How the Archbishop of Smyrna was Martyred

The Barbarous Turks Captured the Foremost Christian Ecclesiastic of Asia Minor and Had Him Torn to Pieces with Wild Horses on a Public Square in Smyrna

The City of Smyrna Burning While the Turks Plundered and Ravished the Christian Inhabitants. Seen from an American Ship.

Monsignor Chrysostom, the Murdered Greek Archbishop of Smyrna.

THE destruction of over 200,000 lives at Smyrna by massacre, fire, hunger, suicide and other cruel forms of death is such a vast tragedy that it is difficult to fix one's attention on any particular incident of it.

The disaster is so great that the mind cannot hold it all. There was, however, one tragedy which in its wickedness and barbarity exceeds anything that has happened in modern times, and therefore should receive attention from Americans.

That tragedy was the martyrdom of Monsignor Chrysostom, the Greek Metropolitan (or Archbishop) of Smyrna. It is evidently the purpose of the Turks in their present campaign to wipe out all Christians in Asia Minor. The deliberate torture and murder of the leading ecclesiastics of the proscribed religion was a terrible earnest of their intention.

The manner in which the Archbishop of Smyrna met death has not yet been reported in the American press. The Paris Figaro, which is a warm supporter of the French policy of backing the Turks against the Greeks, and cannot be suspected of being prejudiced against the Turks, prints the facts briefly.

The Figaro states that the news of Archbishop Chrysostom's death was brought to Athens by the Bishop of Ephesus, who escaped from the sack of Smyrna disguised as a sailor and reached Athens on a French ship. The facts told by him are beyond question.

Monsignor Chrysostom, who was a very courageous man and an aggressive leader of the Greek Christians, bravely remained at his post when the victorious Kemalist army entered Smyrna. Massacre and atrocities by the Turks were regarded as certain by the terrified inhabitants, few of whom were able to escape. A host of more than 300,000 panic-stricken refugees (Greeks, Armenians and Jews) from the interior, who had fled before the victorious Turks and seen their relatives tortured and massacred, poured into the city, which already had a population of 400,000. These conditions alone produced famine and misery.

When the Turkish army entered, Archbishop Chrysostom begged the Turkish commanders to maintain order among their followers, and he exhorted his own panic-stricken coreligionists to be calm and sensible. Turkish officers disregarded him entirely and insolently, and allowed him to be seized by a band of the most savage and fanatical Mohammedans. He was especially hated for his bold championship of his religious followers and his nation. With him they captured his faithful dragoman.

The Turks began by tearing out the Archbishop's beard, which, like all Greek priests, he wore full and uncut. Then they tore his clothes off and subjected him to many dreadful tortures, such as tearing out his tongue and pulling out his finger and toe nails.

Finally, while there was still life in his quivering body, he was carried to the Ikiechesme Square for the supreme agony. Four horses were secured. The Archbishop was placed on his back, and one horse was tied by a long rope to one of his feet, another horse to another foot, another horse to one of his hands and another horse to the other hand.

Four Turks mounted the four horses, one on each, and with their whips drove the animals in different directions. One Turk drove his horse to the north, the next drove to the west, the next to the south, and the remaining one to the east.

The archbishop was slowly torn in four parts by the animals. The fanatical mob watched the proceeding with hideous pleasure, urged on the horses and howled with rage and satisfaction. At last they seized the remains of the victim. The Archbishop's dragoman suffered practically the same fate.

It is very strange that in this modern day a Christian archbishop should be tortured to death in nearly the same manner as one of the first saints and martyrs of the Church, a figure who is now involved in a mass of legend.

St. Hippolytus was a Roman Christian, who lived about 180 A. D., almost in the lifetime of the first apostles, in the very earliest days of the Church—in fact, when persecution was raging under the Roman Emperors.

St. Hippolytus was an active and successful religious leader, and was put to death by the Roman Emperor. St. Laurence states that he was torn to pieces by wild horses. Another account states that he was bishop of "Bostra, the chief city of the Arabs," when he was martyred in this way.

It is probable that St. Hippolytus was really martyred in Italy. His remains are supposed to lie in the famous catacomb of St. Hippolytus, in Rome. The legend concerning a Bishop Hippolytus who was martyred by the Arabs may refer to another martyr of the same name, as it was a frequent name in Greece and Rome. The reference is very interesting as indicating that two thousand years ago the Orientals were in the habit of tearing their victims apart with wild horses.

St. Hippolytus must have been a highly honored saint in the Church for centuries, as the frequent use of his martyrdom as a subject of religious art proves. There is a very remarkable painting of him by the early Flemish old master, Thierry Bouts. It is the greatest treasure of the Church of St. Sauveur at Bruges.

