

Bazmashen's Large History

Since Its Establishment until the Last Days

Author

Aptal Golech Poghosean

Published in "Paykar" 1930
Boston

Translator

Nvard Sununu

E- Mail: nwardsun@yahoo.com

Commissioned by Marion Malkasian

Preface

Launching to write the history of our birth-place, Bazmashen, I want to keep the appreciated memories of our ancestors for ever and arouse love towards their father land in the hearts of the present generation.

I have picked up information about Bazmashen's history from valid sources and traditions that people remember and which are transmitted from son to son.

I hope that my fellow-countrymen reading this story will be more informed about our village's foundation, our past, prosperity and progress and will honor our ancestors' memory proudly.

I'll consider this work fully rewarded if it deserves the appraisal of my fellow-countrymen and serves for a certain purpose.

Aptal Golech Poghosean

A Few Words by the Author

I'm writing Bazmashen's history to show our ancestors' past life, their affluence, attentiveness, manufacture, pity, poverty, also their kind habits that were generous and served our nation and homeland faithfully.

So Bazmashen's sons that are spread now over the four directions of the world, of course won't forget their hometown Bazmashen, whose name is only remembered now. And having no memories from the past all the people from Bazmashen have the responsibility to remember their village.

Oh my fellow-countrymen, you that were fed with the vegetables from the green fields, you drunk the clean water, breathed the fresh air, would you forget your ancestors who had found Bazmashen, who confronted all the difficulties during the centuries and got a great name with uncountable losses in Kharbert and other provinces.

No, no, you must remain faithful to Bazmashen, you must bow before it, you must keep the memories connected with it deep in your heart and make it's name live for ever. You must keep it for the future generations, so that knowing all the details of Bazmashen they will remember it too and will serve to rebuild it.

Bazmashen's Foundation

The history of village Bazmashen I've picked up from valid records and now I want to publish it in the shape of a booklet and thus serve my fellow-countrymen and birth-place, which is unfortunately deserted today and turned into ruins.

Bazmashen is far for two hours from the populous centre of province Kharbert and is situated to the West from it. Its old name was Bazman. The first inhabitants settled there in 1165 consisting of seven numerous families whose life was patriarchal. As landlords they kept many animals. Each family had its own arable lands that were very fertile. They were independent; they worked hard and tasted their crop in peace.

Those seven families of the village built their houses so near to each other that it took only 15 minutes to get to the other house. They also had large gardens. The old gardens were on the foot of Mount St. Zakaria and Chech Karut. Their tracks could be found there until the last days.

The prior seven families of Bazmashen were the following: the Tatoes, the Gorgoes, the Narozes, the Petoos, the Mnchiks, the Panoes and the Terwishes.

The house of the Tatoes was built near the present down gardens called Vardnek. They had hundred lands together with streams. The borders of their lands reached the stream of Ero.

The place of the Gorgoes house was on the head Vlatsika on the way Otsman Kar. This family owned 80 lands. They had their own stream whose cold water running reached Chorgyugh.

The old place of the Narozes house was near Pzti Tap, near Khazars' stream. They also owned 80 lands and a stream.

The Mnchiks' house was between the streams Kaktini and Jrnut. This family had 70 lands that were watered by their own stream.

The house of the Terwishes was near the stream Terwish and the borders of their lands reached the stream of Ero.

The house of the Panoes was in Karatagh with 55 lands.

The estates of these seven families passed from generation to generation as an inheritance.

The youth of the village were also good horsemen and they used to organize horse-races on holidays. They enjoyed watching the bulls to fight in an open playing field and the owners of the bulls that had won were presented with prizes.

Each of these patriarchal families had its own way of running their business. Every house had its head that according to the traditions was called Reyis. Reyises gave directions how to run the business, they told everyone what work to do, bought the necessary things for the house and together they solved the problems of the village. There were 30-40 people in a house who had to obey the Reyises and this condition brought peace and consent to every family.

This patriarchal condition existed in our native region until the years of the last war.

These families were very simple in their toilet. Men wore multi-colored hats made by their daughters or spouses. This was particularly women's skill. And in winter when there was no work in the fields the guys knitted socks. That was their work.

As you see our ancestors being landlords provided for their families without any violence and foreign interference.

There were rumors that these seven families of Bazman migrated to that area after the fall of Bagratun's Kingdom (Bagratuneats tagavoutyun) from the Eastern states of Armenia, which, according to the valid sources belonged to Bznun's race.

The Armenian Rich Man (Hay Melik)

At that time the province Kharbert, as many other provinces populated by Armenians, was ruled by an Armenian Rich Man (Hay Melik), who was from clergyman's family. The neighbors called him Keshish Oghlu and the foreigners Kiul Pazar.

Kharbert with its natural beauty, abundant fields and wealth was envied by the population of other provinces.

Owing to the wisdom and prudence of the Armenian Rich Man people living in that province were much more safe and peaceful than those living in adjacent provinces. It was a kind of an autonomous region and people living in favor with Hay Melik enjoyed freedom and independence.

Owing to the hard working people the province prospered day by day and got enlarged. Our ancestors had nothing to worry about and there was nothing more for their happiness than peaceful work and the outcome of that work. Any official visit was made to Bazman first of all.

At that peaceful period the inhabitants of Bazman, especially on Sundays, after going to church, gathered in an open place and had discussions during which they tasted many delicious dishes from the luxurious tables.

Women of Kharbert were free as men; they could go shopping and buy everything they needed.

As I said before Kharbert became the subject of jealousy for other nations.

And the progress of Kharbert wasn't overlooked by tyrant and vicious Lenktemur, who decided to conquer it too.

The City was the business centre of Kharbert and was built in an inaccessible place, and it had a stable castle. The vast gardens that situated in the North-East of the city were known with cool and fresh climate, with fresh and cold water, with selected fruit and with colorful roses and flowers. And Lenktemur wished to own this heaven-like province, especially the city, which was thought to be built at the period when Tikran Mets (Tikran the Great) was the king.

The city was famous with its natural icy caves called Puzlugh. Going down by a rather deep cavity you could see an opening and many road-about ways from the ceilings of which water dropped down and immediately turned into ice and people

gathered the clear and tough ice and used it for various purposes. It was said that the icy caves reached the castle of the city that was the main means of communication at that time when the castle was surrounded. There was one more unusual thing: in winter time nobody could find a piece of ice in those icy caves. So these natural icy caves could be considered as one of the World's Wonders.

Lenktemur's Invasion

The peace and calmness didn't last long. The bright horizon was covered by the stormy clouds that put an end to their happy life, when Lenktemur's army reached that province leaving behind them the ruins of many villages and cities.

Lenktemur was in Pakhr-Maten and those who had escaped from his bloody sword every day came to Kharbert and told about all the heartless actions done by that cannibal monster.

That's why people living near the borders of the province had to leave their home and work in order to find shelter in the City Castle. The whole province was anxious about the danger and was trying to find a way to escape it.

Hay Melik foreseeing the wicked intentions of the enemy did everything possible to withstand the disaster. At first he sent his personal messenger to all the villages of the province asking the people to gather in the City with their entire weapon, provisions and ammunition. Then he ordered the people of the City to build fortifications from Tal-Gabu, Saray-Pashi and Huseynik to Sarayin.

While the people of the City were busy with these preparations, the people of the neighboring villages began to carry food to the City. Everything was carried to the stream Aslan and then gradually to the city, so that during that besiege they would not starve. After summers' hard work now everyone was trying to protect himself. From the other side the Armenian Rich Man (Hay Melik) was arranging the army and trusting his soldiers, encouraged and gave hope to the people. But as the day of the disaster was near everyone was somehow overwhelmed and they prayed to God for the Armenian army and that they would win in that unequal and unfair struggle. The grief grew more when people heard that in those places that Lenktemur had conquered the inhabitants were forced to change their religion and to adopt Islam.

At the end of September in 1400 the population of the province was ready to withstand the enemy in the bulwarks made by their own hands. In all the villages the streets were deserted, the traffic was stopped and very often little children asked their grandmothers. " Why does the enemy come to fight with us? What have we done?"

And their grandmothers answered that the enemy was barbarian. Their king Arshak with the commander-in-chief of Armenia (sparapet) were imprisoned by the enemy and later died in prison. And from the other side their Rich Men weren't united and one after another became trapped by the enemy. That's why there was nobody to help them now.

As the survivors were telling about the cruel activities of the enemy, especially about making people to change their religion, children asked their mothers. “Why shall we change our religion?” And their mothers replied “They want us to renounce Jesus Christ”.

Everyone was saying that he wouldn't renounce their faith and they were ready to fight with their bows and arrows, otherwise they would commit a suicide but would not yield.

While people were busy with such thoughts, Hay Melik was giving necessary instructions to the army that consisted of 10.000 soldiers. Lenktemur's army had already surrounded Kharbert province and now they wanted to enter the city.

The soldiers of the city began to follow the enemy from height and divided into groups to fight with them in that unequal struggle. Lenktemur's infantry units were very brutal and merciless; they ruined everything on their way like their leader. They remained in history as barbarians.

It's true to say that present Turkish people have inherited those brutalities and Taleats and Envers can be considered the deserving successors of the old Lenktemurs.

We can say that the cruelty done by the Turks towards us during the years of the last war has even surpassed the brutalities of Lenktemur's army. Those who have seen these events may have an idea about Lenktemur's invasion.

Having examined the position of the city thoroughly enough Lenktemur divided his army into three groups: the first group would attack from Huseynik, the second from Khasarchinots and the third would attack from the middle. The clash was near and on the next day early in the morning the noise of the trumpets and drums filled the air as the sign of attack. Lenktemur's soldiers began to climb up from the ravines. But Armenians were ready to prevent their attack and began to shoot from behind their bulwarks and in a moment the ravines were filled with the dead bodies of the enemy. Owing to the courage of the Armenian soldiers the first day's attack was completely a failure for the enemy.

The night was peaceful. In the morning the church bells rang as usual and people thanked God for their first victory and prayed for peace.

Lenktemur had made a new plan: the majority of his army would attack from Huseynik and the minority of the soldiers would try to attract Armenians' attention to Khasarchinots. So the army attacking from Huseynik was far now as if there was no danger from that side and the general attack was expected from the West. But with the help of a few detectives Armenians knew about the cunning plan of the enemy and they weren't deceived. When the attack began from Huseynik Armenian soldiers were ready and struggled bravely until the sunset. So Lenktemur's second attack failed too.

Hay Melik organized a meeting during which they would discuss how to attack the enemy. It was a useful opportunity, but taking into consideration the small account of our soldiers, it was decided to stay defensive.

Realizing that he couldn't get the city without great losses Lenktemur was determined to attack it harshly and get it by making them starve.

Hay Melik and his soldiers expected new attacks day by day, but Lenktemur's army didn't move. Days passed and once the detectives of Hay Melik brought news that the City was surrounded and consequently they had to give up everything because of starvation. People were hopeless, weeping and mourning could be heard everywhere. Though the Armenian Rich Man did his best to give hope to his people, everything was useless; the cruel enemy had already surrounded the City.

During that besiege Lenktemur's clumsy soldiers every day attacked an Armenian village, owned their food, robbed everything, killed people and dishonored the Armenian families with violence of any kind. That abundant province of Kharbert turned into ruins and graves, every sacred place and object was defiled.

This condition lasted for months. They had ran out of food supplies and had to be satisfied by eating only once a day. People became exhausted of hunger, all the domestic animals were butchered and the street dogs weren't able even to bark.

In order to think a way out of this hopeless situation another council was formed. They discussed whether they could attack the enemy and break its rows and survive or not. But their soldiers were exhausted and couldn't fight. There was only one way; to send a spokesman to Lenktemur and either conciliate with him or admit defeat.

On the next they spokesmen holding white flags entered the enemy's army and introduced themselves to Lenktemur. The latter's demands were the following; in order to survive the Armenian Rich Man and his people had to change their religion and leave the doors of the City Castle open in front of him.

They had nothing but to accept Lenktemur's demands. And when the doors of the City were opened in front of Lenktemur's army, they entered the City, robbed everything, killed the male ruthlessly, dishonored the young brides and lasses and turned the City into ruins.

Hay Melik was arrested and forced to change his religion and was called now Kavshash Oghlu and his family was known as Cheotely Zate. Half of them lived in the village Seray and were known as Seray Aghasi, and the rest lived in the village Egheg.

Though the Cheotely Zates ruled in Kharbert for centuries, their power was finished at the time, when Rashit Pasha with his army went to ruin the internal provinces of Anatolu and to constitute the "Tanzimat". At that period the leader of the Cheotely Zates was a woman called Hatchi Khanm, who lived in Mezre.

Despite the Cheotely Zates changed their religion centuries ago and now were like Turks, they kept their nobility and never became robbers or despots. They not only didn't take part in the events in 1895, but even saved the lives of many Armenians and thanks to them the villages Seray and Egheg were safe. And if a Cheotely Zate heard about a slaughter in Huseynik, he rode on a horse along the village, reached the place of the slaughter and averted it saving hundreds of lives.

The Change of Religion

After seizing and nearly ruining Kharbert Lenktemur began to attack the adjacent villages and after much violence he managed to change the religion of many Armenian villages as Zarfanik, Pekenik, Alatchan, Avtchelu, Tchip, Hindarak, Hintsor, Aruni tegh, Suner, Poreag, Khulbank, Kolu, Papushagh, Sultanashagh, Kelushagh, Rshvanushagh, Khachikushagh, Kulushagh, Sanikh and many other villages.

Of course many of them struggled with Lenktemur's army and didn't change their religion easily. But those who struggled well later were dreadfully slaughtered. One of them was the village Aruni tegh. After this slaughter the people of this village were forced to change their religion. The clergyman was in the fields when his wife approached and told him what was going on in the village. When she began telling, the clergyman turned and asked in Turkish. "Gar ne seoliorsn?" (What are you saying?). The woman began to weep crying that the clergyman had become a Turk.

Lenktemur's invasion passed through the Armenian villages like a ghost and ruined everything, but Armenians began to work and to build again.

The Construction of the General Village

During all this time the seven families of Bazman decided to bring closer their houses, so that they would be able to struggle and protect themselves during such attacks. Their decision was the following: to build new big houses close to each other in the middle of the town.

In the previous places of these seven houses now there were built the following houses.

In the place of the Tatoes' house were the houses of the Murwards and the Der-Harutyuns. In the place of the Gorgoes' house were the houses of the Gotoes and the Mijos. In the place of the Narozes' house were the houses of the Khazars and the Oveses. The houses of Terwish Aharon and the Samels' were built in the place of the Terwishes' house. In the place of the Mnchiks' house were the houses of Ero and Gevo. In the place of the Shahpazes' house were built the houses of Ezo and Mztes Alexan. And the first house of the Pans was in the place of the Noroes' house.

When the villagers gathered together they began to talk about the regrettable and happy events of the past, especially in winter time, when there was a lot of wine. These conversations had no end as everyone had its own impressions.

The First Praise

Having the purpose to thank God for the peace of their country the villagers decided to organize a big celebration.

During the last weeks of Mets Pahots (Lent) every family was busy preparing for Easter. Old women sewed clothes, brides and lasses colorful hats and men knitted socks. So by Saturday everything would be ready.

Distinguished men were busy preparing for the “keshkek” near Khachkar. All the villagers gathered there. Many lambs were killed in front of Khachkar. At that time the village didn’t have a church and people were ready to cook the “keshkek” (something like barbecue) themselves.

On Easter Day the whole village gathered in front of Khachkar to taste the delicious keshkek. They laid on food and drink on a big table in the nearest meadow and everyone taking his share sat cross-legged and tasted it. The Sun beams shone brightly from Mount St. Zakaria and with the blessings of Terwish Zakaria the meal began. Then young guys and girls began to sing and dance causing great happiness.

One of the songs they sang was the following.

It has snowed in Kharbert,
In old and new fields,
Life is going on; it’s gloomy in his heart,
Turn back and see it’s gloomy in the mountains too.

You’re standing there, in front of the ocean,
You’re dressed in red,
You don’t have any guard,
Your heart is hurt deep inside.

Singing and dancing went on until late at night and were continued on the next day too. This tradition existed in Bazmashen until the Genocide in 1915.

Terwish Zakaria

We have mentioned Terwish Zakaria’s name before and it’s worth to give an introduction about him.

Terwish Zakaria was the eldest brother of the Terwishes’ family, who was a hermit and lived in the cave called after his name St. Zakaria. His hair and beard were long and he spent his time praying and traveling. He had access and to Armenian and to Kurdish villages and was respected everywhere. He never ate meat and all the villagers tried to find food for him, because he had attained reputation of a sacred man and was the guard angel of the village. If there was any

danger St Zakaria was the first to know about it and would warn the villagers. Usually he walked at nights and had a rest in the afternoons.

There were rumors that if he saw a Turk at night, he would give him a lesson as revenge and would not tell anyone about it.

This is the story about Terwish Zakaria.

Khachkar

We have spoken about Khachkar before too, and it's worth to give some elucidations about it.

In 600s the Greek sculptors noticed that the white stones in the fields of Bazmashen fit to be used for religious objects, as crosses, and also for building churches and gravestones. They called such stones Khach Kar (Cross Stone). There was a cliff of such stone in Bazmashen that had 15 feet length and 5 feet breadth and a cross was sculptured on it. Probably in ancient times Christians being persecuted couldn't have private places for praying and consequently used that place.

The stones of the last church of the village were taken from that place. Architect Golech Mztes' Khayo and his brother /my father/ carved beautiful pictures on it.

The author of these lines had also made some notes and carved some pictures on the stones of the graveyard, brought from Khachkar.

The First Church

The previous seven houses of Bazman didn't have any church when they lived far from each other. They had to build new houses close to each other so that they could struggle against the enemy together.

Naturally the village got enlarged and there was the necessity of having a temple. The Reyises of Bazman had tried to build a church before, but they didn't succeed in it. But seeing that people were debased and discussing the question once more, they asked permission from the authorities to build a small chapel and achieved it. The chapel was built of brick and people began to pray there day and night. They made a graveyard on one side of it, where children were buried.

The first church of Bazman was called St. Toros.

The First Craft

Everything was done on patriarchal way at that time. Nobody made an effort to update anything. All the necessary objects and tools of the village were made with hard work.

But a lad /from the Mnchiks' house/ became a good carpenter and progressed in it very easily. This lad tried to construct a machine that could produce lamp-oil much easier. At last after many experiments he managed to do that; with the help of the machine that he made the oil was much more than before. The machine was made of wood, because it was very difficult and even impossible to find iron at those times.

The oil made of the seeds of the plant "Kenekershek" used for lightening had a difficulty. The lit wick didn't stay on the edge of the lamp. The oily wick burning from the edge of the lamp went in and that was why all the time they had to move the wick forward and backward.

They tried various ways on the seeds of "Kenekershek", but the result was unsatisfactory. Fortunately the success was near. In order the burning edge of the lamp would stay in its place, the seeds were ground first and only then oil was taken and after this the burning edge remained in its place. The family of the lad who had made this machine was called the Narchoes. Other families used this machine made by the young craftsman too and soon the village had eight oil-producing machines.

The achievement gained by this new machine caused the people to grow flax in their corn-fields, because the oil of this plant (linseed oil) was more solid. The flax seeds were ground too and its oil was sold in the squares not only in Kharbert province, but in the adjacent provinces as well. People producing oil in Bazman began to trade with the people of other provinces as Arabkir, Tigranakert, Kharacholi, Balu, Tersim, Malatia and Chmshkatsag.

Until the last war the inhabitants of Bazmashen were known in agriculture and oil production and it was the main way they earned their living.

The Spreading of Bazman

The seven patriarchal families of the village getting multiplied had to build new houses and settle in them and were called after their grandfathers.

Three houses were separated from the Gorgoes; the Gotoes, the Murats and the Meshoes. The Mnchiks were divided into three families; the Narchoes, the Der-Simons and the Mzteses. The Terwishes were divided into the Memishes and the Samels. The Tatoes were divided into the Gngoes, the Chikarchoes and the Chops. The Noroes, the Haroes and the Marsups originated from the Panoes' family. The Petoes were divided into the Ahmatchans, The Petoes and the Mentashiks. The Onans, the Shahpazes, the Tergoes and the Paghtiks are from the Shahpazes' family.

Here it is worth to explain how the Eoksiz's family has formed.

Vardan, who was one of the Narozes' brothers, went to Arabkir to sell oil. On his way home he brought a child with him that was an orphan and nobody took care of him. Vardan adopted him and brought up him like his own child. When he grew up, he got married. And when the Narozeans were separating, they gave a

house to this adopted lad and called Eoksizean. Also other houses were formed from the Narozeans, the Khazars, the Malkhases, the Ovesses and the Eoksizes.

These family divisions enlarged over time, and in 1615 Bazman consisted of 150 families. Every family lived well enough because of the oil production and exportation.

Due to the oil business the inhabitants of Bazman were known not only in their village, but also in the neighboring provinces, as the need for oil was great that was produced only in Bazman. Our ancestors had a peculiarity. When they traveled nobody dared to rob them taking into consideration the fact that our villagers produced the oil for lightening.

The Occupations

The situation substantiated by Lenktemur's authority gradually caused a new incident. Many Armenians, who had changed their religion under the influence of Lenktemur's army and were Kurds, now, were a kind of trouble for the Armenians of Kharbert province. Many of them knew somehow that their ancestors were Armenians, but they were afraid and didn't dare to return to their belief and nation and were lost for us for ever.

Lenktemur's power gradually gave way to slavery and Kharbert was now ruled by the whims of a few despots. So the whole town was under the power of the Cheotely Zates. The area from Pel-Khani to Chor-Gyugh was ruled by a man called Haroghli. The area from Kesmur Khan to Khan-Gegh was ruled by Igoli's sons. Kharachol's sons had occupied Charsanchag and their influence reached Berdak. Balu was completely under the influence of Balu's sons up to the bank of the River Eprat. And as there wasn't absolute authority these rulers often fought with each other for subtle problems and in fact the common obedient people were tortured, majority of which were Armenians.

But owing to their diligence and creativity Armenians always managed to own big properties and lived in good conditions. Unluckily the despots didn't like this progress of Armenians. There was jealousy in their hearts that was gradually growing and at last they began to occupy the estates of Armenians. Accordingly the legal owners of these estates were forced to work in their own fields as workers. In some places they occupied the fields, in another place they robbed the gardens and in Kharachol the leaders occupied the Armenian houses. No one dared to express opposition to these illegal occupations as the end was either prison or murder. The situation grew as worse so that the Armenians working in their own lands had to be satisfied with the half of what they had worked out, the rest was for the leaders and the master.

Beneath the captivity there was much more bad and disgusting situation than this that really made them disobedient. If a lad wanted to marry in Kharacholi he had the right to see his bride only after the permission of the leader. This horrible situation lasted for a long time.

The Cheotely Zates and the leaders of Kharacholi entirely occupied everything their inferiors had. And they even took the lands of Bazman from Saray's leaders, who were more kindhearted leaving to every family their house, the garden and two arable lands.

Armenian villagers were obliged to share their part with the leaders and sometimes worked even without getting anything.

One of the most characteristics of those occupations was the trial of occupying the lands of the Narozes by Saray's leaders. That happened under the following circumstances.

Vardan Narozean had four sons, three of them were adults already and one was five years old. He owned 80 arable lands and did everything possible to avoid giving his lands to Saray's leaders. Several times the invaders came to the village to catch Vardan and his sons and to make them sign the documents about the transmission, because without their signature the occupation wouldn't be legal and valid. But every time Vardan and his sons ran away and returned only when the leaders got tired and went away from the village.

Saray's leaders seeing that this method was a waste of time once secretly surrounded the village with 100 soldiers to arrest the Narozes' sons. They found the eldest son Abraham and little Hovhannes at home, others had gone with their father to water the fields. The villagers informed Vardan about this incident and he together with his two sons ran away and found shelter at Haroghli's place, because they knew that Saray leaders couldn't come to Haroghli and demand to return the refugees.

When they saw that they couldn't catch Vardan Saray leaders taking Abraham and Hovhannes arrested and imprisoned them.

What happened to Hovhannes and where he was remained a secret to the end. They made an effort to find his tracks, but it was of no use. Abraham was imprisoned with his hands and feet chained up and 7kg iron hung from his neck.

Abraham's cousins, Khazar's sons, Garo and Teto often visited him in prison taking clean clothes and food for him. Taking advantage of these visits Abraham asked them to bring a file next time. And when they succeeded to pass a file in together with his clothes, Abraham began to file the chains until the sunrise. At first he cut the chains of his neck, but in order not to make them suspect anything in day time he hung it back. When he managed to cut all the chains at the same night he broke the wooden rods of the window and thus disappeared in the darkness. He went straight to Haroghli and told him everything that had happened.

Listening to Abraham's story, Haroghli got angry with his rival and in order to revenge, promised them to remove their cause into Polis, if they agreed to go to Polis. He also promised to send together with Abraham a few people who would protect them during the journey until the places where he was known.

Consequently Vardan's sons, Abraham and Eghia, encouraged by this protection immediately set off for Polis with Haroghli's people, who came back after getting the places they knew. The two brothers were left alone. They continued their way until they reached Polis.

At that time Sultan Sivleyman was more worried about Palkans, so Anatolu was ignored, especially the Armenian provinces as the leaders and the rulers were familiar. Sultan's relationship with the Armenians who lived in Polis was advantageous. The power of the patriarch was great for B. Dra, because the Armenian Pashas and Amiras played the most important role in the general affairs of the government. The policy led towards the Armenians by Sultan's government was based on this fact; first of all it was necessary to calm the West and consequently to flatter Armenians for the peace of the internal provinces.

Sultan was deceitful. He wanted to keep the Armenians of the province asleep by giving titles to some of them in the Central Government. There were rumors that he had made a contract with the principals of the Armenian Churches taking Armenians as hostages to whom he intended to give freedom later. According to the contract Armenians had to pay small tributes nothing more.

This was the situation when Abraham and Eghia came to Polis. They just went to the Patriarchate and told them the motive of their visit, introduced them to the condition in which were the Armenians of Kharbert and asked to help them.

The Patriarchate, being informed about this condition of the province, with the help of an Armenian pasha (gentleman) sent an application to the government and in return for it they got a decree with the royal stamp on it. According to that decree the eighty arable lands of the Narozes were registered in the calendar of the government as the property of the same family. Owing to the same decree other landlords of Bazman would get their properties back too.

Getting this decree Abraham and Eghia returned to their country with great joy and after a long journey came to Haroghli.

Seeing this royal decree Haroghli was very happy for the triumph they had found. He sent his personal messenger to inform Cheotely Zate Sivleyman that the Narozes had obtained a patent from Sultan according to which the lands occupied by him would be returned to the Narozes. Cheotely Zate took the first chance to ignore this decree. Abraham and Eghia came to their father and brothers, who lived in the village Sanukh that was a little bit far from Haroghli.

After a few days Cheotely Zate Sivleyman under somebody's influence sent a message to Vardan according to which they could go home safely and there was no punishment for them. Believing to that promise the Narozeans returned to Bazman causing great happiness to their families and to the whole village. They told the villagers about their achievement and after that the royal decree was kept as a relic from generation to generation. The writer of these lines had seen and read that decree himself that the Mortans' Abraham kept with him until 1905.

Sultan' Visit

By various occasions Polis's Sultans were informed about the intolerable conditions in the internal provinces. The provinces weren't paid any attention and the leaders ruled over according to their whims.

When Sultan Murat knew about this he decided to visit the internal provinces and in 1670 with a small army, he set off for the internal provinces with the commission to arrange the things there. The people of Bazman hearing about Sultan Murat's visit began to sacrifice lambs for Sultan and his army. They told that the villagers brought so much barley for the horses that a hill raised in a few days. They put a watermelon on the top of the barley-hill and 500 horses ate the barley day and night, but the watermelon stayed in its place and didn't fall.

Sultan Murat seeing this lavish assistance and hospitality before leaving the province called the Reyises and asked what he had to pay for all that, but Reyises refused to take anything and asked instead of it a permission to build a church. Sultan saw people's desire to have a church and allowed to build it and even gave them a present. Sultan Murat told the Reyises that starting from that day the village must be called Bazmashen (a great fertile place) and it must be registered in the royal calendar with that name. At that time the village Bazman consisted of 200 families who lived in good conditions.

After Sultan Murat left the village people had a discussion about the structure of the new church.

Making an appointment with a Greek architect they began to build the church with great solemnity. Two lambs were sacrificed on the first stone. The breadth of the base was 60 inches for which they had used big stones and lime. When they finished the building looked like a firm castle. The breadth of the church was 30 feet and the length 50 feet. They built three temples; the middle one was the biggest and the others were small. The altars were covered with thin decorations of iron that were painted colorfully. There weren't any columns in the church. The height of the walls was 12 feet and in the middle 20 feet. There were 6 windows; every window had 55 inches height and 12 inches breadth. The roof of the church was flat; they built it so deliberately, so that they could defend themselves during external attacks. Three hundred years later a college was built on that church for girls.

The first churchman in Bazmashen was Der Kevork, who was ordained as a priest in the monastery of Arzni and his family was called Der-Derean.

After Sultan Murat's visit all the leaders began to respect the inhabitants of Bazmashen. The population of the village gradually got on; the number of the oil-producing factories reached twenty and the oil consumption was great.

Sultan Murat didn't try to involve new changes in the local government, but studying their life thoroughly enough, especially life in the Armenian villages, he returned to Polis and the first thing he wanted to do was to send a charter to the provinces.

With this charter several peculiarities were given to Armenians. According to that charter Armenian lads, who wanted to marry not only didn't have to obey the leaders any more, but also had to keep sword with them during the wedding. And others who came to the wedding could have swords with them too. But sometimes it happened so that during the ceremony they used their swords, fought together and somebody was killed, but none of them was responsible for it. According to that charter firing took place during the weddings of the province until 1915.

Affected by the welcome of Bazmagyugh, when Sultan Murat returned to Polis, he took into account the oil production of that village and gave instructions, according to which oil would be used as means for lightening in all his army units. So the population of Bazmashen had to build new oil-producing factories as the demand for oil was growing day by day. Oil was sold everywhere; they took 24 dahekan (Persian money) per 1 litre.

This condition continued in Kharbert province for a long time and the population lived in peace and comfort thanks to their hard work.

The Enicheries

Particularly the internal provinces of Turkey weren't ever in peace for a long time. The state authority had hardly made peaceful conditions in the West, when problems appeared in the internal provinces. It was always like that. Sultan had scarcely solved European problems, when there appeared the disobedience of the Enicheries that threatened to take the throne. Some of them entering the provinces made a mess among the people.

One group of the Enicheries got to Kharbert. The doors were to be open in front of them. They had a free access to everywhere. They looked for a comfortable place to sleep, ordered to cook special dishes for them and if it happened so that they had a toothache during the meal they took *dues for their teeth*.

The population of Bazmashen couldn't avoid this new trial, but tried to prevent it by all means. Men and women, young and old gathered huge stones on the roofs of their houses and locked their doors firmly to avoid those unexpected visits. If the Enicheries tried to enter a house in Bazmashen, people gathered on the roofs and began to hit them with stones. But sometimes some of them managed to enter several houses and later it was quite difficult to make them go away.

The seventy years old grandmothers of our village told us about the indecent activities of the Enicheries with great sorrow.

Sultan Mahmut the Second saw that the Enicheries became a burden for the country, so he planned a conspiracy and gathered them in a square in Polis, where they were killed by his soldiers, thus the country got rid of them.

Rashit Pasha's Visit to the Provinces of Anatolu

The Turkish Sultan had the opportunity to turn his attention to Anatolu, where there was no regular government and his power wasn't perceptible, only the leaders ruled familiarly there.

That's why in 1830 Sultan sent Rashit Pasha with 80.000 soldiers to Anatolu to kill the leaders and to constitute a legal government there.

When Rashit Pasha came to the Western side of the River Eprat and was about to cross it, the leaders of Ighoglu tried to resist, but weren't able to endure the

soldiers and the guns. So they ran away to the mountains. Their houses were ruined by the fires of the guns and the leader Khasm Agha was taken as a hostage and was brought to Kharbert.

Haroghli also tried to resist, but the soldiers fired the guns and his house burnt to the ground and all the members of his family were buried under the ruins. With the help of an Armenian woman, who served in his house, Haroghli rescued one year's old child from his family. The child's name was Hatchi Zipel. The woman wrapped him in clothes and took to an Armenian village called Cheotely, where that child stayed until the age 15.

When the population of Bazmashen heard that Rashit Pasha was coming, the Reyises gathered and welcomed him telling about their problems. The list of the individuals who welcomed him was the following; the Ekob's Gnto, the Shahpazes' Ekob, the Khazars' Khazar, the Noroes' **Hambartsum**, the Mechoes' Tepan, the Murats' Poghos, the Samils' Aptal, the Tchikarchoes' Oynik, the Terwishes' Davo, Der Gabriel's Tepan, the Onans' Asatur and Ahmatchean Petros. They all waited for Rashit Pasha near the spring Khan. One of the leading soldiers, Emin Chaush, saw that the villagers had gathered there, approached and asked their nationality and the aim of their gathering there. The villagers answered that they were Armenians and wanted to see pasha and to tell him about their problems. Their wish was declared to pasha, who agreed to listen to them.

