1/ [ca. 9/23/97]

On Tuesday Sept. 4th a warrant was issued by the Bitlis authorities for me to appear at court the following Saturday & answer to the charge of being a "disturber of the peace". I at once communicated by wire with the Legation, and on the day I should have appeared at court entered a protest saying that I could not be present without an American Consul or without instructions from the Legation but that with the approval of the latter I was ready to meet my accusers at Constantinople. Also I should demand that they receive the proper penalty in case they failed to prove their charges. Later dispatches from the Legation instructed me to do practically as I had done and finally the arrangement was made that I should go with the families via Mosh with proper guard & Consular escort to Constantinople as soon as the roads were good. We began preparations for the journey in the hope of getting started by the first week in May. About the first of March some sixty leading Armenians, who had been imprisoned four and a half months, were released. During their imprisonment

of the Gov'r had tried in vain to get them to sign a statement attaching the blame of all disturbances to some of their own number, and the American missionaries, myself in particular. Already depositions against me had been secured from some of the chief Catholics & Jacobites, and a few Gregorians. The release of the prisoners was merely an attempt to secure, by another policy, signatures against us from the leading Gregorians. During the Bairam calls the Vali plainly told some of them in the presence of fanatical Moslems that it was for the interest of the Armenians to demand the expulsion of the Americans from the country. The idea was sedulously broached for some days. On one occasion the Vali said that the Missionaries since going abroad had shown ingratitude to the Gov'r; that letters of Mr. Cole and Dr. Reynolds had been seized, which showed that they could not be allowed to stay in the country. As for me, there were indubitable proofs that I had furnished the lists and ordered the shooting of the Armenians who had been shot several months before.

On Thursday, March 18th, eight or nine of the leading Armenians, with their Bishop, and as many of the leading Moslems were called into the presence of the Vali, with the object of reconciling the two communities. The condition of the reconciliation was

& definitely stated to be the willingness of the Armenians to unite with the Moslems in sending a letter to the Porte, declaring the Americans to be the cause of disturbances, and demanding their expulsion from the country. This insinuation made by the leading Moslems that it would go hard with the Armenians if they did not comply, & the populace rumored that talk of a new massacre. The Armenians asked for a day or two in which to consider the matter, & on Saturday rejected the proposal, saying they had no part in bringing us into the country; in fact had been opposed to our coming; that the evidence against us was in the hands of the Govt, not in theirs; & they could not truthfully say we had a fault.

Meanwhile I thought the matter over. I saw that it was not a personal matter: that the effort was to get all the American missionaries out of the country; & that the method they had used in my case was merely a commintary of starting the ball a rolling. Moreover I felt that my presence there with my case undecided was a constant menace to the safety of the city. If I could get away and have proceedings on my case started, it would probably relieve the strain in the city, and doubtless prevent action in reference to the missionaries while my trial was in progress. Therefore on Friday Mar 20

I sent a telegram to the Legations asking that a Consul be sent, & that I come at once to Tientsin without my family, & how my trial got thus.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, March 25, all the approaches to our house were held by police & gendarmes - communication was entirely cut off from the town, even our servants were hindered while attempting to go to market for supplies. The next day officials came on the part of the Tsali & notified us that orders had been received for us all to leave Hsinmintsun & be ready to leave at any time. Mr. Cole called on the Governor the next morning to ask for explanation. He was told that for himself & the families there was no special hurry; that he was his friend, & that he might secure permission for him to stay on; but that I must go in any case in three days; that I did not comply with school regulations & made him trouble in other ways. He supposed from this that I was to leave Tuesday, & made plans accordingly.

The next morning March 28, the reply to my telegram came from the Legation, telling me that one week had been given for me to wait & come at once to Tientsin with my family, & that the local authorities were to let me alone. Mr Cole was just

I, starting to show this telegram to the Vali
where he was met by the chief-of-police who
handed him a free passport for me to be
conducted out of the country, & told me be
ready to start for Alexandretta the next
morning (Sunday) This was two days earlier
than we had planned - I now addressed a
protest to the Governor, saying that my
request to be allowed to go at once to
Constantinople had not been granted
I now addressed a protest to the Governor
and that I was not free to go at present;
but that if he forced me to under protest
I hoped he would at least not urge me to
travel on Sunday, contrary to my usual
practice. Mr. Cole took this protest to the
Governor, but he treated it with contempt -
he said if I acted on the protest he would
telegraph to the Porte that I refused to
come & thereupon stringent orders would
come to take me out with soldiers, in which
case it would be very bad for me - I was a
criminal - He had not put me in prison
, but had surrounded our house
instead, out of consideration for our
families - at the time of starting, if I
did not go at the set time, I must
take the consequence -

We deliberated for some time when Mr. Cole returned with the reply. We feared there was some Embarrassment at Constantinople which might make my resistance to be as futile in the end & disastrous as well. It seemed evident that most of the leading Moslems had signed a petition for my expulsion, & there was a report, which I did not have a chance to verify, that the Moslems had agreed to make a disturbance in the city, & perhaps attack my house, if I should refuse to go. Rather than be the cause of precipitating on our families or on this city another disaster, I thought it was best to yield. I then sent a telegram to the Legation, saying that I was being sent the next day under protest out of the country via Alexandretta, & asking permission to change my route at Diarbekir & come to Constantinople with the Harpoot Americans.

Early Sunday morning, March 29, the Aïn Bay (Commander) gendarme came to my house with a number of police & jailers. In the course of conversation, while seated in the sitting room, he misunderstood something that was said, and thinking that we were trying to pass off one matter, remarked that the people about us were boisterous Kourds, & if they should get the impression that we were assisting the Gov't, it might be impossible to keep them quiet

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No stronger threat was needed for such time and such a place. I finished preparations as soon as possible, taking two horses of our own, one for myself & the other for the baggage consisting of road equipment, provisions etc.
It was agreed to let two young men accompany us as servants, but after I got started, only one was allowed to come and he was given no road papers. A strong guard accompanied me to the outskirts of the city, where I was left in charge of five mounted Zaptiehs. We had not gone far when the Sergeant told me that he had instructions to take in charge my revolver, if I had one. I gave it up & it was formally passed with papers from cordon to cordon. Emphasizing ~~that~~ in an irritating way the fact that I was a prisoner. I was thus forced out of Bitlis at a time & by a road, which practically made it impossible to take my family along; & it was a circumstance that the Turkish Gov. gave no credit that a fellow-missy was left to take care of them.