capture and sack of one village, there occurred an incident illustrating the hate which made unavoidable the massacres that were common to both sides.

There was a giant Tartar who fought well. I saw him spring from behind a hut into the midst of a group of Armenian soldiers and with a clubbed rifle brain men, left and right. Shots were fired at him, but he continued to swing his rifle and shout, "Allah, Allah," the while he battled. A soldier succeeded in driving his bayonet through the Tartar. I saw the point of the weapon emerge through his back. The Tartar grabbed the muzzle of the rifle to which the bayonet was attached. The Armenian tried in vain to wrest it from him. In the struggle the Armenian inadvertently stepped in close to the Tartar, who instantly let go his hold on the rifle and clutched his opponent by the throat. By this time a circle of soldiers had formed about the combatants, urging them on with shouts and laughter. They both fell to the ground. Another soldier seized a rock and pounded the Tartar's head with it. The Tartar ceased to struggle and lay still. The Armenian who had bayoneted him sprang to his feet, wrested the weapon from the Tartar's body, and, raising it to his lips, licked it clean of blood, exclaiming in Russian, "*Slodkey! Slodkey!*" (Sweet.)

One evening I passed through what had been a Tartar village. Among the ruins a fire was burning. I went to the fire and saw seated about it a group of soldiers. Among them were two Tartar girls, mere children. The girls were crouched on the ground, crying softly with suppressed sobs. Lying scattered over the ground were broken household utensils and

other furnishings of Tartar peasant homes. There were also bodies of the dead.

I was late in the matter of the girls, but I did what I could for them. I spoke to them in their own tongue and assured them that they had nothing more to fear. When they understood that I intended them no harm and sought only to help them, they gave way to their grief and wailed piteously. They were in terror of the soldiers and would not be comforted as long as they were near. I took the girls along with me, leaving the soldiers in an ugly mood; for they considered that I was depriving them of what had become a recognized prerequisite of victory. A verst or two further on I came to another village that had met with the same fate as the first. As it was now dark, I decided to spend the night there. I shared the food that I had with the two girls, found them a shelter and another for myself. I was soon asleep. In the night I was awakened by the persistent crying of a child. I arose and went to investigate. A full moon enabled me to make my way about and revealed to me all the wreck and litter of the tragedy that had been enacted. Guided by the child's crying, I entered the yard of a house, which I judged from its appearance must have been the home of a Turkish family. There in a corner of the yard I found a woman dead. Her throat had been cut. Lying on her breast was a small child, a girl about a year old. I soaked some bread in water that I warmed for the purpose and fed the child until she would eat no more. I placed her for the night in

the care of the two Tartar girls. The next day I had an opportunity, of which I availed myself, to send all three unfortunates to Kars, with instructions that they be placed in the American orphanage there.

Shortly after the cleaning up of the Tartar villages I returned with my regiment to Kars, where for a short time I enjoyed a period of comfort and peace in the companionship of my wife and son. The little fellow was developing rapidly and was for me a never-failing source of joy. I felt that the hopes and plans and ambitions I had held for myself had been irretrievably destroyed; but now as I held my son in my arms, his little fingers tugging at my mustache, my heart was sweetened with dreams for him. I would realize through him the things that I had yearned for and struggled to attain.

It was during this interlude between wars that the Armenian Government received from the English a great shipment of cannon, rifles, ammunition, food, blankets and much besides, so that we were then able to expand and better equip our forces. Following this event I was assigned to patrol duty along a section of the Turkish Armenian border. This proved to be monotonous, lonely, uneventful work. The Turks were quiet and appeared to be thoroughly subdued.

At this time, on the face of things, Armenia would have been judged to be in a favorable position. True it was, the country had been ravaged from end to end and the people impoverished to a point where they had nothing more to lose. Famine and pestilence took

daily toll, lengthening the long roll of those who had died. The old who had endured beyond their strength and the young who had no strength with which to endure were dying like flies at the coming of frost. But in spite of all calamities Armenia was again free and at peace. A great territory more than sufficient for our needs, was ours. We possessed friends among the powerful nations of the world who were pledged to protect and assist us. Our ancient enemies, the Turks, were badly beaten. It was understood that their country was to be dismembered, forever removing the ancient menace to us. Russia, who, under the guise of protecting us from the Turks, had swallowed a large part of our country and incorporated it into her imperial system, was prostrate under the Bolsheviks and seemingly helpless.

The fair promise of those days was never realized. Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia engaged in a three-sided quarrel. The Georgians invaded Armenia in an effort to seize Armenian territory. Our men fought like heroes. They defeated the Georgians in every battle, drove them out of Armenia and half across Georgia, and would have captured Tiflis had not the English intervened to prevent this.

The Armenians in Baku, supported by the English, seized that great oil city and massacred twenty-five thousand of the Tartar population. The Armenians paid dearly for this when, a short time later, the Turks captured the city and massacred an equal or greater number of Armenians.

The incapacity of the government established by the Dashnack Party, combined with the pitiable condition of the people and the long years of war that our soldiers had endured, made of Armenia a fruitful field for Bolshevist propaganda. The communists seized their opportunities and were successful in undermining the morale of the army. Intrigue and dissensions among the great powers who were our allies left us without the support we needed and had counted on. Turkey saw its chance and again sent an army into our country.

CHAPTER XV

MEN ARE LIKE THAT

THE new Turkish invasion came as a surprise to us in the army, though perhaps our leaders knew what to expect. The Turks evidently had been assembling their troops close to the frontier for some time, for without warning or other preliminary they threw strong forces across the border at different points and began a converging movement on the city of Kars. We who guarded the frontier could make no effective resistance and fell back expecting that a determined stand would be made at Kars, strongly fortified, the station of our main forces.

I was in the line of defense to the north of the town when the Turks captured the city and its fortifications and incidentally came into possession of the great mass of supplies that the English had sent us; consequently I was not a witness of what took place. The story, however, is well known and soon told. When the Turks appeared before the city (they were merely an advance guard and not their main army), our soldiers in Kars threw down their arms and fled for their lives. Many hid themselves within the city, later to be hunted out and killed. Most of them

joined a large part of the Armenian population in a wild stampede to Alexandropol. The surrender of the city, without any attempts at defense, came with such surprise to the Turks that they were unable to take immediate advantage of the situation. This gave time for the escape of many of the people of the city.

It is often asked why it was that the Armenian Army abandoned a strongly fortified city, the key to the defenses of the country, without striking a blow. A true and full answer can never be given. Some claim that Bolshevik propaganda was responsible. No doubt it had something to do with it, for Bolshevik agents had been long at work among our men, picturing to them a perfect state in which all men, including the Turks, were brothers. Our soldiers were but peasants in uniform, shrewd and suspicious but densely ignorant. For all their shrewdness they were easily influenced by words and were eager to believe in good tidings. But, Bolshevik propaganda is not a sufficient explanation. I believe that many causes were responsible: war weariness; reaction from the recent campaign against the Tartars; the fear of reprisals by the Turks; the old dread of the Turkish name; Bolshevism; and above all lack of proper training and discipline among both officers and men. Whatever the cause, Kars was again in Turkish hands, and the Armenian Army and people were again in flight.

There is an amusing story now told that had its birth in the capture of Kars. It is to the effect that when the Turkish general who captured the city dis-

covered how great was the prize in military stores of English origin that had fallen to him, he requested the American representative in Turkey, Admiral Bristol, to thank the English and assure them of the appreciation of the Turkish army for so magnificent a donation.

The fall of Kars, news of which reached us within an hour of the event, left the troops with whom I was serving in an untenable position. The men themselves gave evidence of the low morale of the entire army by precipitate desertion. My own concern was for my wife and son, whom I had left in Kars. I mounted my horse and hastened to the road which the fugitives would have to take in the flight to Alexandropol. Reaching this road, I rode back and forth along it, vainly seeking my family. The road was crowded with soldiers and civilians. They were on foot and on horseback, in carts and in *furgons*—men, women and children. Sheep and cattle added to the congestion. Every one carried something. Even cows had been pressed into service as pack-animals and bore swaying burdens of household goods. A soldier hailed me and shouted that he had seen my son in a *furgon* somewhere back on the road. I turned my horse toward Kars and rode as rapidly as I could through the stream of refugees. The poor victims of war and terror, human beings and dumb brutes were in some places along the road crowded together, in others strung out for versts; but all were hurrying and casting fearful glances backward. So great was

the terror of many of them that they had abandoned children and the old and the ill along every verst of the way.

I passed the last of the fugitives and entered a desolate region abandoned by them and not yet occupied by the enemy. Broken *furgons* and carts lay along the sides of the road. I continued until I came almost to Kars, and then, discouraged and despairing, I turned back along the way I had come. I sat my tired horse, indifferent to everything but my own wretchedness. The poor animal, tired out, plodded slowly along. I was aroused by the crying of a child. A *furgon* with one wheel smashed was standing half overturned by the side of the road. The child's voice seemed to come from it. I went to the *furgon*. It was filled with rugs and other household furnishings. I leaned down from my saddle and lifted a rug. Beneath it I found my son. He was indescribably dirty, and for clothing had only a red handkerchief around his head. I had lost him, and fate had presented him to me again. It did not matter that he was dirty and naked.

I thought that my wife might be near and so I called her name and searched for her among the rocks. Silence. At that point the road followed the course of a stream, between steep cliffs. I scaled the cliff on one side of the road and explored the ground above, but I could not find her.

Turkish cavalry might at any moment come along the road, I feared. I knew that my horse was in no

condition for a race. It would not do, I thought, to stay any longer where I was. I took my son in my arms, remounted my horse and spurred the poor beast on. In time, I arrived at Alexandropol, where I placed my son in the care of my wife's parents.

The town of Alexandropol is situated in a region the topography of which may be likened to a saucer, for it consists of a broad plateau surrounded by a rim of mountains. Allagoz, the highest peak in this encircling mountain barrier, has an elevation of over thirteen thousand feet. Across the floor of the plateau, which is as level as the top of a table, the Arpa River has cut a deep, wide, sinuous canyon. It is an ancient country in that it has been inhabited since before the time of recorded history, as the cuneiform inscriptions carved on the face of the rock walls of the canyon testify. The numerous villages that nestle among the foothills of the mountains on the edge of the plain and along the river are now as they probably were some thousands of years ago when the strange writings that are now venerated by the peasants were inscribed on the rocks.

The climate is dry, almost semi-arid; but in the spring there are rains sufficient to give birth in the mountains to little streams that rush and tumble, in their short but yearly recurrent life, down to the plain, there to flow sedately into the greater waters of the Arpa, carrying with them something of the soil of the plain. This process, continuing through the ages, has furrowed the level floor of the plateau with

gullies and miniature canyons of sufficient depth to conceal mounted men.

Extending along the bluffs of the Arpa for several versts was a huge system of fortifications built by the Russians, not so much to protect Alexandropol as to serve as a depot and base for the still greater fortifications of Kars. Our army, after a hasty reorganization, occupied these forts. We strung wire and dug many versts of trenches along the rim of the canyon, so that by the time the Turks appeared we presented to them an impregnable front. But the Turks had no intention of making a determined attack on our prepared positions. They opened on us with artillery, while a small body of their infantry made a feint attack. This was merely to hold our attention and keep us occupied. In the meantime their main force marched around our flank and by the time we were aware of the maneuver were threatening our rear and our line of retreat. Our fortifications and prepared positions were now useless, but the natural gullies that the spring freshets had eroded in the floor of the plain proved serviceable trenches, which enabled us to hold the enemy back throughout the day. That night we evacuated the city. The following day found us in retreat hotly pressed by the Turks.

I left my command when the retreat started and hastened to the house where I had left my son with his mother's people. I found every one in the house busily engaged in secreting valuables and food in places where they hoped the Turks would be unable

to find them. The men of the family had already gone. This reassured rather than alarmed me, as I reasoned that the presence of men would merely serve to provoke the Turks. Besides, representatives of the American Committee of Relief were established in the city and they could use their influence with greatest effect in protecting women and children who were entirely dependent. I exacted a promise that the boy would be cared for tenderly. It was high time that I rejoin my men, but Serajev was crying and I had not the heart to leave him so. I held him in my arms and sang to him until he fell asleep. I kissed him farewell, laid him in his cradle and hurried away to rejoin my company. My wife was in Kars in the power of the Turks. I was parting from my son. When I would again see either of them God only knew.

The Turks soon made contact with our retreating forces, and we fought a rearguard action with them across the plain of Alexandropol to the shelter of the mountains. We made the Turks fight for every foot of their advance. The gullies again served us well, for they afforded us strong positions, from which we could hold up the enemy troops until they brought up their artillery or threatened to cut in behind us. The last fight, during the retreat, took place in the Djadjour Pass. This pass is at an elevation of more than seven thousand feet. It is a narrow, winding, precipitous way, hemmed in by lofty peaks. It is an ideal position for defense, and the Turks had to pay dearly before capturing it. During this last en-

gagement I received a bullet through the leg just above the knee. With other wounded, I was placed in an oxcart and sent to Karaklis.

The undercurrent of influence that had resulted in the surrender of Kars was still running strong. We lost considerable of our strength daily through desertions, and as a result of low morale had to abandon positions that with determination we could have held. Many of our soldiers had their homes in Alexandropol district. They felt that the Turks, if stubbornly opposed, would retaliate with massacres in the villages. For this reason they were reluctant to offer any real resistance to the advance of the invaders beyond what was necessary to secure their own retreat. As it was, scarcely a village escaped a massacre of greater or lesser magnitude. The able-bodied men of the villages were with the army or in flight; and so the victims of Turkish savagery were for the greater part women and children.

