

For God's sake do not let the public conscience go to sleep again over this reign of terror. The land is almost paralyzed with horror and terror !

No. 7.

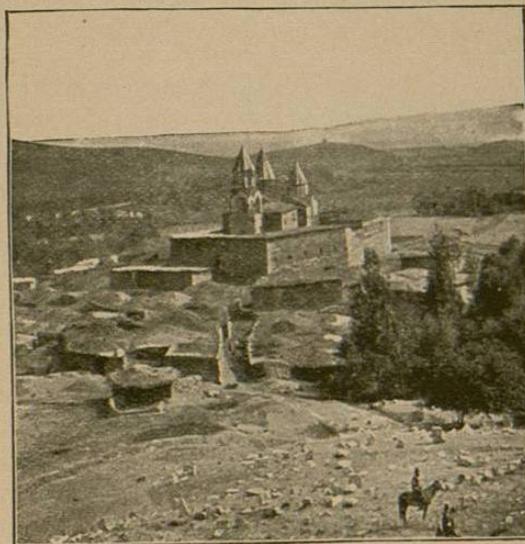
[The crisis and the need of keeping the issue clear. The real explanation of the massacre.]

A . . . , Jan. 7, 1895.

The importance of the present crisis grows upon me. In the first place Turkey is preparing for a terrible catastrophe by squeezing Armenians, and arming Moslem civilians in Sivas, Aleppo, Castamouni, and other provinces ; and in the second place it is putting on the screws tighter everywhere excepting in the three eastern provinces where the Commission is now commencing investigation. In Van and Bitlis the process of arresting and intimidating witnesses went on until the very hour of the departure of the Commission of Investigation. Then the order went out to stop, and those provinces are enjoying the first semblance of quiet that they have known for five years.

This policy of continued massacre and outrage is favored by the profound ignorance which prevails everywhere as to the actual state of things in Turkey. People think that the Sassoun massacre is something exceptional, and that until that is proved there is no evidence of a need of European interference in behalf of Christians in Turkey. What ought to be done is to fix on the mind of the public the fact that Turkey

has taken up the policy of crushing the Christians all over the Empire, and has been at it for several years, so that even if the massacre had not taken place, the duty of Europe to prohibit Turkey from acting the part of Anti-Christ was still self-evident.



NAREG: ANCIENT CHURCH AND MODERN HOVELS.

No. 8.

B . . . , Jan. 12, 1895.

The people are in a state of horror because of the massacre. The Commission has been expected for some time, and without doubt the local authorities have used every means to cover up their tracks and terrorize still further those who may be probable

witnesses. Those who are encouraged to testify will be again at the mercy of the Turks after the Commission rises. I have not the slightest doubt that some will be courageous enough to testify, but it will be at great odds. Almost everything is against the perfect success of the Commission's work, or rather the favorable outcome of the work of the European delegates. It will not be right to stake the fate of Armenia on the outcome of the work of this Commission.

Rather it should be remembered that Sassoun is the outcome of a governmental system. There have been hundreds of Sassouns all over the country all through the last ten years, as you know. The laxity of Europe has afforded opportunity for the merciless working of this system in all its vigor. It is born of religious and race hatred, and has in mind the crushing of Christianity and Christians.

It is not the Kourdish robbers, or famine, or cholera that have to answer for the present state of the country. It is rather the robbery, and famine, and worse than cholera entailed on the country by the workings of this system. It is not alone the blood of five thousand men, women, children, and babies, that rises in a fearful wail to heaven, calling for just vengeance, but also the fearful suffering, the desolate homes, the wanton cruelty of tax collectors and petty officials, and the violated honor of scores and scores.

The Turk is on trial. Let not Sassoun alone go in evidence, but remember that the same wail rises from all over the country.

No. 9.

[From a graduate of an American school.]

[Translated.]

G . . . , Nov. 4, 1894.

"I implore that you will remember one of your former pupils, and hear my cry. Oh, woe is me, eternal pain and sorrow to my young heart! Evil disposed and lawless men have robbed me of the bloom



ARMENIAN GIRLS OF VAN.

and beauty of my wifely purity. It was H— Bey the son of the Kaimakam (the local Turkish Governor residing in the village). I was engaged in my household work. I stepped outside the door, when I suddenly found myself in the grasp of four men. They smothered my cries and threatened my life, and by force carried me off to a strange house. Though this is written with ink, believe me, it is written in blood and tears."

