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# The Tragedy of Bitlis

Grace H. Knapp

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# THE TRAGEDY OF BITLIS

by

Grace H. Knapp

being mainly the narratives of

Grisell M. McLaren

and

Myrtle O. Shane



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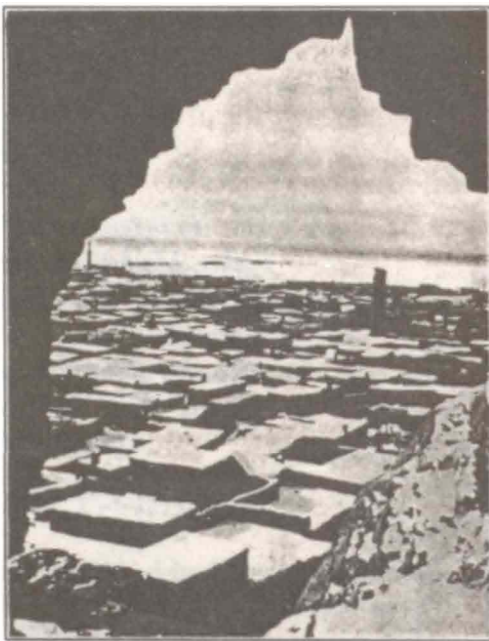
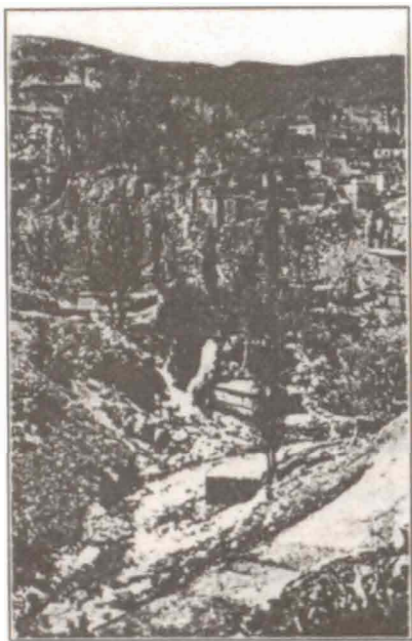
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[original dedication]

*To the memory of those dear to me,  
Father, Mother, Brother, "Aunt Charlotte and  
Aunt Mary" Ely, who, in the name of Christ,  
spent their lives for the Armenians of Bitlis,  
this story of the sufferings and heroism of the  
people whom they loved and worked for is  
affectionately dedicated*



SISTER CITIES WITH INTERWOVEN DESTINIES  
A nook in Bitlis (*left*); Van—from the citadel (*right*)

## PREFACE

After their return to this country in October, 1917, Miss McLaren and Miss Shane each wrote an account of what occurred in Bitlis during the summer and early autumn of 1915. A harmony of the two narratives constitutes two-thirds of the present volume, entire paragraphs or pages being quoted word for word where this was feasible. Every incident is absolutely authentic, for the two American ladies have related without exaggeration what they have seen with their own eyes or experienced in their own persons.

I happened to be in Van when the war began and shared the fortunes of the Americans and Armenians there during the events briefly sketched in the chapter entitled "The Besieged City." But Bitlis was my birthplace and childhood's home, and I had taught there for nine years. So the scenes I have described are dear and familiar scenes and the "Ely residence," now looted, deserted and bare, my old home, once filled with relics of my parents' long life within its walls and endeared by a thousand ties of association. Pastor Khachig, Deegeen Lucentag, Deegeen Heghene, and Kevork Effendi were old and valued friends, together with many others whose names are not mentioned in these pages, and Miss Shane's pupils had once been mine. One of them a few weeks ago related to me the sequel of Miss McLaren's and Miss Shane's narrative and the story of her own strange romance.

The last chapter also describes the present condition in the Russian Caucasus of the refugees from the Van and Bitlis provinces and the wonderful work of relief and rehabilitation undertaken by the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief.

GRACE H. KNAPP

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