When the villagers were ushered to Rashit Pasha, they bowed low to him. Pasha asked their nationality and they replied that they were Armenians and asked him to save them from the Kurd's violence as their ruthlessness was unbearable any more. They also asked him to give them his permission to build a new church as the one they had was too small for the 300 families of the village.

Rashit Pasha listened to their request and ordered Emin Chaush to go to Bazmashen with a small group of soldiers and arresting the Kurds to bring there.

When the Kurds heard about Rashit Pasha's arrival and the order for their arrest, leaving everything and riding on their horses they ran away. Some of their things still remain at the Shahpazes' house. And old women tell many stories about its usage.

As soon as Rashit Pasha came to Kharbert, he sent the leader of Ighoglu, Khasm, to the gallows in the square. With this he wanted to frighten the other leaders too. He ordered to push stakes into the ground near the spring Aslan and the defiant Kurd leaders were caught and tied to those stakes, then they were tortured severely and afterwards killed at the stakes.

Calmness was possessed for a while. Rashit Pasha confirmed a regular government, but with partiality. He gave titles only to Turks and thus made them rulers. The lands of the Armenian villagers remained occupied by the Turks and Armenians' sufferings were not lessened. This time the taxes of the government began to press the people. Armenians were recognized as slaves and their evidence wasn't acceptable by the courts. They didn't have the right to wear a *fess* (a hat that Turks wear still nowadays) and could wear clothes made of only blue linen. And if an Armenian saw a Turk in the street, he was to greet him first and had to stand on one side of the street until the Turk went away.

The Structure of the New Church

In those years Bazmashen had 30 oil-producing factories and owing to them people lived in welfare and safety. The structure of the new church was launched in 1840. Architect Tashchi Hovhannes and Golech Mztes's Khayo, who was from Bazman, and his brother Poghos signed a contract about the structure of the church.

On a Saturday in May the groundwork of the church would take place, so the whole population left everything and gathered there. Khulvank's Gevorg and churchman Der Abraham, the leader of the town, Petros, Father Superior Kharapet of the temple Sursur, and the twelve churchmen of Bazmashen were to anoint the basement of the church. Twelve lambs were brought for sacrificing. Mztes's Khayo had put each base on its place and the priests began the ceremony. The four corners were anointed and the first stones were put and the lambs were sacrificed on them. Then it was delivered to the guests and the people.

The layout of the new church had 100 feet breadth and 150 feet length. The church was built on four columns; each of them had 20 feet height. They were round and their width was 30 inches. The church had 24 arches; the height of each arch was 50 feet. The height of the dome was 58 feet, its width was 30 inches and it had 8 windows. The walls had 50 inches width and were built of huge stones. Wood wasn't used at all.

The church had three altars; one was big and the two others were small. They were made of hardwood and were painted with golden, green, light red and blue colors. On the middle altar there was the beautifully painted portrait of the Virgin and Jesus Christ and a golden cross was on it. This new church was connected with the old one by a small door.

Everyone without any exception took part in the building of the church. Many villagers worked even without getting daily payment. It took 12 minutes to get to the graveyard from the church. So men stood in a line along that road and passing the gravestones from hand to hand used them for the structure of the church. Women and lasses helped them continually by bringing water and soil. Each of the huge columns of the church that had nearly 25 tons weight were brought from the quarry called Otsman Kar (a stone to anoint). It was far from the village for half an hour. Twenty four oxen were yoked to special carriages and almost 150 people were trying to carry the stones by pulling the ropes, but still it was too difficult to move them from their place. Only architect Mztes Khayo made the work of the villagers easier with the help of a rod of iron, because he was a very strong and giant man.

The building of the new church was finished in four years. It had broad surroundings. It had also two entrances; one was from the East and the other one from the South. Samel's Aptal was watching them, besides he paid the expenses of one of the altars of the church. The middle altar was built with the help of the villagers and the third one by the Narchoes. The basin was made of fine stones by

Golech Mztes Aptal. Only a man, who wanted to come down, died during the structure of the church.

It was counted that the whole expense of the church was nearly 20.000 dollars. Like this church four other churches were built in the City, Huseynik, Kesrik and Bazmashen.

The New Houses

The village Bazmashen consisted of 300 houses in the last years and it had a population of nearly 4000. All these houses originated from the previous eight houses with the following names.

From the Tatoes' house originated the Ekobs, the Chikarchoes, the Chopeyes, the Murwards, the Der Petroses, the Chloes, the Pldoes, the Plzoes, the Poghoses, the Der Oseps, the Grzes, the Karamues, the Der Girakoses and the Gabriels.

From the Gorgoes' house were formed the Gorgoes, the Murats, the Mechoes, the Khazers, the Popozes, the Der Mikayels, the Makhaks, the Plpulakobs, the Pleyls, the Ayzoes and the Mztes's Aroes.

From the Narozes' house were formed the Khazars, the Oveses, the Mortans, the Goleches, the Malkhases, the Oskoes, the Kheroes, the Khukoes, the Tertras, the Koshkar Enokhes (shoe makers), the Khurpets, the Pashas and the Antiks.

From the Terwishes' house originated the Memishes, the Petroses, the Asturamues, the Kirkoes, the Tamgnes, and the Samels.

From the Mnchiks' house were formed the Narchoes, the Mzteses, the Der **Simons**, the Ktskas, the Kochkrs, the Eghkas, the Khorsiks, the Tikhuls, the Hazarkhas, the Morsoes, the Khazars, the Kelgevoes and the Lokhes.

From the Petoos' house originated the Ahmatcheans, the Kemo Karapets, the Gaboes, the Mantashiks, the Gspoes, the Tanapaches, the Turuks, the Mroyertars, Agjapekirchoes and the Mztes Martoes.

From the Shahpazes' house started off the Onans, the Mztes Mliks, the Paghtiks, the Tergoes, the Poloes, the Perpres, the Adams, the Sargisoghluos, the Sukoes, the Matoes and the Aghktoes.

From the Eoxizes' family originated the Der Sargises, the Atchems, the Chalzes, the Uliks, the Mariks, the Ayranemezes, the Ohanamues, the Keomoyes and the Krans.

From the Panoes' house were formed the Noroes, the Baloes, the Karoes, the Kevroes, the Marsups, the Michaels, the Arakels, the Tcheloos, the Petiks and the Mztes Marsups.

The Tradesmen of Bazmashen

In 1860 the village progressed a lot. Bazmashen had its courageous tradesmen. They were the Mechoes' Tepan, the Shahpazes' Tono, the Ahmatsheans' Mztes Egho, the Murats' Karo, the Mechoes' Mushekh, the Onans' Mztes Poghos, the Khagrkoes' Mztes Akob, the Der Gabriels' Mztes Tepan, the Ekobs' Ohan, the Mariks' Mztes Poghos, the Mortans' Egho and the Malkhases' Mztes Akob.

These tradesmen had 10-15 mules and their business was spread all over the country. They went to Cilicia, Aleppo, Samson, Kirason, Tokat, Sebastia, Marash, Trapizon, Erzurum and Tigranakert. Thus carrying goods of any kind from one place to another they sold them and made a profit. As their purposes were genuine they were respected by everyone and everywhere. When they came back to the village they almost always wore new and expensive clothes. One of them, the Mechoes' Mztes Tepan had his own horse and hung half meters long sword from his belt. He had also a spear on his shoulder that was three meters long. Mztes Tepan had the reputation of a tough man and the gangsters never dared to rob him. Though Turks watched him enviously, he didn't pay any attention to them and when he approached the town with his caravan, the ringing of the leader mule's bells were heard from half hour's way. Besides he was a brave horseman and he liked to take part in horse-races. All the villagers were of high opinion of him for his bravery.

As mentioned before these tradesmen were from the great families and as every house in the village had its Reyis, all the money they had earned during their trips, they brought and gave to the Reyis. The latter ruled the house and was respected by the old and the young.

The Landlords of the Village

The village had its vigorous landlords or it would be better to say local leaders that ruled over the whole village. They were the Shahpazes' Mztes Ekob, the Samels' Mztes Aptal, the Ekobs' Gnto, the Chikarchoes' Oynik, the Onans' Mztes Astur, the Terwishes' Mztes Davo, the Narchoes' Mztes Markos, the Ahmatcheans' Petros, the Murats' Mztes Poghos, the Khazars' Khazar, the Mzteses' Mnchik, the Der Gabriels' Mztes Tepan and etc. If it happened so that an argument took place in the village or family disagreement arose, these landlords solved everything justifiably. Their decision was final and everyone respected and submitted to it.

Usually the villagers lived in peace and brotherhood; they helped each other and the poor.

At that time the biggest families of the village were the following; the Samels, the Narchoes, the Ekobs, the Mzteses, the Murats, the Terwishes, the Shahpazes, the Der Gabriels, the Shahpaz Gevoes, the Khazars, the Ahmatcheans, the Petoes, the Murwards, the Chikarchoes, the Oyniks, the Onans, the Akheksans, the

Malkases, the Kheroes, the Tergoes, the Cheloes, the Der Kirakoses, the Chopes, the Karamues, the Baloes, the Der Petroses, the Gogoes, the Achems, the Petroses, the Eoxizes, the Der Sargises, the Khardiks, the Pltoes, the Petiks, the Marsups, the Der Simoes, the Noroes and the Karoes. These houses had 42 oil-producing factories and worked there day and night.

The Kheroes' **Hambartsum** took the responsibility of oil supply for lightening for the government, the army, the buildings and the streets. Once he had an argument with the members of the government about the bills. So **Hambartsum** faced court case with Saray leaders of Kefshesh Oghlu in Kharbert, then the case was taken to Tigranakert. But it was impossible to finish it there and this time the case was taken to Polis.

In order to win the court case **Hambartsum** had to go to Polis himself and he took his cousin Poghos and his son Grigor with him too. This court case lasted for three years. There was no glimmer of hope to win. Having spent all that he had, once when he was drunk, he came to the Court and in front of the officials announced the following, "Chuma kiuni kiun tekil, Khati Miupiman tekil", i.e. "Friday is not a day at all, the judge is not a Muslim. My opponent is leader Kefshesh Oghlu Sivleyman, he is strong. I can't compete against him; consequently I'm losing my court case".

At that time an argument started between Bazmashen and Khulgyugh. The fields of these two villages were separated by a big brook. The inhabitants of Khulgyugh wanted to own this brook, but as most of the fields of Bazmashen belonged to Saray leaders and the Armenian villagers of Bazmashen worked there and consequently they watered the fields with the water of that brook. Every day they quarreled until the case was taken to the Court. But the Court either couldn't or didn't want to solve the problem, so both sides had big losses. Though the population of Khulgyugh had the right to own the brook, Saray leaders being powerful and rich rulers didn't let them be justified. At last the government was obliged to send an investigatory committee to that place, which would examine the territory thoroughly enough and would help them to come to a final conclusion. However the committee didn't make any decision too. This time Saray leaders thought of a trick.

One of their workers died and taking advantage of it, they made several sword wounds on his dead body, took it to the brook at night and left it there. It was a subject for a big argument. In the morning they sent two workers to Bazman who told the villagers that they had sent a worker to stay in Khulgyugh, but he hadn't come back yet. So they took a few people with them as if to look for the lost man and found the wounded and dead body of the worker. They told Saray leaders about that incident and the latter informed the government. Saray leaders with a few policemen came to the village Khulgyugh and called the landlords to the place of the murder, convicted them as murderers and arresting took them to the Court. The Court decided to listen to the case in the place of the murder. A few officials and a judge came there, inspected everything but didn't find enough evidence that people of Khulgyugh had killed that man. In order to solve this entangled and complicated problem a decision was made. And in accordance with that decision

the inhabitants of Khulgyugh had to leave the brook and the inhabitants of Bazmashen had to be more careful in their behavior. Thus Saray leaders took possession of the brook. Once in a day time they asked a Hotcha to give them an “Ezan” (an Islamic prayer book) for praying. The common “Ezan” Hotcha called “Allah Wekper” and that’s why that place was called “Allah Wekper”.

Life in the Village in autumn

In autumn, when the warmth of the sun lessened, people had a lot of work to do. The fields of wheat became bare, the meadows lost their fresh greenness, the trees and the grapevines of the gardens were leafless and wine was made from grapes. The villagers had to gather food for the winter in order to rest for a few months, to build up their strength again and to be able to restart the struggle for life in spring.

Part of the grain was sent to the mill for grinding into flour. Another part was boiled and cracked wheat was made of it and from the beaten part lentil and some other legumes were made. The big families cooked a great amount of cracked wheat. The landlord and the landlady were busy giving instructions and everyone obeyed them. Every person had its certain work; a young bride cleaned the house, another bride fed the sheep and the hens, another one had to light a fire in the *tonir* (a clay oven buried in the ground) and to bring water from the spring. Then with the help and the directions of the landlady she had to cook the dinner. Almost every day they had to bake bread for 35-40 people.

There were 40 such big houses, 340 middle houses with the same habits. In total there were 400 pure Armenian houses in the village.

The cracked wheat, the lentil and the other legumes were to be ground by a mill that human hands holding its handle ground the legumes. In the evenings the young of the village gathered near the mills and four persons, two lads and two lasses, holding the handle of the mill turned it round and round until late at night. While working they used to tell funny stories and the lads liked to joke. Some of them had good singing voices and either alone or together with some others sang rustic, folk and love songs and thus caused happiness to the villagers.

One of the folk songs they sang was the following:

I have a bitten apple,
There are golden ornaments over it,
Many people want it, but I won’t give it to them,
I’m saving it for my beloved one.

I’m calling you, where are you?
I hear your voice, but you are far,
I’ll die just for your voice,
You are too far from me.

These cheerful and beautiful parties took place in the moonlight and hundreds of stars shone overhead in the blue and cloudless sky.

Thus these groups moved from roof to roof until every family got enough food ready for the winter.

The Educational and Friendly Life in the Village

In order to show the educational and friendly life in Bazmashen I must bring as an example my own life and the condition in my family. I was seven years old in 1871. In those autumn days every family without exception was busy cooking *khaurma* (a dish made of meat and grease) and its appetizing aroma was spread in the streets. There was such a habit; those houses that cooked *khaurma* should invite guests to taste it, to drink wine and have a good time. In our house my mother always cooked it. In the evening my father came with two guests; one of them was my grandfather's brother and the other one was the eldest man of our family, eighty years old *Naroz tete* (it's in Turkish, means grandfather). The latter was a very witty speaker and knew the history of our village very well.

During the meal they asked my father why he hadn't sent me to school. My father answered that he had decided to take me to school just the following day. Hearing about father's decision I was partly happy, because every day I saw the students going to school with their bags hanging from their shoulders in which they kept their books, ink and other important things. I wanted to enter their rows very much. But when I remembered that I would lose my freedom and the chance of playing with my friends, it became very difficult for me to choose between them.

The school of our village usually opened in autumn and at that time Hovhannes was the teacher, who was from Huseynik and students used to call him Master. I had heard many times that he was beating his students when they didn't learn their lessons and this fact frightened me a lot.

In the morning we woke up early. My father woke up, dressed quickly, washed himself with cold water and at the same time prayed. "My Lord if you open my lips, my mouth will bless you. Oh, my Lord mercy on us, oh, my Lord mercy on us, oh, my Lord mercy on us". When he was ready he asked my mother to dress myself and to get me ready for taking to school. When I heard those words, I faced the reality and began to worry if I would be beaten every day and how I would learn to read and to write. I was lost in these upsetting thoughts, when my mother kissed me and began to put on my clothes. Then she brushed my hair. At the same time she explained that I had to go to school that morning.

She lit the tonir, made our meal and began to wait for my father's return from the church.

My mother had cooked my favorite dish, pilaf, but I had spoilt my appetite, because I ate too much *khaurma* the previous day. We began the meal with the Lord's Prayer and finished it with the Thank God. Then father took out the small

bag of tobacco from his belt, filled his pipe with the tobacco, lit it in the tonir and soon he puffed away on his pipe. After ten minutes we walked away from our house together. Our house was at the end of the village and consequently we had to walk for ten minutes to get to the school. The school was near the church. Soon we reached the school and entered it. The master was sitting in an armchair with his arm leaned on a pillow and his left hand on his face.

Father greeted the master respectfully. The latter greeted him reciprocally and showing the luxurious armchair near to him invited to sit down. Father told him that he wanted me to study at school and asked to take a good care of me and also paid the monthly payment beforehand. The master agreed with it and asked my name.

The answer was Aptal Golech Poghosean. He wrote down my name and asked why they named us Golech. It was a long story, but my father cut it short. Father answered that his grandfather had heard that a group of Americans came to Turkey to open a *golech* (college) there. So it became the main topic of his conversations and wherever he went he always began to talk about *golech*. It was a new word for him that's why he used the word in his speech quite often. As a result of this situation people began to say, "Golech came, Golech went". So his name remained Golech and it was added to our last name and it was registered even in the calendar of the government.

During this conversation I stood and stared at the students, who holding their books pretended to learn their lessons, but they were furtively looking at me. They sat cross-legged in a row on a rug and near them everyone had its own small armchair.

Father left me with the master and saying goodbye went away. Till that moment I was fearless, but when my father left, I began to cry. The master ordered me to take off my shoes and to put them in the special wardrobe for shoes and to sit in the fifth row, which was the last one. After half an hour he called me. I stood up and walked across him with my hands and feet trembling. When I stood in front of him, he gave me a wooden board like a pan that they called *pnak* (plate). A sheet of paper was stuck on it, on which were written the 39 Armenian letters. He asked me to hang it with a rope from my neck and on the next day I had to bring ten paras (Turkish money) for that plate. My first lesson began with A, B, C that I had to repeat for several times and then I went and sat down in my place.

Then a long time ago he said that it was time for the lesson. Five lads stood up and began to check whether we had learnt our lessons or not. They were nearly 15 years old. They were the *khalfas* (heads) of our rows; one *khalfa* for each row. The head of my row was the Karamues' Poghos, who checked my lessons. I only remembered the letter A, and then he made me repeat the letter B for several times and after that went away. Those who hadn't learnt their lessons well were separated from the others. Afterward came the turn of the *khalfas*. They stood before the master and he began checking them. As they were older they studied the Narek, the Bible, *sharakan* (Armenian medieval church music) and arithmetic. When the master finished checking them, he ordered them who hadn't learnt their lessons well to come near. Six students came forward and he asked them why they

hadn't learnt their lessons. Then he took the special wooden stick and began to strike their hands so violently that their screams could be heard in the street. Afterward he told them that next time they would be punished more severely.

When we were dining in the afternoon, the master told us to walk in pairs in the streets and we must bow down before the old people. We must not play naughty tricks on people in the streets and must kiss the hands of our parents. After that we stood up sang the Lord's Prayer and went out. We had only half an hour break for launch.

When the church bells rang out in the distance in the same evening, the master told us to line up against the wall for singing. We opened our song-books and started to sing "In front of the Court" and "Ani City sat crying". After the singing all the students went to church.

At that time the church of Bazmashen had seven priests, all of them were old. There were three young men who were just ordained as priests who were in their forties. So in total the village had ten priests, whose names were Der **Simon** (Der is usually added to the names of the churchmen, and means "Lord"), Der Kirakos, Der Hovsep, Der Michael, Der Ohan, Der Harutyun, Der Asatur, Der Sargis, Der Petros. Fifty houses were given to every priest. These priests earned their living getting the following payments from the villagers; they took 15 dahekans (Persian money) for funerals, 10 dahekans for weddings and 8 dahekans for christening. Usually on Sundays the priests or the bishop said Mass in turn and got about 10 dahekans for it. After saying the Mass one of the priests with a deacon visited every house in order to bless them and delivered the gathered money to the poor people.

Sometimes after the Mass the priest with a few people and a deacon went to their house; they ate and drank there, then left getting 1-2 dahekans from the landlord. On the occasion of Christmas and Easter each family had to give 1-2 dahekans to the priest and he would bless their house. These were the main sources the priests, deacons and other churchmen earned their living. They had rather easy and calm life. Some of them were even wealthy, because they served in Chorgyugh, Erzurak and sometimes even in the city too. For example, Der Asatur served in the city for two years.

It was Saturday afternoon. We had finished our lessons and I already knew A, B, C and was very happy for it. Our master told us that we were free till Monday. We were very happy to hear that wonderful news. Then he told us to go to church on Sunday and those who would not be present there they would be severely punished on Monday. After singing the Lord's Prayer we came out.

On Sunday early in the morning I woke up and went to church. Der Michael was to say Mass that day. The students who were above ten wore white shirts and had formed a group which consisted of 50 persons that could sing well. I felt a strong desire to be at their age and to wear a white shirt too.

The best singing voices of the group had the following sacristans; the Shahpazes' Aptal, the Terzoes' Hovhannes, the Terwishes' Michael, the Mzteses' Asatur. Especially the voice of the Terzoes' Hovhannes was a kind of a heavenly gift. He had a God-given talent. During the song "Holy, holy power of the Lord"

people were very excited, some of them were even crying. They all prayed as if they felt God's presence there. The church was crowded, but no conversations could be heard, because they considered it to be a sin. They stood there so still as though the church was empty and only the voices of the churchmen were audible. Young and old had to be present at the ceremony in the church and those who were absent then would be reproached by the old. On Sunday everyone had to rest and even sweeping the floors was considered to be a sin. Such thing must be done on Saturday. They would commit a sin if they played cards or other games on that day. If some lads played cards secretly and were noticed by the old they ran away. And when one of them was caught he was badly beaten nevertheless whose son he was. So they were beaten even for such a minor offence.

Strict and good discipline was required in the village. There were no attempts for robbery and very few arguments took place in Bazmashen village. But the old solved any problem and peace was possessed again. If people offended each other they needn't go to church and talk with the bishop. Their marriages never ended up in divorces. It wasn't important whether a man or a woman was from a wealthy family or not. They had to live in peace and to love each other until death. Men and women took their responsibilities with great inspiration and did the housework together. The women had to cook the dinner, clean the house, take care of the children, water the gardens, feed the sheep and the cows, sew clothes and find some wood for the fire. The men had to earn money, bring food, make their house splendid, do the difficult works and at last make the house alive and please their children.

The Brave of Our Village

Bazmashen village had its hunters as the Menteshiks' Tepan and the Khorsiks' Kirakos. When they went hunting, they shot and killed the birds in the air and in a few minutes the bird was lying on the ground. But they never shot the birds on the ground. Especially Kirakos was very daring and didn't have an idea about fear. Fox-hunting or wolf-hunting was his job. In January 1872 taking a few fox fur coats Kirakos with his friends went to the city to sell those fur coats. But in order to get the money he wanted he walked along the streets until late at night searching for a rich customer who would pay as much as he wanted. His friends didn't wait for him and returned to the village before the darkness fell. At last he managed to sell the fur coats with suitable costs and he started for the village fully satisfied with him.

The whole country was snow-covered, the clouds covered the sky and icy and strong wind was blowing everywhere. When he got to Sursur's Ketuk, the darkness had already fallen and a snow-storm began. And in fact it became very difficult for him not to lose his way and to go forward. On his way to home, when he came to a place called Sandukt suddenly he noticed a huge wolf that was looking at him.

He didn't lose phlegm at all; he began to walk slowly and began to think how to protect himself from the beast. Kirakos didn't have any weapon or even a cane, because Turkish government had banned the Armenians from keeping a weapon with them, though the Turks kept any kind of weapon they wanted freely. So what could he do? At that moment, an idea came into his head. Usually in winter time the villagers wore a coat called *apa* that was made of wool and even rain couldn't pass through it. Immediately Kirakos wrapped his right arm with his *apa* and moved towards the wolf. The wolf attacked him with his open jaws, but his teeth were unable to prick the *apa*. The beast tried for the second and third time. Kirakos took advantage of the suitable chance and entered his arm deep into the animal's throat. Then with his left hand, he clutched the beast's neck and clenched it tightly until it died and fell onto the snow.

The fight between these two giants finished in that way, the beast bowed down before the human being. But the hunter didn't want to lose the fur of that animal, so he bound one end of his *apa* to the tail of the wolf and somehow carried it to the village. On the next day early in the morning, when the villagers knew about this incident, they came in groups to see it. I joined my father and together with him became a witness to the incident.

In addition to all this, the village Bazmashen had good wrestlers whom nobody could win. They were the Der Gabriels' Ohan, the Eghkas' Khacho, the Petoos' Kirakos, Perper Khacho, Arko Khacho, the Petoos' Gevamu, the Chopoes' Tono, the Hazarkhans' Ovakim and the Murats' Gevo.

In 1875, an argument arose between the leaders of Bazmashen and Datem. They wanted to know whose wrestlers are invincible. Each of them pawned some money. Then decided where the wrestle would take place. After that they began to choose the wrestlers whom they wanted to take part in that particular wrestle. On April 15, the villagers of Bazmashen got a message from Saray leaders. From the message, they knew that Behlivan (wrestler) Ohan must be ready by Saturday for fighting with Datem's behlivan in the middle of Mezre and Datem.

On Saturday, we had already dined, when Khazar and Oskian played the piccolos, Ovakim and Zakar beat the drums, and the noise filled the village. They went to Krdu and the people, particularly the young followed them. They all gathered in St. Zakaria. Gorge and the horsemen began to organize horse races until Behlivan Ohan riding on his horse joined the group. They greeted him with hurrahs. He had been appointed to head the group, so immediately he took his responsibility and they started off. We got to Sursur's Ketuk and at the same time noticed that the population of Datem was moving across us with the piccolos and the drums. They came down from Sursur's temple. At last we reached the place of the wrestle. Hundreds of thousands of people interested in the play had already stood in a circle there. Saray and Datem leaders were safeguarded from harm and damage by the police.

After fifteen minutes, the two naked wrestlers came and took their place in the large field. The two giant wrestlers made a few circles and then came near to each other. They tried each other's weight by lifting each other for a few minutes. Then they again moved in a circle, but this time from the opposite sides. The audience

broke into applause and they attacked each other. The first fight lasted for fifteen minutes and nobody won. For a while the wrestlers took a rest and after making one more circle they again rushed each other. They fought for twenty minutes and suddenly the behlevan of Datem fell down right on his back. So Saray leaders triumphed finally and all the voices cried "Victory, victory, victory". The inhabitants of Bazmashen took Behlivan Ohan on their arms and began to walk along the field. Ovakim began to beat the drum and the leaders and the rulers threw some gold and silver on his drum. We returned to the village with great happiness and were very proud of ourselves. This triumphant news was spread till the farthest provinces at once.

In 1876, Behlivan Ohan went to Cilicia. A long time passed and people knew that he was a good wrestler. A Turk wrestler, who had heard about this, came and suggested Ohan their fighting together. Taking into consideration the fact that he was alien there and had nobody to protect him, Ohan remained silent and didn't answer to the Turk's invitation. This news immediately was spread in the city and even reached the governor's ears. The governor got interested in this story and ordered to bring Ohan to his place. He asked Ohan why he refused to wrestle with the Turk. Ohan answered that he wanted to wrestle very much, but as he was a stranger there and he had no friends there, he was afraid for himself. The governor saw that Ohan's reasons were right and fair. He told Ohan that he would be his protector. He would bring a soldier with him and he himself would be present at the wrestle, and no one would dare to harm Ohan.

Ohan replied that if the governor himself would be his protector and he guaranteed it, then he was ready to wrestle. They decided that the wrestle would take place on Sunday at 3 o'clock. Some seats were brought to the place where the wrestle would take place. They were mainly for the officials. In the evening the soldiers with the leadership of their orchestra and the governor escorted by some leaders and rulers arrived to the fixed place. The people; Turks, Armenians, Arabs, Kurds and etc., had already gathered there. Nearly fifteen thousand people were present there. The ropes were around the square where the wrestling match was going to take place. The soldiers had drawn their swords and kept their watchful eyes on every one as Valy Pasha took a seat in the first row.

At 3 o'clock, Behlivan Ohan and the Turk behlivan came to the square. They moved in a circle for several times, and then they tried each other's weight and set on each other fiercely. This first match lasted fifteen minutes. Afterward they had a rest and then again made a few circles in the square and attacked each other like lions. After ten minutes' fight Behlivan Ohan lifted the Turk behlivan high above his head, then he came and stood in front of the governor and threw the Turk behlivan before him. So the Turk wrestler was knocked unconscious. The Turks got too excited by that sight and tried to harm Ohan, but the governor threatened to put them to a sword if anyone would dare to make a movement. He gave 25 golden pennies to Behlivan Ohan, who returned to the city under the soldiers' protection.

In 1875, the head of the village was the Chikharchoes' Niko and the leaders were the Murats' Mztes Poghos, the Der Gabriels' Mztes Tepan, the Gogoes' Gogamu (uncle), the Ahmatcheans' Petros amu and the Narchoes' Mztes Markos.

The Turkish government had given an order to organize a census of the male in the village. They had to count the male population of the village starting from the cradle. This order was only for Armenians. The result of all this was that every person had to pay forty pennies instead of serving in the army. When a male child was born, his parents should pay the tax to the Turkish government starting from his birthday. Otherwise beating, rebuke and confinement were ready. The tax collectors even took the furniture until the tax was paid. If the landlord wasn't at home, because he had gone shopping, his wife was imprisoned and rebuked instead of him. At the date mentioned at the top of this page, Turkish tax collectors came to Bazmashen and demanded to pay the taxes. The head of the village and the leaders did their best to gather enough money and took it to Mezre. But when the collectors saw that the money wasn't as much as they had expected they wanted to harass the inhabitants. But the Murats' Mztes Poghos realized their intention and couldn't stand it. He had three nephews who were rather tough guys. He asked them to make wooden sticks for each of them and to keep them ready for use. The tax collectors were invited to their house. At first they got into a conversation with each other, but then it changed into an argument, the argument inflamed and at that moment Mztes Poghos ordered the guys to take their sticks. Immediately Mztes Tato, Egho and Gevo began to use their sticks. They struck the collectors so violently until their red blood turned into black. Mztes Poghos ordered to free the horses of the collectors and to take them out of the village together with the tax collectors.

New Year and Christmas in the Village

Usually on December 30, the population of the village Bazmashen was in happiness. The landladies were busy baking *gatas*, pancakes, and other pastries. New brides and grooms did their best to look well. They had a kind of ambition as it was their first New Year after marriage and on that occasion they had to go to the bride's house and kiss her parents' hands. The villagers were in the habit of not letting the brides to see their parents before the first New Year. So it was a suitable time when they could see their parents, relatives and especially their friends. They desired to tell them about their marriage, about their husbands, whom they married without knowing him, about their mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, tete and grandmother, uncle and aunt, and other relatives. They used to tell about the family relationship too.

Young brides most of all liked to tell their relatives and friends what jewelries and clothes they had got. They told that they needed a lot of tender loving care from their husbands. In order to please their husbands they cooked delicious dishes and together enjoyed themselves in many parties.

Moreover, if their husbands got some cake they brought it home and gave to their wives at first. Of course listening to such stories young ladies wanted to achieve their hearts' desire and hoped that fortune would smile on them some day. They were eager to get married too.

The young of the village were not anxious about their living conditions. Only the Reyses took care of all their needs, but the young used to work and eat, play and laugh. And if their baby was born, they didn't look after him as it was not their child at all. The mother-in-law and father-in-law took care of the child more than the father or the mother. The bride didn't have the right to speak to the old of the house. She should remain as a bride for ten or even fifteen years. She had to obey all the directions of her mother-in-law and she couldn't complain of anything.

This local custom existed in the village for a long time. And if it happened that a bride didn't follow this custom she was called wicked and gossips were spread all over the village by the members of her house and the neighbors. Very often, there were quarrels between the young and the old of the house about that certain custom. The young wanted to know why they had to follow it. Some of them found it hard to accept and follow that old custom, but the old told them the following.

When a lass got married and came to her spouse's house she would not know their habits and their treatment would be new for her. And if she began to speak and to make remarks certainly a family quarrel would happen, because the bride hadn't got used to the new atmosphere. She would be like a beehive and if you open its mouth before the necessary time the bees would sting you. So it was reasonable to keep the mouth closed until the suitable time and the bee instead of stinging you would please you with the honey it had made. Accordingly, the bride should wait for a while and then open her mouth. She must become a mother, bring up her children and get used to the new conditions.

On December 31, the whole population of Bazmashen village was in full swing. They gave presents to their godfathers, relatives and friends. The brides sent hand made handkerchiefs, hats and some other clothes to their friends as presents. And the husbands sent apple, pomegranate, pear, mirror, Persian shawl, golden pearl necklace, bracelet, signet ring, socks, shoes and etc. At the same night the whole country was in joy. No one wanted to go to bed. Everyone was waiting impatiently for the midnight as at that time people went to the spring in order to bring cold water for the New Year.

