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MISSIONARY LIFE

IN

PERSIA:

BEING

GLIMPSES AT A QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF LABORS AMONG
THE NESTORIAN CHRISTIANS.

BY

REV. JUSTIN PERKINS, D.D.

With Illustrations.

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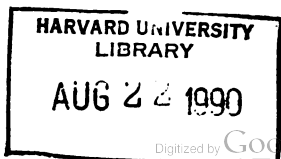
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J. Perkins.

PREFACE.

THIS little book is made up substantially of missionary narratives, the first portions of which were used in addresses, during the author's brief visit to the United States, in 1842, in company with Mar Yohannan, a Nestorian bishop; and some of the last portions have been used, in a similar way, during my second visit to this country, in 1859, '60. Having been importuned to republish my "Residence in Persia," a work which was given to the public at the first-named period, and deeming that work too large and minute to be adapted to the railroad and telegraph spirit and taste of the present day, I have supposed that these first narratives may well serve the purpose of an epitome of that volume; while the latter portions naturally succeed them, and bring down the missionary work, among the Nestorian Christians, in a still briefer form, to the present time.

Slight recapitulations, in different parts of the volume, may possibly be observed, but it is believed that they are too few and brief to be objectionable.

It is proper to state, that, in offering this little work to the public, I yield primarily to the wishes of personal friends, who desire to possess some such humble memento of my visits among the churches; while I also indulge the hope that it may prove a not unwelcome token to many others—especially to “Zion’s friends and mine,” who have so long helped us, and we trust will continue to help us, with their prayers and their offerings, in the prosecution of the hallowed enterprise of missions.

The consideration which leads me to publish so small a book, instead of a larger and more elaborate one, on so ample a subject, may be associated with the hopes of the missionary, in regard to the progress of the gospel. It is a flying contribution—such in deference to the flying demands of the times; and the advance of the gospel in Asia, and other parts of the world, if we have a right understanding of “the signs of these times,” is soon to be a greatly accelerated one—far more than in geometrical ratio to past experience. The author, in a word, believes that we are on the eve of those “glorious things” spoken of Zion by Hebrew prophets. He accounts his eyes blessed in the things he has seen,

and his ears blessed in the things he has heard; but he hopes to see and to hear far greater and more glorious things.

The engravings embodied in this volume are naturally suggested by the subjects where they respectively occur. The plain one, at the beginning, is inserted with much misgiving; but while my friends are thus challenged to bear with me in my "folly," to some of them I may say, "Ye have compelled me."

I will only add the expression of my hope, that, among the readers of this little book, there may be not a few whose interest in the missionary work will be quickened, and their prayers for its success rendered more frequent and fervent, by the perusal. If so, my object in the publication of so humble an offering will be accomplished.

J. PERKINS.

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MISSIONARY LIFE IN PERSIA.

CHAPTER I.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE MISSION TO THE NESTORIANS.

“Go ye into all the world.”

Origin of the Mission. — Embarkation. — Way to the Field. — Arrival at Constantinople. — Trebizond. — Land Journey. — Erzroom. — Troubles from the Koords. — Entering Georgia. — Mount Ararat. — Detention. — Entering Persia. — Sir John Campbell. — Dr. Riach. — Arrival at Tabreez. — Sickness. — English Kindness. — Visit to Oroomiah. — Mar Yohannan. — Reception among the People.

THE mission to the Nestorians was undertaken in consequence of the favorable representations of the missionaries, Messrs. Smith and Dwight, who visited their distant country in the spring of 1830, while on a missionary tour through Armenia and into Persia, the result of which was given to the public in their published “Researches.” Their visit to the Nestorians was short, — of only about a week’s duration, — but it was most gratifying. Says Mr. Smith, in their report to the American Board of Foreign Mis-

sions, "The week that we spent among them was the most intensely interesting of our lives;" and, "For myself, I never felt a stronger desire to settle at once as a missionary among any people I have ever seen."

The American Board justly viewed it as of the first importance to commence a mission in so promising a field, with the least practicable delay,—particularly as those simple-hearted people were in great and immediate danger, as we shall have further occasion to observe, of being led astray by the ever-watchful and wily emissaries of Papal Rome.

It was in January, 1833, that I received my appointment to commence this mission. So little was then known of that distant and untried field, and so short the period allowed me to prepare for it, that it was deemed important I should take a passage with Mr. Smith, as far as Malta, on his return from a visit to the United States to his field in Syria; that, by the opportunity of familiar conversations thus afforded on the way, I might come in possession of the facts he had collected, and the suggestions he might make, relative to our prospective operations among the Nestorians. This arrangement was highly prized by myself; for hardly could one enter upon an undertaking with a deeper consciousness of weakness and

incompetency for so great and responsible a work, than I felt at that time.

We received our "Instructions" together, in the chapel of the Theological Seminary at Andover, on the evening of the 8th of September, 1833, arrangements having been made for our embarkation in the course of the same week. The excitement and pressure of my hasty preparation had so prostrated my system, that, at the close of the impressive services of that evening, I found myself hardly able to walk to my lodgings, and was reluctantly compelled, for the first time in my life, to yield to the strong arm of a violent fever. Hopes were at first entertained that my disease might be early arrested, and our vessel accordingly lingered, a few days, for my recovery; my fever, however, baffled all the means used to check it, and the result being at length considered as doubtful, it was concluded that Mr. and Mrs. Smith must proceed without us. But the day after it finally left me, intelligence reaching us that the vessel in which we had expected to sail was detained in the harbor by adverse winds, I prevailed on my physician to place me in a wagon, and carry me to Boston, in the hope of still being able to secure the important advantages of performing the voyage in company with Mr. Smith. To this propo-

sition the physician the more readily yielded, as he was himself of the opinion, that could I, without too much exhaustion, be once placed on board the vessel, my recovery would be rapidly promoted by the effects of sailing. The first day, therefore, on which I was raised from my pillow and dressed, I was put upon a bed, in a wagon, and rode thus twenty miles to Boston, and the next day was carried on board the brig George, Captain Grosier, and laid in my berth, and we immediately sailed. Never did my heart swell with livelier emotions of thankfulness to God, than when my feet reached its deck, and I took my last look of my native land. So unexpected was the privilege of doing this according to our original arrangement, that the pangs of the last parting with friends were all swallowed up and forgotten in the overflowings of my gratitude and joy.

Our captain, as he afterward told me, remarked to his mate, when I was lifted on board, "We shall very soon have to throw that man overboard." But so rapid was my recovery, that the tender assiduities of the first evening, lavished upon me by Mrs. Perkins and the very estimable and long-since departed Mrs. Sarah L. Smith, — helpless almost as an infant as I then lay in my berth, — were, in a day or two, reciproc-

cated by me toward them. They were both prostrated by seasickness, under the fury of the equinoctial storm which met us at the mouth of the harbor; while I, as soon, and by the same influence, under the blessing of God, was raised to a degree of strength that enabled me immediately to walk about, and in a few days raised me to a far better state of health than I had long before known, and which alone could have sustained me under my subsequent hardships and labors.

I dwell the longer on these incidents, as they furnished us, so early in our missionary course, occasion for the grateful recognition of what God *had* done with us, and an encouraging pledge that he would open for us a door of faith unto the Gentiles.

We were favored with a prosperous passage to Malta, and thence, in a Greek vessel, to Constantinople. There we passed the following winter with beloved missionary friends, — that city being then the outpost of missionary stations occupied by the American Board in that direction, and the lofty mountains on our land journey being impassable by a lady in the winter season. We had hoped, moreover, to be joined by a medical companion before proceeding further; but so difficult did the Board find it to obtain one,

that none reached us until more than two years after our own embarkation : then we were gladdened by the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Grant.

It was in the spring of 1834, that, bidding farewell to our friends at Constantinople, we started alone on our adventurous way to Persia. We took passage in an English vessel for Trebizond, which is a city of ancient Pontus, situated on the south-eastern shore of the Black Sea, about six hundred miles east of Constantinople. Mrs. Perkins was the first American lady that ever navigated that dark and stormy sea; and no Americans had preceded us, except Messrs. Smith and Dwight, on their return from the missionary tour I have mentioned.

At Trebizond we were hospitably entertained, the few days we spent there, by the gentlemen of the English consulate, who, with the French and the Russian consuls, were the only Europeans then resident in the city. The American Board has long had a missionary station there; and the increased facilities for communication, particularly by means of steam, have so annihilated the distance as to render that remote city almost like a suburb of Constantinople.

At Trebizond we completed our preparations for our land journey. Its length, roughness, and solitariness; a distance of between six and seven

hundred miles, leading over almost impassable mountains; our own condition as defenseless wanderers, unacquainted with the languages of the people on the road, and with Eastern manners and modes of travel; the perils from the savage tribes of robbers with which the way is more or less infested; and the frightful pestilence which then often poisoned the atmosphere of those regions,—all stared us in the face, and challenged our faith and our courage. But committing ourselves to the care of Him who protected Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in their wanderings in foreign and hostile lands, and has given to all his disciples the comforting assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world," we felt little disposition to shrink or linger, cheered by a happy confidence that as our day so also would be our strength.

The far interior position of our mission is a circumstance that renders it a field of peculiar self-denial in many respects. It is remote and difficult of access. Facilities for communication are rare, and more or less unsafe; and instead of being in the vicinity of some commercial port often visited by American and European vessels, or in a country under Christian rulers, or bordering on a country that would offer a secure retreat to fall back upon in an emergency, as is

the case with most other missions in interior situations, ours is far away in the central regions of Asia, encompassed on all sides by vast territories of Mohammedan rule.

We performed our land journey on horseback, no wheel carriages then being used in those countries. The first third of it—the part between Trebizond and Erzroom—led across the lofty, rugged mountains of ancient Pontus, and the western sections of Armenia. Frequently did we ascend and descend mountains, so steep and rough that Mrs. Perkins could retain her seat upon her horse only by having him led by one muleteer, and her saddle held upon him by another; often did we skirt precipicès by a foot-path so narrow that a single misstep of the animals we rode must have plunged us down almost unfathomable chasms; and sometimes we pitched our tent at night on heights so lofty that the clouds were far below us; and though it was the middle of June, snow lay deep within a few feet of us.

Our journey to Erzroom, however, was, on the whole, less trying than we had apprehended. It was rendered interesting by recollections called up by the venerable objects and primitive scenes on the way. Among them were the River Euphrates, which we crossed, and the frequent sight

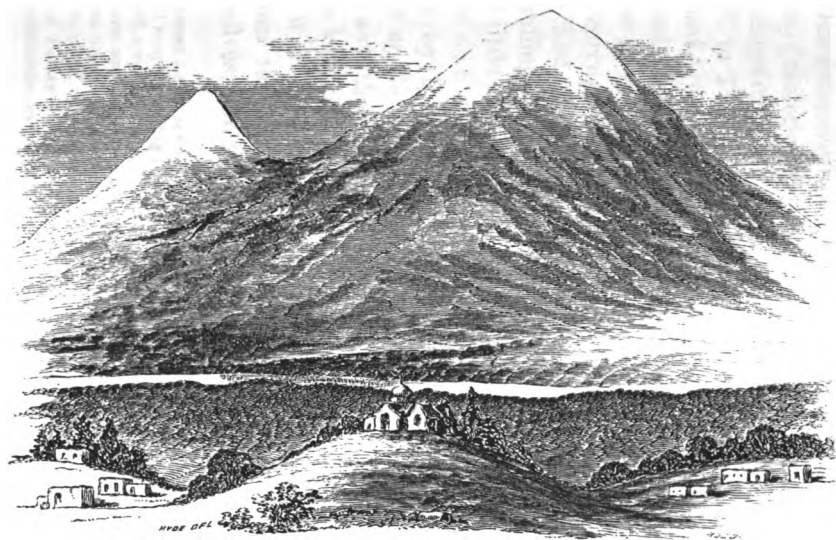
of shepherds with their flocks, gathering the lambs in their arms, and carrying them in their bosoms. On our arrival at Erzroom, that distant capital of ancient Armenia, which tradition says was founded by a grandson of Noah, having been carried over one third of the distance, and by far the roughest part of our journey, without harm or accident, we felt called upon to render special thanksgiving to the great and good Shepherd who had so literally made us to lie down in green pastures, and led us beside the still waters, amid surrounding desolations and perils.

There was, at the time we passed, no civilized resident at Erzroom except Mr. Zohrab, a commercial agent of the English consul at Trebizond. Now, the American Board has long had a mission station in that city; and an English, a Russian, and a French consul, and a few other Europeans, reside there. Thus wonderfully does the Lord prepare the way for the spread of the gospel by the rapid march of commerce and civilization eastward, even into that remote interior and over the dreary mountain heights of ancient Armenia.

At Erzroom we received intelligence that the *Jellalees*, a powerful Koordish tribe, who prowl around the base of Mount Ararat, had intercepted the route to Persia near the frontier, and plundered a large caravan, murdering several of its

muleteers. All hope of our being able to travel, with even tolerable security, on that road for a long time being thus cut off, we concluded, by the advice of the Pasha of that part of Turkey, to turn off and pursue a circuitous route through some of the Russian provinces of Georgia, the distance being about a hundred miles farther than on the direct route, but no other means being left us of evading the threatening danger from the Koords.

In Georgia, whither we thus fled, from a Mohammedan into a nominally Christian land, we were subjected to trials and oppressions from the combined agency of despotic Russian laws and the caprice of unprincipled officers, which we had little anticipated. After having performed a long quarantine in most comfortless circumstances, we were subjected to the arbitrary order and heavy expense of having almost all our effects and traveling accouterments sent back to Erzroom, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, these being as absurdly as unjustly pronounced contraband articles of merchandise. Besides these and almost numberless other very trying embarrassments encountered on *entering* the country, we were, on the other frontier, arrested and virtually made prisoners, our passports being there declared deficient, though



MOUNT ARARAT.

they had been examined, vised, and pronounced ample by the authorities in every Russian town through which we had traveled.

Our detention was on the banks of the River Aras, (the ancient Araxes.) It was in the month of August, and the thermometer ranged from 100° to 110° in the valley of that river, under Mount Ararat,* along the base of which we had just passed, while eternal snows lay deep on its hoary brow in spotless majesty, as if frowning rebuke on the corrupt inhabitants of the fair region below. We had almost melted on the road under the scorching power of that Eastern sun ; and the heat was little less where we were now confined. We were on a vast plain of sand, guarded under our tent by Russian Cossacks. An unceasing gale blew up the valley of the river from the Caspian Sea as withering almost as the blasts of a furnace. This kept the light sand in constant motion, drifting it incessantly through every joint and seam of our tent, upon our beds, our provisions, and ourselves, like the sifting of light snow in the fury

* Mount Ararat is entirely unique in appearance, rising from the great Ararat range, swelling broader than that range at the base, and peering upward, a vast pyramid, 17,000 feet above the level of the sea, and looking down upon all other mountains of those regions. The plain at its western base is about 6000 feet above the sea. On the east side the plain is lower. This mountain is a common boundary of the three empires of Turkey, Persia, and Russia ; and is a suitable bridge between the antediluvian and postdiluvian worlds.

of a winter storm, and frequently upsetting our frail canopy for the want of sufficient soil to retain the pins of our tent in the ground. We were several miles from any village, and neither our attendant nor myself was permitted to leave the spot to go and procure provisions ; and the only means by which we kept ourselves from starvation was, to induce the Persian boatman, on the other side of the river, to bring us food from their village, which was about four miles distant, in Persia. By paying an exorbitant price, we thus obtained bread and melons once in two or three days.

• The period of our detention in that trying situation was to us entirely uncertain, depending as it did on unfeeling Russian officers. The state of Mrs. Perkins' health was very precarious. Prayer seemed to offer our only hope for deliverance. I, however, induced a government courier, on his way to Tabreez, in Persia, as he passed by our tent, to carry a letter from me to Sir John Campbell, then English ambassador to that country, in which I briefly stated our circumstances, and inclosed to him letters of introduction which I had taken from Constantinople. Through the prompt and efficient agency of that gentleman, together with that of the Russian ambassador residing in the same city, we were set at liberty three days afterward, though ignorant at the time by whose friendly exertions our liberation was effected.

Our hearts melted in gratitude to God when we planted our feet on the Persian shore of the Aras, in all the buoyancy of liberated captives, as well as in the joyful assurance that we had at length reached the borders of the distant land of our destination.

- Quiet, defenseless travelers as we were, wishing merely to pass across a corner of a remote province of the Russian empire, I know not the reasons of such oppression as we experienced in doing it, beyond the despotic character of the government, and the particularly bad character of its officers in those distant provinces, unless it were that my passport announced me as an American clergyman — a character of course very obnoxious in that benighted region, where every entrance to a ray of light is sedulously guarded. It was, moreover, but a few months after our detention that all Protestant missionaries were prohibited from prosecuting their labors in the czar's dominions. An order was also said to be issued to the effect that no clergyman should be allowed to enter them without the emperor's special permission. Mohammedan Turkey, on the other hand, had welcomed us, without the least obstruction, to its generous hospitalities; and Persia now invited us, with open doors, to these, and to our
- missionary field and labors.

After crossing the River Aras, which is there the boundary between Russia and Persia, we had proceeded on our way only two or three miles, when we met a courier from the English ambassador at Tabreez, who delivered to me a letter, which will best show the promptness of his kind exertions to effect our release and facilitate our journey.

LETTER OF SIR JOHN CAMPBELL.

TABREEZ, Monday Evening, Aug. 18, 1834.

MY DEAR SIR: About half an hour since I received your letter, with those of introduction you forwarded, and lost no time in waiting upon the first secretary of the Russian embassy and placing the whole of them in his hands, for the information of his excellency, Count Simonitch, who this night (Monday) despatches a letter to the officer commanding Nakchevân, to make arrangements for your immediate permission to cross the frontier, should you not already have received your passports from Erivân.

A duplicate of the letter in question will leave this by my own *ghôlâm* [courier] to-morrow morning at daylight, to guard against accidents, which, together with this, will be delivered to you; but my servant is not permitted to cross the Aras.

In consideration of Mrs. Perkins' situation, I have sent a common *takhtrawan* and four mules, the only ones I could procure at this short notice, which will relieve her from the fatigue of riding, and enable her, I hope, to reach Tabreez in safety. The *takhtrawan* will leave the city to-night, and be on the banks of the Aras on the third day, in which I have placed three or four bottles of French claret, and some tea .

and sugar, and biscuit, as your long detention on the quarantine ground may have exhausted your supply of such articles.

As none of the houses occupied by Europeans are capable of accommodating Mrs. Perkins and yourself, I have just seen Mr. Nisbet, and directed him to hire a couple of rooms for you in the vicinity of his own, till you can make better arrangements for yourself.

Should you meet the *takhtrawan* on the road, the man is directed to place it at your disposal; and if you require other assistance, pray have the kindness to send in the bearer of this to let me know. He will come in from the banks of the Aras in a day or a night. If any accident should have happened to the letter sent by the count, have the kindness to forward the duplicate now sent to the commandant of Nakchevân. With regard to your books, &c., if they are not restored to you or sent back to Turkey, subsequent arrangements must be made. Excuse this hasty scrawl from

Yours, very obediently,

(Signed)

J. N. R. CAMPBELL.

P. S. You may trust to my *ghôlâm* to do any thing you require on this side of the Aras.

J. N. R. C.

This efficient assistance from the English ambassador was rendered at the distance of a hundred miles from Tabreez, within the short period of three and a half days after I forwarded my letter to him from our confinement, in a country where dispatch, with the existing modes of conveyance, is almost as impracticable as it is uncommon.

An hour after the courier, the *takhtrawan*

(which is a kind of litter borne by two mules) also arrived. This easier mode of conveyance was very timely for Mrs. Perkins. She had already ridden on horseback, and with comparative comfort, between six and seven hundred miles ; but her delicate state of health now rendered the exchange of her saddle for the litter most grateful, and even necessary. This vehicle, and the other comforts mentioned in the letter as having accompanied it, were as unexpected as they were welcome. In the few lines I had hastily written to the ambassador, I had not intimated that we were in need of any thing of the kind ; and the whole, coming thus promptly from an entire stranger, impressed us the more gratefully, standing in such broad contrast with the studied oppression which we had so long experienced in Georgia.

We performed a stage of forty miles the same night on which this relief reached us, the weather being too hot to allow us to travel during the day. And we had scarcely encamped the next morning, when an English gentleman rode up to our tent, who proved to be Dr. Riach, physician to the British embassy, whom we had seen at Constantinople, on his way to Persia, and whom we have since had frequent occasion to mention as a most indefatigable friend of our mission.

Hearing of our detention, he had procured a traveling passport from the Russian ambassador in Persia, and advanced toward us with all practicable speed, determined to cross the frontier and remain with us to comfort and relieve us in case of sickness, however long we might be confined in that dreary situation. Such generous kindness made an impression on our hearts, then bleeding with the fresh recollection of our recent trials, and throbbing with joy in view of our deliverance, too deep to be ever obliterated.

We performed the remaining part of our journey in company with Dr. Riach during the two following nights; and when, on the morning of the 23d of August, 1834, we entered in safety, after all our exposures, the city of Tabreez, the place of our first destination in Persia, I need not attempt to describe with what emotions of gratitude our hearts rose to God for all that he had done with us on our way to the confines of the field of our labors.

Our first entrance into distant Persia was attended with incidents which called up many hallowed missionary associations, as well as emotions of gratitude. We went into the city of Tabreez by the same gate from which the sainted Martyn had passed out from it twenty-one years before, and we had crossed the river forming the boun-

dary in the same rude boat in which he crossed, (judging from the description of it in his journal,) and encamped in the same villages on the way at which he encamped but a short time before his death — coincidences, trifling as they were, which we noticed with interest, being among the first to enter that benighted land after he left it, to labor for the salvation of its perishing inhabitants.

The cordial reception which we met from all the gentlemen of the English embassy at Tabreez, and of the military detachment stationed there at that time, and from Mrs. Nisbet, the only English lady then in that land of strangers, was as grateful to us as it was kind on their part.

But trials still awaited us. Only three days had elapsed after our arrival, when Mrs. Perkins became the mother of a daughter, of whose existence she was not conscious for several days. The trying nature of her long-previous exposures had prostrated her system, and this sickness laid her quite on the brink of the grave — nay, carried her further, apparently, across the stream of Jordan than any other person I ever knew who was brought back to its nether shores. We were favored with the attendance of three English physicians — Dr. Riach, above mentioned, Dr. Griffiths, surgeon to the British military detachment,

and Dr. McNeill, first secretary of the embassy, afterward Sir John McNeill, English ambassador to Persia. They tenderly but frankly informed me that they saw no possibility of Mrs. Perkins' recovery. My feelings, in those circumstances, can be more easily conceived than described — the perils and trials of our long and toilsome journey just terminated ; my companion for life, who had so happily survived those trials, now apparently in the agonies of dissolution ; and for myself only the cheerless prospect of being so soon left a solitary pilgrim in that dark and distant land.

But though no American voice was near to solace me in that extremity, a merciful Providence, as I have intimated, had not left me without friends. Parents and brothers could not have been more assiduous in their kindness than were the English residents. The ambassador sent repeatedly to me, saying, "My house is open to you ; spare nothing that can contribute to your relief or comfort." Mrs. Nisbet took home our infant on the day of its birth, and relieved me of all care respecting it ; and Dr. Riach staid five days and nights constantly at Mrs. Perkins' bedside, not retiring from the room to eat or sleep, until, by little less than a miracle of divine mercy, we were permitted to cherish the hope of her recovery.

I may add, in this connection, that the kindness which we thus experienced from English friends, on our first arrival in Persia, is but a sample of their treatment of us during our whole residence in that country ; and I feel constrained to bear testimony that the friends of missions in America are indebted to English residents in the East for the protection and assistance which they render, in various ways, to their missionaries in those regions, to an extent that can not well be understood at this distance from the scenes of our missionary operations.

As soon as Mrs. Perkins was raised to a measure of health that would allow me to leave home, about two months after reaching Tabreez, I made a journey to Oroomiah, a distance of one hundred and forty miles, and on the opposite or western side of the lake of the same name. I had resolved not to attempt a residence in that remote city, as no Europeans resided there, until we should be joined by missionary associates. I therefore visited the Nestorians at that time to procure a teacher, from whom I might learn their language while remaining at Tabreez, and to become better acquainted with the state of the field.

I reached Gavalan, the village of Mar Yohannan, which is forty miles this side of the city of Oroomiah, one morning before day, the weather

being so warm as to render traveling by night the most comfortable. He was the first Nestorian with whom *I shook hands*. I was announced to him as an Englishman who had come to do his people good, our distinct nationality as Americans being then hardly known in Persia, and our country itself barely heard of by the simple-hearted Nestorians. He met me in his yard, in the dark, and the first salutation of welcome had hardly fallen from his lips, when he artlessly inquired, "How can your people make books for us when you do not understand our language?" The acquaintance which he had made with Messrs. Smith and Dwight a few years before, and their conversations with him about schools and books, were evidently still fresh in his mind.

An arrangement for this bishop to return home with me and become my teacher was readily made, and he has generally been associated with us from that day to this — an efficient coadjutor in our missionary work.

Mar Yohannan accompanied me at that time through a considerable part of the province of Oroomiah, his people every where hailing my visit almost as the visit of an angel, and giving me most grateful assurances of a cordial welcome to my missionary work. When I returned to Ta-breez, the bishop not only accompanied me, but

took with him, as a companion, priest Abraham, who has also, from that time to the present, been an efficient helper in our labors. I could not but recognize, at that time, the good hand of the Lord; and I have often since done the same, which led me thus to an acquaintance and to a permanent connection, at the outset, with those influential men, of whom I before knew nothing, but who were destined by Providence to hold so important a place in the subsequent history of our mission. And during every step of that delightful missionary tour, I had fresh occasion to reiterate my wonder at the extent to which God had prepared the way before me, and how he had opened for me the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

We lingered a year and three months at Tabreez for our first associates, Dr. and Mrs. Grant, during most of which time I was occupied in learning the Syriac language from the bishop and priest, and teaching them our own. Near the commencement of that year we were bereaved of our first-born — a bereavement the more afflictive in our lonely situation, as there was no physician in whom we could place confidence within four hundred miles of us, the English embassy and military detachment having removed to Tehrân, the Persian capital, on the accession of Mohammed Shâh, the young king. Our covenant

God, however, did not forsake us, but sustained us, while we saw our loved little one sicken and die, and enabled us, in those trying circumstances, to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The plague visited Tabreez that year, but it was not permitted to come nigh our dwelling; and while I was absent on a journey into Turkey, to meet Dr. and Mrs. Grant, and Mr. Merrick, and conduct them through the difficulties and dangers of the Koordish part of the journey, that still more awful Eastern scourge, the cholera, appeared in that city, and swept away its guilty inhabitants by hundreds in a day for a considerable period. Mrs. Perkins, in my absence, was at our house in Tabreez *alone*. When I learned, on my journey, of the prevalence of the cholera there, my suspense and solicitude respecting her were distressing, not being able to hear a word from her till I reached our dwelling on my return, where, to my inexpressible relief, I found her well, having been graciously spared, and kept from danger and from fear, while thousands had fallen at her side.

