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Armenian Apostolic Church of America
138 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016

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**A Message from
Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian:**

A Season of Hope

Dear Faithful,

With the beginning of spring, after what seemed for many of us to be an endless winter, the earliest flowers are sprouting, the trees are budding, bringing with them the hope of renewal. It is fitting that spring is the season when our Church is renewed with feelings of restoration, rebirth, and renewal through the message of the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The joy of the risen Christ was great and powerful. "This is the day the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it," (Psalm 118:24). We are in the season of hope.

On the evening of the first Good Friday, our Lord's disciples were dispirited and beaten. They were afraid. They were men without hope. The Resurrection of Easter filled them with hope and faith. Although still in great danger, their fear was gone; they came out of hiding to spread the news of the Resurrection.

With this divine message they—the defeated followers of the dead Christ—became the joyous messengers of the Risen Lord, and by spreading the greatest hope of all throughout the world they changed the fate of humankind. In the words of Peter, "We have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Pet. 1:3).

Easter is not just another day of remembrance. It is a day of inspiration and rebirth through the reenactment of Christ's Resurrection. The observance of Easter signifies our communion with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, living with the Holy Spirit, dying with Christ, and, yes, being resurrected with Christ. For as Paul admonished the early Christians, "Believers are not those for whom this life is all; their hope lies elsewhere."

Within a few years the Armenian Church—the first Christian institution—will celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the official establishment of Christianity in Armenia. From the earliest days the Armenian nation became imbued with the spirit of the Resurrection and persevered and survived because of it.

Dear faithful people, let us come together in this season of hope and renew our pledge of faith to the God of St. Illuminator, St. Mesrob, Naregatz, and Shnorhali. Let us believe in the Resurrection of Christ because it is the only evidence which gives us the

(Continued on page 2)

The Last Witness

by Diana Der-Hovanessian

"I would not want to be the last witness"

Elie Weisel, Nobel Laureate survivor of the Jewish Holocaust

**I would not want to be the last witness
either, said the Armenian survivor
but it seems I may be
I did not want to be the last witness
at Appomottax said the dying drummer boy
I did not want to be the last witness
at Wounded Knee said the ancient Sioux
I did not want to be the last witness
at Verdun said the shell shocked soldier
I did not want to be the last witness
of the murder of my nation in 1915 repeats
the Armenian but that's what time does**

**Close your eyes in peace
if you have borne witness aloud
in peace
if you have sworn the truth
in peace
if you have shared the horror
and the vision
if you have defied those who deny
if you have added your testimony
to the roll call of truth
in peace
if you have raised your voice
against all who would silence you
if you have written the story
if you have named the names
if you have listed the places
if you have called down from heaven
the witnesses who have gone**

**Close your eyes in peace
if you have taken one step
on the path that heals.**

Blessing of Muron in Antelias

His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia will bless the *Muron* (Holy Oil) on Pentecost, Sunday, May 26, 1996, at St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral in Antelias, Lebanon. The blessing of the Holy Muron will be followed by the convening of the World General Assembly of the Cilician Catholicate. Delegates from around the world are expected to attend as are many faithful to witness the blessing of the Holy Muron.

ԱՐԱՄ Ա. ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ ԱՅՑԵԼԵՑ ԼԻԲԱՆԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀԻՆ

Երկուշաբթի, 29 Յունուար, կէսօրէ առաջ ժամը 10-ին, Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոս Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ այցելեց նախագահական ապարանք եւ հանդիպում մը ունեցաւ Լիբանանի Հանրապետութեան Նախագահ Էլիաս Հրաւորիին հետ: Վեհափառ Հայրապետին պատուիրակութեան մաս կը կազմէին Սեպուհ Ծ. Վրդ. Սարգիսեան, Վրոյր Աբդ. Տէմիրճեան, Յուլակ Թիթէլեան եւ Անտրէ Թապուրեան:

Վեհափառ Հայրապետը նախ տեղեակ պահեց Նախագահը վերջին շաբաթներուն ընթացքին Սուրիա, Կիպրոս եւ Իրան իր կատարած այցելութեանց եւ պետական պատասխանատուներուն հետ իր ունեցած հանդիպումներուն մասին: Ապա խորհրդակցութիւնները ընդգրկեցին Լիբանանի այժմու կացութեան կապուած շարք մը հարցեր: Հանրապետութեան Նախագահը անգամ մը եւս իր յատուկ գնահատանքը յայտնեց Լիբանանի միութեան ու վերականգնումի գծով Վեհափառ Հայրապետին ունեցած դերակատարութեան՝ Լիբանանէն ներս թէ դուրս:

