

First Dispatch

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following:

Statement of course of events in Adana.

On morning of Wednesday 14th April 1909, I received a letter from Mr Trepani, the British dragoman at Adana stating that there was a very dangerous feeling in that town; threats had been made & there were some murders, & that the shops were all shut.

I went to Adana by the next train, arriving about 5pm. So little had I idea that any massacre was imminent that I took my wife with me.

From the train about 2 stations from Adana we saw a dead body, & a little further on several refugees running towards the train.

All the people from 2nd cl[ass] carriage got in the first, saying that there were men in the train to kill them.

On going thro' carriages of 2nd cl[ass] with my cavass [a Turkish armed police officer] I found 2 armed Turks threatening the refugees running by the train. They put away their pistols & were quiet when they saw me.

The nearer we got to Adana the more bodies there were & while I was escorting my wife to Mr Trepani's house which was near to the station 2 or 3 men were killed under the noses of the Turkish Guard - which had a little guard house about midway between Mr Trepani's house & the station.

I got into uniform [and] went to the Guard, [and] sharply recalled to the officer his duty of preventing murder. I took 4 soldiers as escort & Mr Edwards, inspector of Ottoman Bank who asked protection. I walked through the town to the Konak - about 1½ miles.

I saw several men killed on the way & the town was full of a howling mob looting the shops. There was firing in all directions. On arrival at the Konak I found all in disorder. Vali & Ferik were both in the telegraph office in a state of panic. I demanded more soldiers to go to American Mission & other places where there were British subjects. They gave me a few, very unwillingly, as they said they would take no responsibility for me [sic] life. They would not or could not give an officer & there was no time to argue.

I afterwards found out from American & English witnesses, Mr Gibbons of Tarsus & Mr Lawson Chambers, that some little time before I got there 2 men had been killed in that very office, practically before the Vali's eyes (there was a grating between him & them) who was too frightened to protect them or to punish the murderers. I went in the dark to the American Mission which is in the Armenian Quarter. Around this place there was much firing. Finding all safe there I left guards in the 2 schools. Days afterwards I found out that one of these guards did fairly, but the other melted away.

I took Mr Edwards to the Ottoman Bank where I left more soldiers. I then made a search for Mr Kokinakis & his wife - British Subjects at the other side of the town. I found them at last in a farm where they had taken refuge about 1 mile from their factory.

The owner - an Arab called Diblan Oglu [see <https://www.facebook.com/1391989494393239/posts/1643282315930621/>] - who was their friend swore to me that he could & would be answerable for them.

I had then only 4 soldiers & did not care to take them through the mob in the town to Mr Trepani's house which is at least 2 miles away. However 2 days after this I sent them an armed escort & brought them in as their position has become untenable.

I then went back to the Konak & found the Vali & Ferik had done absolutely nothing. I warned them that I should come again in the morning & require 50 men, a senior officer & a horse to ride round the town. I was then searching for an American & an Englishman who were missing from the Mission. I found they had been safe in the Konak for several hours & had been eye witnesses of the murders referred to. They were also witnesses of the beginning of the outbreak when the Ferik went out with the troops. At the first shot he had turned back to the Konak and taken them with him.

I then returned through the city to Mr Trepani's house. The city all this time was in undescrivable tumult with heavy fighting going on in the approaches to the Armenian Quarter & murder & fires everywhere.

I had not force enough to do much to stop it. My 4 soldiers who had been murdering men on my arrival followed me faithfully through it all.

My cavass Bedir was also with me.

Next morning I went again to the Konak seeing on the way some soldiers joining in the murders.

After some difficulty I obtained some 50 men from the Konak (where I think there were about 500 soldiers). The Commandant of Gendarmerie (Ali Bey) came with me. No superior officer to him would leave the Konak. We paraded through the town with bugles blowing - the Ferik had lent me a horse, & I had 3 or 4 mounted men. Wherever we went firing ceased. We cleared the streets sometimes by charging with the bayonets, sometimes by firing over the heads of the crowd. We went thro' the Armenian Quarter. Both sides ceased firing when they recognised me with the exception of a few stray shots.

