

THE ASSEMBLY HERALD

JUNE, 1899

Current Events

Invasion of the East

A Buddhist magazine in Japan prophesies thus: "The greatest movement of the twentieth century will not be a commercial one, not a military one,—but the nations of the West will invade the East with great armies of Christian missionaries backed by the wealth of Christendom." That invasion has already begun, and reports of its progress are among the most important current events of to-day.

Russian Influence in Persia

It is now reported that the Shah of Persia has signed a concession for seventy years to a Russian mining company, permitting them to exploit and develop the province of Azerbaijan, which has an area of more than 30,000 square miles and a population of 1,000,000, including the cities of Tabriz and Oroomiah.

The people of this province have come to regard with favor their northern neighbor. Every year several thousand of them cross the border and remain a few months in Russia, where they earn better wages than at home and are able to lay aside something for the future. Moreover, Russian capital has constructed much-needed roads in the province. Some of the people believe that Russia, having done so much, will one day deliver them from Moslem persecution.

These facts explain in a measure the remarkable success of the mission of the Orthodox Russian Church established last September in Oroomiah, which has so hampered and curtailed the work of Presbyterian missionaries among the Nestorians.

The opinion is expressed in the *Independent* that Russia will soon proclaim Northern Persia as her own, and that Great Britain will offer no protest, since her interests are in Southern Persia.

Religious Liberty in Korea

Recent letters from Korea mention the fact that through the intervention of the Hon. H. N. Allen an order was issued by the government, to take effect May 1, exempting native Christians from persecution and establishing religious liberty, especially in the Pyeng Yang district. This will counteract a movement oppressive to native Christians that was in progress.

This is not the only evidence that the authorities appreciate the efforts of missionaries. A weekly paper published in Seoul, called the *Christian News*, is exerting a great influence. It contains religious news, a translation of the Sunday-school lesson, with notes, and much useful information. The king receives copies of the paper, and by order of the Korean government it is sent to each of the three hundred and sixty-seven magistracies, as well as to the ten departments of the central government.

Our mission in Korea was established only fourteen years ago. During the last year, 1,153 members were received, and 3,000 catechumens were enrolled. In the Pyeng Yang district alone the people built during the year forty-four houses of worship. The total church membership is now 2,079.

The Study of Tropical Diseases

The prompt response to General Kitchener's appeal for a large sum of money to found a college at Khartoum was interpreted as significant of the English spirit in dealing with the Soudanese. Equally significant of the fundamental ideas which lie at the basis of the civilization of the English-speaking people is the establishment of a medical school in West Africa for the purpose of studying tropical diseases. It is now proposed to provide special courses for nurses and physicians, and to require that

propose to keep up our meetings through the winter in Debra this season, as well as during the rest of the coming year in Landour. Only by thus continuously meeting for the whole year will it be possible for us to accomplish the revision of our entire work, which is so desirable before the final publication of the whole new translation of the Old Testament, when our Committee must break up. The completed translation, life and health being spared, we may now expect to have ready for the press by the end of 1899.

Dr. Kellogg was a man of great mental power

and respected scholarship. In 1891-92 he was Stone lecturer in Princeton Theological Seminary; and besides the volume of Leviticus in the Expositor's Bible Series, a book on the Jews in History and Prophecy, and his last book on Comparative Religion, he had written a great deal, both in the way of books and articles. In his death the mission cause suffers a profound loss.

A Token of Gratitude from Siam

A Troy daily paper has recently published the following letter, written by some of his old friends in Bangkok to the venerable medical missionary of the Presbyterian Board, Dr. Samuel R. House, now residing at Waterford, N. Y. No tribute could be more richly deserved:

Dr. House left Siam in 1876. Last year he received from his old pupils 183 silver dollars as a birthday present. Among the contributors were an army surgeon, officers of the government service, the pastor of the native church, preachers, teachers, clerks, many of whom he had baptized. This is the letter which accompanied the gift:

SUMRAY, BANGKOK, June 15, 1898.