While I was in Karaklis, recuperating from my wound, a boy came into the town and gave a full account of a particularly horrible atrocity, a massacre of which he was the sole survivor. The Turks are gone now, but the evidence proving the truth of the tale told by the boy still remains and can be seen to this day: a valley littered with the bones of five hundred women and children.

Within a verst of the Djadjour Pass is a narrow valley walled in by the steep sides of two lofty mountain peaks. A swift stream brawls and tumbles along

this valley, to plunge with many leaps on to the plain far below, there to irrigate the innumerable little fields of barley and wheat with which the level lands are checkerboarded, and to turn the ponderous wheels of the village mills.

The valley, sheltered from the winds and moistened by the waters of the stream, is a natural garden of flowers in a cold, bleak, wild region of desolate mountains, barren of all verdure except a thick growth of grass during the short summer, that attracts shepherd boys with their flocks hither from the plain.

Into this high mountain valley the Turks one day drove some five hundred Armenian women and children collected from near-by villages. As they were being herded along the mountain trail to the scene of their doom they no doubt realized the fate that was in store for them. Prayers arose from their terror-stricken hearts to God and to their captors for deliverance and for mercy. Mothers with babes in their arms, raised these little ones toward the heavens, across which drifted billowing masses of fleecy clouds, as though offering hostages to their God, but the heavens were as serene and as unresponsive as the eternal mountains about them.

Five hundred human beings! Toil-worn peasants, barefooted and clothed in pitiful rags, who were less even than pawns in the game of war! They were driven along with kicks and blows. Some refused to continue on this march to death and threw themselves down with wild agonized lamentations and poignant

sobs. They wet the dust of the road with their tears, they beat their foreheads against the ground and clutched the earth with their fingers. A blow from a whip or rifle-butt, a kick, or a prod from a bayonet, and the tortured rose and continued on and gained a few minutes of grace, or they died where they groveled. Examples were needed to spur on the laggards. Children clung to their mother's skirts and wailed in the contagion of fear. The worst ogre of their childhood imaginings had come true—the Turks.

All were herded into the narrow valley, trampling the flowers, stumbling over the stones, clinging and huddling together. They sought with their eyes their village homes far below them on the plain. There was no escape for them. The sides of the valley could not be scaled. Above and below were Turkish soldiers. The work of murder was begun. When it was over, the water of the stream could no longer flow in its old bed for the bodies that choked it; and so it spread over the valley floor and covered many of the dying and the dead.

In all those heaps of slain, only a boy lived. A blow from a clubbed rifle had flung him down unconscious. When he regained his senses, it was dark and all was quiet about him. Still dazed, he crawled out from under the bodies that were pinning him down. Spurred to the effort by the terror that gripped him he made his way out of the valley and finally to Karaklis, where he told his story. So it is with massacres.

Russian troops did terrible things in the Turkish villages. The world knows the fate of the Armenians in Turkey. We Armenians did not spare the Tartars. It is all a circle of hatred and revenge, an endless chain plunging ever farther into the depths and bringing forth the worst there is in human nature. If persisted in, the slaughtering of prisoners, the looting, and the rape and massacre of the helpless become commonplace actions expected and accepted as a matter of course. Men are like that. We Armenians, brutalized by the horrors we had endured and inflicted during our war with the Turks, were to be no more merciful toward one another in the civil war that was soon to come.

We live in a universe beyond the understanding. The serenity of God troubles the spirit of the thoughtful. I have been on the scenes of massacres where the dead lay on the ground, in numbers, like the fallen leaves in a forest. They had been as helpless and as defenseless as sheep. They had not died as soldiers die in the heat of battle, fired with ardor and courage, with weapons in their hands, and exchanging blow for blow. They had died as the helpless must, with their hearts and brains bursting with horror worse than death itself. The earth in such a spot should rot, and the air above it be black forever; but always the sun shines as warmly there, and over it the canopy of the blue sky spreads itself as protectingly as elsewhere. Birds sing as sweetly there, and flowers bloom with as much beauty.

CHAPTER XVI

DAYS OF WAITING

FOLLOWING the fight in Djadjour Pass, in which I was wounded, the army retreated to Karaklis. My wound healed rapidly and I was soon able to resume my duties. While convalescing, I took pleasure in visiting again the scenes of my experience while I was a prisoner of the Turks; the cellar where I had been in hiding; the prison; the field where I with my companion of the working party were to have been executed; the yard where I had been penned with others in preparation for the journey to Erzroom and where I had talked with the blacksmith who had murdered his wife and her lover. I think often of him and wonder what fate overtook him on the road to Erzroom.

I saw again my former soldier, Hamadian, who had so greatly befriended me. I was curious to know the origin of his influence with the Arab of Karaklis; but as he did not volunteer me any information on this point, I forebore questioning him.

The Turks advanced to Karaklis and we retreated to Dilijan and finally to Erivan. Soon after my arrival there with the army I met again the Arab. I

had received an order to report to headquarters. I was outside the building in which headquarters was established, walking about in a sort of enclosed yard and waiting to be summoned. A number of Turkish officers, prisoners, were present in the yard. One of the prisoners spoke my name. With difficulty I recognized in the prisoner my Arab. It was hard to believe that this ragged, dirty, emaciated man was the fine soldier I had known. We shook hands and kissed each other, much to the astonishment and indignation of several Armenian officers who were present. My brother officers were cordial enough, however, when I explained that the man was an Arab and not a Turk and told them how he had befriended my wife and me in Karaklis. Late that day I was able to give my commandant an account of the circumstances. As a result he permitted me to assume responsibility for the Arab, paroling him in my care. I was happy at being able to show the Arab some measure of appreciation. I provided him with clothes and took him to live with me in the rooms where I was quartered. Within a week he had recovered from the abuses he had undergone as a prisoner and became an agreeable companion. He was reticent and moody; but these qualities fitted well with my own spirit at the time, for I was greatly worried as to the fate of my family and despondent because I was aware that there were forces at work which could lead only to further disaster to the army and to the country.

An occasional refugee from Alexandropol, where I had left my son, arrived in Erivan bringing word of the happenings in that unfortunate city. The reports never varied. They simply detailed the inevitable commonplaces of lust and brutality that are inseparable from conquest. Love and hate, selfishness and altruism flourish side by side in the same soil. One extreme invariably gives rise to the other. Charity prompts beggary and beggary promotes charity. It is as if man is not permitted to rise too high nor descend too low. So it was in Alexandropol, for as though to preserve the balance and prevent the simulation there of an utter hell on earth, the Americans had established in that city a refuge for children and had taken under their care and protection thousands of little ones who must otherwise have died. Also, the presence there of the Americans stayed the Turks in the commission of extreme atrocities within the city.

My work in Erivan kept me occupied and gave me something to think about besides my own troubles. I was busy in the efforts we were making to bring some order out of the confusion and demoralization into which the army had sunk. Bolshevist propagandists were at work among our men, promising them peace and plenty, promising them anything and everything that was calculated to make an appeal, and all without regard to the possibility of fulfillment. The Bolsheviks, of course, worked under cover. When their agents were caught, they were hanged or

shot without delay or formality. Our soldiers were in rags, half starved and desperate in their misery. They were willing to embrace without question any doctrine or course of action that promised them relief.

Like the Russians, we Armenians are great talkers. Our supreme joy is to make a speech. Talk is our chief diversion. Words have an inordinate influence on our thoughts and actions. If a man among us has a tongue sufficiently glib, though his head and heart be empty, he can make of himself a sage, a hero, or a prophet. With us, words have more force even than actions, and fair promises carry greater weight than good deeds. This is true to an incredible extent. Why! Since the Russians have again conquered Armenia and made of all of us, per force, good Bolsheviks, I have seen members of the American Committee of Relief stoned by the very ones they had saved from starvation and disease. It was not viciousness that prompted the casting of the stones. Far from it. It was rather an aspiration to attain to a higher morality by making a gesture against injustice. For had not the stone throwers been told that the Americans were capitalists and, therefore, oppressors and exploiters, and that there was some trick that returned them a profit, behind their seeming munificent charity and kindness? Unbelievable? Yes, if you have not witnessed it. I tell you, men are like that. It was at least partly because of this characteristic of our people that Bolshevism spread rapidly in the army.

Living the primitive life that we do, we Armenians have few sources of amusement outside of ourselves; consequently, conversation is our chief reliance against the monotony of existence and the boredom of continual work. A man needs other amusement than that of sitting in the sun, with his back against a stone wall, wriggling his toes in the warm sand. With us, talk fills the rôle that in more civilized and advanced countries is filled by the theater, the opera, museums and other such institutions; consequently, we lose no opportunity to talk or argue. This can be seen in the transactions of the simplest business matter. The purchase, for instance, of a sheep in the market-place becomes a social function, a feast of talk in which the public participates with as much earnestness and volubility as do the principals in the transaction.

The deal starts with a preliminary skirmish on the part of the would-be buyer to have the owner set a price on the animal, a struggle on the part of the owner to have the customer make an offer. If he who would purchase does make an offer, he names a sum that is ridiculous in its beggary; while if the owner sets a price, it is far in excess of what the sheep is worth and of what he expects to receive. The preliminaries over, the real action starts. Then the history of the seller, the buyer and the sheep is reviewed even to remote generations, and their future prophesied. The disputants become the center of a ring of crowding, talking, gesticulating people,

every one of whom has apparently known that particular sheep from the day it was born. Adjournment is taken to some place where tea may be had. The crowd trails along. Over a weak brew, hot from the samovar, the struggle is renewed. Finally the deal is consummated at a price that every one present knew all along would be agreed upon. The crowd scatters, happy and stimulated, seeking other interests. Everybody has had a good time. How often have I seen an American pay, without dispute, an outrageous price for some article and go off, leaving the seller not happy at receiving more than he expected, but sad because of having been deprived of an opportunity for debate and also, of course, regretful at not having asked a still greater price.

Wherever I have traveled I have always tried to understand the reason back of and accounting for what I saw. It is not enough to see merely the surface of things. It would not be enough for me to say that my people love to talk. It is necessary to explain, as I have, that it is to add some wealth to the poverty of their existence.

My fellow-officers at this time were forever engaged in unending discussions that wearied me to death when, in spite of myself, I was drawn into them. I was always glad to escape to my room and the quiet companionship of the Arab. One evening he related to me something of his history and explained how he came to know my former soldier, Hamadian, and to call him friend.

My room opened on a balcony overlooking Astorian Street, the main thoroughfare of Erivan. We had finished our evening meal and had adjourned to the balcony, there to enjoy, as was our custom before retiring for the night, a bottle of wine and sweet cakes. The deep quiet of evening was over the city. A golden moon hung in a purple sky. Across the plain, beyond the town, the eternal snow of Ararat's peak gleamed iridescent like fairy silver. The air was heavy and languorous with the scent of ripe fruit from the surrounding gardens. I was aware of the peace and beauty of the scene, but still my heart was sad with worries. My companion, probably divining my mood, touched my arm and began speaking:

"Ohanus, my friend, though many troubles beset us, still Allah is good. To every man is apportioned the exact measure of his fate. Who can avoid it to the extent that a single hair of his beard will thereby be saved beyond its day? Why, therefore, be heavy of heart because all things are not as you would have them? As well repine that there are not two moons in the sky."

The Arab refilled my glass with wine, pushed the plate of cakes toward me, and then rolled a cigarette for himself. When he had lighted this and inhaled deeply of the smoke, he continued:

"You are unhappy now mainly because you worry about the future. Why let it trouble your thoughts? He who, himself, tries to build the future to his desires is as one who writes a word in the sands of the

desert. The first passing moment obliterates the future of our design as the first passing wind erases words that we write in the sand. Come! I will tell you something of myself and how, through the will of Allah, it came about that I, an officer in the Turkish Army, at the appeal of an Armenian, spared you whom I knew to be an Armenian officer."

CHAPTER XVII

THE ARAB'S STORY

THE Arab raised his arm and pointed to Mount Ararat. His eyes gleamed, and the fierce eager expression of his face softened. "Far, far from here, far beyond great Ararat and farther still is a great desert, the land of my birth," he began. "I am an Arab of Damascus. Damascus is a gem of beauty. It is an oasis of gardens, among barren hills, on the edge of the desert. To the traveler, after days of journeying across the waterless waste, the first sight of the city, with its walls and white minarets gleaming among the verdure of its gardens, is as a glimpse into Paradise. It is a city as old as time, and always men of my house have dwelt there. My father, Abd-el-Rahman, is a merchant, as for generations were his fathers before him. He is a man of large affairs. There is scarcely a bazaar of importance, from Bokhara to Cairo, in which he has not connections. An important branch of his business was in Smyrna. To that city I was sent at the age of twenty, there to undergo tutelage in the details of business.

"At twenty a man is interested in many things other than trade, and in Smyrna were many lures;

and so if within the year I had not progressed greatly in the wisdom of commerce, I had at least gained much knowledge of the world of pleasures. I was young, well born and rich. Smyrna was like a beautiful woman welcoming to her arms and caressing such as I. It is a city as colorful as a rose, in a setting fit for romance, for love and passion. It lies there with its back resting against a mountain, and its feet dipped in the blue waters of the sea.

