

# Historical Sketch of the Missions in Persia

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# PERSIA.

**The Country** Persia is notably a Bible land. To it belonged Cyrus the Great, Darius, his son Xerxes (the Ahasuerus of Esther), Artaxerxes, Esther, Mordecai, and the wise men who were the first of the Gentile world to greet and worship the Messiah. When Nebuchadnezzar had led the Jews captive to Babylon, it was Persia that humbled that power and restored Judah to her native land. With her people the lost tribes mingled and coalesced. Of the former magnificence and splendor of this kingdom one may even now gain some faint impression by a visit to the wonderful ruins of Persepolis.

Between the two rival empires of British India and Russia, on the highway between Europe and Asia, Persia sits intrenched. By its location the country is isolated, and must remain so until traversed by railways, an innovation which may be effected before long by foreign capital and enterprise. A branch from Tiflis on the Transcaucasian railroad, which connects the Black and Caspian Seas, is now open to Erivan, and will soon be completed to Julfa, near the northern frontier, and ultimately to Tabriz. Connections with the Siberian Railroad are planned for Eastern Persia, to give access some day from the interior to the Persian Gulf. If the contemplated railroad from the Egean Sea to Bagdad becomes a reality, a branch may be built to Teheran.

The area of modern Persia, though only a fraction of the ancient empire, is still large. It extends nine hundred miles from east to west, and seven hundred miles from north to south, embracing about 648,000 square miles of territory; sixteen times as much as the State of Ohio. Three-quarters of this is desert; and much of the remainder—even of those parts which, like the country along the shores of the Caspian, and on the western border, are exceedingly fertile—is but sparsely inhabited.

The basin of Lake Urumia is a splendid region of country, being well watered, having a climate and soil hardly excelled by any spot upon the globe, and yielding in perfection almost every product of the temperate zone. On the Persian Gulf the country is low, sandy and very hot. Along the Caspian Sea we have a region tropical in its fruits and verdure. Elsewhere the kingdom presents an immense plateau, with pure and bracing air, with mountains breaking up the surface in all directions, with occasional beautiful

valleys and vast salt deserts. Though on the whole so poor a country, dry and thirsty, parched by the drought in summer, desolate in winter, and uninviting to strangers, it is nevertheless passionately loved by the Persians. A thousand bards chant its praises as "the land of the roses and the nightingale, the paradise of the earth."

**The Government** The government is an absolute monarchy. The King, who is called the *Shah*, or by the more fulsome title *Shah-in-Shah*, *i. e.*, King of Kings, is restrained by no constitutional or legal checks, and can even put to death any of his subjects at will. So, also, in the governments of the twenty-five provinces into which the realm is divided, the high officials of all classes exercise almost absolute power; the government interposing little restraint, so long as the yearly revenue of about \$8,000,000 is realized. Such a despotism, and the constant insecurity of life and property, combined with the fact that the villages are owned for the most part by noblemen, who become responsible to the Shah for the taxes, and who practice the most cruel extortions, furnish abundant explanation of the slow advance made by the country, notwithstanding the intelligence and industry of the people.

The assassination of the Shah Nasr-ed-din, May 1st, 1896, removed an enlightened and progressive sovereign, whose reign of nearly fifty years brought great benefits to his people. Our missions were indebted to him for constant friendship and protection, as well as for substantial assistance. The present monarch, Muzaffar-ed-Din, is a man of kindly nature, but lacks the vigor and insight necessary to curb official rapacity and ecclesiastical arrogance. The political and financial interests of the country are rapidly falling into the control of Russia, to whom the oppressed Christians look as a deliverer.

**The People** It is interesting to remember that in the modern inhabitants of Persia, the direct descendants of the ancient Medes and Persians, we have the remnant of the Japhetic stock. The Europeans and Hindoos have emigrated, but these have remained by the ancestral home. And so it is not strange that they pronounce the words "father," "mother," "brother," "daughter," in very much the same accents as we do.

Physically, Persians are among the very noblest specimens of the human race—"manly and athletic, of full medium stature, fine forms, regular Caucasian features, complexion dark, hair abundant and black; well-formed head;

eyes large, dark, lustrous ; features regular and serious ; beard flowing ; a broad-breasted, large-limbed, handsome person, with carriage erect, dignified and graceful." Now, as in the days of Esther, they are fond of dress and show, being courtly also and polite, and even convivial ; but, though "luxurious in their tastes, they are yet hardy and temperate, enduring privation with patience, living much in the open air, delighting in the horse and chase and abhorring the sea."

Intellectually, the Persians are quick of perception, fond of discussion, imaginative, with a fine memory, showing aptitude for the sciences and for the various mechanical arts.

They are a nation of poets and poetry-lovers. The minstrel in every village is often surrounded by impassioned crowds. Modern Persia is in that state of culture in which minstrel poetry is the passion of all classes, and quotations from their classic authors are common upon the lips of even the rudest peasants and shepherds.

As to the social condition of the mass of the people, much may be inferred from what has been said of the government. Their condition is one not much above serfdom, and when a village changes owners the people are usually transferred with it to the new master. The extortions practised are oftentimes pitiless. The serf-like tenant "is seldom permitted to furnish his own seed, but for the tillage and irrigation, teams, implements, harvesting and garnering, he receives one-third of the crop, often but a fourth, or in case he provides the seed, one-half, from which he is to pay his taxes and feed a set of hungry servants of the master, employed to oversee the ingathering of the crops. Often, too, the master takes up his abode for the summer in his village, laying the poor serfs under contribution to maintain himself and family, servants and horses." It is not strange that under such grinding tyranny famine should so often visit the land and sweep off the people by tens of thousands. The only wonder is that the people thus downtrodden and crushed have preserved any traces of noble ambition.

The average dwelling of the peasant consists of a single apartment, with floor and walls of earth, while the roof is a mass of the same material supported by beams and pillars. The *tandour*, or oven, is a deep hole at one side, lined with burnt clay, where all cooking is done, with dried manure for fuel ; the acrid smoke fairly glistens on the walls. An opening in the roof answers for chimney and window. In this one room all work, eat and sleep, usually three or four generations.

The women are closely restricted, as in all Mohammedan countries, and take no part in the general social life. Their days are mostly spent in the small, low *anderoon* (women's apartment), which is very simply and poorly furnished, even in wealthy families. All evidences of wealth and luxury are reserved for the *beroon*, or men's apartments, which are often elegantly adorned. A Persian lady never walks; when she leaves her home she must ride in a basket or horse-litter, always closely veiled. The peasant women are allowed much greater liberty, but they are often unkindly treated and worn down by drudgery and neglect. In Persian Kurdistan the women dispense almost entirely with the veil, and even those of high rank are much less secluded than in Persia proper.

#### RELIGION.

But if we would be intelligent as to the real causes of the physical and moral condition of this interesting people, we must glance at the religions of Persia. These are four in number.

**Zoroastrianism** The faith of Zoroaster was the dominant religion of Persia from very early times until the conquests of Mohammed, in 641 A. D. It carries us back to the time when the Japhetic race was still one family on the plains of Persia, before the Hindoos had emigrated to the East, and the various tribes which peopled Europe had started on their westward course. Says Dr. J. H. Shedd :

“ There is much to show that the faith of that early day was the worship of the one living and true God. Such are the breathings of the earliest hymns of the *Zendavesta*, and such all the oldest religious monuments of the Persians attest. The high priest and sage of this religion was called *Zarathrusta*, a word taken by the Greeks and Romans to be a proper name, and changed to Zoroaster. This purest form of worship was gradually corrupted. A dualism grew up which gave to an evil principle a part of the powers of deity; worship of fire and the heavenly bodies followed. The occult sciences of the *magi* and the corrupt mysteries of Babylon were grafted on, so that the religion of the Persians in the time of Cyrus and Esther was different from the original. It was an intermixture of idolatry with the worship of the God of Heaven. Still, the Persian faith was the purest found outside of divine revelation. As the Hebrew among the Semitic races, the Persian among the Japhetic alone was found faithful in keeping the Creator above the creature. It distinguished the evil from the good, and referred the origin of evil to a wicked spiritual enemy. The war waged against this evil was real, earnest, unceasing, and to result in victory. It predicted that a Saviour should come at last to abolish death and raise the dead. And it is instructive to observe how this fidelity, though so imperfect, was acknowledged of Jehovah. The

prophets are commissioned to utter denunciation, captivity, desolation or complete destruction upon Egypt, Tyre, Syria, Nineveh, Babylon, and the smaller nations surrounding Palestine. Persia is a marked exception. Two hundred years before the event, the Lord predicted the birth of Cyrus by name, calling him His anointed, shepherd, servant (Isaiah 41: 25-28 and 44: 28). He was raised up to be the deliverer of the Jews, to subdue their oppressors, to restore them to their native land, 'saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.'