I visited the American & French Schools.

I had it cried everywhere that everyone was to go into his house as I should fire down the streets.

The city is a large one & it was difficult to quiet many of its alleys & byways at once.

After I passed, apparently fighting was freely resumed.

I went down to the station & drove away a big crowd of villagers who were flocking into the town to loot & murder.

After I returned from there towards the Armenian Quarter - a mile or more away - some of these villagers & guards murdered Armenians within sight of Mr Trepani's house. The Officer on Guard on being called to by my wife saved some women, although badly wounded.

When I arrived in the Armenian Qr I found 2 American Missionaries had been killed. They had been gallantly working for an hour to put out a fire which was threatening their school & were killed at the closest range by 5 Turks who had previously promised to let them alone.

The 3rd missionary, Mr Trowbridge, who was with them managed to escape.

They told me in the school that the bodies were lying in the streets & that nobody could approach. My party carried them in - Both were still breathing. While carrying them in, fire was opened on us from a minaret within easy range.

We went to clear it but everybody ran away.

Before this 2nd visit to the Armenian Qr, I changed my infantry at the Konak but a Captain of Gendarmerie Ali Bey [and] the mounted men remained with me all day. We also visited the Turkish Qrs & dispersed the entering crowds. The big bazaar was blazing, & Turks & Armenians were carrying on house to house fighting, which it was extremely difficult & in some cases impossible to stop. In one place I left a guard to keep clear the road where battle had been raging & no sooner was I gone than it seems my own guard joined in the attack on the nearest Armenian House & killed everybody in it. Late in the afternoon I got an appeal for help from the Regal Tobacco Factory inhabited by Mr Abbot a British Subject. I sent down there with the troops & gave him a guard. While there they told us that certain wounded Turkish Soldiers were lying among some houses in the business ruins not far away. We went to look for them & while searching a tiny garden where 8 or 10 bodies of Turks & Armenians - men & women - an Armenian from behind a window fired at me from very short range & broke my arm. He was probably deceived by my military uniform into thinking me a Turkish officer or else too wild with terror & despair to know what he was doing.

I should like to bring to your Excellency's notice the conduct of Mr Lawson Chambers who rode with me as my interpreter throughout this day. He speaks Armenian & was very valuable to me. He is a nephew of Mr Nesbit Chambers a Canadian British Subject Head of the American mission in this town.

I had taken him with me in the morning from the Konak where he had passed the night for security.

Being afraid that this unfortunate accident [Doughty-Wylie's having been shot] would be the signal for a general storm on the Armenian Qr, I sent the Ali Bey to the Vali & Ferik to say

that even now if they would stop the massacre no indemnity or punishment would be demanded by me, but that otherwise I had already telegraphed for a ship in morning & responsibility lay with them. I told them that they should surround the Armenian Qr with regular troops with a good officer & should allow nobody in or out, at the same time they should also patrol the rest of the town driving people into their houses & shooting them freely if necessary.

This accident was the more inconvenient as my right arm was broken & I could not write.

As regards the troops, the soldiers of my escort in the Konak & in some of the Guards were [illegible - "nigamieh"?] & behaved with some exceptions fairly well whenever there were officers especially when we began to get the matter in hand a little. The Ferik had called up the Reserves who were armed from the Barracks & turned loose without uniform into the streets. They came from outside villages & Tarsus & did an infinite amount of harm. There were a few exceptions even among them. The Hojas were divided. I found one trying to calm the crowd, others took a rifle & fought themselves.

16th April

I had sent Lawson Chambers to the Konak overnight - he told me that the Vali & Ferik has promised all that I wished but that he (Chambers) could get no officer to go with him to the Armenian Qr.