At the midnight, the young of the village both male and female came out to the streets. They all went off in the direction of the springs of the village. On their way to the springs they used to sing loudly and the streets resounded with their laughter and voices. The new brides felt very proud to take water with their new red pitchers to their father's house for the New Year. They liked to doll themselves up and to wear a white veil before visiting their parents. They looked like a new blossomed trees. Many lads took a bath with cold water in such chilly and windy weather. They did that in order to escape from various serious and dangerous illnesses. After that they climbed up a tree and holding one of the branches began to shake it. At the same time they sang.

I'm shaking the mulberry tree,
Who wants to eat mulberry?

And those who were downward answered in this way, "Who has seen mulberry in such a winter time?"

The one that was on the tree answered them in this way, "A shiver can be, but mulberry not?" Then he came down shivering with cold hoping that it would stop.

After that, the new brides filled their red pitchers full of cold water and together with their brothers-in-law set off for their parents' house to wish them a Happy New Year. They knocked at the door, it opened and they said, "Happy New Year and a Merry Christmas". Then they entered and those who were inside welcomed cheerfully the guests with these words, "Oh welcome, come in, Happy New Year and a Merry Christmas".

The landlady immediately got busy trying to set the table. The landlord began to fill the glasses with wine and at the same time repeated continually that the guests were welcome. They emptied their glasses wishing the best of all to each other and asked for a refill. At that time the bride wrapped her arms around her mother's neck and suddenly shed tears of happiness. After that she kissed the hands of the adults and the cheeks of the children. She was filled with longing to stay with them.

For a while, mother and daughter went to a secluded garden to have a private conversation. Mother asked her daughter, "How are you? Does your husband love you? Do they treat you well?"

Her daughter answered, "I'm all right, but my mother-in-law likes to complain of everything, and besides that I missed you and my family very much".

Here her mother began to explain the problem to her. She said that of course her mother-in-law must complain about something. Her daughter must be humble and willing. She told her daughter that very soon she would get used to her new family and used a very wise and suitable idiom here, "East or West – home is best". She herself was a bride once and that's why she understood her daughter very well.

"Hadn't you heard about Tervig's bride? She was like a snake and didn't obey her mother-in-law and father-in-law at all. The mother-in-law wake up early in the morning to do the housework, but their bride was still in bed", said the mother. How many times she saw their neighbor's wife washing in their balcony, while the young bride looked at herself in the mirror doing her hair and fastened in her earrings. But the landlady didn't want to make noise that's why, she did the housework calmly. If she said about this to her son, then he would beat his spouse and the whole village would know about it.

That's why she didn't want even her enemy to have such a bride and asked her daughter to be humble and patient. She didn't want others to say that her daughter was wicked and disobedient. The mother said that she wasn't her mother any more; her father-in-law and mother-in-law were her parents. And the bride had to obey them. Thus the bride had to please and serve her new parents. In a couple of years she would have her own children. She must smile sweetly at everyone and must be patient not to get angry about every little trouble. At the end, the mother finished

their conversation with these two idioms, “Every bird likes its own nest” and “Patience is a plaster for all sores”. Thus giving a piece of good advice to her pretty daughter, she was happy to hug and kiss her once again.

When the New Year morning came all the villagers of Bazmashen were having a feast. Every house laid on food and drink on their tables. A bottle of wine stood in the center of the table and around it were put walnuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts, dried fruit of any kind like raisins, currants, fresh fruit like apples, pears or a few bunches of grape, pomegranates and many other things. Old and young, they all visited each other wishing a Happy New Year and helped themselves to some food. If the guests brought a child with them, the landlady would give him some candy and cake by all means.

In that year the headmaster of the school of Bazmashen village was the Eoxizes’ Abraham. The latter completed his formal education at the city collage. He was a very literate and well educated man. Abraham was especially a fine orator and whenever he made formal speeches in public, people listened to him with great interest and were ready and willing to listen to him for hours. On Sundays people came to the church in order to listen to Abraham who was delivering homily.

When we were waiting for 1876, I was 12 years old then. Everyone was getting ready for the holidays. Old or young, master or student, landowner or worker, they all hurried to do something. Some of them were decorating the church, others were cleaning the lamps, and another group was arranging the candles and decorating the altars.

The best students of school were working hard too. They tried to read books about Christmas. The students who were over 12 also had to read a book.

On Christmas Eve, the students didn’t have classes at school, except the lesson of singing.

In this day, the priests were very busy too; pious people came to confess their sins and begged forgiveness for their sins. In the evening, the church bells rang out and people, young or old hurried to the church. Under the leadership of Master Abraham all the students had to stand in a row near the church.

The church was very crowded that day so that it was almost impossible to come out. Nearly three thousand people had gathered there. One of the priests began the divine will with the Lord’s Prayer. The priest who would say Mass that evening was Der Ohan and the Mass was especially for the Narchoes’ family. Then it came the turn of reading a book and the students one by one read their parts. After that, they read the book of Daniel and during that particular reading people had to put money in the money box. About 40 dahekans was saved in that way. People left the church impressed with the singing and agreed to come back early in the morning.

Next day early in the morning when the church bells rang out in the distance, people wake up from their deep sleeps and getting ready hurried to the church to celebrate the birth of Christ. Everywhere were heard these lines of a song.

“Aysor ton e Tsnndean avetis, Tearn meroy ev Yaytnutean avetis”, i.e. “Today is a holiday, the announcement of Christmas, the announcement of Our Lord’s birth and revelation”.

Then it came the turn of taking the cross out of the water. For that ceremony people had to choose a godfather. The one, who would pay more money, would also have the opportunity of being the godfather. The cross was left in a big pan. The priests began to produce a feeling of great excitement and interest among the people. They wanted to get more money.

Der Petros with his husky voice said, “Who will be the godfather of St. Cross?” In addition, a voice answered, “Der Papa, 10 dahekans offered Shahpaz Mztes Tono and 15 dahekans - Gogo”.

The priest cried out, “God will mercy on the dead bodies of their ancestors”.

The man again cried, “Der Papa, 20 dahekans - the Narchoes’ Marinos”.

“God will bless his father and mother”, added the priest.

The man continued, “Der Papa, a dozen of candles - the Kukhoes’ Musekh. Der Papa, 1 liter oil offered the Petiks’ Tono. Der Papa, 10 dahekans - the Khazars’ Zatur”. While the man was announcing these names, the priest said the blessing. Thus, the cross wasn’t taken out of the pan. The man made people hurry and offer more. Again he began, “Der Papa, 15 dahekans - the Chikorchoes’ Mariam Pachi (grandmother). Der Papa, 1 liter oil - the Onans’ Karo. Der Papa, 17 dahekans - the Samels’ Mztes Tato. Der Papa, 20 dahekans offered the Mzteses’ Mariam. Der Papa, 0.5 liter - the Terwishes’ Marta Pachi. Der Papa, 20 dahekans - the Terzoes’ Varderes”.

During that ceremony, the priest blessed those families who gave some money. Then he said, “Bring a white shirt for the man and put it on him as he is going to become a godfather. God will bless him”. At last, the cross was taken out from the water and people gathered around the godfather waiting for their turn to kiss the cross.

The master ordered us to go to school after this ceremony. We had to dine at home, because we had to visit every family and sing for them “Good News”. We should go to every house and singing this song, we should get 1-2 dahekans from every landlord for our Master.

Small boys walked on the roofs of the houses. They had a bag and a rope. Consequently, they suspended their bag by the ropes and singing “Good News” began to move on the roofs. The landladies put in their bags fried eggs, cakes, fruit, candies, khaurma and etc. These children gathered enough food and then with groups went to a beautiful garden, ate what they liked, told funny stories, made jokes at each other and really enjoyed themselves at their small parties.

The priests were very busy too. They had to visit every house and to bless everyone, without paying attention whether someone was rich or poor. They also sang the sharakan “Holy Sacrament that appeared wonderfully to everyone”. Of course, every landlord paid 1-2 dahekans to the priest to thank him.

Relatives and friends called on each other to wish a Merry Christmas.

The mountains, hills, meadows, and fields were snow-capped and the cows, the bulls, the horses, and the sheep were resting in their snug cow-sheds and stables.

They were getting better for the spring as at that time they would have a lot of work to do. But people didn't stop working. The lads were knitting pairs of socks for themselves, the men used to make different tools of iron, some brides used cotton for sewing many beautiful shirts and skirts, and others were busy with the housework.

One of the favorite hobbies of the lasses was handicraft. They made very beautiful handkerchiefs. The old men together with their grandsons and granddaughters usually gathered near a stable and began to talk. During these conversations, they decided whose son or grandson must marry this or that lass.

In ancient times, the will of a boy or a girl wasn't taken into consideration. If their parents decided and formally announced the engagement, they had nothing but to obey their parents' decision. It didn't matter whether a boy didn't love a girl or just vice versa, a girl didn't love a boy. They couldn't ever object to their parents or grandparents. Usually the boys that were already 15 years old got engaged, and 2-3 years passed till they got married. During that period, the parents of the boy and the girl gave many dinner parties in their houses. Especially once in a year ten people from the boys' family and ten people from the girls' family gathered and started their feast which continued until late at night. As soon as the priest blessed their engagement, the parents of the lad wore an engagement ring on the girls' ring finger and starting from that day the bride began to respect and obey the lad's relatives. Wherever she saw them she was ready to kiss their hands, but she didn't speak to them, as she was a new bride.

In the evenings the neighbors usually gathered in a room near the stable and began to tell various stories about their past live. They also told some famous tales and asked riddles to each other.

I think it is worth to quote some of their riddles in here:

“Which king did rule over 24 years, become ill in 26 and die in 30?”

Answer - the Moon.

“There are three things that the world doesn't have. Which are that three things?”

Answer - The sun doesn't have a shade, the sea doesn't have a cover, and people don't have hair in the palms of their hands.

“When it was alive it ate barley and grass and when it died it ate meat and blood. What was it?”

Answer - It was the jaw of the donkey that Samson used as a weapon.

“When it was alive it had branches and leaves and when it died it became meat and blood. What was it?”

Answer - It was Moses' walking stick that became a snake.

Days passed. The snow was beginning to melt and people could feel the warmth of the Sun. At last came the day of Barekendan (the Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday). Many bulls were sacrificed at the corners of every street. Every family bought enough meat for the Day of Barekendan and ate so much until they were full. The young divided into groups and every day one of them invited the

whole group to his house. They dined and had a good time there. On Saturday and on Sunday people gathered on the roofs of their houses and began to dance there. Of course, some of them didn't dance and in that case, they watched others, who were dancing. Sometimes the lasses couldn't hide their amusement at the way the guys were dancing and chuckled secretly. Some of them played different amusing games. Particularly the young brides and girls were very eager to dance and sing with their sweet voices. They liked to sing love and folk songs and while singing they began to dance. Holding each other's hands they moved their feet in the same way, then jumped and moved around cheering the audience.

I can bring an example of a folk song that they liked to sing together.

A light wind blew from behind the stones,
It got up there but dropped in the sea.
Nazli had a pain down her side,
I'm going downstairs to bring a medicine.
Why do you need a medicine?
Nazli is chosen for Girgor.
Sew a *chukha* for Nazli
And write Girgor's name on it.
Really Nazli what did you do
That Girgor got interested in you?

(chukha –an Armenian national costume)

The Days of Mets Pahots

It came the turn of Mets Pahots (Lent). Starting from 5 years old children every person had to go on a fast for seven weeks. Sometimes the children weren't able to be patient and stand the hunger and wanted at least to get some yogurt. In order to train them their mothers hang a branch of a tree from their roofs and told their children the following, "God Father has ordered us to go on a fast, and those who won't obey his will he'll kill them with that spear. So be patient, keep silent, and don't complain anymore". In addition, they showed the hanging branch as if it was a spear.

The children believed this story and stayed silent. However, sometimes some naughty children filched a small piece of butter and bread and finding a dark room hid under a bed and ate it. They thought that it was dark in the room and besides they were under the bed, so God couldn't see them.

Our faithful people every day went to church and only after that dined during Mets Pahots. They couldn't eat meat, grease, egg, milk, and yogurt as they were forbidden during that period.

During those days, Bazmashen village was in peace. It seemed like the whole village was in mourning. Music, games, and other cheerful things were either stopped or taken away. Only the oil-producing factories of the village worked hard day and night. They had to make special oil, because during Mets Pahots, every

family used that oil for cooking dinners in the city and in the village. As the oil was made only in Bazmashen they had to make enough oil in order to please every customer.

They took 5-6 kg olives and roasted it in an oven. Then they put very heavy stones on it. Afterward they filled it into big sacks. Two timbers were necessary; they were 60 feet long and 3 feet broad. One end of a timber was buried in the ground and heavy stones were put on it, so that it wouldn't move. The one end of the other timber was put in a big stone which hang from a wooden handle that in its turn hang from the ceiling. They put the full sacks on the side that was put in the big stone. After that, they began to move the stone, the handle rose, and began to press the content of the sacks. Thus, oil began to ooze out of the sacks and filled the special plates made for it. People worked hard to make that oil for Mets Pahots.

On February 13, it was Tuesday and people celebrated Tearnandarach (again religious holiday celebrated only by Armenians). Nearly the half of the students didn't go to school, and those who went and were present at the classes were very sad that school was open on that day. They showed obviously their displeasure to the master. The master saw their sadness and dissatisfaction with the problem, so he made up his mind to close the school in the afternoon, and thus pleased his students.

Our happiness didn't have borders that day. We went out quickly to find some wood for the fire. It was a custom that on the Day of Tearnandarach every family should light a small bonfire in the roofs of their houses.

The village Bazmashen that had only eight houses at the beginning now consisted of eight quarters and there were 400 houses in it. The lads of each quarter divided into groups and went to collect dry sticks to start a bonfire. So at the same night eight bonfires would be started in the eight quarters of the village.

There was jealousy in the lads' hearts, everyone wanted their bonfire to be the best and the biggest. Consequently, everyone did his best to find much more dry sticks than others did. Very often, if they had an opportunity, the lads of one quarter went and stole the sticks of the other quarter. That's why some of them stood near the sticks so that others would not be able to take them. Sometimes they quarreled with each other and even began to fight.

In the evening, the church bells rang. We were eager for the end of the ceremony in the church. People who had already lit their candles went off in the direction of their quarter. Everyone took their burning candles with them in order to light the bonfire with their own candles. Crowds of people poured into the streets and came to the place where the fire was being built. They lit the bonfire from the all sides around. And suddenly the flames of the fire began to grow higher and higher. In a moment, the whole village was illuminated. The godfathers holding the hands of their little godchildren made a circle around the bonfire. Some of them even hugged and kisses their godchildren. The landladies brought and delivered to the people cakes, nuts and dried fruit, which they had made after the New Year. Young lasses sang folk songs and the men began to dance around the fire. When the party finished there, every family invited their godfather to their

house and the feast went on in their house. After that, they gave a gift to their godfather. The latter in his turn delivered gifts of toys to the children.

This holiday caused disagreements among the people. Some of them considered it to be the 40th day counting from Jesus Christ's birthday, when the Virgin Mary took little Jesus and went to the cathedral in Jerusalem. There was an old man whose name was Simon. He took the baby from his mother and began to praise God. But in the opinion of other people it was an old custom that had been kept from ancient times, when Armenians were still fire worshippers, and every year celebrated that holiday.

The Village in the Spring Time

As soon as the spring came, the snow had completely melted. The sun was blazing hot. The ground smelt good and that filled the people's hearts with good impressions. The mounts and the fields began to show signs of life. Their first present for the human beings was snowdrop; the flower of early spring. It was a very tasty flower and was used for eating too.

Many lads used to gather snowdrops, thus they picked a bunch of white snowdrops, and gave it to their mothers announcing that winter was over and it was already spring.

The bulls, the cows, the sheep, the horses, and other domestic animals were taken out and for the first time they breathed the fresh and cold air of the spring. They opened their eyes wildly, began to jump and play with each other. At that time, nobody dared to come near to the animals. Everywhere could be heard the distant bleating of the sheep, as if they had lost their lambs. However, the lambs were jumping and playing before people. They sometimes tried to cut and eat fresh grass, but still they were not able to chew it.

The seeds that were sown in rows in the large fields now became green grass or vegetables. Thus, the fields looked like a sea. Whenever the wind made the green grass or the leaves move they looked like the waves of a sea. The gardens were very beautiful at that time. The trees were in blossom and were just coming into leaf. New branches grew on poplars, willows, and oak trees. Very often, some boys cut several branches in order to make a whistle. The birds were very cheerful and were flying from one tree into another. Bird-songs were heard everywhere. The cocks were crowing, and the hens were lying in a warm place. Mounts, valleys, meadows, and fields were covered with the beauty of the nature and people felt very happy and cheerful.

We, the students of the school, were very happy too. On Saturday in the afternoon school was closed. Therefore, we planned to go to the fields and the hills to gather reeds. All the day we spent outside playing cards or hide-and-seek. In the end we gathered wild flowers for the female members of our family and then came back home.

The whole village had been rushing around all day trying to get everything done. The plow-men got ready their ploughs to sow the seeds in rows in the fields

in the spring. Especially they sowed wheat, barley, lentil, and pea. The tradesmen of our village were preparing for leaving our country for further business in other cities. The mine-workers began to use their hammers and spades to dig the ground. The painters were busy mixing their colors and getting their brushes ready as they were going to paint a portrait. The shoe-makers took red, yellow, black, and blue leathers and using their threads and needles began to make different kinds of shoes.

Usually there was a large group of grandfathers and grandmothers standing at the corners of their streets in the mornings. The grandmothers used to gossip about their brides and the grandfathers either smoked quietly or began to argue with each other about a particular problem. They also thought about the clothes and the shoes that they had to buy for the young for Easter. The Reyises went to the city to order a new suit for them and to buy clothes for all the members of their family. The lads and the lasses were looking forward for the Reyises' return, because they were eager to see what the Reyis of their family had bought for them. Young brides and lasses took their red jugs and went in the direction of the spring as if to bring fresh water, but their main purpose was to see each other and to talk. They used to talk about the presents and the clothes they had got.

"I've got a nice red jacket," said a girl with a chuckle.

"My beloved one gave me a pair of earrings," added other lass.

"My present is the best of all," a rosy cheeked girl interrupted them. "My beloved one has sent a golden necklace for me."

"It means that your beloved one is wealthy," replied a girl.

The girl who had got a golden necklace shrugged her shoulders but at the same time blushed with embarrassment.

"My fiancé is very handsome, he is tall, and his eyes are a dark midnight blue. Besides he is a hard-working lad," pointed out a very pretty girl.

Another group of girls had gathered near the spring and the main topic of their conversation was the following.

"Hey lass, I've heard you got engaged, didn't you?"

"Well, there is something like that," mumbled the girl.

"What's wrong? Don't you love Markos?" continued the first girl.

"Why should I love him?" sighed the girl inwardly.

"If you didn't love him why did you get engaged?" this time another lass got into the conversation with her.

"I don't know. My parents decided everything for me," she uttered unwillingly.

"To my mind you are too beautiful for such an old guy. He is not worthy of you."

Here another girl interrupted her with these words, "Why do you call him so? He is very courageous. If he holds a stone, it will become liquid. I highly doubt that our beloved ones are better than he is. I wish my fiancé was as courageous as Markos."

"But your fiancé is wealthy," a black-haired girl cut her off dryly.

"What shall I do with his money? If he was courageous then he could work and earn his living himself. Moreover, we'll be able to live with his daily payment. Till this day no one took anything from this world with him when dying."

“Be quick, fill your jugs with water, and let’s return. Hurry up or otherwise the landladies will be angry with us. This is a useless conversation and I think it has no end. If it happens so that it reaches the ears of our Reyis, he will give us a piece of his mind.”

So taking their jugs and holding it on their shoulders they came back home.

Architect Golech Mztes’ Khayo, his brother i.e. my father Poghos, the Goboes’ Mkrtych amu, his son Akob, my nephew Asatur made crosses and gravestones. They used their big and small hammers quickly and thus hewed out gravestones of solid rock. The dead would have their present for Easter, i.e. a nice gravestone for everyone. The villagers and people from neighboring regions had gathered near Khachkar. Every family, from which somebody had died, wanted to put a tombstone at one end of the buried body. Many tombstones had been carried there by a carriage. People walking near the carriages came to the graveyard. The priest sang the Lord’s Prayer and then blessed everybody. Afterward the gravestones were taken and put in their places. Then the people filled their glasses with wine and drank it. “God have mercy on their dead bodies,” and saying these words they went away.

The Senior Week

It was Senior Thursday. The school was closed and consequently we didn’t have classes. But we had a lot of work to do instead of the lessons. That day was foot-bath day. We were trying the Vespers.

Today a light will appear
To save our souls,
The light will make us bow
Before this holiday,
Before the mysterious supper
Under that god-send light
Jesus will take some water obediently
And will wash the feet of his disciples.

In the middle of the afternoon, the church bells rang out and all the people left their work. The workers left their fields, the landladies left their housework, the miners left the coal mines and the shoe-makers left their needles as it was a sin to work after the noon. The landladies taking some butter and oil hurried to the church to see the man playing as Jesus Christ and the moment when he would start washing the feet of his disciples and then he would anoint their feet with oil.

The priest wore a frock coat and now he was saying Mass. When it came the turn of the foot-bath ceremony, they brought a big tub and put it on the table, then it was filled with water and near the tub was a big plate with butter and oil on it. The priest kneeling washed one by one the right feet of the twelve students, who wore white shirts. While the sacristans were singing, he anointed their feet with blessed oil. Then people came in turn and the priest put on their right hand a little

bit oil that people greased on their face. As if, it protected from the bites of various gnats and bugs. Then they returned home.

At the same night, an eclipse of the moon was expected. We had to wake up earlier in order to go to church and to listen to the songs about the Christ's sufferings.

At 2 a.m., the church bells rang out. My mother woke me up and at once, I jumped on my feet. I washed myself quickly, put on my clothes, and subsequently hurried to the church. It was very dark. I could hardly hear some footsteps, but I didn't see anyone. I supposed it were people who hurried to get to the church as me. I continued my way by uneven paths, but very often, I kicked some rocks. Sometimes I even fell down. And if a person came along me, we would certainly hit each other as it was too dark. As I was small at that time, I assumed that it was so dark, because an eclipse of the moon was to take place.

Like the blind, I groped through the darkness towards the church. At last, I got to the church. The Vespers didn't start yet. The curtains were drawn and in front of the middle altar was put the body of Christ; the sculpture of his head with a crown and a helmet on it. A few minutes later, the Vespers began with the Lord's Prayer and after that "Our Lord I suffered many injuries and lost a lot of blood."

The choir sang, "We recollected that night for the goodness' sake Our Lord, our hearts were filled with kindness and our tongues dared to tell about the priceless work of you, our heavenly Father." Then it came the turn of these lines, "All the world looks at me, at the one that is full of maladies and dirt. I'll open my lips and will speak with my tongue. I'll blame myself. Oh, Our Lord have mercy on me."

The church was full of people, old and young, wives and husbands, boys and girls had come. The school choir sang "Early in the morning the sun rose and its beams lit our souls. We will work to please you and will do that with all our hearts." The priests began to read the twelfth chapter of the Gospel and the sacristans knelt down and prayed. On the both sides of the church, there were two small altars and church choir stood there. All the lights were switched off and only candle-light remained. The choir started to sing the Virgin Mary's praise for Jesus Christ.

Oh, my son Christ, the only begotten heavenly
I found you very late and lost you very soon
Let me become blind
In order not to see you in such condition
Let me become deaf
In order not to hear your cries.
Oh, my Christ, my only child,
I won't ever find a son like you.
I wish I could see you alive once again
And later I would prefer to die.
You're my soul,
You're my sun.

It was Senior Saturday. The landladies were busy cooking. They were painting Easter eggs. The young ladies shook the churn for a long time to make buttermilk. Little girls filled their red jugs with buttermilk and delivered to the poor without any discriminatory measures.

Shopping was stopped, the workers left their fields, farms, and factories and returned home. Usually the travelers came back to their houses on the occasion of Easter. Those brides that got married and lived in another village came to their houses, and those who got married but lived in the same village visited their parents. And we, the students of school, were busy learning the song "Today's resurrection". After the midday, people went to communion. Starting from the entrance there were many brides with their children, grandfathers with their grandchildren and young couples. They all had to queue there waiting for their turn to receive the sacrament. Inside the church, a priest was holding a box and people came in turn and took communion. The priests took care to distribute it in such a way that everyone would be able to receive his share. The church bells rang and the ceremony of the spiritual illumination began. The people were already ready, so two school choirs together with Der Ohan began to sing the Lord's Prayer. They wore white shirts on that day. With the leadership of the Mzteses' Asatur thirty sacristans sang "Song of Songs". Then the curtains were pulled back and the priest who was saying Mass on that day came out. He had a golden helmet on his head and wore expensive clothes. He perfumed the church with frank-incense. The priest confessed his sins to God in order to get forgiveness from him. Some people got very excited seeing the priest praying so devoutly.

Afterward it came the turn of reading Daniel's book and the person who would read it had to give a present to the church. At first 20 dahekans was offered, and then it reached 30 dahekans. At last, the Der Simoes' Gevo offered 40 dahekans and told that his son would read the book. His son Aptal was asked to approach the middle altar. He was very excited. It was the first time that he would read Daniel's book and it was a great honor to be invited there to do that. He rolled his eyes around in surprise and began to read till "God bless us". Then the sacristans began to sing "Bless, praise, and keep him above everything for ever". At 3 o'clock, the ceremony was over and people left the church and took direction to their houses. It came the moment when everyone took colorfully painted and decorated eggs and began to beat boiled eggs together. It was the main symbol of Easter. Young lads took a few red eggs with them to the square of the village to beat them there. The old beat eggs too. They were full of enthusiasm. When two lads met each other in the street, they said, "Won't we beat eggs with each other?" At first they examined each other's eggs, tried it on their teeth and after a little conversation, they beat their eggs. The one, whose egg-shell had been broken, felt very miserable and unsatisfied and gave his egg to the winner. He felt so sad as if he had lost some money and not an egg. In his turn, the winner was very happy and was proud of him.

In the evening when the sun was just setting some lasses and young wives went to Khachkar to burn candles there. Then they went to St. Zakaria to burn candles there too. On the way to the hill, we could see many groups of lasses climbing

slowly the hill and as they climbed higher, the air became cooler. After half an hour, we could see the same groups coming down to the village. Some families sacrificed a dove or a cock on that day.

The darkness had already fallen, but our eyes got used to it. Besides, we could see the candle lights of Khachkar and St. Zakaria in the distance. Khachkar and St. Zakaria situated on the two opposite ends of the village Bazmashen. We had to go to bed early that night, because we should rise early in the morning next day.

Easter

On Sunday morning when I got up, I could easily and clearly hear the singing from church. As I was late, I knew that my teacher would be annoyed with me. I put on my clothes quickly and went to church. I pushed my way through the crowd, reached the middle altar, put on my white shirt, and immediately took my place in the choir. The ceremony started with great pomp and solemnity. It finished at 7 o'clock and we returned to our houses to dine and subsequently to go to Khachkar, where according to the habits of our ancestors a party would be given.

All the inhabitants of the village Bazmashen had gathered near Khachkar. Khazar began to play his piccolo and Ovakim beat his drum. That day a missionary protestant called Mr. Huyler came to our village. At that time, there were only two Protestant houses in Bazmashen. With the companionship of Maghak Maghakean Mr. Huyer had come to Khachkar for the purpose of seeing and understanding the customs of the village. The young began to applause and laugh at him saying, "He come to teach us to be honorable Christians. Our ancestors had been Christians since 1600. Come here, we'll teach you how to be a good Christian." When the protestant saw this peaceful demonstration against him, he rode on his black horse and left the village calmly.

People continued to enjoy themselves at the party. Some boys played hide-and-seek. Grandfathers played backgammon. Women sang and danced until they were too tired and could hardly stand on their feet.

Suddenly Ovakim beat his drum as a sign that a wrestle match would take place. Every game was stopped. People gathered in a circle; Behlivan Ohan and the Ezniks' Khacho were going to wrestle. Both of them had brawny sizes and heights. Some people thought that Behlivan Ohan would be the winner others disagreed with them and insisted on the victory of the Ezniks' Khacho. They considered him to be much more stronger than Behlivan Ohan. At last, the wrestlers came out to the field and the match began. They tried to catch each other's necks or knees somehow. They fought for half an hour, but nobody was able to win. Some guys lost their interest in the wrestle and went aside to continue their games. That day the Lozoes' Mushekh broke his neck while jumping over a wall during a game. During these games, some boys and girls that were engaged together or that were going to get engaged gazed at each other secretly. The girls watched their fiancés or beloved ones and gave chuckles of delight. They were very careful in their behavior and fortunately, the old didn't notice or suspect anything.

In another place, a group of noisy boys was playing *Krak arnuk* i.e fire taking. They had divided into two groups and everyone had a long stick on his hand. On the top of it, they had wrapped unnecessary old handkerchiefs. One group was the house-owner and consequently the fire owner too. The other group attacked them, lit their sticks in the fire, and ran away.

Some of the guards that were protecting the house ran after the robbers and tried hard to reach them. While they were running sometimes, the guards managed to hit the robbers with their sticks until they got to the house of the robbers. Then the game continued on the same way. Usually the new husbands or fiancés played this game, because they wanted to show their strength, dexterity, and ingenious contrivance to the lasses that were standing a little bit far from them and were watching them with great interest and excitement.

A group of lasses had gathered in another place. Together with some new brides that wore white veils, they danced and sang trying to draw the lads' attention to their side.

As soon as the darkness fell, everyone went home with the intention of coming back next day and continuing his or her game. As everyone was very tired, they all went to bed at once.

The priests were much more tired than people were, because all day long they had been visiting the houses of their share with the purpose of blessing their houses. Returning to the church, they began to count whatever they had earned. They took out 10 dahekans of a pocket, then 5 dahekans of other pocket, 20 dahekans of another pocket. Being satisfied with the results, they made a plan to work with more enthusiasm and energy next day.

On Monday, there was a ceremony in church in honor of the dead. Many people went to church. The choir sang regularly and people spoke about Jesus's Resurrection from among the dead. They prayed to be forgiven and then came back home happily. People were happy as if they had stopped mourning for somebody. On Monday in the morning, the young both male and female gathered near Khachkar and the continuation of the games and dances went on until the afternoon. Then everyone stopped playing. Some people went to Khachkar to burn candles for Jesus's Resurrection. Some people took candles and went to the hill of St. Zakaria. Landladies and old people taking enough food and wine went to the graveyard to honor their ancestors and to ask the priests to bless the dead bodies of their ancestors once again. They put flowers on the graves of their ancestors. It was a large graveyard and every family had its own area that was over 5000-6000 feet. Most of the graves had smoothly hewn white gravestones on them. These gravestones were put upright on the graves and had on them the name, last name and the profession of the person buried there. The family members gathered near the grave, took out the food laid on a small table, and began to eat. But at the same time they delivered some of the food to the poor. The priests prayed and blessed the graves fervently passing from one grave to earning money for each grave.

There was something that caused widespread discontent among the people. The Protestants had special graveyard a little bit far from the graveyard of common people and this fact annoyed them. However, that special graveyard was in obscurity and nobody visited it. Why did the Protestants divide the graveyard? Did they do that for a certain purpose? And if yes, then what purpose was it? The graves of our brothers were divided. Did another Christ exist? Or did our brothers belong to another nation? No, never.

Every time I passed near the graveyard of the Protestants, I was lost in thoughts about our brothers. Why they were buried separately and were far from their family area in the graveyard. How could such division exist in the world?

The sun began to set. It seemed as if the sunset wanted to say that it was enough and we enjoyed ourselves for four days. We danced, sang, played various games. We also “cheered up the dead” and celebrated Christ’s Resurrection. It was high time that we returned our homes to have a rest and to start working and studying from the next day.

The War between Russia and Turkey

In 1877 began the war between Russia and Turkey. The Turkish government announced the withdrawal of his troops from the area. Armenian population was in fear and horror. There was probability of massacre. From the other hand, many people hoped that Uncle Moscow would come and would free the Armenian nation. Armenians were forced to give their bulls, horses, and carriages to the Turkish government with the promise that they would be paid back for it. However, making people and animals work hard for dozens of days, the Turkish government didn’t pay them. So people came back home without any payment. Moreover, if unfortunately they met some Turkish soldiers or the police on their way, they were robbed and were left without anything.

The police went to the villages and entered every house with the purpose of finding some domestic animals there as donkey, mule, horse and cow. On that occasion, they used any acts of violence. It was impossible and useless to resist it. Moreover, to protest would mean to be guided to prison.