"Cyrus fully acknowledged his commission in the edict 2 Chron. 36: 23—'Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia. All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of Heaven given me; and hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.' God counted the Persians as most worthy to rebuild His temple and befriend His people; and while all the other nationalities of Bible times have lost their existence, the finger of the Lord hath traced the bounds of Persia and preserved the nation and the race."

This system continued to be the ruling faith of Persia until about 630 A.D., when the Persian emperor was bidden by "the camel-driver of Mecca" to renounce his ancestral religion and embrace the faith of the one true God, whose prophet Mohammed declared himself to be. The monarch, justly indignant, scorned the message and drove the messengers from his presence; but ere ten years had passed, the fiery hordes of Arabia had driven the king from his throne, and within ten centuries the Mohammedan religion had displaced in Persia the honored faith of Zarathrusta. The only adherents of the system now left are some five thousand souls in Yezd, a city of Persia, and less than one hundred thousand Parsees in India.

**Mohammedanism** This is the faith which for more than a thousand years has swayed and cursed the millions of Persia. It has existed under two forms—as the orthodox or *Sunnee* system, until 1492 A.D., and since that time as the heterodox or *Sheah* system, the peculiarity of which is that it regards Ali, the son-in-law and cousin of Mohammed, as having been the only proper heir and successor of the prophet, instead of Abubeker, Omar and Osman, who are regarded by the *Sunneces* as his rightful vicars. It is wonderful with what devotion and even fanaticism the Persian Mohammedans have championed the cause of the long-dead son-in-law. He is the centre of their system and the life of their creed. In their call to prayer they say, "Mohammed is the prophet of God, and Ali the vicar of God." This departure from the regular faith, now cherished for four hundred years, has produced much contention between the Turks and the Persians, and is likely to be a fruitful cause of fresh quarrels in the years to come.

Dr. Shedd considers Persia the weak point of Mohammedanism, for the following reasons: (1) Because the Persians themselves are sectaries—not the defenders of the orthodox faith, as are the Turks, Arabs and Tartars, but the enemies of it. They turn for sympathy and aid to Christians rather than to their rival sect; and, being branded as heretics by the *Sunnies*, they are more accessible to the Christian missionary than other Moslems. (2) As a people, the Persians are more liberal and tolerant than the other Mohammedan nations. Practically there is more religious liberty to-day in Persia than in Turkey, notwithstanding the pressure brought to bear upon the latter country by Christian nations. It is an almost unheard-of thing for an Arab or a Turk to discuss his religion with a Christian; but the Persian invites it and enjoys it, and will listen patiently to all you can allege with reason against his religion or in behalf of your own, where he is not in dread of the *mullah* or priest. (3) It must be remembered that in Persia the Moslem system is divided against itself more than in any other land. The people originally received it under compulsion, at the hands of their conquerors, and with a vigorous protest; and they have never been content under it. New heretical sects arise from time to time, which are as fierce in their opposition to each other as though they were adherents of entirely different systems. Immense numbers are adherents of a mystical faith which antedates the introduction of Islamism. During the last fifty years the whole body of Moslems has been convulsed by the new religion of the *Bib*, whose adherents are estimated at a million souls.\* (4) We need add to these considera-

\*Mirza Mohammed Ali, born at Shiraz, in 1820, spent his boyhood and youth in religious study and meditation. He was a pupil of the celebrated theologian Seyyid Kazim of Resht. In 1841 he became convinced that he was a prophet sent by God, and proclaimed himself as such under the title of the Bâb, *i. e.*, the Gate—the appointed channel of divine revelation. Many followers were attracted by the lovely character and eloquent teaching of the young prophet, and his doctrines spread so rapidly that the Moslem authorities became alarmed and attempted to put down the movement by force. The Bâb was imprisoned, and in 1850 put to death, and thousands of his followers suffered the same fate. The cruel persecutions only served to increase the enthusiasm of the Babis, and their heroism and devotion won many adherents to their cause.

The successor designated by the Bâb was Mirza Yahya, surnamed Subh-i-Ezel (Morning of Eternity). He and his friends fled to Turkey, and were afterward sent by the authorities to Adrianople. Ezel was later superseded by his half-brother Mirza Huseyn Ali, entitled Beha'u'llah (The Splendor of God), who claimed that he was the true Messiah, of whom the Bâb was only the forerunner. In consequence of the disputes that followed, Ezel was sent to Cyprus and Beha to Acre, where he remained until his death in 1892. He was succeeded by his son Ghusn-i-Azam (The Most Mighty Branch). Since this schism most of the Babis call themselves *Behais*; the few that adhere to Ezel being known as *Ezelis*. The Behais are very numerous in Persia, but they are sworn to the closest secrecy in regard to their belief, and do not hesitate to disavow all connection with it. Their doctrines as expounded in the writings of their leaders are a mixture of the mystic Sufi philosophy with Christian and Moslem ideas. They inculcate a lofty morality, and strictly enjoin charity and kindness toward all as the foundation of virtues. Many of them profess to receive the Christian Scriptures, but they interpret them in a



tions only one other to demonstrate the weakness of Mohammedanism in Persia. This is the utter failure of the system, during all these twelve hundred years, to do anything for the people except to curse them. It offers no solace for life's woes; it knows no sympathy or charity. Its priesthood are sensual, treacherous and rapacious. It knows no God except a metaphysical conception, cold and lifeless. It knows no heaven except an abode of the grossest sensual pleasures, and represents hell as consisting of the most exaggerated material tortures. Thus it has oppressed and degraded the people, so that they are open to discreet missionary effort beyond any other Moslem population, and results have been realized from the limited work done among them, altogether beyond expectation. It should be added that while the mass of the people in Persia proper are Mohammedans of the Sheah sect, there are in the mission field, which extends somewhat into Turkey on the west, over a million of Koords and Moslems who speak the Koordish and Turkish dialects, and belong to the Sunnee sect of Moslems.

#### THE CHRISTIAN SECTS.

##### The Nestorians

The Nestorians of Western Persia are sometimes spoken of as "Chaldeans," and again as "Assyrians." But for neither of these names does there exist any sufficient warrant either on historical or geographical grounds. They recognize no appellation for themselves except "Syriani." Their chief bishop claims for himself the title of "Patriarch of the East." But they will always be best known to the world as "Nestorians."

When Nestorius from Antioch, being Bishop of Constantinople, was condemned by the Council of Ephesus, in the year A.D. 431, for his alleged heretical opinions regarding the Person of Christ, the "Church of the East," with its headquarters at Seleucia-Ctesiphon, warmly espoused his cause. They were consequently cut off from communion with the Western Church. Located so far to the East, beyond the reach of the persecuting acts of the Byzantine powers, they enjoyed unusual liberty, and used it with enthusiasm to extend their faith at home and in remote lands. The growth of their church is one of the brightest and most interesting chapters in the annals of Christianity. By its

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mystical and allegorical sense that can lend support to almost any doctrine. They are most friendly to Christians, and claim that the prophecies of Christ's return were fulfilled in Beha. (See "A Year Amongst the Persians," by Edward G. Browne.)

wonderful missionary enterprises churches were planted from Egypt to China, and from north of the Caspian Sea to the southern bounds of India.\* The flourishing church in Persia was of their founding. It is admitted that they were more numerous than any Christian Church then existing. Nor were they conspicuous for their missionary zeal alone. Their schools, where Biblical theology and medicine were taught, were famed throughout Christendom. And when the Arabs became the patrons of science and learning, these Nestorian scholars opened to them the lore of the Greeks, and were allowed positions of honor and influence at the courts of Haroun Al Rashid and other Caliphs at Bagdad. Under the Persian and Mongol rulers, this church, eminent as well for its liberality of opinion and catholicity of spirit, as for its aggressive efforts, continued to flourish, despite seasons of severe persecution. But towards the close of the fourteenth century a terrible storm burst upon it. It was then that Timour, or Tamerlane, emerged from the far East, and swept the lands occupied by these Syrian churches as with the besom of destruction. His Mohammedan zeal added fury to his inhuman efforts to exterminate every trace of the Christian faith. He was far too successful.