"All might have gone well and I have settled down eventually, with my interests centered in carpets and cotton goods, perfumes and tobacco, and the other articles of commerce in which we dealt, but Allah willed that I should come to know Ekrem Bey."

The Arab paused, and his eyes followed the march of a line of camels passing in the moonlit street below us. From the caravan came the tinkling of bells and the shuffling of padded feet. The Arab sighed. "The bells," he said, "are sweet to my ears. As a boy I traveled far with the camels, from Damascus to Kermanshah, to Teheran, to Bagdad and Ispahan."

The camel train passed; the Arab continued abruptly:

"Ekrem Bey was a Turk, a pig of a man, soft, fat, gross. His cheeks fell in folds to below his chin. He, too, was a merchant, and because it was to his interest he spared no effort to gain my good will. He had a villa on the outskirts of the city. It was situated well up the mountain and set in a walled garden. It was a pleasant spot, that he had chosen. From the

house you could see over the city and the harbor. I loved to watch from there the busy life of the quay and the coming and going of great ships from the strange lands of the west. In the garden, a splashing fountain cooled the air, and fine old trees cast a protecting shade.

“Our fate is decreed, and mere trifles serve to guide us unerringly to meet it, whether we will or not. In my case a carpet of Kermanshah and a dancing girl of Georgia were the instruments. The carpet was not a thing of the bazaars, but such a one as is met with only in the special trade in articles of superlative worth, that is altogether apart from the general buying and selling of commerce, and even in this trade such a carpet is but rarely seen. I was, of course, elated when it came into my hands. What was its history? Who knows? Perhaps for the span of a life it had graced the tents of nomad barbarians and for twice that time had looked down from the walls, or lay on the floor, of a sultan's harem.

“I took the carpet to the home of Ekrem Bey for his appraisal. Not a man in all Turkey was better qualified to state its value. Although I appreciated the rarity and worth of the carpet, it was, to me, after all, but an article to be disposed of in trade. But to the fat Turk it was something more. He pressed his face into its folds. He hugged it to his bosom and raised it to his flabby lips. He insisted that its advent into Smyrna must be celebrated with a feast. So he forthwith summoned numerous servants and

bade them prepare a sumptuous banquet in its honor.

“Since coming to Smyrna, the admonitions and commands of the Prophet, as set down in the Koran, had borne but little weight with me when their observance would have narrowed my pleasures; and so it was that I drank freely of wine. Perhaps for that reason I agreed that the disposal of the carpet should rest with the Turk. He kissed me on both cheeks, promised me an immediate reward and left the room. He returned in a few minutes, accompanied by a girl who was veiled and in the costume of a dancer. A servant played a flute, the girl began dancing. At times, as she danced, she came between the Turk and myself. At such moments she would raise her veil, momentarily, and smile to me. I smiled in return. Ekrem Bey rose, picked up my carpet from a couch over which it had been lying and spread it on the floor. The girl stepped on the carpet and continued her dance. Until that moment I had not noticed her particularly or been much interested in her presence. Professional dancers, renowned for their beauty and suppleness, were no novelty to me; but no sooner did she stand on the carpet and resume her dance, swaying her body in slow rhythmic movements, than my blood began surging in a hot stream and beating at my temples. Never before had I known such a sensation as gripped at my heart and contracted my throat. My host was forgotten. I rose to my feet. At that moment she chose to raise her veil again and, looking into my eyes, to smile mockingly. I grasped

her in my arms and pressed her to my breast. A fierce tumultuous joy swept through me. I became vaguely aware of the Turk clawing at my arms and shouting in my ear that the dancer was his wife. I thrust him aside and became oblivious of him until a stinging blow across the face brought me to my senses and filled me with a terrible rage. The Turk was belaboring me with a stick. It flashed across my mind that I had always hated the fat pig. I drew my dagger. I rushed at him and plunged it into his breast. I turned to where I had released the dancer from my arms. She was gone.

“An uproar within the house smote my ears. There were screams and the tramp of hurrying feet. The wave of passion left me as quickly as it had come. I desired now only to get away. I dropped through a window of the room into the garden, scaled the wall and hurried into the city. By that time it was night. I wandered through the dark streets for many hours, fearing to go home, as I thought it likely that the police would be awaiting me there.

“Among my father's employees was an Armenian, the same who interceded for you in Karaklis. He had often acted in confidential matters for me. In my desperation I determined to turn to him. I went to his house, aroused him and informed him of my predicament, and placed myself in his hands. He acted with judgment and discretion. For three days I remained hidden in his house. By the end of that time he had made all arrangements with the Greek

owner of a small trading boat to convey me to Constantinople. It was my first experience of the sea and I did not enjoy it. The boat was a small trading craft such as I had often seen in the harbor and along the quay of Smyrna. The restlessness of the sea communicated itself to me, and I was strangely and violently sick for the greater part of the voyage.

“In Constantinople I was met by relatives who had been informed of my plight. I remained there in seclusion until my friends settled the matter satisfactorily with the officials. This was in 1914. Soon came the war. I was given a commission and sent to Mesopotamia, where we fought and captured an English Army. I have been engaged in the war ever since. I have fought, it seems to me, from one end of the world to the other and against all manner of peoples: Russians, English, Armenians, Indians, Christians, Moslems, and even against my own people, the Arabs.

“In Karaklis I met again the Armenian, Hamadian, who had arranged my departure from Smyrna. I discovered him among a group of prisoners. I was glad to give my protection and for his sake to do what I could for you when he pleaded in your behalf.”

The Arab poured himself a glass of wine and leaned forward in his chair. “It is not well,” he continued, “for an Arab to drink deep of the juice of the grape. In his blood is the desert sun. Wine stirs it to a seething fire, in which will and reason are consumed. If at

such a time a desire be born within him, it never dies. So I have been told by those who have censured me for my folly. It must be so, for I can not and would not, clear from my mind the memory of the dancer, though sometimes, Ohanus, I think it was not the wine. It seems to me that in many things there is a magic beyond our understanding. To me, the carpet I carried to the Turk was merely a carpet, however rare, and the dancing girl of Georgia was merely a dancing girl; but when the girl stepped upon the carpet, to my eyes they became as one, and the one thing in all the world that I desired.

“Somewhere now is the ancient carpet of Kerman-shah, woven for the tent of barbarian Khan, or for the harem of prince or sultan. The passions, the loves and tragedies of generations of the exalted of the world live in its colors and texture, and somewhere is the dancing girl of Georgia. When the war is over, if Allah wills, I will find the carpet and the girl. I will unfold the one at the feet of the other. It may be that the magic will work again.”

CHAPTER XVIII

ERIVAN AND THE PLAIN OF ARARAT

A GREAT change had come over Erivan since, when a boy, I had first seen that city. At the time I was attending the agricultural school in Tiflis. I had been one of a group of students who made a tour of Armenia under the direction and supervision of the school authorities. Erivan interested me beyond any other town or section of the country, possibly excepting the ruined city of Ani.

Erivan, now the capital of Armenia, is ancient and historic. At various times it has been occupied by Persians, Mongols, Tartars, Turks and Russians, all of whom have stamped it with something of their identity and put their impress on its inhabitants. There is to be seen a peculiar mingling of East and West. The dome of a Russian cathedral, the minarets of a Persian mosque and the pre-Gothic spires of an Armenian church point their different ways to heaven. There are tiny narrow streets winding their way among the squalid mud and stone huts of Tartar and Armenian peasants, as well as broad avenues faced with the mansions of the rich.

When I first knew the city, life there was abound-

ing, gay and colorful. In the streets camel trains from the deserts beyond the Caspian, water buffaloes, diminutive donkeys bearing burdens greater in bulk than themselves, ox-drawn carts of peasants, smart phaetons drawn by horses resplendent in silver decked harness, and flocks of sheep and droves of cattle herded by wild Kurds and Tartars from the mountains contended with automobiles for the right of way. Cafés and restaurants overflowed. Officers in the uniform of the Czar, princes and beggars, white men and black, Christians and Moslems, these rubbing shoulders, paraded the public park and Astofian.

The city is situated on the Zangar River at a point where it emerges from a defile in the Akhmangan Plateau on to the vast Ararat Plain, which, as level as water, extends to the foot of Mount Ararat distant from Erivan some fifty versts.

The plain is dotted with villages. These are distinct in type from all other in Armenia. They are reminiscent of the Persian days in that they exhibit many Persian characteristics in house architecture. The better houses are built of sun-dried bricks, but most merely of mud with walls some three feet thick. They are roofed with a thatch of reeds. The center of a village is usually a jumble of narrow crooked streets among small mud huts. On the outskirts are the homes of the prosperous. These are set far apart and situated in walled gardens. Over the walls peer the tops of peach, cherry and mulberry trees. The

narrow streets are lined with tall poplars and the inevitable irrigation ditches flowing with water. The water in the ditches is the life blood of the region. It is brought long distances from the Arax and Zangar Rivers. Without it the entire plain would be a desert, for the climate is almost arid. In most villages the irrigation canals furnish the only water available. The water for cooking and drinking is ladled from the same ditch that affords an ideal bathing place for the cattle, pigs and children.

In these villages of the Ararat Plain, land of gardens and desert, there is sensed more than elsewhere in Armenia the spirit, glamour, charm, or whatever is the attraction of the East. The streets, ankle-deep in dust, the brilliant gold of the houses as the burning sun reflects from them, the dark purple of the shadows beneath the trees, the desert and the distant mountains are apiece with the stories and dreams of childhood. In just such a setting Aladdin may have lived and worked wonders with his magic lamp.

It is the first dusk of evening in such a village, as I recall it. There is a street sentineled with rows of tall poplars and lined with high crumbling walls over which fruit trees lean. There is an atmosphere indefinable and inexplicable. Women are washing clothes, and naked children are playing in the water of a stream that flows placidly beneath the trees. A Tartar woman, heavily veiled, emerges from a door in a wall, pauses for a moment, slowly walks across the street, raps at a door in another wall, is admitted and

disappears. The sound of bells is borne faintly to the ear. The sound grows louder, and then down the village street with stately arrogant dignity comes a train of camels ridden by wild-looking Kurds in great sheepskin headdresses. They are journeying from Mesopotamia, or from Daghasan, from Bokhara, or from Ispahan, or from one or another place of golden name, of romance, of adventure. I follow them with my eyes and imagination out of the village, past the cultivated fields, and across the darkening desert beyond which looms the snow-blanketed immensity of Mount Ararat bathed in a sunset glory of gold and purple. The departed caravan leaves a poignant desire for things, beyond expression.

What a change had come over the region since I had seen it as a boy! The blight of war had descended upon it. The city was in the grip of famine and pestilence. Homeless children and half-dead refugees contended with the dogs in the streets for offal. The many Tartar villages of the plain were mere heaps of sun-dried mud and charred sticks.

After having been several weeks in Erivan, I was given command of a few dozen men and assigned to patrol duty along the Arpa River. I established myself in the village of Bashaberian.

I parted from my friend, the Arab, with sorrow. I had to see him returned to prison, though I received assurance that he would be treated well. I may as well say here that within a few weeks he was released by the Bolsheviks when they seized the government.

In common with other enemy military prisoners he was returned to Turkey.

The Turkish Army was quiet, and under threat from the Bolshevist Government of Russia content to rest with that territory they already occupied. The fact that the Russians could intimidate the Turks in this way was indicative of the growing strength of the Communist Government in Russia.

My patrol extended along the Arpa River from Bashaberian to a point opposite the ruins of the ancient city of Ani held by the Turks.

CHAPTER XIX

AN ANCIENT GLORY

THE story of the coming and going of peoples and races, the growth and decline of kingdoms and of gods, in Armenia, can be read in the sculptured rocks and the ruins scattered throughout the country. Greatest of all the ancient monuments are the ruins of Ani, once the center and capital of an Armenian kingdom.

In telling my story I have not spared my own people. I have dwelt on their backwardness, their vices and their cruelty, their inaptitudes and blundering, trusting to sympathy, and understanding of the fact that national vices are but the wounds dealt by circumstances. Armenia has much to be proud of also, and so I must tell now something of Ani, for it is a monument to a vanished glory of which we Armenians can be proud.

The region about Ani is bleak and cold and serene. It is a wide upland plain circled with barren mountains. Across the plain the River Arpa has eroded a deep, broad, sinuous canyon. At the site of Ani a small lateral stream joins the Arpa, entering the latter through a deep ravine. Between the two streams

extends a narrow-necked promontory of land. It was on this promontory, the sides of which rise perpendicular from the canyon, that Ani was built. A double line of walls extends across the narrow neck of the promontory, defending this the only naturally weak spot in the defenses. Wherever the sides of the promontory rise from the canyon with less than perpendicular steepness there also are defending walls and towers. From the center of the city rises a steep rocky hill, atop of which is the citadel. There is also a small citadel on a rocky mass that rises isolated and abruptly from the canyon.

The site was evidently chosen with an eye to defense. In its defensive features it is quite typical of other Armenian strongholds of the period when just such promontories projecting into deep canyons were usually chosen as the sites for fortified towns and castles. Ani for four-fifths of its circuit was impregnable to assault under medieval conditions of warfare, but along the other fifth, where reliance for defense was placed in walled towers and moats, it was comparatively weak.

Ani is now without inhabitants and of the city there remains only ruins, though some few buildings, notable among which is the cathedral, are in a fair state of preservation. However, the extent and nature of the ruins bear eloquent testimony that here, at a time when Europe was sunk in savagery, existed an advanced Christian civilization in which art, especially art in architecture, came to a glorious flowering.