Once when my father and me took some flour from the mill and were returning home, we met the police halfway to our house. They put the sacks of flour on the ground and taking our animals, they continued their way. My father had to go with them. I came to the village, found some domestic animals, and at last brought the sacks home. My father returned only two days later.

Usually the tradesman kept their mules in a secret places even in caves. Thus, trade was completely stopped in the country. At that time, the landlord of the village Bazmashen was the Shahpazes’ Aptal and the leaders of the blocks were the Grzes’ Mztes Pazto, the Terwishes’ Mztes Minas, the Noroes’ Serob, and the Chikarchoes’ Mztes Akob. The Turkish government produced new money i.e. bill which was at no worth for people. The new bill was called *khayma*.

Though our village was situated far from the general avenue, some soldiers came to our village with groups. Of course, at that moment everyone closed the

doors of their houses and locked them from inside. Nevertheless, if the soldiers saw somebody in the street, they caught him and beat him severely. Whatever they found they took with them. They caught hens in particular, wrung their necks, and put in their bags. Sometimes they broke doors and entering Armenian houses behaved themselves violently, fiercely and aggressively.

The old of the village made a decision according to which they would give some money to the soldiers next time and thus bribing them with money, they asked the soldiers to leave the village. From the other side the tax-collector police kept people under increasing pressure. They beat the people, arrested, and robbed them. This was their usual behavior. They ruined everything on their way. In winter time when it was very cold they made people have bath with cold water and left them outside without bothering that people would catch cold or even die. The police didn't care whether poor villagers had got some money or not. People were obliged to pay the tax, otherwise the furniture and valuable things were taken away from their houses. The tax-collectors took even the beds with their pillows and blankets. Many people had to mortgage some of the jewelries of their wives in order to save their skin.

When the news about the slaughter of Armenians in Payazet come to Kharbert province, people of the province were in horror and hopeless. Those who had escaped the slaughter and were alive went and found shelter in Russia. How many sleepless nights did the Armenians spend? Day by day, they expected bad news and maybe slaughter. If someone dared to protest against the government, the latter's answer was the following, "The Turkish troops are killed at the front. Why should you stay in peace? Go away and don't appear any more again." Another conspiracy was being made up for the Armenians. All famous Turks of Kharbert had gathered in order to make up a plan how to slaughter the Armenians.

Fortunately, Muhettin Beg of the city didn't sign their decision and explained to them that if they slaughter the Armenians now, later when the Russians came they would slaughter them all. Especially they took into consideration that the commander-in-chief of the Russian Army was an Armenian. When the news of that meeting spread over the country, the Armenians were hopeless and in terror, because they felt that they would be sacrificed as lambs. There was no conception, no consciousness of the past heroism of our ancestors. We didn't even cost a hen for the Turks and we would be murdered ruthlessly.

Many people blamed the revolution for the Genocide. However, in those days there was no revolution, no parties, and no national conception.

At that time, the Armenians were as obedient and meek as lambs and were busy with their daily works.

The war between Russia and Turkey lasted for 2 years and ended with the victory of Russia. The Turks gave two very important and necessary provinces Kars and Ardahan to the Russians. At that time, the *pakhr* (Turkish copper penny) lost its value and consequently became useless. The government didn't gather its useless money and people suffered hundreds of thousands of losses.

The money began to be used during the war in 1880, but later it again lost its value and people became poor and helpless at all.

During those days the leader (Khojabashi) of the village Bazmashen, the Shahpazes' Aptal thought a way out of that situation with the purpose to help the villagers. He gathered all the money of the village and took to the center Mezre. The Shahpazes' Aptal wanted to pay all that money as a tax of their village to the Turkish government. There he saw that many other leaders of other villages had also gathered the money and wanted to pay as a tax as he had decided. However, the Turkish government didn't take their money as a tax. All those Armenian leaders remained bewildered.

Aptal Shahpazean found a way to enter the building and approaching the tax-collector took out the money and began to count it. The Turk official asked, "What are you doing?"

The leader answered, "What should I do? I have brought the money of the villagers to pay the taxes."

"Don't you know that the money you have brought is out of use now?" said the Turk official.

"I gathered the money from the villagers instead of the tax and gave them sales slip. If you don't take it, I'll suffer great losses. I wasn't the one, who produced this money. So why should I suffer the losses? As the government has made it, so let it get back its useless money."

When this conversation was going on, the chief official came in and hearing this dialogue told the other official, "It's enough. You see that that garrulous man doesn't understand anything. So take the money, give him a sales slip, and ask him to leave."

Thus, the leader Aptal managed to save the population of his village with small losses.

The Merchants of Bazmashen

After the war, when peace was made, the Armenian inhabitants of Kharbert province began to work hard and livelier.

The merchants of Bazmashen were preparing to go to the country in order to start a new work. The merchants of the village took goods and money from one province to another. They were the Khaghkoes' Grigor, the Mechoes' **Hambartsum**, the Chalghes' Karapet, the Meliks' Niko, Hatchi Zatur, the Murvards' Niko, the Karoes' Hatchi Karo, the Mzteses' Kayo, the Karoes' Pilo, the Malkhases' Mztes Poghos, the Khalachoes' Egho, the Chloes' Musekh, the Poghoses' Gogo, the Mantashiks' Tepan, the Mortans' Musekh, the Sugoos' Aznavur and etc. But oil merchants were the following: the Baloes' Israel and Basilos, the Ekors' Moses, Ohan and Solomon, the Karoes' Mkrkich and Hovakim, the Terwishes' Michael, the Pltoes' Toros, the Kemoes' Poghos, the Terwishes' Karo, the Memishes' Michael, the Peyroses' Peyros, the Shahpazes' Mamas, the Ahmetaches' Kirakos, the Samels' Peto, Mro Etare Niko, the Gogoes' Khaghar, the Ohans' Grigor, the Peghes' Tato, the Terwishes' Kiro, Antigajchi Khachatur

and etc. These merchants took and sold oil and butter to the surrounding provinces and even reached Mush and Baghin.

Those merchants, who worked on the roads of Malatia and Tigranakert were the Achems' **Hambartsum** and Melkon, the Grzes' Musekh, Ohanes and **Hambartsum**, the Ksroes' Grigor, the Terwishes' Gaspar and Krpo, the Kheroes' Peto, the Sargis Oghloes' Gaspar, the Adams' Osko, Egho, Kirakos and Astur, the Ktskhas' Sahakeri (uncle), the Khorsiks' Tono, the Chopoes' Khacho and Khariman, the Eghkas' Musekh, the Derders' Martik, the Mariks' Poghos, the Plghes' Zakar and etc. Their work was to take goods from one city into another one and sell it with higher prices. The merchants of neighboring villages were Ktskay Papo and Ohan, the Terars' Gevorg, the Onans' Ovakim, Papo and Varderes, the Mantashiks' Malkhas, the Cheloes' Arut and Paghto, the Shushans' Gaspar, the Matoes' Minas, Kurd Oghli, Shahpaz Karo, the Onans' Aznavur, the Chikarchoes' Poghos, the Karamus' Poghos, the Antikas' Astur, the Keldevoes' Tono, the Ahmatchans' Karo, the Der Peyroses' Tato, Tnpan Peyros, the Khagrkoes' Davo and **Hambartsum**, the Der Aruts' Karo, the Khazars' Zatur, the Noroes' Hambo and Musekh, the Paghtiks' Karo, the Pashas' Sargis, the Der Sargises' Poghos and Mke, the Oxuzes' Grigor, Plpul Akob, the Maghags' Aptel, the Ogses' Peto, the Uliks' Margar and Arut, the Petiks' Arut, the Khukoes' Shahpaz, the Narchoes' Ohan, the Samels' Samel, the Kamoos' Karapet, the Malkhases' Tepan, Daniel, Ovik, Akob and Hambo. Their job was to travel till Ayvios, Arabkir, Akn, Chmshkatsag, Kharachol, Balu and to buy and sell everything valuable and useful.

There were many merchants from the village Bazmashen in the city of Kharbert and Mezre. Astur Malkhasean was the most powerful merchant with his large business in Mezre. And Musekh Mortanean had great reputation in the city. He had many stores in the square of Mezre.

The village had also its doctors as the Michaels' Sargis, who was very experienced doctor and cured a lot of patients.

Bazmashen had also its *ashughs* (folk singers). Poghos was one of them, who had a sweet voice.

The Brave Mule keepers

There were many brave people among the merchants above mentioned. One of them, the Khagrkoes' Grigor had fifteen mules, and the Mechoes' **Hambartsum** had seven mules. These two merchants together with their mules traveled till Cilicia, and took many travelers with them. When the news spread in the village that their caravan was going to start off, all the travelers of the neighboring cities and villages came to Bamzashen. Everyone was eager to travel with those two mule keepers, because they were known as courageous and fearless people.

During that period, Bazmashen was so crowded that it was almost impossible to find a place for night. Particularly Grigor was not only brave, but he also was a honest and very kind man. Accordingly, his sudden and unexpected death caused great sorrow to everyone.

Another merchant, who was much more active and brave, preceded him. His name was Hatchi Zatur, he had ten mules, and together with the Mechoes' **Hambartsum** he traveled to Cilicia. Hatchi Zatur liked weapons very much and consequently he always took good weapons with him. He also was a very generous man and wasted money carelessly. Thus, his name was spread in the country and became known everywhere. Whenever Hatchi Zatur asked someone for something his request was never denied. His reputation even reached the ears of the gangsters in the hills and they respected him too.

Once the merchants of the village Bamzashen came back from Cilicia with the companionship of many people. Among them were the Murwards' Niko, the Karoes' Hatchi Karo, the Loghoes' Egho, the Mechoes' **Hambartsum** and others. They came till Gyolbashi safely and when they came down the ravine, the gangsters stopped the leading mule. Some gangsters, who had guns with them, ordered to stop the caravan moving. Hatchi Zatur was coming from the back. When he saw that the caravan was not moving he called for the leader merchant and asked what was the matter. The answer was that the gangsters had closed their way. Hearing this he immediately rode on his horse up the hill, came down of the horse, hid behind a huge rock and directing his gun toward the gangsters demanded to go away and let the caravan continue its way. If not, he would fire his gun at them and would kill them all. One of the gangsters hid behind Hatchi Zatur. He wanted to attack him suddenly. Fortunately, Hatchi Karo seeing that cried out, "Hatchi Zatur, there is a gangster behind you that wants to attack you, be careful." Hatchi Zatur immediately turned around, caught the gangster, thrust him back and shooting killed him.

Seeing the dead body of their friend, the gangsters understood that their enemy wasn't a common man and he was courageous. Thus, they left everything and ran away.

At those times, the transportation of money and goods was left on the shoulders of such merchants as there was nobody to do that.

Once, when the caravan of Hatchi Zatur was going from Kharbert to Cilicia with a great group, an incident happened. When they got safely to Pelvery, they saw there some other merchants, among whom there was also a famous Turk merchant who had 30 mules. All these merchants stood there and couldn't continue their way. Hatchi Zatur asked the cause of their stopping.

"Some new gangsters had appeared in Kyolbashi and they don't let people pass from this road. They rob everyone and later on kill them", replied the Turk merchant.

"I must continue my way by all means. Who are they? Why are you all afraid of them?" said Hatchi Zatur.

Everyone begged him to decline his intention and not to risk his life. Nevertheless, Hatchi Zatur told the Turk merchant, "I want to ask you something. Give me your "Martin" gun and I'll make all the gangsters to kneel before us. I promise that I'll return your gun to you."

"If what you want is only that here it is, take it." answered the Turk merchant.

Hatchi Zatur took the gun and ordered his friends to start off. The other merchants were surprised and asked each other how many people he had that he wanted to struggle against the gangsters and finally to open the way.

As soon as Hatcui Zatur came to Kyolbashi with his people, he told them to go down the ravine and continue their journey. In addition, he told them that he would pass the other side of the mountain. Soon the caravan approached the place where the gangsters had gathered. The gangsters cried out and ordered the merchants to stop moving and stand where they were. Hatchi Zatur took position high above the gangsters and when he heard their order, he fired his gun at them. He shot and hurt the arm of a gangster and the latter fell unconscious on the ground. Then he shot and hurt the left foot of another gangster, who fell down too. Seeing all this action the rest of the gangsters ran away. Hatchi Zatur sent a messenger at once to inform the merchants that the road was open and there was no danger. Hearing the good news, the merchants started off without any fear, as their friend had triumphed.

Hatchi Zatur's name became famous and it was spread over the country by such courageous acts.

Once three female students came to Marash with the purpose of spending their summer vacations there. They were from the collage Eprat in Kharbert province. The churchman asked Hatchi Zatur to take care of those girls and to bring them home safely.

Setting off from Kharbert Hatchi Zatur with the girls arrived in Malatia. Next morning, when they continued their way, a Turk mule keeper joined them. There were some other Turk guys with the Turk mule keeper. On their way to Pugharlu, the Turk lads demanded from Hatchi Zatur to give those girls to them. Otherwise, they would take the girls with force.

“As I am alive you can't touch these girls,” answered Hatchi. “I'll put you all to the sword. You don't know who I am.”

In the evening, when they reached the village Pugharlu, Hatchi Zatur chose a place a bit far from the Turks for night in order to be on the safe side. When the girls knew that the Turks threatened to take them away, they were very afraid and anxious. However, Hatchi Zatur managed to calm down them, and explained to them that he would take care of them with the sword in his hand during the whole night.

At the midnight, the Turks came to the house where Hatchi Zatur and the girls were having rest. They had arranged to attack them abruptly. Fortunately, Hatchi Zatur noticed them and guessing their bad intention told the Turks to go away and leave them in peace. In spite of his warning, the Turks continued to walk across the house. Hatchi Zatur attacked them with his sword in his hand and injured some of them. After that, the Turks left their weapons and ran off. Later the Turk mule keeper said to those guys, “I told you that you can't take away the girls in the case when Hatchi Zatur is their guard.”

The Craftsmen

The village Bazmashan had its well-known architects. They were the following: Golech Mztes' Khayo, my father, Golech Poghos, the Terzoes' Tsepan, Golech Astur, the Gaboes' Hakob, the Oveses' Papo, the Poles' Khacho and the Noroes' Marto.

The barbers of the village were Barber Abo and Khayo, the Barbers' Khacho, Golech Mztes' Ohan.

The cloth-manufacturers were the Tanapashes' Niko, the Jeloos' Ohan, the Oxuzes' Hatchi Karo, the Goboos' Hambo, the Der Kirakoses' Paghto, the Eghkas' Gaspar, the Derders' Grigor, Aptal Khacho, the Mortans' Abraham, the Malkhases' Asatur, the Kemoes' Enko, Barber Torik and etc.

The carpenters of our village were the Mantashiks' Mztes Gogo, the Jigyarjoes' Sargis Gevoian, and the Ohans' Sako.

Famous shoe-makers were the Demurbashes' Ohanes, the Enoks' Marut, the Onans' Minas, and the Chopoes' Gevorg.

Among these craftsmen, there were a few very talented and clever masters. One of them was Golech Mztes' Khayo, who was the best architect of the village. One of his best works was the columns of the church of Bazmashen. These columns were made of one huge rock and each column had 15 feet length and 30 inches breadth. Khayo also built three churches in Chmshkatsag. They were the church of Murna, the church of Prekh and Baghabon. He built a police station in the square and also the prison of the city Mezre. Many other buildings were built by Khayo.

Bazmashen had its very famous people, who ruled over the village in turn. The first famous leader was the Ekobs' Gndo. He was followed by Mnjik Oghli, the Shahpazes' Mztes Ekob, the Samels' Mztes Aptal and the Murads' Mztes Poghos.

During these years, the leader of the village was the Terwishes' Mztes Minas and all the villagers respected and obeyed him. Owing to his wisdom, the inhabitants of Bazmashen were able to overcome many difficulties, which at first sight seemed to be insoluble.

After the war, when peace was possessed in the country, people began to live fearlessly and calmly. Then it was decided to organize a big party during which they would cook *keshkek* and would deliver it to all the houses of the village. The leader was determined to sacrifice twenty lambs and ordered to buy eight copper casseroles for cooking it. They made up their mind to sacrifice the lambs near the graveyard. That place was near our house and on that occasion, I was very happy.

On Saturday in the morning, all the priests of Bazmashen village wore their festive frocks. They were blessing the lambs that would be sacrificed later. Thirty lads were making a fire near the graveyard. They also did other preparing. At last, everything was ready for sacrificing. A messenger was sent to all the neighboring villages, who informed the poor population that our villagers were making a sacrifice. Accordingly, the poor were invited to our village, so that they would take their share of *keshkek*. Four hundred families i. e about five thousand people were going to dine together. This was a rather difficult work. Luckily, our church had thousand plates and was ready to lend those plates to the people to use during such

big parties.

The whole village was happy. Many people even didn't go to bed at that night.

On Sunday in the morning, when the Mass was over in the church, the priest with the church choir took direction to the graveyard. The priest was wearing his festive frock. There were 30 singers in the choir. All the people cheerfully followed them.

Many leaders were present at this party from Khulgyugh, Tsorgyugh, Sursur, Qorbe and Hinagarak. The priest, who was saying Mass on that day, together with the choir blessed the ceremony of sacrificing.

Everyone in turn approached the place where a clerk was delivering the sacrificed lambs. They took their share of keshkek and went to take place near the table. Some girls quickly set the table. A casserole of keshkek was sent to the troops of Mezre. When this news reached the ears of the governor, he felt very pleased.

The main aim of this sacrifice was to thank God for he saved the lives of the Armenians during the war.

Daily Life in the Village

It was in May 1881, that after spring rains the hills and the fields were green with new growth. Many colorful flowers had blossomed and smelt very sweetly in the fields. These colorful flowers attracted people's attention to their side. From the top of the mountains magnificent views opened in front of the eyes of the passers.

There were flowers of any kind. One of them was forget-me-nots that with its open leaflets made the fields much brighter and full of delight. The corn-flower, which is a common wild flower, with its dark blue head was pleasurable to look at. The lilies of the valley were spread along the roads and no traveler could pass near them without noticing them. And the blue-bells with their blue-bell like heads were rocking as if they wanted to say to the little lively girls, "Take us and hang from your necks, we have blossomed just for you." The roses with their long stems and with their beautiful heads were spread in the fields and forests. It seemed that every rose wanted to say, "I am the queen of the flowers."

The lilac trees filled the air with the sweet odor of their closely together grown purple or white flowers. The date palms (pshateni) were in blossom too and their beautiful yellow flowers had sweet smell.

All the fruitful trees were in blossom and were very nice. The wheat-germs seemed to sing, "We are the ones that feed the people. Be happy our Lord, you'll get abundant harvest as you have worked hard for our sake."

The whole village was in action. The cows were mooing, the bulls were bellowing, and the lambs were bleating. The villagers, who were busy digging their gardens, used to sing cheerfully while working. The brides were gathering green grass for the domestic animals and were also singing. In addition, the landladies were cooking tasty dishes for the workers, who were working in the fields and the

meadows. These workers all the day were busy in the fields, that's why they had to eat eggs, matsun (yogurt), khaurma and many other nutritious foods.

Young or old they all worked. There was nobody free. Only some grandfathers had gathered in the streets and were discussing their daily life in the sun.

In the evenings, the streets were full with the people, who had been working in the fields since morning.

The flocks of the sheep and the goats and the herds of the cows also were returning from the fields. Each animal knew its home and entering their stables they began to rest.

It was Thursday and people were celebrating Ascension Day. On that day girls played a game in which as if their fate was decided. Those young girls dancing went to Khachkar and sitting on the fresh grass began their cheerful and interesting game. After enjoying themselves in the game in Khachkar, the girls took direction to the hill of St. Zakaria.

All these games and parties lasted till 3 p.m. Then the groups of the young girls returned home and made different kinds of delicious foods. They tasted whatever they had made, sang, danced, and enjoyed their time till late at night. In fact, in the end, they came back to their houses happily, but at the same time, they were so tired that could hardly stand on their feet.

Those girls sang various songs. One of them is the following:

Hey girl, you are very tall,
Hey na, na, na, yar, (babe)
You are not for that boy,
Yar, yar, yar.
Leave him and love me,
Hey, na, na, na, yar,
I love you so much,
Yar, yar, yar.
You are standing near the wall,
Hey, na, na, na, yar,
You are wearing a nice ring,
Yar, yar, yar.
I wear a festive hat,
Hey, na, na, na, yar,
And you have a fess on your head,
Yar, yar, yar.

It was July. The warmth of the sun could be felt everywhere. The fruits had already ripened. The crops with their full stems were moving here and there like the waves of the ocean. The crops seemed to say, "We can't stay in this condition any more, come and scythe us." It was a very admirable sight.

All the villagers were busy doing something. The reapers were preparing their sickles in order to cut the crops. The brides were pitching tents so that to protect the cradles with their babies from the harmful beams of the sun. Some of the old were preparing the carts and their tools.

The Apteress' had brought red jugs, put them in the square, and sold them. The landladies watched those red jugs with great admiration and jealousy. They were eager to buy one of them, as those jugs kept water cold. Some of the reapers got their pitchforks ready for lifting and moving hay. The young brides wore apron of leather over their clothes to keep them clean while cooking or washing.

It was Monday morning. Old and young both left the village in groups before the sunrise. They put their sickles, scythes, jugs, and tents on the backs of the donkeys and the mules. Usually the villagers rode donkeys and mules to carry heavy loads. The women holding the hands of their children went to the fields in separate groups.

Gradually the village was being deserted, because everyone hurried to the fields. Only the grandmothers and the landladies remained in the village.

As soon as every group got to their field, they put up a white tent, laid on the table for the meal and sitting cross-legged began to dine. If one turned his eyes around he could see white tents everywhere. Every group consisted of 20-30 people.

When the leader of our village ordered the reapers to get ready to scythe the corn-fields, the reapers wore wooden thimbles on their fingers in order to protect their fingers when scything. Afterward they took their sickles and standing in a row, they said these lines from the Lord's Prayer, "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The reapers began to move arduously their sickles and scythes and the corns began to fall down noisily.

The landladies, who had remained in the village, were making various tasty dishes for the reapers. They gave those dishes to the carters of our village and they had to take those dishes to the fields and to hand them to the reapers. When they got to the fields, the carters delivered the food to the reapers. While the reapers were eating the food and drinking buttermilk, the carters were busy gathering the corns and fresh grass. They put it on their carts and carried the heavy loads to our village. Thus, they did this work a few times a day till evening. The villagers took with them bulls, horses, cows, sheep, and donkeys to the fields and made them to help them in work. Actually, everyone had its share of work.

In spite of their hard work, people were very happy and didn't lose sense of humor. When working they sang, joked, danced and consequently spent their time easily. They were now reaping the rewards of all their hard work. This work lasted nearly for 4-5 weeks. After reaping the corns, it became rather difficult to walk there. The flocks of birds flew and jumping on the ground ate the seeds. Bird-song could be heard along the whole fields.

Every family filled their threshing-floors with the grains of corn and kept it there for winter. Especially the Narchoes and the Samels had got a good harvest in that year.

People began to separate the grain from the hay, gathered it in the sacks, and put on their carriages. Particularly this work was being done by the boys and the girls, who worked with great pleasure.

On August 20, the workers and the herdsmen came back home from the fields happily, but they were very tired. As soon as they came home, they took off their dusty and dirty clothes, went to have bath, and shaved off their beards. Young girls wore their clean and colorful dresses. People were very joyful that they had successfully finished their summer work in the fields.

In the evenings, when the sheep returned to their stables from the fields, the landladies taking their buckets went to milk the sheep. There were about three thousand sheep in Bazmashen.

Usually the villagers were red-cheeked, because they breathed fresh air, worked in the sun and drank the milk of their animals.

The forty rich families of our village had very great gardens, in which they grew up watermelon, melon, cucumber, tomato, eggplant, pumpkin, and many other vegetables. As they had a bumper crop, they delivered some of it to the poor families.

At the end of the summer, the grapes began to grow.

It was August. And people were celebrating the holiday of the Virgin Mary. The villagers gathered different kinds of grapes. Then they filled their baskets with bunches of grapes and holding the hands of their little kids went to the church, where the priests were blessing the grape. Only after that ceremony people could eat grape. The gardens of grape occupied large territories in Bazmashen village.

There were many springs in our village that had tasty and icy water. Those springs had their names. Some of them were: Jrhor, Jrnut, Vlatsik, the Spring of the Khazars, Tar, New Spring, Geghi Akhbyur (the spring of the village), the Spring of the Narchoes, the Spring of the Goleches, the Spring of the Petoës, the Spring of the Terwishes, the Spring of the Malkhases, the Spring of the Aghas, Kotrats Spring, the Spring of the Poloes, Khani Spring, Cherkez Spring, the Spring of the Oniks, the Spring of the Jigyarjoes, Vari Spring, White Spring and etc. The water of White Spring was very delicious. Therefore, people could drink from that water as much as they would like, because it wasn't harmful one.

The Visit of the Leader of Arabkir

In 1882, Master Abraham informed the students of our school that the leader of Arabkir, Bishop Eznik Apahuni was going to come to Kharbert. We, the students of school, had to welcome him. On that occasion, each student had to learn a poem by heart, because we were supposed to recite it in front of the leader. At that time, I was 15 and I had a degree of khalfa in our school, so I had access to everywhere.

Next morning, after the Mass was over, I went to the old church, where there were kept a tremendous amount of valuable and ancient books. I had the purpose to find a wonderful poem for reciting to the audience on that day.

I looked through various books among which there were both handwritten books and parchment scrolls. In that old church, I found a surprising book. Half of its pages were parchment scrolls and the rest were of common papers. When I was looking through that old book, I found out that it contained the history of

Bazmashen. Surely, my happiness didn't have borders. I put away all the other books, and only took that particular book. I put it into my pocket and took care that the churchmen wouldn't notice it, because people weren't allowed to take away any book out of the church. Those, who dared to take away books from the church, were certainly punished.

Getting to the school, I entered my classroom and my classmates asked where I had been. I answered that I was copying a poem in the school library. I didn't tell anyone that I had taken an old book from the church.

After the classes, when I came home, I opened the wonderful book and became completely absorbed in reading. On the first page was written this date - 1165. In that book was described the history of the village Bazman starting from that year. There were a few chapters about the history of Kharbert province too. I read the book from the beginning up to the end for several times without being noticed by the members of my family.

Our family wasn't large. There were my father, my mother, my little brother, and me. That's why I was confident and safe that my secret wouldn't be opened.

Regrettably, that valuable book was lost with some other books of mine during the massacre in 1895. As I had read it for many times the significant incidents, the important and famous personalities, and the necessary dates remained in my memory very well.

On Saturday morning, our school was getting ready to welcome Bishop Eznik. The priests were wearing their frocks and the students white shirts. The leaders of the village were waiting for Bishop Eznik on the central road of Bazmashen. They were Mztes' Minas, the Gogoes' Gogo, Shahpaz Aptal, the Mzteses' Hovhannes, the Ahmetchans' Poghos, the Jigyarjoes' Gevo, Shahpaz Mztes Egho, the Samels' Mztes Tato and the Narchoes' Mztes Markos.

Some families had brought food with them, so that they could receive and entertain their guests. When we noticed from a far that Bishop Eznik with his clergymen was approaching, the groups of leaders singing preceded them. While they moved on, I together with the students of my school stood on both sides of the road.

The leaders greeted the Bishop and his clergymen and invited them to have rest in a comfortable place. Our leaders laid on the table, filled the glasses with wine and the meal began. During their meal, the six khalfas of our school including me began to recite their poems to them. My poem was about the heroism of King Artashes. Of course, I chose that poem from the ancient book.

In the end, the Bishop blessed all the villagers and with his group left Bazmashen village. We all accompanied them till Sursur's Ketuk and later we returned to the village happily and were full of good and impressions. That day remained in my memory for a long time.

* * *

In these years, three young men were perished by the Turk gangsters. The Ahmetachans' Kirakos, the Pghetes' Teto and the Peyroses' Peyros went for

shopping to Chmshkatsag. It happened so that the Turk gangsters robbed three of them and later shot and killed them in Dersim near Tsag village. The gangsters also took the animals of the victims. This sad news was instantly spread in our village. All the people of Bazmashen wept over the death of those three young men and were in mourning. The leaders of our village went to console the families of the victims.

Next year, Bazmashen was again in grief and sorrow. The Kemoes' son, who was just 17, was present in a horse-race as an audience. During that horse-race, when he was calmly watching it from his place, an arrow was shot that stuck straight in his forehead. However, this was a sudden incident, nobody had planned it, and for that reason, nobody was to be blamed. The killer offered his apologies to the leader of the village, Mztes' Minas, and the family of the dead.

Such incidents happen in every country, even in the developed European countries.

Other Religions in Bazmashen

Besides the main religion, there were some other religious parties in Bazmashen. One of them was Protestant Church. It had been put into practice in the village Bazmashen since 1874. The first Protestant was Maghak Maghakean, who had decided to change his belief. He wasn't an intellectual man and couldn't understand the differences between the religions.

In a few years, some other people joined Maghak Maghakean in his faith. They were the following: the Pltoes, the Achemoes, the Peyroses, the Kheroes' Grigor, the Kemoes' Poghos, the Petoos' Ero, the Baloes, the Pashas, and the Karoes' Hatchi Karo.

When the number of the Protestants grew, they opened their own private school and church, and chose a bishop for them. The latter's name was Der Khohararean, who was also a teacher in our village.

Der Khohararean was from Tigranakert. He completed his formal education in college Eprat. He was a well-educated and honest personality and after short period of time, he began to be respected by all the villagers. He was married and his two children were born in Bazmashen. Their names were Hakob and Mariam. Der Khohararean stayed in our village for many years and some people called him Father Preacher. Sometimes he invited me to be present at his religious meetings. Of course, I accepted his invitations and listened to his religious talks with great interest. The Petroses' Marinos visited every family of Bazmashen and taught to read and write to the brides and the girls. If only we had more such ladies, who were worth to be respected for the hard work that they did for their nation's sake.

At that time, besides the Armenian Protestant families there were also about ten Armenian Catholic families in Bazmashen. They had their own priest, who came from Mezre to Bazmashen every Sunday for saying Mass.

The members of these two religious parties hated each other. There were no close relations between these parties. In addition, the main religious party (Hay Lusavorchakan) hated both of them.

The first Catholic families of Bazmashen were the following: the Noroes, the Kheroes, the Michaels, the Gazes, the Khukoes' Zakar, the Tanapashes and the Kevoes. These Catholic families had their own private school and church in our village. Subsequently they chose a priest for their church, who was rather an intellectual person. The teacher of the Catholic school was Harutyun Khukoean, who worked in that school for 15 years.

The Vintage

It was September. So it was already the season of gathering grown grapes for making wine. In that year the guard of the gardens was Gevo. During the period of vintage, the teens of our village took their domestic animals out of the village to graze in the fields. Leaving the cows and the sheep to eat fresh grass in the fields they began to play hide-and-seek and some other games. Later they secretly jumped over the wooden fences that were made around the gardens of grape. They stole a few bunches of different grapes and filling their pockets with it quickly ran and jumping over the fence again came out of the gardens. It would take half an hour from Guard Gevo to come, to catch, and to punish the naughty boys.

In the afternoons, when it was warm enough to swim in Khulagyol Lake, the boys all together jumped into the water and began swimming. They swam in different styles of swimming like butterfly and breaststroke. When the boys of Bazmashen were swimming, the sheep-herders of Khulgyugh approached the lake. Seeing them, the boys of our village called to each other, "Hey, look, some guys are coming from Khulgyugh." They came out of the water, put on their clothes. Each one held a stick in their hands and waited for the guys from Khulgyugh. As soon as they met each other, an argument began between them, which later turned into a fight. During that fight, the boys beat each other with their sticks and cried loudly. For a while, their fight went on, but at last, everybody got tired and went home.

Mztes' Marsup suffered great losses because of those guys. He had a small garden in the nearest hill, where he grew up onion. Every time, when Marsup left his cottage, these naughty guys entered it, mixed up everything, and took whatever they liked. Later when Mztes' Marsup came back and saw his cottage in a mess, he lost his patience and began to shout angrily at them. The guys were obliged to return whatever they had taken away and instead of it, they all got some green onion.

It was at the end of September in 1880 and the days of vintage were near. The messenger of the village walked along the streets of Bazmashen and announced that starting from that day the guard of the gardens wouldn't work any longer. Everyone had to go and to look after his own garden. Each family, who had a garden of grapes, took their pillows and blankets and went to stay in their gardens for night. One could see people trying to build a big fire in their gardens. The villagers used to sing and dance around the fire and they enjoyed their time till the sunrise.

Next day, in the morning some of the landlords put a few empty baskets on the backs of the donkeys and started off to their gardens. And the wealthy families that had large gardens put 6-7 big baskets on the carriages and also went to their gardens.