The Patriarchal seat was removed from place to place in quest of a safe retreat. It is probable that about this time, in consequence of these desolating conditions, large numbers of these Christians found refuge from the tempest in the secluded fastnesses of the inhospitable mountains of Kurdistan, where they still dwell. Later, many of them ventured down upon the plains of Persia, where they have since lived, remaining, when practicable in villages by themselves, but sometimes obliged to mingle with the Mohammedans and to accept a position of inferiority.

In the sixteenth century there arose an unfortunate schism in the Church, resulting in the establishment of two Patriarchs, both holding to the same creed. One of these made Mosul his residence. In recent years a large body of this section of the Nestorian Church has conformed to the Roman Catholic Church, and is known as the "Uniat Chaldean Church," under a Patriarch, called the "Patriarch of Babylon." But in the earlier division mentioned, the larger part of the Nestorians living in Kurdistan and Northwest Persia accepted the Patriarch Mar Shimun as their head,

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\*In China in the province of Shensi some years since a tablet was discovered which gives a brief history of the coming of Nestorian missionaries to China, and their favorable reception by the Emperor. For several centuries their influence continued, but persecutions and dynastic changes weakened the church, and it finally became extinct.

who established his residence in a village among the Kurdish mountains. His successors always take the same dynastic name of Mar Shimun, and for nearly four hundred years have made their home among these lofty crags and precipitous ravines. Where the valleys broaden out into wider areas, the various tribes have built their villages, and through the centuries have maintained their national existence and their ancient faith at serious odds against their neighbors and foes. The most important of these village groups are Tiari, Tkhoma, Jelu, Bas and Dis. These Christian mountaineers are called "Ashiret," or *tribal* Syrians, while those living outside the mountains proper are called "Rayahs," or "Rayats," *i. e.*, *subjects*. The Ashiret are semi-independent, and pay only a nominal tribute to the Turkish Government. They are a more sturdy race than their brethren the Rayahs, found on the plains, whether of Persia or Turkey; but the latter live in more comfort and culture than the mountaineers in spite of Turkish and Persian ill-treatment.

The Syrians on the plain of Mosul are all known as "Chaldeans," both the larger body of them, who have conformed to the Church of Rome, and are under the spiritual jurisdiction of the so-called "Patriarch of Babylon," and the feebler community under the Bishop Mar Elias Melus, who have strenuously resisted union with the Roman Church. The Chaldeans in the city of Mosul are many of them merchants, fairly prosperous, as things go in that part of Turkey. The Rassam family, distinguished in the English explorations at Nineveh, are Mosul Chaldeans. A powerful Roman Catholic establishment in the city affords considerable protection to its own adherents.

The persecutions to which these people have been subject for centuries from Moslem power, constitute a most pathetic record. Their condition in Persia has been in some respects less harsh, but in Kurdistan and Turkey, they have endured grinding oppression, and even terrible massacres. In the recent atrocities perpetrated upon the Armenians of Turkey, the Nestorians were in constant fear of a similar fate, and a number of them, including a bishop and some priests, were brutally murdered. Notwithstanding centuries of ill-usage at the hands of Mongols and Moslems, their literature obliterated, except a few manuscripts, and these written in the ancient Syriac tongue—a dead language which only their priests and deacons can read—this old Church has yet maintained the primitive faith in far greater purity than any other Oriental Church. They have clung to their Bibles

with a desperate tenacity, and reverence them as the very word of God. They tolerate no pictures or images, no crucifixes or confessionals, or worshipping of the Host ; but the masses of the people are very ignorant, degraded and superstitious, leaving the care of their souls for the most part to the priests, and having no just conception of the character and work of Jesus Christ. They look upon His ministry simply as that of a *teacher*, and see in His tragic death only a martyr's end

The Nestorians number about one hundred and fifty thousand in all. A few have gone to Russia ; about thirty thousand of them dwell in the plain of Urumia, while the rest inhabit the Koordish mountains or extend westward into the valley of the Tigris.

For several years Russian priests have carried on a vigorous propaganda among the Nestorians of the plain. At first they were received with the greatest enthusiasm, more from political than religious motives, and nearly the whole of the Old Church, bishops, priests and people, disavowed their Nestorian doctrines and connected themselves with the Russian Church. A reaction followed later, when it was found that the protection and prestige expected from Russian influence were not obtained. It remains to be seen whether the remnant of the ancient church is strong enough to restore the organization to any semblance of life.

**The Armenians** Another branch of the Christian Church found in Persia is the Armenian, representing the nation whose terrible sufferings during recent years in Turkey have attracted the attention of the world. About 60,000 of them are residents in Persia, where they are treated with more consideration than under Turkish rule. " They are physically of good stature, strong features, manly bearing ; industrious and frugal ; loyal to their religion and to their nation ; of marked ability, adapting themselves to any circumstances, whether of climate, social or political life ; very kindly, sympathetic, affectionate ; with an element of the jovial in their life ; intensely proud of their history and their faith ; clannish almost to the last degree, refusing such association with other races as might imply the loss of their own ; of exceptionally pure morals among the Eastern races ; intense lovers of home and family life, and hospitable in the extreme ; with acute minds and suave manners, they manifested many of the essential elements of a strong nation. There are, however, other features which must be noted. They are grossly ignorant and for the most part densely superstitious, held in absolute thrall by a hier-

archy bigoted and overbearing to the last degree, and fully as ignorant as the people whom they mislead."

The Armenian Church adheres to the seven sacraments of the Roman Church, performs baptism by triune immersion, believes in the mediation of saints, the adoration of images, and transubstantiation, and administers the holy communion in both kinds to laymen. They deny purgatorial penance, and yet think the prayers of the pious will help the souls of the departed. Their name and some remnant of their ancient faith survives, but their ignorance and superstition and spiritual darkness are almost incredible. Even many of the priests can scarcely mumble through the appointed prayers in the dead language, and often cannot translate a single word. They are very much in the state of the Nestorians, when first made known to the Christian world, a generation ago—having a religion of mere formalism, a system of fasts and ceremonies, knowing little or nothing of the Bible itself, practically thinking of Christ as the Jews of the East do of Moses, or the Moslems do of Mohammed, as *their* prophet. Surrounded by Mohammedanism, they have imbibed too much of its spirit and morals.

#### The Jews

About 50,000 Jews, remnants of both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, are found in more than 100 towns and villages

between the Tigris and the Caspian.

### MISSION WORK.

As in nearly all Eastern lands, the Roman Church was first in the field, their efforts dating back to the fourteenth century, when they were rivals of the Nestorians in seeking the favor of the Grand Mogul. Later on they expended no little effort to proselyte the Armenians, but a small church in Ispahan is the only existing result of those centuries of labor.

Modern Protestant missions date from the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1811 Henry Martyn, passing from India, took up his abode in Persia, and spent about eleven months in Shiraz. Here he gave bold and frequent testimony to Christ before the Mohammedans, and even the bigoted *mullahs*, and labored incessantly upon a translation of the New Testament and Psalms, which he completed in about ten months, and then dedicated his arduous labors to the Master and His cause, in the following prayer: "Now may the Spirit who gave the word and called me, I trust, to be an interpreter of it, graciously and powerfully apply it to

the hearts of sinners, even to the gathering of an elect people from among the long-estranged Persians." One year after entering Persia, he left Shiraz and proceeded to the king's camp near Ispahan, to lay before him the translation he had made. Let him tell us the story in his own words :

"June 12th I attended the vizier's levee, when there was a most intemperate and clamorous controversy kept up for an hour or two, eight or ten on one side and I on the other. The vizier, who set us going first, joined in it latterly, and said, 'You had better say God is God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God.' I said, 'God is God,' but added, instead of 'Mohammed is the prophet of God,' 'and Jesus is the Son of God.' They had no sooner heard this, which I had avoided bringing forward until then, than they all exclaimed in contempt and anger, 'He is neither born nor begets,' and rose up as if they would have torn me in pieces. One of them said, 'What will you say when your tongue is burned out for this blasphemy?' One of them felt for me a little, and tried to soften the severity of this speech. My book, which I had brought, expecting to present it to the king, lay before Mirza Shufi. As they all arose up, after him, to go, some to the king and some away, I was afraid they would trample upon the book, so I went in among them to take it up, and wrapped it in a towel before them, while they looked at it and me with supreme contempt. Thus I walked away alone, to pass the rest of the day in heat and dirt. What have I done, thought I, to merit all this scorn? Nothing, thought I, but bearing testimony to Jesus. I thought over these things in prayer, and found that peace which Christ hath promised to His disciples."