The date of the beginning of the building of Ani is not known, but it is recorded that the walls were erected by King Simbut II, A. D. 977-989. The Suljuk Sultan, Alp Arslan, stormed Ani in the summer of 1064, after a siege of twenty-five days. Before that time the city had attained to its greatest growth and power. After its capture by Alp Arslan the place frequently changed hands and was alternately under Moslem and Christian rule. In 1239 the troops of Jenghis Khan surprised and sacked the city. The final catastrophe was an earthquake which wrecked most of the buildings and finally led to its total abandonment.

It is said that in the eleventh century Ani contained not less than one hundred thousand inhabitants. Many authorities give it double this number. Early travelers recount having seen over two hundred churches within the city and in its immediate vicinity. Another name for Ani often met with in early writing is the "City of a Thousand Churches." Further evidence of the greatness of the city is to be seen in that it is recorded that the Byzantine emperor, Basil II, while spending a winter in the neighborhood of Trebizond, in 1022 A. D., following a campaign in the Caucasus, received as envoy from the King of Ani the Patriarch of the Armenian church, accompanied by twelve bishops, seventy monks, two scholars and three hundred knights.

An interesting and peculiar feature of Ani is an immense underground labyrinth. It has never been

fully explored but is known to contain many versts of passages. The Turks have a name for it that means, "The place from which no visitor returns." Indeed, numbers of people who have ventured a few yards beyond one of its various entrances have lost their lives by so doing, presumably being unable to find their way out. Passage runs into passage and each twists and turns and branches in such confusion that any one who ventures for even a short distance out of sight of an entrance, without a rope to guide him, must inevitably lose all sense of direction and be lost.

The ruins of Ani mark for Armenians the golden age of their country. We are inclined to think of Armenia of those days as a paradise now lost to us. For my part I have some doubts that all was then perfect. To build and maintain the castles and palaces and the great churches of the time and to support in splendor the hosts of servitors of church and king, the patriarch, the bishops, of whom there were so many that twelve could be sent in compliment to the Byzantine Basil, the monks, and the knights, who appear to have been beyond number, must have constituted a heavy burden for the peasants, whose toil supported it all. I have noted in the ancient ruins of the country, in Ani as elsewhere, that the glorious structures of whose ruins we are so proud rose from the midst of just such squalid dwellings as are to-day typical of Armenian villages. But it is all a matter of contrast—and if for me the days of Ani can not

be numbered in a golden age, they plead none the less forcefully of the possibilities of my people. The ruins abandoned by all and given over to the wild creatures of the air and the fields stand as irrefutable evidence of the fact that my people, Armenians, pioneers in accepting the Christian faith, by so doing separating themselves from, and gaining the hostility of, neighboring peoples, there in the ravines of the Arpa developed a civilization, an art and a culture that was far in advance of anything known in Western countries at that time. Ani is a monument to a glory which is past. In a happier day it may return.

CHAPTER XX

THE PRISON

WHILE I was engaged in patrol duty along the Arpa River the Bolsheviks overthrew the Dashnack Government and took control. Conditions had become so bad under the Dashnacks that neither the army nor the people offered any real resistance to the communists. Any change was welcomed by the people on the theory that things might improve and could not be worse.

Situated as I was at the time at a lonely frontier post I did not participate in the revolution. When news of the change of government reached us, I decided that the only course for me to take was to carry on as I had been doing while awaiting definite orders from the new government. The first word I received officially was an order to collect a tax of grain from the peasants living in the district I was patrolling. Difficult and distasteful as it was, I proceeded with this work to the best of my ability. Throughout the country, people were dying of starvation. Grain was the most precious of commodities. It was life itself. The peasants exercised all their ingenuity in secreting such supplies of the precious

breadstuffs as they had. To collect a tax in grain under such circumstances, it was necessary to resort to disagreeable measures, or fail entirely. My sympathy was with the peasants in their efforts to avoid the tax. The little they had remaining to them after the many requisitions that had been made upon them was not only the fruits of their toil, it was a vitally necessary provision against immediate needs of the present and against a future that promised to be even more dismal. I was only moderately successful, as I could not bring myself to use force beyond making terrible threats which I had no intention of carrying out and which, of course, the peasants soon came to value at their true worth.

The various incidents of my experience in the war, both in Russia and in the Caucasus, stand out clearly enough in my memory, but I have only a hazy idea as to dates. I even find it difficult now to keep things in their proper sequence. Among the dates that do remain with me is the twenty-sixth of January, 1921. On that day I received an order despatched two days before, commanding all officers who had served in the army prior to the Bolshevik régime to report, within a period of three days of the issuance of the order, to the commandant of whatever district in which they were serving. The order specifically stated that no excuse would be accepted for failure to report within the time allotted. As two days of the time had already elapsed, it would be impossible for me to report on time. I turned over my command to my

sergeant and without delay set out for Erivan, arriving two days later. I reported at once to headquarters, where to my astonishment I was arrested without explanation. That same day I was put on a horse and taken under guard to Etchmiadzin, which lies about thirty versts from Erivan. At Etchmiadzin I was taken before an officer whom I recognized as an old friend and comrade, as I thought, for we had served together in the same regiment. I stepped from between my guards and approached him, greeting him by name and saying, "Bashnakian, can you tell me why I have been placed under arrest?" I was quickly disillusioned of the idea I held that the man was a friend. Gruffly he ordered me to stand where I was and not to forget that times had changed. He examined some papers for a few moments, and then ordered that I be returned to Erivan and confined. No charges were made. There was nothing to which I could answer; there was nothing for me to explain.

On the return journey to Erivan I questioned my guards and learned from them that all officers of the old army who were not late in reporting, other than those who had participated in the overthrow of the government, had been arrested and sent on foot to Akstafa, a station on the Tiflis-Moscow Railroad. It has since become known that all who survived the journey to Akstafa were shipped into Russia, from whence none has ever returned.

My guards took me to a military prison situated on the outskirts of Erivan. I was thrust into a large

room, where I was welcomed by a small group of officers, prisoners like myself, most of whom I knew. Among them was the colonel of my regiment, Boris Kamarov. He was a tall, heavily built man. His hair and beard were red. Always his face was screwed into a fierce scowl. He had a peculiar habit of tilting his head back when he addressed himself to any one. I am of fair height among my own people, but short when compared with most Russians, consequently whenever the colonel spoke to me the only part of his face I could see was a pair of flaring nostrils in a wilderness of red hair. He was really a fierce fellow. He was notorious for the severity with which he dealt with all communists who fell into his hands. He had them hanged or shot without delay or formality. I did not like him. He was probably well aware of this for he always assigned me to difficult and disagreeable tasks, in the performance of which there was no pleasing him.

Also I was revolted by his policy of executing all prisoners. I had myself experienced the awful cold loneliness and bleak despair of standing, a prisoner, and awaiting death. It is an ordeal too awful to inflict on any one. If a man suffers a great indignity, or passes through a peril so menacing that his soul sinks to the last depths of despair, and he abandons all hope, then forever after, for better or for worse, he is a changed man. On the road to Erzroom, when I, a prisoner burdened with a box of ammunition, had been kicked and clubbed along the weary miles I had

suffered such an indignity; and when I had stood surrounded by Tartars and one of them with a drawn dagger had commanded me to advance to him and be killed, I had experienced such peril. It is not a question of hardship, of physical suffering, or of the imminence or degree of danger; for one becomes dulled to suffering, and danger is a commonplace.

In the great battles in which I participated in Poland and in Germany and in Russia I saw my comrades blasted into mangled bloody heaps and I expected each moment to be overtaken by a like fate, and yet when the battle was over and I found myself unharmed and safe for the time, I could laugh at the danger through which I had passed. But to be a prisoner, and to be beaten and starved, and in your utter helplessness and misery to be threatened with execution has an effect on your soul that I can liken only to its being squeezed by an icy hand. It is your helplessness in such situations, the feeling of being buried alive and powerless to move even a muscle, that freezes your soul. Such experiences have left me reluctant to inflict pain on any one under any circumstances. I know of men, however, who, because of the sufferings they have endured, have become embittered and brutalized.

I rather imagined that my colonel would react to misuse in this way, if that were not already the secret of his cruelty and severity.

Army officers and officials of the Dashnack Government were added from day to day to our num-

bers in prison, until eventually there were probably two hundred of us. We were arranged in groups, and imprisoned in rooms in different parts of the building. It was winter-time and cold. The room in which I, with about thirty others, was held had a stone floor. There was no glass in the windows, merely iron bars. The snow and rain entered without hindrance and froze on the stone floor. During the daytime our lot was not so bad, for then we were taken out to clean away snow from the streets and walks, and to do other such work; but at night we suffered greater misery than I can describe. We had no blankets or other protection from the cold, aside from the clothes we wore. There was no place to sleep except the wet stone floor, which froze our bodies as soon as we lay down. Sleep can not be denied, and so we resorted to the expedient of lying down huddled together with our arms about one another for mutual warmth. In the morning our clothes would invariably be frozen fast to the floor.

For food each of us was allowed half a *foont* of bread per day.

I had been in prison not more than a week before one of our miserable company died. He had entered a sick man and failed rapidly. Poor Sahakian! He was not intended for rough usage. We did what we could for him, little as that was. On the night previous to the day of his death I sat and talked with him in a corner of the room in an effort to make him forget himself for a time. The last light of the short

winter day had faded away and the room was in complete darkness. A cold wind bearing wet snowflakes entered through the windows and eddied about in the room seeking us out where we sat with our backs pressed to the wall. Indiscernible to us on account of the darkness, most of our comrades sought sleep, wrapped in one another's arms. Some cautiously paced the room, with shuffling steps, flailed their sides with their arms, and blew their breath upon their fingers. There were sounds of whispered conversation, frequent groans and curses and occasionally a laugh followed by a bitter imprecation or a supplication to God.

The sick man shivered continually. He pressed close against me. I put my arm across his shoulders and rested his head on my breast. I bent over him to shield him from the snow that with feathery lightness brushed my face and neck as might the fingers of ghosts and that, melting, sent chills through me. For a time we ceased to talk. Several times I dozed fitfully, and each time was aroused by a paroxysm of coughing from the dying man. Following a more than usually severe spell, he threw himself across my knees and lying thus, said to me: "Comrade, during the past few years I have seen so much of suffering that I became or thought I had become indifferent to it, and it came to me that a man's life was a trifling thing. I know now that I have been thinking in terms of the sufferings of others and of the lives of other men. It comes to me to-night with overwhelm-

ing force that it is a pitiful and monstrous thing that I, a young man, should be coughing my life away in the dark and the cold of this filthy hole. My agony is none the less acute that I have seen so many others suffer, nor is life less sweet that I have seen so many die.

“I know that for me there is little time remaining. If it had not been for the war, I might be close to a warm fire, in a pleasant room, with gay companions, with wine and song and laughter, with pleasant memories, and with visions of many years of life opening before me.”

Sahakian sat erect, his voice, now shrill, broke. He spoke wildly and incoherently. His mind seemed to be dwelling, now on some horrible incident of the war, again on his own approaching end. His hysterical cries aroused the room. From some of our comrades there were words of admonition, from others words of sympathy. Several, their figures indistinct in the darkness, came and spoke kindly and encouragingly. They sat down with us and pressed their bodies to his to give him warmth. He collapsed in my arms and for a time wept bitterly. Throughout the night our little group remained apart from the rest. Sleep came in snatches, to be dispelled by the cold. One or another would rise, swing his arms and stamp his feet to start stagnant blood circulating. After his wild outburst the sick man remained passive except for spells of convulsive coughing. Daylight came at last. When we were marched from our prison

room that morning to our daily work in the streets, we left Sahakian lying on the floor, too far gone to know that we were leaving him alone. When we returned at the end of the day, he was dead.

Reports reached us in prison that all was not well with the Bolshevist Government. There were rumors of counter-revolution, of fighting and uprisings against the new authority. We prisoners were expecting to be sent at any time to Russia, whence we had little hope of ever returning. Tales of the treatment accorded by the revolutionists to Russian army officers had penetrated to the Caucasus. Awful as the actuality was, the stories that reached us were exaggerated to the point where they left us no choice but to believe that not a single Russian army officer or former government official who had fallen into the hands of the communists had been spared his life.

In spite of the hopeless outlook that would confront us should we be transported, we nevertheless would have welcomed this fate, if only as a change. At night, when by ourselves and free from the immediate surveillance of our guards, we would gather together and discuss with bated breath each fresh rumor. It would be, perhaps, merely a word dropped by a friendly guard, perhaps distant firing heard that day, or unwonted activity among Bolshevist troops. We eagerly grasped such slender threads of encouragement, took fresh courage and endured.

There came a day when we received terrible confirmation of the rumors on which we had builded

such hopes as we entertained. The Bolsheviks were in truth being hard pressed. In retaliation they proceeded to execute with the greatest brutality the officers of the old army and the officials of the old government who were prisoners in their hands.

The execution of prisoners by the Bolsheviks, in reprisal for counter-revolutionary activities, has since become a recognized and accepted principle of revolutionary strategy. It was only the other day that two hundred men selected at random from among the political prisoners held by the Tiflis Tchecka were executed as a consequence of the assassination of a Bolshevik commissar in Batoum.

