

manner. In his series of short stories, he depicted Armenian village life in pre-1915 Turkey, as if to eternalize a reality that no longer existed and to preserve its memory for posterity. And perhaps he had an ulterior motive or a subconscious intent: to stimulate the question, where are they now? It should be noted, though, that these stories were written in Armenian for Armenian consumption, and the message in them was conveniently and obliquely concealed in descriptive details.

Born in 1886 in Armdan, a village near Agn facing the Dersim (Mintzuri) Mountains, Hagop Mintzuri brings to life the prewar Armenian presence in Turkey from Agn to Istanbul, a presence that Turkey has ignored and denied. Armenians from all walks of life are portrayed: wealthy and influential aghas in their plush houses, with a sophisticated lifestyle, enjoying close ties with the Sultan's palace; peasants and artisans in their everyday toil, their modest lives, their pain and their joy. Mintzuri describes in detail the streets, the churches, the schools, from the darkest corners of poor city outskirts to the stylish quarters of the capital city. He cites names and characters, intellectuals, teachers, leaders of the community with whom he interacted and of whom he kept a lasting memory. They obviously all went through the hell of 1915 never to return, and today they live only in the vivid landscape Mintzuri painted. These characters, portrayed in such detail in their everyday life, are undeniable evidence of the law-abiding, peaceful people and their apprehensive and cautious behavior, the *modus vivendi* they had developed