The next European laborer in this field was the Rev. C. G. Pfander, a German, whose brethren had a flourishing mission in Shoosha, Georgia. He visited Persia in 1829 and afterwards sojourned there at intervals, leaving, as his most important work, a large controversial book called the "Balance of Truth," which exhibited the comparative evidences of Mohammedanism and Christianity, and showed the great preponderance of the latter. This book, with several other treatises on the Mohammedan controversy, is still doing a good work among skeptical Moslems.

Then came, in 1833, Rev. Frederick Haas, another German missionary, who located at Tabriz, in northwest Persia. He was soon followed by other brethren from the German missions in Georgia, which had been broken up by the intolerance of the Czar. Could these brethren have been sustained, they would have done a blessed pioneer work for Persia; but unscrupulous bigotry held sway and created embarrassments in the city, so that they were recalled by their society in Basle, after four years of labor.

In July, 1838, Rev. William Glenn, D.D., a Scottish missionary, entered the field. He had already spent many years in Astrachan, Russia, on a translation of the Old Test-

ament into the Persian language. This work he completed in 1847, and, combining his translation with that of Henry Martyn, he returned to Scotland to superintend the printing of them, and at the age of seventy went back to Persia to aid in circulating the Scriptures thus prepared. These two men will ever be held in grateful remembrance for their labors in giving the Bible to the millions of Central Asia.

In 1869 another missionary from Great Britain entered the country—Rev. Robert Bruce, D.D.,—who, locating at Ispahan, awakened a deep interest in the evangelization of Persia. As a result, the Church Missionary Society established a station at Julfa, a suburb of Ispahan, in the year 1876. A force of devoted and energetic laborers have made this a strong evangelical centre, full of promise for the southern portions of the Persian empire. They have flourishing schools and an active church among the Armenians, and have baptized a number of Moslems from time to time.

In 1886 an English mission was established in Urumia, under the auspices of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Its work is largely educational, and its especial object is to strengthen and purify the old Nestorian Church without changing its organization. While it has enlarged the opportunities for education among these people, the pressing of rival schools into villages large and small, side by side with those long established by the American missionaries has not had a healthful effect in several respects.

**American Missions** In 1829, Rev. Messrs. Smith and Dwight were sent by the American Board to explore the regions of northwest Persia. The result was that their hearts were especially drawn out toward the oppressed Nestorians on the plain about Lake Urumia, and on their representations the American Board determined to establish a mission in Persia with special reference to the Nestorians; and so for many years this mission was known, not as the "Persian Mission," but as the "Nestorian Mission." In 1833, Justin Perkins, a tutor in Amherst College, was appointed the first missionary, and sailed, with his wife, in September of that year. About a year later they reached Tabriz, and in 1835 were joined by Dr. and Mrs. Grant.

This little company formally occupied Urumia as a station November 20, 1835, and soon proved themselves to be possessed of strong faith and unquestionable zeal. The career of Dr. Grant was ended in a few years by death; but Dr. Perkins was spared to labor with great vigor and usefulness for thirty-six years. The instructions given to these pioneer workers mentioned, among other objects to be kept

in view, the two following: (1) "To convince the people that they came among them with no design to take away their religious privileges nor to subject them to any foreign ecclesiastical power;" (2) "To enable the Nestorian Church, through the grace of God, to exert a commanding influence in the spiritual regeneration of Asia."

Having obtained as a teacher Mar Yohanan, one of the most intelligent of the Nestorian bishops, Mr. Perkins gave himself to the study of the common language; and when this had been mastered to some extent, the first formal work was undertaken—that of reducing this language to writing (which had never yet been done), and the preparation of a series of cards for school work.

The first school was opened in January, 1836, in a cellar, with seven small boys in attendance. On the next day there were seventeen. That school was the germ of Urumia College. Other laborers were added after a few years. In 1843 Fidelia Fiske came to take charge of the girls' school. Vigorous preparatory work was done by teaching, preaching and printing. For ten years the precious seed was sown with great labor and many discouragements. At last came the time of rejoicing, when the presence of the Holy Spirit was manifest, and in two months fifty of the pupils in the schools professed their faith in Christ. The gracious influence spread into the surrounding villages, and for twelve years there was an almost continuous revival from on high, bringing hundreds of new-born souls to be trained and taught.

**The Reformed Nestorian Church** "For twenty years," says Dr. Shedd, "the effort was made to reform the old Church without interfering with its organization, and the missionaries were slow to abandon the hope of leavening and remodifying the ancient body." The separation came about at length for the following reasons: (1) The patriarch, at first friendly, did all in his power to destroy the evangelical work, and to compel the spiritually-minded to quit his fold. (2) The converts could not long accept the unscriptural practices which prevailed, and for which there were no available methods of discipline or reform. (3) The converts asked for better care and instruction and means of grace than they found in the dead language and rituals and ordinances of the Old Church. The separation was not a violent disruption; the converts were first invited to unite with the missionaries in the Lord's Supper. As the village converts increased in strength, pastors were placed over them. In time, these village pastors



and other laborers in the reform—Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons—met in conference with the missionaries, and adopted a simple Confession of Faith, with a form of government and rules of discipline. The first Conference or *Knooshya* was held in 1862. The rules then adopted were enlarged in 1878, and again in 1887. In 1893 there was added a Church Directory with forms of worship. The present Church Book has (1) The Confession of Faith in 27 Articles, and the Shorter Catechism. (2) The form of government providing for the guidance of the local Church. (3) Rules of discipline. (4) The Directory of worship and forms. (5) Still incomplete, are canons for certain matters of marriage, divorce, etc., such as are essential in this land. This Code of Laws is adapted from the ecclesiastical canons of the Old Church. In this reform there has nearly always been one or more of the Bishops in the evangelical communion; three united fully and died in the evangelical faith; one is now in living fellowship, and others are friendly. Over seventy of the Presbytery have labored with the missionaries as teachers, preachers or pastors. Many others acknowledge the evangelical doctrines to be Scriptural and salutary, but have various reasons for remaining in the Old Church. The leading men, including the Patriarch and his family, have in many ways evinced their friendliness to the missionaries, and to the leading men in the Evangelical Church.

This Evangelical Nestorian Church is now organized into five local *Knooshyas*, or Presbyteries—three in Persia, and two in Turkey among the mountain Nestorians and plain of Assyria. Unitedly they constitute a General *Knooshya* or Synod, which forms one of the churches of the Presbyterian Alliance.

The history of this reformation is one of the most intensely interesting anywhere on record in missionary annals. It has been the spread of Pentecostal power penetrating hundreds of villages. Out of it might be written many chapters of thrilling incidents, illustrating the work of the Holy Spirit convincing of sin, of righteousness and judgment, and chapters of remarkable providences in ordinary labors in revivals; and also during the prevalence of pestilence and famine and war, as also of manifold joys and sorrows, in perils of the sea and land, of persecutions, of robbers, of sickness and death. Here a chapter could be added of excellent and eminent missionaries, men and women who have given their lives to this work, and died in the triumph of faith. To this could be joined a long record

of the lives and labors of native brethren and sisters who have gone home to glory, whose memory is truly blessed. Well might the venerable Dr. Perkins write as he bade final farewell to missionary shores: "Heaven will not know any higher joy than the joy of redeemed Nestorians in the presence of their Saviour."

The Reformed Church has steadily gained in steadfastness and in aggressive power, and has made material advance in the matter of self-support. Many of its executive responsibilities are entrusted to a Committee of nine, called the "Evangelistic Board," chosen by the Knooshya or Synod, for a fixed period. The oversight of its educational interests it commits to a "Board of Education," also carefully selected by the Synod. It also appoints a "Legal Board" of three, including its Moderator, for the oversight of such matters of canon law as are usually managed in the Oriental churches by their Bishops. The meeting of these Boards, as well as the regular conferences of the Synod and Presbyteries, have done much to impart firmness to progressive ideas and practices in the Church. The national character has been elevated and made more robust by this training.

The general improvement in morals and modes of living is another practical result of the reformed movement. Pulpits and Councils and schools press on the people a higher standard of morality. That some of its members are deficient in some of the virtues which Anglo-Saxon Christians have by inheritance is allowed and lamented by the Church itself. But the standard of honesty and truthful speaking is higher within the Reformed Church than without it. Total abstinence, though not required by Church rule, is the all but universal practice, especially in the ministry, and this in face of the fact that almost everyone has his vineyard, and wine is largely manufactured among the people.

