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An
American
Physician
in
Turkey

Clarence D. Ussher

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2005*

AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN IN TURKEY

A Narrative of Adventures in Peace and in War

by

Clarence D. Ussher, M.D.
Grace H. Knapp, Collaborating



Sterndale Classics
London

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An American Physician in Turkey was first published by Houghton Mifflin Company in 1917. It is reproduced here in its entirety with the silent editing of spelling errors, redesigning the book layout, and the addition of an index of proper nouns. Sterndale Classics is committed to republishing books with fidelity to original materials.

Published by Taderon Press, PO Box 2735, Reading, RG4 8GF, England
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Printed in association with the Gomidas Institute.

06 05 04 03 02 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 1-903656-13-3

Sterndale Classics
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London W14 0XT
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AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN IN TURKEY

PREFACE

It has seemed to me most desirable that the story of the siege of Van and of the flight from Asia into Europe of most of the present survivors of a martyred race should be told in detail and put into permanent form. As the Armenians of Van were believed to have rebelled against the Ottoman Government, it is important that the facts of the case should be made widely known, and that their actual loyalty, their patience under almost unimaginable provocation, and their heroism when loyalty and patience proved of no avail, should receive their due meed of publicity and appreciation. I speak of what I do know by the witness of my own eyes and ears, my own nerves quivering in sympathy with the torture of the people I have labored for, my own fellowship with their sufferings.

Many other missionaries in other parts of Turkey have also shared in the tragedy that has befallen the Armenian race, some by the giving up of their own lives, others by the sacrifice of what was dearer than life itself.

When I began this book I meant to write only of the siege and flight and the events that led up to them, preceding these chapters by a chapter or two of travel experiences and memorable conversations with Turk and Christian, but I was persuaded, instead, to tell the whole story of my life in Turkey. Should there seem to be too much ego in these reminiscences, its presence may be explained by the fact that while writing I have seemed to myself to be conversing with those whom I have met face to face, and talked to from lecture platform and in hospitable homes all over the United States for the last two years: listeners who have shown and expressed such kind interest in my personal experiences that I have been tempted to enter into considerable detail in the present volume, which is intended especially for their perusal.

I have recorded some of my most intimately personal experiences because they have so profoundly influenced my outlook on life and my contact with it. The interview with the Moslem Vali, in "Before Governors and Kings," meant so much to me in crystallizing my own religious ideas that I have felt impelled to relate it in this book, and at the request of many friends, will include it with the story of Kharaba in a separate booklet at a later date.

My dearest hope is to be able to build a memorial hospital in Van to take the place of the one that has been destroyed. I know so well how exceedingly great is the need for a hospital there. The proceeds of this book will be devoted to that purpose. Should any reader desire to help in realizing this hope, will he communicate with me or with Mr. F. H. Wiggin, Treasurer of the American Board, 14 Beacon Street, Boston?

I would here express my gratitude to my collaborator, Miss Grace H. Knapp, without whose aid this book could not have been written.

I would also acknowledge my indebtedness to the Reverend William E. Strong for permission to use one of the maps from his book, *The History of the American Board*, and to Miss Mabel Whittlesey, of New Haven, to my brother, the Reverend Sydney Ussher, and to the Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief for the loan of photographs for illustrations.

CLARENCE D. USSHER, M.D.

AUBURNDALE, MASS.

October 17, 1917.