The village was again deserted, because old and young had gone to the gardens. The vintage was like a holiday for our population, that's why everyone was happy. Only the landladies remained in their houses to prepare food for the workers and to do the housework. The villagers began to pick grapes and put it in small baskets. When these small baskets became full of grapes, people took them and turning emptied the content into the huge baskets. Such kind of work was being done by the brides, the lasses, and the lads, for whom this work wasn't a boring one; just vice versa, they enjoyed doing it.

This week was *Ankonkan* Lent. Therefore, the landladies almost always cooked *perper* (a dish made from pumpkin) which had yellow color like the apricot. The dish mentioned before was taken to the gardens with big casseroles. The landladies together with that dish took a lot of sour cucumber and cabbage. When the landladies got to the gardens with the food in their hands, all the workers greeted them with pleasure. They had eaten so many grapes, that they felt hunger and were very thirsty now. Soon everyone came and took place near the table and they began to eat *lavash* (Armenian bread cooked in an oven), *perper*, and sour vegetables and drank the icy water of their springs. No other dish could be compared with *perper* that was very tasty.

It became the turn of emptying the small baskets into the huge ones. This work was being done by the old. All the baskets were put in the carriages and the donkeys carried it all to the village Bazmashen.

On their way to home in a place called Krdu Gor the group of our villagers was stopped by the Turkish officials. They weighed carefully the baskets of grape and as a tax took some grape. Sometimes while weighing the baskets some arguments arose between the villagers and the Turkish officials. The Turks deliberately weighed the baskets on special scales that showed that the baskets were heavy, but it didn't coincide with the reality. The Khojabashi and the brave men of our village on those days usually were busy finding solution to such problems.

The young brides and the lasses had kept the grapes in the sun in order to dry it and as a result of all this in the end, they took home a great amount of raisin. There were also such landlords, for whom the vintage lasted for 4-5 days, because they had very large gardens. Every year they got 100-150 liter of wine.

Every inhabitant of Bazmashen had its garden of grapes and even those who had small gardens got at least 50 liter of wine yearly. At that time, people ate grape carelessly as it was the main fruit after their meals.

When the baskets of grape were brought home, people emptied the content of the baskets on the clean floor that had been washed for that certain action. The landladies and the brides began to squeeze the grape with their hands. The juice of grapes came out and the landladies made various tasty jams and sweets from it and kept it all for winter. The rest of the juice was left in large clay jars to ferment.

Nevertheless, the vintage of that year caused great unhappiness to all the inhabitants of the village. The most handsome and smart lad of our village, the Hazarkhans' Hovakim, who played drum, was shot and consequently killed by a Turk. This incident happened when he was watering his corn-field. His tallness and handsomeness made the Turk envy. The Armenian lad had got a gun to protect himself, but as he was watering the corn-field, he had left his gun aside and the Turk took advantage of it. Subsequently the Turk's attack was an unexpected act for poor Hovakim.

The ceremony of his funeral was organized very well and the entire village came and stood in front of his grave in silence as a mark of honor to him. Der Petros with his loud voice sang a song during the funeral.

Here is it:

I had still many years to live,
But my life ended very soon,
The sudden death excluded me from the good,
Good-bye my dear friends.

 Yesterday I was alive,
 But today I am dead,
 I miss my relatives very much,
 My young heart is broken,
 Good-bye my dear friends.

An angel has come and is standing in front of me,
And wants to take away my soul,
My relatives are crying for me,
And my enemies are happy,
Good-bye my dear friends.

 My body faded as a rose,
 And it blackened in front of my eyes,
 My children are very sad,
 Good-bye my dear friends.

In the end of summer, the inhabitants of Bazmashen village began to gather and to bring home all the vegetables and the plants that they had grown in the fields. Guard Mztes' Marsup, who saved the onion gardens too, now was dreaming to return home, because he was sick and tired of the naughty guys and was happy that soon he would be at home. The onion was a very useful and wholesome vegetable and thus our villagers were preparing to gather and bring it home too.

One morning, every family went to its onion garden, and digging the ground, they found and took out the onions that looked like a red apple. Besides their share of the onion, the villagers had to give some part of it to the Turkish government. The leaders of our village managed to solve this problem successfully as well.

However, some other agricultural problems remained and there was need to solve them somehow. Some fields were covered with white color and it seemed like it had been snowing for a long time. All this was like a sign to the people that

it was high time to gather that “snow” and to bring it home. Those white fields that seemed to be snow-covered in reality they turned out to be cotton fields.

Once early in the morning in autumn, before the sunrise, the brides, the lasses, and the lads were preparing to start off to the cotton fields. They took with them aprons, baskets and the food that the landladies had made especially for that day. They took care so that not to forget anything important and at last took direction to the fields.

Reaching the cotton fields everyone wore the aprons and began to gather the soft white hairs from around the seeds of the plants. Whatever they had gathered, they put in the pockets of their aprons and after that, the lasses emptied all the cotton of their aprons into the big baskets. While the young of our village were working in the cotton fields, some merchants came there and sold fruit and some trifles. The young herdsmen interchanged some of the cotton with either fruit or some trifles. It took about a week from the villagers to gather the cotton. Finishing their work they came back home happily, but were, of course, tired.

Our landladies used the cotton to make fabrics and thread for their family needs. Sometimes the lads took some part of it to the city and sold it there, and instead of it bought whatever they wanted.

In 1882, I was 17 years old. It was autumn, but our school was still closed. My father was an architect and had to build a house in Pekenik village. This time he had decided to take me with him so that I would help him.

On Monday morning, we set off for Pekenik and in the evening, we reached it. The house that we were going to build was the property of a Turk. As soon as we were there, we started to work. I regularly went for a walk in that village after the work in the evenings.

This village had beautiful gardens. There were the best kinds of grape and many other fruits. The village Pekenik situated on a high hill and had very nice places. In front of this hill, there was one more hill and between these two hills, there was a ravine. In this ravine, there was a narrow path that led to the village Khzlkilise. This village had many springs and people watered their gardens and fields as much as they would like. That’s why they had tasty fruits and grape.

The landlord of the house, which we were supposed to build, was a Turk long-mustached man about sixty. He was a kind-hearted man and he often entertained us with food and fruit.

This was for the first time that I got introduced to another aspect of live out of my school. Though my father wasn’t a rich man, he was eager to give me good education. Moreover, during summer vacations he never took me to work.

We worked till Saturday and wanted to return to our house just that evening. But the Turk landlord, whose name was Ahmed, didn’t let us leave for our house, saying, “Why do you go home in vain, when you must return again on Monday? You had better stay in my house; we have got enough rooms and food for you too. So don’t worry and stay here.” My father with pleasure accepted the suggestion of the landlord and thus we stayed in their house. In the evening, when after the dinner we were sitting in the balcony and were tasting fruit, the landlord said to his son, “Tomorrow you must go to Azmezire and visit your Uncle Sargis. Tell them

to come and look after their corn-field.”

I began to think how an Armenian, whose name was Sargis, could be a Turk’s Uncle. When we finished eating fruit, my interest grew more and more and I wanted to get some explanation concerning the matter. My father didn’t get the main meaning of those words. At last, I couldn’t be patient enough to calm down and told my father about my doubts. My father was also surprised and he asked Ahmed, “How can an Armenian called Sargis be your Uncle?”

The old Turk answered unwillingly, “My son, don’t touch that harmful story. Why do you need its details?” However, I begged Ahmed to tell that story with all the details.

“As you are eager to listen to the story of my life, then I am ready and willing to tell it to you,” replied the old man.

He began to tell, “Many years ago all the inhabitants of this village were Armenians. When the Turks invaded this territory, they ruined everything on their way, tortured and killed the people cruelly. Those, who survived, were forced to change their belief and to become Turks. People had nothing but to obey and to change their belief. The Turks brought a Muslim Molla, who began to teach the people the Turkish prayers and their habits. At that time one of my sisters-in-law, who was from Azmezire, had a 10 years old son, called Sargis. During this violence, my sister-in-law with her son had gone to Azmezire and was staying in her Uncle’s house. When her Uncle heard the news that our villagers were forced to change their religion, he didn’t let his niece with her son leave his house and thus he saved his relatives from danger. So all this lands belong to that Sargis and still now we are watching them.”

Ahmed also told us that his ancestors had left a significant note that they kept as a relic from father to father. Ahmed’s ancestors had sworn not to show that document to anyone else. He also told us that he kept an old bow and arrow in his attic. There was a kind of desire in me that made me ask the Turk to show to me that bow and arrow. He went upstairs, brought the bow and arrow, and showed to us. The arrow was about 1 inches breadth and had 30 inches length. It had a sharp point at one end, and the other end was wide. The bow was very old and it hadn’t the tight sting that had to join its two ends.

In spite of our request, Ahmed refused to show the important document to us. Instead of that, he promised to take and show to us the sacred places of his ancestors.

At that time, as I was young, I didn’t know the importance of those valuable things. Under the influence of those interesting stories, I went to bed very affected by them and being full of such strong impressions, I saw many interesting dreams at that night.

On Sunday after the meal, I was waiting for the Turk with irritation. He had to take us to the ancient places and thus not to break his promise. Finally, after a short rest Ahmed said, “Oh my son, do you really want to see those old places?”

“Of course, I do want,” added I hurriedly.

Ahmed, my father and me together left the house and began to walk to the right side of the village. After 15 minutes’ walk, we reached a high hill. We saw there

ruins of some ancient buildings.

“Do you see these ruins?” said the old man. “Many years ago it was the church of my ancestors.”

I came down and walking near the ruins, I saw the khachkar of the church and the ruins of the altar. I understood that the church had had very thick walls, but its door was very small. As my father was an architect, he began to explore thoroughly the ruins of that old church.

Without paying attention to my requests landlord Ahmed didn't show to us the relic that he was saving with great carefulness.

After finishing our work in Pekenik my father and I returned to our house. My father and the Terzoes' Varderes together consulted a question and at last came to the conclusion that a spring was to be built near the gardens far from our village. They decided to build the spring near Sandukt as a charitable donation, because there was no spring on the way to the city.

It took nearly 2 weeks from my father and the Terzoes' Varderes to finish building that new spring. Finally, the water began to run.

After that, the passers would never stay thirsty. This work was done by Poghos Golechean and Varderes Terzean as a charity and in this way, their names remained in the history of Bazmashen for ever.

A Rural Marriage

The population of Bazmashen village was completely ready for the winter. The workers finished gathering crop, cotton, and grape from their fields. Every family had plenty of red wine and it was time for the people to organize big parties and to enjoy their lives.

In the beginning of November, several families had already arranged wedding ceremonies for their sons and daughters. During that autumn 12 lads and 12 lasses were going to get married in Bazmashen.

The boys' parents had to go to the city in order to buy presents for their future brides. There was an old custom in our village according to which the girls' father decided what presents for his daughter had to buy the boy's parents. Usually they demanded to buy a gown of silk, a Persian shawl, and a long bridal veil. All this presents cost about 300 dahekans.

Almost always, the rural marriages began in this way. The lad's family roasted mutton in an oven. Then the lad's mother put on a large tray fruit, sweets, nuts and the presents of the future bride. Nearly ten relatives took that tray and went to the girl's house, where the girl's relatives had already gathered and were waiting for their guests impatiently. The girl's family got ready all the preparations so that they could receive the boy's parents and relatives as honored people. Some girls were busy setting the tables. They put on the tables lavash that the grandmothers had just taken out of the oven. The grandmothers were wearing oven gloves in order not to harm their hands. There were many kinds of tasty dishes on the table.

At the head of the table comfortably sat the priest of our church. The landlady

brought a big pitcher full of red wine and put on the center of the table, where the guests were dining. Then she said loudly, "You are welcome our dear guests."

All the people together cried out, "Let our relatives be healthy." The landlord quickly filled the empty glasses with red wine and the priest blessed their table. The first toast was proposed by the priest, who wished happiness and success to the relatives and the bride and the groom. Afterward everyone emptied their glasses and said, "God bless them."

A few minutes later the boy's relatives put on the table the tray that they had brought. Their godfather took away the veil that was closing the tray. The priest blessed the presents of the future bride and for that got a few dahekans.

During that special meal just around that table was arranged and fixed the exact date of the marriage. The feast was continued till the midnight.

Starting from the next day both sides got busy preparing for the marriage. They sacrificed a bull for that special day. A woman was invited to make the dishes and to give directions to the lasses how to set the table. On Saturday in the morning, that woman visited all the houses of the boy's relatives and invited them to be present at the wedding ceremony.

Each family gave presents to her. At first, the boy's female relatives gathered in his house and began to dance. The boy's mother began dancing first and only after that, the other women joined her in dancing.

On that certain occasion, the lads, the girls, and the young brides prepared their festive clothes and dresses. Everyone wanted to look well on that day. On Saturday evening, in their turn the landladies gathered in the house of the boy to bake pastries. The boy's godmother made the mixture of flour, fat and water or milk. The boy's mother rolled the mixture out flat and put it with pies into the oven. The women did this work happily and used to sing while working. After baking the pastries, before the sunrise, they went to their houses.

On Sunday early in the morning, everyone cheerfully hurried to the church to pray before the wedding ceremony. After church, they returned home and dined. One of the boy's best friends, who was wearing his best clothes on that day, together with the musicians visited the houses of all the relatives and invited them to the wedding ceremony. Girls, boys, and young brides joined them from every house and in the end with a great group they came to the boy's house. The male had gathered in a room and the women gathered in another and danced till 2 o'clock. The boy's family put a roasted mutton, pastries, sweets, nuts, and fruit on the back of the donkeys and went to the bride's house. The other relatives took direction to the bride's house too. Half of them went by carriages and the rest rode on their horses.

The whole village was in great happiness. Twenty wedding ceremonies were going to take place just on the same day. The music and the jolly voices were audible everywhere. Even if the bride's house was near, the guests deliberately chose different ways to get there as they wanted their happiness to be continued for a long time. It took them about half an hour to get to the bride's house. However, the doors of the bride's house were closed. They knocked at the door for several times, but still it didn't open. For a while, dancing and singing went on right in the

street. Later their godfather promised to buy an expensive present for the bride and finally the door was opened. The house was decorated very well and with good taste.

All the relatives of the girl had already sat at the table and were waiting for the future husband and his relatives. The tables were full of different tasty dishes and drinks and the landlady was ready to serve her guests. The first toast was proposed by the priest, who emptied his glass of wine at once. All the guests followed him. Afterward the godfather drank a toast to the bride and the bridegroom.

A few hours later, the bride's relatives invited the boy's best friends to join them in the wedding feast. The party went on for a long time until the priest stood up with the purpose of blessing the sword of the bridegroom, the wedding ring of the bride, and their clothes and dresses. After blessing, the priest asked the guests who would like to be the lad's friend during the wedding ceremony. The one, who would pay more money, he would become that special friend. This friend's duty was to praise the bridegroom and to put on his festive clothes. At that time, the bridegroom stood in the center of the room and his friends stood around him. One of the best friends of the future bridegroom, who had a good voice, began to sing the special song for praising his friend.

He sang:

Hey, go and bring my beautiful mom,
I want her to come and see the tree in blossom,
Our apple tree has blossomed,
Its flowers look like the veil of a bride,
Hey jan, hey jan, hey.

Hey, go and bring my handsome dad,
I want him to come and see the tree in blossom,
Our apricot tree has blossomed,
Its flowers look like the veil of a bride,
Hey jan, hey jan, hey.

Hey, bridegroom I can't compare you with anyone,
You look like a brave knight,
Ride on your horse and wear your armor,
And your mom will be proud of you,
Hey jan, hey jan, hey.

During this song, the bridegroom managed to put on all the necessary clothes. The boy's best friend put on his shoulder a silk belt of three colors; red, green and blue. He also put on the bridegroom's head a silk fess and handed to him the sword. Later the godfather holding the bridegroom's hand led him to an armchair, where he sat like a king. The king of the house hence-forth became the bridegroom. He chose the appearance of a serious man. He didn't want to talk with everyone. Sitting on his luxurious armchair, he was just looking at the passers. But his relatives and friends danced, sang and enjoyed themselves at the party till the

midnight. On that day, the women liked to color their hands and fingers with red color (hina).

On Monday, before the sunrise, the godmother with a relative from the boy's side went to the bride's house to see her. They took with them sweets and nuts. These women helped the bride to get dressed. She wore her wedding dress, which was of red silk and was very long. On her wedding dress there were sewn many colorful buttons. The godmother carefully brushed and arranged the bride's hair and the bride wore a long white veil on her rosy face. Afterward they returned to their house. Nearly everybody had awakened with hangover in the boy's house. Seeing the condition of her guests, the landlady quickly brought and gave them vodka to drink. In his turn, the bridegroom entertained his relatives with nuts and sweets.

At last, it came the turn of beginning the wedding ceremony. The men got their carriages and horses ready to go to the bride's house. The godfather took his gun with him. The musicians came and began to play right in the street.

The brides and the lasses sat in the decorated horse-drawn carriages, the men rode on their horses, and they all together went to the bride's house. There were about 100 people in this group. The children were running before the carriages. The first rider was the bridegroom and the rest followed him. On their way to the bride's house, the men used to dance right on their horses. As soon as they reached the bride's house, the godfather took his gun and fired it in the air. Usually this shot meant that the bridegroom and his relatives had arrived.

Of course, it was very difficult for the bride to leave her father's house and to be divided from her relatives. Particularly she couldn't leave her mother. She stood in the entrance of their house, hugged her mother and silent tears ran down her red cheeks. Finally, the godmother introduced the bridegroom to the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law kissed the bridegroom's forehead and filled the latter's pockets with sweets. At that time, the godfather took the bride's hand and ushered her out of the house. There one of the bridegroom's friends helped her to jump and sit on the white horse. Beside her horse stood a black horse that the godmother was going to ride on.

All the relatives began to throw sweets, raisin and nuts right toward the bride. Usually the wealthy families threw some silver pennies.

When the bride came out of the house, the guests greeted her cheerfully and the girls began to dance and sing. In this way, they went to the church. In front of the church dancing and singing was stopped.

At first, the godfather and the bridegroom stepped forward to enter the church and the godmother with the bride followed them. Afterward the guests hurried to take a seat in the church.

The other bridegrooms and the brides of our village reached the church too and entered it like the first couple. The twelve bridegrooms holding their swords stood in front of the middle altar like soldiers.

The priest at once took his responsibility and the wedding ceremony began. He asked the bridegroom, "My son, are you ready to take care of your wife till death?"

The bridegroom answered, "Yes I am."

Then the priest asked the bride, “My daughter, are you ready to be obedient till your last days?” The bride’s head nodded in agreement.

Getting these answers, the priest brought their heads nearer. The godfather held his sword and a cross on their heads. The bridegroom and the bride interchanged the wedding rings and the priest gave to the twelve bridegrooms and the brides to drink red wine, to kiss the cross and said, “God bless you.” After that all the relatives and the friends congratulated the new married couple and wished them happiness and success. When the ceremony was over in the church, they all left it. Each new married couple with its guests crossed each other in front of the church and only after it went to their houses. On their way to the house, the young again began to dance and sing in the streets and the godmother was throwing sweets here and there. The bridegroom’s father with his friends was leading the group. He was very happy and was a little bit drunk. Their neighbors had lain on the tables in the street and were impatiently waiting for them. They invited the bridegroom’s father and his friends to drink a glass of wine and said, “Please Mztes Gevo take the glass of wine and share your happiness with us. We are glad that your son got married today and now you have a bride at your home. We wish them happiness and let them live together for many years.”

“Thank you very much. Hope one day your son will get married too and he’ll make you as happy as I am now,” answered the bridegroom’s father and emptied his glass of wine. Someone announced, “Young Zakar come near we want you to sing a song for Mztes Papo.” Zakar began to sing with his good voice and all the guests listened to him with great pleasure.

A group from another marriage party had gathered around their bridegroom and was also singing:

Here is that song:

Who are you looking for my dear mother?
Come here, don’t be excited,
Look at your dear son happily,
And don’t pay attention to his injuries.
Let the Turks’ mothers cry,
And you go to Zeytun with happy news.
I wish you were near my bed
As you used to be in my childhood,
And I wish you hugged me with your soft hands
And I wish you sang for me like an angel.
Let the Turks’ mothers cry,
And you go to Zeytun with happy news.

They came home after 3-4 hours, because their way was very long, but they didn’t feel that length as they had been singing, dancing and joking all the way long. When they got to the bridegroom’s house, the bridegroom and the bride came down from their horses. There the bride’s brother came and stood near his sister. The bridegroom stood in the entrance of his house and right there in front of the eyes of the guests he sacrificed a cock.

The bride with her godmother stepped along the entrance, but at first she put on the ground her right foot. When they all entered the house, the bride with her godmother went and sat down on a sofa. Their corner was closed by thick curtains so that nobody could see the young bride. And the bridegroom with his friends stood near the door of the dining-room.

Under the landladies' directions, the girls again quickly set the table for meal. Being tired and hungry from the long way, the guests took the chairs, sat at the table, and helped themselves to different dishes and salads. Every guest took his glass of wine and said to the bridegroom's mother, "My congratulations to you. I'm glad that you have got such a beautiful and humble bride."

To these kind words the bridegroom's mother answered, "Thank you, hope that one day God will give you such a bride too."

The new bride had heard these kind words addressed to her from behind the curtains. She became happy and full of delight. While the guests were dining, the bride's friends went to see her taking with them some sweets and nuts. They asked her how was she and kissed her as if they hadn't met each other for many months. The bride's brother was the most important person during that day. The bridegroom's parents gave him special presents for taking good care of his sister.

The music began and it came the turn of the ladies to dance. At first, the bride's friends danced, because they desired to get married too. When dancing, the guests gave some money to the bride. The ladies and the girls danced so much until they got awfully tired.

The men had gathered in another room and were noisily discussing a certain problem. They wanted to know how many little boys had been running before their horses on the way to the church. Somehow, they found out that there were fifteen boys. They decided to visit each boy in his house, to give a present to him and to have a small party in every house.

A few weeks later all the relatives, friends, and guests gathered in the bridegroom's house, where the bridegroom's family was again giving party.

Monday was the day, when people bought presents for the new married couple. The bridegroom's relatives put many presents and sweets on a large tray and went to the bride's house. In their turn the bride's parents took some presents too and together with the bridegroom's relatives went to the godfather's house. Here they saw that the godfather with his wife had put presents on a tray and they were going to leave for the bridegroom's house. So everyone with his or her present returned to the bridegroom's house.

Everyone got busy in the dining-room, except the bride's mother. The latter secretly entered the room, where her lovely daughter was sitting. As soon as the bride saw her dear mother she ran across the room, hugged, and kissed her. She hadn't seen her mother for two days and had missed her very much. The bride was so happy to meet her mother again that she even burst into tears.

That evening all the guests had to bring present for the new married couple. They also brought pastries, sweets, nuts and fruit. The bridegroom's and the bride's relatives had come to see the presents. Again, the landlady was busy in the kitchen cooking delicious dishes for the feast. The landlord was filling the empty

glasses with red wine and the guests continually drank toasts to the bride and the bridegroom. They enjoyed the meal till late at night. Afterward dancing and singing began. All this continued till 3 o'clock. Then everyone went to his house to sleep, as they all were very tired.

On Wednesday, a party was given in the bridegroom's house. On that day, the bridegroom and the godfather were going to dance together. That's why people were eager to see them dancing together. The musicians took their instruments and began to play the best music for dancing. It was a charming piece of music to dance. The bridegroom and his godfather began to dance in the center of the hall. The guests surrounding them threw some silver pennies towards them. The new bride was watching all this, and from her side she even secretly threw a penny for her future husband. Seeing so much money, the musicians didn't want to stop playing on their instruments, just vice versa, they began to play with more enthusiasm in order to earn more money.

When they finished dancing people ushered the bridegroom out of the house. Soon they all arrived in the godfather's house, where they continued their cheerful party and only after that, everyone left for his house. In fact, the bridegroom remained in his godfather's house alone.

The new bride's house was crowded by the women. They had come there to help the bride's mother to pack her daughter's dowry. They began to place the bride's dresses in a special trunk. She had 8-10 colorful handmade dresses and each dress cost nearly 100 dahekans. When they finished packing the trunk, they closed it tightly and put on the back of a horse.

On that day, they allowed the bride to come out from her corner. But there were only women in the dining-room. The godmother brushed the bride's hair and the bride wore a silk scarf on her head. Her mother-in-law came nearer to her and wanted to open her face that was closed with a white veil.

However, the mother-in-law had to give a present to the bride for opening her face. The other ladies, who were present there, followed the mother-in-law and gave their presents to the young bride. Then it came the time to open the trunk and to show the bride's dresses to everyone. One of the bride's relatives one by one took out each dress of the trunk and showed to the guests. The women said, "Our congratulations. They are all very nice and we are sure they'll suit you. We wish you to get nicer and more expensive dresses." The new bride came nearer to every lady, kissed their hands, and thanked for the gifts.

Again, the lasses laid on the tables' food and drink. However, this party was going to be the last one. They all drank toasts to the bride and the groom and finally everyone went to their houses. In fact, the new bride and the bridegroom were left alone in their house. Thus, the rural marriage, that lasted for 4 days and nights was finished.

The Revolutionary Movement

In 1887, my father suddenly died. Subsequently the family problems fell on my

shoulders. I made friends with Mr. Gaspar Memishean and with Mr. Poghos Shahpazean, who had a store in our village. Mr. Memishean used to sell oil in the villages of Arabkir province.

During these years, the Hnchakean Party had already extended in Arabkir and Kharbert. We had heard many good things about Shmavon, who was from Arabkir and was one of the activists of the Hnchakean Party. He did his best to help the Armenians survive from the Turkish massacre.

Once, I together with my two friends had a discussion about becoming a member of the Hnchakean Party. We asked Mr. Shahpazean to go to the city and to bring with him the project of that political party, because we wanted to know about all its aims and ideas.

A week ago, we had in our hands the rule book and the swearing-in of the Hnchakean Party. Its aims and ideas coincided with the ones we had. The most important thing in that rule book was to keep its information as secret. Nobody could know about the activities of that political party, even our parents, wives, and children. In that rule book were given the most important ways of our future actions. But the details were missed out. In spite of all this, we were full of enthusiasm and wanted to be involved in the actions of the Hnchakean Party at once.

A few weeks later, Mr. Shmavon called on us and encouraged us for our serving for our nation, for our faithfulness and for keeping secrets. Mr. Shmavon stayed with us for a few days, and during those days, he managed to give us a piece of good advice. Then he expressed his eagerness to go and see the Kurd leaders, because he wanted to involve them in our struggle against the Turks.

Poghos Shahpazean, Gaspar Memishean and me, the writer of these incidents, now were soldiers of the Hnchakean Party. In addition, as soldiers we needed weapons. Mr. Memishean had got an old gun, but then Shahpazean and I found two guns for us too. Now it was necessary to learn how to aim and to shoot.

It was impossible to practice it all in the village, because the old would certainly hear about our secret.

There was a cave out of the village near Chechakarut, so we often went there, and gradually we became highly skilled in pointing our weapon at something or somebody and in shooting. Every evening, before the sunset, we went to that cave lit a few candles and began to shoot. There was a kind of competition between us; everyone tried to learn to shoot sooner than his friends would do.

Very often, we returned home late at night. Moreover, sometimes we didn't even return home at all and we stayed in the cave for night. When we got tired of shooting, we sat cross-legged, began to talk over different topics, and discussed our future plans.

At that time, I was a new married man. That's why I quarreled with my wife quite often, because of being late in the evenings. She wanted to know the reason of my being late. Nevertheless, I couldn't explain anything to her, because I didn't have the right to open our secret. Sometimes, when my wife got very angry with me, she hid my gun somewhere in the house, but when I made her give it to me, she didn't resist any longer and at last handed my gun to me.

A few months passed and we bought new guns for us. Together with our new guns, we felt us very strong and thought that we could win more than hundred enemies with the new guns. But it was too difficult to shoot from our new guns.

It had become a habit for us to go to the store of Mr. Shahpazean, where we hung a board from the wall and began to shoot at it.

However, three men were not enough to fight for the freedom of the Armenians. We needed to include more members into our small group.

There was a point in our rule book according to which the one, who would manage to involve ten new members to the Hnchakean Party, he would become their leader and would be called *Tasnapet* (leader of ten people). My friends and I were busy finding and persuading people to join us.

We also got some newspapers. But we kept them secretly. The newspaper was handwritten and consisted of four pages. Usually Mr. Memishean brought it with him from Arabkir with great watchfulness.

According to the information of the newspaper, one could guess that the Armenian nation would get freedom in a few years. I thought that as soon as Armenians got freedom they would work hard and rebuild their country. My friends and I were too young and inexperienced to understand that with ten people we would not be able to struggle against our enemies and to withstand so many problems.

We became a subject of interest in Bazmashen village. The villagers felt that we were doing something serious, but they couldn't find out what in particular we were doing. In order to keep our activities out of sight, we organized a meeting in one of our friend's house. During that meeting a decision was made, according to which we had to pay some money to Hovhannes Petikean and the latter had to do our orders. In a few words, he became our spy. Nevertheless, Petikean didn't have any ideas about our group and our secret activities. He was just a common worker. We paid this man to spy for us, so that the villagers wouldn't suspect us in anything. We worked hard for this revolutionary movement.

A year ago, in the beginning of 1888, we opened the Union of the young scholars of Bazmashen. The members of that Union were Papo Ktskhean, storekeeper Poghos Shahpazean, Aptal Golech Poghosean, Hakob Derarean, Gaspar Memishean, Varderes Terzean and Hakob Malkasean. Each member had to pay 20 dahekans in order to be involved in our Union. Besides that, each member was supposed to pay 20 paras weekly. A council was gathered and one of the members of that council gathered money in the church, especially on Sundays during the Mass. People gave some money with pleasure, because they were sure that they somehow supported us in our activities. Thus, we earned about 100 dahekans. We often went to the school of our village and had meetings with the students of the higher classes. During those meetings, we tried to explain the students the aim of our activities and the Hnchakean Party.

Gradually, our group got enlarged. Many people joined us. They were the following: Papo Ovesean, Musekh Mortanean, Gaspar Der Kirakosean and etc. We continued to work hard for our nation.

* * *

It was the end of July. It was very hot in our village. The tax-collector of the Turkish government, Zilif Chavush, came to Bazmashen with his eight policemen to gather the taxes. It was Saturday and all the working people had already returned from their fields and were having rest in their houses.

In the evening, when the church bells rang out, I hurried to the church as I wanted to listen to the Mass. On my way to the church, a little bit far from me, I saw that the leaders of our village, the Turk official, and the policemen were arguing about a certain problem. I went to the spring of the Narchoes, where they were arguing. I wanted to know what the matter of their argument was. I jumped over the fence of the garden of the Muradeans. Then I passed to the garden of the Narchoes, climbed up a high tree, and from there began to listen to them. I felt comfortable in my place, because nobody could see me through the branches of the tree.

In front of the spring, there was a beautiful pool. The Turk official ordered the leaders of our village to jump into the pool without taking off their clothes. Our leaders didn't obey, but the policemen used force and consequently jostled two Armenian leaders into the water. The other policemen began to beat with sticks the Armenians violently. Seeing all this violent action, I quickly came down from the tree and without delay ran to the store of Mr. Shahpazean. As soon as I arrived in his shop, I began to tell him what had happened. Mr. Memishean was there too. We together wanted to find a way out of that difficult situation, because we didn't want our villagers to suffer great injuries by the Turks again. My friends and I decided to punish the Turks and to save our villagers. Reaching this decision, everybody went to his house to bring with him his gun.

On Sunday early in the morning, I left my house and began to walk along the church, as I wanted to be present when the priest would say the Mass. When I entered the church, to my great surprise, I saw that the Turk policemen had come to our church. This scene made my blood boil in my veins. As I was extremely angry, I made an abrupt movement of hand. My hand hit the plate that was full of incense and was lying on the altar. It fell down and broke into pieces.

This was for the first time that the Turk policemen dared to enter our church. What did they mean with their presence in our church? Couldn't we pray in our church quietly? The villagers didn't hide their indignation towards the Turks. They wanted to be absolutely free in their church. However, they felt that the Turks' visit would no doubt make troubles for them. As they had heard all the unpleasant news about the incident that happened on Saturday, people felt that the danger was near.

The Mass was over. I came out from the church and saw that the Turk policemen had already arrested a few people. They made the people pay the taxes, otherwise they imprisoned them. Those, who were imprisoned, were trying to explain to the Turks that they hadn't got any money with them at that moment. The villagers asked the policemen to free them and promised that they would pay the taxes by all means. They wanted to go home and to bring the money. But the Turk

policemen didn't agree with our villagers. They said, "We'll take you to prison and later if your wives or sons bring the money, we'll free you." Thus without paying attention to the protests of the villagers and without further negotiation with the people they took with them those men.

This incident made a strong impression on me. I hurried to go home. As soon as I was at home, I quickly dined and persuaded my wife to give me my gun. My wife gave up and brought my gun. Taking it, I hurriedly went to the shop of Mr. Shahpazean, where we usually met each other.