Then, again, how marvelous the spread of Gospel light from this evangelical Church into regions beyond. Young men filled with the Spirit have lighted the flame of true piety in many a distant place. Two Urumia men visited Bootan, 200 miles away on the Tigris plain, and opened the way where whole villages have since been evangelized. The beginnings of the work in several of the mountain districts and outlying regions are traceable directly to similar agencies. The foundations in Tabriz, Salmas, Maragha and Hamadan were laid by preachers from Urumia. One of these, up to the time of his death had made 32 long journeys to distant parts of Persia. Another is at the

present time a fearless and honored colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Eastern and Southern Persia. All these and others like them are humble persons, but they are "men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Wider and more notable has been the influence of another worker, Pastor Jacob Dilikoff, a man of apostolic zeal and self-denial, who, for nearly forty years, went to and fro in Russia, preaching evangelical doctrines with singular devotion and fruitfulness, in connection with the great evangelical revival known as the Stundist movement. He died in Eastern Siberia, where he had gone to preach the Gospel in spite of hardship and persecution.

These incidents go to show a real revival among the Nestorian Church of the missionary zeal which has given their forefathers renown in the records of the Christian faith.

The leavening influence of this Reformed Church upon their Jewish neighbors constitutes still another gratifying feature in the history worthy of mention.

Allusion has been made already to the impression made by these evangelical Christians upon the Mohammedans. There is abundant evidence that the adamant surface of Moslem antagonism to Christianity has been deeply scored by the diamond-like force of a higher and a spiritual type of Christian character as seen in these their evangelical fellow-citizens. Christianity stands to-day on a vastly higher plane in their estimation than it ever has done in the centuries of their mutual contact. And in spite of the almost impregnable barriers, these spiritualized bearers of the Christian name are constantly proclaiming the claims of Jesus Christ as the only name given under Heaven whereby any can be saved. This activity of theirs in the vineyard, by the wayside, and in the homes, has won many Moslems to a genuine friendliness to the teaching of Christ. How many of them cherish a saving faith in Him secretly cannot be known. Some of them have professed Him openly. Several have suffered martyrdom for Jesus' sake.

In 1869 the name of the mission was changed from "The Nestorian Mission" to "The Mission to Persia," with a view to emphasize more definitely both the duty and the purpose to give the Gospel to all nationalities and classes within the kingdom.

The year 1871 marked another epoch in this mission. At the re-union of the two branches of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the work was transferred from the American Board to the care of the Presbyterian Board

of Foreign Missions, which continues in charge of it to the present time.

In accordance with the new policy of expansion, plans were early laid for the establishment of new stations. Teheran was occupied in 1872, Tabriz in 1873 and in 1880 Hamadan became a missionary residence. The great distance between some of these stations, the difficulty of communication, the diversity of languages and other causes, led to a division of the mission in 1883 into Western and Eastern Missions. Urumia and Tabriz constitute the western division. The eastern mission embraces Teheran and Hamadan.

## The Western Persia Mission.

The wide area of territory covered by this mission, from the shores of the Caspian to the valley of the Tigris, the diverse populations embraced in the field, and the confusion of tongues spoken, present here more than the ordinary number of difficult problems in the prosecution of missionary work. They differ in different portions of the field. In Tabriz the effort is to build up a living church and to reach the masses of a great city, bigoted and intolerant, and to carry the Gospel over a wide territory to Armenians and Persians, with increasing responsibilities to the peoples of the Caucasus, the contiguous province of Russia. In Salmas it is to evangelize a large rural population of Armenians strongly enclained to their ancient superstitions and formal rites and ceremonies, and to reach out to Chaldeans and Moslems. In Urumia the special work is among the more plastic Syrian or Nestorian people, to develop the power of the native church, gathered there after nearly sixty years of missionary effort, and make it a forceful evangelizing agency to its Moslem, Armenian, and Jewish neighbors. In the mountain districts of Kurdistan the knotty problem is how to secure the entrance and growth of the gospel among almost barbarous conditions, checked by Turks, Kurdish chiefs, and independent lawless tribes of nominal Christians. Farther westward, in the valley of the Tigris, the task is to reach up into Kurdistan to the Nestorians, as attempted by Dr. Grant 50 years ago, to check the disastrous influence of the Church of Rome among the Chaldeans and Nestorians of the plains, and to rescue the Yezidees from the degradation of their senseless Satan worship.

**Urumia (Urmi)** Urumia is an important town and has been from the outset the centre of a varied and extensive work, which now covers the large plain of Urumia, and the smaller ones of Sulduz and Tergawer, and reaches into several large mountain districts across the Turkish frontier. The work is mostly among Nestorians, though there are many Armenians, whose numbers have recently been augmented by refugees from Turkey. There is also a large Jewish population peculiarly open to Christian teaching.

Two native evangelists are employed, Kasha Shmoon among the Ali Illahis and the Moslems, and Kasha Yonan among the Moslems and Jews. They work in the city, and make long tours in the surrounding region, finding free access to the people everywhere. Many Moslems hear them gladly, and freely confess that Christianity is the true religion though they hesitate to acknowledge their faith openly.

Urumia College was originally established at Mt. Seir, where it had a memorable record. It was there that the saintly Stoddard spent the few short years of his memorable missionary career. After him, the institution was chiefly under the care of Rev. J. G. Cochran, its eminently spiritual character continuing for a series of years. In 1879 the school was brought down from the mountain side and located a mile and a half outside the city of Urumia. The grounds are ample, and include a hospital and missionary residences besides the college buildings. Of these latter, there are two main edifices, containing library and apparatus worth twelve or fifteen thousand dollars. A building was erected in 1896 for an industrial department. The college was re-organized in 1899, and has now theological, medical, collegiate and preparatory departments. The whole number of students averages about eighty, representing the best element of the people. Much desire is shown for instruction in English, which is of great advantage to the young men in finding work in Egypt or in their Eldorado, America. The restrictions that hamper them in their own land are so tyrannical that they cannot be contented to remain at home after they have awakened to the possibilities of life elsewhere. This rage for emigration, which is taking away the most capable men of all classes, is a serious menace to the native community.

Fiske Seminary, now a large and flourishing institution with nearly 100 pupils of all grades has grown from a small school for girls begun by Mrs. Grant in 1838. Its history, like that of the College, has been one of repeated and very

powerful revivals, by which large numbers of Nestorian young women have been brought to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have become mouth-pieces for the truth in multitudes of villages on the plain of Urumia, and in the dark recesses of the Kurdish mountains. The high spiritual character stamped upon it by Fidelia Fiske, and which continued under the administration of Miss Mary Susan Rice, has not been lost in the years which have succeeded. It is now graded from the kindergarten to the normal class, and is doing a most useful work for the women of Persia.

The plain of Urumia is thickly studded with villages of Moslems and Christians. In many of the latter are found the largest congregations which have been gathered under mission influence. Here, as well as in the smaller and more neglected villages and hamlets, scores of village schools have been established, which have proved centres of intellectual and spiritual awakening. Thousands have here learned to read the Word of God, and have themselves become agents used of the Holy Spirit for the extension of evangelical truth among both Christians and Moslems. In thirty villages Christian Endeavor Societies have been organized, with excellent results. The schools reported in 1903, including those in the mountain districts, number 99, with 2,279 scholars.

One of the first needs of the mission was a supply of religious literature, and in 1837 a printing-press was sent to the mission by the Board; but it proved too unwieldy to be taken over the mountains, and was sent from Trebizond back to Constantinople. Two years later, the invention of man had provided a press which could be taken to pieces, and one of these, in charge of Mr. Edward Breath, a printer, was sent to Urumia, to the great wonder and delight of the people. The Scriptures were now so far translated into the Syriac of the Nestorians that portions were at once struck off. "Some of the ablest of the Nestorian clergy had aided in the translation, and the contents of their rare ancient manuscripts were now given back to them in a language which all could understand. They stood in mute astonishment and rapture to see their language in print; and as soon as they could speak, the exclamation was, 'It is time to give glory to God, since printing is begun among our people.'"

The type, for which the punches and matrices were made in Urumia, is acknowledged to be the most beautiful Syriac type in existence, and is adopted by some of the first Oriental publishing houses in Germany and England. Text-

books for the theological students and the schools and colleges are printed, and many tracts for distribution. *Rays of Light*, a monthly newspaper, and the Sunday-school lesson papers are widely circulated. The Turkish authorities have forbidden the circulation of the books and papers in Koordistan.