One morning our guards, who daily appeared with our ration of bread and then led us forth from the prison to labor of one sort or another, were late in making an appearance. When they finally came, one of them held in his hand a paper from which he read off a number of names. Those whose names were called were formed in line and marched out. The building which served as our prison was built around the four sides of a court. The windows of our room looked out on this court. From these windows we soon saw the men who had been taken from among us assembled in the court, together with a number of others, prisoners from elsewhere in the building. There were, perhaps, thirty in all. As we watched and speculated there was a shout, and then began a horrible killing. It was not a matter of slaying men with a rifle volley, but a butchery with knives and

axes. These men in the court had been our comrades in barrack and in camp, on the battle-field and in prison. With horror-distended eyes we, who numbered among them friends and relatives saw them slaughtered. We grasped the bars of our prison and raised our voices with theirs in a strange wordless cry. Unable to endure the sight of what was taking place, I threw myself on the floor and buried my face in my arms, but I could not shut from my ears the awful sounds.

For several days, each morning witnessed a repetition of this massacre. We were not taken again from the prison to work. We abandoned all hope. Our fate, it seemed to us, was determined and inevitable. We awaited with apathy the passage of the long hours between the readings of names that each morning preceded a short walk to death for some of us.

We were dulled by our extremity and by weakness of body and spirit to the horror of our position. We were merely animated skeletons clothed in filthy rags. Only during the daily reading of the roll call of the condemned was there an awakening of spirit among us. Then intent, strained faces, clenched hands and wild eyes told that we were not yet beyond the powers of our tormentors to inflict further mental anguish upon us. Men heard their names called and went to their death, for the most part bravely. Some, with a smile and a wave of the hand, called farewell to their comrades who were remaining. Others parted

from us in silence and with bowed heads. There were those whose spirits were strong beyond the strength of their bodies. They had to be carried out, but there was an indomitable light in their eyes. There were a few who groveled and begged. I would not say that these last were cowards. Perhaps on the battle-fields, while in health and strength, they had been the bravest of the brave.

One morning there was an unaccustomed silence in the prison. Our guards did not appear. We wondered what portended. From the direction of the city we heard firing, that increased in volume for some time and then died out. A short time later there was a great uproar in the building. The door of the room in which we were confined was burst open, and soldiers entered who informed us that the communists had been overthrown and that we were at liberty. We feared a trick. Incredulous at first, at last we accepted this extraordinary news and hastened to leave the prison. Having accepted the tidings of deliverance, we immediately rushed into the yard, to be joined by the mass of other freed men. We became so eager to leave the horrible place that we did not think to break open the main gate that opened on the streets from the court, but all together tried to pass through a small door. We shoved and interfered with one another. The delay was fortunate, for while we were thus engaged a detachment of Bolshevik troops, in retreat from the city, passed along the road before the prison. They opened fire on those who had suc-

ceeded in forcing their way through the small door; and so it was that a number who had survived the peril and suffering of the prison were killed during their first moments of liberty.

The troops who opened fire upon us were being pursued and had no time to make an attack beyond firing as they were passing. The counter-revolutionists were close behind them. The outskirts of Erivan are characterized by their innumerable gardens, each surrounded by a stone or mud wall. The contending forces fought throughout the day among these gardens, taking advantage of the defensive possibilities of the walls. Toward night the Bolshevists gave up the battle and retreated along the road to Etchmiadzin. We who had been prisoners were taken into Erivan, there to join in the general rejoicing.

CHAPTER XXI

ETCHMIADZIN

I HAD spent one and one-half months in prison. Like those who had shared captivity with me, I had become a mere shadow of my former self. There was not much more to me than skin and bones.

The government was devoting itself to prosecuting the war against the communists. Never had there been greater need for the service of every available trained man. The second day following my release from prison, I was assigned to duty. I did the best of which I was capable, but it became immediately clear to myself and to my superiors that I was unable to carry on. I was on the verge of a complete breakdown, as became evident in my actions. In consequence, I was given two weeks' sick leave. The last three days of this time I spent in Etchmiadzin, the religious shrine of the Armenian race.

No other name is so deeply engraved in the hearts of Armenians, whether they be at home or of the dispersion, than that of Etchmiadzin. All that Mecca means to Moslems, and all that the Holy City signifies to Jews, is for Armenians contained in Etchmiadzin.

I love the old, old things of my people and country, the old buildings and traditions, the ancient customs and legends, and though I would change the old ways of doing things—would displace the sickle with the reaper, the spade with the plow, the ox with the tractor—I would yet preserve in the minds and in the hearts of my people memory and reverence for all that has gone before.

With what joy have I found a relic of the ancient days, when as a lad I followed the plow in my father's fields and watched for the unearthing of a treasure, as the rich brown soil turned from the side of the plow. Whether it was a stone fashioned to the hand for use as a tool by some prehistoric man or a bit of broken pottery, I loved it and treasured it.

As I said, though I would modernize my country, I love the old things. Therefore I eagerly availed myself of the opportunity afforded me by my sick leave to visit Etchmiadzin, the very fountain head of Armenian history, and the spiritual home of the Armenian people during the past two thousand years.

Etchmiadzin is situated on the plain that lies between Mount Ararat and the mountain that is called "The Eyes of God." It is on this plain that life is said to have begun anew, when the waters of the Flood subsided and the Ark came to rest. Confronting each other across the plain, that is forever aplay with a myriad indescribable colors as though tenuously carpeted with the debris of rainbows, Ararat and Allagoz, their summits eternally white with the

snow of the ages, are the portals of one of the world's great gateways. Through this gateway during long ages, armies and peoples and races have passed, and on the broad plain, that is spread between the mountains, civilizations have had birth, have flourished and have died.

For all its historical and religious significance, Etchmiadzin is not a noble city, but rather a small poor village, differing from other villages of the region mainly in that here are to be seen a number of churches built in the very earliest days of Christianity, and that are now counted among the artistic as well as among the historical treasures of the world.

Here and there on the plain are to be seen long low mounds marking the sites of buried ruins of unknown import. Shortly before the war one of these mounds had been partly explored. The excavations revealed the ruins of a wonderful structure which is said by archeologists to be the remains of the cathedral built by Saint Gregory about 303.

Armenian tradition assigns to Saint Thaddeus and Saint Bartholomew the credit of being the first to carry the Christian doctrine to Armenia, and of being among the first to meet with martyrdom in Armenia for Christianity. But it remained for Saint Gregory, surnamed the Illuminator, to convert the entire nation and to erect Christian churches on the sites of pagan temples. The exploration that revealed the ruins of the cathedral revealed also a Zoroastrian temple, much of it as well preserved as when the fire

worshippers made obeisance therein to the dancing flames.

Inextricably interwoven with the story of the conversion of Armenia from paganism to Christianity by Saint Gregory are the names of the Armenian king of the time, Tiradates, and of a woman of wonderful beauty who fired men's hearts with love and desire, Ripsime, the Christian virgin, who chose martyrdom in preference to the love of a pagan emperor.

There existed a blood feud, such as was common in those days, between the families of Tiradates and Gregory. During the course of this feud, the father of Gregory killed the father of Tiradates. Later Gregory's entire family was killed, he himself, a child at the time, escaping because he had been sent to Cæsarea in Cappadocia.

In Cæsarea, Gregory was reared as a Christian. In the course of time, Tiradates, the son of the man whom Gregory's father had slain, came to the throne and ruled as King of Armenia. Gregory returned to Armenia and took service with the King.

Whether because of the new religion he had brought to Armenia from his exile, or because of the old feud, Gregory was soon cast into a dungeon, where he remained in chains for about fifteen years.

At this time, which was during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, there was living in Rome the Christian maiden, Ripsime. The Emperor became enamored of her because of her great beauty and sought her love. The maiden in the fervor of her

Christianity preferred death to accepting such a fate. To escape the Emperor she fled from Rome to Armenia, where she took refuge in the outskirts of the Armenian capital.

The fame of her beauty and the news of her flight from Rome and arrival in Armenia came to the ears of Tiradates. The King sought her out. When he beheld Ripsime, he fell as deeply under the spell of her beauty as had the Roman Emperor. Ripsime resisted the advances of the King and when he became insistent she again sought safety in flight. During her wanderings she taught Christianity to the people. Her teachings, when they did not convert the pagans, aroused their fanaticism, and finally she was stoned to death on the outskirts of Etchmiadzin.

Because of his treatment of the Christian virgin the vengeance of Heaven fell upon the King. Tiradates was seized with a frightful malady. His physicians were powerless to relieve him of his sufferings or to stay the approach of the death that threatened him. In his desperation he bethought himself of Gregory, whom for fifteen years he had held in a dungeon. No doubt tales had come to the King of the new faith for which men and women gladly embraced death and of miracles performed by Christian teachers.

Tiradates was a king, and his pride was great. Probably it cost him a bitter struggle with himself before he could appeal to the man he had wronged so greatly, and there was the memory of the feud that had existed between their two families. Be that as

it may, he finally appealed to Gregory to intercede for him with the Christian God.

Tradition has it that the good saint, in a miraculous manner, effected the cure of the King, who thereupon became converted and proved to be the most zealous of Christians. He was convinced that his illness had been a visitation from God because of his treatment of Ripsime, the holy maiden, who had resisted evil to the death. Such was the King's zeal that nothing less than the proclamation of Christianity as the religion of the state would content him. In this way it came about that Armenia abandoned its pagan beliefs and became the first Christian state.

Following his release from the dungeon in which he had been chained for so long, Saint Gregory, visiting the spot where Ripsime had found refuge after her flight from Rome, had a vision of Christ. There where he had seen the Son of God descend, he built his cathedral and on the spot where Ripsime met her death he built the church of Saint Ripsime to commemorate for all time the virgin whose martyrdom had been an instrument in converting Armenia from paganism.

At the time of the conversion of Armenia, Gregory was but a layman. However, in 302, he was consecrated by Leontius, Archbishop of Cæsarea. For twenty-five years following his consecration he labored incessantly in Armenia and in neighboring countries. He founded the Armenian Church and established the first schools. In 325 Gregory died.

The work of the Illuminator was well done, for from his time to this, Armenia has remained firm in the Christian faith, though surrounded and beset through the years, almost without pause, by pagan and Moslem peoples. Time and again the country has been conquered and overrun. The conquerors invariably and vainly endeavored with fire and with sword, with scorn and with slavery, to destroy the faith. Our nobles and our great families were extinguished or reduced to poverty, and so it came about that lowly peasants bore princely names.

Always there remained the peasants. These the conquerors could not quite annihilate, and while the peasants remained, the work of Saint Gregory and the spirit of Ripsime lived on.

At Etchmiadzin I witnessed a scene eloquent of the love and reverence in which the memory of the Illuminator is still held. I was prowling about among the ruins of the cathedral which he had built, when my attention was attracted to a number of peasants approaching in procession across the fields. They entered among the ruins and grouped themselves before the remains of the pulpit. There was a woman among them carrying a babe in her arms. Soon the group was joined by a priest. I realized then that I was to be a spectator at a baptism.

When the ceremony was concluded, the priest mounted the pulpit and prayed for the welfare of his people. The children of the soil, gathered at the shrine of their race, attended his words with such

an expression of rapt devotion on their faces as I had never seen before.

When the gathering had dispersed, I engaged the priest in talk. He proved to be a kindly old man, pleased to answer my questions and instruct me in the history of the cathedral. I asked him why the peasants had chosen to have the ceremony I had just witnessed performed there among a mass of fallen walls and columns, rather than in one of the near-by churches.

He replied: "The people felt that on this spot hallowed by the prayers and the presence of Saint Gregory was to be found a greater sanctity than elsewhere." He smiled, as he added: "I share that belief with them and so can not dissuade them."

We sat together on a huge pedestal that was carved in relief with the figure of a spread eagle. The column it had once supported lay shattered in the debris before us. All about were masses of shapeless masonry. My imagination sought in vain to reconstruct what the original of this confusion had been.

My companion confided to me that for a number of years he had been engaged almost exclusively in the work of excavating the ruins. He was old and wished above all things to see the completion of the task. It was a real grief to him that the war, for the time being at any rate, made further work impossible. He quickly discovered my own interest in old things and offered to guide me about. I was glad to avail myself of his knowledge. In his enthusiasm he forgot

the infirmities of his age, as he scrambled from one point of interest or advantage to another.

By the time we had finished our tour the skies were aflame with the gorgeous fires of sunset. In the gathering gloom I walked across the fields with the old priest to the town, where we parted.

The following day I returned to Erivan and reported for duty.

CHAPTER XXII

THE WAR WITH THE REDS

THE day on which the counter-revolutionists captured Erivan and liberated us from prison was February 18, 1921. During the days that immediately followed, a new government called "The People's Government" was formed in Erivan. It was to be neither Dashnack nor Bolshevist, but merely a government of the people, in which all parties who did not seek to overthrow the government by force could participate.

The Bolshevists had been overthrown because, after they had seized the government, they had been unable to realize the glowing promises they had made; and also because, to make matters worse, they had instituted a policy of limitless commandeering that drove into hiding such wealth and supplies as remained in the country. No one could call anything his own, not even the clothes he wore. Terrorism became the chief weapon of the government. Executions were of daily occurrence. The bodies of the slain were purposely exposed to public view. The bodies of my fellow-prisoners, executed in the terrible manner I have related, were laid in a row on the pave-

ment of Astofian Street as a warning to all who were hostile to the government. A feeling of anger developed among the population. One village after another took up arms in rebellion. Group joined with group until the rebels were strong in numbers. Then their leaders marched them on Erivan. The capture of Erivan was but the beginning of the struggle against the communists.