Our hearts have often bled in view of the multitudes in the East who are hurried, under fearful condemnation, into a dark and miserable eternity by "the pestilence that walketh in darkness and

the destruction that wasteth at noonday." And our only relief, in contemplating the painful subject, has been the thought that God may be using these terrific scourges, the plague and the cholera, to shake down the abominable system of Moham-
medanism, thus preparing the way to open effect-
ually the door of faith to all those Gentiles. It
is during the prevalence of these frightful dis-
eases in Asia that I have beheld the most striking
exemplification of the Scripture language: "Men's
hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after
those things which are coming on the earth."

CHAPTER II.

STATE OF THE FIELD, AND EARLY LABORS.

“If one look to the land, behold darkness.”

Dead Christianity.—Degraded Morals.—Arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Grant.—Removal to Oroomiah.—Exposure of Health.—Opening our first School.—Want of Literary Matter for our Learners.—Fever.—Ophthalmy.—Bereavements.—Attractions of the Field.

BEFORE proceeding to notice our permanent removal to Oroomiah, I should speak briefly of the circumstances and character of the Nestorians at the time of our arrival among them. They are but a small remnant of a once great church and mighty people. Their present number is not probably more than one hundred and fifty thousand souls. The Nestorians of Oroomiah, which is a part of ancient Media, situated in the north-western province of modern Persia, to whom our labors have hitherto been primarily directed, are simple-hearted peasants, humble in their worldly circumstances, being subject to Mohammedan rulers, by whom they are more or less borne down, though they naturally possess high, independent feelings, and are restless under their op-

pression. Those dwelling in the adjacent, rough Koordish mountains, which are a part of ancient Assyria, are a wild, rude people, leading a more precarious life, mostly with their flocks, being less subject to systematic exaction; but, until lately, in constant apprehension and danger of being overrun and sacked by their more numerous and powerful neighbors, the Koords, except the inhabitants of two or three almost inconceivably rough mountain districts, who, by the aid of the rocky ramparts that surround them, and their muskets and daggers, which they always wear or keep near them, maintained a kind of desperate independence of the marauding Koordish chiefs, who in turn had long resisted the control of the Turkish government.

As Christians, the Nestorians, when we reached them, might well be described in the language of the Apocalyptic address to the church of Sardis:—

“And unto the angel of the church of Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name to live, and art dead.”

The Nestorians also had a *name* to live. And to the forms of their church, which have almost a Protestant simplicity, they clung with mortal tenacity. Their periodical fasts, consisting of re-

striction to vegetable diet, for example, many of the people would sooner die than violate. Declarations to that effect have been repeatedly made to our physician, when he has prescribed chicken soup for the sick, which they would most perseveringly refuse, because prescribed on days when their church canons restrict them to vegetable diet. And one of their bishops, when visited by missionaries, in time of Lent, while he scrupulously abstained from the use of wine at dinner because the vessel that contained it had been oiled to prevent leakage, urged them to join him in a glass of *arrack*, or native brandy, as an innocent beverage, inasmuch as it had not been thus contaminated by contact with animal oil!

But with a name to live, and with all their rigid punctiliousness in adhering to the letter of the forms of their religion, the Nestorians were dead. The life and the power of Christianity had departed. Of the meaning of regeneration, even their most intelligent ecclesiastics seemed to know nothing; and their works were not found perfect before God. The plain commandments of the Decalogue—those against falsehood and the violation of the Sabbath in particular—were wantonly and almost universally broken. They would not indeed labor on the Sabbath; but, as matter of calculation, would visit, engage

in festivities, trade, and transact other business, on that sacred day, far more than during all other days of the week.* And falsehood, among all classes seemed to be much more habitual than telling the truth, and when there was not even the poor apology of a pretext for preferring falsehood to truth. Intemperance, too, was fearfully prevalent. Their temptation to this vice is great, — their fertile country being like one great vineyard, and furnishing wine almost as cheap as its springs of water. When reminded of the sin and inconsistency of these vices in nominal Christians, — especially in those who in theory recognize the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, — they would acknowledge the wrong, but, at the same time, excuse themselves in consideration of their depressed political condition, where lying, they would urge, was often indispensable to shield them from being overreached and oppressed by their Mohammedan masters.

The scriptural observance of the Sabbath, too, in their circumstances, they would say, must not be expected. And as to indulgence in the use of

* The missionary, on observing a poor woman overhauling her rag-bag on the Sabbath, said to her, "Are you not called a *Christian*? Do you not know what day it is?" With a shrug of pious horror she replied, "God forbid that I should *work* on the Sabbath day; I am only selecting patches to sew on to-morrow."

Query. — Has she any sympathizers in America, in this economy?

wine, why, they would account their facilities for it as a most precious boon vouchsafed by Heaven, and almost the only one left for them, to cheer and sustain their spirits under the habitual burden of their heavy oppression. These excuses were to a great extent pretexts; and if not, would of course constitute no reasonable apology for openly violating the commandments of God.

From some vices, however, the Nestorians were, as a people, generally free. The seventh commandment was comparatively but little violated among them; which is the more remarkable and interesting, considering their situation in the midst of corrupt Mohammedans, among whom little less than the abominations of Sodom prevail.

Nor should it be inferred that Christianity, in the fallen state in which it then existed among the Nestorians, cost them no sacrifices. It cost them the privileges of *freemen*, and subjected them to almost every species of ignominy and oppression. American Christians know nothing, in comparison with Nestorians, of suffering for the *name* of the Lord Jesus. They are habitually called, by their superiors, infidels, unclean infidels, and dogs, and are treated accordingly. Their property, and in some instances their children, are wantonly taken from them, because of their attachment to Christianity; while their re-

nouncement of it would place them at once beyond the reach of such indignities and sufferings.

Nor should it be supposed that their formal Christianity — their having a name to live, while they were dead — was of no practical benefit to them. Even the apparently lifeless fossilized skeleton of our holy religion exerted on them a very important influence. It saved the existing remnant from becoming Mohammedans, and from the little less deplorable alternative of yielding to Papal control; and, as already suggested, it preserved among them, in some respects, a far higher standard of morality than exists among the debased followers of the false prophet, in the midst of whom they live, and by whose vices they are much contaminated.

As of the church of Sardis, so also in regard to the Nestorian church, we may, in the spirit of charity, hope that it might be said, "Thou hast a few names which have not defiled their garments." If such there were, however, we must stretch the mantle of our charity much broader to reach them, and cover their deficiencies, than in enlightened Christian lands; so blinded were they by the deep darkness, and borne downward by the mighty current of iniquity and corruption that prevailed around them. And still, that there were, at that time,

here and there a solitary Anna and Simeon, sitting in obscurity, and prayerfully waiting for the consolation of their Israel, I have, in the progress of our labors, found more and more reason to hope and believe.

Education, when we reached the Nestorians, was at an ebb almost as low as vital religion. None but their ecclesiastics could even read; and but very few of them could do more than chant their devotions in an unknown tongue—the Syriac, a modern dialect of which is their spoken language, while neither they nor their hearers knew any thing of the meaning.

They possessed nearly the entire Scriptures, but only in very rare copies in that obsolete tongue. Indeed, both in a religious and an intellectual point of view, the flame of their candle had long been flickering, and was just ready to expire. The threatening of the angel to the church of Sardis seemed to be already falling upon them—“I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come.” The commencement of our missionary labors among them was just in time to strengthen the things that remained and were ready to die, and save them from actual extinction. Such has been the object, and such, to a happy extent, the result of our labors; and as such they have been welcomed by all classes of the Nestorians.

It was late in November, in the autumn of 1835, (Dr. and Mrs. Grant having just before reached us at Tabreez,) that we went to Oroomiah to commence our missionary settlement. The Nestorians, after my first visit to them, had been quite impatient for us to open schools, and enter upon our other labors. Our arrival to reside among them was welcomed with the strongest demonstrations of joy by all classes of that people, and with at least a high degree of satisfaction by the Mohammedan population. The Nestorians, in some villages, marched out in masses to meet us, with their rude trumpets and drums, to express their gladness on the occasion, and would not be dissuaded from doing so by our earnest remonstrances.

It was after the 20th of November, in a climate about as cold as that of our Middle States, that we were obliged to repair and plaster the dilapidated, mud-walled houses which we rented to live in. The rooms, at that late season, had no opportunity to dry; and during the first winter, while the barley (from the cut straw mixed with the mud) grew from the walls of our own sleeping room, which communicated with the room in which we lived, and was thus partially warmed, the frost stiffened the bed clothes of the lamented Mrs. Grant, whose damp sleeping room was not

even thus warmed ; and these exposures that winter did much, doubtless, to undermine our systems, and render them an easy prey to the distressing sicknesses which we suffered the ensuing summer.

Such exposure of health should have been avoided, perhaps even at the expense of deferring a few months longer our settlement at Oroomiah. But so ripe and inviting was our field, so eager and even impatient were the people for instruction, that we felt constrained to forget ourselves, while we entered as speedily as possible on our labors for their salvation.

Within two months after our arrival at Oroomiah, a school room, fitted up, on the Lancasterian plan, in the basement of my house, — the first of the kind ever known in Central Asia, — was ready for the reception of scholars, and our seminary commenced, under my superintendence, and priest Abraham's instruction. We began with seven boys ; but the number soon increased to forty or fifty, and has continued such from that time to the present. Its object, from the first, was to raise up pious teachers and preachers. It numbered among its early members some bishops and priests, and many deacons. The good which it has accomplished, and the greater good which it promises, will appear in future years,

though its full amount eternity alone will unfold.

A formidable difficulty met us at the outset — as is the case with most new missions — in the want of literary matter for our seminary, — the spoken language of the Nestorians having never been written. With the assistance of priest Abraham, I therefore immediately commenced reducing this language to a written form, and translating parts of the Scriptures for reading cards, which two of our oldest scholars soon learned to copy for the use of our classes in this our first missionary school. Thus was I occupied, during my first missionary year, at Oroomiah, laboring on the language to bring it to a grammatical structure, and preparing school cards, eight hours in a day, and teaching the English class two hours; besides superintending the general concerns of the seminary, preaching twice on the Sabbath, attending one or two meetings during the week, and performing an amount of miscellaneous labor incidental to the commencement of a mission, which of itself often seemed quite enough to occupy the whole of my time.

When spring and summer came, sickness seized upon us like a strong man armed. As I have suggested, our exposure in damp houses during the first winter, and the pressure of missionary labor,

undermined our constitutions, and prepared the way for disease. The climate of Oroomiah is also trying to foreigners. It is naturally good, but is rendered unhealthy by artificial causes. The constant evaporation in summer from its myriads of irrigated fields—almost the entire surface of the district, consisting of a plain of nearly a thousand square miles in extent being repeatedly flooded, (and the rice fields constantly so,) to water the soil during the warm months of the year, — is one such cause; and another and still more prolific one is the almost limitless extent of its annual vegetation. A country so charming, — stretching more than fifty miles along the beautiful lake, and back from it to the base of the lofty Koordish mountains, — so bright under the effulgence of its gorgeous sun and pure heavens, and rejoicing under its thrifty growth of abundant crops, presents to the eye so much the aspect of an Eden as almost to preclude the idea of sickness and pain. But the foreigner is soon forced to feel that its brilliant skies and balmy breezes, beautiful and grateful as they are, are still pregnant with the elements of disease and death.

The other individuals of our missionary circle were repeatedly and violently attacked with fever and ague, and with ophthalmy — a burning inflammation of the eyes — during the first spring

and summer. My own health continued good, and I performed all my labors unremitted till about the middle of August, when I was seized by a bilious fever of a most obstinate and malignant character. It ran violently many days, under the burning sun of a Persian summer, defying all efforts to arrest its progress. Three days and nights I lay entirely insensible, and all hope of my recovery was given up. Our circumstances were then the more trying, as my companions were themselves so ill as almost to disable them from attending upon me; and a child, then our only one, who has since died, lay apparently at the point of death at the same time. But He at whose bidding diseases come and go stayed the progress of mine, even when it seemed to be doing its last work, and brought me back to life, to health, and to my missionary labors.

I was, in two or three of the subsequent years, attacked by bilious fevers, in the same manner and at the same season; but by the divine blessing on the means used, they were sooner arrested, and at length I became acclimated to the trying influences of that foreign land.

Most of the other members of our mission have suffered from attacks of fever and ague, and from diseases of the eyes. Mrs. Grant lost the sight of one of her eyes from violent ophthalmia some time before her death.

There were also sweeping bereavements of the members of our mission in the death of their children. Thrice before my first visit to America had death come up into *our* windows, and written us childless ; and our associates had been afflicted, though less, still painfully, in the same way.

Such exposure of health, and such heavy bereavements, are severe trials for flesh and blood ; but they were inseparable from our early residence at Oroomiah ; and its rich encouragements and strong attractions as a missionary field — the wide door of faith which God there opened to the Gentiles — reconciled us, and rendered us willing, nay, happy, thus to suffer, in the cheering confidence that he that goeth forth there and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

CHAPTER III.

PROVIDENTIAL INTERPOSITIONS.

"Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Visit from a Prince. — His Order. — The Affshars. — The Lootee. — A violent Assault. — Punishment of the Offender. — Arrival of Messrs. Holladay and Stocking. — Rupture between England and Persia. — Protection. — A Health Retreat. — Death of Mrs. Grant. — Abuse of Mar Yohannan by a Mohammedan Noble. — Malek Kâsem Meerza. — Royal Order. — Papal Emissaries. — Secular Papists. — Coercive Conversion to Papacy. — Captives made Converts. — Arrival of Dr. Wright and of Mr. Breath.

IN the autumn of the first year of our residence in Oroomiah, Kahraman Meerza, a favorite brother of the king, and the Prince of Azerbaijan, the northern and most important province of Persia, visited that city. He had heard of our residence there, and of the fame of our seminary; and he sent to us an uncle, who accompanied him on his tour, to visit us and look into our missionary operations. That uncle came, in a most friendly manner, dined with us, and inspected our seminary; and, as the result of his report of us and our labors to the king's brother, the latter, entirely unsolicited by us, prepared and sent to us a firman, of which the following is a translation: —

"The command of His Highness is: Whereas the very honorable and respected gentlemen, Messrs. Perkins and Grant, at Oroomiah, are attending to the education of the people, and render the people useful by teaching them European science, the grace of our Excellency and Highness having become favorably disposed toward them, we order and command three soldiers for their safety at this harvest season and onward; and in accordance with this grace, we command that they shall be honored and have occasion to praise our beneficence. It is our command that the exalted and noble lord, Nedjeff Kooly Khân, governor of Oroomiah, shall take care to protect them in every respect, and he shall give to each of the three soldiers, the guard of their safety, three dollars per month, and never shall he neglect it. It is ordered that the trusty secretaries arrange and execute the sum of this blessed command.

"Written in the month *Jumady ul ewel*, in the year 1252 [of the Hegira]."

It is, of course, always far "better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." Such protection and encouragement, however, voluntarily tendered to us by the second man in Mohammedan Persia, in the infancy of our mission, could not but impress us with a strong and delightful confidence that God was verily, by his providence, opening for us a wide and effectual door of faith unto the Gentiles.

The provision made in the above firman for our personal safety (of but a part of which we ever found it necessary to avail ourselves) renders it

proper that I allude to the character of the dominant class of the people of Oroomiah ; which will also furnish additional illustration of divine guardianship over the interests of our mission. The Mohammedans of that province are Affshars, a bold, warlike tribe, originally from Affghânistan, or Eastern Persia. They have such a reputation for rudeness and barbarity, compared with other Persians, that it was at that time the opinion of several of the gentlemen of the English embassy, who were deeply interested in our object, that we could not, with a due regard to safety, attempt a residence among them, especially as no Europeans ever had been residents of the remote city of Oroomiah. He, however, who has the hearts of all in his hands, and turneth them as the rivulets of water are turned, so favorably disposed those Mohammedans toward us, both rulers and people, that they have not only from the first offered us no molestation, but have treated us with uniform kindness and marked attention.

But in Oroomiah, as in all parts of Persia, is a class of professional ruffians called Lootee, — taking their name, as it is said, from the patriarch Lot, but resembling in character the corrupt Sodomites, who vexed the soul of that righteous man, — whose lawless acts of violence on property, and often on persons, being usually mixed with a

measure of buffoonery, are regarded as half licensed, or, at least, are more or less connived at, by the constituted authorities; and these desperadoes are always the instruments of violence in the hands of the fanatical Moollahs, whenever they attempt to carry a point against laws and rulers by the agency of a mob, as is often the case in Persia. The Loootee are more numerous and savage in Oroomiah than in most other parts of the country; and it was against robbery and harm from them particularly that the king's brother wished to shield us; and the issuing of his firman, becoming a matter of general notoriety, did much to effect that object.

Another event, which occurred about the same time, while it nearly cost my life, contributed much to the permanent security of ourselves and the interests of our mission. In company with Mrs. Perkins and Dr. and Mrs. Grant, I was visiting one of our village schools. As we were walking quietly through the village in which it is situated, three of those Loootee, or professional ruffians, who were under the influence of liquor at the time, hedged up our path by stationing a horse across it just before us, and taking a stand themselves on either side. Priest Abraham, who was with us, stepped forward, and mildly requested them to turn the horse a trifle, and allow us to

pass by; upon which one of them instantly drew his dagger, — a fearful weapon which they always carry, and raised it to strike him. Seeing the defenseless priest in such peril, I instinctively sprang forward, not doubting that my presence would check the ruffian; but so far from that, he turned in a twinkling, and stabbed me with indescribable ferocity. I was just recovering from the severe sickness to which allusion has been made, and to this circumstance, under God, I owe my preservation. Being still very weak, as I sprang back to evade the weapon, I suddenly fell, and the prompt intervention of Dr. Grant with his riding stick prevented a repetition of the blow. The weapon passed through all my clothing, and slightly penetrated my body. Had I not fallen as I did, it must have entered my heart, and instantly killed me. As it was, it harmed me only just enough to leave a speaking witness, in the small wound, against the bloody assassin. An almighty and ever-present Protector said to the deadly point, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further." And as we ran into a house near by, and barred the doors, and found ourselves secure from those men of violence, who still fiercely pursued us, I felt a stronger and calmer confidence than ever before in the guardian care of an un-failing Deliverer.

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But it was the effect of this event in reference to our subsequent security that I had in mind in detailing it in this connection. The governor of the district, on hearing of the affair, without any complaint having been made by us, immediately arrested the assailant, and caused two hundred and fifty lashes to be laid upon his naked back ; and the king, some time afterward, hearing of it through the English ambassador, ordered his brother, the ruler of that part of Persia, — the same who had favored us with the firman, — to seize the offender and send him to the capital. The prince sent officers to take him ; but, being apprised of their coming, he fled from the province, and thus evaded their pursuit. The summary punishment, however, which he had already received from the governor, and the vigorous efforts made, under the king's orders, again to apprehend him, in connection with the prince's firman a little before received, produced a strong and lasting impression that we could not be injured with impunity. A series of misfortunes, moreover, befalling some of the connections of the wicked man who had assailed us about the same time, a feeling bordering on awe grew into a common proverb in the province, that the Lord would arrest and punish whoever should harm the missionaries. From that period to the pres-

ent we have never been annoyed by the lawless Loootee, frequent and desperate as are their outrages on the suffering inhabitants among whom we live.

These outrages were so numerous that hardly a week elapsed in the early period of our mission in which murders were not committed, though the murderers were often apprehended and executed. The Loootee have a branch of their fraternity among the wild Koords of the mountains, who can the more easily evade justice by retiring, after the commission of crime, to their rocky fastnesses. The day before we left Oroomiah, on my first return to this country, two of these savages were seized, beheaded, their bodies split in two, and the halves hung over the gates of the city to deter their comrades; and this is by no means a strange transaction in Persia. Such summary, frightful punishments may shock the common feelings of humanity in this happy Christian country; they shock *us*, who have been so long familiar with them in that land of despotism, violence, and blood. But we have little doubt of the necessity of severity there, to give to property and life any measure of security; for even such appalling examples, occurring not unfrequently, are but a limited check to the commission of crime, so ineffectual a preventive is

mere punishment, in any community, in the absence of morality and religion.*

That we have, in such circumstances of exposure, lived so long unharmed and unmolested in the open prosecution of our missionary work, can be ascribed only to the gracious and constant care of that divine hand which has opened for us at Oroomiah so wide a field of labor.

In the summer of 1837 our mission was reënforced by the accession of Messrs. Holladay† and Stocking and their wives, whose arrival greatly cheered our hearts in our distant seclusion, and relieved us by sharing in our multiplied and constantly increasing labors.

In 1838 we were thrown into much solicitude by the political rupture which occurred between the English and Persian governments, and the highly threatening prospect of immediate war between the two nations. The only alternatives before us seemed to be the abandonment of our interesting missionary field, at least temporarily, in the then incipient and critical state of its culture, or to in-

* Under the general softening influences of the gospel on the Mohammedans a great change has taken place — so much so, that a murder is now (in 1860) a comparatively rare event in the district where we reside.

† Mr. Holladay died in America in 1856, and Mr. Stocking in 1854, having returned to their native land on account of the failure of health.

trust ourselves in that remote Mohammedan land, during the storm of hostile collision, to the mercy of the excited Persians, who, we supposed, would naturally identify us with the English, whose protection we had previously enjoyed, especially as our distinct nationality as Americans was but very imperfectly understood. Some time before the English embassy withdrew from the country, however, the Persian authorities, of their own accord, relieved us by pledging to us their efficient protection, whatever might be the issue of the pending difficulties between them and the English. "Hitherto," said the governor of Oroomiah to us, "I have regarded you as my brothers ; now that the English ambassador leaves the country, I assume the place of a *father* to you." And however treacherous the Persians may be toward foreigners in their diplomatic transactions, — and they are charged with flagrant treachery in these matters, — they did, from the king down to the city magistrate, fully redeem their pledge to extend to us uninterrupted protection during their rupture with England. The fact that we had nominal protection from Russia during that period doubtless contributed to keep the Persian authorities faithful to their promise. But whatever may have been their motives, that we, defenseless missionaries, were enabled to prosecute all

our various and extended operations in the heart of distant Mohammedan Persia during the almost three years' absence of the only Protestant Christian embassy that had been in the country, and while the power to which that embassy belonged, and whose protection we were known to have enjoyed, assumed a directly hostile attitude toward Persia, is a fact that strongly evinces the vigilant care of the great Head of missions, that the door of faith which he had opened for us should not be closed by political commotions, however threatening. It is one of the many facts connected with our work, which should, in all our prayers and labors for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, even amid approaching convulsions or apparent reverses, give us unwavering confidence in the stability and security of His cause, who himself rides upon the whirlwind and directs the storm. Wherever we can see the hand of God, it is always safe for us to follow, whether it be through seas, over deserts, or up mountains.

Suffering severely as we did from the commencement of our residence at Oroomiah from its climate, we early felt the need of a *health retreat*, to which the sick of our number might repair for relief. The subject was embarrassed with difficulties. Any mountain village to which we might

go, even within the Persian territory, would then have been constantly liable to be sacked by the savage Koords from beyond ; and retiring from the city and plain, even temporarily, would withdraw, in a measure, our strength and influence from the most central and important part of our field. But the sudden death of Mrs. Grant, in the early part of 1839, led us deeply to feel that due regard to our lives, as well as true missionary economy, required us to provide such a retreat. Gavalan, the village of Mar Yohannan, which is about forty miles from the city, is shut out from the sickly influences of the main part of the plain by an arm of the Koordish mountains, which runs down almost to the lake ; and this was the place which we selected as being equally healthy, and a more secure residence than any mountain village.

We readily obtained a firman from the prince of Northern Persia, whom I have repeatedly mentioned, authorizing us to build at that village, (which is the property of government,) and reside there as much of the time as we should find desirable. I accordingly went to Gavalan in the spring of 1839, and commenced erecting a rude building for our accommodation. But scarcely had we laid the foundation when the selfish Mohammedan nobleman who farmed the village,

apprehending that his opportunities for oppressing the villagers might, in some way, be curtailed by our residing there, sent his son, at the head of eight or ten armed ruffians, who suddenly came upon our workmen, beat them severely, and drove them from their work. They then seized the unoffending bishop, Mar Yohannan, tied him to a cart, and brutally bastinadoed him, for the alleged crime of having invited the missionaries to his village. This took place in my presence, and in the face of my earnest remonstrance, and protestation of the bishop's innocence of even the sin of that charge.

The tyrannical noble committed this outrage on the bishop, whom he knew to be our particular friend, to deter us from attempting to reside in the village. And to make the affair at the same time a lucrative one, he extorted from him a large fine, before he would allow him to be liberated from the cart. A few days afterward he seized and imprisoned his aged father, and kept him under constant apprehension of being bastinadoed, until the distressed family rescued him, by borrowing and paying to the oppressor a sum of money which, together with the fine extorted from the bishop, amounted to two hundred and fifty dollars. Thus wantonly were the Nestorian Christians, even the highest of their clergy, some-

times oppressed by their merciless Mohammedan masters. In vain did the governor remonstrate against the unrighteousness of such proceedings, with that wicked Khân, who openly defied his official authority; and equally in vain did the Russian consul at Tabreez, to whom the affair was reported, represent it to the higher authorities there. Their order, that the extorted money should be restored, the obstinate noble contrived repeatedly to evade, by bribing the officers sent to him to carry that order into execution.