Rev. S. R. House, M.D.:

SIR: We having learn that your old age coming to eighty-one on the 16th October next.

On this occasion we were glad to subscribe among your oriental scholars of Siam to offer you a small present which we obtained for your birthday.

We herewith requests you to accept this small sum for your birthday's present for the recognition of your Siamese scholars, and we beg to thanks you for the knowledgement which we obtained from you when you be with us in our lovely country, and we noted you are the foundation of our knowledgement, and we will place your name on the stones of our hearts long as we lives.

We pray God to blaess to comfort and to help you in any circumstances, and we hope to meet you again in the kingdom of Our Father.

We have the honor to remains sir yours affectionate scholars

(Signed by over thirty names.)

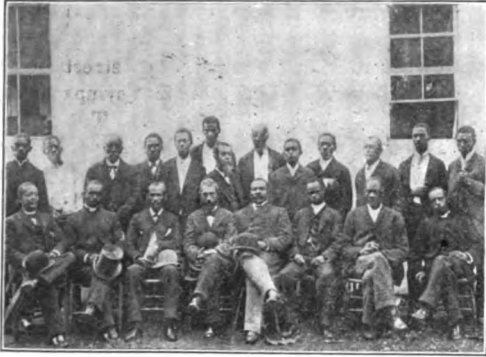
Sowing Beside All Waters

By Robert Hamill Nassau, D.D., M.D.

"The Spirit maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means." "And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Preaching in neither Christian nor heathen countries is necessarily confined to the platform of a pulpit. Indeed, if so confined, it fails in the full accomplishment of its object. The preacher is a preacher still in his pastoral visitations. There is a recognized work and place for the "street" preacher. Missionaries to such uncivilized countries as Africa do the major part of their work as preachers on the streets, in the villages, by boat, canoe, or afoot, or whenever and wherever and however they may find hearers.

I look with tender pleasure on my pulpit ministrations to the church of Corisco, of Benita, of the three Ogowe, and of Gaboon—six in all—of which I have successively had charge, for terms of from one to six years. But in three of these I had first to gather the materials for an organization. Those materials were not obtained ready-made, members of other churches already existing, but were to be found, taught, enlightened, converted, trained, and prepared for baptism. They were found in the highways and under the hedges, in forest vil-



PRESBYTERY OF LIBERIA

lages, by little lakes, on the banks of the queenly Ogowe and its score of smaller affluents. They were the outcome, under the Holy Spirit's miraculous touch, of words spoken under rain and sun, in health and weariness; standing in the noisy village street, or lying disabled on the thwart of a boat; to ears that were simply curious to hear what this white spirit had to tell, but whose hearts were not burdened with a sense of the sinfulness of sin, and whose highest thought at the moment was by what fetish-charm they might induce that same white spirit to share with them some of the yards of cloth or bars of soap or other goods lying in his traveling chest, from which he bought food for his boat's crew. And yet, my tenderest thought today, resting in my furlough, but with heart back among my African flock, is not of the comfortable pulpit, but of the uncomfortable canoe or bamboo hut. If God has given me the joy of any soul brought into the kingdom by my hand or voice, I value, as the means used by him, less the decorous church service than the apparently hopeless sowings by all other waters. *That* in the church was for the "building up in faith and holiness"; *these*, in the hut, at noon, or by night under star or moon, are for the seeking of the lost, the saving from sin, the beginning of a life of faith.

Itineration had advantages over the physically easier church pulpit ministrations. It reached many who, not feeling themselves sinners, or having none of the variety of personal reasons that gather congregations in both Christian and heathen countries, did not care to come to church, and probably never would. It reached more who, distant ten, thirty, sixty, or more miles, could not find canoe or other means of coming. It reached still more who,

living perhaps a hundred miles away, in an interior tribe, scarcely could make their way through intervening tribes—often hostile to them—but whom I found as guests on rare journeys of trade in villages I happened to be visiting. How with riveted eyes they listened to the white stranger whom they had never before seen, and probably would never see again! And how that stranger threw all his soul of utterance and instruction and prayer into that his one street sermon! Hoping that the precious word uttered might be carried by the Holy Spirit to those guests' consciences, and, though perhaps forgotten in life, might, even in their dying hour, be savingly remembered.