Cruelty is a deeply planted, ineradicable characteristic of the Asiatic races. During the thousands of years in which the Turks, Tartars, Mongols and other Oriental races have been plundering and ravishing they have always practised such cruelties as tearing prisoners to pieces with wild horses. Assyrian stone reliefs of three thousand years ago show the conquerors flaying their prisoners alive and committing equally dreadful atrocities. The Turks and other Asiatic races commit exactly the same atrocities to-day, and probably they number among them lineal descendants of Assurbanipal and other conquerors who flayed their prisoners alive. In more recent centuries, when the Turks were making inroads into Europe, they had a habit of tying prisoners to the ground, building a platform upon their bodies and then feasting on the platform as the victims were slowly crushed to death.

Reports assure us that the Turks in their recent campaigns have followed their old method of crushing their victims as they did in other centuries. Flaying prisoners alive, tearing them to pieces, crushing them to death—these are all as much a part of the psychology and morality of the Mongolian to-day as they were two, three or five thousand years ago. Nothing is better established than that Asiatics do not change in morals and habits.

It seems that we ought to stop for a moment and think seriously what it means when a Christian archbishop is tortured to death by Orientals in exactly the same way as they did it two thousand years ago.

Has the world progressed at all? Shall we hear of Christians being fed to the wild beasts in the circus? During the extermination of Armenians in the great war refugees told how wild Turkish horsemen made a public sport of catching Christian maidens on their spears. The civilized world has now allowed the Turks to massacre about 3,000,000 Armenians. Some observers think that there would be no serious interference if the Turks made an organized spectacle of putting the few remaining Asiatic Christians to death.

It is interesting to know that the murdered Archbishop of Smyrna was a highly cultivated, refined and scholarly man, a noble figure, in fact, of much distinction. He was not uncouth, unclean and primitive, as a good many of the Armenian and other Christian priests of Asia Minor are. If he had visited New York he would have been asked to sit in the chancel of the Episcopal Cathedral with Bishop Manning, as other Greek bishops have been. Smyrna was a great, beautiful and wealthy city, containing 250,000 Greeks among its cosmopolitan population. Naturally, such a community gave an opportunity for a man of high qualities.

Monsignor Chrysostom greatly distinguished himself and endeared himself to his countrymen in 1913, just before the world war, by his brave rescue of four young Greeks. They had been convicted and sentenced to death by the Turks for an alleged attack on a Turkish woman on the island of Mitylene during the war between Greece and Turkey, which raged only a year before the world war. The men were actually being carried to the gallows when Monsignor Chrysostom produced irrefutable documentary evidence that the men did not commit the crime and that they were convicted by perjury. With the help of the foreign consuls he was able to stop the execution.

After Monsignor Chrysostom had witnessed the agonies of the world war and the loss of lives spent in fighting the Turks he did not dream that they would be permitted again to occupy such civilized Christian communities as Smyrna. It was natural that he should support with all his heart the effort of Greece to hold Smyrna and the coast area for civilization.

The Turks remembered well his patriotism, his bravery in rescuing their victims from their clutches at the foot of the gallows, his consistent championship of Christianity and civilization. When they had him in their grasp they thought of all that, and repaid him with the dreadful martyrdom that has been described.

After all, it must not be forgotten that the martyrdom of the Archbishop was only one murder out of a number that has been estimated as high as 400,000. His position and the manner of his taking off stamp the occurence as a special tragedy.

The accounts of scores of eyewitnesses leave no doubt that the aim of the Turks was to extinguish all Christians in Asia Minor.

A very notable American woman, Dr. Esther Lovejoy, chairman of the executive board of the American Women's Hospitals and president of the Medical Women's International Association, was present at the sack of Smyrna, and has told in plain language some of the acts she saw committed by the Turks.

"On September 28," said Dr. Esther Lovejoy, "the Turks drove the crowds of Christian refugees from the quays of Smyrna, where the searchlights of the allied warships played on them, into the side streets. All that night the screams of women and girls were heard, and it was declared next day that many were taken for slaves.

"The Smyrna horror is beyond imagination and the power of words. It is a crime for which the whole world is responsible in not having, through the civilized agen, built up some means to prevent such orders as that of the Turkish chief in the city and the means with which it was carried out. It is a crime for the world to stand by through a sense of neutrality and permit this outrage against 200,000 women.

"Under the order to remain neutral I saw the launch of an American warship pick up two male refugees who were trying to swim to a merchant ship under the Turkish rifle fire and return them to the hands of the waiting Turk soldiers on the beach, for what must have been certain death. And under orders to remain neutral I saw soldiers and officers of all nationalities stand by while Turk soldiers beat with their rifles women trying to reach children who were crying just beyond the fence."

How St. Hippolytus, One of the Earliest Saints of the Church, Was Martyred by the Arabs Nearly 1,800 Years Ago in the Same Manner as Archbishop Chrysostom Was Martyred by the Turks the Other Day. From the Famous Painting by Thierry Bouts, in the Church of St. Sauveur, Bruges.

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