Towards evening the Vali sent me news that peace had been made & the Hojas & Armenian priests had kissed each other in the Konak. During the day fighting had been going on in places around the Armenian Qr & B[ashi] B[azouk]s had been firing houses. Mr Chambers Senior had a man killed actually in his arms, but with singular courage, & still covered with blood managed to make his way with some other peace makers to the Konak.

From this visit resulted the peace which was announced to me by the Vali.

The day was spent in continual telegrams & messages. I was trying to save Germans at Bagshi, an Englishman at Osmenieh & Americans at Hadzeen. The streets were nearly as the day before. The refugees began coming in here escorted by soldiers. The Germans from the German Cotton Place in Adana had taken refuge in Mr Trepani's house, having been ordered to leave by soldiers who said they would kill the 500 Armenians left behind. I ordered Yuy [?] Bashi of the guard near [the] station which had become my guard to go with the soldiers & save their lives. He brought them all to Mr Trepani's house in safety except 3 men. The men I think would have been murdered but that I heard the firing & sent over to stop it. It was quite close to Mr Trepani's.

From Friday morning the murdering was done by Bashi B[azouk]s alone.

Except in isolated cases so far as I know I believe the Turkish soldiers made some effort to stop it.

On Friday at 10am 400 Tarsus Redifs seized a train, threatening the station master (British Subject) with death if he did not give it. They left to massacre & burn Tarsus. I sent Mr

Chambers Junior & Mrs Gibbons under escort to demand troops to send to Tarsus to protect the American & French Schools, but none were given on the day. That night 100 [Nigamieh?] arrived from Beirut & the next morning I got 25 soldiers & a good officer. I sent them with Mr Gibbons & Dr Christie whose son-in-law had been killed on Thursday) by special train to Tarsus. The train was refused to me by order of the "Director" at Mersina but I told the station master I would take it by force if necessary & would afterwards get for him the necessary order for it which had to be signed by the Vali. He ([the] S[tation] M[aster]) gave way & for this action the next morning was censured & another man sent up to supervise him because he had given the train contrary to the Director's orders. I think this is a very hard case & I recommend it to your Excellency's notice - Mr Falanga S[tation] M[aster] throughout this crisis has done all he could to help but his regulations are against him.

His station was surrounded by corpses & he was often in imminent danger himself. The train in question I think may be said to have saved the Tarsus school. While I am on the subject of the Railway I should like to state that it refused to transmit telegrams for me, their telegraph office is close to Mr Trepani's house while the [illegible] to the other lies right through the heart of the town & is over a mile long. & also when it became an urgent question to send down messengers & certain European refugees they refused trains. Military defence of the trains was never at all difficult.

17 Saturday

Next morning, a deputation of Hojas & notables came to me. They said that peace was made. I also saw the Messrs Chambers who told me the same thing.

I sent a message to the Vali that he was to telegraph the severest orders to outlying districts to stop the massacre.

Turkish officers came to me for orders & I said that the streets were to be kept clear, fires put out - plunderers & anybody with arms in their hand to be shot. Anybody committing a murder to be killed by the troops with no distinction of race or religion. These orders were accepted by the Hojas as being fair and just but in spite of them there were a good many murders committed that day & killing & pillaging in the villages went on as before.

I think it was on this day that your Excellency's telegram reached me that a British ship had sailed for Mersina.

I cannot give any detailed account of the days that followed. They were occupied from morning till night in bringing in refugees & telegraphing & messages to & from the Konak also with endless visits from people of all nationalities in urgent need of assistance in different directions. There being no other Consul in Adana I did what I could to help the dragomen & nationals of all the powers.

On Tuesday night I got the telegram that the Swiftsure would arrive the next day, which news I promptly circulated & which had a great effect in restoring confidence. Threats of renewed massacre were made at various & all hours, but gradually we began to persuade the people to return to their homes.