Նախագահական ապարանքէն մեկնումի պահուն, Վեհափառ Հայրապետը հետեւեալ յայտարարութիւնը կատարեց մամուլին.— «Անցնող ամսուան ընթացքին այցելութիւններ տուինք Սուրիոյ, Կիպրոսի եւ Իրանի մեր համայնքներուն: Հանդիպումներ ունեցանք նաեւ այս երկիրներու պետական պատասխանատուներուն եւ յատկապէս անոնց նախագահներուն հետ: Լիբանանի Հանրապետութեան Նախագահին պարզեցինք Մեր ունեցած հանդիպումներուն արդիւնքները: Այս գծով եւ կ'ուզեմ կարեւորութեամբ երկու կէտեր ընդգծել.— Առաջին. Մեր այցելած երկիրներուն՝ Սուրիոյ, Կիպրոսի եւ Իրանի հայ համայնքները կը մնան ամբօրէն կապուած Լիբանանին ու անոր ներկայացուցած արժէքներուն ու աւանդութեանց: Երկրորդ. Սուրիոյ Նախագահ Հաֆէզ Ասատ, Իրանի նախագահ Ռաֆսանճանի եւ Կիպրոսի Նախագահ Քլէրիտիս յատուկ կերպով ինձի յայտնեցին իրենց ամբողջական գորակցութիւնը Լիբանանի միութեան, անկախութեան, գերիշխանութեան ու հողային ամբողջականութեան: Հետեւաբար, ինձի հետ թերած եմ իմ այցելած երկիրներուն մէջ ապրող հայ համայնքներուն, այդ երկիրներու ժողովուրդներուն ու անոնց նախագահներուն, այլ խօսքով՝ մեր եղբայրներուն ու բարեկամներուն գորակցութիւնը Լիբանանին ու անոր արդար դատին»:

Message

(Continued from page 1)

hope for eternal life and faith in the survival of our nation. On Easter morning let us shed our garments of despair and put on the mantle of hope and proclaim, Christ is Risen from the Dead; Blessed is the Resurrection of Christ.

May the blessing and peace of the Risen Saviour be in your hearts and homes this Easter Day and forevermore.

With Faith and Hope in Christ,

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian
Prelate
Armenian Apostolic Church of America
Eastern United States and Canada

Prelacy Ladies' Guild
Mother's Day Luncheon
Set for Friday, May 3

The Prelacy Ladies Guild has prepared a unique program of entertainment for this year's Mother's Day celebration on Friday, May 3, 1996, at the St. Regis Hotel, New York City.

A musical revue, "An Afternoon on Broadway," will feature popular tunes in song and dance of the "Great White Way." Conceived and produced by Musical Director, Gregory Toroyan, the show will highlight the talents of Armenian singers and composers.

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian and members of the Guild unanimously agreed to honor one of its own as the Mother of the Year. The late Suzanne Hagopian, a founding member of the PLG, was not a mother and yet she was considered the mother of all, with her nurturing and caring disposition. Mrs. Hagopian's life will be celebrated in tribute to her qualities and achievements as a true "Cilician Princess," an honor bestowed upon her by Catholicos Karekin I, while he served as Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in New York.

As customary, a sumptuous lunch will be served and a raffle drawing of exquisite gifts will conclude the day's activities.

-G. B. Kupelian

For reservations to the Mother's Day Luncheon contact:
Silva Zadourian, (201) 767-8414
Anna Pilligian, (212) 570-4651
Gemma Vartanian, (718) 441-2134
Lucille Sahagian, (203) 259-1945