In 1894 the Syriac Bible, revised by the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Labaree, assisted by able Nestorian scholars, was printed by the American Bible Society. The revision involved a vast amount of labor and the printing was a work of extreme difficulty. The Bible Society is entitled to the thanks of the Syriac-speaking world for the admirable style in which the volume has been issued.

Medical work has always been prominent at Urumia, and has proved potent in opening a way for the truth. The Westminster Hospital, built in 1880, accommodates thirty patients, and under the efficient management of Dr. J. P. Cochran, aided by a corps of native assistants trained by himself, has a field of usefulness only limited by its inadequate equipment and resources. The Howard Annex for Women was added in 1890, and is under the immediate care of Dr. Emma T. Miller. There are two dispensaries, and a class of students constantly under instruction, besides much outside practice. An operating room given by Mr. and Mrs. Lyman of Minneapolis as a memorial to Mrs. Cochran was opened in 1901. About 400 in-patients are treated annually, and the outside cases in 1902 were 11,400. The young physicians who are graduated yearly from the classes do incalculable good all through the country by their professional ability and upright characters. Dr. Cochran says: "The sick come in large numbers to the office every day. They flock in by sunrise; some on foot, others on horses, donkeys, oxen, or on the backs of their friends, or borne on litters. The people often throw their sick at our feet, saying, 'We shall not take them away until you cure them, or let them die here. Our only hope is in God above, and in you as His instruments below.'"

Few mission fields have been more successful than that of which Urumia is the centre. And as for the lives of the servants of God, who have labored there Urumia may challenge the world to produce men and women of more exalted piety or more fervent consecration. The names of Perkins, Grant, Stoddard, Rhea, Coan and Fiske will be held in everlasting remembrance. Among later workers were Rev. J. G. Cochran and Mrs. Cochran, who was called to her reward in 1895, after nearly fifty years of service. Dr. J. H. Shedd,

who died in the same year, had been identified with Urumia for a generation, and was revered by the native Church as "priest, bishop and patriarch, all in one." Most of the men now attached to this station were born there, being the sons of missionaries. They have in consequence a perfect knowledge of the native customs, and speak the languages of the country with all their idioms and imagery, with a perfection which no foreign-born missionary can ever hope to attain.

### **The Mountain District**

One of the chief aims of the Urumia Mission from the outset was to reach the Syriac-speaking tribes of Kurdistan and the Tigris plain. It was felt that this could best be done by opening a station at some point near them. Dr. Grant went to Mosul for this purpose, and died there in 1844. His successors gathered a church of Arabic-speaking Christians and were able to do something for the Syriac villages. Our own Board sent Rev. E. W. McDowell and Dr. Wishard to reside at Tiary in 1889, but after a heroic struggle with hardship and opposition, they found the region too isolated and lawless for the best results. In 1892 the American Board decided to give up its station at Mosul, which was transferred to our Board in the hope that the mountain district could be reached thence. Rev. J. A. Ainslie continued in charge of the Arabic work, and Mr. and Mrs. McDowell and Miss Melton joined them at Mosul, with Dr. C. C. Hansen and Mrs. Hansen. But the hopes for the new station were not realized. The climate proved extremely unhealthy, and the persistent opposition of the Turkish government, instigated by powerful Roman Catholic interests, made it impossible to obtain suitable dwellings. The disturbed condition of the country prevented any itinerating work. In the summer of 1893 while visiting one of the Christian villages near Amadia, Miss Melton was attacked in her tent by Koordish ruffians and barely escaped with her life. For all these reasons Mosul was given up in 1897.

The people of the mountains are poor and oppressed beyond belief. The scanty harvest which they wring from their stony fields is seized by the government or stolen by the robber Kurds, and they have no redress. It is plainly the deliberate aim of the Turkish government to exterminate or drive out all its Christian subjects. Mr. Coan, Mr. Labaree and Mr. Sterrett have made constant tours among the isolated villages where we have many earnest Christians, preaching, encouraging the native helpers and doing what they can to help the starving people. Schools are



kept up in many villages and some of the brightest children are sent to Urumia.

In 1902 Rev. E. W. McDowell and Mrs. McDowell and Rev. C. E. Sterrett went to Van (Turkey), where they are making their headquarters until the government shall give them permission to reside at some central point in the mountains. Mr. Sterrett has spent most of his time in the mountain villages, undergoing great hardships to gain acquaintance with the language and the real life of the people.

**Tabriz, Salmas** Tabriz lies east of Lake Urumia, and about 140 miles by the road from the city of that name. It is a great centre of European trade, and the emporium of Persia, having many extensive bazaars and caravansaries. It has a population of about 200,000, principally Moslems. There is a small but important community of Armenians.

Rev. P. Z. Easton and Mrs. Easton, with Miss Mary Jewett, first occupied Tabriz in 1873. Great opposition was encountered from the fanatical Moslems and the jealous Armenian and Roman Catholic officials. But by patient labor a foothold has been gained and a church organized. A beautiful church building was given by Mr. Covington, of Brooklyn, N. Y., in memory of his daughter. Services are held in Armenian and Turkish, and the Sunday-schools are well attended. The Memorial School for Boys, under the care of Rev. S. G. Wilson, is organized into primary, intermediate, high school and theological departments. In 1902 there were 22 boarders, and the total enrollment was 145. Numbers of the young men here educated have entered the Protestant Church during their course of study, and several have become valuable workers in the different parts of the field. In 1891, a fine building was erected for this school by Mrs. W. Thaw, of Pittsburgh.

The Girls' School has a handsome, commodious building, with about 100 boarding and day pupils. It has had a successful history, and has exercised a marked effect upon the schools of the Gregorian Armenians in the education of their girls. The attendance fluctuates as the opposition is more or less severe.

The medical work of this Station is in the hands of Dr. Vanneman and Dr. Mary Bradford. This department of the work has done much to counteract the hostile measures of the unfriendly. The present Shah of Persia, during his long residence in Tabriz as the Crown Prince, became the warm friend of Dr. Vanneman, as he had been of Dr. Holmes previously. So great is the Shah's confidence in the

integrity and skill of these physicians, that he entrusted to Dr. Vanneman the care of his large harem in their removal to the capital. He strongly urged Dr. Holmes to become his confidential physician, an honor which the missionary felt constrained to decline. The Rev. W. S. Whipple, for many years the agent of the American Bible Society in Persia, on leaving Tabriz in 1896, presented his residence to the Station as a hospital for women and children. Other friends gave funds for its equipment, and it was opened in 1899. The wards are constantly filled, and thousands are reached and relieved by the dispensary work. Dr. Vanneman has a dispensary for men and a large outside practice in Tabriz and the neighboring villages.

Perhaps the most important work of Tabriz Station is done in the evangelistic tours constantly undertaken throughout the neighboring regions. Many months of each year are spent in this way. The people are generally accessible and often show great interest in hearing of the Word of Life. Miss Jewett has at times resided for months quite alone in the Moslem villages, where the people showed her great friendliness. Miss Holliday spends much time in the villages on the Salmas plain, north and west of the great Salt Lake Urumia.

This district is the centre of a large Armenian and papal Nestorian population. In 1884 Rev. J. N. Wright and Mrs. Wright were sent to Haft-Dewan, one of the principal villages, where they resided for some years. A girls' school was begun by Miss C. O. Van Duzee. In spite of bitter opposition several vigorous churches were established, with excellent pastors. In 1890, Mrs. Wright was murdered by an Armenian who had been employed as a school teacher. The vigorous pursuit and punishment of the assassin by the government created much ill-feeling.

Dr. Wright rendered excellent service by revising the Turkish Scriptures in the Azerbijan dialect as translated and published by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

In 1895 the village of Haft-Dewan, which had been the headquarters of the Salmas work, was rendered almost uninhabitable by a singular rise of water through the foundations of the houses. It was found best on this account to withdraw the foreign workers from Salmas, leaving the churches to the care of the Persian pastors under the superintendence of the Tabriz Station.