Mr Trepani's house had 500 people in it while there were thousands in the factories & in the American & French Missions. Many were wounded & the food question became acute. My wife opened a hospital the day after I was wounded & with several excellent English volunteers, has been very busy ever since. Mr Chambers & I organised the beginnings of relief work & subscriptions were started. I am making great efforts to get the factories & flour mills working, but the people are too panic-stricken to do much yet. The dead had to be sorted & buried & the wounded brought in. In all this Mr Lawson Chambers & other English & Americans were my untiring helpers.

Parties of troops have been sent to various places such as in Hamidiah, Osmanieh, Bagshe, Hadjin, & many villages to try to save lives. The Hojas of the town have made a practice of visiting me in a body with the exception of today - 22nd & we have tried to arrange the restoring of loot & women & girls abducted, & general pacifying of the country. The Armenian Bishop of Adana (Gregorian) was announced to be returning on the 21st Wednesday by the Khedival steamer. Many Turks have spoken to me of this man as one of the prime causes of the trouble. On the Tuesday certain notable Armenians thro' Mr Chambers asked me to prevent his return if possible as they feared he would again stir up strife.

I took upon myself to telegraph to my dragoman to meet him on arrival & forbid him to land. I backed this up by telegraphing to the Mutessarif of Mersina to prevent him from coming to Adana if he should in spite of me succeed in landing.

He appealed to the Captain of the Swiftsure who backed me up.

At the Parliament of Hodjas that day when the question of the disarming of the Armenians was mentioned, some of them declared that the Armenians did not wish for peace as they still kept their arms. I said that they did, & that I could prove it, as they had themselves asked me to prevent their own bishop from coming, & that I had done so.

This produced a[n] instantaneous effect[,], every Hoja jumping to his feet & coming to shake hands with me.

It is still too early for me to have much idea of the real causes of this extraordinary massacre which took me by surprise.

I have for some time expected disturbances in Adana, but nothing on such an appalling scale. The Turkish side of the Question is that the Armenians from 1st to last are entirely to blame, that they armed themselves & that certain delegates of the Handjak society & preachers like the Gregorian bishop had openly urged the people to fight the Turks & to set up a principality for themselves - that latterly the Armenians had shot 2 Turks in Adana - that they had fixed a certain day in which to rise & rebel against the Turks & were all armed & prepared for it.

There is truth I think in what they say about the Handjak Society which however, represents but a fraction of the people. It is also true tha[t] an Armenian did shoot 2 Turks (whether in self defence or not is not established) & certainly there was much vain boasting & wordy provocation. But I cannot think however that such wide-spread destruction was without some secret preparation on the Turkish side.

The massacre began in very distant places, on the same day & nearly the same hour. The local provocations at Adana [sic] could not have effected [i.e. brought about] this.

I am inclined to think that some, at any rate, of the authorities knew of the intended massacre beforehand.

The extraordinary demobilisation which I found in the Konak on arrival was no doubt the result of the natural feebleness of the Vali Djevad Bey. I do not understand why the Ferik, a Turkish General, has from the first displayed such pitiable cowardice. He refuses to leave his Konak even now. Even the doubtful troops he held were sufficient to have scattered the howling fanatical mob if resolutely handled in the first hour.

The only official of the province who has kept massacre from his town is the Mutessarif of Mersina & even he lost Tarsus which is under his command.

Among the best of the Turks, both civil & religious there exists still a unanimous distrust & even hatred, of the Armenians. They deplore massacre but all apparently believe in the idea of an armed Armenian Revolution.

Among the first Armenians who were killed was a well known member of the municipality. He had been that morning thro' the Bazaars together with Turkish notables to persuade Shopkeepers to open their shops. They had returned to the Konak to report to the Vali - it is said that he was killed with these words: "I will begin with you & God increase the work."

This was one of the murders of which Mr Gibbons & Mr Chambers Junior were eye-witnesses, committed almost in the Vali's presence & for which no arrest of punishment has been made.