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ՄԱՏԱԴ

Կենդանիներ, թեև հնում ընդունելի է եղել նաև էգի զոհաբերումը: Պողոս Տարսնացին իր «Ընդդեմ Թեոփիստեայ Հոռոմ Փիլիսոփային» (Կ. Պոլիս 1752) հակաճառութեան մէջ գրում է. «Թէ որձ է եւ թէ էգ՝ ոչ է խոտելի» (էջ 279): Քանի որ մատաղն Աստծուն մատուցող նուէր է, ապա պէտք է Աբելի, Նոյի, Աբրահամի եւ միւս նահապետների օրինակով ամենաընտիրը եւ ամենագէրը զոհել: Խեղանդամուած արատաւոր կենդանին չի կարելի մատաղ անել: Մատաղի միսը չի կարելի պահել տանն իբրև ուտելիք, այլ նոյն օրը պէտք է սպանել: Արջառ զենելու դէպքում պէտք է 40 ընտանիքի բաժանել կենդանու մից, եփելուց յետոյ, ոչխարի դէպքում՝ 7 ընտանիքի, աքլորի՝ 3: Աղանու պարագային նախընտրելի է ոչ թէ մորթել այլ բաց թողնել:

Եթէ մատաղն օրհնուում եւ մորթուում է վանքում, ապա ըստ հնագոյն կանոնների, մորթին եւ մի թելը պիտի նուիրել վանքին:

Մատաղի երկրորդ նիւթը, ինչպէս նշեցինք, արդ է: Ս. Գրիգոր Տաթևացին «Գիրք Հարցմանց»-ում (Կ. Պոլիս 1829) «մատաղ» բառը ստուգաբանում է իբրև «մատոյ աղ» (էջ 657): Մատաղի աղը պէտք է օրհնել: Այդ օրհնութիւնը կատարուում է մատաղը կուտքերին մատուցած զոհերից տարբերակելու համար: Ըստ Ստեփանոս Օրբելեանի՝ աղի առաջին օրհնութիւնը կատարել է Յակոբոս Տեառնէրբայրը Ա. դարում, վարդավառի տօնին, Անտիոքում (էջ 135): Աղը խորհրդանշում է առաքելներին՝ ըստ Քրիստոսի խօսքի. «Ռուք էք երկրի աղը» (Մատթ. Ե. 13), իսկ անբան կենդանիները խորհրդանշում են հեթանոսներին: Եւ ինչպէս որ առաքելների խօսքերն են սրբում մեզ, այնպէս էլ աղը սրբում է անասունին (Հակաճառութիւն Ընդդեմ Երկաթակացն, Կ. Պոլիս 1756, էջ 138-139):

Մատաղի պատրաստման եղա-

նակն այսօր միսը միայն օրհնուած աղով եւ ջրով խաշելն է, մինչ հնում, ինչպէս վկայում է Ս. Գրիգոր Տաթևացին այն ողջակիզել են՝ «ի հուր խորովեալ» (էջ 657): Այս ձեւը նըմանուում է յոյների մօտ պահպանուած զատկական գառի ողջակիզման ձեւին:

Պատմութեան ընթացքում, ինչպէս նաև այսօր, օտար եկեղեցականներն ու հայ աղանդաւորներն (ինչպէս օրինակ՝ թոնդրակեցիները) ու այսօրուայ բողոքականները մեղադրել են մեզ մատաղի հարցում՝ համարելով այն հրեական սովորութիւն, հեթանոսական զոհ, բարբարոսութիւն եւ այլն: Հայոց մատաղի սովորութիւնն ազգային, խորապէս մարդասիրական եւ քրիստոնէական մի երեւոյթ է, որ հնարարութիւն է տալիս հաւատացեալին հաղորդակցելու Աստուծու հետ, օգնելու իր նմաններին, ցուցաբերելու զոհողութեան ոգի եւ այլն: Եւ ինչպէս Ս. Գրիգոր Տաթևացին է ասում, այլաբանօրէն «մատաղն ըստեւր եւ օրինակ է ճշմարիտ պատարագին Քրիստոսի (էջ 657): Մատաղի հիմքերը բարձրաճանու, հասնում են Աբելի, Նոյի, Աբրահամի, Իսահակի, Յակոբի, Մովսէսի եւ միւս նահապետների մատուցած ու օրհնադրած զոհերին: Նոյն Ինքը՝ Յիսուս Քրիստոս, Վերջին Ընթրիքի ժամանակ ճաշակեց զատկական գառից, որ մատաղի մի սովորութիւն էր՝ օրհնադրուած Մովսէս մարգարէի կողմից:

Մատաղի մասին մեր այս խօսքը ցանկանում ենք ւարտել Ստեփանոս Օրբելեանի այն դիտողութեամբ, թէ Աստուծոյ անունով մատուցող մատաղը սկզբնաւորուել է նահապետների կողմից, հաստատուել ու կատարուել Օրբելեանի եւ մարգարէների ու յանձնարարուել առաքելների եւ հայրապետների կողմից. հետեւաբար այն ոչ թէ մարդադիր օրէնք է, այլ՝ աստուածադիր (էջ 144):

Book Review

The following review appeared in The Princeton Seminary Bulletin.