THE SEQUEL TO SASSOUN.

The Sassoun massacre, which was first publicly proven beyond doubt by the foregoing evidence, was simply a gigantic murder of which the perpetrators were the Sultan's regular and irregular troops, and of which the victims were four thousand hardy, brave, but helpless mountaineers, the flower of the Armenian race. The massacre took place early in September, 1894. Within a month, the British Government was in possession of the main facts through reports of its own consuls. But instead of taking prompt action, it spent several months more in polite correspondence on the subject with the Powers and the Porte. After giving his officials four months in which to clear up the evidences of their crime, the Sultan sent a "Commission of Inquiry" to investigate at Moosh. This Commission was a farce from beginning to end, for it was composed of Turks, and the Sultan had already rewarded and decorated the criminals. England, France, and Russia, whose right and duty it was to have instituted an investigation of their own, contented themselves with the "concession" from the Sultan that their vice-consuls should be allowed to attend the sittings of the Commission as visitors, but without the power of summoning or protecting witnesses.

It is clear that the diplomats did not take the Commission seriously, for, without awaiting its report they proceeded to prepare a "Scheme of Reforms" for the six eastern provinces—namely, Erzerum, Van, Bitlis, Diarbekir, Harpoot, and Sivas—and presented it to the Sultan on May 11, 1895.

These reforms were mild and in the line of what the Turks had frequently promised, and their execution was entrusted to the Sultan. But in spite of all this he obstinately refused to accept them.

Spring and summer passed, the anniversary of the Sassoun massacre arrived. No redress had been secured, nor the punishment of a single official, nor the adoption of a single reform. Europe seemed to be trying to hush up the Armenian question.

The Armenians felt that this would mean the sleep of death to their race.

They had been growing more and more restive under the long delay, and a few hot-heads decided to have a demonstration in Constantinople in hope of hastening matters. They made no secret of it, representing that they were simply going to present a petition to the Grand Vezier in an orderly manner, and sent word to him beforehand of their purpose. Such methods of securing attention to grievances are common in Turkey. But the authorities, *as a matter of course*, took the wrong line of action. Instead of letting the crowd go to the Porte and present its petition, as usage requires, thus passing the affair off in a quiet manner, the police were ordered to block the way. This led to a riot on September 30th, during which about twenty Armenians were badly hurt, and three of them died, as well as three of the police.

The few Armenians who had made a show of resistance belonged to the *Hunchagist* or "agitating" society. The members of this society are a mere handful compared with the mass of the Ar-

menian population, which realizes its utter helplessness and has no thought of resistance. No one understands this better than the Turkish Government; but it delights to find an occasional trace of disloyalty, in order to brand the whole race as seditious, and thus justify the policy of cruelty, impoverishment, and extermination which it has been deliberately executing in Armenia for years, and is determined to continue.

If in defending their right of petition the Armenians were guilty, their guilt ends there, for they made no further resistance. But great numbers of them were arrested at once, and several hundred were brutally killed in Constantinople during the week by Mohammedan civilians and *Softas*, or religious students.

The following is a significant extract from a letter:

"CONSTANTINOPLE, Oct. 5, 1895.

"The slaughter continued through Tuesday and Wednesday morning. There was no general attack on houses, but a tendency to kill every Armenian seen in the streets. This morning the Sultan sent presents to the *Softas* engaged in the work. No Mohammedan has been arrested for murder of Armenians. The worst feature of the whole affair has been the brutal murder of prisoners at the Ministry of Police by the officers charged with their guardianship. Several eye-witnesses describe how men were beaten to death by the police in the Court of the Ministry. The clerk of a foreign consulate happened to be there on Monday, and saw eight

Armenians brought in from the street and instantly bayoneted."

The massacre at Trebizond, October 8th, was the first of a series, and in many respects was typical of those which rapidly followed in Erzerum, Erzingan, Baiboort, Sivas, Marsovan, Cesarea, Harpoot, Bitlis, Diarbekir, Malatia, Marash, Aintab and other places. It should be remembered, however, that Trebizond, being a seaport, with a large foreign population and European consuls, suffered less than the cities of the interior where there were no such restraining influences.

The following description of the massacre at Trebizond, is that of an American eye-witness and was written on the spot at the time.

