

JERUSALEM IN WAR-TIME

EXPULSION OF RELIGIOUS.

Father Lagrange, a well-known Dominican, for many years a resident in Palestine, has given in a French periodical a singularly interesting account of what took place in Jerusalem since the beginning of the war (says the *Catholic Times*). Early on August 2 he heard that all horses and mules had been requisitioned. Then followed notices of mobilisation issued by the different consuls. The next day Frenchmen received their marching orders. They were, with few exceptions, members of religious Communities. Their departure for Jaffa, where a steamer awaited them, was witnessed by a sympathetic crowd. Shouts were raised: 'The victory is ours!' Germans had to take the long and tedious land-route to Constantinople.

Throughout Syria people showed no dislike of the Allies. They knew that France had recently advanced Turkey twenty million pounds. Illustrated papers showed Djemal Pasha, their marine minister, who a short time before had visited Creusot's works, shaking hands with French recruits and wishing them good luck. Nobody had any idea how deeply the Young Turks had committed the country. The mobilisation certainly was very different from that for former wars, when the Zapties, the police, picked up young fellows from the country in a haphazard manner. Now, all had to come. All day long lines of sturdy yokels were seen outside the recruiting office, waiting to be enrolled. A short time afterwards they appeared in brand-new uniforms, with rifles of the latest pattern, in a camp perfectly pitched, hard at drill. Jerusalem had never beheld such a sight.

Appearance of German Officers.

The people most astonished were the Turkish officials; nor was this miracle of order and activity explained until some fair-haired officers appeared on parade who sat stiffly on horseback and gave orders in an unmistakably Prussian manner. This was certainly the largest army the Turks had ever raised: Father Lagrange estimates the original number as well over a million. Their officers looked upon the victory of the Germans as an article of faith, and expected with their aid to recover Egypt and the Caucasus. They set themselves to prepare public opinion. The country was flooded with news-sheets, which retailed in French, German, and Arabic shameless horrors alleged to have been committed by Belgian women on German wounded, and cruelties said to have been practised by the English on their prisoners, and extolled the might and majesty of the Emperor William.

German Influence Supreme.

German influence eventually got the upper hand, and now undoubtedly rules supreme. The change must be attributed to the thoroughness of the propaganda which made its way through Asia Minor and Syria. 'France formerly, to-day Germany,' the Bedouins of the desert used to say. The services of theologians and preachers were enlisted, who taught that Germans were not like other Christians in that they believed strongly in the unity of God, that the Kaiser was, in a way, a distant cousin of the Sultan, that Mohammed William agreed well with Mohammed Rechid. Then began the first hostile measures, the suppression of the post offices belonging to different nations, and the abolition of the capitulations. These treaties, dating from the days of Louis XIV. and Francis I., had given the strangers certain rights, privileges, and courts of their own; indeed, foreigners had come to be regarded as beings whom it was not safe to molest. The abolition was immensely popular: a triumphal procession passed through Jerusalem; patriotic speeches were delivered; a general feast was instituted to celebrate the event.

Consternation in Jerusalem.

When eventually war broke out, the news caused the greatest consternation in Jerusalem. The com-

maundering of camels, horses, and mules brought the true state of affairs home to the minds of all. The wild talk of English atrocities caused a general flight from the coast to Jerusalem; wealthy women deposited their jewellery in the English bank and the Credit Lyonnais. Such are the contradictions of human nature! Against the expected appearance of the Allied Fleet vigorous measures were taken. All subjects of belligerent Powers were informed that they would be shot if they tried to leave the country. All members of religious Orders were held as hostages; they were threatened with immediate execution if any of the coast towns should be bombarded. By way of final theatrical display the spectre of the Holy War was unchained. The Holy War was an affair not intended for home consumption, but for export; its effects were expected to be felt in the conquest of Egypt. This was the one subject of conversation; everybody suggested some plan for crossing the Red Sea. Innumerable utensils of every kind, and thousands of empty petroleum tins for making rafts, were seen on the railways travelling south.

The Turks Kind.

It is certain that the Holy War had nothing to do with the measures taken against the Orders; both the officials and the people showed a kindly disposition towards them. Some of their establishments were turned into barracks; others used for officers. Their libraries and churches were locked and sealed. The remaining houses received the members who had been expelled. Thus they continued, until suddenly in December they all received orders to proceed to a concentration camp at Orfa, the Edessa of former days. They started on their journey, and reached Damascus, when fresh orders reached them to turn back towards the coast to Beyrout. Here they found nuns of the various Sisterhoods awaiting permission to leave. With them they made their journey home; and Djemal Pasha could state in January that all the French religious Orders had left Palestine.

Suppression of Convents and Schools.

Father Lagrange has no hesitation in saying that the first orders were due to Germans, whose aim was to eliminate French influence. Frenchmen had been dismissed throughout Syria from public services and the railways they had founded. The war gave their rivals a welcome opportunity to suppress convents, schools, and hospitals. They proceeded with their usual thoroughness. They expelled even the good Sisters, who had never raised a shadow of suspicion, and thereby cast on the streets numbers of children, of old and infirm. They had priests and monks deported to be detained in a dreary solitude as hostages, or perhaps to meet a worse fate. It was the personal intervention of Benedict XV. and his strongly-expressed wishes—as Father Lagrange was assured by the Pope himself—which changed the direction of the journey, and enabled them to return home. It was the last touch of the diplomacy of the Germans to assure the neutrals and the French themselves that they, the Germans, had delivered French priests out of the hands of Turkish officialdom! For the moment their methods have succeeded. Prussian officers rule supreme in Jerusalem. Mohammed William is the real Sultan. It will be surprising if duplicity and violence do not defeat their own ends, if those who have risen by the sword do not fall by the sword. We can look forward to the day, perhaps not so far off, when under a fairer and juster rule the religious Orders will return to their own.

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