Ashjian, Mesrob
Armenian Church Patristic and Other Essays
New York: Armenian Prelacy, 1994
pp. 251, \$25.00

Reviewed by S. Peter Cowe
Columbia University

Widely ranging over the Hellenistic, patristic, and medieval periods, this diverse collection of essays deals with a number of subjects of abiding theological interest, as well as addressing some more characteristically modern problems. Written mostly in the early seventies as graduate papers at Princeton Seminary, they have undergone only slight, mainly stylistic, revision and are inevitably dated in some respects. Despite this, they are of importance as an introduction to aspects of Armenian religious thought all too meagerly accessible in English. Moreover, Ashjian's research marks a significant advance over Arpee's A History of Armenian Christianity (1946) to which reference is sometimes made in the notes. One is especially struck by the rigor of the analysis in the best of these investigations which, in a formula borrowed from the foreword, display "none of the ecclesiastical chauvinism, theological provincialism and intellectual defensiveness that often prevails in the Armenian Church."

This is particularly evident in what constitutes the core of the work, a series of three chapters devoted to a reexamination of the scholar Grigor Taf'ewac'i's magnum opus, the "Book of Questions" of 1396. Since the work has enjoyed only one complete printing (until recently) and that occurred in 1729, it

has hardly featured prominently on the reading list of the Armenian educated public. Nevertheless, a mystique has grown up around it and its author to the effect that they represent "Armenian Orthodoxy's greatest champion" (p. 109). However, as Ashjian rightly notes, in contrast to neighboring cultures, Armenian theologians have been comparatively little exercised with polemics over the centuries and, under scrutiny, Grigor emerges as being fairly typical. Hence, we observe an interesting dichotomy between the textbook rhetoric of the introductions (one of which is repeated verbatim on pp. 19-21, 109-11) and the results of the young researcher's own enquiries, which are more nuanced and prepare the ground for a fuller reevaluation of Grigor's position within the evolution of Armenian theology.

While Aristotelian logic was known in Armenia, its categories had never been applied to sacramental theology. However, these insights were propagated in eastern Armenia by Dominican missionaries, responsible for translating works of Aquinas and Albertus Magnus in the first half of the fourteenth century. The fruits of that endeavor are visible in Grigor's acceptance of the doctrine of transubstantiation along with other Western features including the sevenfold delineation of the sacraments, a more Augustinian view of original sin, and a concomitantly individualistic understanding of the role of baptism, as well as the rather artificial attempt to accommodate certain aspects of Armenian baptismal chrismation as a proleptic form of extreme unction (which is not practiced by the Armenian church).

Ashjian clearly demonstrates the extent of Grigor's divergence from Armenian tradition by a judicious selection of earlier writings. However, he

seems to make light of Grigor's insistence (in continuity with the Armenian rite since at least the sixth century) on celebrating the eucharist with wine alone, unmixed with water, as a symbol of the incorruptibility of Christ's flesh. Subject to internal debate from the twelfth century, this apparently uniquely Armenian feature has nevertheless been tenaciously maintained in the face of strong latinizing pressure at various times. The author offers a briefer treatment of Grigor's eclectic handling of Pseudo-Dionysius' doctrine of the ninefold division of the angelic powers and its implications for the constitution of the church and his teaching on the divine image in man. The negative assessment of Grigor's departure from Armenian sacramental tradition is emblematic of certain "Eastern" tendencies in Roman theology itself since Vatican II, granting a new emphasis to the invocation of the Spirit. Similar moves are underway in the Armenian church. Ashjian's consideration of the reaction to Chalcedonian Christology is also timely in connection with the current WCC-sponsored Oriental-Eastern Orthodox discussions in which the author is a participant. His apposite distinction between the doctrinal issue and the council's status is borne out by the early agreement reached on the compatibility of the two christological formulations (essentially prefigured by an accord between the Armenians and Byzantines in the twelfth century!), while debate continues on several related issues of canon law.