The main body of the enemy was occupying the village of Kanagir. Independent bands were hiding in the mountains, particularly along the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Allagoz, a region that is a veritable fastness of cliffs and ravines. From the advantage of their positions in the mountains the independent bands bade defiance to our arms, and raided the villages of the plain.

For a short time I commanded a small detachment, trying to rid the mountains of these pests. We met with little success. The region from which we were trying to drive them was vast and for the greater part almost inaccessible. We had not sufficient force to enable us to station troops permanently at strategic points so as continuously to command the whole territory. Occasionally we made contacts with the enemy, but seldom more than to engage in long-range sniping duels in which naturally very little damage was done.

My old colonel, he of the red hair, who had been in prison with me, was in command of the troops in this work. His prison experience had left him even

more embittered against the Bolsheviks than he had formerly been. It was his particular pleasure to hang every one of them that he captured. Inasmuch as rope was scarce and trees few, he had often to content himself with having them shot.

He sent me, with a small command, to investigate a village high up on the side of Mount Allagoz. After two days of fatiguing climbing and marching, we reached our objective just at sundown. We reconnoitered the village carefully and, finding it deserted, entered and occupied it for the night. The following morning twenty ragged, half-starved Bolsheviks, not suspecting our presence, walked into our midst. Our sentries had reported their approach; and so we prepared for their coming, and had them surrounded before they were aware of any danger. They surrendered without a fight. When I reported to my colonel a tally of twenty prisoners, he ordered their immediate execution and cursed me for not having shot them. I had to witness their end. It was sickening to see these poor fellows sent into the Hereafter. It was probably comparatively easy for them to die, since they were in such a condition as the result of the hardships they had endured as to be about at the stage where men welcome death as a glad release.

There was something in the Bolshevik doctrine that fired its adherents with a fanaticism that gave them unlimited courage. The communist propagandists would accept any risks to spread the faith. I use

the word faith because Bolshevism was more of a religious mania than a political or economic theory. It could have been only that utter determination and complete disregard for consequence that is characteristic of religious fanaticism which enabled a small group of men to seize and retain the power of government in Russia.

Nineteen of the twenty prisoners I had taken faced the firing squad, with taunts and jeers, as though they were meeting with but a momentary reverse in their fortunes. They laughed as though sharing among themselves a good joke. One man, the twentieth, stood silent. He lacked the spirit of his companions. He awaited the volley with a peculiar smile on his face, a smile such as I had seen on the faces of many in like predicament. It was a twisted beseeching smile of the mouth that seemed to say, "I know this is all a game. I know you will not continue with it to a serious end. See, I am playing up to you." It is a smile that is a mask, covering, and yet revealing, a soul filled with terror.

After a few weeks of hunting Bolshevik bands in the mountains, all our forces were concentrated for an attack on the main body of the enemy at Kanagir. The village was captured after a short engagement. The Bolsheviks slowly retreated, and we followed in pursuit. Our advance troops kept in constant action with the enemy's rear guard. This fighting was an affair of small bodies of men, merely the slight engagements incidental to a retreat and a pur-

suit not too hotly pressed. This continued until the enemy reached Dilijan.

One day I happened on a wounded Red officer who was lying in the snow by the side of the road. His only article of clothing was a shirt. His intestines were protruding from a wound in his abdomen. I spoke to him, and he turned his face to me. At once I recognized in him the officer who had consigned me to prison from Etchmiadzin. I remembered how, when I greeted him that day, he had ordered me to keep my place. But my sympathy was none the less aroused for him. He had been my comrade. We had shared many dangers and hardships together. I put my canteen to his lips. He drank greedily. The wine cleared his senses and revived his strength. He raised himself on an elbow, opened his eyes, and recognized me. He spoke my name with an oath and exclaimed, "I wish to God you were lying here in my place." He was near death. There was nothing I could do for him, and so I left him lying there in the snow, shouting curses after me. He would soon furnish a feast for the wolves, I reflected, and when the snow melted in the spring, his bones would be among the many scattered over the fields and roads of Armenia.

Shortly after our forces reached Dilijan, we received news that a Russian Army had invaded and conquered Georgia, and that that country was now a Bolshevik republic. Soon afterward the Armenian Bolsheviks, whom we were opposing, received strong

reinforcements from the Russians, and we were obliged to retreat. We made our way back to Erivan. There could be no security for us there or elsewhere in Armenia, for it could be a matter of only a little time before the whole of the country would have to surrender to the Russians.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FLIGHT TO PERSIA

WITH Georgia in the hands of the Russians, Armenia was completely locked in from any possible help from abroad. Within the country, we had not sufficient resources seriously to contemplate resistance against the power of Russia. Our people were divided into two camps that were arrayed against each other. The Turks were in possession of a great part of our territory. Persia was the only adjoining country whose people were not actively hostile to us, and Persia could serve only as an avenue of escape for our people in flight from their own country.

A large part of the population of Erivan joined with the army officers and government officials in flight. It is always sad when a people are forced to abandon their homes, their possessions, their means of livelihood. Leaving behind the hopes and attachments of a lifetime, they set forth. In fear of what pursues them they seek safety in cruel, blind wandering. Day by day such wealth as they have been able to take with them dribbles away, until they become absolutely impoverished. For them there is nowhere welcome or hospitality. They become the prey of

all. Their very abjectness but serves to justify the abuse with which they are greeted. Their experience is the human equivalent of the wounded wolf being devoured by the pack.

Many thousands of people took part in that flight from Erivan. Soon we divided into a number of huge bands, each band with a different destination. One large party crossed the frontier into Turkey, preferring to trust to the mercy of the Turks rather than to that of the Bolsheviks. The Turks stripped them of all they possessed and turned them back into Armenia. I joined a party whose destination was Zangazour. We hoped to find refuge in that wild mountainous country. There were about two thousand of us, soldiers, civilians, women and children. The snow lay deep over the country. Lofty mountain passes had to be crossed and a way found through a region where there were no roads.

Zangazour is a country of tremendous mountains, a region that has hardly been penetrated by modern civilization. It is inhabited by a race of Armenians who are a wild primitive people. They are like the mountain Kurds. Of all the people of Armenia they are the best fighters. In their mountain villages they have lived isolated from the rest of the country and free from the demoralization resulting from the presence elsewhere in the country of great Russian military posts that are the centers of a life of almost parasitic dependency.

Armenia is a small country. For generations it

has been occupied by a great Russian Army located in many huge military posts thickly scattered over the country. Each of these posts became the center of the district in which it was located and dominated the life of the district economically, socially and morally. About each post there quickly developed a class of Armenian speculators and contractors notorious through the country for their greed and cunning. They became rich but remained subservient to the Russian officers and officials. They snared the peasants in a net of debt and destroyed their independence. Alexandropol, where was located one of the army posts, became a sink of vice. Its people were disliked and distrusted throughout the rest of the country.

Zangazour had remained free from the evil of great army posts, and its people retained the homely virtues generally associated with mountaineers. The British recognized this when they seized Baku and the great oil fields near that city, for at that time they attempted to send a mission to Zangazour for the purpose of organizing an army of the mountain people to operate against the Turks. The latter advanced so rapidly, however, that Zangazour was isolated; and the British, prevented from carrying out this plan, resorted to the expedient of creating an army from among the city-bred Armenians of Baku. When the Turks attacked the city, the Baku Armenians threw down their arms and fled. The British, left alone to struggle against vastly greater numbers,

were cut to pieces by the Turks. Had the mountaineers of Zangazour been with the British, there would have been a different story to tell.

We, who were in flight from Erivan, hoped to find refuge with these sturdy people in their wilderness. We reasoned that they would be immune to Bolshevik propaganda, and strong enough and courageous enough to defy Bolshevik force.

We quit Erivan on the second day of April, 1921. A few versts out of the city we met with snow, which became deeper as we climbed higher. The plain of Ararat, from which we had departed, smiled with all the beauty of spring. There fruit trees were laden with blossoms. Over the floor of the plain the tender green of barley and wheat spread like a luxurious carpet blending with the red and gold, the mauve and purple of the spring-born plants of the deserts.

The farther we advanced into the mountains the colder became the weather, and the deeper the snow we encountered. After a few days of travel, most of the women and children had dropped out through inability to continue. Groups of them were left in the various villages through which we passed. We, who were now refugees seeking in flight safety from the Bolsheviks, had been the leaders of Armenia. Our numbers were made up of army officers, government officials, leading merchants and professional men, in short, all who were important and prosperous.

The reputation of the Bolsheviks was such among us that we did not think that the lives of even the

women and children of such men as made up our company would be spared in the event of their being captured by the Reds. Therefore leaving women and children behind in the villages through which we passed was a resort of despair. Many of the men who parted with their loved ones in this way met death later on from one cause or another, many have become permanent exiles. The dependents they left without support, in a land already on the brink of famine, were turned adrift from the villages in which it was hoped they would be harbored. For a time they wandered along the roads from village to village in vain search for succor, eventually to die of starvation and exposure. Some, more fortunate, found their way to a station of the American Committee of Relief. There the women received a dole of food sufficient to keep them alive, and the children food, clothing, shelter and tender care.

Our party became widely strung out along the way. Those who were most eager or had greater strength forged ahead and broke a passage through the snow. The weaker straggled behind. It was not long before the food we had brought with us became exhausted. We had to rely on what we could purchase in the villages. Each man provided for himself and his dependents as best he could. The villagers, taking advantage of our necessity, charged us exorbitant prices for whatever they let us have. The change of government had made our money valueless unless it was gold. The peasants demanded that we pay

with gold or in kind. Above everything else they desired clothes. It was soon a common thing for the hungry to part with the clothing that kept them from freezing, in order to secure food to keep them from starving.

The struggle for food became beastly. There were those among us who had brought cattle, mules or horses with them. When, as was often the case, an animal dropped from exhaustion, an immediate rush ensued to secure a portion of its carcass. It was seized upon before it was dead and cut and torn to pieces. As long as an animal kept his feet it was not molested, and its owner could enjoy such benefits as were to be derived from it. But if it went down it became the property of all who could reach it. This law of the road resulted in many disgusting scenes, as can be imagined.

I was fortunate once in securing the liver of a mule. Happy with my prize, I was hurrying along looking for a place where I could feast in seclusion, when my colonel, he of the red hair, overtook me. I bore him no great love. Besides, I wanted all the meat for myself. I tried to put him off when he begged me for some of it. "I have no knife to cut it with," I told him, and strode away.

He stopped me by grasping my shoulder. I turned toward him and saw that he held a long knife in his hand. It was an evil-looking blade, and I did not like the way he toyed with it and flicked its edge with his thumb-nail as the knife lay balanced in the palm

of his hand. "This," he said, "will serve excellently for cutting meat."

I gave him a portion of the liver.

When we left Erivan we had taken with us as prisoners about two hundred Bolsheviks. During the course of our march these prisoners were killed off a few at a time. A scene and incident of that march, in relation to these prisoners, stays vividly with me. Imagine a world covered with snow—a world of mountains—peaks rising one behind the other, the more distant blue as the sky and fading indistinguishably into it. Out of a valley white with snow, save for the black perpendicular sides of the mountains that enclose it, winds a long broken line of moving figures. Slowly, painfully this line advances, making its way up the mountainside along a narrow winding trail. The leaders reach a point where a precipice falls sheer to the valley floor. The opportunity offered them here is not to be neglected. They halt and talk, with their eyes on the precipice. These men are gaunt, famished, almost in the last stages of starvation. They are dirty and ragged. Their faces are covered with matted hair. They carry rifles in their hands, and packs on their backs. At the prospect before them their eyes light up. They become animated in their talk and eager in their actions. They post themselves on either side of the trail. Soon other members of the straggling line reach them, some to halt, others to pass on. Presently comes a group whose members, to all appearances, are like the

others, but they do not carry arms. They are prisoners, ten of them. They are followed closely by men with rifles held in readiness for instant use. The prisoners, upon reaching the groups awaiting them on the trail, are ordered to halt. Immediately they sink to the ground, seeking rest for weary bodies. In a moment they are seized, and their hands are bound behind their backs. Having been secured, they are forced to their feet. Then commences a game in which they are shoved from one to another of their guards and toward the edge of the precipice. They realize the doom that is theirs. They struggle and beg for mercy. One by one they are toppled over the edge of the cliff and go hurtling through the air and on to the rocks far below until the last has taken the fatal plunge. There comes a high-pitched laugh from those who enacted the tragedy. They speak a few words and again straggle onward. Gone is the light from their faces and the eagerness from their movements. Slowly, wearily they renew the struggle with the snow, the cold and the miles. The tonic effects of the drama in which they have played their violent parts have faded away. They are lost again to everything but their own misery.

That march was a tremendous drama. Its every stage was marked with dire tragedies. To recount its incidents is impossible. For myself, it was a matter of little difficulties and hardships, all trifling in themselves, but in the aggregate almost overwhelming. It was one such little thing that almost broke

my spirit. It was only this—my feet slipping on the wet snow. When you are in strength and vigor you can walk an icy trail, indifferent that each step you take is shortened by a backward slip; but when you are weary in body and spirit almost to death, when a special effort and a new resolve are necessary every time you put a foot forward, then should your foot, as you bear your weight upon it, slip back ever so little, it is a tragedy that brings despair to your heart and tears to your eyes.