Malek Kasem Meerza, the prince who had visited us and reported so favorably of our seminary, the first year of our residence at Oroomiah, had repeatedly shown us much kindness, and had himself procured for us the firman from the king's brother, authorizing us to build and reside in Gav-alan. This prince was then providentially at the capital, and in great favor with the king. And on being informed by Mr. Merrick, with whom he was intimate, of our interruption in our work, and the wanton abuse and oppression of Mar Yohannan, he lost no time in presenting our cause, and that of the bishop, in consideration of his being our friend, to the attention of the king, — and in so effective a manner, that his majesty sent orders to his brother at Tabreez, that justice should be done, in the following laconic terms: —

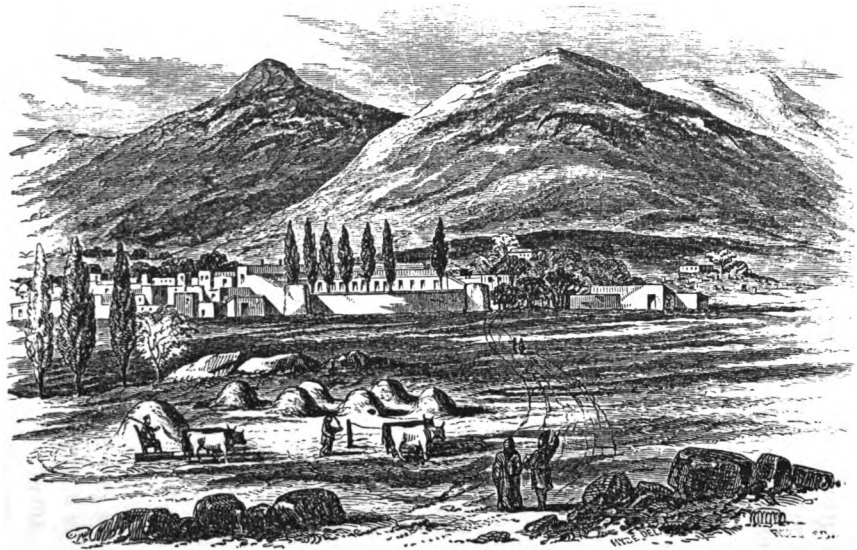
KAHRAMAN MEERZA : Those learned men must be held in honor — especially that holy stranger, [alluding to me, as longest in the country and best known to him,] who has come from the new world at his own expense, and is teaching knowledge to our subjects. By all means inquire into the wishes of his heart, and cause him to be satisfied. Let him erect a dwelling for himself there. And that man, Nazir Ali Khân, who has so much annoyed the man from the new world, you must surely punish.

These orders of the king the obstinate Khân could not set aside. He was compelled to restore the extorted property ; and so numerous were the fees of the officers intrusted with the execution of the royal order, as to subject him also to a severe pecuniary punishment.

These are among the instances of fidelity on the part of the Persian rulers, in protecting us, during the rupture between them and the English government. The repeated favors which we have received, unsolicited, from the king and other members of the royal family in Persia, and which have contributed so essentially to our personal safety and the prosperity of our work, have often delightfully impressed us, as being at least a partial fulfillment of the cheering promise of Scripture to Zion, that, in latter days, kings shall be her nursing fathers and queens her nursing mothers.

The interruption of our undertaking by the

Khân, and various other circumstances, prevented our securing a health retreat at that time. But the district of Oroomiah having passed into the more efficient hands of a new governor, and the adjacent declivities of the Koordish mountains being thus rendered more secure from the predatory incursions of the savages beyond, we soon afterward prepared a residence in a small village, on a beautiful and commanding site, on the declivity of Mount Seir, about six miles from the city. It was, we thought, sufficiently elevated to escape the febrile influences of the plain, and at the same time was not so distant that a residence there would seriously retard our missionary work. The last labor which I performed, before my first return to America, was, to stand from morning till night, among the workmen there, for thirteen weeks, laboring also myself, to prevent the waste of missionary funds, in the preparation of that mountain residence. It promised much for the preservation of the lives and health of the members of our mission, and in that way very much for the advancement of the great cause in that field where the Lord had opened for us so wide a door. And it has proved to be all that we anticipated, and much more. Our male seminary has long been located in a portion of that health retreat, and two or three families have perma-



HEALTH RETREAT AT MOUNT SEIR.

nently dwelt there, and more, some months, every summer. From that charming spot the eye ranges a hundred miles over some of the finest scenery in the world.

In the autumn of 1839, the mission was reënforced by the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Jones.

I should not omit to mention, in passing, a portentous cloud, to which I have not yet alluded, as having darkened our missionary horizon. I refer to the influx of Papal emissaries into our previously undisturbed field. The pope, it would seem, had observed, with a jealous eye, from the first, our entrance and successful commencement of operations among the Nestorians. And to secure if possible so interesting a post in his assumed province, the world, he has been sending his emissaries into Persia for many years, like swarms of locusts, to devour the land. They have made frequent and bold attempts to take from our hands the Nestorian field ; but the people themselves have as often and promptly resisted their efforts, and the good hand of the Lord has hitherto in a great measure thwarted their evil designs.

These subtle foes become the more formidable from their alliance with the numerous secular Papists, who, banished for crime, or strolling for adventure from their homes in Europe, seek a living

in Persia ; and though many of them are avowed infidels and atheists, they still often show an interest and an activity in promoting the Papal cause which vie with the zeal of a Jesuit. As they frequently obtain posts of influence and authority in connection with government, their power and opportunity to advance that cause are far greater than those of the Jesuits themselves. Their singular devotion to Papacy may arise from a superstitious notion (for professed infidels and atheists are often the most superstitious) that they will thus atone for their accumulated crimes ; and such a reward may not improbably be promised to them by the priesthood.

An instance will best illustrate the kind of efforts which these adversaries use to advance the interests of Romanism, not questioning, of course, the grand principle in their system, that the end sanctifies the means. The individual whose case I mention was understood to be an Italian quack, though after his death, papers were found proving him to be a Frenchman, who was the head clerk of a branch mercantile house in Smyrna, and absconded with a large amount of funds. He had been an outlaw from his country twenty years, whose adventures, in the interval, are too fearful to repeat, and who prided himself so much on his boasted infidelity, that he often avowed his pur-

pose to originate some new religion, denouncing that of the Bible as antiquated and obsolete ; and yet this man was a zealous Papal agent.

Possessing considerable intelligence and an insinuating address, he succeeded in obtaining a place in the service of the prince of Oroomiah, first as his physician, but subsequently, by his artful management, as governor, under the prince, of the Christian part of the population. No position could have given him more power to embarrass us, in our missionary work ; and Satan himself, it would seem, could have selected no more practiced and wily foe to occupy that position. No sooner had he assumed his office as governor of the Nestorians, than he commenced a course of open opposition to us, and a vigorous system of efforts to make proselytes to Romanism. He threatened all the Nestorian ecclesiastics, who were in our employment as teachers and assistants, with fines, if they continued their connection ; promising, at the same time, diminution of their heavy taxes, freedom from military enrollment, and other important immunities, to as many as would become Papists. And in entering upon the execution of this oppressive proselyting system, he began with the four bishops of the province, all of whom were then among our native helpers. His prerogatives being only limited, he

represented to the prince that these bishops received annually large salaries from their people, and could well afford, and of right ought, to make a present of a hundred dollars each to his royal highness. Tempted by his strong love of money, which, in Persia, is emphatically the root of all evil, and believing the reiterated assertions of his European magistrate, that the bishops were well able to pay that sum without feeling it, the prince governor proceeded to issue orders that the money be exacted, allowing a fortnight for its collection. The bishops, no one of whom receives a hundred dollars—nor half that sum—from their poor, oppressed people, were thrown into great distress, and knew not what to do; especially as their Papal governor managed so effectually to hedge up the way of access to the prince, that neither they nor their people could reach him and represent the truth of their condition. But while iniquity was coming in like a flood, the Lord lifted up a standard. Within the fortnight allotted to the bishops for obtaining and paying the demanded presents, the Mohammedan population of Orooniah, disgusted with the overbearing conduct of the same European quack, and roused by some instances of oppression toward themselves, to which he had instigated their prince, rose suddenly against both the prince and his European

satellite, fled to Tabreez, the seat of the general government of Northern Persia, and represented their grievances to the king's brother. The prince, following the malcontents to Tabreez with all practicable speed, left his unjust demands on the bishops unexecuted. It was only by paying a large sum to his superior, and pledging a more equitable administration, that he retained his place as governor of Oroomiah; and from that time forward, I hardly need say, he never again touched the subject of a present from the Nestorian bishops; and the quack did not attempt again to reside in the province.

For nearly two centuries emissaries of Rome have been struggling elsewhere, with a zeal and perseverance worthy of a better cause, to effect the conversion of the entire Nestorian church. And they have succeeded, by means as wicked as various, among most of the Nestorians of the plains on the western side of the Koordish mountains, to which part of our field their efforts have till latterly been principally directed. There, too, secular men, acting in connection with clerical emissaries, are often equally zealous and far more efficient agents of the pope than Jesuits themselves. A fact will best illustrate the kind of means used in that region also, and show the formidable nature of this mighty foe to the prog-

ress of truth and light among the Nestorians, and, indeed, in the East in general. A score of years ago a Koordish chief came down from his mountain fastness, and, as the Koords often did, sacked a Nestorian district on the declivity, taking a considerable number of females captive, whom he sold to Turks in the region of Mosul as slaves. The French consul at Bagdad heard of the circumstances, and with an ostentatious affectation of philanthropy, applied to the sultan, through the French ambassador at Constantinople, and obtained a royal firman for the immediate and unconditional liberation of those captives. This firman was committed to the consul, who engaged to see it faithfully carried into effect. But instead of doing this, he took the firman, and offered freedom to such, and such only, of the captives as would, on their liberation, become Papists. In one instance, a poor Nestorian priest, whose daughter was among those in bondage, traveled on foot a long distance to Bagdad, to beg the French consul to liberate his captive child. To him also the consul submitted the only condition on which he could liberate any of the captives, viz., their becoming Catholics. But the noble-spirited priest preferred that his daughter should remain a slave to a Mohammedan master, rather than become one to the pope; and replied to that

effect to the consul. The latter then contrived to intrap the poor priest by false accusations, and caused him to be seized and beaten by the Turkish authorities, hoping to effect, by violent coercion what he had failed to accomplish, in that case, by his philanthropic scheme of oppression. But the priest remained unmoved. Few, however, of that company of captives, or their friends, possessed his firmness, and the result was, that most of them were set at liberty on their becoming Papists, as the price of their freedom.

Such is the Papacy which we encounter in Asia, in the middle of the nineteenth century. It has there all the wily subtlety and grasping ambition of its essential character, and all the bloody vindictiveness, however cautiously and artfully concealed, that lighted the fires of Smithfield, or plied the racks of inquisitorial Spain, in bygone centuries. Yes, it is from the agents of the "man of sin," even in the dominions of the false prophet, that the Protestant missionary must experience his most violent opposition and relentless persecution. But by these formidable foes, even, we have little reason to be discouraged, in view of what God has done with us, and how he has opened for us, and hitherto kept open, the door of faith unto the Gentiles. For even Antichrist cannot prevail against "Him who openeth, and

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no man snutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth."

The year 1840 was marked by the arrival in our field of Dr. Wright, and of our printer, Mr. Breath. Mr. Merrick was also transferred from the mission to the Mohammedans to the Nestorian mission.

CHAPTER IV.

PROGRESS IN THE MISSIONARY WORK.

"Like a grain of mustard seed."

A School for Mohammedans. — Note of a young Persian Noble. — Nestorian Schools. — Introduction of the Press. — Preaching in Nestorian Churches. — Religious Interest. — Providential Aspects. — Influence of Steam Power. — Commerce. — Change of Customs. — British Influence.

I HAVE repeatedly alluded to the protection, kindness, and special favors which we have experienced, in our residence and labors in Persia, from the Mohammedans of that country. Some of that class have also manifested so much confidence in us as to desire us to extend our educational efforts to their children. The king himself has shown a deep interest in this branch of our labors, and, unsolicited by us, he even issued in our favor a royal firman, pledging us protection, and encouraging us to proceed in the instruction of his subjects. And as a peace offering to this class, rulers of the country and masters of the Nestorians as they are, as well as with the hope of benefiting them, and gradually preparing the way

of the Lord among them, we so far complied with their wishes as to keep a small school for young Mohammedans two or three years. And though we bestowed little time, and less expense, on that school, it was by no means without interest, as a collateral branch of our missionary operations. If we did not formally preach Christ and him crucified to these youthful followers of Mohammed, we did use the New Testament as text book in that school, and, as opportunities were presented, explain its contents to them, with the same freedom which we used in instructing Nestorian children.

It may not be uninteresting, in this connection, to insert a short letter, which I received during my first visit in this country, from one of those Mohammedan pupils. He was the son of one of the wealthiest and highest nobles of the province, and nephew of the governor; and though a small boy, was himself a Khân; and I may add, that he was one of the brightest scholars and finest boys that I ever instructed in any land. As he had studied English but a short time, and this note is one of his early attempts at writing our language, allowance will be made for its imperfect style. It is under date of August, 1841—about a month after our first departure from Oroomiah.

OROOMIAH, August 5, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR: How is your health in this month? I wish to write a letter in every month, but the *câsid* [foot messenger] has not come from Tabreez yet. I hope the Koords did you no harm on the way, and that you have arrived at Constantinople, and that you will go safely across the ocean, and that God will keep you. We read and learn in school with Dr. Wright, and sometimes talk with Mr. Breath. It is necessary for me to speak the English language; for, perhaps after two or three years, I may go to England or to America.

Our Moollah wished me to find, in the gospel, if it was forbidden to drink wine. We looked into the gospel translated into the Persian language, and we found it written in 1 Cor. 6: 10, that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. I send you my *dooa salâm* [prayerful salutation].

Your friend, very truly,

HASSAN ALI KHAN.

The promise of good which missionary instruction to Mohammedan youth of this boy's standing and prospects holds out for Persia can be fully understood only by those who have seen the mighty barriers of prejudice existing against the Christian religion there, which must be softened before the gospel can triumph in that country, and which such preparatory means do much to undermine. And when bigoted moollahs applied thus to our scholars for proof texts from the gospel, against prevalent vices, is there not reason to hope that their prejudices are beginning to yield?

Returning to the Nestorians, I may remark, that we early multiplied village schools among them, as teachers became qualified in our seminary, to the utmost extent of our pecuniary means. These schools, as well as the seminary and female boarding school, have, from their commencement, been in a flourishing condition. It was delightful to mark the progress of these scholars, where, twenty-five years ago, no schools existed; to see them gradually rise, in the brief course of even the imperfect education which we were, in the early periods of our work, able to furnish them, from the rude, ignorant, squalid children first collected, up to the comparatively intelligent young men, like plants grown up in their youth, and daughters, as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace; and yet far more delightful was it to mark their rapid progress in religious knowledge, their increased attention to eternal things, and the hopeful conversion of some of them from the power and the bondage of sin to the love and service of the living God.

Our educational efforts thus held out the grateful prospect, in connection with our other labors, of furnishing the Nestorians with an intelligent and pious ministry, and, by their aid, gradually raising the masses from their deep degradation to be an enlightened and virtuous Christian people.

Our press arrived in 1840. It was like a rising sun, bursting suddenly upon the long-darkened horizon of the Nestorians. A small Scripture tract was the first fruit of the labors of the press, and the first book ever printed in the spoken language of the Nestorians. As I carried the proof sheets of it from our printing office into my study for correction, and laid them upon the table before my translators, they were struck with mute astonishment and rapture to see their language in print, though they had themselves assisted, a few days before, in preparing the same matter. As soon as recovery from surprise allowed them utterance, "It is time to give glory to God," they mutually exclaimed, "that we behold the commencement of printing books for our people" — a sentiment to which, it will be readily supposed, my heart most fully responded.

In connection with my other labors, I usually devoted a part of each day to the work of translating, and was thus enabled to complete a translation of the New Testament, and some smaller works for the use of our schools, before my first visit to America. Parts of this New Testament were printed during my absence.

But the most interesting department of our labors remains to be mentioned. I refer to our preaching the gospel in the Nestorian churches.

We had long preached statedly, on the Sabbath, to the members of our seminary and female boarding school on our premises, and extensively in our village schools during the week, and, more or less, from house to house, as opportunities occurred and our other labors permitted. But we had not expected (certainly not so soon) to enter their churches as clergymen, and formally preach the gospel; for we apprehended that the native ecclesiastics, much as they rejoiced in our more general labors, would be likely to regard themselves as in danger of being undervalued by their people in their clerical capacity, by a comparison with the missionaries, and so take offense at the measure, were we to assume the attitude of regular preachers in their churches. What, then, was our surprise and gratification, when, in 1840, we began to be invited and urged, by the most intelligent and influential ecclesiastics, with an importunity that would take no denial, to enter their churches, every Sabbath, and proclaim the gospel to their people! We were thus invited to preach in far more churches than we could possibly occupy. During that year those of our number who were able to speak the native language preached usually three times on the Sabbath, to as many different congregations situated some miles distant from each other. Occasionally we

yielded to the importunity of other churches still, and preached a single Sabbath to their people.

The scene was more interesting than can possibly be conceived, as we took our places in those venerable churches, a Nestorian bishop standing usually on one hand and a priest on the other, and a congregation of both sexes and all ages seated upon their mats, on their simple earth-floor, crowded shoulder to shoulder, and listening to the words of life as they fell from the speaker's lips, with an eagerness of countenance that would almost loose the tongues of those of our number who had not yet learned their language, and inspire them with the power of utterance. It is always an unspeakable privilege to preach the gospel of salvation, but especially so in such circumstances. Never have I addressed audiences, elsewhere, in regard to whom it might apparently with so much truth be said, that they received the word with gladness.

Some of the clergy who were a considerable time under the influence of our mission early became able and faithful preachers. Often have I heard them address their people with a solemnity and power which we associate with the preaching of apostles. The earnest, moving voice of priest Abraham and priest Yohannan, who were then in middle life, and the less pungent

but affectingly serious and tremulous tones of the venerable Mar Elias, urging their people to repentance and salvation, seem often to be still sounding in my ears. They and a few others of the clergy were accustomed to go out, not only in company with the missionaries, but alone also, and address other congregations on the Sabhath.

The attendance on our preaching at the Nestorian churches, during the last winter and spring, before my first return in 1841, was very large, and a deep solemnity pervaded the assemblies. Indeed, an unwonted interest on the subject of religion seemed to be awakened, and extending itself throughout the whole province. The indications that the Holy Spirit was verily in the midst of us and around us were clear, and often very impressive, — not in the thunder nor the whirlwind, but in the still small voice that convinced many of their sins and their need of a Saviour, and led some to Christ — to the saving of their souls.

Such was the state of our mission, when I reluctantly left the field for a season, in 1841, on account of the impaired health of my wife; and such are some of the incidents in our previous experience and labors that occur to me in the brief retrospect we have now taken of the work up to that period. Many of the nominal Christians,

who, when I reached them, found ready apologies for their sins in their civil oppression, then as readily turned the scale against themselves, recognizing, in the rigor of their bondage, the hand of a kind heavenly Father, scourging them for their backslidings, and seeking to reclaim and save them. The church that was dead, while it had a name to live, was beginning to awake and rise into life. The great valley which was full of bones—very many and very dry—had begun to feel the quickening power of the breath of Jehovah. Bone was coming to its bone, and the ghastly, lifeless skeleton beginning to be invested with flesh, with spiritual comeliness and vitality. In a word, the Lord was moving on the body of the Nestorians of Persia,—a population of near forty thousand souls,—waking them to thought and serious reflection; and a work which might, in a certain sense, be called a revival of religion, still and gradual, yet deep and general, was in progress among them, which promised to make them again a people whose God is the Lord. A verdant oasis had thus suddenly sprung up around us in the midst of that great moral wilderness, small, indeed, but bidding fair to extend until it should cause the whole mighty desert to bud and blossom as the rose.

And was there nothing in our unobstructed

access to the people from the first; in our oft-repeated restoration from distressing sickness; in the long preservation of our lives amid sickly influences of a strange climate, and of our work amid threatening prospects of hostile commotion; in our manifold deliverances from perplexities and difficulties, from the subtle designs of artful and formidable Papal adversaries, from personal danger and death; in the favor we had enjoyed from Mohammedan rulers; in the uninterrupted prosperity that had attended our various and extensive missionary operations; and, above all, in the influences of the Holy Spirit, vouchsafed to crown with a measure of saving success our feeble instrumentality? Could we see nothing in all that God had thus done with us, and how he had opened for us the door of faith to call forth our thanksgivings? Yes, much, very much, to excite in us gratitude for the past, nor less to encourage our hopes for the future. Had the Lord thus begun a great and good work among the Nestorians, and would he fail to carry it forward to completion? Never. His arm is not shortened, that it can not save, nor his ear heavy, that it can not hear. Their iniquities had indeed long and lamentably separated between them and their God; but he will purge away their sins for his name's sake — yea, purge them as gold and

silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Nor needed we to rest this hope solely on the reformation, in such delightful progress, among that people. There is much also in their circumstances and history to warrant the belief that the day of salvation for that venerable church has fully come. Is not their almost miraculous preservation so long from being crushed by the heavy arm of Mohammedan oppression on the one hand, and decoyed and annihilated by the wiles of Papal emissaries on the other, an encouraging pledge that He who has graven Zion on the palms of his hands—the Lord of the church—will revive and build up this remnant for the glory of his name and the advancement of his kingdom? May he not have very important purposes for it, as a church, to accomplish—a conspicuous part for it to act in ushering in the millennial glories of Zion? What geographical position could be more important, in its bearing on the conversion of the world, for a Christian church to hold, than that occupied by the Nestorians?—situated, as they are, in the center of Mohammedan dominion, and far toward the center of benighted Asia. Pure religion once revived among them,—they are, most emphatically, a city set on a hill, whose light can never be hid.

And is it too much to believe that this ancient church, once so renowned for its missionary efforts, — its heralds of salvation having carried the gospel for centuries, in the face of danger and of death, even into China, — still possessing rare native capabilities, as well as such felicity of location for the renewal of like missionary labors, — is it too much to hope and believe that it will awake from the slumber of ages, put on again the beautiful garment of its espousal to God, and become bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners, to achieve triumph for Zion? — that it will again diffuse such a radiance of the blaze of truth as shall put for ever to shame the abominations of Mohammedanism, roll back the corrupting tide of Papal influence, and send forth faithful missionaries of the cross in such numbers and with such holy zeal, as shall bear the glad tidings of salvation over their own dark plains and mountains, and aid in speeding their flight through all the world?

I then anticipated, and still anticipate, such results, and at no very distant period, — not indeed by any human might or power, nor by miracles, strictly so called, — but “by my Spirit, saith the Lord” — by the promised, and to some extent then already vouchsafed blessing of Jehovah on the humble efforts which American Christians put

forth for the revival of religion among the Nestorians.

There were then, as now, encouraging aspects, in the providence of God, affecting not only the Nestorian mission, but also the cause of truth in general in the East; and which gave to the revival of religion in progress among that people a peculiar interest that strangely impressed my own mind, and may with propriety be thankfully recognized in this connection.

To the extension of the power of steam, after our mission was commenced, by which the distance is almost annihilated between Europe — and, indeed, between America — and the remote ports of the Black Sea, I have already alluded. The influence of this extension of steam power is amazing in preparing the way for the spread of the gospel, by bringing different and distant nations into near and familiar proximity, and thus breaking down their national prejudices, and in the intercommunication and rapid diffusion of light and general intelligence.

Beyond the shores of that distant sea the steamer can not push its way. It can not scale those lofty mountains, whose snow-capped summits pierce and peer above the clouds. But ever-sleepless, restless, advancing commerce does cross those mountains; and though it can not level them, it

can smooth the way over them. When I first went to Persia, thirteen thousand caravan horses and mules were accustomed to pass annually on the route which we traveled between Trebizond and Erzroom; but on my return, eight years afterward, the number had doubled, twenty-six thousand, instead of thirteen thousand, as the English consul at Trebizond informed me, then annually traveling that same route. And the adamantine ledges of the rocky passes had evidently been worn down and smoothed, and the road essentially improved, in the interval, by the incessant attrition of the hoofs of beasts of burden in so vast an amount of travel; so much so, that rude wheel carriages were beginning to take the place of the backs of animals as the vehicles of merchandise over a part of the way, and it was expected that they would ere long be able to run the whole length of that formidable route.

But how much more important an effect of this rapid increase of commerce in that direction is the tide of light and civilization which it is rolling into the dark empires beyond those mountains! By these mighty strides of commerce, the *earth is verily helping the woman*; in other words, the hand of the Lord in controlling and directing the current of secular adventure and enterprise, is opening the way for the introduction and triumph

of the gospel in all the world, but particularly in Western and Central Asia, in a manner too wonderful to be comprehended, or hardly believed, save by the astonished beholders who personally observe the surprising phenomena.

Not that this flood of commerce, which is thus rolling eastward, is entirely under religious control. The vicious influence of civilized nations, like the frogs of Egypt, is every where. In the heart of Turkey the missionary sees the children of peasants playing briskly with European cards, where not one child in perhaps thousands knows a letter of any language. And New England rum is still almost the only commercial representative with which our Christian, Protestant country has ever yet honored the wants of benighted Mohammedan Persia. But the overruling hand of the Lord can, and does, cause the good greatly to preponderate. The swelling tide of trade and adventure on which this liquid poison and these demoralizing practices steal their passage pours into the East far more light than darkness — far more blessings than curses ; and with all its attendant evils, it is rapidly hastening the day when holiness to the Lord shall be written on the bells of all its caravan horses.

The increasing disposition in Asiatics to obtain European knowledge and adopt European cus-

toms is another encouraging aspect of things in the East. Borne onward by the general current of light and improvement, the Persian monarch long since exchanged the flowing robes of his Oriental costume for the less graceful, but more manly, tight coat and pantaloons, which he once as heartily despised as he did the European who wore them; and the beard which, on the face of his predecessor, being of extraordinary length, was generally and reverently styled the glory of the empire, and upon which he would once have placed a value scarcely second to that of his crown, was clipped to his chin; and he obliged all his subjects who enjoyed the emoluments of office, willing or unwilling, to follow his example in these innovations.*

I attach no importance to such changes of custom and costume, being, as I conceive, quite indifferent in themselves, except as they strongly indicate the decline of Mohammedan and Eastern prejudice, and the rapid opening of facilities for the spread of the gospel.

* When I was in this country in 1842, I journeyed to the south as far as Richmond, and to the west as far as Buffalo, and saw not a single beard except that on the face of Mar Yohannan. On reaching Boston, at the close of 1858, one of the wonders that surprised me was a beard on at least every third man of all professions. Little did I anticipate that the venerable appendages then beginning to drop from the chins of those staid Orientals were so suddenly to migrate and reappear on the youthful and the aged faces of so many of my countrymen.