Apart from a broad survey of views on cremation, the other significant topic dealt with is church-state relations with particular reference to the millet system regulating Ottoman administration of ethnic groups as religious units, investing both sacred and secular authority in

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Pink Flowers for Mama

by Marguerite Harmon Bro

EDITOR'S NOTE: Intrigued with the story of the Birds' Nest Orphanage near Beirut, and the woman so many called "Mama," Marguerite Harmon Bro went to Jebail, Lebanon. This article is a result of that trip many years ago. In the February 1993 issue of OUTREACH, an article by Louise and Shant Harootunian and Ruth and Dr. Varant Hagopian about their trip to Lebanon, wrote of their visit to the Birds' Nest Orphanage. In an Editor's Note I had mentioned this article which had been printed in the May 1979 issue of OUTREACH. Since then many readers have asked for a copy of the article. I promised to reprint it as soon as possible. April seems to be an appropriate time to remember the story of Marie Jacobsen—"Mama"—who saved so many Armenian children following the genocide.

FOR two weeks before Mothers' Day our house is given to a kind of camouflaged secrecy—a child sideling through the kitchen door with a package behind him, a nubby something under a pile of slippers in the little girls' dresser, the smell of baking before the mother of the household is up on Mothers' Day morning. This is a family day. After breakfast, at which we all arrive on time for once and sit down together, the presents appear! Then the cheerful hustle of getting ready for church. Finally from a cardboard box in the refrigerator come the pink carnations which the children pin on smilingly, serene in the knowledge that their mother is a part of their daily life.

But beneath the lively chatter my mind has skimmed the wide Atlantic to a place called Jabail, a few miles down the Mediterranean coast from Beirut. I am watching some two hundred boys and girls pin on their flowers. In a few moments they will file out of their great sprawling home reconstructed from a deserted silk mill and march to church down a road where Alexander the Great once marched his invincible armies. In their minds Mothers' Day was invented for the woman known to them as "Mama." Along with hundreds of other children across two continents their hearts are turned toward her, Marie Jacobsen, on this day of private memories and public celebrations.

Not long ago I was there in Jabail. I had gone especially to see what kind of woman had the heart to mother so many wistful merry children gathered from so many strange backgrounds. One bright morning I hunted out the old silk mill. Just as I reached the top of the stone steps leading to the courtyard I saw a small boy, flitting across the cobblestones, fall flat on his face. "Mama! Mama!" he cried out. And there she came, rounding the corner of the house. Her finely wrinkled face was sunbrowned and joyful. Nodding to me, she hurried over to the weeping child, lifted him to his feet and gave him a hug. At 78 one does not so readily lift a child into one's arms. "And you were running to meet me!" she said to him, cupping his too thin face in her hands. Then to me, as he snuggled against her, "Birds must learn to fly, but when they fall I am glad I am at hand."

The Birds' Nest—this is the name of the dark orphanage which grew up on one dark disastrous night. Mama began at once to tell me about some of the Nest's fledglings as we climbed another flight of stone steps to the living room where sunshine was streaming through the deep set windows filled with plants. Mama has as green a thumb for flowers as for children. Sitting beside an enormous Christmas cactus in bloom, I began my questions as to how she came to be called "Mama" by so many in America.

"My answer really began in your America," she said, "because it was an American doctor who stopped in my town in Denmark on his way home from Kharput in Asian Turkey and changed my life. I was 24 years old and a supervising surgical nurse. He made a speech and the story that touched me most was his incidental reference to the time a Turk had cut off his nose and he himself had sewed it back on, with a looking glass to guide him.

"There was no surgical nurse in Kharput. All that night I thought only of his need. The next day I fairly shook as I told the American doctor I was ready to go to Turkey with him. But he did not even seem surprised. He said that I was the answer to many prayers. I! Of all people."

So Maria Jacobsen became a member of the staff of the American Mission hospital in Kharput serving both Moslem Turks and Christian Armenians. She loved those first years. "But in 1914 the First World War broke and the Turkish and Jewish had to leave Turkey. Then in 1917 the Americans also had to leave. Only I, a neutral Dane, could remain, so the Americans turned over to me all their property and supplies and cash. Also their responsibilities, which included a boarding school for teen-aged girls down on the plain below the city. Immediately the hospital was confiscated by the Turkish army and the American homes were robbed of windows, doors, furniture,

everything that could be carried off.