It was hot weather in Bazmashen. And while I walked, sweat was pouring off me. Suddenly I noticed eight Armenian men standing on a roof. In front of them were standing a few rough Turk policemen with sticks in their hands. I approached the building, because I wanted to see them well and to know what was going on.

The house of one of my relatives was near that building, so I took advantage of it and went to my relative's house, from where I could see the men on the roof quite well.

The Turk policemen had crucified a young Armenian boy like Jesus Christ. The lad was about twenty. His hands and feet were tightly fastened to a wooden cross by a large rope, and he couldn't move. The policemen had punished another man too. The latter was about fifty, rather large and stout person. They had hung a heavy sack from the man's neck which was full of stones by a light rope. Another villager was made to take off his clothes, and he had to stand completely naked in the sun like Adam. The villager tried to protest, but two Turk policemen began to strike him severely, and managed to take off his clothes themselves. Then they poured on him oil and left him to stand in the sun in that dishonorable condition. I couldn't believe my eyes. Was it just a dream or reality? However, alas, it wasn't a dream; the poor man was standing in the sun. He couldn't stand on his feet any more and fell down.

I carefully come out of my relative's house and hurried to the usual place of our meetings. There I met Mr. Shahpazean and, of course, told him in details whatever I had seen on my way to his shop. A few minutes later, Mr. Memishean joined us and thus he also heard about that sad incident. Discussing the problem, we were seeking revenge for our poor villagers. We decided to stay in the shop and waited until one of the Turk policemen would pass near by.

At that time, we saw Musekh Samuelean, who was walking straight toward us. From the other corner of the street was coming a Turk policeman. When Musekh saw the policeman, he tried to run away. The policeman noticed Musekh, ran after him, caught him, and began to strike him brutally. Seeing this awful scene, Mr. Memishean said, "It's time to take our revenge on our enemies." He felt angry at the injustice of the situation, and catching the Turk policeman, thrust him back to the ground, and began to beat him. We also ran to their side and together with Mr. Memishean beat the policeman. Afterward we left him lay unconscious in the street and went to the shop of Mr. Shahpazean.

After having a short rest, Mr. Gaspar breaking the silence said, "My friends, we

made the Turks understand that the Armenians aren't afraid of them and that we can protect ourselves."

We began to discuss the consequences of what we had done. Mr. Poghos suggested that we should do everything in order not to let the leaders of our village punish and blame us. My suggestion was to write and send a letter and to warn them not to harass us. My friends agreed with me and told me that I was making sense. We wrote five letters that contained the same information and with the help of our spy, Hovhannes Petikean, sent the letters to the five leaders of the village Bazmashen. But we didn't put our signatures on those papers.

From the other hand, the Turk tax-collector threatened our leaders and demanded to give him either the men who beat the Turk policeman, or just their names. Taking into consideration the information of our letter, the members of the village council decided not to give our names to the Turk official. Seeing that he was wasting his time in vein, the tax-collector took the Turk policeman with him to Mezre.

Guessing that soon a group of Turk policemen would come to our village I and my two friends went to our cave and hid there. We knew that if they found us they would arrest us by all means. Late at night, we came out from our hiding place, and came to Khachkar. We stopped there for a while and carefully looked around, because we wanted to know whether there was any Turk policeman in the village or not. We were worried. Would our villagers betray us to the Turk policemen? From the other hand, we thought that we had done everything for our village we could then why our villagers should betray us. We even expected them to help and support us.

Each of us was lost in such thoughts, when suddenly we heard somebody weeping from our village. What could it mean? Ten minutes later, it became very noisy in the village and more cries could be heard from the distance. What was the reason of all that at midnight? We were in doubts; we wanted to find out whether the Turk policemen had come to our village, and were making troubles for the villagers or there was another problem. At last, we decided to go to Bazmashen and know what the matter was.

A few minutes later, we were in the place from where the cries were coming. We met a villager there, who told us that the man, who had been standing completely naked in the sun, was dead now. We taught the villagers what to do. Early in the morning, they had to take the dead body of the man by carriage to Mezre and in front of the building of the government; they had to tell how he died.

We arrived in Mezre on Monday early in morning. We wrote a protesting letter and gave it to a Turk official. The Turk official immediately read the letter and asked us what had happened. We introduced him to our demands; i.e. we wanted the dead body to be examined by a doctor. When the doctor finished examining the body he verified that the man died because of heat and beating. Getting his verification, my friends and I took the dead body and returned to our village. We didn't bury it until we got the verifying document about the reasons of the death of that man.

We were determined to be watchful until this case was solved. Doctor Mirek,

who was an experienced dentist, advised us not to give up and if it would be necessary, we had to take this case even to Polis.

The Turkish government of Mezre didn't pay attention to our protests. Moreover, when Dr Mirek started off to Polis, the Turk policemen caught him before he would arrive in Malatia. So they caught and brought him back to Mezre.

After this offensive incidents, dentist Mirek did his best to leave this hell like country and to move to America.

Afterward, when the Turk tax-collectors came to our village, they didn't use force on our villagers and had began to behave themselves. They realized that the Armenian young generation protected their village and that they would be punished by the Armenians if they harm anyone in Bazmashen.

These incidents assisted that the name of our Party became popular. Starting from those days, many people wanted to be involved in our activities. They were Hazarkhanean Astur, Khukhoean Harutyun and many others.

We felt us stronger than before and we were full of desire of liberty. We wanted the Turkish government to treat us both, the Turks and the Armenians equally. The Hnchakean Party had it own special song:

Here is it:

The soft lands of my fatherland
Became rivers of blood,
And in our free fields
Now the swords of our enemies are shining.

We must slap the Turks' faces hard,
How many years should we remain as slaves?
It's enough that we weep,
And every night we sleep with tears in our eyes.

It's enough to weep
Let our trumpets of revenge call,
We can't bear all this violence any more
And see our sisters and brothers as slaves.

I would prefer to die today
Or to triumph in this life,
It's better to die as a hero
Than to live as a slave.

Oh, my Christian flag
I will struggle for you,
I'll ruin the countries of our enemies
And I'll sing my victory song for you.

My ancestors that sleep under the ground
Are now encouraging us
To fight and win our enemies

This is their holy commandment to us.

The leaders of the Hnchakean Party of Bazmashen decided to change the aims and future plans of the council. We chose Poghos Der Gabrieleian and Basilos Baloean as special members of the Village Council. So they ran the affairs of the Village Council for many years.

However, the Turks always remained in backwardness. The Turkish government forbade the Armenian teachers from teaching the children the Armenian history. Free transportation from city to city was forbidden too. The Turkish government always found chances to kill the Armenians.

At that time, the leader of the village Bazmashen was Baghdasar Shahpazean. Even with all his short-comings, he was very useful person for our villagers.

The Brave Women of Bazmashen

I think it is worth to remember the women of Bazmashen village too. They were not only good landladies, but also were known as brave women. The story that I am going to tell you is the purest proof of that.

In spring, people used to cut the dead bunches of the vine in order to let the new green bunches grow well. This method was very useful and owing to it, the grapes were very juicy. They gathered those bunches that they had cut, and kept it in their roofs for winter to make fires.

One evening in spring, Mrs. Mariam Bltoean took a rope and went to their garden of grape. She wanted to collect all the dry sticks and to bring home. On her way to the garden, she suddenly noticed that a Turk policeman was defiling the graveyard of the Armenians. Seeing this dishonorable scene, Mrs. Mariam changed her way, and walked straight to the graveyard. She hadn't reached it yet, when she began to cry, "Hey, you disgusting barbarian, what are you doing there? Wait and I'll show you now." She stepped quickly toward the Turk policeman and said, "Do you see this rope? I was going to bring dry sticks with it for making a fire. Now I've changed my mind and I think it's better to tie you tightly with it. Instead of the dry sticks I'll lit a fire of you. I want evil people like you disappear from this world and only the kind people remain alive." While pronouncing these words, it seemed that Mrs. Mariam had become a tiger, she was filled with anger.

The Turk policeman laughed out loud at Mariam. When Mariam saw that ignorant behavior toward her, she rushed against the policeman and began to strike him with her tight rope. The Turk policeman tried to resist and protect himself, but the Armenian woman made abrupt movements of hand. Mrs. Mariam caught from the Turk's neck and thrust him back onto the ground. She began to kick with her feet the lying man and said to him, "I'm going to kill you now. And in my turn I'll dishonor your own grave."

The Turk policeman was nearly tongue tied. A few minutes passed and he began to beg the Armenian brave woman to let him free, and promised that the same

behavior wouldn't be done again by him.

He began to kiss Mrs. Mariam's feet and asked, "Please stop kicking and hitting me; I'll do whatever you want."

However, Mariam, who was very angry at that moment, replied, "No, I am going to beat you until you go unconscious. There is no forgiveness for you, dirty barbarian. I know what I shall do with you." She continued beating the poor policeman. When he fell unconscious, Mrs. Mariam began to carry him to the nearest ravine. There was a small river and taking the policeman's fess, she made him fill water in it. Afterward she carried the policeman back to the graveyard. Mrs. Mariam ordered the Turk to wash the grave which he had dishonored.

While the man was trying to wash the grave, Mrs. Mariam holding his neck asked, "Will you dare to do this again? Mind that you can't save your soul till you haven't finished doing my order. How could you be so disgusting? Shame on you! You don't respect the dead. Hurry up and clean everything or I'll send you to the hell right now."

The Turk policeman had nothing but to obey Mrs. Mariam and he washed the gravestone. When he finished his work, he turned around and Mariam slapped him hard across his face. She let him go, but ordered to remember that day very well and not to dare to do such disgusting things again. Thus, the Armenian brave woman taught a good lesson to the Turk policeman that he would never be able to forget.

The news of this incident had already reached the ears of the other Turk policemen. That's why after that whenever a Turk policeman came to Bazmashen village, he know how to behave himself in order not to hurt the feelings of our villagers.

During this period, Grigor Jigarjean was chosen as the leader of Bazmashen. He was a clever man and knew his work very well. He never left any villager to have difficulties. Grigor Jigarjean followed the rule and helped all the villagers, who needed it. Our leader had pull with the officials of the Turkish government. Thus, he was able to solve every problem. Nevertheless, sadly, he died very soon, because he was ill. Hearing the sad news of his death, the inhabitants of Bazmashen were very sorry for him, who was a great man for them.

* * *

At that time, many people from our village worked and lived in America. Of course, they didn't forget their parents and relatives, so they regularly sent some money to their families. People became wealthy and didn't lose the opportunity of buying lands. They bought the lands from the Turk and the Kurd landowners. In this way, our village had its wealthy landowners and thus the surrounding territories and Bazmashen became populated only by the Armenians.

Owing to these changes, the life of our villagers became easy and starting from that day, they began to live in welfare. Moreover, people weren't robbed by the Turks any more.

The first people, who moved to America, were Hatchi Zatur and Hatchi Karapet

Karooan.

Though the inhabitants of the village Bazmashen became landowners due to the money sent to them from America, the Turks didn't lose the chance to say, "It doesn't matter that now you are the owners of these lands. We are sure that one day we'll get back those lands." And they always looked at our lands with envious eyes.

We thought over these words and couldn't understand what they meant. The bad characteristic features of the Turks that they had obviously shown to us for centuries weren't enough for us to know and to beware of them. Although the Turks always robbed, slaughtered, and chased us, we, the Armenians, still remained optimists. We had bought lands, but didn't think that we had to be able to protect and keep them, if it was necessary. We knew very well that we were obedient nation and didn't have security for our property, name, and life.

Nobody thought about such important things. If we were wiser, cleverer, and used 30 percent of our money for our security, than our position would be better now. There were few people, who had weapon, both in our village and in the whole Armenia. Even if some people had any weapon, they were common poor people. Usually the wealthy families didn't participate in any activity that could bring any use for our nation. The rich man only criticized our activities and they didn't help and support us.

However, the political parties always tried to help the people and protect them from the harmful actions of the Turkish government. It must be taken into consideration that the Armenian political parties had both external and internal difficulties and material discomforts too.

The Year of Massacre

In September 1896, the inhabitants of Bazmashen lived in horror as all the Armenians. The dark clouds had gathered on our country and people lived in fear and were waiting nothing good from it. The news of the bloody massacre of innocent villagers in Sasun had already been spread in our village and people were very anxious. Shopping was stopped in the village and every day people expected bad news. That expectation didn't let the people wait long and soon it became reality.

An event took place in the village Bazmashen that seemed to be a sign to the people about the nearest disaster.

Once, in the end of September, the sky suddenly went dark and it started to rain hard. The fierce storm broke and strong winds began to break everything on their way. This storm with great speed reached Khachkar. In a few minutes, Khachkar became storm-tossed.

This Khachkar was very ancient; it was built more than 1300 years ago. It was an excellent work of art and had 15 feet height. People liked Khachkar very much and always used to gather near it. Unfortunately, Khachkar was completely ruined by this heavy storm.

People accepted this fact as a precaution of danger. Now they were more frightened than before. It seemed to them that God was angry on the people. People thought that God didn't want the Turks to touch his sacred objects and places.

The inhabitants of Bazmashen considered the collapse of Khachkar as a great unhappiness. Khachkar was very important and sacred-place for us and its sudden collapse made the villagers hopeless.

This unpleasant and sad news was spread everywhere and everyone with fear waited for a new disaster. September passed in horror, not only for the inhabitants of Bazmashen, but also for all the Armenian cities and villages.

It was in the end of October, and our villagers felt the nearest danger. Half of the young of our village got their weapon ready. Moreover, those villagers, who didn't have any weapon, took their sickles, axes, and scythes. Day and night the men of our village guarded around the village with groups in order to be on the safe side if the enemy tried to attack suddenly on them. The young of our village had guessed the bad intentions of their enemy. The Turks wanted to rob us and to own everything that our ancestors had left for us. They wanted to ruin everything on their way which was typical behavior for them.

That was the main reason that the young didn't go to bed and guarded sleeplessly around the village for three weeks. In their turn, the Turks knew about the security that we had organized in our village and they didn't dare to come out from their hiding places and attack on us. They realized very well that if they attacked on us, they would suffer great losses.

However, our enemy didn't calm down and did its dirty and cruel work in the neighboring small villages. Many people managed to survive from these small villages and they found shelter in Bazmashen.

Once, the Turks tried to deceit the Armenian lads and in that way wanted to take them out of the village. Since they had tried for many times to attack on our village, but they failed, because our men defended themselves.

Once, in the afternoon, a few Turks robbed the villagers of Khulyugh and took away their cows. The brave men of Bazmashen village noticed the robbers and a few friends pursued them. Those brave men were Hatchi Zatur, storekeeper Poghos Shahpazean, the Memishes' Gaspar and etc. When Hatchi Zatur ran near to them, he took aim, fired his gun at them, and succeeded to hurt one of the Turks. Some of the robbers ran away, but our villagers managed to catch one of them. They beat him brutally, tied his hands together with a light rope, and took him to Bazmashen. They thrust him to the attic of Mr. Shahpazean's shop and locked him in there.

The Turks considered it to be an intolerable behavior towards them and informed about this incident the Turkish government of Mezre. They demanded a few policemen, who had to come to our village. These policemen came to our village and ordered to release the Turk robber. Our villagers explained to them that the man, who was locked in the attic, was a robber and he had tried to take away their cows. The Turk policemen insisted on their demand and at last taking the Turk robber went to Mezre. On the next day, a group of Turk police officers again

came to the village Bazmashen, arrested Hatchi Zatur and took him to Mezre. There they punished and tortured severely Hatchi Zatur and kept him in prison.

About thousand Turk and Kurd gangsters were hiding in the hills of Chechkarut and Suru that were near to Bazmashen. They were waiting for a suitable moment for attacking on our village. But guessing that, our men had good weapons and even had a cannon, so they didn't dare to attack on us. Soon the Turkish government provided them by weapons and cannon. This group of the gangsters stayed in the hills between Khulgyugh and our village. They threatened to kill everyone, starting from the cradle to the old, and ruin everything if we wouldn't surrender.

We knew very well that the Turkish government had decided to destroy our village like barbarians.

It was Saturday. The Turk gangsters that had kept our village in blockade for a few weeks now took the new weapons that the Turkish government had sent to them. Suddenly the trumpets of the Turkish Army called and the Turk soldiers with the gangsters attacked on our village. The firing began from both sides. As our villagers had decided to fight till the end and die as honored people or to kill their enemy. Together with our leader, we made a decision, according to which no Turk would enter our village. We were full of strength and resolution. We were ready to protect our fatherland and our houses till the last drop of our blood. Our villagers adopted a resolution and weren't afraid to fight and to die for their country's sake. We had decided to stand up for our village and our families. There was nothing more expensive in our lives than our homeland and families.

With the resolution that we had adopted we wanted to make our enemies understand that they wouldn't win us; though our weapons were old, we were not cowards and would defend against their attacks. The Turks were heartless and barbarians, so they were going to attack on a village that had only 4000-5000 inhabitants, and most of them were women and children. The village was defenseless and unprotected against the attacks. They thought that they would seize our village easily. Yet, the Turks were very much mistaken in their plans. All the men of the village Bazmashen holding their weapons in their hands were standing near the borders ready to fight and kill each Turk, who would dare to come to our village and in this way we wanted to put an end to the Turkish violence.

The fight between our villagers and the Turks lasted for 5-6 hours. The Turk cannon fadders sent a message to the leader of our village. The message's information was the following; if we didn't surrender, they would fire on our village until it fell into ruin.

There was need to answer to this message. It was simply not the case that we could withstand their attacks. Moreover, if we surrender we would be slaughtered by all means. Therefore, it was reasonable to leave the village secretly. This was rather difficult and sorrowful thing. To leave everything for the enemies that our ancestors and we had gathered for centuries and to leave your fatherland could mean a shameful defeat. But there was no way out of that unbearable situation. We

were obliged to leave our churches, khachkars, houses, fields and gardens and we would lose the historical books and parchments scrolls. It was too difficult for us to leave everything to our enemies, who were barbarian, illiterate and cruel people.

It was really a very pathetic sight. All the villagers were crying. The screams and sobs of the poor children were louder than the thunders of the guns and cannons. The human heart was too fragile to overcome all this violence.

The Turkish government was guilty and he was to be blamed for all that. The government let its soldiers and gangsters to rob and kill a whole generation. It was their fault that hundreds of thousands of Armenians lost their houses; they were deprived from their fatherland, and now were spread all over the world.

When we discussed the present condition of our village, we came to the conclusion that the best solution to the problem was to leave the village. The men had to remain in their posts until the villagers left the village safely. According to our decision, no enemy would enter Bazmashen village as long as last woman or child would leave it. The village became totally deserted.

Mr. Gaspar Memishean was our leader at that time and he always tried to encourage and give us hope. Gradually people began to go to Mezre and hoped that there they would escape the nearest disaster. The Turks weren't man enough to enter our village. The village was deserted and only the men remained there, because they had to fight with the Turks. However, the men wanted to leave Bazmashen too. But the Turks had closed their way and it became difficult to leave the village.

Some lads tried not to pay attention to the Turks and somehow wanted to pass the way. But the Turk soldiers noticed them and fired their guns at the Armenian lads. The lads also shot, but as there were more Turks than Armenians were, the Turk soldiers killed the lads. Gaspar Memishean was one of those lads who fought very bravely during the attacks, but in the end, he was unluckily shot by the Turk, who was from Peshk. The death of Gaspar Memishean was a great loss for our village. He was one of the bravest sons of the village Bazmashen and had faithfully served in the village for many years.

The inhabitants of our village that had gone away had come and gathered near the hill called Vorbuk (orphan). Once, Khachatur Hekimean approached them and suggested their leaving Mezre. Otherwise, they all would be killed by the Turks. Mr. Hekimean said to them, "I know the Turks of Mezre well enough to advise you to leave Mezre as soon as possible and thus you'll save your lives."

Our poor villagers didn't know where to go. Some of them went to Sursur. Another group went and found shelter near Saray leaders. And the rest went to the mountains.

It was Sunday. The whole Bazmashen was crowded by the Turk gangsters. The whole village was robbed and destroyed. The gangsters crossed the village plundering and looting as they went. When the Turks finished with our village, the next subject to which they paid much attention became Sursur. People from three villages had come and gathered in Sursur. As soon as the Armenians heard that the Turk gangsters were coming to Sursur, they began to walk across Mezre. The Armenians from all the neighboring villages had gathered in Mezre and hoped that

the government would help them.

The situation wasn't better here. There was no food and people were starving. It was cold at nights. The Armenians were desperately seeking shelter from cold and wind. The children were hungry and thirsty, that's why they were crying all the time.

It was for the second time that the Armenians of Kharbert province met with such difficulties. Because of the Turkish government, they lost their historical memorials and were exiled from their fatherlands. Being tired and hopeless of all this violent actions, our nation day and night prayed, "Our Lord, have mercy on us and save us from the third disaster."

* * *

It was Monday. All the villages of the province Kharbert were robbed, destroyed and in fire. Clouds of thick black smoke covered the sky. The sun beams weren't visible.

It was an odd phenomenon. A few days before many people were wealthy and lived in peace and welfare. But a few days passed and they both the rich and the poor appeared in the same unbearable condition. They were all hungry, thirsty, and homeless.

A lot of people had lost their family members on their way out of the village. Almost everywhere were laying dead bodies. The Turk bullies cruelly slaughtered the Armenian nation by the order of their government. At that time, the village and the city Huseynik were still in peace and the population didn't feel the nearness of danger.

After ruining all the surrounding villages of Mezre, the Turk gangsters came and gathered in the place, where the troops of Mezre stayed. Suddenly a trumpet called and the Turk gangsters began to move toward the village Huseynik. Only the eye-witnesses could describe all that happened there, during a few hours. Everyone was crying and sobbing because of this awful sight. The children and women were screaming with excitement. Every one was horrified and waited for his or her turn of dying. Especially the young brides that held their little babies and pressed them to their breasts, prayed all the time and asked God, "Our Lord, please take our souls first, than the souls of our babies. We don't want to see them dying."

It seemed to me that the sun was setting earlier than usual, because it didn't want to see the barbarian actions of the human beings. In addition, the darkness was a suitable chance for the Turk bullies to do their dirty and brutal work.

People had problems at night too. Groups of people that had ran away from their own houses, now were dirty, hungry, and sleepless, and were tired of looking for somewhere, where they could have rest. They hadn't got any fire, candles, bed and nobody was able to sleep on the ground. Everything they had been the following: stones instead of pillows, the ground as a bed and the sky were blanket for them. Nearly nobody was able to sleep at that night. But at the same time nobody talked. Some people were lying on their coats and were lost in thoughts. They all hoped that one day fortune would smile on them too.

Despite our poor villagers, the Turk gangsters being satisfied with their plunder want to sleep deeply.

It was midnight. The excitement grew more and more. No one knew what would happen on the other day. Nobody was sure whether he or she would remain alive the next day or not. Many people slept deliriously and some others were nearly half-dead, because of the horror they felt during the day.

After the sunrise, the beams of the sun began to shine equally for both the evil and the good. One could hear the same words pronounced by the people's lips "God willing, save us from this disaster."

On Monday early in the morning, as per the instructions of the Turkish government all the cannons were taken to the city Tabukhlu and left on a high place. None of us could understand what it could mean. It seemed like the Turks were preparing for a war. Against whom were they going to fight? Were they going to fight against the rocks of Khayapachi or the Missionary?

I understood that during the last night the Turks attacked on Huseynik and robbed and plundered everything there. Now the city's turn came. Why should the Armenians of the city live in peace? Even the sight of the Turk gangsters made our villagers terrified. As soon as the homeless and fearful Armenians noticed the Turk gangsters, they came nearer to each other and held each other's hands as if they would save each other. The group of these homeless, disheartened, and fugitive Armenians looked like the corns of the fields and it seemed that the Turk gangsters had come to scythe the corns.

Unfortunately, my thoughts soon became reality. A few hours later, the gangsters began to climb up the ascending path that led from the valley to the city. They moved with unbearable commotion and we heard gunfire. In a few minutes, the whole city was in fire, especially those places that were populated mostly by the Armenians.

People were in a stable of panic. They realized quite well that they had to run away. But where to run? That was the point. The gangsters entered the Armenian houses and put the men to the sword. The Turks didn't even save the little children. They killed them right in front of the eyes of their mothers. The screams of the women could be heard everywhere. Their grief and sorrow was so great that they began to tear their hair roughly. There was no consolation for poor mothers. The Turk gangsters behaved according to their maternal barbarian instincts.

The Turk gangsters didn't even save the live of Eprat Golech and killed him too. They dishonored the female students and even took many Armenian lasses with them. The most shameful thing was that the male couldn't stand on the dignity of their wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters. A rough gangster, who was from Khangegh, took very beautiful Armenian lass with him. The relatives of the lass tried to gather enough money and thus bribed the Turk gangster. So they hardly managed to persuade the Turk to release the poor girl.

The Turk gangsters and soldiers were under the orders of their government and had to kill everyone without exception. The whole city was in fire and those Armenians, who escaped from the previous disaster, didn't have any idea what was coming up on next.

Destroying all the villages and the city, our barbarian enemies weren't still satisfied with the bloody massacre that they had started. The Armenians, who had gathered near Mezre, had some jewelries, money, or just new clothes on them. Of course, the Turks hadn't overlooked it. They had their eyes on us and they didn't lose the opportunity of robbing us once again. They took whatever they saw and it was almost impossible and useless to resist. To protest would mean death.

Subsequently, people that escaped from the massacre gave everything the Turks demanded. The poor villagers were willing to give everything just to stay alive.

Such things as holiness, dignity, mental strength, and all these serious things were on a knife-edge. Many people were forced to stay nakedly in the square, because the Turks' will was that.

Only three villages of the province Kharbert were saved from the violent actions of the Turks and the massacre. They were the village Egheg, Saray and Vardadil due to the Cheotely Zates, who didn't forget from which nation they had originated, and in fact helped and gave lots of support to the Armenians. Many centuries ago, their ancestors were Armenian leaders by the name Keshish Oghli in Kharbert province. Till our days, some Saray leaders kept their names and were called Keshish Oghli.

They received hundreds of thousands of Armenians in their houses, but didn't take anything for that. They gave us food, clothing, and shelter, i.e. the main things that the human being needs. When the Cheotely Zates of the village Egheg heard about the massacre going on in Husaynik, they immediately rode on their horses and hurried to the place of massacre. As soon as they arrived in Huseynik, they ordered the Turk gangsters to stop any kind of violence. The Cheotely Zates spit in the faces of the Turk leaders of Huseynik and said, "You are merciless people. You are slaughtering a whole poor nation which doesn't have any weapon or army."

It was Wednesday. The massacre and all the violent actions were stopped. The Turk gangsters returned to their houses in order to have rest and enjoyed looking at the plunder and the fortune that they had made during the last days. They had taken away everything from the Armenian houses. Now their houses were filled by the Armenian jewelries, furniture, money and etc. Our clothes, food, money, jewelries and many other valuable things now were decorating the common dirty houses of the miserable people, who always wore *trekh* (the cheapest kind of shoes) and common grey pants.

Only the population of Mezre, Egheg and Saray escaped the bloody massacre. Owing to the dexterity and wisdom of the Cheotely Zates of the village Egheg, our villagers were now free and in safety. They managed to save the lives of many defenseless people.

However, the people had gathered near Mezre and had been expelled from their own houses, they still didn't even have an idea what they were sentence to. Their brutal enemy hadn't finished his dirty work yet. The Turk gangsters wanted to ruin everything. So it came the turn of destroying all the houses and buildings. They took with them the doors with the purpose of making fire of them in winter. Then they burnt the Armenian houses to the ground and watched the scene with great

satisfaction and pleasure.

The situation was getting worse and worse. The Turk gangsters attacked on the men and the women and tearing took off their clothes and burst into cynical laughter. They felt satisfied with the things that they had got due to their violent actions.

The villagers of Bazmashen remained in Mezre for six days, starved, and they were tormented by feelings of insecurity. Then they returned to our village under the control of two policemen. At the very sight of the village, many women fell unconscious onto the ground. The poor villagers couldn't believe their eyes. How could their village turn into such ruins in six days? The picture was horrifying and shocking. All the houses were completely destroyed. From the four hundred houses of Bazmashen village, now there stood only fifty half-ruined houses.

Returning to their village the poor inhabitants of Bazmashen had to stay in those half-ruined houses, where there was no food, no drink, no bed, no pillow, no blanket and etc. The worst thing was to look at the starving children, who ate nothing during the last days. It was unbearable to hear the screams of the breast-fed babies. Their mothers' breasts didn't produce milk anymore and they were starving. The innocent babies had gone pale and were crying all the time. Alas, what could their poor mothers do? Seeing this condition, the old of our village were heart-broken and depressed. With all the good will in the world, they would never be able to forget those days.

The Turkish government knew about the miserable conditions in which the Armenian villagers had appeared. But they didn't care about us and didn't do anything in order to help the survivors of the massacre. The Turkish government had a casual attitude towards us. Becoming an eye-witness of such violent actions and facing the indifferent treatment of the Turks, one could wish to stop to believe in God. Why did he let a whole nation starve in this way? Why God didn't save our babies? Everyone had these questions, but there was no answer for those questions. From the other hand, everyone prayed to God for an end to his or her sufferings. Some people prayed to be forgiven for their sins.

There was one way out of that situation. Those villagers, who had got any relatives in Mezre, asked them for help. In order to save their families, they borrowed some money, clothes, and food. For some time our poor villagers endured such miserable existence until they would be able to provide for their families themselves.

It was at that time, that the Americans sent and provided the Armenian nation with the humanitarian aids. Actually, it saved the people from many discomforts. But it had its bad sides too, i.e., who were members of the Protestant Party got more help than the others. The same scene was with the Catholic Community. That's why these two communities didn't want to lose the suitable moment and took full advantage of it. Many people went and became members of those parties in order to get more aids.

The villagers of Bazmahen informed about the bloody massacre to their relatives, who lived in America. Soon they got the necessary aids by their relatives. Thus, our villagers were able to rebuild their half-ruined houses, found food, and

drink for their families. Gradually they managed to set up normal conditions in the village. The reconstruction began and soon no one could believe that a month ago the bloody massacre was ruining the same village. Now the villagers of Bazmashen lived in peace and comfort. They began to live in welfare.

Only one person remained safe and sound from all this violence. He was Kurd Oghli, Varderes Minoyean, who went and found shelter near the Kurds during the bloody massacre. Varderes Minoyean saved his skin and soul near the Kurds. He was full of fun and consequently was a good joker. So he managed to amuse the people. Besides, when he returned to our village he tried his best to make fun of anything in order to make the villagers laugh and forget the awful past.

Before the spring would come, the inhabitants of Bazmashen somehow forgot the past and were ready to work in their fields again. The fields in Bazmashen village were again being crowded by people. The villagers worked hard, but their cheerful voices and laughter didn't stop. No one was able to believe that the same people six months ago were starving somewhere, out of their village.

Yes, really time works wonders.

The Fields and the Mountains

The fields in our village had their special names. Those fields that were to the northern side of the village were called New Spring, Lachak, Vardenik, Kran Spring, Karmrots, Barak Champa, Aghuesker, Jror, Cheruk, Baktin, Pitak Spring, Mets Tegher, Chalka Yetev, Ero Spring, Prtel, Tzeni, Mormeninut, Chrnut and Kharaeaz.

The fields that situated to the West had the following names: Srmay Pos, Mugharan, Kavdar, Katnaghbyur, Vlatsek, Sev Hogher (black lands), Kaghchnut, Dzorgeghapos, Otsman Kar, and the Spring of the Oskoes.

The southern fields were called Khachkar, Pztik Daruk, Tapin Tump, Tap, Khan Spring, Aregin, Pztik Tap (small Tap), the Spring of the Michaels, Cherkez, Orin Spring, the Spring of the Khazars, Sarerun Arjev, Khanli Teren, Kepurtin, Khrachtin, Pano Kprder, the Places of the Baloes, Timartin, Pesein Tegher, the Spring of the Chikarchoes, Sandukhov Hor, Oran Keskeoprin.

The eastern fields and springs had the following names: Gyughi Spring, the Spring of the Narchoes, near which there were many large gardens with fruit trees, the Spring of Mztes Khayo, Gerezmanots (graveyard), Blur (hill), the Spring and the Gardens of the Khazars, the Fields and the Spring of the Onans, Pzti Pachek, Mztes Sego Chay, the Spring of the Poloes, Atatin, the Spring of the Petoes, Kotrats Aghbyur, Karmrotsi Ayginer, the Spring of the leader, the Spring of the Goleches and the Terzoes, Sandukt, Allahepkertin, Anaektin, Hoghdar, the Spring of the Terwishes, the Spring of the Malkhases, Khula Blur, Kharatach.

