

obvious that her experience had impacted her life.⁴⁹ She writes that her mother “was deeply affected by what she heard, which were the screams of people being burned alive in a church, and of the murder of her aunt, Shamiram, and family during the Marash War of 1920” (144). She tried to leave the shadow of the Old World behind and she was more in control than her husband was, at least on the surface. As for Sarkis, he never succeeded in casting off the shadow of the past and revealed its presence in periodic outbursts of rage.

Looking back on her upbringing, Ellen could clearly see the impact of the ordeals her parents had experienced during the massacres, the deportations, and for Sarkis, the subsequent years of wandering and struggling to survive.

When we were growing up, his rages would come and go. Sometimes he would be so understanding and speak so softly and sweetly, like the father we always dreamed about. At other times he would be very critical of us all and beside himself with anger. I tried to understand, but could never discover the reason for this split personality. (158)

Ellen’s parents loved their children but showed it very little, especially as they grew older. “I think life would have been so much easier for all of us growing up if both Mother and Father

⁴⁹ The interview is available on the website that Sarkisian Chesnut created to market her book (www.scarshecarried.com). Her mother was born in Marash. Her family was not deported because her father was an established tanner whose products were used by the Ottoman government to make boots for soldiers. The family’s ordeal began in 1920 when the French abandoned Marash and the Armenian residents and the deportation survivors who had taken refuge there took to the road in the middle of a winter blizzard under threat of the approaching Kemalist army.