"Right away the Armenians sensed they were in danger because the Turks were bound to turn the war against the Allies into a Holy War, and all Christians expected to be exterminated. Every Armenian who was able left for some distant village. But in the girls' school some forty girls could not leave because of lack of safe escort. I became their guardian."

"How could you safeguard forty girls?" I asked her. "If you refused admission to the soldiers, what was to keep them from shooting you?"

"Oh, that," she answered, "Whenever the soldiers came to demand release of the girls, I stood in the doorway and asked them how they did expect me to let the girls go when I had no chaperone to send with them. I think they were confounded to be confronted by their own custom."

Soon a pogrom was begun against the Armenians. Marie Jacobsen saw more than 30,000 men driven into the valley, set to digging trenches, then shot and dumped into their waiting graves. Next some 50,000 women and children were escorted into the mountains where the younger women and such children as were old enough to work were seized and made household slaves, while most of the remainder died fleeing over the icy Caucasus mountains.

However, as winter wore on, homeless children began to make their way back through the snow to the only home they knew—Kharput—where they hid between buildings and in trash and ash heaps. In the dark as Marie Jacobsen crossed the city on her mule with food for her school girls, she would suddenly feel a hand pluck at her skirt. No child was refused. She gathered them all into an empty American Mission building in Kharput and fed them as she could. They never went out by day; at night she had to leave them without a lamp when she returned to her guard duty at the school on the plain.

As winter deepened and food became very scarce—the Armenians had been the gardeners of the area—the Armenian children taken as slaves were again turned out of doors, often naked.

"It was during that winter," she said shyly, "that the children began to call me Mama."

So Mama made the daily rounds dispensing medicine and amputating frozen fingers and gangrenous hands and feet, as she prayed for help. One night a tattered Armenian woman, dressed as a man, arrived at the door of the girls' school, having made her way back over the mountains hunting for her own children, whom she never found. Taking in Mama's plight she insisted that she could buy wheat in the country without betraying its destination. So each day, driving ten thin donkeys, she made her roundabout way through the hills to bargain for grain.

Since there was no one to bake bread for the children, the bread was made by a baker who demanded double pay for secrecy, but when the price of wheat soared he began to substitute trash and sweepings, even bits of dirty rags. Finally the girls from the school on the plain, half-starved themselves, insisted upon going into the city before dawn to do the baking for the children.

The most beautiful of them all, a girl of 14, was stolen by a Turkish officer and hidden for weeks in his harem when her refusal brought her into court and then into an unspeakable jail. There Mama managed to visit her every night until the girl was too ill to matter to the officer, whereupon Mama took

her home and nursed her back to health.

Talking about that winter of 1917, Mama's face clouded, "By Christmas there were some 2,500 children hidden away. Fortunately at the time the first children were returning, I had had the money left by the American missionaries to buy a quantity of freshly sheared wool and a large amount of raw cotton. But who could spin and weave? One night another woman returned from the mountains, stabbed in 49 places but able to walk. She knew how to make looms! She would teach the older children to weave. Finally each child had an outfit."

There was much sickness. Mama where she the dying into her own bed often she could hold a small hand even though she herself sometimes had to sleep in exhaustion. But she did not have enough hands! By spring there were 3,600 children. Some of the older ones, returning after the snow had melted, had to be refused.

There were many graves. For a time a dozen or so children died every night and Mama dug all the graves herself, not wanting the children to share this task. Once again an old woman showed up, almost blind but stout of heart, and insisted upon taking on this responsibility. "Dear old woman whose name nobody knows," Mama said, "she was one of nature's noblewomen."

Finally there was only a weak porridge for the children. It was then that Mama nursed a German officer, who fell at her door, through a bout of typhus. Upon his recovery, at great risk to himself, he maneuvered an arrangement which resulted in permission for her to buy food in the city market at the price the soldiers paid.

In June, 1919, two years after Mama had been left alone, the first Americans returned. Long lines of children welcomed them, singing John Bunyan's great hymn: "He Who Would Valiant Be." A few days later Mama came down with typhus. But as soon as she was able to travel she was off to the United States to ask for help for the thousands of Armenians farther south, now being caught in a second massacre. Across America Mama told her story. The result was the greatest program of relief the world had ever known.