## Eastern Persia Mission.

### Teheran

The mission to Persia, as already stated, was transferred to the Presbyterian Board by the American Board, in 1871, and with the transfer there came an urgent plea from the missionaries for an enlargement. It was felt to be a duty to embrace within their work the Armenians and Moslems of central Persia. Accordingly Rev. James Bassett, who had reached Urumia in 1871, made an extended tour the following year, visiting Tabriz, Hamadan and Teheran, the result of which was that in November, 1872, he was sent to occupy Teheran, where he was warmly welcomed by both Mussulmans and Armenians. In 1874 he was joined by Rev. J. L. Potter, whose fruitful ministry is still continued. Teheran has a population of 300,000, most of whom are Moslems; but there are 1,000 Armenians, 5,000 Jews and several hundred Europeans. The languages chiefly spoken are the Turkish and the Persian, the latter only being heard on the streets. Of this field Mr. Bassett says :

“We occupy the only tenable ground for labor designed to reach either eastern Persia or the Tartar tribes of Turkistan. The Turkish language spoken here enables a person to pass quite through Turkistan into Chinese Tartary and far to the northward, while the Persian makes accessible all central and southern Persia, through Khorassan to Afghanistan, and even large populations of India. Central Asia has, in nearly all the past, been neglected by the Church of Christ; the result has been that it is the great source whence have proceeded the scourges of mankind; and the Tartar and Iranian hordes have, age after age, as in great tidal waves, overflowed Christendom, overthrowing its civilization and nearly extinguishing its light.”

Teheran is not only the central point from which to reach a vast outlying population, it is also a rapidly growing city, and the vacant land within the twelve gates will soon be occupied. The importation of European ways and inventions has been considerable, especially since the Shah's visit to England. A bank recently opened is of great advantage to foreigners in transacting business. The old caravan trail, formerly the only means of reaching the city, has been superseded by a fine wagon road to Resht, on the Caspian Sea, built by Russian capital in 1899.

In 1883 a neat chapel was built with a seating capacity of 300, in which preaching services in Persian and English are regularly held. The work for women, a school for girls and also one for boys, the medical and evangelistic work are all vigorously pressed. The girls' school is called “Iran

Bethel"—the Persian Bethel. It was a boarding-school for some years, but was closed in 1898 for the sake of retrenchment, and re-opened after a year as a day-school. There are about seventy pupils, most of them Armenians, the rest Jews and Moslems.

The boys' school was opened in 1887 with sixteen students, and has now over one hundred, although many other schools have been opened in the city. The boys come from the best families in the place, and nearly half of them are Mohammedians.

The medical work inaugurated by Dr. Torrence was continued by Dr. Wishard. A hospital built in 1892 was enlarged in 1895 with money given by residents of the city. In 1893 a new dispensary was built, and during the cholera epidemic of that year more than two thousand patients were treated. The hospital was closed for a time after Dr. Wishard left, and re-opened in 1902 by J. A. Funk, M. D. The women's dispensary is in charge of Dr. Mary Smith. Dr. Smith has many calls to visit the families of influential Persians, who would never be willing to come to the hospital.

The Armenian Church has a commodious building, erected with funds raised by themselves. There is a good congregation, though the growth of the church has been retarded by factious quarrels among its members. Persian services are held in the chapel on the mission compound, and also regular English services, attended by members of the Protestant Legations, heads of business corporations and other Protestant foreigners. This has a good effect on the native community.

The evangelistic work in the surrounding country grows in importance year by year. Long tours are constantly made by Dr. Potter, Mr. Esselstyn and others, reaching hundreds of towns and villages. The territory dependent upon Teheran covers about 850 miles by 200, with a population of 3,000,000. The welcome reinforcements lately sent out have made it possible to occupy two out-stations, Kasvin and Resht. Kasvin, nearly midway between Teheran and the Caspian Sea, is one of the most ancient towns in Persia. The present population is about 35,000, but extensive ruins show its former grandeur. Dr. Potter and Mrs. Lawrence (Dr. Jessie Wilson) have made long visits to Kasvin at different times. Friendly relations have been established with many of the people, and it is hoped that hereafter the station may be permanently occupied.

Resht is an important and growing town on the Caspian

Sea, where much evangelistic work has already been done.

**Hamadan** This ancient city, the second centre of the East Persia Mission, is supposed to occupy the site of Ecbatana (Ezra vi: 2), the place where Darius found the roll with the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the house of God at Jerusalem. It lies in a plain 6000 feet above the sea, at the foot of Mt. Elvend (the ancient Orontes) and is noted for the tombs of Queen Esther and Mordecai.

The place was early visited by colporteurs from Urumia, but the first regular work began in 1869, when Mirza Oohannes, who had learned of Christ in Bagdad, went to Hamadan and began to preach. In 1872, Hamadan was made an out-station of Teheran, and in 1880 it became a regular Station.

There are now two churches, each with its regular services and sacraments. The Armenian congregation, known as St. Stephen's Church, has a membership of more than one hundred, with a large Sunday-school. The devoted pastor is a tower of strength to the Mission. A church was organized among the Jews in 1893, taking the name of Peniel.

The high school for boys is greatly esteemed in the community, and grows constantly in numbers. The *Faith Hubbard School* for girls has 115 scholars, mostly Armenians. A society of "King's Daughters," formed a few years since, has been merged into a flourishing Christian Endeavor Society, with many members outside of the school. Nearly all the Armenian girls of school age in the city are enrolled in our schools. There are also schools for Jewish children.

The medical work, much crippled by the departure of Dr. Holmes in 1900, has been partially sustained by the young Persian doctors whom he had trained. The dispensary is superintended by Mrs. F. M. Stead, M.D. (Miss Blanche Wilson). A hospital is imperatively needed.

A little sanitarium, built on a hill outside the city, affords a refuge where the missionaries can go now and then to escape the heat and filth of the city.

There are several out-stations. At Kermanshah, 100 miles to the south, on the road to Bagdad, a Persian evangelist, Kasha Moosheh, has an excellent school for boys and is gaining great influence. There is a church at Sheverine, and at Lilahan, where interest was first aroused by the casual visit of a young convert from Islam, a church, manse and school were built during 1902. A new village, Nehavend, has recently been occupied through the influence of one of the young physicians.

Hamadan, as well as the whole Christian Church of Persia, met with a great loss, in 1902, in the death of Rev. W. L. Whipple. For thirty years Mr. Whipple had labored in Persia in connection with our Mission and the American Bible Society. His earnest faith and beautiful character gave him wonderful influence, especially with young men.

Secretary Speer writes from Hamadan :

"The Hamadan field has a large number of villages and cities assigned to it. Its boundaries run from Sehna to Sinjan, from Sinjan to Karaghan, from Karaghan to Kashan, thence to Khoramabad and the Turkish border as far as the point where a line from Sinjan through Sehna would meet it. In this district are eight cities, with populations from 10,000 to 60,000, and scores of plains full of villages. In one small plain, in which all supposed there would be fifteen villages, there were fifty-one. Dr. Shedd was deeply impressed as he came over the same road we traveled to Hamadan, on his way to the Hamadan Conference, with the almost innumerable villages passed, in which no missionary had ever stopped even an hour with the message of the world's Redeemer.

"At the close of some delightful conferences in Hamadan at which we were all as one band, of one heart, of one accord, I asked what were the great conscious needs of the station which they would want to lay with longing and prayer upon the prayer life of the Church at home. The needs they mentioned resolved themselves into these: That the hearts of Moslems may be opened, and that they may receive the truth; that the ecclesiastical system of Islam may be shattered; that religious liberty may soon be secured to Persia; that the missionary spirit may fill the native Church; that the 'mind of Christ Jesus may be in us.' If the mind of Christ Jesus, who was the Light of the world, who came to reconcile the world unto Himself, who died the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, be in the home Church, will not these requests for prayer be heeded? Let us ask and receive in behalf of Persia and the missionaries of Persia."

### STATISTICS, 1903

Missionaries (8 medical).....	52
Native assistants.....	222
Churches.....	25
Communicants.....	2,897
Pupils in schools.....	2,792
Hospitals and dispensaries.....	10

## STATIONS, 1903

### EASTERN PERSIA MISSION

**TEHERAN:** Capital of Persia; population 300 000; work begun in 1872. Missionaries—Rev. J. L. Potter, D. D., and Mrs. Potter, Rev. Louis F. Esselstyn and Mrs. Esselstyn, Rev. S. M. Jordan and Mrs. Jordan, Dr. J. A. Funk, Miss Cora C Bartlett, Miss Mary J. Smith, M. D.

**Kasvin:** Rev. Charles A. Douglas and Mrs. Douglas, Dr. Jessie C. Wilson and Miss Mary Jewett.

**Resht:** Rev. H. C. Schuler and Mrs. Schuler, and Dr. E. T. Lawrence and Mrs. Lawrence (Jessie C. Wilson, M. D.).

**HAMADAN:** 200 miles southwest of Teheran; population 40,000; occupied in 1880. Missionaries—Rev. James W. Hawkes, and Mrs. Hawkes, Rev. N. L. Euwer, Rev. F. M. Stead and Mrs. Stead, Miss Annie Montgomery, Miss Charlotte G. Montgomery, and Miss Sue S. Lienbach.