Bazmashen village had four mountains. One of them situated between the fields of Datem, Khulbank and Bazmashen and was called Mount Mariam. The second highest mountain was Mount Suru that situated between our village, Hindzor and Hinagarak. Mount Varbuk was near Mezre and the road, where Khan Spring was.

This mountain had many caves and one of them was the cave of St. Zakaria. Dzaguts Hor also was a big cave there. There were many rumors about Dzaguts Hor. This cave was very large, that's why people said that the other end of the hole reached the house of the Eroes. The mouth of the cave was very narrow. However, several times, the lads of our village tried to enter the cave and reach its end, but they all failed to do that. It was too dark under the ground and their candles weren't enough to show the way, besides that it was too cold inside. Dzaguts Hor remained a mysterious cave for us. Sometimes, we heard voices from inside or we just let our imagination run away with us.

The old of our village told us, that those caves had been dug by their ancestors for a certain purpose. Whenever the enemy attacked on them people entered those caves. Especially they entered Dzaguts Hor from the end that was near the house of the Eroes. Then they came out from the other end and appeared in the hill of St. Zakaria. The caves gave a good chance to the people to escape the danger. Thus owing to the wisdom of the villagers, the enemy's attack on the village failed. Moreover, the soldiers began to run away.

Very often, some noise could be heard in the village. When the villagers entered the cave, they began to walk along the end of it, but, of course, they talked with each other. And the wind that flew from St. Zakaria, entered the cave and brought the echoes of their words back to the village. Perhaps this was a true story.

The last mountain that was the lowest one compared with the others was called Chechkarut. It was the nearest mountain to our village. The lands of Mount Chechkarut were red. Our villagers used to gather big stones from there and made various plates, cups, large and small jars of them. They made such huge jars, where people could fill 75 liters of wine. Some villagers made even tonirs (ground oven).

Mount Chechkarut had its superiority. There were many *chechkars* there. These stone wasn't heavy and fragile. It was a very solid kind of stone and didn't break easily. Moreover, if you used a hammer for breaking it, chechkar wouldn't fully break into pieces, only some small pieces would be broken.

Except chechkar, people used all the stones of that mountain for their needs. In order to use chechkar the villagers needed a specialist and a special machine. If it happened so that the relatives of our villagers tried to sent that special machine from abroad, the Turkish government forbade its exploitation in the village. They thought that the villagers thought of a conspiracy against them.

All the Turks watched the Armenians with envious eyes. They didn't want that obedient nation to progress in anything. Wherever the Armenians got something valuable or new, the Turks abducted it shamelessly. That's why those Armenians, who were watchful, made great efforts in order to get friends with a powerful Turk official so that to be on the safe side.

At first, the inhabitants of the village Bazmashen began to rebuild their houses with their own means. Taking into consideration that brick was more advantageous and cheaper, the villagers began to build their new houses of brick. Besides, there was one more great advantage too. Brick was preferable, because it was easy to find and get it. So it became preferable not only by the inhabitants of Bazmashen, but by the neighboring villages too. In their opinion, the brick didn't differ from

the other kinds of stones. The villagers made the bricks with great care. They used clay, lime, and sand and made solid bricks for their houses. All those things that were necessary for baking bricks they could find in our stony mountains. The villagers baked about thousand bricks daily. But they couldn't use them at once. It needed 3-4 days for the bricks to become solid and useful. Of course, sunny weather played great role in this work. Afterward our villagers arranged the bricks and the building of the new houses began.

The brick walls were much more solid than the others were. It would be difficult to break and they wouldn't be crushed down easily, especially, when a master had built the house. The rains and the snow would make those brick walls more solid. Therefore, the Armenian landlords thought how to protect themselves.

It was rather difficult to go 5-6 miles away from the village and bring the stones. The lads of our village took a few carriages pulled by two horses or donkeys and went to the feet of the mountains in order to gather stones and bring to the village. People used different stones for building houses like checkkar, limestone, and sandstone. The houses that were built with such solid stones and with such carefulness remained for more than hundred years. There were even such ancient houses that had been built centuries ago, but their walls were still solid.

As a rule, the houses in Bazmashen were on two floors. Usually in winter, the villagers lived on the second floors of their houses, and in summer, just vice versa, on the first floors. In summer, when it was too hot, the young even went to sleep on the roofs of their houses.

Returning from America, the young wanted to build new modern houses, because now their tastes differed from the others. This caused irreconcilable conflicts in the Armenian houses. Very often arguments arose between the old and the young. Sometimes, the lads left their houses and went to build their own modern house. In some cases, the brides began to quarrel with their father-in-law or mother-in-law. They became a little bit disobedient, because their husbands had brought some golden jewelry for them. During the last years, many old customs were changed. For example, the national costume of the women became much more colorful.

The most important parts of the village houses were the dining-rooms, the ground ovens, the stables, the cellars and the attics. The door of the dining-room opened straight to the street. The stable was in the middle. There was another room, which served the people as bathroom and usually the women did their washing there. Near that room there was a well. The sides of wells were usually covered with brick or stone, and there was a small wall at the top of the well. Therefore, it wasn't difficult for the villagers to obtain water. Near the door of the dining-room, there were stairs that led to a large room. Going downstairs one could see the tonir and half of that room was used as kitchen, where the meals were cooked or prepared.

The kitchen had 50 feet breadth and 60 feet length. It was in that room, where women used to keep their kitchen utensils; frying pans, casseroles, tea sets, cups, plates, glasses, bottles, trays, jars, vases and etc. Most of these things were made of copper and every year, the landladies washed and cleaned them as if they were of

silver.

There were two other rooms in village houses too. These rooms were used as bedrooms. The villagers didn't forget to build porches onto the sides of their houses, where they often gathered to play chess or backgammon in summer evenings.

We had a few villagers, whose work was to make different jars, cups, pots, and plates of clay. There were even some landladies in Bazmashen that could bake different things of clay with their own hands. They made large clay jars that could contain maximum 50-60 liters of wine.

If there were ten women in a house, each of them had its corner in the dining-room, where they kept their big chests, in which they kept needles, scissors, thimbles, threads, and spinning wheels.

A corridor, which was near the dining-room, led to the attic of the house, where people stored tools, furniture, clothes and many other things. Every house had its cellar. Usually the cellars had 30 feet length and 40 feet breadth. On one side of it, near the wall, people put the large clay jars full of red wine. Near the jars, there were a few big boxes full of wheat, lentil, pea, rice, and other cereals. There were also such special jars in which the villagers kept khaurma and sour vegetables. The landladies kept candies, nuts, dried fruit, and honey in their cellars. Only the landlady had the keys of the cellar door and every day she was to decide what to cook for the dinner.

When the dinner time came, the brides laid on two tables. The men sat around a special table and in their turn the women and the lasses around another table. If there were more than 30-40 members in the family, the landlady put 50-60 breads on the tables. It had become a habit that all the members of the family had to be present during the dinner. It would be considered a sin to begin dining without saying the Lord's Prayer. The tables were full of different dishes and if unexpected guests came suddenly, there would be enough food for them too.

As I mentioned before, every house had a stable near by. In addition, if one went upstairs the stable there was a big room. The villagers used those rooms mostly in winter time. Every family gathered in that room and either worked or played something. The landlady and the young brides sat by the window spinning for hours. The lasses liked to knit pairs of socks. Some grandfathers sat and played backgammon; others gathered their grandchildren around them and told many stories from their past life. Sometimes, they told very interesting and unbelievable fairy tales to their little grandchildren. In their turn, the boys used to tell amusing stories, joked, and consequently cheered up their families. They stayed in that room till 10 o'clock. They used to sing many songs during those evenings.

Here is one of those songs:

The boy: What a pretty little girl!
 She is standing near the wall,
 She is wearing a woolen blouse,
 She has a silk scarf on her head.
 The sun is shining brightly above,

A lad saw her there.
He went and told his mother,
His mother liked this girl
And sacrificed a lamb for her.

The girl: I want a wealthy boy,
I want a pair of diamond earrings,
I want a full cellar,
I want a chest full of presents,
I want a cozy house
And I want to live like princess.

The boy: I want a humble girl,
I want her to have long hair,
I want her to be rosy-cheeked,
I want her to be black-eyed
And I want her to be a good landlady.

It was an old custom that before going to bed everyone had to say the Lord's Prayer and only after that, they all went to sleep.

Near the stable, there was a special place, where the villagers kept their garden equipments like wheelbarrow, saw, hoe, fork, watering can, shovel bucket, sickle, shears, and many other things.

Every family had these equipments and tools. Each member of the family had its share of work, and did it without any complaints or displeasure. They always worked together harmoniously. The brides and the lasses worked equally with the lads and in the house, and in the fields. Those, who were lazy, became to be mocked all the time. Eating nutritious food, breathing fresh air and living in peace, the villagers were red-cheeked and very healthy. This was the way the villagers lived in Bazmashen.

The Building of the New School

In 1898, a great number of the young generation came back from America. At that time, the village Bazmashen was in good economical state. However, the Turkish government put a great deal of pressure on the Armenians. It seemed like people didn't have the previous strength any more. Whenever they spoke to a Turk or an official, they couldn't protest, people could only agree with them through force of circumstances. Years ago, they could stay in their fields for night. Now, before the sunset everyone had to return to his house.

Under these circumstances the young, who had returned from America, called a meeting for building a new school. During this meeting, a decision was made according to which a letter was to be written. In addition everybody, who had been

present at that meeting, had to put his signature under it. They were Michael Ahmatchanean, Mhsi, Karo Oxuz Khazarean, Poghos Chikarchi Asaturean, Aptal Golech Poghosean and Hakob Misho Muskhean – the representatives of the Company of American Studies in Bazmashen, that was opened in 1892.

We thoroughly explained our purpose in this letter and demanded that the necessary money would be sent not later than in two months.

All the villagers supported us as they could. Some of them provided us with wood. Another group of the villagers gave us a great amount of brick. Due to the support of our villagers, the building of the new school was fully finished by the end of October. We even managed to finish repairing inside the building. We employed two teachers and the new school was opened. Starting from that day the children of our village had the opportunity of being educated in the new school of Bazmashen by the modern methods.

* * *

During those days, nearly every family bought new large lands. They could afford to buy new lands owing to the hard-working young people, who had returned from America and now were helping their parents. They wanted to become landowners. So there were no free and ownerless lands in the village Bazmashen. Every house, garden, field, and land had its owner. In fact, our village became a kind of a town and people from the surrounding villages came to Bazmashen for shopping. Thus, our villagers made good fortune and became wealthier, than they had been before, because they stopped paying taxes to the Turks, and expended much money.

* * *

Coming back from America, our villagers didn't want to sit without working. They were full of different ideas about the political parties. Moreover, the Ramkavar Azatakan Party and the Dashnaktsakan Party wanted to involve more people in their activities.

Mr. Margar Ahmatchanean, Barber Karapet Mztes Ohanean, Karapet Mantashik Mztes Gogoean were very courageous men and did their best during that period. These men saved the lives of Hakob and Habet. They kept them in the Mortans' house for four weeks. Unluckily it was impossible to save them later, because someone had betrayed those two brave lads. Therefore, we didn't know what happened to them.

There was a man in our village, called Teli Karo, who didn't know anything about our national activities. However, in fact the people of the surrounding Muslim villages got horrified at the sight of him. He didn't care whether the man standing before him was an official or common mortal. If someone tried to protest him, he shot and killed that person without any conversation.

The Pashes' Nikoghos was just like Teli Karo. He always did whatever he wanted without taking into consideration the control of the government.

Together with these two men, the Khorsiks' Grigor also did what he wanted. He was a very vengeful guy. Once, when the Turks had tried arresting to take him and make a soldier, he alone fought against them.

Political Life

In 1900, I was a storekeeper in Mezre, in the province Kharbert. It happened so that one day I met Semerchean Heri. He had returned from America and it was for the first time I saw him, after his return. We had been closely cooperating together in the Hnchakean Party in America for a long time.

I invited him to dine with me in my house and he accepted my invitation with great pleasure. That evening I closed my shop a little bit earlier than usual, and together we went to my house. On the way to the house, we began to talk about the political life in America. Mr. Semerchean informed me that he had found a way how to get weapon, for all our friends. He said to me, "It's too easy to make friends with people, but it's too difficult to find weapons for your friends. So now I'm trying to find enough weapons for everybody."

"How can you bring weapons till Kharbert?" asked I suspiciously.

Two public figures had come to Bazmashen. Their names were Hakob and Habet. I told Mr. Semerchean that I had heard about those men. These two public figures were very brave, adroit, and had only revolutionary ideas. So we began to think how to make them useful in transportation of weapons. First of all, we decided to see our friends, who had returned from America. On Sunday, we called a meeting in Bazmashen. During that meeting, we explained to our friends what was going on and how we could involve more friends in this work. After discussing a few other questions, everybody left, including me. I went to open my store.

Two weeks later, Mr. Semerchean again came to Mezre. This time, we met each other in the house of his father-in-law. The latter was my neighbor. We went to a separate room in order to have a private talk. Mr. Semerchean wanted to know what I had done. I informed him that all our friends agreed to help us. He said that he had arranged everything. Our friends, Hakob and Habet, were going to help some men to pass the borders of Russia and then leave for America. Thus, Hakob and Habet would earn money with which they later would bring some weapon to Bazmashen. The transportation of the weapons would be done in the following way. They were going to buy some clothes with some part of the money. Habet and Hakob would fill the boxes with clothes, but at the same time, they would put weapons and cartridges in those boxes. They would make special boxes and would hide the weapons in such way that if the policemen frisked the boxes, they would find only clothes. This was our present plan. As soon as we would have enough weapons, we would start to make bombs. For that work, we had got all the necessary materials. Here, we finished our conversation.

Months passed. Once I had the chance of going to the city, where I saw Mr. Semerchean in happiness. He asked me to be his guest that evening by all means. Despite my will, I had to decline his invitation, because I was a storekeeper and consequently I had to keep my store open. But Mr. Semerchean put his feet down and finally persuaded me to go to his house at least for two hours. I gave up and agreed to go to his house. When we reached his house, my friend introduced me to Habet and Hakob. My happiness didn't have borders at that moment. The guys were very interested to know about our friends in Bazmashen and their names. Giving the information they needed, I bade them good-bye and returned to my store.

These two brave guys, Hakob and Habet, had already started their dangerous work. They had transported a great amount of weapon to Mr. Semerchean's house. During this work, a famous Armenian deceived them into paying the money. That's why for a long time this argument didn't have its end.

* * *

Mr. Heri Semerchean, who lived in the city, had a Turk neighbor. During that summer, the Turk neighbor with his family left for his cottage. Many people used to spend their summer holidays in their cottages, both the Turks and the Armenians. Those families that had got cottages went and stayed there for 3-4 months.

Therefore, Mr. Semerchean taking advantage of the absence of his Turk neighbor didn't lose the chance of transporting as many weapons as possible. However, a few weeks later, suddenly the Turk neighbor came to his house in order to take something that he had forgotten there. Taking the thing, the Turk wanted to check whether he had closed all the windows or not. While he was checking his windows, he looked through the window and all of a sudden noticed Mr. Semerchean, who was putting the weapons in special boxes at that moment. The Turk neighbor didn't waste his time and at once informed the Turkish government about that. Half an hour later Mr. Semerchean's house was completely surrounded by the Turk soldiers. Nevertheless, the family members didn't lose strength at all. Especially Heri's mother and sister put a big casserole on the gas stove. They filled it with water and put all the cartridges in it. They did it on purpose, because they didn't want to make the Turks suspicious. As soon as the Turk soldiers entered the house, they began to search for the weapons. Soon they found the weapons, chained Mr. Semerchean's hands, and imprisoned him. But they didn't find the cartridges.

Mr. Semerchean suffered many terrible tortures in prison. In this way, the Turks wanted to make him say the names of his friends and the place of the cartridges. Despite all his suffering, Mr. Semerchean didn't confess. The Turk officials got very angry. In the evening, they caught Heri Semerchean and threw from the fifth floor of the prison. Luckily, Mr. Semerchean didn't die; his both arms were hurt and his shins had been broken. When the officials saw that he was still alive, they took and thrust him into his cell in that condition.

After these incidents, Mr. Astur Jamkochean, Stepan Der Stepanean and many others were arrested. Moreover, some investigations were going on in Mezre. In addition, Professor Tenekechean with about fifteen other men was arrested in the city.

Under the influence of these brutal actions, the Armenian inhabitants of Kharbert were hopeless and lived in horror. Each Armenian kept with him or her documents, manuscripts, lyrics of patriotic songs, and weapons. Knowing the incidents in 1895, the Armenians could imagine what would happen. Their fear was so great that whenever an Armenian went for shopping and it was his turn in the queue to buy things, he stepped backward and let the Turk to buy before him. There was increasing pressure among people. The Turk storekeepers preferred to sell their goods to the Turks even with lower prices than with higher to the Armenians. Day by day, the situation was getting worse and worse, Armenians couldn't sleep at nights.

At that time, the man, who hadn't given the necessary money to Hakob and Habet, took advantage of the suitable moment and informed the government that Hakob and Habet were dangerous guys. Getting this information, the Turkish government did everything to find and arrest those two men. Policemen stood on every road. Besides that, many spies were sent to all the Armenian villages. They even enquired the Kurds that lived in the hills.

As soon as Eprat Golech's friends heard that news, they took Hakob and Habet to the one end of the city and hid in a house, which was in the Khachamues' garden. Then they realized that it was impossible to stay there any longer, and consequently left for Khulvank, where they remained for a few weeks.

At that time, the guard of that monastery was Mr. Nshan Alpiarean. The Father Superior of the monastery told the guard about everything. In his turn, Mr. Alpiarean went and told Hakob and Habet that they had better find another hiding place for them. He said that if they remained in Khulvank they wouldn't be in safety. Besides, if the Turk policemen found Hakob and Habet in the monastery, they would punish not only them, but also all the Armenian population of Kharbert. The two brave men got the meaning of Alpiarean's words and agreed to leave the monastery soon. But they were strangers in Kharbert province, so there was need of guide.

Taking into consideration all those things, Hakob and Habet decided to leave for Ashuan next day. Later they would pass to the other side of the River Eprat. There they would be safe and sound.

With this decision, next day, early in the morning, they started off for Eprat. It took them four hours to get to the place from where people crossed river by ferry boats and appeared on the other bank. When the Turk ferry-man saw the two strangers, he didn't want to ferry the boat. He began to ask who they were and where they were going. Hakob and Habet tried their best to persuade the man not to betray them. They even offered some money. But it didn't help, the Turk official was very stubborn and didn't agree to ferry them to the other bank.

In the evening, the two friends understood that it was impossible to persuade the Turk ferry-man in anything. So they decided to return to Ashuan and to stay in the

house of one of their relatives.

That behavior of the Turk official proved that the Turkish government was keeping watch over that area too. When the Turk policemen came to that place, the ferry-man at once informed them about the two strangers. The police officers went to Ashuan according to the depositions of the ferry-man. When they got to Ashuan, they began to enquire about the two strangers and at last found out where they were staying.

The policemen entered the house. All the members of the family had gathered in the dining-room and were dining together. The old of the house stood up and invited the policemen to dine with them. But the police officers refused saying that they had come to arrest their two guests. This time Hakob and Habet invited them to dine together and later they would discuss the problem. However, the Turk policemen again refused and told them that they had got the right to arrest the two strangers. The old of the house answered, "Than you must wait until we finish our meal."

"We don't have time to wait. Hurry up! Get ready to leave," ordered one of the policemen.

"Hey, wait, what have we done? We haven't injured anyone and we are not criminals. We are common travelers and we have got families. Have you got a decree for arresting us?" asked Hakob.

"You are wasting our time. It's a useless conversation," said the first policeman and ordered his friends to strike Hakob and Habet.

This time, the landlord of the house tried to save the situation. He offered ten golden pennies, but unfortunately, he failed too. The family did everything possible in order to save their guests, but everything was useless and in vain.

When the police officers tried to arrest the two strangers, Hakob made a sign to Habet and they both quickly took out their guns. In a few minutes, two of the policemen were lying unconscious on the floor and the third one was badly injured.

The brave friends didn't lose even a minute. They came out of the house, jumped over the hedge, and soon disappeared in the darkness. All the night they had been walking and before the sunrise, they reached Khulvank without being noticed by anyone. The guard of the monastery received the unexpected guests without asking anything.

Next morning, the news of the incident that had happened in Ashuan, was spread all over the province Kharbert like a flash of lightning. The government immediately sent 25 soldiers and a few inspectors to the place of the incident.

Without any exception, all the members of the family, where our brave friends had dined, old and young they both were arrested. The Turk soldiers broke everything in their house and returned to Mezre. Here the whole family was imprisoned.

All the Armenians appeared in a condition that was full of hazard and fear. But who had done those awful things? Nobody knew the answer to that frequently asked question. The government was sure that it was the work of the Armenians. Subsequently it began its investigations and arrested many people. Most of the Armenians managed to dig the ground of their gardens and hid their weapons,

history books, and old manuscripts under the ground in order not to be suspected by the Turks. All the roads and villages were under investigations of the government. Armenians didn't even dare to talk about these events with each other. They were in fear of being heard. It seemed to them that even the walls had ears.

The prisons of the city and Mezre were now full of Armenian prisoners. Once a day, they were brought to the court for being examined. Every day Heri Semerchean, who was almost crippled, was brought to the court. Four soldiers put him on a stretcher, carried from the prison to the court, and then back from the court to the prison. After the interrogation at the court, the prisoners were brought back to prison under the control of many armed soldiers. This scene gave the impression that the soldiers had caught captives from the front of the war and were coming back.

Is it worth to mention here the discrimination that the government showed to the Armenians and the Turks?

Once, a year before the incidents in Ashuan, Ohan Terzean was killed, who was from the village Bazmashen. He was about 25 and was a very lively lad. He had finished his work in Mezre and together with his donkeys was returning home. When Ohan reached the place called Sandukt, the Turk gangsters attacked on him, robbed, and killed him. Moreover, taking the donkeys of the deceased they ran away. When Mr. Terzean's family noticed that he was late, they informed all their relatives about it. The young of the village and the relatives began to look for Ohan. They had been searching for Ohan all the night. Only next day in the morning, they found the dead body in a hole and a pile of stones on it.

The dead body was brought to Mezre and the government was informed about that sad incident. The relatives of the deceased demanded from the government to find the murderers and to punish them. However, the Turkish government not only didn't find the murderers, but also didn't even pay any attention to their demands.

Where-as, when the incident happened in Ashuan a year later from this one, the government did everything possible to find and catch the murderers.

The two friends, Hakob and Habet remained in the monastery for a few days, but then they decided to change their place. In order to change their place they informed their friends about that decision. Their friends were Karapet Mhtesi Grigorean, Margar Ahmatchanean and Karapet Golech Mztes Ohanean. These friends lost no time in helping Hakob and Habet to move to another place. At last, with the help of their friends the two brave guys moved to a house in Bazmashen village, where a girl and a boy lived. This girl got married with Karapet Golechean. Her name was Mariam and now she lived with Karapet Golechean. This girl made dishes and took to the house, where Hakob and Habet lived. Mariam secretly brought food for them for a month, without making much noise and consequently she remained unnoticed by anyone.

Afterward these two friends lived safely in Mr. Vardan Shahpazean's house for two years, because the house was empty. Nobody lived in it.

When the Turkish government began its investigations with the purpose of finding the criminals of Ashuan, Hakob and Habet thought how to cross the River

Eprat. As I mentioned before, the government kept control on the province. But it was very necessary and important to find a way out of that intolerable situation. Hakob and Habet made up their minds to meet with mule keeper Zakar and discuss the matter with him. The government had banned to travel from one province into another without having a patent for that. Nevertheless, Zakar secretly used to take t with him people from one province into another. Many people confidentially left the country due to Zakar's cleverness and dexterity. Those people reached America and even became citizens of that country. Moreover, then they helped their families to move to America too.

Finally, we discussed the problem with Zakar and promised a great deal of money if he would agree to help Habet and Hakob to flee the country. But he told the two friends to stay in a place, from where it would be easier to run away. We found a house in Sursur, in which only a lad lived. Usually every morning the lad went to Mezre and worked in a shop. This house was far from the village and was surrounded by gardens all around. The two brave guys immediately moved to this house from Bazmashen. Days and weeks passed, but Zakar couldn't find the suitable moment for fleeing from the house. Every time he found some reasons. He said that he had to find two more people and only then, he would help them to flee together.

It was autumn. One day early in the morning, when I was going to open my store, I saw that many soldiers with their horses left the Army and quickly walked along Pavlik Road. I asked one of the soldiers where they were going so early in the morning. The soldier replied indifferently, "We are going to Sursur to arrest some Protestants." As I heard this news, my feet stuck on the ground and I was tongue tied. My first thought was Hakob and Habet had been betrayed. I didn't go to my shop. I just came back home under bad impressions and in bad mood. My wife wanted to know why I returned, but as I was tongue-tied, I couldn't explain anything to her. I just went towards the window from where Sursur could be seen. Besides, the gunfire could be heard in our village. I made a sign to my wife to come near and showed her the horrifying scene; Sursur was covered by the smoke of the gunpowder. We could see the gunshots and hear the gunfire. "Hakob and Habet are being arrested now," explained I to my wife, as soon as I was able to speak again.

A violent struggle was going on there. The Turkish troops had surrounded the house. The struggle continued for a long time. At last, the Turk soldiers decided to throw bombs through the windows and to blow up the house. They wanted the two friends to die burning. However, when the two brave guys guessed this intention of the Turks, they opened the door, came out of the house. They thought it would be sense to yield, as there was no chance to escape death. When they came out, they throw away their guns. The Turk soldiers attacked on them and after hitting them chained up their hands. Afterward Habet and Hakob were taken to Mezre, where they were imprisoned.

Who had denounced them to the Turks? Who was the traitor? Nobody knew that. None of us suspected mule keeper Zakar in it. Everyone was sure that the latter was a reliable, honest, and patriotic man. We did everything in order to find

out who had denounced our friends. We even promised some money to the Turk officials, but it was of no use. However, it was quite clear that an Armenian had done that dirty work.

A little bit later, the owner of the house, the lad that worked in Mezre, was arrested and imprisoned too. There was such point of view that mule keeper Zakar had told his relatives about the two friends. So perhaps one of his relatives had suddenly opened the secret.

It didn't matter who was the traitor. The saving of these two brave guys was indispensable. All the Armenians tried many methods in order to extenuate the case. Everything was useless. The prisoners had been tortured for months and the court listened to the case for a long time. We promised a great deal of money to the Turk Pashas and police officers so that to extenuate the circumstances. But everything was in vain. There was no simple remedy to save the lives of those two friends.

The villagers somehow managed to save all the prisoners connected with that certain case. Only these two heroes, Hakob and Habet, weren't saved from the claws of the government.

On October 4 in 1905, the Turks were celebrating a holiday called Khurpan Payrami. On that occasion, the Turks used to offer sacrifices to Allah. The Turks were in happiness and rejoicings as on that day they were going to make human sacrifices.

It was secretly announced that on October 4, early in the morning, the two Armenian brave men would be beheaded and only the Muslims had the right to be present at that punishment. When the Armenians were still sleeping, early in the morning, Habet and Hakob were taken out of the prison and brought to the square of Mezre under the control of many heavily armed soldiers and policemen. The two heroes were forced to stand 3 feet far from each other. The square was crowded among the Turk people, policemen, and soldiers there was an Armenian priest in the square of Mezre. The latter had come in order to say his last words of spiritual consolation. After they had confessed their sins to God and the priest, Hakob and Habet were given the chance to say their last words. They said, "We are dying for our country's sake." Then their eyes were closed by black pieces of cloth, so that they could never see the sun and light again. The Turk executioner bared his arms, took the axe, and only after several attempts managed to cut down their heads.

Next day, the Armenians took the bodies of Hakob and Habet to the graveyard and buried there. Then they put tombstones on their graves. Before leaving the graveyard, everyone uttered sadly, "God rest their souls."

* * *

According to the choice that the Turkish government had made, transportation from province to province had become very difficult. In addition, they had banned the people to leave for abroad. That's why those, who had such intentions, were obliged to use unknown methods in order to achieve what they wanted.

Usually the parents advised their sons to leave Bazmashen at night and with as little noise as possible in order not to attract attention to their side. Though, years ago, when someone decided to leave the village, his parents and relatives gathered in his house and then in the afternoon bade him good-bye. So in those times the traveler left the village in day time. Many lads and dozens of families had left Bazmashen and who knew; maybe they all wouldn't come back at all.

Especially the mass emigration of the Armenians from Bazmashen began after Hakob and Habet were beheaded, because people weren't sure that they would stay alive. The pressure on Armenians grew more and more. Many Armenian parents wanted to save their children from the barbarian actions of the Turks. Consequently, the only way out of that unbearable situation was to send their children away from Kharbert. They wanted their children to go abroad and find shelter there. Hundreds of lives were threatened at that time.

In spite of this entire ambiguous situation, schools in Bazmashen were still open. Especially those schools that were foreseen for the girls and the children. Three teachers remained in the school of the children and only one teacher in the school of the girls. Usually the scholars of Eprat taught the children like Mr. Vardan Shahpazean and many others. In addition, a good scholar taught the girls in their school, which was built on a church with the assistance of the American Company of Educative Studies. The annual budget of these schools was about 60-70 golden pennies, which was being sent from America.

These schools differed from the ones that existed years ago in our villages. In those old schools, the students had to learn Narek, the Book of the Psalms and many sharakans (Arm. medieval church music). It took many years from the students to learn those books and songs. In these new schools, the students were taught to different languages like English, French, and Turkish with modern methods. They were also taught to national and general history, geography and many other subjects.

Thus, after many years of horror, the villagers of Bazmashen a little bit relaxed and livened up. Gradually life became easier for them. Some young people returned from America. The young thought about the political parties with enthusiasm. The political parties of those times were the Ramkavar Azatakan Party and the Dashnaktsakan Party. Each party was eager to rule both in schools and in churches too. Sometimes, it even happened that Father Superior's interference became necessary. These parties often sent their protestant letters to America, because the budgets of our schools depended on the Company of Educative Studies.

As an answer to those protests, the Educative Deputy Committee sent a strict instruction and those, who would ignore that instruction, they would face deportation.

After the Constitution

While the Armenian provinces lived in horror and while there was no security

in the country, in 1908, the government, declared about the Constitution. As if, it would make the principle of equality before the law for people.

People were happy to adopt Constitution in Mezre, and in the villages of Kharbert province. This news made the Armenians and the Turks forget about the past. Everyone was happy and parties were given everywhere. A procession was gathered. There were Armenians, and Turks in it. They went to the graveyard, put flowers on the graves of Hakob and Habet and a few Turks made a speech right there. In their speech, they mentioned that those two guys were actually heroes. How frank was this courtesy, the latest events gave the proof of it.

However, the Armenian population was reconciled with the barbarian Turk population that had been tyrants for centuries. The Armenians forgot about their sufferings, the violent actions, the destroying of their houses, the burning of the whole villages, the countless murders, the demolition and disappearance of old manuscripts and books, the ruining of many ancient churches and buildings, and finally the unbearable life that they lived for many years. Again, the Armenians wanted their country to progress in everything and they were ready to serve faithfully for the government.

During those days of freedom, the Armenian political parties began to work more actively and each party opened a club for him. The members of the Ramkavar Party in Bazmashen built their own club with the help of their friends, who lived in America. Their club had got a library and a large hall for meetings.

It became a usual thing that when meetings took place in those clubs, the Turk officials sit in on those meetings. They spoke about the Armenians with respect and commended the people, who died for their country's sake and the activists of the revolutionary movement. The government took advantage of the suitable chance and got the list of the names of all the members of the political parties. And those wealthy people, who didn't want even to hear about the political parties before the Constitution, they all now were eager to join one of the parties. However, alas, the Turks remained the same cruel Turks and refused to tolerate the same equality in which the Armenians were with them.

The massacre in Cilicia (Kilikia) was the first sign of the dissatisfaction of the Turks. However, this massacre didn't teach us a good lesson. The Armenians had to study the Turks' psychology and we had to see and to unfold the false behavior of the Turks. We couldn't imagine how rough and miserable was that nation. Their maternal instinct was to destroy, burn, loot and ruin everything. This nation didn't know to value the things. They didn't have any idea about rebuilding in general. The word prosperity was missed out from their speech and vocabulary.

The government got all the names of the members of the Armenian political parties, because they wanted to find out how we had brought weapons to our village. The inhabitants of Bazmashen village took advantage of it and wrote a few more names in those lists. Thus, they would get more weapons as members of the political parties.

In spite of the fact that before the Constitution common Armenian people couldn't have weapons with them, now the Turkish government itself gave weapons to the people. Only the members of the political parties had the right of

getting weapons. Of course, they were preparing something new for us. The false sympathy that the Turks expressed for the Armenians, kept us in deep sleeps until the Ittihat Party (Turkish political party) would get rid of all the secrets of the Armenians.