On the first evening 5 men were killed in the closed courtyard of the Konak where is the Vali's house. One Armenian cartdriver was shot the next morning under the Vali's window & almost on his door-step by the very Redifs he had brought in his cart. This courtyard contained at that time about 500 regular soldiers. I took the Vali out myself & showed him the fresh pool of this man's blood, & asked him how afterwards he hoped to clear himself of having abetted the murder. He was too frightened to answer.

Two regiments are reported to be coming from Gallipoli & troops & cavalry from Syria under the command of Osman Pasha commanding 5th Army Corps. It is undoubtedly necessary to make a military parade through certain districts to restore order. I am afraid owing to the slow processes of Turkish law there will be little or no punishment.

The gravest question is imminent famine.

It is reported to me tonight that there are in Adana city already 15000 people in desperate need of food. The shops have been burned & gutted. The barley harvest begins in about 10 days but there will be great difficulty in finding the necessary labour owing to the extermination of the Armenian workmen in nearly all the villages. It is said that there is left in Adana flour & wheat sufficient for 20 days, but the prices are already enormous & will rise

still higher. The new harvest cannot be of much help till the middle of July. Further there are a quantity of women & children whose supporters have been killed.

An enormous quantity of valuable property, much of which I fear will prove to be English, has been destroyed [and] many farms have been burnt with their agricultural implements. Many farmers & merchants will be bankrupt & will be unable to pay for goods or obtain credit. It is doubtful if insurance will be held to cover such risks.

The country, which seemed so promising a field for English Commercial Enterprise is ruined in credit & will take years to recover.

The disarmament of the country is being taken in hand. My advice was asked by the Turks & I have advised them not to press the house to house search for a few days on account of the panic it would cause.

The Armenians sent the French Priest to me to beg that if a search was necessary foreigners should accompany the Turks.

I declined even to listen to such proposals as they have nothing whatsoever to do with the foreigners.

I strongly urged on the Vali the hanging of murderers caught red handed since the peace but without success. He has not the courage to take such a step. I propose, with your excellency's approval to assist as far as possible the relief work which is now necessary but to refrain from giving advice on subjects not connected with British Interests. What I have done in this direction has been forced upon me by the entire absence of any respected authority, & the risk of renewed massacre.

Osman Pasha's arrival or a change of Vali should put this right.

At Adana city there seems to have been about 20000 corpses buried. Besides this there were a large number thrown in the river. A considerable fraction of these[,] 2000 about, were Moslems killed in the street fighting in the Armenian Quarter.

In the villages while no exact number can yet be given the loss has been enormous. It may be estimated at between 15000 & 25000. Of these very few if any can be Moslems.

In many cases women & even small children were killed with the men.

Account of death of American Missionaries

Sir,

In accordance with your telegram I have the honour to submit the following report of the death of Mr Rogers & Dr Maurer, American Missionaries.

When I visited that part of the American Missionary buildings in which they lived for the first time on Thursday morning - 15th, they were both alive but after that I am told it became necessary for someone to demolish some burning buildings which were gravely threatening the school.

Mr Trowbridge & Dr Maurer very gallantly began this work. The Turks who were quite close to them & knew them for Americans, swore they would not touch them. After 1 hour's work, the fire gaining on them, they called on Mr Rogers for help & soon after his arrival a volley fired at very close range mortally wounded Mr Rogers & Doctor Maurer. Mr Trowbridge was luckily untouched & got back to the school. It was then impossible for anybody to go to bring in the bodies or render assistance as they were under a heavy fire. At this point I arrived with my patrol. Firing ceased. We carried in the bodies, Dr Christie who ran out from the school helping to carry in his son-in-law's body, both men still breathing. While Miss Wallis, the English nurse, in the courtyard of the mission was attending to the wounds fire was re-opened from a neighbouring minaret to which my soldiers replied. I went down to clear this minaret, but everybody had run away before I got there.

I have the honour to be, Sir with the greatest respect, your Excellency's most obedient & humble servant.

Vice Consul Adana