The churches of the Ogowe, which, by presbytery's direction, I assisted in organizing with their over three hundred members, were the result of just such wayside sowing, begun by myself in 1874, and carried on during later years by my associates, Rev. W. H. Robinson, H. M. Bacheleer, M.D., Mrs. J. M. Smith, Miss I. A. Nassau, and others, until the grain began to ripen in 1886, just as Rev. A. C. Good, Ph.D., joined us to help gather in the sheaves.

During my nine Talaguga years I made no



BENITA SCHOOL GIRLS, WEST AFRICA

church organization there. It was seventy miles up river from Kängwe, the nearest of the Ogowe churches, in the work of whose session I continued to share. But some of my happiest hours at Talaguga were when companies of strangers, twenty to fifty in number, came, as they often did, bringing loads of ivory to the Fang villages near by. My Fang friends were proud to bring their guests to see *their* white man. They stood amazed at the (to them) palace-like house and furniture, amused with kaleidoscope or sewing machine, delighted with organ; and then, gathered on the veranda, and all other work, however pressing, laid aside, I told them the old story that grew more sweet the oftener I told it. They went away reverential. How much did they understand? I do not know. How much did they carry away? Enough to save. After many days I often heard of the bread thus cast from others

to whom these visitors, on their arrival home, had repeated the story in their vivid account of what they had seen or heard in the white man's house. "Let him that heareth say, 'Come.'"

On that veranda, or in that street or hut, I was able to establish a closer sympathy than church conventionalities allow. To the pulpit, doubting hearers will not utter their objection, nor ask a needed explanation. Through the familiar chat of the veranda or hut they are invited to ask and to object; and they felt free to do so. They would go away, if without faith, at least with knowledge. Giving the knowledge was my business; the working of faith was God's. I believe he did it. I think I have a larger church membership in Africa whose names and faces I shall not know this side of heaven than of those whom I have actually baptized and enrolled on earth.

There are, on the Congo and its branches, 150 Catholic and 250 Protestant missionaries.

The railway from the mouth of the Congo to Stanley Pool connects by quick and easy transit the interior of Africa with the ocean. It opens to commerce the "greatest river basin of the world," with its 3,000 miles of navigable waterway and its 30,000,000 of population. This railway will not only quicken commercial enterprise, it will also aid the rapidly growing work of the Church.

The Christians in Toro, which borders on Uganda, who first learned something about the gospel less than five years ago, when they heard that the Baganda, owing to a mutiny, had not funds enough to pay their native Christian teachers, made a collection "for the poor saints in Uganda," and sent them an offering valued at £30.

One out of every five of the converts in Uganda acts as a missionary to his heathen neighbors.

The Indigenous Religions and Superstitions of Africa

By F. F. Ellinwood, D.D., LL.D.

Christianity and Mohammedanism in Africa are foreign importations. Christianity had the precedence by many centuries. It was introduced as early as the day of Pentecost when certain representatives of Northern Africa witnessed the descent of the Holy Ghost, and spake in their own African tongues of the glory of God. In the advancement of Christianity in the Roman Empire and thence through Europe and the world, great African fathers like Augustine, Cyprian and Tertullian may be said to have had a chief part in rearing the structure of what is known as Latin Christianity. Their influence became a great aggressive missionary

force in the world. But it was by one of the mysterious providences of God that the Christianity of Augustine was crippled by the Vandals and finally almost extinguished by the Mohammedan invasion, and that to-day Mohammedanism claims the larger half of the great Dark Continent. In the article published elsewhere in this magazine the present spirit of Islam as a missionary religion, or more accurately a religion of conquest, may be seen. Christianity and Islam are struggling for supremacy in the conquest of Africa.

The native or indigenous type of religion in all those portions extending from the southern