"TREBIZOND, Oct. 9, 1895.

"On Saturday, October 5th, the excitement in town (over news of the attacks on Armenians in Constantinople) was very intense. The Consuls had a consultation, and going in a body to the Governor, earnestly pressed him to arrest those who were exciting the people to acts of outrage. The Governor declined to do so but promised in his own way to do 'the right thing'!

"Suddenly like a clap of thunder in a clear sky, the assault began at about 11 A.M. yesterday. Unsuspecting people walking along the streets and merchants sitting quietly at their shop doors were shot ruthlessly down. Some were slashed with swords until life was extinct. They passed through the quarters where only old men, women, and chil-

dren remained, killing the men and large boys, generally permitting the women and younger children to live. For five hours this horrid work of inhuman butchery went on. Then the sound of musketry died away and the work of looting began. Every shop of an Armenian in the market was gutted. For hours bales of broadcloth, cotton goods, and every conceivable kind of merchandise passed along without molestation to the houses of the spoilers. The intention evidently was to impoverish and as near as possible to blot out the Armenians of this town. So far as appearances went, the police and soldiers distinctly aided in this savage work, their only care being to see that the right ones—that is, Armenians—were killed.”

“TREBIZOND, Oct. 14, 1895.

“Many, who even promised to accept the religion of Islam, were still most cruelly hacked to pieces.

In this city and vicinity the killed number 1,000, almost exclusively males. When you consider that the adult males of the Armenian community did not number more than 2,000, the frightful mortality is at once understood. On the other hand, not one of the rioters has been arrested; not one has been disarmed. Apparently all this wholesale murder of peaceable and law-abiding subjects of the Sultan is no crime worthy of notice. The Armenians are now so prostrated that they can do nothing. Relief must come from abroad.”

October 16th was a day of rejoicing in Constantinople, but it will be remembered as one of the

blackest days in Armenian history. On that day the Sultan professed to accept the scheme of reforms which for more than five months the Powers had urged upon him in vain. What he really did, as subsequent events demonstrate beyond a doubt, was to sign the death-warrant of the Armenians who were to have profited by the reforms. He had darkly hinted that this would follow if he were pushed too hard, but no one believed that he would really prove so vindictive or so foolish as to carry out the threat. The Armenian leaders who were baffled in trying to present their petition on September 30th, had for two weeks kept up a silent protest by compelling all Armenians to close their shops in the bazaars. But the granting of the reforms, which was all that the so-called “revolutionists” demanded, produced at once an enormous sense of relief, and the streets were as busy as ever.

From this time on reform by massacre was the order of the day. The Armenians in city after city were quickly given over to slaughter and spoliation.

The following letter, written from Erzerum within three weeks after the Sultan accepted the reforms, shows with what energy, zeal, and good faith he carried them out. It should be remembered that Shakir Pasha, the Imperial Reform Commissioner, and Raouf Pasha, the best Governor in all the Eastern provinces, were in command at Erzerum :

“ERZERUM, Nov. 5, 1895.

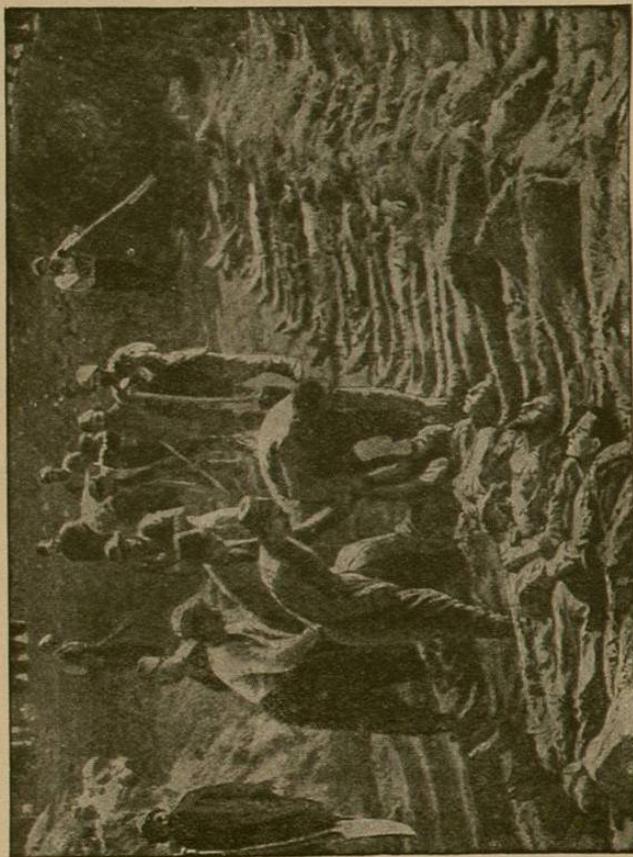
“The wave of destruction started at Constantinople and has so far swept through Trebizond, Bai-