The extension of British political power and influence in Asia is another sign of the times, auguring most auspiciously for the spread of the gospel over that continent. I say this, not, of course, as a party politician, but as a Christian philanthropist and a missionary, who has long had abundant opportunity to observe and feel the effect of British influence in the East. Where English power is felt in Asia, in general, it is no more certain that the rod of oppression is broken, the captive liberated, and the condition and prospects of the inhabitants vastly ameliorated, than that there the Protestant missionary, and especially the American missionary, has an unfailing pledge of protection, encouragement, and aid in his object and labors; and there only has he any such sure and permanent security.

To the eye of the Christian observer it is clearly not chance, nor success in the game of politics, nor military skill or prowess, that is placing so much of Asia under British control. It is the hand of Providence, the arm of the almighty Ruler of the world.

It is a most interesting circumstance, not perhaps generally understood, that among the English who are scattered through the East there is a large number of devotedly pious men, and among them many military and civil officers of high

standing, who, like the good centurion of old, are not ashamed to be known as the humble servants of God, as well as the faithful servants of their country. A British envoy at the court of Herat, in East Persia, was Colonel Todd,* of the Indian army, who was previously some time in Persia. He was a devoted Christian, and repeatedly cheered us with his counsels and labors. Colonel Stoddart, another pious officer, was envoy to the yet more distant court of Bokhara, which is one of the strongest holds of the religion of the false prophet, and one of the most inaccessible points, and least known to Europeans, in all Central Asia. Mohammedan bigotry cast him into prison, and submitted to him the fearful alternative of conversion to that bloody faith or a violent death.† Amid the perils of his gloomy confinement, and under the pressure of his trials, Colonel Stoddart forgot not us and our labors in Persia, but cheered us in like manner with fraternal epistles. Need I say that such Englishmen — and scores of them there are, scattered over the wild regions and posted on the high places of benighted Asia — are missionary pioneers, rapidly preparing the way for the spread of the gospel throughout that continent.

* Afterward killed at the head of his regiment, in a great battle of the Punjaub war.

† He was finally beheaded, after being confined in a pit among serpents and venomous reptiles.

Indeed, Providence seems to be extending and strengthening British influence in all parts of the world, but especially in Asia, (exceptionable as is much of its policy and the character of many of its agents,) as a radiant orb of light, a mighty bulwark of truth, a grand antagonist of false and corrupt religions — the protector of Protestant missions, and the champion of pure Christianity.

Let it be our fervent prayer that favored America may never be found slow to emulate the fatherland in this highest and best of the momentous purposes for which Providence has given to the two countries so exalted a place among the nations.

In view of these general aspects in the signs of the times in the East which I have mentioned, and many others I might name, as well as of all that God early did with us in our particular field in opening the door of faith, and enabling us to occupy that open door, what occasion had we to thank him, and take courage!

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE.

"Being filled with all unrighteousness."

Persia.—Route to it.—Physical Features.—The Persians.—Their natural Traits.—Their Moral Condition.—Hopeful as the Objects of Missionary Effort.—The Nestorians' Lineal Descent.—Conversion to Christianity.—Origin as a Sect.—Their Number.—Geographical Position.—The Koords.—Why we first labored for the Nestorians.—Their Condition when we reached them.

IN bringing forward the account of the missionary work among the Nestorians, our object may best be secured by slightly recapitulating and noticing in this connection somewhat more distinctly, though briefly, the lands and the people where that work has been carried on.

Persia, the principal scene of our labors hitherto, is a venerable land, teeming with sacred associations, the land of Cyrus and Darius, of Daniel and Mordecai and Esther. To reach that distant clime, as already stated, we make our way by water to the south-eastern extremity of the Black Sea. Disembarking there, we ascend the lofty mountains of ancient Pontus, rising suddenly from the home of the olive, the fig, and the lemon, to

towering summits clad with perpetual snow, on which, on my last return, the mustaches of our traveling companions were frozen on the 17th of August, after suffering very intense heat just on the other side of them. Crossing those high ranges of mountains, much of the way on narrow parapets, along the face of lofty precipices, we pass eastward by a moderate descent upon the elevated table lands of Armenia, on which we cross the ancient rivers Araxes* and Euphrates,† and skirt the base of the sacred mountain of Ararat. Another moderate descent from those high table lands brings us down upon the immense sunny plains of Persia, surrounded by stern ranges of naked mountains, like vast enclosed gardens — a country at once genial in climate and attractive in scenery, whose atmosphere is so clear that the naked eye with ease traces objects distinctly at the distance of a hundred miles, which would hardly be visible one fourth of that distance in America, and readily descries celestial bodies ‡ seen elsewhere only by the aid of a tel-

* We cross this classic river about forty miles east of Erzroom, on the plain of Fasin, by an ancient arched bridge, built strongly of brick and stone, some six or seven hundred feet long.

† Both branches of the Euphrates are fordable where we cross them, willows skirting their margins, as was the case on the banks of that ancient river in the days of Israel's captivity.

‡ Mr. Stoddard often saw the satellites of Jupiter and Saturn's rings with the naked eye.

escape. Much of it is a land physically so fair as to be almost fairy, abounding in luxuriant fields, orchards, and vineyards, and smiling with tasteful gardens of brilliant and fragrant flowers, studded with gurgling fountains and shady arbors, and vocal with the notes of warbling nightingales and other musical birds — a land, emphatically,

“ Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.”

But the spiritual watchman looks with far more interest to the people, however much he may be charmed with the natural scenery ; for he watches for souls as one who must give account unto God. And truly the inhabitants of Persia are vile ; not, however, externally, and to general observation. On the contrary, the modern dwellers of Persia, the direct descendants of the ancient Medes and Persians, are naturally among the noblest specimens of the human race, manly and athletic, of full medium stature, fine forms, regular Caucasian features, and good complexions. They are also an intellectual people, lively, imaginative, social, fond of discussion, and exceedingly shrewd and discriminating in their observation of men and of things ; and the higher classes are a literary people ; while in manners so proverbially courteous are they, even to fastidious

punctiliousness, as, with much reason, to be designated "the French of Asia."

But with all that is externally decorous in the intercourse of the Persians, and polished in their manners, they are a deeply depraved and corrupt people, while they are still not destitute of kindly and generous traits of character. Politeness with them is generally a cloak for studied intrigue and deception. Falsehood seems so much more congenial to them than truth, that lying is not only common, but habitual, often even when there seems to exist no motive for it where the truth would better serve the purpose to be gained. Such is the power of depravity,* intensified by habit; and the depths of their secret impurities it were a shame to mention. The highly favored of Heaven in country and climate, and in physical and intellectual endowments, their very elevation in these respects tends but to render the more painfully conspicuous their fearful moral degradation, presenting them before us more in the likeness of fallen spirits than those who bear the image of God, and their fair country like the

* Ask a Persian what he thinks of a liar, and he will promptly respond, "A liar is the enemy of God." Ask him, "Why, then, do you lie?" and he will reply with equal promptness, "Because our business will not succeed without lying"—a species of reasoning and of practice in which the Persians probably have sympathizers in more favored lands.

land of Sodom, which was also naturally as "the garden of the Lord." And we marvel that such a land has so long been spared, under its provocations against the divine forbearance, hardly less than we admire the charming earthly paradise * which it is, as the goodly work of the Creator's hand.

The modern Persians are descendants of the ancient fire worshipers, and are themselves Mohammedans in religious profession. Those residing in Persia proper amount to perhaps twelve millions of souls, and they are numerous in India. Their religion, I hardly need say, has no power to regenerate or elevate their moral character, but the reverse, imposing, indeed, a few arbitrary restraints and austerities † for a portion of the time, but in other respects giving loose reins to corrupt propensities and fleshly indulgences in

* The word *paradise* has its home in the Persian language, meaning *garden*, and the thing thus designated has eminently its home in the country in the physical features of the cultivated portions.

† An entire lunar month, called *Ramazan*, is observed as a fast from all food and drink, and from smoking from early dawn till twilight. But the table stands laden with the best food they can command, ready for the hungry ones to gormandize as soon as the gun announces permission to eat; and many pass most of the night in feasting, in anticipation of the next day's abstinence. As this fast, so called, circulates with the lunar month through the year, it is very severe for the laboring classes in spring and summer; and excess in eating during the night, added to the gnawing hunger and fatigue of the day, is a very fruitful cause of disease and death.

this world, and promising only a sensual paradise in the world to come.

Yet, in justice to the corrupt Persians, and as necessary to a proper understanding of their character, I should repeat that they are not destitute of redeeming traits. With all their rank depravity, they possess, in common with most Orientals, a strong religious vein, which, in the absence of truth, feeds greedily on error. They cherish, for example, an habitual recognition of an ever-present, overruling Providence in all that pertains to this world—a recognition which, while in their case it savors of fatalism, may still be preferable to the atheistical, or even heartlessly Christian, exclusion of God from the affairs of men, too common in the worldly masses in Christian lands. With the Persian, whatever happens is from God. Whatever he undertakes, it is, in his language, *Bismillah*—In God's name; and *Inshallah*—If God will; and when accomplished, it is *Al hemdoolillah*—By God's help, and with thanks to him for success.

A perversion of this habitual recognition of the divine presence and agency leads to their shockingly prevalent profaneness in the familiar use of the name of the Supreme Being. It is impossible, in a Christian land, to conceive of the frequency with which that sacred name is invoked

in the East. The gardener, every time he drives his spade into the earth, and the woodman, every time he lifts his ax, exclaim, "O God," as though there were some charm in that idle repetition to prosper them in their work.* Yet, in all their reckless trifling with that sacred name, we hear from them nothing of the daring, blasphemous imprecations coupled with it that often stun our ears in the marts of Christendom.

Their grinding avarice, which seems to constitute their ruling passion, though probably less a devouring mania in them than in many who bear the Christian name in America, is neutralized by the same strong religious element which prompts them to expend liberally of their ill-amassed treasures on religious objects, as they regard them, as the building of mosques, the performance of pilgrimages, &c. ; and on charitable objects, as the construction of bridges, the opening of fountains, and the erection of caravanserais by the wayside in the desert, the redemption of captives, and the distribution of bread to the hungry poor, &c., albeit for religious merit or ostentation.

* Mr. Stoddard, not long after reaching his field, once told two of his pupils to remove a box of books. As they eagerly grasped it, one of them exclaimed, "In thy name, O God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!" "What do you mean by using such language?" reprovingly interposed Mr. Stoddard. "It is *heavy*, sir," promptly responded the Nestorian boy.

The noble harp of religion thus presents itself in the soul of the Persian, even in its ruins, as formed peculiarly for the worship and the service of God, and in this view, as a very hopeful material for moral culture, when the power of the gospel shall reach and regenerate that soul and restring that ruined harp.

The Nestorians—that other people in Persia to whose benefit our labors have been more immediately directed—are of much humbler pretensions than the Mohammedans, yet very interesting in their history and character, being a small remnant of a once great, influential, and active missionary church. They are the oldest of Christian sects, and in their prosperous days, as already mentioned, were numerous through all the regions of Asia—from Palestine to China, and in China itself. The last point is now well attested by enduring historical inscriptions in that country, in their own written character, the Syriac, on a solid stone tablet which remains to this day.

The lineal descent of the Nestorian Christians is not the same as that of the Persian Mohammedans, though they are not inferior to them in either physical or intellectual endowment. They are of the Shemitish stock, which is clear from their language, the Syriac, strongly guttural—a cognate of the Hebrew and the Arabic; and

from other peculiarities they claim such an origin among the sons of Noah. Some have supposed them to be descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel.* In favor of that supposition is their own common tradition, and some other quite plausible but not fully conclusive arguments.

Their conversion to Christianity they refer to Thomas, one of the twelve apostles—a point not fully made out, though strongly favored by tradition, and more or less by concurrent evidence.

Their origin, as a Christian sect, is matter of authentic church history. Nestorius, from whom they derive their name, born and educated in Syria, was a presbyter at Antioch, where believers were first called Christians, and was made Bishop of Constantinople in the year 428 A. D. The conspicuousness of his station, his attempts to resist some popular superstitions, and perhaps his rashness in theological speculation, made him a convenient mark for the envy and hostility of cotemporary bishops, particularly of the am-

* Jews are numerous in all parts of Persia, particularly in the large cities. Five thousand, at least, reside in Oroomiah. They speak the languages prevalent among the people where they dwell, as Turkish, Persian, &c. Their physiognomy is every where quite marked—so much so that I can always distinguish one from all other nationalities, when I meet him. Every where in the East the Jews are sorely down-trodden and heartily despised. No epithet in the vocabularies of abuse there is so odious as that of *Jew*. Thus the fearful imprecation, "His blood be on us and our children," rests crushingly on the descendants of Israel, even unto this day.

bitious Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, a celebrated heresy-hunter of that early period. Summoned to a trial, Nestorius was deposed and excommunicated, at Ephesus, by the third General Council, in A. D. 431. A prominent charge, on which that assembly decreed his excommunication and exile, was, that he refused to apply to the Virgin Mary the idolatrous, if not blasphemous, epithet, *Mother of God*. To this day his name and memory are often and vehemently anathematized by the Papal church and other sects of Oriental Christians, as the arch heretic of all time; and his followers are despised and detested by the same fallen churches as little above heathen. Yet, for aught that appears, he may have been quite as orthodox, to say the least, in any proper sense of that term, as his opponents and judges; and his comparative purity, in the general corruption which then prevailed, may have been the real ground of the rigor with which he was treated.

The cause of Nestorius being regarded as that of a persecuted man rapidly gained adherents, until the sect became, as I have stated, a very numerous, influential, and active missionary church, carrying the gospel through vast regions of Central Asia during the night of the middle ages, while the rest of Christendom was buried in profound slumber.

The history of these Christians has been a varied one — sometimes, as under the tolerant policy of the mighty Tartar conqueror Gengis Khan, being raised to high places in the camp and at the court; while, subsequently, as under the bloody monster Timour Lane, they were cut down and swept away till scarce a vestige remained, save in the fastnesses of well nigh inaccessible mountains.

The present remnant of that venerable church, numbering about one hundred and fifty thousand souls, are situated geographically on the eastern borders of Turkey and the western borders of Persia, in the very heart of Mohammedan dominion, and just on the dividing line of the two great rival Mohammedan sects — the Soonees and the Shiites. Their country — to be more definite — stretches from the ancient River Tigris, along the southern border of Armenia, into Northern Persia, more than three hundred miles, and extends southward along the Tigris on the west about the same distance, embracing the Assyrian mountains and plains as far as Mosul, or ancient Nineveh, on the south-west; and on the east it includes several of the most beautiful and fertile Persian plains. If you have followed me in thus briefly sketching the locality of the present Nestorian Christians, you will have in mind, then, that

they are found in the north-western province of modern Persia, which is ancient Media, and the adjacent eastern province of Turkey, which comprises ancient Assyria, embracing much of modern Koordistan. The latter is an exceedingly wild, mountainous country, inhabited by numerous tribes of a yet wilder people, the Koords, of the Mohammedan faith, among whom and in proximity to whom many of the Nestorian Christians dwell, subject to lawless extortion, and often, till lately, to violent plunder, from those redoubtable neighbors. The Nestorian field, then, is one and continuous, though lying in two empires. The Koords number nearly two millions. About half of them live in villages, cultivating the land, and the other half are nomads—not exactly *wandering*, for they have well-defined circuits which they annually perform, moving down to the mild plains of Persia on the one hand, and of Assyria on the other, as the frosts of autumn come on; and then, with early spring, commencing their upward course, with tents, flocks, and herds,—the hardy females bearing their little ones in their cradles on their backs, the older children being packed in large sacks, often with lambs to balance them, and thus slung over the backs of oxen or cows, their heads only emerging from the mouths of the sacks,—

the whole motley throng often moving from encampment to encampment, gradually rising with the advancing season, till midsummer finds them near the summits, in the neighborhood of perpetual snow, among cool rills, and verdant pastures, and redolent flowers; and as summer wanes and autumn returns, they gradually again descend to the plains.

Those Koords consist of many tribes, from one hundred to two hundred, speaking dialects more or less different, yet all having the Persian radically as their origin. The tribes possess elements so incoherent that extensive combination is impracticable, which is a great favor to Turkey and Persia; for could the Koords have been firmly united, those empires might often have been laid waste by them.

The Nestorians are, in general, sparsely scattered among the more numerous classes, the Persians and Koords, to whom most of them stand in a relation analogous to that of serfs, being cultivators of the soil, and artisans in the more common and useful mechanical trades.

On the eastern boundary of their country is Lake Oroomiah, a noble sheet of salt water, ninety miles long and thirty miles broad.

It was among the Nestorians of Persia, in the district of Oroomiah, which is one of the richest

and fairest of the Persian plains, as has before been stated, that we commenced our missionary labors twenty-five years ago. This plain of Oroomiah skirts the beautiful lake of the same name, and runs back thence to the Koordish mountains as its broad pedestal.

The wild regions of Koordistan were, for many years after our arrival in Persia, under the rule, or rather the anarchy, of the bloody Koords, and thus rendered too insecure for the residence of civilized men. Latterly Turkish garrisons have been established among them, and for nine years we have had a mission station in that part of our field.

The query may arise, why we passed by the more numerous and dominant classes, the Mohammedan Persians and Koords, and directed our efforts mainly to the Nestorian Christians. I may answer, in few words, because those Christians were such but little more than in name, and therefore about as far from salvation, while continuing thus, as the followers of the false prophet; yet, being Christians in name, and thus being regarded by the Mohammedans as the representatives of Christianity, it would be extremely difficult to affect favorably those followers of the false prophet toward our holy religion, while they saw it so poorly exemplified by a people living in

the midst of them, and bearing that sacred name. Those nominal Christians were, moreover, at the commencement of our mission, entirely accessible, while death was the penalty for any Mohammedan who changed his religion. The guiding hand of Providence thus pointed us to the Nestorians as the proper medium through whom to reach the Mohammedans.

In sketching the state of the Nestorians when we reached them, and the results of our labors among them, I seem to stand in my distant field, and respond to Zion's inquiry as sounded by the prophet, "Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night?" "The watchman said, The morning cometh, also the night." The missionary watchman fulfills his office in the *night*. The lands to which he goes are lands of darkness — deep moral midnight. The gospel lamp, which he bears in his solitary hand, is the only light to gleam on that darkness, break in upon its death shade, and kindle rays of the longed-for morning. The Nestorians were in a night of deep darkness when I reached them, a little more than a quarter of a century ago. Ground down to the dust by their Mohammedan rulers and masters, toward whom, in that relation, they naturally cherished a bitter hostility, as sore oppressors, luxuriating, in idleness and voluptuousness, on

the fruits of their own severe and ill-requited toil, they still contracted many of the prevalent vices of those hated oppressors. Falsehood, among those nominal Christians, also, was nearly universal. The Sabbath was a day of business, trade, and recreation, and almost every command of the Decalogue was habitually violated with little compunction, or even shame. Indeed, in their morals, the Nestorians were nearly on a level with the corrupt Mohammedans around them, with the single exception—which is indeed a great and important one—of their better observance of the seventh commandment, the awful violation of which, with kindred sins, is a loathsome pit of abominations, from approaching which, to depict it, we shudder.

The Nestorians were very ignorant, as well as immoral; their ignorance doubtless being a fruitful cause of their immorality. Not a female among them could read, except the sister of the patriarch, who being regarded as belonging to a higher order, it was deemed befitting that she should possess that peerless accomplishment. And but very few of the men could read,—hardly any except their ecclesiastics,—and most of them being merely able to chant their devotions in an ancient and unknown tongue—the Syriac. They had no printed books, and but very few in

manuscript. Portions of the Bible, or most of it, they possessed, in very rare copies, rolled up and hid away in secret places in their churches, to keep them from the ravages of the Mohammedans. Some of the copies are very venerable, written with nicest care on parchment, and dating back between six and seven hundred years, to the period of England's Magna Charta. "The word of the Lord was precious in those days." The parchment copies are mostly found in the wild mountains, where they could be most easily secured from Mohammedan marauders, by aid of the strong fastnesses of the rocks. From those mountains the ancestors of the Nestorians of Persia descended to the more genial plains, in the lull of deadly persecution, two or three centuries ago.

Thus were these Nestorian Christians when we reached them, — their home the almost enchanting vale of Oroomiah, skirted on the one hand by mountains of unsurpassed grandeur, and on the other by a lake of equal beauty, — smiling physically like an Eden, yet being morally a melancholy desolation, a valley of dry bones, like that portrayed in Ezekiel's vision.

Yet these nominal Christians, though thus depressed and degraded, possessed many interesting traits, and were very hopeful as the objects of

missionary effort. Naturally, they possess deep religious susceptibilities. They are artless and confiding, welcoming us with open arms and hearts to our labors among them. They are also, as before stated, much more simple and scriptural in their religious belief and practices than other Oriental sects of Christians, acknowledging the Bible as the highest, and, in theory at least, as the only authoritative rule of faith and practice, and rejecting image and picture worship, the doctrine of purgatory, confession to priests, &c., with hearty indignation. They were thus, even at that time, well entitled to the honorable distinction which had long been awarded to them — that of being called *the Protestants of Asia*.

CHAPTER VI.

MISSIONARY RESULTS.

"The joy of harvest."

Education. — The Press. — Preaching. — Revivals. — Character of the Converts. — Letters of a native Helper. — The Mountains of Koor-distan. — Our Mountain Station. — Deacon Gewergis. — Out-stations in the Mountains. — Gorge of Ishtazin. — Hymn on that Gorge. — Prevalence of Christianity in rough Countries and among hardy People.

HAVING a broad field of common ground with the Nestorian Christians (though they were deeply fallen) in their regard for the Scriptures, and the most ready access to them, we at once entered upon the work of their amelioration and salvation. This we of course attempted by means of the gospel lamp which we bear to the benighted, a lamp that shines by its own light, yet through appropriate mediums, as the school, the Sabbath school, the press, and last, but preëminent, the preaching of the word.

Our first school, which was commenced in a cellar (apt emblem of the moral state around us) for want of a more comfortable place, it being winter, with seven small boys, was the germ of

our flourishing male seminary. The number of pupils soon increased to forty or fifty; and from learning their alphabet, on manuscript cards, at the beginning, they steadily and rapidly advanced, till they have long graduated with very respectable general attainments, a remarkably familiar knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and most of them with considerable acquaintance with theology as a system.

Our female seminary was commenced, under less promising auspices, about two years later. It had greater obstacles to encounter at the outset, among a people who deemed it not only unnecessary, but unbecoming, for females to read. "Will women become our priests?" was the common sarcastic inquiry, when we first spoke of opening a female school. But those prejudices the female seminary soon conquered, and it advanced with a success so complete, that it has long been, if possible, more popular than the male seminary; and its graduates successfully rival their compeers of the other sex in intellectual acquisitions. Both these missionary nurseries, under the able and indefatigable management of the lamented Mr. Stoddard, and his associate and successor, Mr. Cochran, and of Miss Fisk and Miss Rice, have for many years been among the very best regulated and highly favored schools on mis-

sionary ground, and few surpass them in Christendom.

In the course of the first year of our residence in Persia we opened three primary schools, in as many large villages, and the number of those village schools gradually increased to sixty or seventy, in almost as many different places.

Sabbath schools have also come in, as most important auxiliaries. Our largest Sabbath school now numbers three hundred pupils, of all ages and both sexes, from the sightless matron of more than threescore years and ten, down to the lisping child of three or four. In this school is a class of adult females, of forty members, nearly all of whom have learned to read the Scriptures there, having never attended school in their childhood; and most of them have found the pearl of great price. In another Sabbath school, the oldest scholar is an aged man more than ninety years old, who became hopefully pious at the age of more than eighty years. He has never learned to read, not having had the opportunity in his childhood, and not having had eyesight to do so after he became hopefully pious. But he goes regularly to the Sabbath school, and commits his lesson to memory, by having it repeated to him by a little boy who sits by his side for that purpose; and then he rises and recites it very accu-

rately to the whole school, most delightfully impressing all who behold him, as a venerable pilgrim on the threshold of heaven.

In our seminaries, schools, and Sabbath schools, have risen near three thousand intelligent readers of the Bible, among a people where hardly a score of male readers, — and they not intelligent readers, — and no female readers, were to be found when we reached the field. And every reader, child or adult, is an independent lamp in his dark village, neighborhood, and household.

To provide reading matter for our learners, in an unprinted language, was a problem of not easy solution. The spoken language of the Nestorians, which is a modern dialect of the ancient Syriac, (the latter supposed to have been used by the Saviour* while on earth,) had never been written. Simultaneously with opening our schools we therefore entered upon the task of reducing that language to form, and translating into it brief portions of the Scriptures, which were copied with the pen (or, rather, *reed*, which is the *Oriental pen*) on cards, and suspended on the walls of our school rooms, around which ten or a dozen eager children took a standing position and spelled out their lessons. How affectingly inter-

* The quotations in the New Testament, as *Talktha Cumi*, *Lama Sabakthani*, &c., occur just in their place and form in that language.

esting was the sight of those delighted semicircles of bright children, for the first time drinking in the waters of life from the pure fountain of the Bible !

This laborious process of furnishing reading matter by means of the pen was continued and extended as our schools increased and progressed, till seven years after the commencement of the mission, when our press and printer arrived. Nothing could exceed the wonder and delight of the Nestorians when the long-anticipated press finally reached them. And no marvel. It was as the trump of their intellectual and moral resurrection. The announcement of success in the laying of the Atlantic telegraph could not have been so startling or gratifying to the Anglo-Saxon race, as was, to the simple-hearted Nestorians, their first sight of the rapidly-falling leaves of the tree of life from the mysterious engine which those ancient Eastern Christians had received from their more favored brethren far beyond the setting sun.

Our press has been vigorously occupied, during the last twenty years, in giving books to that hungry people. The Holy Scriptures have been translated, and printed in repeated editions. Other excellent books and tracts have also been multiplied. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Baxter's

Saints' Rest, Doddridge's Rise and Progress, The Dairyman's Daughter, The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, The Young Cottager, a Church History, and other like works, have long had a place in the family library of many a humble Nestorian dwelling, by the side of the Scriptures, yet always far below them in the reverential regard which that primitive people ever cherish toward the inspired oracles. We have published a book of hymns, containing two hundred and forty, most of them translations of the richest and sweetest hymns in our own language. Excellent school books have also been prepared and published, and an able treatise on theology, prepared with great care by the acute and erudite Mr. Stoddard. And during the last twelve years, our press has also given to the Nestorians its monthly periodical, made up of the various departments of Religion, Education, Science, Miscellany, and Poetry, which has been highly useful in our schools and among the people, as a vehicle of religious truth and general intelligence. Its name is *Rays of Light*, and it has proved itself no misnomer.