Getting information about the purposes of the Armenians, at last the Turks achieved their aim. Starting from the cities up to the smallest villages, the Turkish government knew what was going on there. They were informed how many lads were registered in the lists of the political parties.

All the Turks didn't like that now the Armenians were in freedom and in equality with them. They didn't show their grievance obviously, but were waiting for just an opportunity.

The Turkish government didn't want the European countries to be informed about the Armenian case, because it would make troubles for them. Therefore, they showed that they were ready and willing to please the Armenians, satisfy our demands and as if, they respected the rights of the minority.

During these years, the population of the village Bazmashen had doubled its forces and began to work harder than before. Especially landowners did their best in order to raise their weekly income. The villagers were very happy and thought that the freedom was full of good things. The violence was in past, and the women daringly went from village to village without any fear.

After the Constitution, the young of the village did everything possible for their schools and churches. They began to sing fearlessly those patriotic songs that before the Constitution, the government forbade to sing. Now Armenian songs could be heard everywhere like in the fields, in the mountains and in the ravines or caves. Those men, who liked weapons, were freely walking across the streets wearing some weapons.

This new life that began in our fatherland attracted the people, who went abroad from Bazmashen. So many young people came back to their country. Usually the returning people were at the age, when they had to go to serve the Army. Most of them had made good fortunes in America, of course, due to their hard work of many years. Therefore, they could afford to build new houses for them, buy lands and thus they made a life-enhancing for their families. The singles got married and formed families without having any doubts what was coming up next for them. This happiness attracted even those families, who had emigrated from their country. These families returned to their fatherland with great happiness and pleasure. They wanted to see their country after the Constitution and to enjoy their lives there. Alas, this condition didn't last for a long time. However, the village Bazmashen made a vital progress during this period. The daily life was changed, it had become modern.

The Patriarch's Visit of Sis City

After the Constitution, the Patriarch of Sis, Der Der Sahak had decided to visit his birth-place; i.e. the village Egheg in Kharbert province. He wanted to see his

relatives and friends, whom he hadn't seen for years. The Patriarch had sent a telegram to the church in Mezre and informed about his arrival. Everyone got busy preparing to receive the Patriarch of Cilicia (Kilikia) properly.

Being informed exactly when the Patriarch was arriving, the villagers of Bazmashen started the preparation of welcoming party early. The teachers of our schools gathered their students and went to welcome the Patriarch. Besides those groups, all the churchmen, the priests and many people went till Khangyugh to welcome the Patriarch of Kilikia. The students walked, the teachers followed them, then the churchmen and the priests came. And after them common people. People walked along the both sides of the road. The villagers of Khangyugh had gathered on the roofs of their houses in order to see the Great Guest of the day. Thousands of people came from Khanaghbyur till Khangyugh. They all were waiting for the Patriarch to arrive. The interest of the population of that province was very great, because they had never had the chance of seeing Der Der Sahak in their province.

Soon the carriage of the Patriarch was seen in the distance. They welcomed him loudly. The valley and the hills echoed back their voices. That day was a kind of holiday for the little children, who were eager to see the Patriarch, a man that was born in their village.

It was an exciting scene. When the carriage reached the place, where the crowd had gathered, the Patriarch of Cilicia came out of it, blessed the procession, and thanked for honoring him with their presence. Afterward the procession silently moved along Mezre. As they came near and near many people joined them and the students began to sing more loudly than before. On their way to Mezre the crowd again stopped the carriage, so the Patriarch had to bless the people once again. In their turn, people greeted and welcomed him.

This warm reception that had been arranged by the inhabitants of Bazmashen was really unforgettable. Moreover, Der Der Sahak Patriarch highly rated it. When he was saying Mass in Mezre, the Patriarch didn't forget to thank the people once again for our warm reception.

Before and After the War

After the Constitution, the Armenians had to serve the Army by all means. So our naive lads agreed to become soldiers and to serve for the Osmanian country.

Despite the equality that was given by the Constitution, the Armenian young men wearing the uniforms of the soldiers at last felt the falsehood of the Turks. The Armenian soldiers were given the cheapest uniforms and things, but the Turks got the best things in the Army. The young of the village Bazmashen told that they weren't treated well in the Army.

Those Armenian lads, who came back to their fatherland after the Constitution, they all now regretted and did their best to leave their country again. Thus, they again would be away from their families and relatives. This time many people wanted to emigrate together with their families, but they faced with a lot of difficulties and obstacles in order to provide themselves by patents. The

government deliberately made such difficulties for people so that to earn more money, in the case, when, all those things could be done more easily.

In 1914, when World War had already broken out, some preparing began in the internal provinces. Though the Turks still didn't take part in it, the government began to gather and enlist more soldiers in the Army. It explained its behavior in this way. If an enemy attacked on them, they wanted to be able to defend themselves and the country. In order not to make the Armenians suspect that they had already joined Germany, the Turks made various speeches for the Armenian soldiers. They didn't want to lose soldiers, just vice versa, now there was an urgent need for more soldiers.

All the young men of Kharbert province, including the young of the village Bazmashen, had already been registered as soldiers. Those men, who didn't want to become soldiers, instead of it, paid 50 pennies monthly. This was as a ransom and continued for eight months without raising any doubts amongst the villagers. The landladies of our village made underclothes and socks for the soldiers without any discrimination.

The naivety of the Armenians didn't last for a long time. The coming events proved that the Turkish government was secretly using them for its own motives. However, it had enlisted many Armenian soldiers, who were not older than 45. The fates of the Armenian soldiers were in the government's hands. The tortures and sufferings of the Armenian soldiers had begun before taking part in the war. An incident is quite enough to show the Turkish government's attitude towards the Armenian soldiers.

Once, Terwish Michael's son had fallen ill in the Army. Instead of curing the poor boy, the military doctors poisoned him. Soon after, when the lad's condition became worse they sent him back home.

As soon as the Armenian doctors examined the boy, they found out that he had been poisoned. Alas, it was too late to cure, to save the poor lad's life and a week later the Armenian young soldier died, and subsequently he was buried.

This incident made a strong and deep impression on our villagers, because the lad was from Bazmashen. After that incident, again a lot of people left the country. But they had hardly reached Polis, when the Turks made them all come back. Most of these people died on their way to the village. After all these incidents the Turkish government still made attempts to persuade the people that they were the sons of the same country, so they all had to do everything to win the war.

I have got a letter that had been written down a month before Turkey took part in the war. The author of that letter was my cousin, Hatchi Khachatur Golechian, who had four children and who was the only member of the family that worked.

Here is the content of that letter.

"My dear cousin, I want to inform you that now I'm a soldier, though I'm 50 years old. The government counted that I'm 45, so I'm in the Army already for three months. At first Armenian soldiers were given weapons too and we went to do military exercises for one hour a day. Now things have changed. They took away our weapons. At present, the Armenian soldiers are busy building new camps. The life has become unbearable here. I feel miserable and I'm hopeless. I

prefer to die. If it is not difficult for you and if you can afford, please send a few golden pennies to me. I'll sell my fields in here and I hope that with all that money I'll be able to pay the ransom and leave the Army. I wish I listened to your advice. In that case, I would be there now.

Waiting for your reply
Hatchi Khachatur Mhtes Khayoean.”

As you see this was the conspiracy plan of the Turkish government. Gradually their plan of action was being exercised on the Armenians. Though our nation showed willingness to be useful for the Army in everything; they made clothes, food and even collected some money in order their soldiers would be able to protect their fatherland, however the government had made another plans for the Armenians.

The soldiers from Bazmashen were all about 17-45. They had gone to serve in the Army, despite the fact that many of them had 3-4 children at home and they had to provide for their families. Nevertheless, the Turkish government didn't even think of a plan or take any responsibility on him for those families. They didn't care that all those families would starve to death. In this way, they wanted to get rid of the Armenians. The other point of their plan was to annihilate a whole human race in blood, i.e. the Armenians. At that time, the young of the village Bazmashen were working hard building new camps for the Turks.

The Turk officials tortured and beat the Armenian soldiers as if to make them work harder and quicker. At nights, they left these soldiers to sleep on the ground and didn't bother about their health and clothes at all.

Only a very small group of Armenian soldiers had still weapons with them. They were near the borders of Russia and nobody knew why they had still got weapons with them.

On October 31, in 1914, the Turkish government declared war on Russia. Those Armenian soldiers, who had weapons and served at the front, they already realized what it could mean. In a week all those soldiers would die.

All the Armenian population of the internal provinces had already got the main point of the Turks' plans. Nevertheless, none of us was aware of the condition in which the Armenian soldiers had appeared, because any means of communication was stopped. The families of the village Bazmashen didn't get any news from their husbands and sons. It was in these days that began the mass emigration of people from Karin City. This caused anxiety amongst all the Armenians. When the government saw that people were very troubled and anxious, he assured that nothing wrong would happen with the Armenians of Kharbert province. The Turkish government gave its reasons in order not to make people doubtful. They told the Armenians that that particular emigration was done for military purposes only. The government gave these reasonable assurances with the purpose of saving time until all the Armenian soldiers weren't cleared away from its way, because after that it would be very easy to accomplish the annihilation of the Armenians.

Despite the fact that the Armenians, including our villagers, suffered great losses for their country's sake, the Turkish government began to use force on them and abducted wheat, barley and money for clothes. It didn't matter whether the

poor villagers had got those things or not. The Armenians had to meet with their demands. After taking all they could, the Turks ordered the Armenians to hand over their weapons to them, because all the Armenians became doubtful people in front of the eyes of the government.

The Weep of an Armenian Bride

I'm weeping, I'm weeping, weeping,
Give me back my beloved one, so that I'll laugh too.
The Armenian lads serve at the front,
There is no way out of that situation.
You are an Osmanian tyrant,
And you are taking away my young father.
 You are a heartless barbarian,
 You are a son of an Osmanian tyrant,
 And your Army is full of Armenian soldiers.
 You made Armenian brides weep for ever,
 I'm weeping, I'm weeping, weeping,
 Give me back my beloved one, so that I'll laugh too.
You took the weapons of the Armenian soldiers,
And you exiled them from their homeland,
You tortured them in your camps,
And you put them all to the sword,
I'm weeping, I'm weeping, weeping,
Give me back my beloved one, so that I'll laugh too.
 You filled your caves with the Armenian soldiers.
 You made Armenian mothers weep,
 And you exiled them to the farthest deserts,
 You killed many Armenian children.
 I'm weeping, I'm weeping, weeping
 Give me back my beloved one, so that I'll laugh too.

The Turkish government began to use strict measures so that to take away the weapons of the Armenians, saying that some incidents had happened in Van City. That's why as a safety precaution it was necessary to gather all the weapons. In addition, those people, who had resisted, later were tortured severely in prisons.

On March 16, in 1915, the governor of Kharbert asked the German Ambassador for a piece of advice. He wanted to know how to gather all the weapons of the Armenians. The ambassador's answer was that the missionaries were the best choice and they could easily convince the Armenians that it would be better for them to give away their weapons. During these days, about forty people were imprisoned from Bazmashen amongst which there were also some famous politicians. They were Karapet Mhisi Gogoean, Margar Ahmatchanean, Mhisi Aptal Koshkarean, Mhisi Mkrtych Jigarjean, Michael Terwishean, Toros Pltoean and

some others.

A German missionary, Mr. Eyman, under the orders of the government, called a lot of people from the surrounding villages to his place and advised them all to hand over their weapons to the Turkish government. As the Turkish government had made such a decision, so it was useless to protest. Therefore, the Armenians took his advice.

But the governor wasn't satisfied with that. He demanded from the Armenians to take out the weapons that the government had given to them, and which they kept in the wells. Therefore, people had nothing but to obey. This was one more pretext for more violent actions.

Starting from May 4, in 1915 massive arrests began. More than four thousand people were sent to prison. Amongst them there were teachers, professors, merchants and political leaders.

Some people told that the sufferings of those prisoners were so severe and painful that their voices were heard in the nearest villages. When a few family members wanted to take food for their fathers, husbands, or sons, they returned from half way, because they couldn't stand the unbearable screams and cries of the prisoners.

These sufferings affected on the Armenian population of Kharbert so deeply that priest Psak took the German missionary, Mr. Eyman, with him and went to see the governor. He wanted to get some explanation, but the governor refused to give any explanations to the priest. In addition, soon priest Psak faced the same difficulties and sufferings as his nation.

The Turkish government did all these arrests with ease, because it had the names of everyone, especially the names of the politicians. Under the curtain of the Constitution, the Turks as if became our brothers, but they were nothing more but snakes in the grass. However, in that way they managed to be aware of everything and were waiting for a suitable chance to implement whatever they had got in their minds.

The dungeons of prison were full of prisoners. More than 150 people were thrown into one dungeon. This fact showed how bad the conditions were. People lay down to sleep near each other, but even in that case they couldn't open their knees. The food and water that had been sent for the prisoners were taken away by the guard soldiers. So the poor prisoners could hardly get a piece of bread during the whole day. Because of these awful conditions, the number of the dying people day by day was rising.

Many times, when the Turks demanded from the Armenians to hand over weapons to them and the Armenian people really didn't have any weapons; they were obliged to go and buy some weapon and then gave it to the Turks.

When the government was sure that the Armenians had no weapon any more, the Turks took a photo of all the weapons gathered from our nation and sent it to Polis, to the central government. With this action, they wanted to show to the government of Polis how much weapons the Armenians had got. Although most of those weapons were useless, but it was quite enough; they were called weapons. The government did this on a certain purpose. Later he would use these facts

against the Armenians that would help the Turks to accomplish their mission, i.e. annihilation of the Armenian nation.

On June 1, in 1915 the two thousand Armenian soldiers of the province Kharbert were sent from somewhere over Tigranakert way to Aleppo, under the pretense of building camps there. However, this time, the Armenian population guessed the Turks' had intentions and the consequences of it and they were all hopeless, troubled and they grew increasingly desperate. The governor noticed this desperation of our nation, therefore with the help of the German missionary, Mr. Eyman, he wanted to assure the Armenians that there was no need for trouble and worry for the Armenian soldiers, who were in safety. Two days later, a few Armenian soldiers that had miraculously escaped from that group of the Army, informed us that their group was completely annihilated and no one had survived from death, except them. Hearing this sad news, the American Ambassador and a few missionaries tried to protest against this violence, but no one paid attention to their protests.

On June 15, in 1915, under the command of the Turkish government all the Armenians of Kharbert were to be exiled from their homeland. The leaders and powerful politicians were already in prisons, and the young were killed as soldiers. The rest that remained alive and free were the old, the women, and the children. Hearing this new command, they all lost their souls, became miserable and unable to do any thing. There wasn't even a glimmer of hope to survive from the nearest disaster. They had nothing but to face the music. From that moment, our fate was sealed.

The Deportation

The prisoners were sent into exile on the way to Tigranakert and it was the first signal of the deportation. About one thousand people were being exiled amongst whom there were the most powerful Armenian personalities of Kharbert, including priest Psak. The prisoners were all kept in chains.

They had hardly gone a bit far from Mezre, when the Turks killed all the prisoners with gunshots. In this way, the Turkish government achieved one of the most important points of his bloody plan.

I wrote the story of this particular deportation due to Ms Marta Hatchi Khachatur Golechean, who continually suffered the bitterness of the deportation for 5-6 years. Actually, she had become an eye-witness of all those violent actions. It is impossible to put pen to paper, and to describe all that with black ink on white paper. The human mind is unable to give the full and detailed description of those events.

How many times did we record such genocidal events started by the Turks in our history?

The Deportation from Bazmashen: It is an awful and unbearable sorrow for a person to leave the house that he has inherited from his ancestors for centuries, to be compelled to leave everything under the influence of someone with the

stipulation of not coming back. Seeing this hopeless condition of the Armenians, the Turk officials explained to them that they needn't worry and their properties would remain intact, their houses would be locked and sealed and would be given back to them in the same conditions, as soon as they return. The Turks did this in order to calm down and to console the poor people a little bit.

On June 28, in 1915, the scene was very exciting in Bazmashen. It was commanded to displace the whole village at once. The worst thing was that many families were helpless, because their husbands, fathers, or sons were either imprisoned or enlisted in the Army as soldiers. There were a lot of families in which there were more than 3-4 little children, who weren't able to walk for a long time. It didn't matter whether they were old or young, poor or rich; they all had to obey that command.

The inhabitants of Bazmashen left their village with tears on their eyes. Many people carried bread on their backs and hoped that it would be enough at least for 1-2 days. They carried some bread in order not to starve on their way while their cellars were full of food. Holding the hands of their children, they walked bare feet, and at the same time wiped the tears from their eyes. When they got to Tapin Tump, the people once again turned their faces towards their village as if they silently bade good-bye to their birth-place. When they reached Tapin Spring, everyone drank from the icy water, perhaps for the last time in their lives.

People walked along the narrow paths in the fields for hours, but no one broke the silence. It seemed that they all were bidding good luck to the fields, the springs, the mountains, the lands, and the stones of their fatherland. They found their living owing to those fields and lands. Now it was very difficult for them to leave those places with which many memories were connected. People had hardly come out of the village Bazmashen, when their feet and ankles began to be stung and hurt by the prickles. They felt awful and sharp pains. The children weren't able to walk any more and in order to make their children continue walking their mothers said to them, "My dear, if you stop walking the Turks would kill you." Only one family escaped from this deportation. They were the Chloes. A powerful Turk saved them, but later he killed them all near the village.

Miraculously four other people were saved too. These four men had hidden somewhere near our village. They were Cheloean Paghdasar, Der Kirakosean Gaspar, Onanean Manuk and Noroean Mlo. A few guys ran away and found shelter near the guys of Pulutlu. Some people had changed their religion and thus escaped that displace. Moreover, a few boys (12 years old) had run away and found shelter again in Pulutlu, where they worked for the Turks and remained alive.

Those four people, about whom I mentioned before, about a year stayed near our village, but couldn't enter it. In the end, when they were hopeless, they went to a Turk's house and told the Turk landlord, Chorgegh Osman, about their condition. However, a few hours later, they had to run away from that house too, because they realized that they weren't in safety. While running away, Gaspar Kirakosean was killed. However, his three friends ran to the corn-fields and soon there could be found no traces of them. These three friends remained in the corn-fields for a

long time. Soon after Manuk Onanean saw that the Turks were scything the fields of Khulbank near the spring of the Khazars. Manuk told his friends that he had known those Turks for a long time. At last, he decided to go and ask for bread from those Turks. His friends warned him not to do that, but he didn't listen to them and trusting the Turks went towards them. But he had hardly reached them, when the Turks attacked on him and began to hit him with their sickles and scythes. The two friends saw that Manuk died, so they desperately ran away from those fields to Pzti Tap. Here Mlo Noroean starved to death. When Cheloean Paghdasar saw that he lost his three friends, he tried to enter a village. He walked till Srmapos. As soon as the guards of the village noticed him, they caught him, struck his head against the rocks, and consequently killed him.

The poor villagers of Bazmashen that had been displaced from our village, after a long way's walk had reached Keomir Khan, but they all were dreadfully tired. Here the Turk soldiers ordered the women and the children, who were above 12 to continue their way. But the male remained in that place. A few minutes had hardly passed, when all the men were put to the sword and then their dead bodies were thrown into the River Eprat. I got this significant information from **Simonean Hambartsum**, who had been hurt, but somehow he escaped the death, ran away, and joined the group of the women and the children. Alas, he lost so much blood on the way that finally he died too.

There is no doubt, what a horrifying view it could be. None of the people could protest against that separation. All the feelings of the human beings were ignored by the Turkish government. People were separated from each other without having an idea what would happen to them or their relatives.

Till the place called Lzoli, where the Armenians had to cross the river, only women, girls, and children were still alive from the village Bazmashen. Many people were already dead. One could see dead bodies all around. From the 30.000 people displaced from Kharbert very few reached till Malatia. If it happened that a mother couldn't carry her child any longer, she was immediately shot and killed. Moreover, if some people fell behind, they were beaten severely.

These displaced persons were led to Der-el-Zor by long paths.

This group was being led towards Aghcha Tagh. Those young and lively women, that very often had been more courageous than men had, now they were tired. They felt utterly exhausted and couldn't stand on their feet any longer. These poor women weren't even able to look after their children. They were obliged to leave the shares of their hearts; i.e. their children on half of the way and they continued their way. Of course, it was terrible for the mothers to leave their little children, but there was no way out of that situation. Those mothers, who were ready to die just to save their children, but they weren't given even that opportunity. They had to leave their children and to go on with the group. That was the command of the Turk official.

Very often some mothers took and left their 3-4 years old children under a tree and said to them, "You stay here, my dear, I'll go and bring water for you." And they went away and never came back again. The mothers certainly knew that they wouldn't return, but they didn't have even a piece of bread to give to their children.

So with the tears on their eyes, they went away sometimes turning around in order to see their children once again. This was the condition of the displaced persons. The people continued to walk forward without knowing what tortures and physical abuses were waiting for them.

Separation from Fatherland

Good-bye my sweet fatherland,
We have to go away,
Give the last kiss to us as our mothers
So that our hearts will be satisfied.

The cloudless sky above,
Suddenly went dark,
And it seemed like the darkness
Broke the Armenian hearts.

What a terrible thing!
It happened to us,
As if, the devil itself dropped in
In order to sacrifice us.

Hey you, poor Armenian parents,
Do not cry and weep in vain,
But ask God to save your souls and bodies
And to be forgiven for your sins.

We are not sure
Whether we'll survive again,
Whether we'll return to our country,
And will live like re-born people.

On the way, many people had died because of hunger and thirst. It happened so that they passed near by a spring, but none of them was allowed to drink even a gulp of water for quenching their thirst. A lot of people were ready to die just for a cup of water.

If the group of these displaced people passed near a village or a city, the Turks and the Kurds attacked on them, robbed everything the refugees had and if they didn't find some money they physically abused and tortured the people cruelly. Very often, some of the people swallowed their money.

Wherever the displaced Armenians stopped near a village or a city for night, the female suffered many violent actions of passion. The officials did whatever they wanted. There was nobody who would protect and save those refugees. That's why all the whims of the officials were always pandered. Very often, the old hurt the faces of their beautiful daughters or granddaughters and in addition, they covered

their rosy-faces with soot. They did this on purpose. In this way, they made their girls look ugly and thus wanted to save them from the violence that took place at nights. People did everything in order to save their young lasses, but the Turks did their best too. The Turks often tore and took off the clothes of the girls and let them remain naked in front of the people. Varderes Michaelean had escaped the death due to his deceitfulness, when his female clothes were taken off; Michaelean was at once shot and killed.

Those refugees, who had swallowed their money, now were being burnt alive, because the Turks didn't want to lose any money. A lot of people didn't want to be dishonored or tortured, so they committed suicides throwing themselves into the river like the Pltoes' bride and Shahpaz Petros's daughter.

There was another way of abusing people too - to make the people walk nakedly in the sun. The sun had changed the color of the refugees' skins and they had become unrecognizably horrible. If a mother lost her child in the crowd, it was impossible to find him or her again. In that state of nakedness, a lot of people were lost near Veran Sheher.

The skins of these poor displaced people became dark and many people had painful wounds. According to the command of the Turkish government, such people had been gathered in a place and were burned to death. In this way, the Turks wanted to get rid of the situation. It was a kind of health measures to prevent the spread of various infectious diseases.

From amongst these people, many girls and young brides were taken away by the Turks. There wasn't any Turkish or Kurdish house, where couldn't be found an Armenian girl or a young bride. Most of those girls and brides were forced to do different kinds of hard work and instead they got just a piece of bread daily.

The condition of the displaced persons was getting worse day by day. Now they had to walk away from the villages and the cities, so that they would not be able to find any food. It even happened that they saw a dead animal, fought with each other, and snatched it from each other's hands. After eating the meat of the dead animal, they carefully kept its bones and while walking along the roads they began to gnaw those bones. Very frequently, they gnawed the bones to the end and didn't leave anything of it, because people wanted to fill their empty stomachs with something. Moreover, if they didn't find any plant, vegetable or dead animal they began to tear into pieces the dead human bodies and ate them.

There were such rumors that once people were so hungry that they had boiled the meat of the dead body and had eaten it. Once, a child, who had fallen ill from one group, asked his mother to go and bring boiled meat of human being for him from the other groups. But the other group refused to give food to the poor mother and the latter came back without any food. When the ill boy heard that the group had refused to give some meat to his mother, he turned to his mother and said, "Mom, when I die, you boil my meat and if they'll ask you for some food don't give anything to them."

They ate whatever they found and didn't even care what it was. The poor people wanted to fill their stomachs. Nevertheless, the brutal Turks didn't let the people to eat whatever they had found. Many of them died of starvation. They

wanted the displaced people to starve to death as soon as possible. Thus, their mission of annihilation soon would be accomplished.

From the six thousand refugees of Bazmashen village, only one hundred and fifty-five persons were able to reach till Der-el-Zor. The rest had died on that way.

At that period of time, the Arabs were considered to be the most dirty and untidy people. They didn't wash their hands and faces before the meal. In addition, the Arabs used to eat the food with hands and later they cleaned their dirty hands in their hair. They were a nomadic tribe, 30-40 people lived together, moved from place to place. Some people brought and sold food to them from the cities. This was the nomadic life of the Arabs.

One day, an Armenian girl, who lived with the Arabs, saw one of those men that used to bring food for them. She asked him where Baghdad was situated. Getting the information she needed, the girl went and told about her secret intention to the other girls. She advised them to run away with her. These girls that served for the Arabs had been kidnapped from the groups of the refugees. All these girls were about 16-17 and they worked for the Arabs. This suggestion began to be discussed by all the girls. Once, in the evening, they all gathered together and each girl had the opportunity of expressing her own point of view about that certain question. However, some girls refused to join the others because of fear. Nonetheless, seventeen girls decided to run away next day early in the morning. So next morning they woke up earlier than usual and taking whatever they had got, they ran away before the herdsman would rise. After a long way walk, at last the girls managed to get to Baghdad and found shelter in the Armenian churches.

Many refugees from Bazmashen stayed with these Arabs. A lot of boys and girls, who hadn't been able to run away from that nomadic tribe, lived with them. Most of them died and nobody cried for them.

Especially the Turks had kept the Armenian girls and young brides with them. They made the poor girls work hard. The Turks had also kidnapped many Armenian children. Later on, when those little children grew up, they forgot who were their parents and to which nation they belonged. Thus, a lot of such Armenians were lost for our nation for ever.

After the armistice in 1918, it turned out that a great number of villagers from Bazmashen had survived and they all were in the surrounding territories of Baghdad and Urfa. When the French and English Army entered the territories of Turkey, those emigrants, who had left Bazmashen for America, came and helped the refugees of our village. These volunteer helpers found, gathered, and helped, about 25 refugees there. These volunteers served and worked hard. That's why I think it is worth to remember their names here. They were Sedrak Hekimean, Minas Terwishean, Avag Koshkarean, **Hambartsum** Khachaturean, Mushekh Mishocean, Grigor Gogoean, Levon Petikean, Sahak Norocean, Avetis Oskaeon, Michael Nacharean, Sukias Baloean, Eghia Der Kirakosean, Levon Kavroean, Khachatur Petocean, and Khachatur Norocean.

These guys together with the refugees were eager to return to Bazmashen and to settle down again in their houses without losing much time. Hearing about this decision, two other volunteer guys, Minas Terwishean and Avag Koshkarean

joined the group.

After the Turks were defeated, the winners demanded from them to release the Armenian women, brides, and girls from their harems. The children would be released too. The demand was partially met. Those inhabitants of Bazmashen that had found shelter in the surrounding Turkish villages came back. There were about eighty people in that group. However, this group found their village in ruins. Schools, churches, and other buildings were all destroyed and damaged. During the war, Turks lived in Bazmashen, especially the ones, who came back from the borders of Russia.

Besides them, the villagers of Bazmashen, who were near Urfa and Baghdad, returned to their village. The number of the people that returned was about 140. At the beginning, our village had a population of 6000. Those people that had properties in our village didn't manage to get them back, because either the government or the powerful guys had already owned them and didn't want to give to the real owners. Thus, many people lost their properties. The Armenians began to work hard again. However, they had to give the powerful guy's share. This was a usual thing nearly in every province. The Armenians had to work and the Turk leaders enjoy the results of our work.

The population that returned to the village was very poor. The American Union of Rebuilding Bazmashen sent 4000 dollars. As a result, every person got 20 dollars. This Union hurried to help and support all the refugees until they would be able to find their living themselves. Besides this Union, the Company of Educative Studies sent as much money as the first one. They tried to help somehow the refugees. Those, who returned to Bazmashen, lived in awful conditions for about ten years. However, in spite of that entire unbearable condition, the people stayed in their village, which was very precious for them. Moreover, there were so many memories connected with their ancestors and the village. Despite all the difficulties, the villagers of Bazmashen endured. They didn't prefer the happy life in another country. It was preferable for them to eat just a piece of bread in their village, than to live in welfare in somewhere else.

Although the Envers and the Taleats killed thousands of Armenians, the survivors of Bazmashen again came and stayed in their village with the hope that one day they would again gain back the same position. However, soon after the government of Kemal was formed, the villagers were compelled to leave for abroad.

Those villagers, who remained in Bazmashen till 1929, under the command of the government they all left the village. About 140 people left it and nobody remained. As if the sufferings they had suffered before weren't enough and they needed more. Their pain was too great to endure. However, these refugees again experienced and had to deal with great and awkward difficulties and scarcely reached till Aleppo. They all looked miserable, horrified, and desperately unhappy.

Now the name Bazmashen will remain in the history. I hope that it won't be forgotten by its inhabitants, who live in other countries at present. My hope is that one day those people will return to Armenia and will try their best so to find a corner, where they'll build New Bazmashen. Thus, they'll make this name live for

ever.

Those refugees of the village Bazmashen now can be found in the following places: Syria – 30 people, France – 170 people, and America – 700 people. Perhaps there may occur some reduction amongst these numbers, because a normal census hasn't been done. I am sure that our villagers, wherever they are now, won't forget about their birth-place. As it is almost impossible to forget the lands which fed our villagers, it is also impossible to forget the happy or unhappy days and the nature of our village. In my opinion, none will be able to forget the life he or she lived in Bazmashen.

Each inhabitant of the village Bazmashen must remember the largest field of our village, which was spread across Erzuruk, Chib, Chorgyugh, Hinagarak, Hindzor, Khangegh and Khulbank. It is impossible to forget those victims, who were killed by the Turks in the deserts and the mountains.

Finishing my booklet, I desire to see all the people of Bazmashen to kneel down before the graves of our unburied victims and to say, "We'll never forget you and will revenge for you. Though Bazmashen is in ruins now, it doesn't matter, we'll rebuild it and make its name live for ever. Moreover, if we break our promises let the blood of our victims protest and punish us. So we, the refugees must live in brotherhood in order the future generation will get our commandment and we hope that one bright day they'll build New Bazmashen near New Kharbert in Armenia."

T H E E N D

A Few Words by the Translator

I took the responsibility of translating this book full of memories from Western Armenian into English in order the Armenian grandfathers and grandmothers in the US will get the opportunity to remember and never forget their fatherland, Armenia and their birth-place; the village Bazmashen of Kharbert province.

I'll be happy to know that with this work, which was rather difficult one, I can help the future Armenian generation in America, who doesn't know the Armenian language, to know about their ancestors and fatherland. I hope that they'll never forget who they are, where they are from, and what they can demand from the Turks.

Nvard Sununu
3rd course student
Yerevan State Linguistic University

CONTENTS

Bazmashen's Foundation	4
The Armenian Rich Man (Hay Melik)	5
Lenktemur's Invasion	6
The Change of Religion	9
The Construction of the General Village	9
The First Praise	10
Terwish Zakaria	10
Khachkar	11
The First Church	11
The First Craft	11
The Spreading of Bazman	12
The Occupations	13
Sultan's Visit	15
The Enicheries	17
Rashit Pasha's Visit to the Provinces of Anatolu	17
The Structure of the New Church	19
The New Houses	20
The Tradesmen of Bazmashen	21
The Landlords of the Village	21
Life in the Village in autumn	23
The Educational and Friendly Life in the Village	23
The Brave of Our Village	27
New Year and Christmas in the Village	30
The Days of Mets Pahots	36
The Village in the Spring Time	38
The Senior Week	40
Easter	43
The War between Russia and Turkey	46
The Merchants of Bazmashen	48
The Brave Mule Keepers	49
The Craftsmen	51
Daily Life in the Village	53
The Visit of the Leader of Arabkir	56
Other Religions in Bazmashen	58
The Vintage	58
A Rural Marriage	64
The Revolutionary Movement	70
The Brave Women of Bazmashen	77

The Year of Massacre79
The Fields and the Mountains	87
The Building of the New School	91
Political Life93
After the Constitution	100
The Patriarch's Visit of Sis City	102
Before and After the War	103
The Deportation	108