It was then that the phrase "the starving Armenians" became coin of the realm and in those days it was no quip. Countless Armenian Americans now in this country—among our largest givers to the needy—remember the phrase in grief and gratitude. The astounding generosity of Americans toward people they would never see and from whom they could expect no return was the pride of Mama's life. Let no one say in her presence, ever, that America was not a spiritual country!

Finally Mama returned to Turkey only to find herself refused admission. All night on her knees she waited for God to explain Himself! Why had He allowed the door to be slammed in her face? With the dawn she concluded, serenely, that He knew more about closed doors than she did. So she went to Beirut in Lebanon where she would be allowed ashore. And there she was waiting when the newly formed Near East Relief began the evacuation of the nearly 200,000 Armenian children across the country from Armenian Turkey to Beirut, transshipping them on to Greece and Cyprus to wait adoption in other countries. Because housing was extremely scarce in Beirut, one American ship loaded nearly 3,000 newly arrived children in a single cold, rainy night. The sick, the crippled and

the newly born were left with Mama.

But what should she do in Beirut with the sick and crippled children left in her hands? And with the others continually being brought in as their parents died on the exodus from Turkey? Her answer was to rent that dilapidated silk mill at Jebail near Biblos, the town from which the Bible took its name. And here, after thirty-five years, Armenian, Arab, and European children are still finding a home.

To an uninitiated eye which cannot see such imponderables as faith, love, and determination, the big sleeping rooms with their cold cement floors appear a bit cheerless; the dark dressing and wash rooms with their open pigeon-hole cupboards for each child's belongings seem exceedingly cramped; the meticulous order everywhere is depressing.

But where there is limited outdoor play space and less indoor space, order is as essential in its way as safe water—which only recently has been piped in, at last eliminating typhoid. Beginning at age 5 each child has his or her daily task.

Recently it became plain that Mama's bodily machinery was running down. Mama checked all accounts with particular care; all accounts with problems had a special visit with her. And then one night she simply slipped into her wider life.

It seemed nonsense to speak of Mama as dead. Even the smaller children in tears, seemed none the less convinced that Mama would still be looking after them.

Within days letters from all over America began to pour in. From a lawyer in New York: "When I, a hulking boy of 14, was embarrassed to start first grade, Mama told me I had a gift for argument and some day I'd be a lawyer in the United States. I accepted her confidence and dug in."

A teacher of handicapped children commented, "If Mama had retired at 65, I'd still be living in a hut made of oil tins with no chance in the world of finding my relatives in the United States and getting an education."

To everyone who ever knew her, mama is still there.

This May every boy and girl will wear a flower on Mothers' Day. Usually the children whose mothers are dead wear a white flower, while the few who have somewhere a living mother wear pink.

This year, by request of the children, the flowers will all be pink and they are for Mama. ✚

The Well-Rounded Life

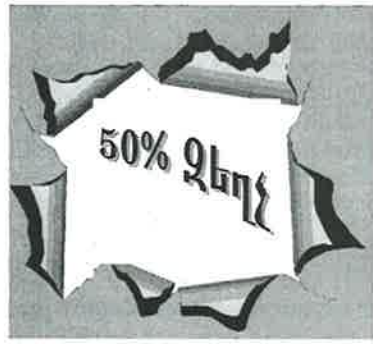


Book Review

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the hands of the hierarchy. Although the study concentrates on the historical operation of this government by confessional affiliation, it documents the extent to which the system still applies to churches and Jewish communities in the Middle East. Moreover, the author perceptively analyzes its baneful effects on the church's functioning and self-understanding in terms of an overidentification with the interests of its constituent people in ways reminiscent of national churches in the West.

In view of the collection's inherent value, the number of typographical errors is irritating. The work's utility for a less specialized readership, moreover, would have benefited from an English translation of various French, Latin, and Greek citations and provision of maps and a general index. However, the volume contains much that is both stimulating and informative and amply repays careful reading. ✚



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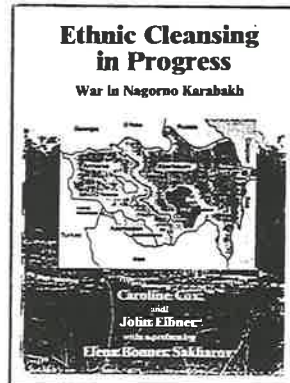
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