

Defense of the Mohammedan

By An European Traveler Who Has Spent Years in Mohammedan Countries



NUBIAN MOHAMMEDANS BY THE NILE.

(Copyright, 1903, by T. C. McClure.)

EXTRY! EXTRY! Awful murders in Macedonia! Turks kill 50,000 Christians! Speshul extry!

And the newsboy sped down the street, selling his papers like hot cakes to people eager to read about the latest atrocities of the "unspeakable Turk."

An educated Mohammedan from Constantinople, on a visit to America, bought one of the papers and read the cablegrams and editorial comments, smiling cynically the while.

"Do you people really believe all this?" he asked an American friend. "Do you really believe that we Mohammedans are such monsters of depravity, and that we take pleasure in wiping out Christians just because they are Christians? Such a course is totally opposed to the spirit of Mohammedanism."

"Then," asked the American, "how do you account for these massacres we hear so much about?"

"Many of them never happen," was the reply. "They are invented by the Macedonian revolutionary committee, the Bulgarian authorities and other enemies of the Ottoman empire. Other 'massacres,' as your papers call them, are really battles. When the Macedonian rebels are beaten in a fight, the survivors call it a massacre."

"And what about the Armenian affair? Surely the same remarks can't apply there."

"The Armenians and the Kurds," said the Mohammedan apologist, "have always been at deadly feud. For centuries Armenians have slain Kurds, and Kurds Armenians. It is not a matter of religion at all; it is a matter of race, of politics, of commerce—there are a thousand points of difference. The Armenians have become a race of cowardly hucksters and usurers, while the Kurds have remained a race of warriors. The Kurds are paying back old scores, and the Armenians can no longer 'keep their end up,' as you would say. That is all there is to it."

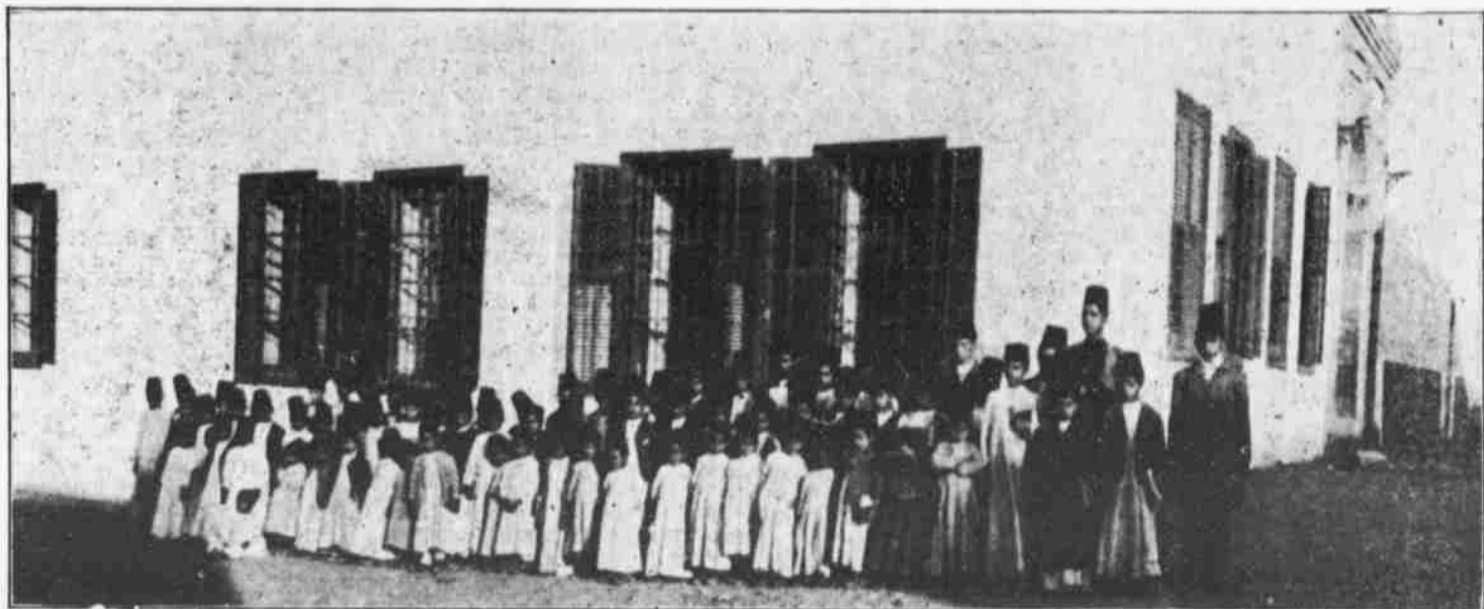
"Believe me, any slaughter of Christians in Turkish dominions, or in any other Mohammedan country, arises from some other

cause than the fact that they are Christians. We have no animosity toward Christians. They are what the Prophet called 'people of a book' ('ahl kitab')—that is to say, followers of a revealed religion—and kindly treatment of them is expressly commanded in the Koran. They are tolerated by us, and even cherished and assisted when they deserve it, by reason of high

of the poor. The Mohammedan peasant would probably offer the same reasons for killing them that the Russians offer for the Kishineff massacre and the persecution of the Jews. Others are political plotters of the most desperate, anarchistic type, who think nothing of blowing up a mosque full of people with dynamite, or of poisoning the streams upon which a Mohammedan

Jews and Christians of all sects are permitted to live and practice their religion within his territory. And the better Jews and Christians they are the better he likes them, he avers.

The Mohammedan asserts that he extends tolerance to the practices and exactions of any faith, be it what it may. His religion teaches him reverence not only



A COPTIC SCHOOL TOLERATED BY THE MOHAMMEDANS.

character and good works."

"Then, if you are so tolerant," said the still skeptical American, "why all this trouble?"

"There are many reasons," said the Mohammedan. "A great many of the Christians in Turkey and throughout the Levant are not by any means nice people. If you had them here I don't think you would like them."

"Many are usurers who grind the faces

village depends for water.

"If they simply practiced the Christian religion, and were otherwise peaceable, law abiding, useful subjects nobody would trouble them. Hundreds of thousands of other Christians, who have those qualities, live under Turkish rule and have no complaint to make about it."

This, in brief, is the defense of the Mohammedan. He denies strenuously that he is intolerant, and points to the fact that

for his own creed, but for all revealed religions. If the Salvation army went through the streets of a fanatical Mohammedan city, beating its drums and flaunting its banners, it would meet with none of the insults which it sometimes encounters in the slums of western cities. As soon as the Mohammedans understood that this curious and novel demonstration was ordained by the religious belief of the actors, they would treat it not merely with polite tol-



THE RAW MATERIAL OF A MOHAMMEDAN ARMY.