boort, Erzingan, Erzerum, Bitlis, Harpoot, and the intervening districts. The entire Erzerum province has been deluged in Christian blood and the bulk of Christian property plundered or destroyed.

"The scheme of reform has now become an impossibility. The only hope of this land is foreign occupation. Appeal for relief funds. The remnant of the people are left in utter destitution. They cannot get out of the country. Two cents a day will give a man about a pound and a half of bread. For the love of God do all you can to get relief for these wretched people!

"The scene in the cemetery was awful. The remains are simply the wrecks of human bodies. Awful cruelty was practised. The majority have bullet wounds in addition to bayonet, sword, and dagger cuts. Some were skinned, some burned with kerosene. A great many women are missing. Very many of the dead have been disposed of by the Turks themselves. There must have been a thousand killed. About seven hundred houses and fifteen hundred shops were plundered of *all* that was in them. The wanton destruction of property that could not be removed was very marked. Boxes and other furniture were split to pieces. Provisions that could not be carried away were destroyed.

"The Armenians had shown a great amount of patience. I am perfectly sure they had no thought of attack, much less any preparation for it. The attack was made by Moslems after leaving the mosques, after the noon hour of prayer, and it was simultaneous all over the city. The Armenians



THE BURIAL PIT AT ERZERUM.
From a photograph by permission of Harper Bros.

were in their places of business, which were simply death-traps. For instance, the silversmiths' row was cut off at either end and not a man escaped, and the shops were not only plundered but wrecked. In fact, the most violent Armenians, *i. e.*, the *Hunchagists*, had determined to keep perfectly quiet till the scheme of reform was well tried. The soldiers declare that they had been instructed beforehand. The Turks were expecting it for a long time, and evidently the orders were given from Constantinople. The massacre was almost entirely in the hands of the military. It began and ended with the bugle.

The following has been received from perfectly trustworthy sources in regard to the massacre at Sivas :

"The outbreak began on November 12th and was 'permitted' to continue for seven days ; during this 'bloody week' about twelve hundred Armenians and ten Turks were killed. Suddenly at noon, as if at a given signal, the Turkish laborers seized their tools, clubs, or whatever was at hand ; soldiers, Circassians, and police their arms,—all under command of officers,—and rushed to the market to begin their dreadful work of killing, stripping the dead, and looting the houses. No resistance was made by the Armenians. Many of the merchants and their clerks were killed ; thus at one blow the Armenian element is eliminated from the trade at Sivas. The Armenian villagers in the vicinity have been robbed of everything, and the people are left to beg and die. The suffering on the approach of winter will be very great.

"As the fury of this storm of blood and greed subsided, the stricken Armenians of Sivas slowly

gathered the mangled and naked bodies of their kinsmen to their cemetery, where a great trench had been dug to hold the horrid harvest of death. A single priest read a short service over the long and ghastly rank, and thus was closed another chapter in the yet unfinished story of cruelty, lust, and fanaticism."

Similar reports from a score of other places might be given, but for the fact that space and the feelings of the reader forbid. The story is the same everywhere. The greatest loss of life was in the province of Harpoot or Mamouret-ul-Aziz. Here 15,000 were slaughtered. Letters from that region state: "The Kurds plunder, but do not generally kill unless resisted; but the Turks kill in cold blood and in ways suggested by the Arch-Fiend himself. The fate of the survivors is even worse than that of those who have been killed. The villagers wander about the fields houseless, with scanty clothing, no food, and winter is upon them. Everywhere they meet with the dread alternative, 'Become Moslems or die.' At least fourteen Protestant pastors, besides Gregorian priests and hundreds of their flocks, have been publicly martyred on refusing to deny their faith."