### WESTERN PERSIA MISSION

**URUMIA:** 480 miles north-of-west from Teheran, the capital; Station begun under the American Board, 1835; transferred to this Board in 1871. Missionaries—Rev. Benjamin Labaree, D. D., J. P. Cochran, M. D., Rev. F. G. Coan and Mrs. Coan, Rev. W. A. Shedd and Mrs. Shedd; Rev. B. W. Labaree and Mrs. Labaree, Rev. C. S. Blackburn and Mrs. Blackburn, Rev. C. E. Sterrett, Rev. E. W. McDowell and Mrs. McDowell, Miss M. K. Van Duzee, Miss E. T. Miller, M. D., Miss Bertha McConaughy.

**TABRIZ:** nearly 360 miles north-of-west from Teheran; Station begun 1873. Missionaries—Rev. J. N. Wright, D. D., and Mrs. Wright, Rev. S. G. Wilson, D. D., and Mrs. Wilson, Wm. S. Vanneman, M. D., and Mrs. Vanneman, Rev. Charles R. Pittman, Miss G. Y. Holliday, Miss M. E. Bradford, M. D., Miss Lillie B. Beaber, Mrs. L. C. Van-Hook, Miss Lucille Drake.

### REINFORCEMENTS, 1903

Rev. Fred'k N. Jessup, Miss Mary E. Lewis, Miss Rosa Shoenhair.

## MISSIONARIES IN PERSIA, 1871-1903

\* Died while connected with the Mission. † Transferred from the American Board.  
 Figures, Term of service in the field.

†Ainslie, Rev. J. A.,	1891-1898	Carey, Miss A.,	1880-1883
†Ainslie, Mrs.,	1891-1898	Clarke, Miss M. A.,	
Alexander, E. W., M. D.,	1882-1892		'80-'84; 1892-1898
Alexander, Mrs.,	1882-1892	*Coan, Rev. G. W., †	1849-1879
Allen, Mr. E. T.,	1891-1897	*Coan, Mrs.,	1849-1879
Bartlett, Miss C. G.,	1882	Coan, Rev. F. G.,	1885
Bassett, Rev. J.,	1871-1884	Coan, Mrs.,	1885
Bassett, Mrs.,	1871-1884	*Cochran, Rev. J. G., †	1847-1871
Bassett, Miss S. J.,	1875-1888	*Cochran, Mrs.,	1847-1893
Beaber, Miss L. B.,	1899	Cochran, J. P., M. D.,	1878
Blackburn, Rev. C. S.,	1896	*Cochran, Mrs.,	1878-1895
Blackburn, Mrs.,	1896	Cochran, Miss K.,	1871-1875
Bradford, Mary E.,		Cochran, Miss E. G.,	1885-1888
M. D.,	1888	Dean, Miss N. J.,	1860-1892
Brashear, Rev. T. G.,	1890-1900	Dean, Miss Margaret,	1901
Brashear, Mrs.,	1890-1900	Demuth, Miss M. A.,	1895-1900

- Douglas, Rev. C. A., 1901  
 Douglas, Mrs. (Miss Ballis), 1901  
 Drake, Miss Lucile, 1902  
 Easton, Rev. P. Z., † 1873-1879  
 Easton, Mrs., 1873-1879  
 Esselstyn, Rev. L. F., 1887  
 Esselstyn, Mrs., 1887  
 Euwer, Rev. N. L., 1901  
 Funk, Dr. J. A., 1902  
 Green, Miss M. W., 1889-1892  
 Hansen, C. C., M.D., 1895-1897  
 Hansen, Mrs. (Lilian Reinhart, M. D., '94) 1895-1897  
 Hargrave, Mr. A. A., 1883-1887  
 Hargrave, Mrs. (Miss M. J. Moore, 1884) 1885-1887  
 Hawkes, Rev. J. W., 1880  
 Hawkes, Mrs. (Miss B. Sherwood, 1883), 1884  
 Holliday, Miss G. Y., 1883  
 Holmes, G. W., M. D., 1874-1877; 1881-1899  
 \*Holmes, Mrs., 1874-1877; 1881-1890  
 Holmes, Mrs., 1893-1899  
 Hunter, Miss Adeline, 1889-1893  
 Jessup, Rev. F. N., 1903  
 Jewett, Miss M., 1871  
 Jordan, Rev. S. M., 1898  
 Jordan, Mrs., 1898  
 Labaree, Rev. B., † 1860  
 \*Labaree, Mrs., 1860-1898  
 Labaree, Rev. Benj. W., 1893  
 Labaree, Mrs., 1893  
 Lawrence, Dr. E. T., 1902-1903  
 Lawrence, Mrs. (Jessie Wilson, M.D., 1892) 1903  
 Lewis, Miss M. E., 1903  
 Lienbach, Miss, 1891  
 McCampbell, Miss L. H., 1891-1899  
 McConaughy, Miss B., 1900  
 McDowell, Rev. E. W., 1887-'96; 1902  
 McDowell, Mrs., 1887-'96; 1902  
 McLean, Miss J. F., 1892-1898  
 Mechlin, Rev. J. C., 1887-1896  
 Mechlin, Mrs., 1887-1896  
 Medbery, Miss H. L., 1892-1899  
 Melton, Miss Anna, 1888-1897  
 Miller, Emma T., M.D., 1891  
 Montgomery, Miss A., 1882  
 Montgomery, Miss C., 1886  
 Morgan, Miss Maria, 1885-1889  
 Oldfather, Rev. J. M., 1872-1890  
 Oldfather, Mrs., 1872-1890  
 Pittman, Rev. C. R., 1900  
 Poage, Miss A. E., 1875-1880  
 Porter, Rev. T. J., 1884-1885  
 Porter, Mrs., 1884-1885  
 Potter, Rev. J. L., D.D., 1874  
 Potter, Mrs., 1878  
 Roberts, Miss Emma, 1887-1889  
 Rogers, Rev. J. E., 1882-1885  
 Rogers, Mrs., 1882-1885  
 Russell, Miss G. G., 1891-1899  
 Schenck, Miss Anna, 1877-1899  
 Schuler, Rev. H. C., 1899  
 Schuler, Mrs. (Miss A. G. Dale, 1885) 1902  
 \*Scott, Rev. D., 1877-1879  
 Scott, Mrs., 1877-1879  
 \*Shedd, Rev. J. H., † 1859-1895  
 Shedd, Mrs., 1859-1895  
 Shedd, W. A., 1892  
 \*Shedd, Mrs., 1894-1901  
 Shedd, Mrs. (Miss Wilbur, 1901), 1903  
 Shoenhair, Rosa, 1903  
 Smith, Mary J. M. D., 1889  
 Stead, Rev. F. M., 1902  
 Stead, Mrs. (Blanche Wilson, M.D.) 1900  
 Sterrett, Rev. C. E., 1900  
 Stocking, Rev. W. R., 1871-1879  
 \*Stocking, Mrs., 1871-1872  
 Stocking, Mrs., 1873-1879  
 St. Pierre, Rev. E. W., 1887-1895  
 St. Pierre, Mrs., 1887-1895  
 Torrence, W. W., M.D., 1881-1888  
 Torrence, Mrs., 1881-1888  
 Vanneman, W. S., M.D., 1890  
 Vanneman, Mrs., 1890  
 VanDuzee, Miss M. K., 1875  
 \*VanDuzee, Miss C. O., 1886-1897  
 VanHook, Mrs. L. C., 1876-1894; 1902  
 VanNorden, Rev. T. L., † 1866-1873  
 VanNorden, Mrs., 1866-1873  
 Wallace, Miss M., 1894-1897  
 Ward, Rev. S. L., 1876-1897  
 Ward, Mrs., 1876-1897  
 Watson, Rev. J. G., 1888-1902  
 Watson, Mrs., 1888-1902  
 \*Whipple, Rev. W. L., 1872-'79; 1899-1901  
 Whipple, Mrs., 1872-1879  
 Wilson, Rev. S. G., 1880  
 Wilson, Mrs., 1886  
 Wishard, J. G., M.D., 1889-1900  
 \*Wishard, Mrs., 1892-1899  
 Wright, Rev. J. N., 1878  
 \*Wright, Mrs., 1878-1884  
 \*Wright, Mrs., 1887-1890  
 Wright, Mrs., 1892