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ARMENIA, LAND OF MARTYRS



THE SOIL of Armenia, land of many miseries and massacres, is drinking the blood of her Christian martyrs again. To the memory of the most of us it seems as if the Christian nations have always been protesting against Armenian butcheries by the Turks. It is a singular land, that in which the Turks are putting so many men, women and children to the sword. It is a land so old, reaching so far back into the morning mists of history that the earliest legends of the human race point to it as the birthplace of mankind. There rise the headwaters of the River Euphrates, which flows on through the Garden of Eden. Mount Ararat lifts its sublime head above the plain of those massacres with the same placid oblivion to human cries and pangs that it showed when Noah's Ark rested there.

The very village founded by Noah and his family when they emerged from the Ark is yet there, the oldest inhabited town in the world. The Armenian is the oldest branch of Aryan stock on this earth. They trace their descent back to Japhet, grandson of Noah. That may or may not be true, but certain it is that from that land in the shadow of Ararat, somewhere in the region now generally designated as Armenia, the human race first began that process of migration and development that has led to the peopling of every corner of the earth. From Armenia began the dispersion of the nations, and all the legends of the early prehistoric days point the finger back toward that land at the headwaters of the Euphrates and Tigris as the birth-

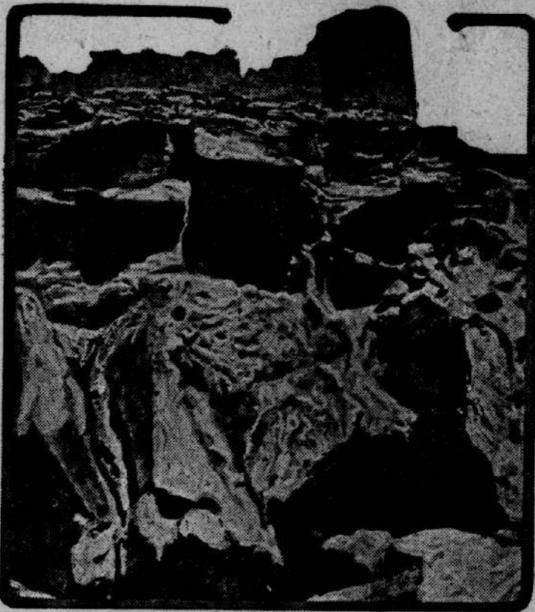
place of every nation that preserved a memory of its own origin. Sacred Treasure of Armenia. In the southern Caucasus, near the meeting point of Persia, Russia and Turkey, is situated the most treasured and sacred possession of the Armenian nation, the monastery and cathedral of Echmiadzin, the Holy See of Armenian Christians, the heart of the Armenian nation, and the source of that strength which has held together and guided the Armenians through centuries of persecution, warfare and massacre, says a bulletin of the National Geographic society. Echmiadzin is the seat of the catholicos, or primate, of the Gregorian Armenian church.

Mount Ararat lies just to the south of the venerable Armenian see. Here runs the Russo-Turkish frontier, while a few miles to the southeast lies Persia. The monastery lies about 3,000 feet above the sea, 40 miles north of Ararat, and 12 miles west of Erivan, the capital of the Russian government in which it is situated. The Armenian Rome is surrounded by massive, gray mud walls, which inclose the monastery, the cathedral and an academy. The buildings are arranged around a great quadrangle, in the center of which stands the cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator, a church of more ancient beginnings than even far-famed Santa Sophia of Constantinople. It has been the bulwark of Christianity against the barbarians of Asia since 302, and, though its fight has been unusually severe, long and heroic, little is known of Echmiadzin among the peoples of the West. The library of Echmiadzin is a treasure store of Armenian documents and literature, and on its shelves are kept some remarkable manuscripts of the gospels, dating from the ninth and tenth centuries. The monks main-

tain a type foundry and a printing press, and they have accomplished great things for the education of their people and for the development of Armenian literature. The academy connected with Echmiadzin is one of the first educational institutions in the Armenian world, and many of its pupils do excellent graduate work in German and Russian universities. It was founded under Catholicus George IV in 1873, and regularly trains between 200 and 300 boys.

The Armenian Pompeii. Ani is a remarkable ruined Armenian city in the heart of the Caucasus battlefields. Its thick, crumbling walls and the ragged foundations of its ancient buildings, mayhap, have served, since the outbreak of the great war, as defenses for the Russian or Turkish soldiers. Ani is the Armenian Pompeii. The ruins lie in a rolling, parched, upland country, almost deserted. They are near the Alexandropol-Erivan railway, a little more than thirty miles south of Alexandropol, and some thirty-five miles from the Russo-Ottoman boundary. There is a steep hill to the south and east of the storied capital of the old Armenian kingdom, and through a tortuous gorge beside the dead city flows the Arpa Chal, a weird, bright-green river. This is the site of the last great city of a free Armenian people.

Ani was once a famous, splendid capital, the "city with the 1,001 churches," whose influence extended throughout the Caucasus, and as far as England in the West. All that remain of its population are an aged Armenian monk, the director of ex-



RUINS OF ANI

place of every nation that preserved a memory of its own origin. Sacred Treasure of Armenia. In the southern Caucasus, near the meeting point of Persia, Russia and Turkey, is situated the most treasured and sacred possession of the Armenian nation, the monastery and cathedral of Echmiadzin, the Holy See of Armenian Christians, the heart of the Armenian nation, and the source of that strength which has held together and guided the Armenians through centuries of persecution, warfare and massacre, says a bulletin of the National Geographic society. Echmiadzin is the seat of the catholicos, or primate, of the Gregorian Armenian church.

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Back of the walls lie the remains of churches, palaces and public places without number, some just the heavy groundwork, suggesting the oldtime structure, while other buildings survive in high, ragged masonry. The cathedral stands unbroken, a solitary, weather-torn edifice, a red and brown growth out of the red and brown plain.

The history of the later years of the Armenian kingdom is bound up in the history of Ani. The stronghold city became the capital of the Bagratid kings of Armenia in 961. The Byzantium emperor captured it in 1046, and it was then a hive of many scores of thousands, a wealthy city and an inviting one. The Seljuk Turks carried fire and sword throughout its confines 18 years later; the warlike Georgians took it five times between 1125 and 1209; the Mongols overran it in 1229, and an earthquake in 1319 completed the work of ruin. The great cathedral, the most perfect survival, was founded in 1010, just at the beginning of the city's long chain of misfortunes.

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St. Joseph, La., May 12, 1915.

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