"In many places the Moslems are picking up the destitute widows and orphans and simply taking possession of them in order to make them Mohammedans without any will of their own." "Fifty-five Armenian women and girls, thus carried off from Oozonovah, a village near Harpoot, were being conveyed along the Euphrates, when, by a swift decision, they all jumped into the river and drowned

themselves to escape a life of Mohammedan slavery and bestiality."

A letter from Cesarea of Dec. 3, 1895, states: "The method taken with the women was to demand that they proclaim themselves Moslems. If they refused, as many did, even young girls from twelve to fifteen years of age, they were cut down mercilessly. This is not intended to be a sensational account. It is a cruel fact which can be substantiated with the utmost ease."

Enough of this Chapter of Horrors! It has been necessary to omit the most cruel details, and the stories of inhuman lust of which hundreds of pure Christian women, both matron and maid, have been the victims, shall not be allowed to soil the pages of this book nor to defile the imagination of the reader. It will be sufficient to give a general summary of the massacres of October, November, and December, 1895.

A GENERAL SUMMARY.

Careful study of trustworthy reports from all the regions devastated proves beyond doubt that *the recent outbreaks, while sudden, were under careful direction in regard to place, time, nationality of the victims and of the perpetrators, were prompted by a common motive and their true character has been systematically concealed by Turkish official reports.*

1. With some exceptions, the massacres have been confined to the provinces to be reformed. In out-rages elsewhere, as at Marash, Aintab, Oorfa and Cesarea, the Moslems were excited by the nearness

of the scenes of massacre, and by the reports of the plunder which others were securing. The region devastated is vast, being five hundred miles east and west, and three hundred north and south. It extends from Asia Minor proper to the Russian and Persian frontiers, and from the Black Sea to the Mesopotamian plain.

2. The massacre in Trebizond occurred just as the Sultan, after six months of refusal, was about to consent to the scheme of reforms demanded by the Powers, as if to warn them that, in case they persisted, the mine was already laid for the destruction of the Armenians. In fact the massacre of the Armenians is Turkey's real reply to the demands of Europe that she reform. From Trebizond the wave of murder and robbery swept on through almost every city and town and village in the six provinces where reforms were promised. When the news of the first massacre reached Constantinople, a high Turkish official remarked to one of the ambassadors that massacre was like the small-pox: they must all have it, but they would n't need to have it the second time.

3. The victims were exclusively Armenians. In Trebizond there is a large Greek population, but neither there nor elsewhere have the Greeks been molested. Special care has also been taken to avoid injury to the subjects of foreign nations, with the idea of escaping foreign complications and the payment of indemnities. The only marked exceptions were in Marash, and in Harpoot, where eight buildings belonging to the American Mission were plundered

and burned, the total losses exceeding \$100,000, for which no indemnity has yet been paid, though more than three months has passed.

4. The method in the cities has been to kill within a limited period the largest number of Armenians—especially men of business, capacity and intelligence—and to beggar their families. Hence the massacres were begun during business hours, when the Armenians could be caught in their shops, just after the noonday prayer of the Moslems. The surprised and unarmed Armenians made little or no resistance, and where, as at Diarbekir and Gurun, they undertook to defend themselves, they suffered the more. The killing was done with guns, revolvers, swords, clubs, pickaxes, and every conceivable weapon, and many of the dead were horribly mangled. The shops and houses were absolutely gutted, and often burned.

Upon hundreds of villages the Turks, Kurds, and Circassians came down like the hordes of Tamerlane, robbed the helpless peasants of their flocks and herds, stripped them of their very clothing, and carried away their bedding, cooking utensils, and even the little stores of provisions which they had with infinite care and toil laid up for the severities of a rigorous winter. Worst of all is the bitter cry that comes from every quarter that the Moslems carried off hundreds of Christian women and children.

The number killed in the massacres thus far is estimated at forty thousand. Not less than two hundred and fifty thousand wretched survivors, most of whom are women and children, are in danger of

perishing by starvation and exposure unless foreign aid is promptly sent and allowed to reach them.

5. The perpetrators were the resident Moslem population—armed and instigated by the authorities, who had previously disarmed the Christians,—reinforced by Kurds, Circassians, and in several cases by the Sultan's soldiers and officers, who began the dreadful work at the sound of a bugle, and desisted when the bugle signalled to them to stop. This was notoriously true in Erzerum. In Harpoot, also, the soldiers took a prominent part, firing on the buildings of the American Mission with Martini-Henri rifles and Krupp cannon.