Our press has already given to the Nestorians more than seventy thousand volumes, large and small, comprising more than fourteen millions of pages, in a language not before written. The

printing office * has thus risen among that darkened people like a stately tree of life, striking its roots deeper and deeper, and sending its branches further and further, to drop its saving leaves over every village and every dwelling, even in the remote hamlets of the Koordish mountains, those leaves being an eminent instrumentality for the healing of the dwellers of both the plains and the mountains.

The question has sometimes been discussed as to what place preaching should hold among missionary operations. I would say that it should hold the *first* place, and *all* places, every where and at all times, though certainly not to the exclusion of its auxiliaries, or, rather, subsidiary agencies, that I have mentioned, as the school, the Sabbath school, and the press. It has little reason to repudiate those agencies. On the contrary, every village school may be a preaching center, where not only the teacher may daily, nay, hourly, "expound the Scriptures," as well as teach them, — the Scriptures, which should in every mission school be the leading text book, — but where also the missionary may occasionally,

* Mr. Breath, our printer, has not only done our printing in excellent style, but his skillful hand, aided by Nestorians whom he taught, has also constructed all but one of the numerous founts of our beautiful type, thus saving to the missionary treasury thousands of dollars during this long period.

if not statedly, and the pious helper, as school visitors, hold forth the word of life to the pupils, and others who so often drop into the school room, especially when thus visited, to say nothing of the numberless truths which are constantly inculcated by every teacher, male or female, who is fit for the occupation, God's word thus distilling incessantly as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, whatever may be the particular branch which is the subject of the lesson.

The missionary seminary, so far from curtailing the preaching of the gospel, affords a daily and most promising audience, where the truth as it is in Jesus may be habitually proclaimed, and under the greatest conceivable advantage, to say nothing of the character of the studies pursued, and the methods of pursuing them, which should ever lead the mind of the pupil to God, the Creator and Redeemer. The result of teaching and preaching in some mission seminaries has attested the truth of this estimate of them as preaching agencies. I should like to be pointed to the church or the chapel, if such exists, where Christ and his cross were ever more the standing themes, or ever more effectively proclaimed from day to day and year to year, than by Mr. Stoddard in our seminary on Mount Seir; nor less truly has

this been done in our female seminary in the city of Oroomiah.

The printed volume, too, and especially the sacred volume, is itself a living and enduring preacher, the missionary being invested, by his labors through the press, with a kind of ubiquity, the volume going in every direction where he can not; and with perpetuity, for the volume lives and continues to exert its influence long after the missionary who prepared it is laid in his grave.

Yet the school, and the seminary, and the mission press may never, one nor all, usurp the place of the more formal proclamation of the gospel in the Sabbath and week-day congregation, from house to house, and by the wayside. I commenced preaching in a language of the country, in our "own hired house," the first Sabbath after reaching the field, having learned something of that language on the way. Nor have I failed thus to preach once, twice, or thrice on the Sabbath, as health and circumstances have enabled me to do, and more or less on other days of the week, during all the years that I have been a watchman in Persia; and the same has been true of my fellow-laborers, however much they have been additionally occupied in giving instruction and preparing matter for the press. From our dwelling

room our Sabbath service was soon adjourned to our cellar school room, and thence, a year afterward, to a more spacious and airy apartment above ground. In the course of three years we were invited and importuned, as already stated, by the most intelligent and influential Nestorian ecclesiastics, to take our places in their churches, and proclaim to their assembled flocks the tidings of salvation. Those humble but venerable churches, built of plain earth or stone walls, have, from that day till this, been open to our use for preaching Christ to congregations varying from four hundred and more down to some scores. We have also preached in hamlets and by the wayside to a few individuals, as we have been able to collect them. In our chapels, at the mission stations, we have had stated Sabbath congregations and Sabbath schools, and much of the time religious services every evening, and, at favorable seasons of the year, on some of the days of the week.

It is an unspeakable privilege to preach Christ, in whatever way, to listening Nestorians. The common people heard him gladly while he journeyed and preached the gospel here on earth. Our message has been emphatically good tidings of great joy to those humble but deeply interesting Christians.

I have stated briefly the various ways in which we have essayed to carry the gospel lamp to those darkened dwellers of Persia and Assyria who bear the Christian name, and the manner in which it has been received. We have extended that light to them through the school and the Sabbath school, our higher seminaries, the printed page and volume, and yet more by the stated proclamation of the gospel.

But in thus cursorily detailing what the watchmen have done, I may not omit to tell you what God hath wrought, while in infinite condescension he has been pleased to smile on their feeble and unworthy instrumentality by the agency of his Spirit. Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; and except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain; and Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase. Powerless and fruitless were an angel's tongue and a seraph's zeal except the Lord add his blessing; and how much more so the weak and imperfect instruments he uses in the missionary work!

It is fifteen years since the first extensive revival was enjoyed in our field, though limited refreshings had previously been vouchsafed to it. Since that, to our mission, memorable year, 1846, there have been ten very precious visitations of the

Holy Spirit enjoyed in our male seminary, and eleven in our female seminary, besides seasons of special quickening in the remaining years of this period. These revivals have extended into Nestorian villages, where many have also been converted ; and in some cases revivals commencing in those villages have from them reached and blessed our seminaries, and a general enlightening, softening, and elevating influence of unwonted power has gone forth, during all those seasons of refreshing, pervading the masses of the people.

It is impossible to convey an adequate impression of the intensely interesting character of these visitations of mercy among the Nestorians. They have reminded me more of the revivals associated with the labors of Nettleton, in the days of my youth, than any others I have witnessed, so far as the difference of the people thus blessed and their very diverse circumstances would admit of comparison — the same deep and searching conviction of sin experienced by the impenitent, his sins appearing to him like the sands on the sea shore, innumerable, and like mountains for magnitude ; the almost overwhelming sense of his totally lost condition by nature, but not less of the boundless fullness and freeness of salvation through a crucified Redeemer ; the grasping of that provision

with all the heart, casting the soul prostrate and contrite at the foot of the cross, and laying its sins on the head of the atoning Lamb; and the unreserved surrender of soul and body into his hands, to be his wholly and for ever.

Then the joy, and peace, and love, and gratitude, and praise suddenly welling up in that believing, penitent, grateful soul, before hardened and besotted, and but just now writhing in bitter anguish, if not heart-riving agony! Yet in depth of interest I have never witnessed such scenes elsewhere, nor expect elsewhere to behold them. Heaven itself, while complete in bliss, will not present that peculiar form of interest of beholding penitent Nestorians turning to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," except as viewed in retrospect, and contemplated in those monuments of mercy among the blood-washed inhabitants of that bright world. And afterward, to follow the new-born soul in his career heavenward, sometimes halting, indeed, yet probably less than the mass of believers in more favored lands; to listen to his songs of praise, his melting prayers, and moving exhortations, and mark the good confession of Christ which he witnesses in his life, often under hardships and persecutions; and, in the case of those who have died, to see them lie down on the bed of mortal sick-

ness undaunted, their confidence in a personal and present Saviour calm and unshaken, and their faith, hope, and joy waxing stronger and stronger as their outer man approached its dissolution, till, their face often shining like dying Stephen's, they have slept peacefully in Jesus; these have been, amid manifold trials, sore bereavements, and untold sacrifices, the missionary's full hundred fold in this world.*

One of the most striking characteristics of these revivals has been fervor and earnestness in prayer. I recall the following scenes: Under the effect of a pungent discourse preached by the lamented Mr. Stocking in our male seminary in time of a revival, I saw the pupils leave the place of meeting under so deep an impression, that nearly all betook themselves to their closets with the least possible delay, to unburden their souls before God, till those closets, and every other available nook and corner, were filled; when several individuals, seeking also where to pray, caught up rush mats that happened to be near, and spread them upon the snow in the yard, knelt down upon them, and cried to God for mercy, apparently unconscious of what passed around them. And once,

* There is a little book published by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society entitled "Nestorian Biography," embracing about twenty sketches of pious Nestorians who have died, which strikingly illustrate the character of their godly lives and happy deaths.

listening to a native convert who was leading in social prayer in time of a revival, the expression, "Dear Saviour, we will cling to the skirts of thy garment till thou dost shake off our hands," struck me so forcibly that I instinctively opened my eyes, standing as I did near the person, and I observed him simultaneously reach forward with an earnest grasp of the arms, as though consciously clinging to the Saviour's garment. Yet such was the deep solemnity of the speaker, that nothing appeared irreverent or unbecoming in the language or the manner. It was but obeying the apostolic exhortation to "come boldly to a throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

The missionary work among the Nestorians has been eminently God's work. While the gospel treasure, there as elsewhere, has been committed to earthen vessels, the excellency of the power has been very clearly seen to be of God, and not of us.

While I have stated briefly how many schools we have opened, how many souls we have taught to read the Scriptures, and how many Bibles and other good books we have published, I may not presume to be thus definite in regard to God's spiritual part of the good work. The records of eternity alone will reveal the number who have

been converted. We can not, however, doubt that that number embraces many scores and hundreds. We have been permitted to sit at the communion table with hundreds of Nestorian brethren and sisters in Christ at the same time. And never, till admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven, do I expect to sit in such heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, as at those Nestorian communion boards;—nowhere else, where the Saviour more obviously presides at his table, and visits the hearts of more loving, grateful, and devoted guests.

The line of demarkation between the converted and the unconverted among the Nestorians is becoming more and more distinctly drawn. Individuals are admitted to communion with the mission churches only after careful examination, and on their adoption of its church covenant. A score or more are usually added to the number of the communicants at each successive celebration. Without any rending severance, most of them quietly withdraw from their old organization, in the observance of the ordinances,—not relishing the indiscriminate and heartless manner of their observance in the Nestorian churches; and a clear distinction between “the holy and the vile” is thus becoming well understood by all classes. Those communion gatherings—where

scores and hundreds of Nestorian brethren and sisters in Christ thus sit down at his table with the missionaries—are not only affectingly interesting occasions, but they exert a very strong influence, both in the edification of believers, and in extending and deepening a general impression of spiritual religion, in contrast with that which is formal, and silently rebuking, and in a measure reforming, the abuses in the celebration of the ordinance as practised in the old church. They have, for a considerable time, been held in the city of Oroomiah, and at Seir, simultaneously, — the former place being found too strait for all; and recently in several other places on the plain of Oroomiah, and at Gawar, in Koordistan. The problem of “separation” is thus being successfully worked out by the hand of the Lord quite as fast, doubtless, as the prosperity of the work requires it.

The extent of the work of conversion among Nestorians is not to be measured by numbers. While every individual soul is of infinite value in the sight of the Lord, it has pleased him to gather in, as first fruits among that people, a large number of chosen vessels to bear his name to the Gentiles. The converts are the most influential part of the people. Two of the communicants are intelligent and much respected bishops,

—the aged and venerable Mar Elias, and Mar Yohannan,—whom some of my readers may remember as having visited this country. Another is Deacon Isaac, the most influential brother of the Nestorian patriarch, intellectually, perhaps, superior to any other individual among the people, yet in piety possessing the humility and artlessness of a little child. A great company of the priests are also obedient to the faith. Thus an efficient host of the Lord's elect is raised up by his own hand, to carry the word of life among the masses of the entire people.

Were I to refer to comparative results in the different departments of our labors, I might speak of at least three fourths of the pupils of our seminaries as converted during the course of their education, and of many of those who have left those favored nurseries of Zion impenitent, and some of them apparently hardened under the strong religious influences there, as having been reached by the grace of God afterward; the seed long buried at length springing up, and bearing saving fruit. Of these graduates of our male seminary, I might speak of near sixty already engaged as faithful preachers of the gospel, proclaiming Christ to their perishing people as their stated occupation; of others as pious and competent teachers of schools; and of others still

engaged in secular callings, yet ensamples to the flock, recommending the gospel by a godly life and by word as they have opportunity. And of many of the young women* who have left our female seminary, I might speak as now the wives of graduates of the male seminary, and of other pious Nestorians, intelligent and godly families being thus multiplied, exemplifying Christianity in the domestic relations by well-ordered households. Others still of those female graduates are among our best teachers of village schools.

In giving prominence to these model seminaries, we may not disown the more obscure village school, which supplies them with pupils, besides quietly pursuing its own humbler mission in the village where it is located, diffusing light and truth, the fruit of which at length appears in here and there a plant of righteousness, thus made wise unto salvation, — the retired school, like the silent rill, being little known, except by

* The transformation in some of the earlier graduates of our female seminary, during their education, was amazing. When first taken by Miss Fisk, some of them resembled so many wild "Topsies," (not in color — their complexion being light,) and must be initiated through the wash room, to be at all endurable on the score of cleanliness. A few years change them into intelligent and refined young ladies; and yet more, Christ adopts them as his children, and grace makes them devoted and active Christians. In later years, after our village schools had advanced, the pupils of the female seminary were much more intelligent, orderly, and inviting in appearance at the commencement of their course.

the smiling green, which, in due time, skirts its margins.

Nor may we leave out, in such a comparison, the blessed agency of the press, which, like a treasure house opened by God's own hand, furnishes the intellectual and spiritual nutriment for both school and seminary, as well as scatters its leaves from the tree of life, broadcast among the people. It is the gospel of Christ, in whatever way made known, by the printed leaf or book, by conversation, by instruction, and, of course, wherever practicable, by the formal discourse to the assembled congregation, which is the power of God unto salvation to those who read, or hear, and believe.

In this hasty sketch of our various labors, I have not made specific mention of the medical practice of our physicians. I would therefore state, in a word, that that important department has been faithfully prosecuted in our field for a quarter of a century, by Dr. Grant, till his death, and by Dr. Wright, who has been constantly at his post for twenty years. It is impossible to convey a full impression of the obligations of the mission to it, alike for the relief and welfare of its members and families, and the vast influence it has exerted for the security and prosperity of its general interests. The medical practitioner

has access to all classes at all times, and readily acquires their confidence and power to do them good.

Our physicians have by no means limited their labors to medical practice. Dr. Grant was an "elder" before he left this country, and an able and faithful laborer, in word as well as in deed; and Dr. Wright, being a clergyman as well as a physician, has preached regularly and abundantly in common with the other members of the mission, and has performed a great amount of literary labor, in connection with the operations of the press.

I have spoken of the Nestorian converts as an influential body, chosen of the Lord to make known his name to others. They are such, not only from their superior intelligence and social or ecclesiastical relations, but also from their natural traits and the stamp of their piety. In temperament, the people are ardent, impulsive, and aggressive; and as a class, the pious are decided, devoted, whole-hearted Christians, accounting that they are no longer their own, but bought with a price,—even the precious blood of the Son of God,—and thus "judging that he died for them, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again."

These interesting traits in their religious character, and some other points, may be illustrated by my introducing three or four notes from a Nestorian preacher. The imperfection in the use of our language, in the writer's limited knowledge of it, is of course observable; but it detracts nothing from the force of his deep and solemn earnestness, nor from the interest of the subjects on which he writes. These notes are addressed to Miss Fisk and Miss Rice, the principals of our female seminary. The first is written from our male seminary, on Mount Seir, where the writer was engaged a few days in religious labors, at the commencement of a revival.

MY DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST: I am very anxious to know about your school; for I have not heard of you about two days. I hope you will write me about your interesting meetings, and about any new event, if it has occurred.

If you ask about the seminary here, the Christians are quite awakened; and there are some individuals who are lately awakened. These days the countenances of all are fallen, and they are sober and prayerful. Always the voices of prayers are heard around us. Joseph of Degala is very sad; I went and talked with him, and prayed with some others who were there. Yonan, from Ada, is distressed very much about his backslidings. Soon after we finished evening meetings, I took him into a very small closet of darkness; I talked with him very sad subject; he commenced weeping till we finished. I took Sarah's brother to talk with him, and I put my arm around him; he wet my hand with

tears. And I have talked with Sanem's brother. He seems to be sad. Will you ask Sanem and Sarah to pray for their brothers? On Sabbath day many of the boys were very solemn. It is evident that God is here. On Sabbath day I had more feelings than I had had there. I always remember your labors at the mercy seat; and I hope you always remember me in your closets. Arsanas and Moses have more feelings than I ever have seen them. Will you ask Morissa to pray for her brother? I have talked with him some; but I will try to talk and pray with him more. Tamo sends his love to you, and he needs your prayers. Will you ask the girls [i. e., the female pupils] from me, till when will they delay repentance? And until when will they grieve the Spirit? It is a very dangerous thing to drive away the Spirit from their hearts.

I wrote this note very late — at one o'clock, [at night.]

Yours very truly,

JOHN HORMEZD.

P. S. I have conversed with Joseph this morning all alone, and we prayed. I addressed to him very sad subjects, and he thanked me.

The following, from the same individual to the same persons, is dated one day later: —

MY DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST: I thank and magnify the name of Him who rejoiceth the needy, and who hears the suppliant's cry. If I should have been some more days so much distressed for the boys, [the pupils,] I should have been sick. As soon as priest Eshoo finished the meeting in the evening, I read Yonan's description about our village. Moses and Joseph of Degala and some others wept. What should we do then? [i. e., how could we help it?] and many

of the boys who just went out from the school room came in, so that it was made a loud voice. During the meeting two prayers were offered fervently. Some of the boys were moved then ; but afterward it became a lamentation. It did not make me to think it was foolish to cry aloud. Sisters, it is the hand of God, and the prayers of the righteous. We must not cease from daily praying. There are six or seven boys, who prayed all night.

Excuse this. My pen is bad, and the time is late.

Yours, &c.

P. S. I was mistaken to tell you that seven boys were praying all night ; but thirteen were praying till twenty minutes remaining till two o'clock. That same Moses, whom we were talking about 'one day down there, is quite changed, — very prayerful and zealous.

The following, from the same individual to the same persons, is written from his native village, which is the scene of his stated labors : —

MY DEAR SISTERS : Sunday night, very late. I can not write you every thing about our labors here, but will tell you about a very interesting night which we have had. The house [his dwelling] was quite full — more than a hundred. We offered four prayers. Yonan preached from " Ye are not willing to come to me, for ye do not wish," [a free translation from Syriac into his imperfect English.] Priest Abraham and I talked also. Afterward about thirty individuals did not go out. I read Sarah's very interesting letter to them. We had again four prayers offered. Afterward some of the brethren went again with me into a closet. We felt so much we did not wish to leave the closet. We prayed very earnestly that the Sabbath should be a Pentecost. We hope that

the work of the Lord is increasing. We have begun to talk and pray with the large boys of priest Abraham's school. Tell for the Christian sisters that my father confesses his very hard heart. He says, "I strive for my hard heart to God, but he does not hear me." Do pray for him, I beseech you.* There is much hope for him, for he prays often for himself. We never have had such an interesting night. We did not wish to sleep any, but for the sake of the day's labor we slept. This morning our house was quite full.

The following and only other note I will add is also written at his native village : —

MY DEAR SISTERS, MISS FISK AND MISS RICE: From engagements of going round in the houses to talk and pray with my dear people, I could not write you soon. I feel often like what you feel, distressed for your dear ones. Do you remember, when I left you, that I told you that my coming home seemed very heavy? Yes, it appeared to me so till I reached the village; then I looked up to heaven very earnestly. Just when I reached the door of our yard I stopped a little, and said, "O Lord, I have often entered this door," &c. I meant that my entering should not be there as at other times, with negligence about the service to which I am devoted. I have not much time to write you about my labors and meetings. I have never in my life seen such days in my village, new days and new labors. I do not mean that many awake and repent, but engagements in the work of the Lord. There are several individuals who are awakened lately, and the Christians are dreadfully awakened, and are a great help

* This aged man gained the victory. He became pious probably at the age of ninety, lived a godly, praying life for several years, and then slept peacefully in Christ, being suddenly summoned away by cholera; and his aged wife, of like character, followed him a week afterward.

for the work of the Lord. I give you tidings about my wife. She is awakened dreadfully. Very early, much before the dawn, she asked me, "What shall I do? There is no such great sinner as I." I talked with her some; then I got up and pleaded for my labors.

My dear sisters, I am content [gratified] that you remember me always before our heavenly Father; for I remember you more than when I was with you personal. I thank you very much for Yonan's coming. He was a great help for me. He will tell you about our pleasant labors. We have in my house a great company of people for meeting every evening. Do, if you please, any of you, come with Mr. Stocking, and help me on Thursday, and spend one night here. Please to send brother Gewergis to help me. Yours truly,
(Signed) JOHN HORMEZD.

The glimpses furnished by these hasty notes, which I use rather than others, as they happened to fall into my hands after I left my field, can give, of course, but an imperfect idea of the devotion to Christ that marks the piety of many of the Nestorian helpers and converts—an earnestness in the native preachers partaking much of the holy unction of the sainted Stoddard, under whose self-consuming toils and prayers they were trained, and which reminds us of an apostle who continued his parting exhortations till the break of day, and of "those women" who so faithfully helped him in the labors of the gospel.

Such being the character of many of the Nestorian converts, they form a very effective agency,

under the supervision of the missionary and in coöperation with him, for carrying the gospel to the masses of their people, to their families, their neighbors, their respective villages and their remoter countrymen.

In many villages of Persia, as I have already stated, native pastors are stationed, who, with well-ordered families, are standing luminaries among their darkened people. Others are teachers of schools, and some unite the two relations. Others travel as evangelists from village to village, with the word of life ever in their hands and on their lips; and others, as private Christians, by their godly example and faithful labors as they have opportunity, are hardly less useful co-laborers in the work of the gospel.

Thus the word of the Lord has free course and is glorified among the Nestorians of Persia. Converts are often introduced to us for the first time as applicants for a place at the Lord's table, who appear well as Christians, having been led to the truth and to the cross through the labors of our helpers.

Nor is this work limited to Persia. From the commencement of our mission we have desired and sought to push our labors into the wild mountains of Koordistan, the portion of ancient Assyria forming the eastern province of modern

Turkey, which I have mentioned — a region than which none more rugged, physically, exists on the face of the globe, and few more fearfully infested with bloody men, the savage Koords.

The Nestorian Christians probably betook themselves to those mountains, many centuries ago, as an asylum from deadly persecution, as was the case of the Waldenses of Piedmont in similar circumstances. They may have had much less to fear, at some periods, when Mohammedan fanaticism raged in Persia and Mesopotamia, from the wild Koords of those mountains, than from the more civilized inhabitants of the plains on either side, especially as those Christian fugitives, by securing some of the most central and roughest gorges of those mountain districts, deemed nearly untenable even by the Koords, have from time immemorial been able in general to defy the approach of their Mohammedan persecutors near or distant.* As men, the world over, partake much of the character of the lands they inhabit, so those mountain Nestorians are not a little allied in their character to their rugged mountains, and, like the savage Koords around them, are wild, brave, defiant, desperate, and bloody in their mu-

* To reach this people in such a region, especially as they are encompassed and interspersed by the yet wilder Koords, was a problem the solution of which required prudence as well as courage, the better part of courage, indeed, being prudence.

tual feuds. They are also jealous of innovation, especially in religious matters, and much in proportion as vital Christianity had declined among them, and empty forms been substituted in its place.

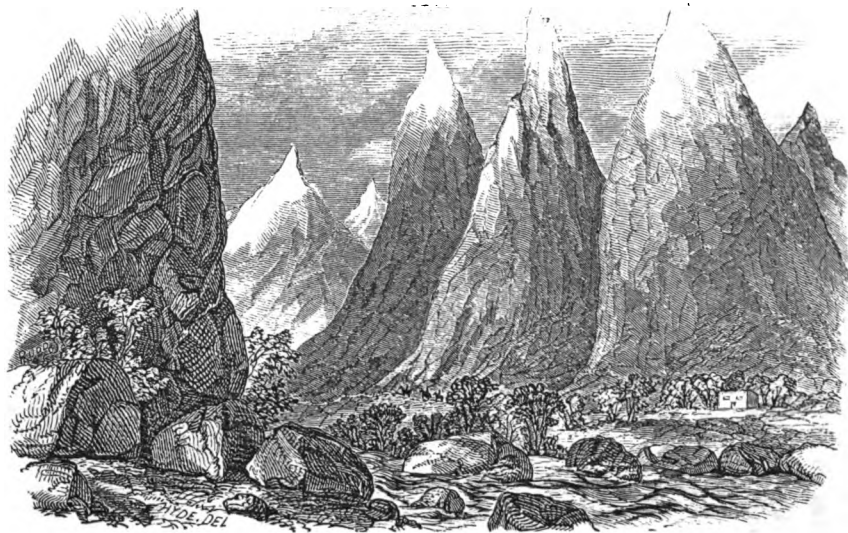
For many years, particularly since Turkish garrisons have been established in Koordistan, we have had hardy, self-denying evangelists traversing different districts of those mountains, bearing the lamp of the gospel to their darkened dwellers. Prominent among them was the holy, indefatigable Deacon Gewergis, familiarly styled by us "the mountain evangelist;" not that he was the only one, but eminent among them. He rested from his labors about four years ago. His monthly or quarterly reports might often have been summarily given in the language of Paul: "In journeyings often; in perils of waters; in perils of robbers; in perils by mine own countrymen; in perils in the city; in perils in the wilderness," &c. Sometimes tempests have overtaken him in winter on desolate mountain passes, darkening the atmosphere, and the driving snow obliterating his path. Then he would kneel down and pray, and on rising has sometimes found the storm lulling, and light breaking through the clouds. He journeyed on foot, supported on his wearisome way by his well-worn staff, his New Testament, his Hymn Book, some tracts, and a few morsels of

dry bread slung over his shoulder in a substantial shepherd's bag, being instant in season and out of season, ever ready to speak for Christ with all whom he met. Few happier men than Deacon Gewergis have ever lived. A heavenly serenity ever lighted up his benignant countenance, and the rocks and the valleys often echoed his songs of praise as he journeyed alone.