On the twenty-second day of our march we arrived at Gerusi, the main town of Zangazour. Old family friends, who were living there, took me in and cared for me tenderly. Many of those who had been in the flight from Erivan were not so fortunate in this respect. They had no friends or relatives in Gerusi, no one of whom they could claim hospitality. Those who could not care for themselves were aided by the Dashnack organization.

There is this to be said for the Dashnack Party: it functioned best during the times of greatest adversity; it possessed the virtue of undying hope and the merit of unlimited tenacity of purpose. No one, even at this time, imagined that Bolshevism, either in Russia or in the Caucasus, would have any permanency of duration. It was known to all that White armies, led by officers of the old régime and supported by great European powers, were operating against the Reds. It was confidently expected that French or English troops, or a White Russian Army

would invade the Caucasus. In hope of this and in order to be in a position to take advantage of any such change in the situation, the Dashnacks retained their organization and did all they could to strengthen it.

I slowly regained the health I had lost as a result of the hardships I had endured while in prison and while in flight from Erivan. For a time I had neither strength of spirit nor of body. I had become lethargic and apathetic. I was indifferent to my own fate; I even ceased to think, except at rare intervals when thoughts of my wife and son came to me. I remember that I passed many days sitting in the warm sunshine. My mind was almost a blank, and I accepted with indifference the ministrations of my kind friends.

One day—it was after I had regained considerable of my physical strength—I was seated in the garden, on a carpet that I had spread on the ground, in a spot that was favorite with me. It was a quiet place, open to the sun and yet protected, by the garden walls, from the winds. I was idly watching a hen and her brood scratching in the dust, when my attention was diverted from them by a piece of wire such as is used for binding hay. I took the piece in my hands and, without thinking, began bending it into various forms. Slowly, memory of the blacksmith, who had been a beast of burden with me on the road to Erzroom, awakened in my mind. Using two stones, I hammered one end of the wire to a point, and then

bent the wire as the blacksmith had instructed me to do. The result was a crude safety-pin. This happening proved the beginning of a revival of my spirit. Soon I was again taking note of what was going on about me, and before long I was even participating in the life of the family caring for me and in the activities of the town and the refugees. By the time I had so far recovered, I had spent much time bending wire into safety-pins and had mastered the knack of it, a skill that was to stand me in good stead later on.

We refugees had been in Gerusi three months, when the Bolsheviks invaded Zangazour and began rapidly to take control of the district. It became evident that Gerusi would not remain long a refuge for us. A meeting was held, at which it was decided to flee into Persia. The feasibility of offering resistance to the advance of the Reds was discussed. There could be no hope of successful opposition without the cooperation of the peasants. It was brought out in the discussion that this cooperation could not be depended upon because of the activities of the agents of Red propaganda who had been at work among the peasants and had won over great numbers of them. It was the usual method by which the Reds prepared the way for the advance of their armies.

In any projected advance of the Bolsheviks their propagandists were worth an army to them. These fanatics were brave men. The hazard they accepted was a tremendous one. When captured, death, often in a cruel form, was invariably their portion. They

were usually ignorant men, for the Bolsheviks' ranks contained few men of education, aside from the leaders. Their methods were not subtle; their arguments were not backed by logic or even by reason, nor was there need that they should be, for they made their appeal, not to the educated, but to the ignorant, that vast mass of uneducated and oppressed humanity that is Russia. Therein lies the secret of their success. The ground had been well prepared by the brutal oppression of the Czarist régime. It was necessary only that the propagandists recite to the soldiers, the workers and the peasants the wrongs they had suffered and to make golden promises for the future. There was no need for going into the irksome details of how such promises were to be realized, considering the hearers.

There was a great stirring among us in preparation for the journey to Persia. My friends advanced me a little money, a mule and a supply of food and clothing. To this equipment I added a small roll of hay wire.

Summer was well advanced when we started. There were two thousand of us, some mounted, some on foot and others in oxcarts. We did not suffer from cold or from the fatigue of breaking our way through snow as we had in our journey from Erivan. At night we stopped in Armenian villages. The region through which we passed had suffered little in the war, and as long as we had the means of paying we were able to purchase whatever we needed. The inhabitants were

not hostile; and though they were not at all hospitable, they were at least quite eager to trade with us, and that was something.

It was a journey devoid of outstanding events until we arrived at the Arax River. Across the river was Persia and, we believed, security. We signaled to the people of a Persian village that was just across the stream from us. After a great deal of delay, the khan of the village crossed to us in a small boat. Our predicament was stated to him and his advice and assistance asked. A whole day of dickering was required before he would agree to ferry us across at a price of ten kopecks per person. The rate was extortionate; but we agreed to it, as we feared that the Reds, whom we believed to be in pursuit of us, might arrive at any time.

The means of conveyance provided by the khan for the crossing of the river was three rafts of inflated goatskins. The rafts were not large enough to accommodate more than four men at a time. The crossing progressed with terrorizing slowness. We expected the Bolsheviks to be upon us at any moment. They were no doubt anxious to capture our party, for we numbered among us the leaders of Armenia, as well as many officers of Russia.

The rafts did not afford a means of carrying our cattle, horses, or carts across the river, and so these had to be disposed of for next to nothing. We sold most of them to the people of a near-by Armenian village. Of course they took advantage of our neces-

sity, which was only what could be expected, for men are like that.

On the second day of the ferrying, some Persians in a near-by village on our side of the river set up a great shouting and discharged guns. They intended this demonstration as a joke to frighten us into belief that the Bolshevists were attacking us. In this they succeeded, for our entire party was thrown into a wild panic. Many threw themselves into the river and attempted to cross by swimming. They drowned in the swift and swollen river. I and a number of others tried to swim our mounts across and failed. My mule struck out bravely for the opposite shore. At first he swam so well I had hope of his taking me across safely, but before a quarter of the distance had been covered I felt the animal weaken. I turned him back. After a fierce struggle, we regained the shore; but instead of the gradually shelving shore that had marked the spot where I had taken to the water, I was confronted by a steep bank that afforded no foothold for the mule. If I had remained on his back we both, in all probability, should have drowned. I cut loose my saddle-bags which contained all my possessions, and, with these in my hands, scrambled ashore. I hope the mule, that struggled so bravely, found a possible landing place farther down the river.

The tragedies resulting from the panic caused us great distress. It was imperative that something be done to speed the crossing of the river. The khan claimed that he could do no more than he was doing

unless we were to supply him with goatskins of which to make additional rafts. There being no other course open to us, we bought thirty goats of the khan at his price. We ate the goats and turned the skins over to him. Additional rafts were made and, eventually, the crossing effected.

We were indeed a depressed company gathered on the Persian side of the Arax. Our elation at our escape across the river from the reach of the Reds did not long survive once we began contemplating what still lay before us. Each man of us, Russian and Armenian, was living a tragedy. We were exiles from our countries; Armenia and all of Russia were forbidden to us. Death awaited us if we returned to our homes. We did not know what lay before us and naturally we feared the worst, for we were impoverished and in a foreign country. We were tormented by the dread of evils that might have befallen loved ones left behind.

When we had crossed the river, the Persian authorities interested themselves in us to the extent of confiscating all our arms. Following this, they left us severely alone.

The problem now was to reach Tabriz. A Tartar spoke to me, proposing to show me a way that would shorten the journey by many versts. I wanted to get to Tabriz as soon as possible, and it seemed to me that I would have easier going if I could keep myself apart from the great mass of our party. However, I did not fancy trusting myself alone with the Tartar.

I decided to accept his offer if I could induce a few others to go along with me. Three men to whom I repeated the Tartar's offer agreed to do so.

At the end of the first day of our journey our guide led us into a Tartar village. There he left us, and we saw no more of him. No one offered us food or other form of hospitality. We lay down in the yard of a Tartar house and slept. Toward morning we were awakened by being struck with stones. We sprang up to find that a number of Tartars had stationed themselves on the roofs of near-by houses and were throwing stones at us. Only the darkness, which prevented our being plainly seen, saved us from serious injury. We rushed from the yard where we had been sleeping and made our escape from the village.

I was reared among Tartars and know their language as well as my own. From the shouts of the Tartars as they stoned us I learned that they were refugees from Azerbaijan who had settled in Persia as a result of the massacre of 1905. That is the way with things in this land. The memory of old wrongs is cherished, and, when the time is opportune, vengeance is taken. We never again ventured to sleep in a Tartar village.

I was now able to turn to good account my skill in making safety-pins. It enabled me to provide bread for myself and companions. I sold the pins in the Tartar villages. I charged one-half *foont* of bread, or one *krahm* in money, for each pin. The Tartars apparently had never before seen safety-pins and

were eager to obtain them even at the price I charged.

The Persian Tartars are faithful, devout Moham-medans. In their persons and habits they are the dirtiest of people and yet, in spite of this, they hold that all Christians are unclean and that everything a Christian touches is defiled. In making the exchange for bread for my pins they would not receive the pins directly from me, but would have me drop them into a bowl of water, from which they would take them. I have seen a dozen upper-class Tartars sit around a bowl of butter, and each in turn thrust a dirty hand into the butter, put his hand to his mouth, and lick the butter from his fingers, repeating the process until the butter was consumed. They have many other practises equally filthy, and yet they think themselves clean beyond all other people. Perhaps it is not physical cleanliness that they have in mind, but cleanliness of the soul, or spirit, that comes from belief in what they hold to be the true faith.

It is all past understanding, gods and religions. We have been warring with one another and slaughtering one another for many generations because of differences in belief; and now the Bolshevists tell us that there is no God. I do not see how the Reds can know any more about it than any one else, and yet they have influenced great numbers to become avowed atheists.

When I arrived in Tabriz, I reported to the Dash-nack Committee of Armenian Relief. From this committee I received one *krahn* per day. On this I had

to support myself, for although I had sought diligently for work I could find nothing to do. Tabriz was crowded with refugees, particularly Armenians and Russians. The only means afforded to the refugees of gaining a living was to engage in trade. I had not the experience or capital necessary for this. The ability to trade successfully is highly developed in my people. Many of my compatriots who had fled from Armenia started in business with a stock in trade that could have been contained in a pocket handkerchief, and within a month or two possessed well-stocked booths in the bazaar. I felt that trading in general was somewhat beyond me, especially under conditions where competition was so keen, although I might have been able to do well enough in the line with which I was familiar, the buying and selling of cattle, horses and sheep.

Among the refugees were many Russians of the upper class. They were less able to adapt themselves to changed conditions than were the Armenians. The Russians had fallen from high estate. They were without experience in gaining a livelihood. It was sad to see their beautiful women dancing and singing in the cafés and coffee-houses of Tabriz.

I had been in Tabriz about two months when the representative in the city of the Russian Bolshevist Government announced that certain classes of Russian and Armenian refugees would be permitted to return to their homes. With a number of other exiles, I went to him. We were searchingly questioned as to

our antecedents and the part we had taken in the war and in the revolution. I and thirty others were given leave to return and were promised that we would not be imprisoned, because of anything in the past, when we should come again under Soviet authority. A few days later we started back to Gerusi along the road we had traveled but a short time before.

When I arrived in Gerusi, I was welcomed again by the generous friends who had previously cared for me. In order to recuperate from the hardships of the road I remained with these benefactors for two weeks and then continued on my journey toward Azerbaijan and the home of my boyhood.

I reached the village of Shusha, where as a boy I had attended school. The scene that met my eyes filled me with dismay. The town was, for the most part, in utter ruins and there was none but Tartars living there. I was made melancholy with pondering on the possible fate of all who had lived in this town and who had been my comrades and friends. I dared not show myself to the Tartars and spent the night in an abandoned shed.

Before daybreak the next morning, I continued my journey. I did not know what the condition of affairs was in the district at this time, and I was fearful of being seen by Tartars; therefore whenever I observed any one on the road I hid myself until he had gone.

The day was well advanced when I arrived in my own village of Khankandi. The village appeared to

be deserted. Many of the houses were in ruins, among these the house of my father. I wandered about disconsolate, inexpressibly saddened by all I saw. I had about come to the conclusion that the town had been abandoned, when I was gladdened by the sight of a woman appearing in a doorway. I saw that she was an Armenian and I called to her. She hesitated for a time and then came to me. I asked her for news of my father. She told me that he was living in a house farther down the street.

I hurried to the house she had indicated, an ordinary peasant hut, and knocked on the door. A woman who was a stranger to me opened the door in answer to my knock. I spoke my father's name and asked if I could see him. She replied that he was sleeping and that I should return in an hour. This I did. The same woman again opened the door. I implored her for news of my family; though I did not tell her who I was, for she was a stranger to me. She told me that there was none of the family left but the father, that there had been two sons, that one had been killed a few months before in a fight with the Tartars, and that the other had left home ten years previous and probably was dead also. Unable to keep quiet any longer as to my identity, I told her I was that son who had left home so long ago. She embraced me and called to my father. When he saw me, he threw himself into my arms and wept with the joy of reunion.

The ten years which had elapsed since I left home

had brought to my father many vicissitudes. I found him now a feeble old man. He had married again. The woman who had met me at the door was no other than my stepmother. Of the great property that my father had owned nothing remained to him but two *dessiatines* of land. Everything else had been confiscated by the government. He was now living in a peasant hut. On the little land that he was permitted to retain was an orchard of mulberry trees. He supported himself now by selling vodka which he made from the mulberries. He was having a hard time to secure sufficient bread for himself and his wife.