It is an utter mistake to suppose, as some have, that the local authorities could not have suppressed the "fanatical" Moslem mobs and restrained the Kurds. The fact is that the authorities, after looking on while the massacres were in progress, did generally intervene and stop the slaughter in the cities as soon as the limited period during which the Moslems were allowed to kill and rob had expired.

6. The motive of the Turks is apparent even to the superficial observer. The scheme of reforms devolved civil offices, judgeships, and police appointments on Mohammedans and non-Mohammedans in the six provinces proportionately. This, while simple justice, was a bitter pill to the Mohammedans, who had ruled the Christians with a rod of iron for five hundred years. All that was needed to make the scheme of reforms inoperative was to alter the proportion of Christians to Mohammedans. This policy was at once relentlessly and thoroughly exe-

cuted. The Armenians have been both diminished and utterly prostrated, first, by killing at a single blow those most capable of taking a part in any scheme of reconstruction, and, secondly, by compelling the survivors to die of starvation, exposure, and sickness or to become Moslem. Thousands in despair of help from God or man have already accepted the religion of the murderers of their relatives. Though only an outward acceptance now, it will soon become an irrevocable fact, unless the awful pressure of the Turks is broken by foreign intervention.

It is the very essence of Mohammedanism that the *ghiaour* has no right to live save in subjection. The abortive schemes of Europe insisting on the rights of Armenians as men and Christians have enraged the Moslems against them. The arrogant and non-progressive Turks know that in a fair and equal race the Christians will outstrip them in every department of business and industry, and they see in any just scheme of reforms the handwriting on the wall for themselves.

7. The refinement of cruelty appears in this, that the Turkish Government has attempted to cover up its hideous policy and deeds by the most colossal lying and hypocrisy. By the constant publication of mendacious telegrams and reports, it has tried to make Europe and America believe that the agricultural and commercial Armenians, stripped of all weapons and in a hopeless minority, are in rebellion. It is true that on September 30, 1895, some hot-headed young Armenians, contrary to the entreaties of the Arme-

nian Patriarch and the orders of the police, attempted to take a well worded petition to the Grand Vizier, according to a time-honored custom. It is also true that brave and oppressed mountaineers in the one isolated town of Zeitoun drove out a small garrison of Turkish soldiers, whom, however, they treated with humanity; it is likewise true that in various places individual Armenians, in despair, have advocated acts of violence and revenge with the hope of calling attention to their wrongs. But the universal testimony of impartial foreign eye-witnesses is that, with the above exceptions, the Armenians have given no provocation whatever. If the Armenians made attacks, where are the Turkish dead?

And all this has been done by those who have for years dazzled and deceived Europe with Hatti Shereefs and Hatti Humayouns, promulgating civil equality and religious liberty for their Christian subjects.

The Sultan who is the head of all authority in Turkey, wrote to Lord Salisbury, and pledged his word of honor that the scheme of reforms should be carried out to the letter, at the very moment when he was directing the massacres. And the six great Christian Powers of Europe, as well as the United States, still treat this man with infinite courtesy and deference.

The most appalling feature of this vast tragedy is the fact that all the "civilized" and "Christian" nations of the world have watched it for months without moving a finger to check it. The sober truth is that civilization is not progress, and that the Christianity of to-day is not Christian.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT EASTERN TURKEY.

IN order that the ordinary reader may grasp the situation in Armenia, information is given at this point in regard to the country itself, its administration, the elements that compose the population, and their relations to one another.

The massacre took place in the mountainous Sasoun district just south of Moosh, two days' ride west of Bitlis, a large city where the Provincial-Governor and a permanent military force reside. It is near the western end of Lake Van, about eight hundred miles east of Constantinople, two hundred and fifty miles south of Trebizond on the Black Sea, and only one hundred and fifty miles from the Russian and Persian frontiers of Asiatic Turkey. These distances do not seem great until the difficulties of travel are considered. The roads are, in most cases, bridle paths, impassable for vehicles, without bridges, infested with highwaymen, and unprovided with lodging-places. It is, therefore, necessary to go to the expense of hiring government guards, and to burden oneself with all articles likely to be needed on the way—tents, food supplies, cooking utensils,