For nine years, as I have said, we have had a mission station on the hights of Koordistan, as a resumption of the labors commenced by the lamented Dr. Grant twenty years ago, and soon interrupted by Koordish massacres of several thousands of the mountain Nestorians. Our station is not in the roughest and most central portion of Koordistan, but near it, just at the base of its loftiest mountain, which is fourteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, and second in hight to Mount Ararat only, in that part of Asia. That station is at the village of Memikân, on the vast level plain of Gawar, which is surrounded by mountain ranges. There a good work has already been accomplished by schools and preaching, and it promises much through the establishment of out-stations, which are advantageously superintended from that point. At some of those out-stations are located married helpers, cultivated young men and women, educated in

our seminaries at Oroomiah, who cheerfully forego the comforts of the mild plains of Persia for the self-denials and hardships of a residence among those interior mountains. We have enjoyed seasons of most affecting interest in giving "instructions" to those young brethren and sisters on sending them forth to their distant posts of toil and self-sacrifice, not unlike leaving the endearments of America, in our own case, to go to dark and far-off Persia. I now recall one such young married couple, who have been located in a deep gorge of those central mountains, which is the home of thousands of Nestorians, where the lofty encircling ranges limit the rising and setting of the sun to ten o'clock A. M. and two P. M. much of the year; where the towering cones of solid rock, like peering Gothic spires, cast their pointed shadows from the moonbeams on the sky, as on a canvas — nay, rear their tops against that canopy, which seems to rest on them as on pillars; and where, in winter, the terrific roar of avalanches above and around is one of the most common sounds that salute the ear.

Do you ask what tempts them thither? Let me answer you in the language of a hymn of the missionary whose home is not distant from that mountain valley.



GORGE OF ISHTAZIN.

There is a dashing river,
Down the deep gorge swiftly rolling,
Foaming and leaping ever,
Boiling and wildly roaring.

On each side of that river,
Onward in fury raving,
Rise mountains in their grandeur,
Their tops to heaven lifting.

Like ancient ramparts towering,
To the passer they proclaim,
His eyes in wonder fastening,
The great Creator's name.

Five villages embosomed
Adorn the narrow margins,
With trees and vines bestudded,
Small fields and smiling gardens.

There, too, are ancient churches,
All of choice stones constructed,
Desolate since long ages,
No gospel note resounded.

Thousands of men benighted,
Who sit in darkness there,
Themselves and all their kindred
Are hastening to despair.

In those wild mountains scattered,
With none to guide their way,
How will the lost be gathered,
If thus still left to stray ?

There are many such secluded glens among the lofty mountains of Koordistan ; and it is in response to such calls that our intelligent, cultivated helpers plant themselves as spiritual watchmen among them.

Nor has the missionary himself shrunk from participation in labors and hardships in such places. Often has he also scaled those mountain heights, and threaded their deepest gorges, to search out the sheep of those long-forgotten folds, and point them to the good Shepherd. Sometimes he has crept along the steep and lofty cliff towering threateningly above him, where whispers, at particular seasons of the year, must be his only method of communication, lest the sound of the human voice, by an echo, bring upon him an overwhelming avalanche, ever ready, at such seasons, to quit its bed at the summons of the slightest jar.

Not all the Nestorian mountains are thus precipitous and difficult of access. There are gentle declivities and extended intervals clothed with verdant forests of the gall-nut oak, and fruit trees growing wild as well as in their fields. But the most rugged districts of the mountains are the most populous, and for the very reason that such retreats have offered the safest asylums to those long-persecuted Christians.

Our mountain station and out-stations have been blessed of the Lord. At the former a goodly number of conversions have occurred, and whole villages, in different districts of the mountains, have declared themselves Protestants,

though but imperfectly enlightened. At some of the out-stations much light has been diffused, and some souls have come to a saving knowledge of the truth, and the good work is happily progressing.

The Gawar station has been a trying one, particularly on account of the early death of two who have occupied it—the youthful and very estimable Mr. Crane, and the not less estimable Mrs. Rhea. But their death was from causes not peculiar to that locality. Mr. Rhea was thus long left to live and toil alone in those remote mountains. Born and reared in the lap of affluence in the sunny south, his devotion to the cause of Christ in the wilds of Koordistan has bound him as by a chain of gold to his arduous work in that self-denying field.

Is it said that so rough a field as Koordistan is unattractive? It is in some respects difficult, but is still a very interesting and promising field. Where has our holy religion, in the whole history of the Christian church, found its firmest footholds and its most congenial soil? Has it not been in rough countries and among hardy people? Look at Scotland, and Switzerland, and Piedmont, and the rugged hills of our own New England, beginning at Plymouth Rock? Yes, and look at those same mountain Nestorians, who, in their

fastnesses, have clung so desperately to little more than a shadow, to the name of Christianity during long ages of bloody persecutions, and their entire isolation from the rest of Christendom, clinging as for their life to their rare parchment copies of the New Testament, in an ancient, unknown tongue, locked up in their venerable stone churches.

The towering mountains and deep glens of Koordistan begin again to resound with the songs of salvation, and good soldiers of the cross are already numbered among its hardy sons and daughters. The heroic Deacon Tamo, during a cruel imprisonment of more than a year in a distant Turkish town, on false accusations, witnessed a confession that would do honor to a martyr. There is an ardor of patriotism,* a sacred love of the land where God gives them their birth, peculiar to the inhabitants of such regions, which is second indeed to religious principle, but strongly allied to it, and very favorable to its culture.

* Mr. Coan saw an aged woman in Diz who was wailing over the slaughter of her husband and son, and the sacking and burning of her village, by the Koords. The missionary told her of another country, where there is no sorrow, nor sighing, nor pain, nor death, and invited her to go and dwell in that better land. She listened earnestly as he pointed upward; but at length, wringing her hands, she exclaimed, "Oh, how can I leave these dear rocks and go there?" of course but poorly comprehending the nature of the country to which the missionary pointed her.

Let no note of discouragement be sounded in regard to that portion of the Nestorian field; rather let the work there be vigorously prosecuted, since God in his providence has opened the way for us by the subjugation of the savage Koords. Possession has been successfully taken of it in the name of the Lord, and that possession hallowed by the precious dust of some of its pioneers, as if to invest the field with a deeper and more touching interest and more imperative claims. Koordistan, by the grace of God, will yet, and at no very distant day, become Immanuel's land, a mountain of holiness, a habitation of righteousness.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVIVAL OF 1849.

"I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh."

Circumstances preceding the Revival. — Its Commencement. — The first Monday of January. — Interest in Members of the Female Seminary ; in the Male Seminary. — Correspondence of Native Christians. — Letter of Deacon Moses. — Note of Deacon Gewergis. — A Day of Fasting and Prayer. — The Work in the Village of Seir. — Labors of the Pupils in Vacation. — The Mountain Girls. — Interest in Geog Tapa ; in the Village of Degala. — Deacon Isaac. — Melek Aga Beg. — The Means used to promote the Revival.

As revivals have long been the most interesting feature of the work of the Lord among the Nestorians, it is meet that we give to them a corresponding prominence in this small volume. With this in view, we here introduce a chapter on that subject, which is made up of a simple narrative account of one of those visitations of mercy penned by one of my respected associates, Dr. Wright, during the year in which it occurred. Dr. Wright was an eye-witness of the work which he describes, and shared largely in the arduous and responsible, yet delightful, labors connected with such a visitation. His statement was prepared, by appointment of the mission, to be read at its annual

meeting of that year. There is an obvious advantage in using for this purpose the testimony of such a witness, given with care on the spot and at the time, above any reminiscences of my own of the same or a similar work of grace that I might be able imperfectly to recall at this distance from the field, and after the lapse of a considerable period. There is also an advantage in a connected account of a single work of the kind above fragmentary notices of different revivals. Dr. Wright's narrative is given nearly entire.

“Before commencing a sketch of this work of grace among the Nestorians, we must not omit an allusion to the scenes of the year 1848. That year we can never forget as a year of persecution and trial. Much of it was spent in efforts to thwart the designs and machinations of the patriarch and his friends, and, though the gospel continued to be preached regularly in most places, where it had been preached before, our own strength, as well as that of our native helpers, was more or less diverted from our proper missionary work — laboring for the salvation of souls. But the persecution resulted in good. It strengthened the faith and love of the pious Nestorians, and prepared them to labor more acceptably for their divine Lord. In the autumn it became

evident to the patriarch and his friends that they could not succeed in their designs, and all outward opposition on their part ceased. The course of events during the season ending in this result had been wonderful, showing that the mission was, in a special sense, under the guardian care of the Most High. I think it may be said with truth that many hearts that had been borne down with care and anxiety for months together were now filled with wonder at God's goodness, and heartfelt gratitude for it, and new resolutions of devotedness to his service were formed; and it was felt that that merciful Being who had so signally interposed to defend his friends against the wiles of their adversaries would not withhold the still richer blessing of the Holy Spirit. For this great blessing much earnest prayer was offered here toward the close of the year 1848; and we are also assured that much prayer was offered for the Nestorians by the people of God in America at that time. The intelligence of the machinations of the enemies of the truth had reached them; their anxieties were awakened, and they presented themselves, as we are informed, at the throne of grace with unwonted importunity.

“But we will proceed to more particular details. In doing so, the names and agency of individuals will be unavoidably mentioned to some extent,

and at the same time we would attribute all the efficiency in this blessed work to the Lord, and to him we would give all the glory.

“It was in the month of November that Deacon John came from his village to the city to teach the Mussulman boys the English language. He devoted himself to the work with great zeal, and became deeply interested in the study of the language himself. He used to be up till a late hour of the night poring over his books. But souls were perishing, and his conscience did not continue at ease. In December, ‘Pike’s Guide to Young Disciples’ was put into his hands by a member of the mission. The chapter on backsliding fixed his attention. He studied it, translated it into Syriac, prayed over the subject, and talked of it with others, until he was fully roused to a sense of his spiritual condition. He communed with the two native teachers of the female seminary, young men of like spirit with himself, and they often spent seasons together in prayer for a revival of religion. The first Monday in January of this year was observed as a day of fasting and prayer by the mission, the members of both seminaries, and our native helpers. It was a day of solemn interest, though nothing occurred worthy of particular remark. Some of the hopefully pious were waked up to a

sense of their departures from Christ. The Bible of one of the girls in the seminary was found open at the fifty-first Psalm, and its pages were wet with her tears. She had just been bending over it, meditating on that psalm, and had then retired to her closet to pray.

“The first among the impenitent in the city who was brought under conviction of sin was Khnan Eshoo, who was then employed as a steward in the female seminary. His convictions were deep and almost overpowering. It was on the 8th of January that he gave such signs of having become a child of God, that one brother remarked to another, ‘What would you say if you knew there was a new-born soul in this yard?’ Some days later two of the girls in the seminary, who had been hitherto careless, were found in deep distress, and one of them, about the middle of the month, came to one of her teachers with a countenance radiant with joy and love. Her errand was, to tell what the Lord had done for her soul. The other did not find peace until a later day.

“Most of the month of January passed without any general awakening among the impenitent on the mission premises in the city. The older girls in the seminary, who were hopeful subjects of the revival of 1846, passed through a season of deep searching of heart. They had become so cold

and formal that they thought they had no part nor lot in Christ, and set themselves to the first work of repentance as lost sinners. They spent day and night in weeping and praying. For some time their prayers were mainly confined to themselves, as they felt that, in their backslidden state, they could not pray for others. Deacon John was unwearied in laboring and praying with them, and also with all the members of the female seminary. He also labored with all the printers one by one; but little interest was manifested among them until the revival had progressed several weeks.

“In January scenes of thrilling interest were witnessed in the male seminary at Seir. But as I was there only occasionally, they can be better described in the words of Mr. Cochran, the superintendent of that institution, who was a constant observer of what was passing. He wrote to Dr. Anderson in April as follows: ‘At the beginning of the present year there were unusual solemnity and increased earnestness in prayer on the part of a few of our number who were hopefully pious. Some ten or twelve days afterward, more marked and positive indications of the Spirit’s presence appeared. There were fervency in prayer, a waiting attitude, and a trimming of lamps for the coming of the Bridegroom. Saturday and Sunday, the 13th and 14th of January,

are memorable days in connection with the commencement of this work in the seminary. At the morning exercise on Saturday of that date, nothing unusual occurred to attract our notice or quicken our hopes; but in the afternoon, there being no school exercise, the voice of prayer fell upon our ears with unwonted earnestness and importunity. The prayer closets, (ten or twelve in number,) we were surprised to find, were all simultaneously occupied by anxious and weeping suppliants. A group of boys had also assembled in one of the rooms for united supplication. The following day gave still more decisive evidence that the Lord was in our midst. The whole seminary was trembling with a sense of his presence. Deacons Tamo and Moses, [teachers,] and deacons John and Gewergis, the two latter of whom were spending a few days with us, together with several of the older members of the seminary, had spent nearly the whole of the previous night in prayer, so burdened were they with a sense of the perishing condition of those around them. The convictions of the hopefully pious became increasingly pungent, till nearly every individual abandoned his former hopes, and was constrained to seek anew for pardoning mercy. From this date the work progressed with great rapidity and power. A large proportion of the pupils were soon awa-

kened, and very many had the new song upon their lips. The voice of prayer and praise could be heard at all hours of the day, and frequently at all hours of the night, and additions, we trust, were daily made to the number of those that will be saved.

Early in the revival, several of the pious Nestorians adopted the habit of writing short notes to each other, to stir each other up to more faith, love, and zeal; and also to the impenitent, warning them to flee from the wrath to come—a means which, in many cases, was signally blessed of God. The following may be taken as a specimen. It is a translation of one from Deacon Moses to his sister in the female seminary, in answer to one which he had received from her.

January 13.

My joy was great, my dear sister, when I received your letter, and saw that you were waked up to a sense of your sins; and at the same time tears rolled down my cheeks on account of the wretchedness of yourself and of myself—a lost sinner, an abuser of the great free grace of God. My dear sister, I mourn for those who oppose the Holy Spirit. My sister, be careful that you do not stand in the way. I beseech you, be not like Achan. Search in your heart with a candle, (the word of God,) and see if there be one small sin hidden there. I remember you and your companions in my poor prayers, though I have found myself wholly lost, and a heavy load of sin is on my back, and I am weary with bear-

ing it. I see that darkness has covered my soul, and the shades of death have encompassed me. I find no remedy any where. My eyes hang upon Him who can not lie. I wait for the true light and the rays of his grace to shine upon me, and scatter the darkness, and dissipate the shades of death. I regard all my works as filth, and my righteousness as filthy rags. I entreat you and your companions to be always in earnest prayer, to cast yourselves before the bloody cross, and look for the precious drops that flow from the Prince of Life, that you may be washed; and I, a lost sinner, will try to do the same; for God regards not a deacon, or priest, or bishop, or patriarch, who are [wicked] sinners, but regards, forgives, and accepts those that fear and love him, and keep his commandments, though they be poor, and of no account among men. Oh, my sister, what a beautiful palace of God, and place of his dwelling, is the closet of the poor man who fears his name! If you wonder that you have not fallen into the burning lake, wonder still more at your great and innumerable sins. Mourn and lament with strong crying and tears in your closet, and seek from God the forgiveness of your sins. And thank God your Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ your Saviour, that you have not fallen into that dreadful pit.

The letter closes with these words: "Our help is from God alone; we are but dust and ashes."

The night of January 29 is marked as an era in the history of the revival in the female seminary. Up to this time two or three only of the impenitent had shown any signs of alarm. Most of them had listened to the most pungent exhortations, and the most rousing warnings,

unmoved. Indeed, they seemed so light and trifling, and to care so little for their immortal souls, that their teachers were almost heart-broken in view of their state. The evening meeting of the above date passed without any incident worthy of note. The bell was rung for the girls to retire for the night, at the usual time, but the signal was not heeded. One of the pious girls came to Miss Fisk, and said that many souls were distressed on account of sin, and that it was the time to pray, and not to sleep. The Holy Spirit had come like a rushing, mighty wind. Most of the school had assembled in one room; and there the pious girls were pouring out their souls in importunate prayer, and the impenitent, with scarcely an exception, were borne down under a sense of their sins, and were crying for mercy. Those of us who witnessed the scene can never forget it. It reminded us of a wreck, tossed upon the wide ocean, where the unhappy crew were pleading for their lives. One prayer commenced, "O Lord Jesus, throw us a rope, for we are on a single plank out upon the open sea, and wave upon wave is dashing over us." Eternal realities rose up before our minds with awful vividness. Jesus and his salvation were the absorbing theme. Prayer was continued till past midnight, when they were advised to seek rest.

Our meeting, the next night, was deeply solemn. Most of the girls were in tears; and several other persons who were present were much affected. Mar Yohannan looked pale and anxious, and the printers were filled with awe.

We have now arrived at the first day of February; and to record events in the order of their dates, we must return to the male seminary at Seir. What transpired there is best recorded again by the superintendent:—

“On the first day of February we were again visited with a fresh baptism of the Spirit, more affectingly powerful than the first, and in the opinion of all who witnessed it, far exceeding any thing that had ever been seen in Oroomiah. On the previous day, apprehensions had been expressed that there was an abatement of interest. Christians became alarmed, and addressed themselves anew to the work. The unoccupied portions of the day, and much of the ensuing night, were spent in solitary prayer. The importunity, and wrestling, agonizing urgency of their supplications were truly wonderful. It was the struggling importunity of earnest, burdened souls. ‘Give me the blessing, or blot out my name from among the living; restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, or let us die pleading for the blessing,’ was the attitude which Christians assumed. And

while they were yet praying, the blessing was received.

“On the morning of the 1st of February, the heavens were indeed bowed, and the Lord of Sabaoth came down with fearfully searching and quickening power. The seminary assembled for its ordinary exercises, but the young men seemed more like culprits, dragged to the block for execution, than like buoyant youths in the pursuit of knowledge. A load of guilt and a burden for the salvation of sinners were upon every soul. Being convinced that an errand of greater moment than the acquisition of science was pressing upon the mind, I suspended study, and exhorted the pupils to repair to their closets to implore relief and pardoning mercy from their grieved but compassionate Saviour. The prayer closets attached to the seminary, and all the unoccupied rooms in the buildings, were immediately filled; and yet a majority of the pupils had no place to give vent to their burdened hearts. Prayer was proposed by one of the pupils in the yard; and there, on a wintry day, for nearly an hour, these youths were pouring forth their earnest prayers to Heaven for pardon and salvation. It was a scene more solemn than language can describe, and seemed to me more like the dread assizes of the judgment day than any thing I had ever be-

fore witnessed. The scenes of the following day and evening were scarcely less marvelous. The few in the seminary who had been hitherto unconcerned for their personal salvation were powerfully awakened; and quite a number of individuals, I find, date their conversion from this period. The whole aspect of the work became thenceforth intensely interesting. The attention of all was called to the one great subject; and prayer and preaching of the word, in season and out of season, by day and by night, were the engrossing pursuit of all."

It was just after the scenes above recorded, that the "mountain evangelist," Deacon Gewergis, who was a witness of them all, wrote to a friend in the city, "Glory to God, there has been such an awakening among the boys as I have never seen—a lamentation, a mourning for sins, that is wonderful. Many of the boys prostrated themselves on the floor to pray; others left the room; and there rose such a sound of weeping in the yard, prayer closets, and elsewhere, as to melt our hearts; and this continued until midnight."

A member of the seminary wrote to priest Eshoo at the same time, "I think there has not been such an awakening among our people as this since the days of the apostles. It resembles that on the day of Pentecost. As they were then

pricked in their hearts, so are the boys of the seminary now. They cry out one to the other, 'What shall we do to be saved?'

Friday, February 2, was observed by the mission and pious natives as a day of fasting and prayer. In the city two public services were held—one in the forenoon for preaching, and one in the afternoon for prayer and exhortations. Besides the members of the female seminary, the printers and persons immediately connected with the mission, a large number of men and women from the surrounding villages were present. The season was one of deep solemnity. The Holy Spirit was evidently moving upon many hearts, and the realities of the eternal world were brought clearly in view. During the interval of the public services, those who loved to pray assembled by themselves; and many earnest prayers were offered that the people from abroad might not go home without a blessing for themselves, their families, and their villages.

A blessing evidently rested upon the services of the day. At night a spirit of most importunate prayer was bestowed upon the members of the female seminary. Their burden was, first their own sins, and then the weight of perishing souls around—the bishops, printers, and others. Their own sins weighed upon them as an insup-

portable ourden. A member of the mission entered the door of the room where a few of them were assembled, when the following words broke upon his ear: "We are hanging over a lake of fire, with a heavy load on our backs, by a single hair, and that is almost broken. We are in a ship burnt almost down to the water; the flames are just seizing hold of us. O God, have mercy! O Jesus, Son of David, have mercy! O Lamb of God, have mercy!" From this time the work progressed in the city with an interest and power marvelous to us all who were permitted to witness it. We can never forget some of those scenes in our meetings for prayer, when the veil that shuts out the view of the eternal world was, as it were, taken away, and hell, with its fearful realities, rose vividly to alarm the sinner, and heaven, with all its joys, stood bright before the Christian, to move his heart, and make him long to go away and be at rest. The inexpressible worth of the soul, and its lost condition without Christ, seemed to fill every mind. Earth and its vanities sunk away as nothing. It was at this time that some of the most interesting Christians were wrought up to such a pitch of feeling that their physical system could not sustain it; and in our social meetings, and even in their closets, they were overpowered by their emotions—an

event which, to us who witnessed these scenes, is no matter of wonder. For several weeks in succession they had been crushed to the earth under the weight of their own sins, and borne down by an awful sense of the lost condition of souls around them ; they could neither eat nor sleep ; night after night was spent in continued prayer ; they were consequently much reduced in physical strength, and the exercises of their minds were greater than their bodies could sustain.

While these events, which we have been recording, were transpiring on the mission premises in the city and at Seir, the Holy Spirit was doing its convicting and converting work in several villages around. It was reported abroad that remarkable scenes were passing in the seminaries, and the relatives and friends of the pupils came to witness them. Our premises, especially in the city, were daily thronged by strangers, who, though they came in many cases to scoff, went away with an arrow in their hearts, and returned to their homes to warn their families and neighbors to flee from the wrath to come.

The first week in February the work extended in its greatest power to the village of Seir. From the commencement of the revival in the male seminary, the people of that village had attended the religious exercises there ; but no special feel-

ing was manifested by them until early in February. At this time the teachers and pupils in the seminary had become intensely interested in the village, and some of them held daily meetings in it for prayer and preaching. At last the Holy Spirit descended with marvelous power. The flood-gates of feeling were opened, and the whole population of the place—old and young, men and women—were intensely moved. When the gospel was preached, we can never forget with what breathless attention it was listened to, and how the tears rolled down the cheeks of the venerable old men, as they listened to the story of a Saviour's love and death. We can never forget how some, bent with age and decrepit from infirmity, poured forth their souls in prayer, in simple but touching language. At various times some of the older girls in the seminary spent several days in the village laboring for the females. Their efforts for the salvation of their sex there, as well as in other places, were eminently blessed. About the middle of February, two of them, Sanum and Hânee, spent a short time in the village, and wrote to their companions in the city as follows: "Beloved sisters, we have just come from the house of mourning. What shall we tell you? Such a day we have never seen in all our lives. To-day we went from house

to house ; and every house appeared to us like that day in which the angel of the Lord came and removed a beloved one from every house in Egypt. There was such a great mourning in every house we entered that we could not do otherwise than mourn with them. We saw the old women bowed upon their faces, the tears rolling down their cheeks, and brides and girls in the same, and even greater distress. The poor old women made our hearts burn most of all. To-day we visited only eight families ; for in each one we found so much work to do, that we could not draw our feet after us to leave."

On the 16th of February the male seminary was dismissed for two weeks, to gratify the wishes of the pupils to visit their relatives and friends, and to labor for their salvation. The morning of their departure is described by those who witnessed it as a season of tender and melting interest. The superintendent writes, " With eyes suffused with tears, and with mutual exhortations to fidelity, and zeal, and prayer in the good work, they set out for their homes, stopping by the wayside before they had generally separated to hold another parting prayer meeting, and to commend themselves anew to the great Shepherd and Guardian of Israel." Going to their friends with hearts full of love and zeal, they were in-

stant in season and out of season in laboring for their spiritual welfare. In many cases they had opportunities to address large congregations in the churches, and in other places, in their villages, and often with so much humility, love, and power, that their hearers were moved to tears. The day of final judgment alone will disclose the amount of good done by these youths during the period of their dispersion. Often, very often, have we heard of their taking a father, a mother, a brother, or a sister, by the hand, and with eyes filled with tears, pleading with them to come to Christ.

About the 1st of March the members of the male seminary were again assembled. The fact was most cheering, that their love and zeal had not at all diminished from their contact with the cold world in their villages. As soon as they were assembled, they held a meeting, at which they recounted the dealings of the Lord with them after their dispersion, and narrated the scenes through which they had passed in laboring for their relatives and friends. Some spoke of wonders which they had witnessed in the conviction and hopeful conversion of souls. Near the close of the meeting, Deacon Tamo arose, and with a tremulous voice and flowing tears, in his own earnest and graphic way, remarked, "I

will tell you what wonders I now see — I see the Son of God hanging upon the cross, dying for sinners, and our hearts little affected by the sight." The appeal was like an electric shock. The youthful company were melted to tears.

In this connection I am reminded of the separation of three girls from their companions in the female seminary; and though it occurred at a later day than the events we have been recording, I can not refrain from briefly alluding to it. They had come to the mission hungry and almost naked, refugees from the ruthless hands of bloody men. Here they had met with kindness. They were fed and clothed, and, what is more, their souls were cared for. In the revival of 1846, two of them became hopefully pious, and the other one during the revival of this year. By their amiable and lovely deportment, they had endeared themselves to their teachers and companions — indeed, we all loved them. But their friends, who were returning to their mountain home, wished to take the girls with them, and they were constrained to go, though not without a struggle. Can we ever forget our emotions, when we heard that they *must* go — that their friends were inexorable? And that praying one, too, — that "mountain Sarah," — *she* was to go. We were no longer to hear her pour out her soul

in prayer, and such a prayer as but few have grace to offer. How gifted she was in this grace! Though a poor and ignorant girl, who can tell what agency she had in the scenes of the past winter? When she laid hold of the horns of the altar, it was not in vain.

They left us weeping and praying, and they were followed with tears and prayers. We can not doubt but they will be lights in Tiaree, and instruments in the hands of God in the salvation of some souls in that benighted region.