Azerbaijan had suffered greatly during the war and the revolution. Russian, Turkish, British and German Armies had all invaded the country, intent on capturing or holding the great oil fields of Baku. Aside from the fighting of the organized armies, there had been a fierce and merciless struggle between the Tartars and Armenians that had for its object revenge, slaughter, loot and destruction. The Tartars had finally triumphed in this struggle and had become the dominant people. Before the war the poorer Tartars had been little above the grade of serfs and they had conducted themselves accordingly. Now in their new arrogance they cursed all Armenians whom they met. Only the presence in the country of Russian Red soldiers prevented the extermination of the Armenians.

It was in a fight with the Tartars that my brother had been killed. He took part, with a company of

Armenians numbering about two hundred men, in an attack on a Russian military barrack in Shusha in which a regiment of Tartars of the newly organized Tartar Army was quartered. In the remarkable combat that resulted, a fight that will always be famous in Armenian annals, over five hundred of the Tartars were killed or wounded. The Tartars for a time supposed themselves outnumbered, not believing that a mere handful of men would attack them; and so they remained in the barrack which was not defensible, and suffered severely. When they discovered, as they eventually did, that they were being attacked by only a small force, they sallied out and made quick work of the Armenians, only thirty of whom escaped.

In retaliation for this attack, which was a stupid and unwarranted affair, creditable only because of the daring of the Armenians, the Tartars destroyed the Armenian sections of thirty-two towns in the district and massacred many of the inhabitants.

The days are gone when the Armenians of Azerbaijan were respected and feared by the Tartars. We are now without prestige. Not only our wealth has been destroyed or taken from us, but also the sources of our wealth, which were cheap Tartar labor, land, silk mills, tobacco, factories, trade. The Reds have unionized the Tartar laborers, given the land to the peasants, forbidden trade and seized the factories.

I remained with my father for several weeks. During that time I wrote letters and made all diligent inquiries for news of my wife and son, but received no

word of them. At that time there was no mail service. One had to trust letters to chance passers-by who might perhaps be able to deliver them. As time passed and I received no news of Markouie, I determined to go to Armenia and search for her.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE HARVEST

You probably wonder why I had not set out long before on this undertaking. How was I to keep myself from starvation once I left my father's house and its meager resources? That was the problem I had not been able to solve. To have ventured forth in those days of famine, without resources, was but to join the throng then wandering to their death while seeking food and life.

To stay where I was, however, maddened with thoughts of the possible plight of Markouie and my boy, was unendurable. I decided that it were better to die than to make no effort to find them.

When I had come to this decision, I informed my father of my intentions. We were in the house at the time. My father was seated on a roll of blankets that was his bed. His wife was sifting some wheat, preparatory to grinding it for flour, while I paced back and forth across the dirt floor of the room.

My father did not attempt to dissuade me. No doubt he understood that inaction was no longer possible. For a time he sat silent, then with a sigh he went to a corner of the room, dug a hole in the floor,

and took from it a small packet. He returned to his seat and, opening the packet, disclosed a number of Russian gold coins, about two hundred rubles.

My father, old and feeble, sat there, handling the coins, alternately lifting them and letting them drop through his fingers. The slanting rays of the afternoon sun, entering the only window of the hut, glorified his white hair and glinted on the gold as it cascaded from his hand.

He raised his face toward me. Tears were in my eyes, for I knew what he was about to say. "Ohanus, this is the last of my wealth. Take such part of it as you think you will need."

My emotion was so great that I could not speak, but I went to my father, and sat at his side, and put my arm about him.

I realized that the offer was the means of undertaking a search for my wife and son, but at the sacrifice by my father of the last reserve he had. There was no use for me to try to find words to express my gratitude.

My stepmother came to where we sat. She raised my father's hand to her lips and then, nodding to me in indication of her consent to my taking the money, returned to the work she had been doing.

Two days later, as I sat talking with my father over my plans for returning to Armenia, we were interrupted by a faint knocking. I went to the door and opened it. A woman stood there with a baby in her arms and a small boy clinging to her skirts. She

stood without speaking. Through tangled hair that partly obscured a corpse-like face, I saw huge bright feverish eyes staring at me. I looked at the boy. His features were drawn and wasted. His was the face of a monkey, but without animation. The woman swayed as though about to fall. Her hands dropped to her side. I noticed then that the baby, which she had seemed to be holding in her arms, was supported in a strip of blanket slung across her shoulders. She raised a hand wearily and slowly, and drew her hair from across her face. It was then recognition came to me. The woman was my wife. I clasped her in my arms and shouted to my father. He hurried to me, and between us we carried Markouie and the two children into the house.

For many days it was doubtful if any of the three would recover. Through starvation and exposure they were all reduced to the last vestiges of their strength. They were grotesque skeletons. The joints of my son's arms and legs were swollen and distorted, and, though he was but an infant, his face was covered with a growth of downlike hair. The baby, that my wife had carried strapped to her breast, was our daughter, of whose existence I had known nothing. Within a week of the arrival of my family at my father's house my daughter died.

How my wife had succeeded in making the journey from Alexandropol to Khankandi, with two children to care for, one a baby but a few months old, only God knows. I have never been able to obtain the

details from her. For a long time she could answer my questions with tears only. Even now she can tell little, remembering nothing beyond having walked and walked, and having journeyed in a railway train so crowded that no one could sit down, and having gathered the roots of thistles and other wild plants for food.

Of the events accompanying the fall of Kars she had a clear memory. She had started to leave Kars in the general flight, accompanied by my orderly, who was carrying the boy. In the stampede of fugitives she became separated from the orderly and the boy. A bridge, leading from the city and spanning a deep ravine, collapsed under the weight of the great number of people who crowded upon it. Many were killed and more injured in this catastrophe. My wife did not know whether or not my orderly had succeeded in crossing the bridge. She sought for him until it was too late for her to leave the city. She then found her way to the American Relief Station and placed herself under the protection of the Americans.

The Turks committed many atrocities in Kars, but the presence there of a number of Americans deterred them from indulging in a general massacre. All who were under the immediate protection of the Americans were not molested. Throughout the remainder of the war, that is, until the Russian Bolshevik Government made peace for Armenia with the Turks, my wife remained with the American Committee. The

committee gave her work to do that enabled her to support herself.

After the Russians had made peace with the Turks, she returned to Alexandropol, there to find our son in the charge of the people with whom I had left him. Shortly after this a daughter was born to us.

It was not long before my wife had to leave her relatives in Alexandropol and shift for herself, for they had not sufficient food for their own needs. Her own father, having been a Dashnack leader, had fled to escape capture and execution by the Bolsheviks, leaving his family unprotected and helpless. There was famine in the land. The only place of possible refuge for my wife was my father's house in Azerbaijan, hundreds of miles distant. There was in Alexandropol an American Relief Station, but the Americans had not sufficient resources to care even for all the orphaned and homeless children. They could do nothing for adults or for children with parents. There was nothing for her to do but undertake the journey that eventually brought her, almost dead, to me.

As my wife and boy regained their strength and my father's little hoard diminished, it became imperative that I find some means of contributing to our support. I learned that the American Committee of Relief in Alexandropol had greatly enlarged its work and was beginning a program of agricultural development. I saw in this a possible opportunity to make use of my knowledge of agriculture. I made my way to Alexandropol, part of the way on foot and part by

train. At that time railroad travel was free in conformity with the early extreme communistic theories of the Bolsheviks. It seemed as though every one in the world was riding or seeking to ride. At every station an appalling mass, lured by the hope of better things elsewhere, fought to board the train that could hold no more. What pitiful human wreckage these people were! They had no objective other than to escape from where they were. In their flight death strode with them, and marked their way over mountains and plains with unnumbered bodies. Victims of famine and pestilence, the old and the young lay down by the wayside and died, while old and young with sufficient strength to continue on passed them by.

In Alexandropol I was successful in securing work with the Americans. During the period of acute famine I received a wage that was calculated as being sufficient merely to sustain life. Yet from this small sum I sent something each month to my wife.

It must have seemed to any observer in Armenia, during the year of acute famine, that the entire population of the country was doomed to extinction. Even Red soldiers in the Russian Army of Occupation died of starvation. It was a famine such as the country had never before seen. The contending armies had drained the country of its food. Pestilence added to the horrors of starvation. Typhus, cholera, typhoid and malaria reaped their harvest of death, more so than did the battles and massacres of the war. The

people had no strength, and died as flies die with the coming of frost. I have, in my story, given you a brief account of horrible things, but things having to do mainly with the savagery and cruelty of wild people. I say wild people, because we, of this land, are not civilized. We are still living with the social and ethical conceptions of the days of the Mongol conquerors. Indeed, in many aspects of civilization we are not so far advanced as we were in those distant times. Awful as were the incidents I have described and related, they are not comparable in sheer horror with the happenings during the time of famine.

Compared with pestilence and famine all other calamities of war are merely mishaps. What words can convey the meaning of hunger and disease when these agents of death and bestiality have stricken an entire people! The young and the old lie dead on the streets, in the fields and on the roads. Each day in towns and villages the death carts rumble over the cobbles, bearing their ghastly loads to an open ditch in the fields. The wolves fatten and become bold. At night they range the streets to feast on the toll of the day.

I would not offend your ears with words about the awful acts of men at such times. Enough to say that men became beasts. But then there is a brighter side, for in such a pass there are men and women who become saints. There are those who give the last of their strength in the service of others, beasts and saints. Men are like that.

Human beings can live and work on an incredibly meager ration. Through two years, men lived and worked on less than a *foont* of cornmeal per day, doled out to them by the American Committee of Relief, plus such edible roots as they could dig from the fields. I have watched with amusement and sympathy (I myself was at the time never other than hungry) a man staggering, with the weakness of starvation, behind his oxen as he plowed his field through a long morning. At the hour of noon he would unspan his cattle, so that they might graze for a time, and he himself go to digging roots for his own dinner. Men and cattle grazing in the same field!

It is difficult to say how the majority of those who are still alive managed to survive. As far as visual evidence went, they were doomed to die, but the concealed resources of a country are always greater than imagined. The government policy of confiscation caused every one to hide whatever store of food he possessed. The depreciation of the currency reached a point where its value could best be expressed at zero. I have seen a sheep sold for its weight in notes of fifty thousand rubles. A reasonably sound currency and a policy of non-confiscation would have unlocked the stores of hidden grain; and although profiteering would have resulted, the grain would have been distributed and many lives saved.

So it is that, from a disturbance in the social order that results in fear and avarice, a famine may come. People die of starvation merely because on account

of the destruction of the accustomed medium of exchange they lack wherewithal with which to purchase. Certain it is that at a time when dogs were devouring the bodies of children on the streets of Erivan, capital city of Armenia, it was possible to secure a sumptuous meal in that same city, if one had the price in an acceptable currency.

What a mighty army of dead the war and its aftermath mustered even in so small a country as Armenia, an army recruited through years of battle, massacre, famine and plague. To what end the travail and suffering, the loss and the heartbreak, the death and the ruined lives? Perhaps merely that we have gained a fresh and exhaustless source from which to draw stories of terror to while away the tedium of long evenings, or to frighten the children into good behavior or to sleep, that and a heritage of new hate and new ruins to take their places among ancient hates and ancient ruins.

Recently I visited the village of Marmachai. It is a village ages old, situated in the canyon of the Arpa River. The habitations are poor one-room huts. On the face of the canyon cliffs are inscriptions in a dead and forgotten language that are said to date from 900 B. C. The huts of the people are now exactly as they were then. And in the way of life the intervening years have brought no essential change.

Rising from the center of the village and towering above it are the ruins of a great church, built over eleven hundred years ago. Along the brow of the

cliff is a cart road that descends by many turnings and twistings down to the village in the canyon. Centuries and centuries ago, in time beyond written history, yes, beyond even traditions, when this road was first built and used, the wheels of the ox carts from the village began wearing a parallel line of tracks in the hard rock of the road. It was a slow process. Generations of people in the village were born, grew old and died. Each day a few lumbering carts jolted along the winding trail, imperceptibly scratching the rock in their passing. In time the ruts grew so deep that the hubs of the wheels struck the level of the road. The road was then impassable to carts and had to be widened, the carving of the cliff by the wheels of the carts began anew. Time and use prevailed over the work of man; and again the road had to be widened, and again, and again, until, when I visited Marmachai but a short time since, the cliff was marked with row after row of parallel wheel tracks worn deep into the solid rock and successively abandoned.

In this description of the village of Marmachai I have indicated the whole history of Armenia. In the humble dwellings bespeaking the unchanging life of the people, in the cuneiform writing on the cliff, probably the record of travelers from Mesopotamia or Van, bringing to Armenia the beginnings of civilization, in the ruins of the great church edifice, a monument to Armenia's conversion to Christianity and its short day of glory, past and gone these seven hundred years, in the wheel tracks worn deep in the rock,

there we have the story of the centuries of lowly toil of the Armenian peasant.

The day I visited the village there was a new feature on the landscape. A tall scaffolding stood on the brow of the cliff. Over it floated the Red flag of Bolshevism. The tower marked the entrance to a tunnel that was being bored to tap the water of the Arpa and lead it to the broad plain above the canyon for the purpose of irrigating the land and furnishing power for factories. The Red flag is symbolic to the peasant of a relentless mastery of ideas and purposes beyond his comprehension; and yet the flag, such as it is, is the only hope he has for the time being of a termination to the ages of stagnation in serfdom that has been his lot under alien masters.

THE END

