

NOURITZA HANUM NERCESSIAN'S STORY

My husband, Boghos Nercessian, was a graduate from the Yale University School of Agriculture. When he came from the U.S.A. sometime before the First World War, he brought with him a reaping machine, which used to reap the harvest, tie it in bundles and throw it out from the back.

The Turks of Marash thought that this machine had a jinn in it so they broke it. In Turkey no one could repair it and there were no spare-parts. My husband had paid one hundred gold pounds (Turkish) for it.

The government asked for agricultural experts. My husband applied. He was sent to Aleppo to pass an exam. He succeeded. He became a government official in the Dept of Agriculture.

When the deportations started in 1915, our family was exempted because my husband had an ~~affix~~ paper showing that he was government official. We were sent to Aleppo but not with the other deportees. We settled in Aleppo and my husband worked as an expert in agriculture for three years, that is, until the end of the war.

The Kaymakam of Bab (a town near Aleppo) was a very good man. He used to go out secretly at night to help the refugees. The government heard about this and dismissed him.

At the end of the war we returned back to Marash, because most of the survivors from the deportations were going back to their homes.

After a short period there was trouble again. One day they knocked at our door. "Erkekleri dishari chuksun!" (All males get out!). (She does not remember who knocked at the door. Once she said the "Tchétes" and then "the slaughterers").

We had five sons. No daughters. One single, and then two twins. I clasped the infant twins in my arms. My husband took the other three children and went out. Soon I went out also. There was turmoil and panic in the city. People were running confusedly one way or the other. My husband said, "You stay here with the two infants. I will run after the French army to Adana, with the three children. May be you will survive here, or we may survive in Adana, if we reach there. This way part of the family may stay alive. He took the three children and disappeared.

I was in the streets panic-stricken. I saw the mob rushing towards us. I was scared to death. Suddenly Mr. Kerr appeared. "What is it?" he asked. "They are butchering us!" I answered. A gun in one hand and an American flag in the other he ran towards the mob and "You God damn fools!" he cried. The massacrers vanished. Helping me to cross the street, "Run towards the American Mission Center!" he told me.

I stayed at the American Mission Center with my two infants. My husband with the other three children reached Adana safely, following the French columns. On the way he did not let the children rest on the snow lest they might freeze. One night he improvised straw and buried the children up to their necks to keep them from freezing.

Mr. Lyman of the American Mission made a trip to Adana and brought news that my husband and the children had reached there safely.

My uncle, Dr. Kalouste Najarian, who happened to be in an Armenian quarter far from the American Mission, was butchered together with his wife and two sons.

My sister-in-law and her husband, Mr. Hagop Takhtajian, had four sons and one daughter. Before the troubles started in Marash, we tried to convince them to come and live in our quarter. They refused, because they were reluctant to leave their house and property and live somewhere else. Survivors from that quarter told us that their four sons were butchered in front of their parents eyes, to be followed by the slaughter of the parents themselves.

After the Marash war, the situation quieted down and I lived there for two years working in the American Mission. I left for Beirut, during the final exodus in 1919. My husband also left Adana to join me in Beirut.

join - - - -

(P.T.O)

No deportations in 1920

Mr. Kerr
American Mission



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Join

(P.T.O)

No. 1920

Marash

NOURITZA HANUM TOLD ANOTHER STORY THAT HAD HAPPENED IN MARASH

When the French and the Turks started fighting in Marash, an Armenian doctor and a Turkish pharmacist made a deal. If the French won the war, the Armenian doctor would give shelter to the Turkish pharmacist; if the Turks won the war, the Turkish pharmacist would give refuge and protect the Armenian doctor.

The Turks won, and massa cres started in the city. The doctor happened to be outside home and in a relatively safe quarter, while ~~the~~ his wife and children were at home. The doctor's wife went to the pharmacist and begged for protection. The pharmacist agreed and sent word to the other Armenians in that quarter to bring all the money they had and promised to give them shelter in the mosque. They brought 150 gold Pounds and were taken to the mosque, including the doctor's wife.

Every now and then a few were called out "to be settled in another place." When a few were left in the mosque, someone asked, "Where are you taking us?" The answer was, "Don't be scared. The knives are sharp, they won't hurt!"

Actually, they were taken away to be butchered. One of the girls who had fainted at the sight of the butchering, was taken as dead and thrown into the precipice. Waking at night, in perspiration, she had found her way out "through a waterway" to the American Mission Center where she told her story.

The doctor, who had not enjoyed the pharmacist's protection, was saved, but his wife and children were butchered.

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What doctor? This story not true of Dr. Vartan Poladian
" - - - Dr. Harutun Der Zhegarian
? ? ? - Parsyeh Serdar ?