But we have too long deferred to notice the scenes that transpired in several other villages besides that of Seir. Geog Tapa has so many of its sons and daughters in the seminaries, that a chord which vibrates in these institutions is always felt in the village. Nothing, however, occurred there worthy of record until Deacon John went home, about the middle of January. His soul was on fire as he approached the place, and, as he reached the door of his own house, he lifted up his heart in prayer that he might not enter, as he had too often done before, without the blessing of the Lord. He first set himself to labor with the hopefully pious in the village, to bring them into a praying frame. He first talked with them one by one, and then assembled them in small groups. His efforts to recover them from their

backslidings were successful. On the 28th of January, a member of the mission went to the village to preach, and, on entering Deacon John's house, heard the voice of most earnest prayer in an adjoining room. Deacon John remarked, in English, "The Christians here are becoming like fire," (that is, very zealous.) A small company of them had gathered there for prayer. Meetings were held every night for prayer and preaching; and every Friday several persons came to the city to attend the services on that day on the mission premises.

Early in February Priest Abraham, Deacon John, and some other brethren, began to visit from house to house, and to pray with every family. To their great surprise, they were welcomed wherever they went, even by those who had hitherto been bitterly opposed to the truth. Several persons of abandoned habits, and notorious for their wickedness, were brought under conviction, and, after some days, gave evidence of being born again.

The work steadily increased in power and interest until the middle of February, when the young men in the seminary from that village returned to their homes for their winter vacation. A new impulse was then given to it, and the 18th of February, the Sabbath, was a day long to be

remembered in the annals of that village. It is called by the people the "Pentecostal Sabbath." At evening prayers, on Saturday, the day before, the attendance was unusually large in the church, and Deacon Tamo, a teacher of the male seminary, and Yonan, a teacher of the female seminary, were both there with fire in their bones. They addressed the large assembly in the most feeling and touching manner, and it is said that there was scarcely a person in the house not affected to tears. One of the printers, in describing the scene, remarked, "Glory to God, we have never seen any thing like this." The native brethren were full of faith and hope for the next day, and they were not disappointed. Early the next day a messenger was dispatched to the city, with a request that a member of the mission and Mar Yohannan would proceed to the village to aid in gathering in the harvest, as the leading laborers there had become quite exhausted from excessive exertions. Mr. Stocking and the bishop hastened to the village, and spent the day in pointing inquiring souls to Christ. The whole population was roused, and, with few exceptions, resorted to the house of God, and gave breathless attention to the preaching of the word. Those who were unable to obtain admittance to the church assembled in a school room, where the



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MAR YOHANAN, BISHOP OF OROOMIAH.

gospel was also preached. From this time the work there progressed with wonderful power. Scenes of thrilling interest were daily witnessed. Deacon John, in a note to a member of the mission, writes, "The former revival, [meaning that in the year 1846,] in comparison with this, was trifling in the eyes of the people; but in this the truth of God was wonderfully revealed to men, and fears fell upon many. There was such a time that it seemed as though the last day was drawing nigh, and the last trumpet sounding." Several scores of persons were brought under deep conviction of sin, and, as we trust, led to Christ for peace and pardon.

The Sabbath following the one above alluded to, Mr. Perkins spent in Geog Tapa. "The state of the village," on his arrival, he writes, "was very peculiar. It was the day preceding the long fast, which is, by common consent, devoted to eating, drinking, and carousal, by the mass of the people, in anticipation of their approaching abstinence from animal food and every dainty. But Geog Tapa, as I entered the village on Saturday afternoon, was as still as the Sabbath in the strictest New England village. No circles for convivial purposes were to be seen, nor had any assembled that day. Deep solemnity sat on every countenance, and a great congregation assembled in the

church immediately after my arrival, to which I preached the gospel. The old men of the village expressed their wonder at the state of things."

Mr. Perkins preached six times, while in the village, to congregations "large and very solemn. Many seemed very deeply affected in view of their lost condition as sinners; while others were full of the peace, and joy, and gratitude of first love."

The whole aspect of the village, from that time to the present, has been extremely interesting. An order and sobriety have prevailed, and a stillness reigns on the Sabbath altogether remarkable in a Nestorian village. The daily meeting for prayer and preaching, held after the people have come in from their labors, is still continued. During the summer, it has been held on the roof of Deacon John's house, which, being in a central position,* the voice of prayer and praise, and the words of the preacher, are distinctly heard by nearly all the people in the place, as they sit or recline on their roofs at the still evening hour.

The village of Degala shared in this blessed work. February 9, Sayid, "the tailor," "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," went there, and was present at evening prayers in the church. After

* The houses, in the villages of Persia, are built thickly together, as in cities, for protection.

the regular prayers were concluded, the priest of the village asked him to address the people, which he did in so affecting a manner, that it is said the whole congregation was in tears. The next day, several females came to the mission premises in the city, in an anxious state of mind, asking what they must do to be saved. From this time forward, the gospel was frequently preached in Degala, and our native helpers residing in that place were faithful in carrying the messages of salvation from house to house. During the vacation in the male seminary, in February, Deacon Tamo and Mar Yohannan preached there several times, and persons were so wrought upon, under the preaching of the word, that they cried out in the midst of the sermon, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Several persons gave the most decided evidences of conversion, and the change in them was so marked, that even those of the "baser sort" were constrained to confess that there was something marvelous in it. Though but few were convicted of sin, an impression was produced on the mass of the people; so much so, that the Easter holidays, which are usually observed there by dancing, rioting, &c., were spent in prayer and preaching, and there was so much solemnity in those days, that Deacon Joseph remarked, "I thought the *whole village* would repent."

The following is extracted from some notices of the revival in Degala, by Deacon Joseph: "Whenever I went home, during the revival, I used to find our house like a house of mourning. At night, after the lamp was put out, and it was time to sleep, I could not sleep on account of the sounds of sighing, weeping, and prayer, that issued from the closets and retired places in the house. In four or five houses, even the small children, only three or four years old, used to kneel down and pray. They had heard their fathers and mothers pray so much, that they had learned to pray well themselves. The women were very zealous. After preaching, they used to meet by themselves to pray. One day I took some men by the hand, and led them near the place where the women were praying. When they heard their bitter cry on account of their sins, they began to tremble and weep, and begged me to teach them also the way of life, and to pray with them. Thanks be to God, by the election of grace, there are some stable Christians there, who are always talking with others, and stripping them of their vain hopes."

The enemy was roused there, and the friends of the truth were often reviled and abused. An attempt was made, at one time, by some wicked men, to exclude by force the preachers of the gos-

pel from the church. But their counsel was put to naught.

A few persons from Charbash, early in the revival, became interested in the work of their salvation. They attended the meetings frequently on the mission premises, and heard the truth from the preachers of the gospel, who often visited the village. Priest Benjamin was deeply convicted of sin, and for some days he appeared among us, pale and emaciated, like one from the dead. Suddenly he fell sick, and when visited at his house by members of the mission, he was found in a peaceful and happy frame of mind, resting on the bosom of his Saviour, and only desiring that the Lord's will might be done. While he had peace in his own soul, he was burdened with an inexpressible sense of the lost condition of his aged father and mother, and of the mass of the people in his village whose spiritual shepherd he was. When he recovered his health, and was able to leave his house, he was earnest and zealous in endeavoring to discharge his duty to his poor people. From that time to the present, he has appeared to adorn the doctrine of God, his Saviour, and we have reason to believe that his labors for the salvation of others have not been in vain. He has borne reproach and persecution with commendable humility and patience. When denied

a place for himself and wife in his father's house, he meekly took up his abode in a small room in the yard, and thought it better to be there, where any might come unmolested who wished to hear the truth, than to be in more comfortable circumstances.

From the commencement of this work of grace, much prayer was offered by the friends of the Redeemer for the Nestorian quarter of the city; but, though so near our door, the religious interest never became general there. The temptations of the people in that quarter are peculiar. At one time—it was near the last of February—the pious natives were full of hope and expectation that this stronghold of sin and Satan was giving way, and that Christ was about to take possession of it for himself. Up to this time they had held meetings frequently in the place, but only in private houses, which were, however, attended by many people. But now a deputation was sent to them by the principal men of that quarter, proposing that if they would come to the church and preach, they would all attend. The native brethren were much encouraged by this proposition. We can never forget the joy that lighted up the face of priest Eshoo, when it was made. They went to the church, and preached to a congregation consisting of persons of every description.

Some quite drunk were present. All the chief men of the place were civil to the brethren, and said nothing in opposition. Only some low fellows gave vent to their hatred of the truth. When any outward emotion was manifested by any one, under the preaching of the word, as was sometimes done by those who had been awakened at the meetings on the mission premises, some shameless person would speak out, "What, are *you* becoming a fool?" The native brethren did not long frequent the church. The blessing of the Lord did not appear to rest upon their labors in it. They, however, continued to labor in private houses, and by the wayside, and a few were brought into the fold of the good Shepherd.

Babito, a joiner, a subject of the former revival, rapidly grew in grace and knowledge in this. He labored with his family and neighbors with great devotion, and it was thought that God blessed his efforts to the salvation of some souls. He is indeed a burning and shining light among his people.

In this place, the case of a joiner's apprentice ought to be mentioned. He was a poor orphan boy. One Sabbath he was seen by one of the native brethren working at his trade, and was expostulated with for it. The word was timely, and the Spirit blessed it to his awakening. That

night he attended the meeting on the mission premises, and was deeply affected. He attended again the next night, and on Tuesday morning—it was February 20—came into our house to family worship. He was much agitated during the exercises. He left the room with others, who were in the habit of attending, but soon returned in great distress of mind, and weeping like a little child. He trembled from head to foot, and sank down upon the floor, overcome by his emotions. I asked him, “What is your burden?” He replied, “I am a great liar, swearer, thief, &c.; what shall I do?” After being pointed to Christ he left the house. For some time he continued to attend regularly upon the means of grace, and the native brethren, who saw most of him, thought that he had committed his all to Christ.

In noticing the places where the presence of the Holy Spirit was specially manifested, the village of Vazerowa is to be mentioned. Situated as it is near Geog Tapa, it could not be otherwise than influenced by the remarkable scenes which transpired there. But the agency of Deacon Sayid, the teacher of the school in Vazerowa, ought to be recognized. Having been, as we trust, truly converted to Christ some years before, he early waked up, this winter, and breathed in the spirit of revival. I am not informed in detail

of what passed in the village during the progress of the work. I remember but a single incident. One night the deacon, with a full heart, was addressing his own family on the subject of their salvation, and with such earnestness, that a number of persons, who happened to be on the roofs, heard his voice, and gathered around the opening on the top of the house to listen. They could distinctly hear his exhortation, and, as I am informed, his words sank into their hearts, and they were melted to tears, as well as the members of his own family.

Deacon Gewergis, as has been already mentioned, participated in the revival scenes in the city and at Seir, during the month of January and a part of February. He entered into the work, and labored and prayed with great devotion. About the middle of February, he was so burdened with desire for the salvation of his family and neighbors in Tergawar, that he could remain here no longer and be contented. He returned home, and as soon as he entered his house his family and neighbors gathered round him, to whom he recounted what God was doing in Oroomiah. He closed with a direct appeal to them, which was blessed by the Spirit of God to their souls. A number of persons were then awakened, and, as the good deacon hopes, found

the pearl of great price. One of them was his own brother, older than himself. The deacon, in speaking of him, says, "The drowsiness that used before to close his eyes whenever the gospel was preached, from that time was turned into tears." Deacon Gewergis, full of love and zeal, went forth and preached the gospel in many other places besides his own village, and, at a later day, made an extensive tour, with Deacon John, in the mountain districts. Though he was not able to speak of any general awakening in the places he visited, he often found individuals, here and there, on whose minds the Holy Spirit appeared to be doing a saving work.

It would be interesting to notice many particular cases of conviction and hopeful conversion to Christ, in the course of this revival. This might be done to almost any extent, but an allusion to two only must suffice in this brief sketch.

Deacon Isaac, the brother of Mar Shimon, the patriarch, long before this revival commenced, we had regarded as a reformed and enlightened, though not converted man. He had shown a strong attachment to evangelical views in defending the mission when it was attacked by the patriarch, and in exposing himself to great reproach from the people in separating from him. During the month of January he was a serious and atten-

tive listener to the truth. But when addressed on the subject of his *personal* salvation, his mind appeared hampered with difficulties about the doctrine of election. Early in February he was taught by the Holy Spirit. He awoke to a sense of his duty to repent, and no longer was disposed to excuse himself from it on the ground of any inability on his part. When conversed with, he seemed tender, and thenceforth desired to live for the glory of God. We all remember how fervently and humbly he poured out his soul in prayer when called upon in our social meetings. Though naturally a proud man, now he had the simplicity of a little child, and was ready to sit at the feet and learn of the most humble of the people. He used to send for the "mountain Sarah" to come to his room and talk and pray with him. From that day to this he has appeared to walk with God; and it becomes us to give thanks to God, that he chose one so gifted in intellect, so effective as a public speaker, to be a vessel of mercy to this perishing people.

The case of Malek Aga Beg, of Geog Tapa, is one of the deepest interest. Being the most influential layman on the plain of Oroomiah, and being surrounded by the strongest temptations on account of his position, his conversion is a wonderful trophy of the power of divine grace. Early

in February he manifested unusual interest in the subject of religion, and was observed often to weep under the preaching of the gospel, and to be much in prayer. On the 23d of February he accepted the invitation of a member of the mission to come to the mission premises in the city, and spend a few days, that he might be more free from worldly cares to attend to the concerns of his soul. While there, he requested to see his daughter, a member of the female seminary, and the other girls in the seminary from Geog Tapa—seven or eight in number. They gathered around him, and, in an earnest and affectionate strain, pleaded with him to make his peace with God. He asked them to pray with him, and they knelt down and prayed one after another. He was affected and wept, and then he prayed himself. I do not know just the period when he found peace; but from about this time he showed more decision in the cause of Christ than ever before, and he has appeared ever since to grow in grace and knowledge. He is a source of great joy to the native brethren in Geog Tapa, by his humble walk and godly conversation. He aids them in every way in his power; occasionally accompanies Deacon John and others when they go to neighboring villages to preach the gospel; exercises his authority as a *malik* (or civil chief) to secure the proper ob-

servance of the Sabbath, and to promote the cause of temperance, and spends his leisure time in learning to read.

As to the means used to promote this work of grace, we may mention, 1. *Prayer*. Early in January those who had a heart to pray, both in the city and at Seir, began to meet daily for prayer. Subsequently the meetings became more general, and included all who wished to attend. We can not doubt that much prevailing prayer was offered in them; and still more, far more, was done in the closet to advance this work. There, in a peculiar manner, the struggling, agonizing prayer of faith was poured forth by burdened souls.

Yes, it is prayer that has wrought these wonders. God in a remarkable manner heard and answered the supplications of his children. He is a prayer-hearing God. Those nights spent in continued prayer were not in vain. Those hours, when the children of God knelt before the throne of grace, and poured forth their souls with strong crying and tears, had their fruits. Our God is a faithful God, and oh that his professed children, in all the world, would take him at his word, and ask and receive!

2. *The preaching of the word*. The members of the mission and their native helpers endeavored, in the strength of God, to obey the com-

mand of the apostle — “Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.” The great truths of the word of God, as man’s total depravity, regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit, salvation by the free grace of God on the terms of repentance and faith in Christ, were set forth in the most plain and simple manner. Some of the native preachers had a peculiar unction from the Holy One in unfolding these truths, and in pressing them upon the sinner’s heart and conscience. They preached with unwonted ability and power.

3. *Efforts for the salvation of individuals.* These were abundant from the very commencement of the work. For months, probably, scarcely an individual came upon the mission premises, whatever his errand might be, who was not taken by the hand, led to some retired place, entreated to attend to his soul’s salvation, and prayed with. Our hearts have often been melted as we have overheard these tender and pungent appeals. I can not refrain from recording one, which is but a specimen of many others. One of the girls of the seminary was spending a few days in one of the mission families. While there, she was faithful in laboring with a woman living in the family as a nurse. One evening she drew her away alone,

and was overheard addressing her in the following strain: "My dear B., my heart burns for you—you are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Your soul is as my soul—why will you perish? Think of your soul—think of your poor husband and children in the village—they are perishing in their sins. You love them. You have left them, and are here doing service that you may earn bread for their dying *bodies*. Think of their *souls* and your own. What will you do without Christ? Lift your eyes to him hanging on the bloody cross. See him die; he dies for *you*." The blessing of God has rested in a very peculiar manner on these efforts for the salvation of individuals.

In view of what God has already done for this people, we have reason to hope and expect much in future. Blessed be his name for the showers of mercy which he has vouchsafed to the plain; but what wide regions still remain dry and parched! The darkness of midnight still sits upon the mountains. They, too, need these gracious visitations from on high. Let us, then, gird up the loins of our minds—give ourselves to prayer and effort; for in truth the song of salvation shall roll over every mountain, echo through every valley, and a multitude shall become the

sons and daughters of the Most High ; for the Lord our God hath spoken it."

Thus far the sketch of the revival of 1849, by Dr. Wright. It may serve to convey to the reader a good general idea of the character and fruits of about half a score of seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, with which the Nestorian field has been graciously visited during the last sixteen years.

CHAPTER VIII.

RELIGIOUS INTEREST AMONG THE MOHAMMEDANS.

"The Gentiles shall come to thy light."

Influence of the Reformation among the Nestorians on the Mohammedans. — Oroomiah the Home of Zoroaster. — The Persian Scriptures. — Individual Inquirers among Persians and Koords. — Prospective Ingathering.

THE reformation among the Nestorian Christians, as might be expected, and was expected when our mission was commenced, is a most effective agency in making known the gospel to the Mohammedans, both Persians and Koords, who are the dominant classes in the lands where those Christians are situated. The pious Nestorians, now forming a numerous and influential body, are indeed a city set on a hill, whose light can not possibly be hid in that very heart of Mohammedan darkness.

Oroomiah, the principal seat of our missionary operations hitherto, has long been memorable as an emanating center of religious influence. It was the home of Zoroaster, the founder of the

ancient system of fire-worshippers* in Persia, whose lofty mounds of accumulated ashes on that vast and beautiful plain still indicate the sites of their altars of perpetual flame. It has also been conspicuous at later periods as the home of distinguished doctors of the Mohammedan system. And with the Nestorians there as an evangelizing fulcrum, what more befitting point on which to rest the missionary's gospel lever to act on the mingled masses — to upheave and sweep away the Mohammedan system? In the language of the lamented Eli Smith, in the report of his visit of exploration to that distant spot more than thirty years ago, what more appropriate center where to "rekindle the light of pure Christianity, to shine forth upon the corruptions of the Persian on the one hand, and the barbarities of the Koord on the other, till all shall come to its brightness, and the triumphs of faith shall crown his labors of love"?

The striking and delightful changes that have

* There are not, probably, more than ten thousand fire-worshippers now remaining in Persia. Most of these are found in the city of Yezd; a few reside in Tehrân. They are a down-trodden, mild people, called by the Mohammedans *guebres*, (infidels.) They bow to the rising sun, and perform various ablutions. They also perform pilgrimages to Bak-koo, a locality of naphtha springs, on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, which spontaneously ignite, and are constantly burning. The Parsees of India, as the fire-worshippers are there called, were driven to that country by the Persian Mohammedans, and are a numerous and enterprising people.

taken place among those nominal Christians during the last twenty-five years, already described, raising thousands of them from sottish ignorance and stupidity to intelligence and mental activity, and hundreds from deep moral degradation to the purity and the beauty of holiness, exemplified in individual character and life, in households, neighborhoods, and villages, form a spectacle that can not fail to arrest general attention, and produce a profound impression. Religious discussion has thus become common on the part of the pious and enlightened Nestorians with their Mohammedan neighbors and superiors; and cases are not wanting of intelligent followers of the false prophet avowing themselves convinced of the truth of Christianity, and ready to make a public profession of it but for the death penalty, that at present would inevitably follow such a profession.

The recent promulgation of more tolerant laws in Turkey, as a consequence of the late war with Russia, opens a partial asylum for such Persians. In one instance, a very amiable young Persian meerza, (scribe,) convinced of the truth of the gospel, imbued with its spirit, and earnestly desiring to make a public avowal of it, traveled the long and arduous journey of twelve hundred miles, to Constantinople, to enjoy that privilege.

There he was baptized by Mr. Schauffler with the appropriate name of Henry Martyn. He is now pursuing a Christian course of study, we trust, to become a herald of salvation to his countrymen.

One of our Nestorian helpers accompanied that young Christian brother of Mohammedan origin in his escape from his native land a hundred miles to befriend him in case of disaster. He was often astonished, and sometimes not a little concerned, at the boldness and ability with which, in public, as well as in private, this meerza proclaimed salvation through a Saviour's blood; his very boldness for the time disarming bigotry, and shielding him from the hand of violence. And as the pious Nestorian and this young convert from the proud followers of Mohammed bowed the knee together and implored the Spirit's influence on the word thus proclaimed, did not angels rejoice over the spectacle?

The wonderful providential changes which characterize our age, especially in the Eastern world, warrant the hope that the rigor of Mohammedan law in Persia also will ere long be relaxed, and converts to Christianity from the Mohammedans there have no longer a bloody ordeal to pass in the profession of their faith in the Redeemer.

Happily the entire Scriptures exist in the Persian language * — the New Testament as translated by the holy Martyn † half a century ago, and the Old Testament, translated more recently by the venerable Scottish missionary Dr. Glen, who found his grave a few years ago at the Persian capital. These excellent translations have been extensively circulated by an agent of British Christians, as well as by our mission — not broadcast exactly, but presenting copies discreetly to persons who would prize them; and the sacred volume in these attractive forms is thus read by increasing numbers of the Persians. Not

* I here speak of the language of the Mohammedans, and not that of the Nestorians, into which our mission have translated the Scriptures.

† Just as I was leaving Persia I fell in with a Chaldean bishop about seventy years old, in the district of Salmas, with whom Martyn had stopped as a guest for a week, forty-seven years before. This aged man is the only Persian I have met who personally recollected Martyn. He was charmed with the missionary, pronouncing him the finest Englishman he ever saw; and his remembrance of him was very vivid so long afterward. He spoke of him as social, active, and inquisitive, writing from morning till night, yet always ready to engage in conversation with all who called — as very temperate, eating (as the bishop figuratively said) an egg for breakfast, and dining on a chicken wing. When riding out to visit antiquities in the region, he was accustomed to propose a topic for discussion; for instance, when they mounted their horses one day, Martyn said to the bishop, "Let us discuss the question, Was darkness created? You take one side, and I will the other, and see what we make of it;" showing Martyn's taste for metaphysics, and his knowledge of the Persian tastes and mind. The bishop represented him as small in stature and frail in appearance. There must have been wonderful power, as well as a singular fascination, in Martyn to have left so enduring and grateful an impression on that Persian.

a few of our Nestorian helpers learn to read that language (which is not vernacular to them) that they may use it in expounding the Scriptures to the Mohammedans.

What is true of the influence of our labors on the Mohammedans of Persia is measurably true also in regard to those in the Assyrian mountains. There the barbarous Koord is often an attentive listener to the gospel as proclaimed by the missionary and his Nestorian helpers. As a class, the Koords, though rough and savage, are still remarkably accessible to the gospel message.

Thus it is, as before suggested, through the Nestorian Christians as a nucleus and an effective agency, that the millions of Mohammedans in Persia and Koordistan—yes, and through unmeasured regions far beyond them—are to be brought to the knowledge and acknowledgment of the gospel; and the position and character of this remnant of an ancient church, possessing remarkable qualifications for the fulfillment of that high agency, invest those Christians, and our labors for their reformation, with an interest and importance quite independent of their numbers. Their ancestral missionary history being one of unparalleled interest, Persia, Tartary, Thibet, Hindoostan, and China, during many bygone centuries, having been scenes of the little less

than apostolic zeal and success of their fathers, it is proper to hope that the descendants of such an ancestry, fallen though they have long been, will emulate that illustrious example with the revival of pure Christianity among them; and such is their own fondly-cherished anticipation and holy ambition.* Indeed, the reformation now in such rapid and cheering progress among the Nestorians should be regarded more in the light of a means than as an end. Momentous in itself as an end, it still looks to an ulterior and far broader object—the conversion of uncounted millions of Mohammedans, among whom Providence has placed and preserved that remnant of a once great missionary church, we trust, for such an end. We have been accustomed to contemplate that end as yet far off in the distant future. But present indications rebuke the weakness of our faith.

Favoring the Christian influences now brought in advantageous contact with the Mohammedans in their strongholds, is their own deep and widespread distrust in their religious system, and growing apprehension of its downfall, a foreboding, in this case as in many others, hastening the result it most dreads. The sword, they are fully

* One of our most promising helpers has often importuned us to send him onward to regions beyond.

sensible, is passing from their hands, and they feel that a religion propagated and maintained by the sword must fall with the staff on which it leaned.

Surprising moral and religious changes, we know, are often of very sudden occurrence, especially where preparatory influences have long been in operation. The colossal iceberg, for illustration, may be months, or years, or ages loosening its hold on the solid polar mountain, under storms, or the gentle power of a brief summer sun, or the wild lashings of the sea ; but it finally parts from its moorings in a twinkling. As I listened, at Constantinople, on my return to this country, to an excellent sermon from a converted Turk, in open day, in a public assembly and a Protestant chapel, the scene struck me as one of very deeply affecting interest, and not more indicative of the marvelous changes that have recently transpired in that capital than as foreshadowing yet greater ones to come, and probably very near at hand, both there and in Persia. The latter country, lying side by side, will not fail to follow quickly any favorable movements in Turkey. And more recently still has been witnessed in that Mohammedan capital, the scene of the once bigoted moollah, while discoursing from the Koran in the great mosque, indignantly

closing the book and pronouncing it a lie — a thing which could not have occurred there a short time ago without that moollah's leaving the mosque at least a head shorter. The religious interest among the Mohammedans of Persia may best be shown by brief extracts from letters of missionary brethren in the field. One of my associates, Mr. Coan, writes thus: "God seems to be moving on the hearts of many of the Mohammedans. I gave a New Testament a few days since to a prominent merchant. He has read attentively the four Gospels, and had a long discussion before the saint, Meerza Ali Akbar, in the presence of several of the Moslem heads of the town, in which he maintained the divinity of Christ."

The "saint," so called in the foregoing extract, is a Mohammedan priest, regarded by his followers as so holy that they dignify him with the title of saint, and some, in their delusion, kiss the ground on which he treads.

In a letter dated a few days later, the same missionary writes, "You will be surprised, perhaps, to hear that many of the Mohammedans are inquiring. One, formerly a moollah, but latterly a merchant, is keeping up discussion openly in the market. Men are astonished at his boldness. We know not whereunto this may grow. The

movement among the Mohammedans at Constantinople is felt even here."

Dr. Wright, another of my associates, in a letter of still later date, writes as follows: "You may have heard of a Koord, living on the river above the village of Bant, who has often been to the village of Degala, to discuss religious subjects with Deacon Joseph. The same man has been in our guest room in the city, and at our house at family prayers. A few days ago he came and wanted to be baptized. I had much conversation with him, speaking in Persian, and was surprised to find him so well informed as to the way of salvation through Christ. He appeared wonderfully well. I stated the reasons why we could not baptize him in Persia. He passed the night on our premises. In the morning, when he came to take leave of me, he said, with deep seriousness, "I came to you to be baptized; you don't do it. Can you answer for your refusal to Christ in the judgment day?" That is a juncture to try men's souls. It is not from lack of courage that the missionary declines baptism in such cases; but he prefers that applicants for baptism from the Mohammedans should go into Turkey for that purpose, where the death penalty for conversion is abolished, rather than subject them

to that penalty until toleration may be granted in Persia.

May we not thus hope and believe that the second half century of the operations of the American Board is to be ushered in by the commencement of a great ingathering of Mohammedans, both in Turkey and in Persia?

CHAPTER IX.

OBSTACLES REMOVED, AND OPPOSITION OVERRULED.

"The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."

Obstacles not Hindrances.—Civil Oppression.—Papal Influence.—Nestorian Massacres by the Koords.—The Waldensian Hymn.—The Slaughter on Mount Lebanon.—Restrictions from the Persian Government.—Russian Influence.—The Early Death of Missionaries.—Civilizing Agencies.—English Protection and Aid in the Missionary Work.

THE faithful missionary watchman, in responding to the church's inquiry, *What of the night?* may not dwell exclusively on the signs of the approach of morning, but tell also the state of the night; for the night also cometh, after there are tokens of morning. Its dark folds, for the time, obscure the cheering rays of approaching day, and threaten to extinguish them. Yet they only thus threaten. The faith of the watchman learns to trust in every such temporary obscuration, assured by experience that the passing clouds will not long intercept the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; nay, those very clouds, in their varied evolutions, are intended in the end only to hasten

the approach, and display more fully the glory, of the morning. It is preëminently in the missionary work that

“ Behind a frowning providence
God hides a smiling face.”

The echo of the prophet, “ The morning cometh, *also the night*,” has, indeed, a deep and solemn significance in a missionary’s experience. We would not conceal the fact that obstacles exist. But they are removed or surmounted, in the providence of God, doing little more in effect than to raise slight ripples on the mighty stream of that providence, to show the rapidity of its current toward the sure and full accomplishment of his purposes of mercy. Though mountains, they become a plain before Zerubbabel. The night yields to the rays of approaching day, as they glimmer on the eastern sky. The morning in nature, we know, is often all the more beautiful for the presence of clouds that linger in the horizon. The brightest bows of promise span the arch of heaven after tempestuous storms, and on the darkest retiring clouds. In all cases we may rest assured that the clouds and the storms are the Lord’s, as well as the fair weather ; and as clouds and storms are vehicles of mercy and of blessings in the natural, so are they in the spiritual world, and preëminently in the missionary work.

CIVIL OPPRESSION.

A dark cloud in our field, and a serious obstacle to the progress of Christianity there, at first view, is the heavy civil oppression which the Nestorians experience from their Mohammedan rulers and masters, though not a great deal heavier than rests also on the Mohammedan peasantry. It is an oppression whose iron bolt goes through the soul, binding it down in its noblest aspirations to rise socially and civilly ; yet, even in that land of Mohammedan darkness and grinding despotism, it does not deny to those nominal Christians their Bibles and churches, nor separate their families, nor rob them of their manhood, nor deprive them of their personal freedom, and of many of their proper rights and privileges as men and as subjects ; and it never treats nor regards them in any sense as chattels. And how long, in humiliating contrast, must this refinement of sin and of wrong be practised by Protestant Christians under a republican government ?

While the civil disabilities of the Nestorians, the oppressive exactions and crippling restrictions which they suffer, bear heavily upon them, the galling yoke is still doubtless overruled, by that wonder-working economy of Divine Providence, which from great evil educes a greater good,

for their more welcome reception of the gospel. They rejoice the more, in consequence of that oppression, that to the poor, emphatically, the gospel is preached.

Christian hope, too, comes in to lighten their burdens, and soften the rigor of their hardships; on the one hand, yielding them present consolation, and on the other, grateful anticipation; for it assures them that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" that the meek shall, in due time, inherit the earth. And this they find true, to a limited extent, in their own experience; for, as they rise in intelligence and moral character, they rise rapidly also in the respect which they receive from the dominant classes. The change, in this matter, which has taken place during a quarter of a century, is surprising. When we entered our field, it was unsafe for a Nestorian to appear in public clad in new, or even decent, apparel. It would be stripped from him in the streets by some rapacious Mohammedan ruffian. Now, nothing of the kind occurs at Oroomiah. Then, compulsory conversion to Mohammedanism was common, more especially of attractive young females, by their Mussulman admirers, with the purpose of marrying them. Now, such conversions are not allowed;

and when attempted, the parties are often sent by the authorities to the missionary, that he may hear the declaration of the supposed convert, unembarrassed, whether coercion has been used to convert her, and, if so, the proceeding is arrested. And the evangelical Nestorians, as a class, are treated by their Mohammedan superiors with marked consideration in a country where persons of all nationalities, bearing the Christian name, had been more heartily despised than the dogs of the streets. These oppressed Nestorians are thus beginning to comprehend that it is for their sins that God permits them to be thus trodden down, as was the case with Israel of old; and that, as pure Christianity takes root in the hearts of men in any land, it weakens the oppressor's rod, and points to a year of jubilee to come. Most naturally, therefore, does their grievous yoke itself lead them to long for the coming of that kingdom, in the midst of them and around them, which is made up of those who do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God — assured that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

PAPAL INFLUENCE.

The zealous proselyting exertion of the French Jesuits has long been a dark cloud in our horizon, as is the case at almost every Protestant mission

station. Knowing well the importance of the Nestorians, for or against their cause, they leave no stone unturned to subject them to the Papal yoke. It is difficult for those who have never been thrown into proximity with French Jesuits to realize that even Popery can transform its propagators, who are from a civilized land, into such perpetrators of evil, and therefore difficult to conceive the nature and number of the wicked expedients to which they resort, descending to the very lowest, to effect their object. Think of a polished French priest, for example, with his own hands pitching one of our pious, unoffending Nestorian helpers into a stream, and plunging him under the water, after calling in vain on his native converts to "come and drown him ;" all for the simple offense of entering the village where the priest resided — to strike terror on any who should in future be so presumptuous.

It is matter of gratitude to God that these emissaries of the pope in Persia have met with comparatively a small measure of success in their efforts to convert the Nestorians. The gospel had entered that field before them ; and where it has free scope the race is not doubtful. Their tireless exertions and endless stratagems have there turned out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel ; on the one hand, quickening our mission

and Nestorian believers in their efforts to save the people from the threatening Papal thralldom; and, on the other hand, the policy of the Jesuits has revealed such depths of iniquity, which those Eastern Christians had never before conceived, as effectually to demonstrate to them the worthlessness, and worse than worthlessness, of a religion of *forms*, and give to multitudes a strong disrelish for that part of their own religious system which is merely formal, (though far less unscriptural than the Papal system,) and, in the same measure, enhance their estimation of a religion of inward vitality and practical godliness.

But in the remoter portions of our field, on the western declivities of the Assyrian mountains, the Jesuits have had their own way. There the gospel lamp has not met them at each turn, to expel the deep darkness they would intensify; and there, consequently, more success has attended their exertions. Speedily should those portions of the field be manned * with missionaries, to resist that active adversary, now waging so desperate a warfare.

NESTORIAN MASSACRES.

Another dark cloud that settled on our field — and to human view the darkest — was the bloody

* Mr. Rhea and his associates have in mind soon to commence a station on the western side of the mountains.

massacre of thousands of Nestorians, about seventeen years ago, by the ruthless, fanatical Koords, led on by two tigers in human form, — the noted chiefs, Noor-oolah Bey and Bader Khân Bey, — when, like fearful avalanches, descending upon their peaceful vales, the savage hordes suddenly surprised the brave, but too self-confident inhabitants, and mercilessly put thousands of them to indiscriminate and wantonly revolting slaughter; when helpless infants, tossed on the points of their spears, and caught again while falling, before the eyes of their agonized mothers, were but pastimes in the appalling tragedy.

But mark the providence of God in an event itself so dark and melancholy. Nothing less than the thrill of horror which the tale of those massacres every where excited could have roused the indignation of Christian governments, and impelled them to demand of the Porte to send an overpowering army into those wild border regions, put a hook into the nose of those modern Sennacheribs, and drag them to a far distant and life-long exile on the Island of Crete, where they still are; thus breaking effectually the terrible power of the Koords, and establishing the more regular and far less unrighteous government of the sultan throughout the Koordish mountains.

It was my lot, on my return to America, to be on board the same Turkish steamer from Trebizond to the Osmanly capital, which bore the remnant of Bader Khân Bey's connections, about twenty in number, in chains on the deck, on their way to join the fallen chieftain in his dreary exile. Nothing but the impression of retributive justice reconciled me to the sight, and especially to the captivity of the poor females, one of whom, sickening from the hardships of the long land journey, died on the passage, and was thrown overboard. Verily there is a righteous God in heaven, who rules in the affairs of men, nor least of all in the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty. The murderous sword of the savage Koord proved no less fatal to itself than to its bleeding victims in those fearful massacres.

On the other hand, mark the effect of that sore visitation on the surviving portion of the mountain Nestorians. It has proved morally beneficial to them. Shut up in their rugged fastnesses, complacently felicitating themselves on the munition of rocks thrown around them by the Creator's hand, bearing the Christian name, and retaining the Christian rites with a simplicity almost primitive, though sadly fallen in their moral condition, those Christians had come to

fancy themselves the inalienable favorites of Heaven, too wise to be instructed, too good to be reformed. Not inaptly would the thrilling strains of the hymn that has so often reverberated through the valleys of Piedmont, as sung by the Waldenses, in many respects have represented the self-gratulatory feelings of the mountain Nestorians at that period.

For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God ;
Thou hast made thy children mighty
By the touch of the mountain sod ;
Thou hast fixed our rock of refuge
Where the spoiler's feet ne'er trod ;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.

We are watchers of a beacon
Whose light must never die ;
We are guardians of an altar
'Midst the silence of the sky ;
The rocks yield founts of courage,
Struck forth as by thy rod ;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.

For the dark surrounding caverns,
Where thy still small voice is heard ;
For the strong pines of the forest,
Which by thy strength are stirred ;
For the storm, on whose free pinions
Thy Spirit walks abroad ;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.

The royal eagle darteth
On his quarry from the heights ;
And the stag, that knows no master,
Seeks there his wild delights ;

But we, for thy communion,
Have sought the mountain sod ;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.

The banner of the chieftain
Far, far below us waves ;
The war-horse of the spearman
Can not reach our lofty caves ;
Thy dark clouds wrap the threshold
Of freedom's last abode ;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.

For the shadow of thy presence,
Round our camp of rock outspread ;
For the stern defiles of battle,
Bearing record of our dead ;
For the snows, and for the torrents,
For the free heart's burial sod ;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.

Alas ! they had fallen — forsaken their God — their fathers' God ; yet little conscious were they of their fall. In the graphic language of one of their more intelligent bishops, addressed to them just before the sad day of their visitation, they were confident of being taken right up to heaven just as they were, with their muddy sandals all on — far enough from a state to receive, or hold, the truth in the love of it, vainly glorying in the dead letter.

But the overwhelming tornado of slaughter broke the spell of their false confidence that they were the inalienable favorites of Heaven even in

their deep degradation, awakened them to a sense of their real condition, humbled them in view of it, and made them more grateful to the hand stretched out to help them.

Their bloody catastrophe also drove forth many of the trembling survivors from their native cliffs and gorges, in which they had gloried and trusted, and brought them in contact with people of other nations, to receive from them gospel light, and feel a softening, humanizing influence. Their wild seclusion had well served the purpose of preserving for them, from age to age, the Christian name, and the Christian forms in comparative purity, secure on the one hand from the vindictive Mussulman, and from the wily Jesuit on the other, till the boon of richer spiritual provisions should be restored to them. Large numbers went temporarily down to the plain of Oroomiah, and fell under evangelical influences there. Others descended, for the first time, to Mosul, and were met and blessed with similar influences there. And at Constantinople, on my way to this country, I met, in a Protestant chapel, one Sabbath, more than thirty of those poor Nestorians, who had wandered thither, for employment, from the far-off wilds of Bootan, the district of the famous Bader Khân Bey. I gladly preached Christ to them in that chapel, and they gladly received my mes-

sage; their joy being affectingly evinced by expressions of mingled surprise and delight, as the tones of their mother tongue fell on their ears, in that foreign clime, in accents of good tidings. They had never before seen a missionary who could speak their language; yet with characteristic simplicity they had enrolled themselves as Protestants,* on being told by the Armenian converts that Protestants follow the New Testament as their guide of life and doctrine. These and other Nestorian wanderers for occupation, adventure, or gain, are thus brought under the influence of light and truth, in the distant cities they visit, rays of which they convey back to their dark native mountains.

Our mission and its helpers, as already stated, are bearing the lamp of life to those mountains, as they have strength to do it, and the Lord opens their way.

The unworthy Nestorian patriarch Mar Shimon, now in his dotage, has set himself against the progress of the gospel many years; being led to do this by Puseyite counselors, and from choice when he perceived the spiritual tendency of our labors as likely to cross the superstitious homage which he exacts from his ignorant, down-trodden

* Members of the Protestant *community*, not of the church.

flock. Often has he made violent onsets against our helpers in the mountains ; but they have been little daunted thereby ; and very much in proportion to his opposition has his influence over his people diminished, and now there remains little either to hope or to fear from him.

It is a wonder, in the providence of God, that those valleys in the heart of Koordistan, so much desolated by the massacres, are again quite as thickly populated, to say the least, as before ; and in all that is valuable in human freedom the mountain Nestorians now possess more of it under a regular Turkish government than they could ever have possessed in their former irresponsible and doubtful independence of that government, always liable to lawless onsets from the Koords, now effectually controlled by the same Turkish rule. And long ages, in the ordinary course of events, could not have thrown those Nestorians and their Koordish neighbors and adversaries so fully open to the influences of the gospel as those same bloody massacres and their consequences have done it. Not, then, in vindictive wrath, but in judgment mingled with great mercy, did God visit them, that both might thereby be made partakers of the living gospel ; the poor Koord receiving it in no small measure from his Nestorian brother, in the blood of whose kindred his or his father's

hand may be stained, dire evil being thus requited with the highest good, according to the holy dictates of that gospel. God may show us, there and elsewhere, that in building up his kingdom he attaches far less importance to nationalities than men are wont to do, magnifying rather the grand principle in the divine economy asserted by apostles, that he is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him, who hath made of one blood all the nations to dwell on the face of all the earth. And so, in regard to the terrific tornado of slaughter that has lately swept so furiously through many of the glens of the goodly mountain of Lebanon, fearful, sanguinary, and revolting as it was in its occurrence, rest assured that God will bring greater good out of this great and sore evil, thus hastening the time when "the mountains," always the haunts of terrible men in unevangelized lands, shall bring peace to the people, and Lebanon all the sooner thereby become more truly than ever a mountain of the Lord.

RESTRICTIONS FROM GOVERNMENT.

Another dark cloud that has hung over our field is the jealousy of the Persian government, which has led it to embarrass our work with some restrictions. This jealousy is not of long stand-

ing. For a score of years that government not only tolerated our labors, but gave them positive encouragement; in one instance, as we have seen, by a royal firman in our favor, unsought by us, and in other cases by edicts of provincial governors to the same purport, princes and high officials vying with each other in showing us kindness, regarding our work, as in truth it is, highly beneficial in the instruction and improvement of their subjects. When duty once called me to the capital to answer to some gross misrepresentations filed against us there by our Papal adversaries, I stood before the former king for the purpose, who, satisfied of the falsity of those charges, declared to me in the kindest manner his approval of our residence and labors among his loyal subjects.

The wonder is, that this very favorable disposition of the Persians toward our mission continued so long, especially in view of the rapid and striking changes which our labors, under the divine blessing, were producing. The mission is, in fact, a moral wonder, a surprising monument of God's providential and gracious care, suddenly rising and rapidly expanding, as it did in the heart of Moham-medan rule, with its flourishing seminaries, its many schools, its press, its scores of native preachers, and its hundreds of converts, all unharmed

and unchecked for so long a period. The calm continued till the good work had taken root, and acquired a degree of strength and maturity which enabled it to bear the shock of persecution uninjured when it came, and even derive benefit from it.

The government at length became suspicious of all foreign influence in the country, and it naturally classed our mission with other foreigners. There were not wanting French Jesuits near us, and their tools at the capital, to fabricate rumors unfavorable to us and the Protestant religion, representing us as red republicans, levelers, revolutionists. The former king had died, and his fickle son, a boy in years, and still more so in character, easily led by evil counselors, had ascended the throne.*

The result was, that several years ago this young king appointed a civil governor of the Nestorians to reside at Oroomiah, with special instructions to restrict our labors, particularly our schools and preaching, and so annoy and harass our converts as to cripple our work, while some limitation of it only was the ostensible object.

* The present Shah of Persia, like his cotemporary, the Sultan of Turkey, in imbecility, contrasted with the energy of his predecessors, is a standing emblem of the waning tendencies of the religious system that has so long scourged those two countries.

The agent selected for that evil purpose was well chosen, being remarkably wily and malevolent even for a Persian. He has repeatedly made violent onsets against our helpers, beating some, and wrathfully threatening all, but has accomplished far less than he has attempted, and attempted far less than he has threatened. When persecution has raged most, as was the case during the late war between England and Persia, it seemed to effect little more than to impart firmness and decision to our suffering converts, and nerve them not only to bear much and cheerfully for Christ, but also to engage more actively than ever in his service.

The providence of God has also strikingly interposed to thwart the designs of our enemies, some of the principal movers in the persecution being arrested by the hand of God in a manner so marked as to produce a strong impression. In one case, a *Khân* of high rank, a general in the army, volunteered to stand pledged to the government for the destruction of our mission, being the person who, as it was reported, first marked out the plan for accomplishing it. Not long afterward, leading his troops back to the frontier mountains in the pride of his power, he levied heavy exactions on the border *Koords*, not for any specific misdemeanor on their part, but to replen-

ish his exhausted coffers. To effect this object, the Koordish chief, a man of might, daring, and blood, was decoyed to the general's camp by fair promises, and then treacherously detained until he should meet the enormous demands. The chief, incensed and desperate, entered the general's tent, and told him that he had a private proposition for him. Being ordered to deliver it, he advanced seemingly to whisper it in the general's ear, but with a dagger concealed under his garment, with which he instantly assassinated the tyrant, while reclining on his damask cushions.

This startling providence at once arrested the Persian agent's persecuting career; for he had relied for his power to carry it forward on the support of the now assassinated general.

At the same time the governor of Azerbijan, the northern province of Persia, in rank the third man in the kingdom, was urging forward his inferiors, the above-named Khân, and the agent, in the same work of persecuting our mission. He had rendered himself obnoxious at Tabreez, his provincial capital, by extortion, and his subjects there just then rose in violent insurrection against him. It was with great difficulty that he escaped from the city. Soon being summoned to the capital to answer for that state of things, he was

stripped on the road of all his attendants and his baggage by officers of the king sent on for that purpose, mounted on a pack-saddle, and thus led a prisoner into Tehrân in the greatest humiliation and terror, where he fled for his life to a place of refuge deemed inviolable even for the worst of criminals, all his immense ill-gotten treasures being immediately confiscated.

Thus sudden are the changes of fortune, even with the favorites of royalty, in that land of despotism. The more rapid and the higher the elevation, the more precarious the tenure of place and power, and the more probable, as well as signal, the fall. And yet, such are the bad character and conduct of most Persian officials, that when thus rigorously treated they seldom receive more than a just requital for their evil deeds.

The most active and powerful supporters of the Persian agent who was charged with the interruption of our work being thus in quick succession providentially cast down, the agent relaxed his zeal in his attempts to break up our schools and embarrass the labors of our evangelists; and as before, and more than before, the gospel has since had free course and been glorified.

Acknowledged toleration in Persia is a problem that must be practically worked out. To urge it on the government too strenuously would be to

petition denial, and postpone the day of its being granted. But the evangelical Nestorians do, in fact, enjoy a considerable measure of toleration already ; and as their numbers increase, it will doubtless, in due time, become such in form, and, we trust, at no distant day, extend also to converts from the Mohammedans — perhaps as soon as pure Christianity there shall be most effectually advanced by it. In such a country some safeguards against imposture are salutary.

How easy for the Lord, when his cause requires it, to “instruct judges and reprove kings” for his servants’ sake, saying, “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm” !

RUSSIAN INFLUENCE.

Another threatening obstacle to the progress of the gospel in Persia, as we have sometimes regarded it, is the prevalence of Russian influence in high places there, and the general apprehension that that despotic power may eventually roll down its gloomy folds over the northern province of that country, if no further.

When I first went to my field I was told by many that the advance of Russia in that direction was inevitable and near at hand, as the debt of some millions, incurred in settling the terms at the conclusion of a war not long before, was due,

and an important part of that province was held in pledge for its payment. And the same apprehension has often since been urged as discouraging to our missionary prospects, our field being almost within sight of the Russian frontier. But nevertheless, Russia has not encroached a foot on the territory of Persia in that direction during this period ; and the probability of such an event is less now than then, Russia having lost much of its former prestige in the East as a result of the last war with Turkey.

And so far from our mission having been injured by Russian influence in Persia, on the contrary, it were ungrateful not to acknowledge its obligations to the kindness of high Russian officials in that country. In one instance, when the Jesuits had laid deep their plot for breaking it up, they were boldly met and thwarted by the Russian ambassador, Count Medém, an intelligent Protestant gentleman, (since Russian ambassador at Washington,) whom Providence had placed in that important position for such a time.

In another instance, in the late war between England and Persia, when we were without any civil protection in that remote Mohammedan land, whose inhabitants were then strongly excited against all in any way associated with the English name and the Protestant faith, and the prop-

osition was even made to mob, and perhaps massacre, the missionaries in their dwellings, Chevalier Khanikoff, another noble representative of Russia, promptly stepped forward for our succor, asserting our proper nationality, and claiming for us protection from the Persian authorities ; and his demand was heeded.

I admit that such Russian officials are much better than the policy of the government they represent. That government, I know, is despotic, and especially jealous of missionary influences within its borders and beyond them. Of this I have often been made sensible ; and I was forcibly reminded of it by a little incident that occurred on my way home. When at the house of Dr. Schauffler, of Constantinople, a German peasant from Odessa called one day and offered to take packages for the missionary. Dr. S. wished to send some account of the revivals then in progress in America to a pious Englishman residing at Odessa. For that purpose he tore up a number of the New York Tribune containing a very full and interesting account of those revivals, and told the peasant to wrap the torn pieces around his spare shoes, to evade the rigor of police censorship, and on delivering the paper, request his English friend to re-adjust the scraps and read it.

What a tale does such an incident tell of the

policy of Russia! Yet there is hope, great hope, even in regard to Russia. How significant is the revival of the Bible Society there, which had been suppressed by the former emperor! And what a chapter in history is the heavy blow inflicted on Russian serfdom! — an example of state policy which some governments, making far louder pretensions to freedom, would do well to emulate. Grant that this is a measure of mere policy; but the causes in operation that call for it, the enlightened, humane, and Christian spirit of the age, which exacts, even at the hands of the Russian autocrat, such concessions to religion and freedom, are far more significant and hopeful than if volunteered simply by the will of the sovereign.

The policy of that colossal empire, so potent for evil or for good, is undergoing some favorable changes. It is becoming less belligerent, seeking to extend its influence by the harmless and beneficent means of commerce and friendly intercourse with other nations, rather than, as before, mainly by hostile aggression. My attention was arrested at Constantinople by the appearance, under the Russian flag, of some of the largest steamers in the Golden Horn, a harbor that now contains many of the finest in the world. And on inquiry, I was informed that eighty such

steamers were under contract to ply about the Levant and other foreign waters. One of those steamers, soon after my passing, bore a company of our missionaries from Smyrna to Syria, and at a much cheaper rate than any other boat would carry them. How hopeful to see Russia thus vying with other civilized countries in that pacific manner, rather than solely by the increase of her arms and the adroitness of her diplomacy! And if this feature, too, arises from the necessities and the demands of the age more than any preference for such changes for their own sakes, in the central government, the fact is none the less interesting and encouraging.

There are evangelical elements at work in Russia — the silent leaven of the gospel. One such element has recently come to light in the Christian sect of the Malakân. For several years Nestorian laborers who wander into Georgia for employment during the summer have told us, on their return to Oroomiah, of people whom they met in that province who keep the Sabbath, and follow the teachings of the New Testament, always winding up their account of them by saying, "They are just like your missionaries." This sect are in the main Protestants, (though irregular in the observance of the ordinances,) scattered through various parts of the Russian empire, whose history is soon

told. Ninety years ago a Russian ambassador to England took with him a German tailor and his wife as servants, who there imbibed the spirit of the gospel. On their return they quietly (to a considerable extent secretly) made known to others the pearl of great price which they had found; they and their converts, in their turn, always imparting the diffusive spirit of Christian love, and a million souls, supposed now to be embraced in this wonderfully interesting sect, is the result of this humble instrumentality in three generations. What a comment on the vital power of the gospel! And what a rebuke of the apathy of most Protestant Christians!

Let Russian policy and influence be modified by evangelical elements and by general increase of light, and we have little to fear, but might have much to hope, from their extension in Mohammedan countries. Russia, with its long iron front, may yet perform a vastly momentous agency in battering down the strongholds of Mohammedanism and paganism in Central and Eastern, as it has done in Western Asia, and preparing their untold millions for the reception of a purer Christianity than itself can now offer, but which God, in his providence and grace, will make ready for them—either from Russia reformed, or from other more favored lands. Al-

ready has that aggressive power done effective service of this kind, however little intended as an end. The present prostrate state of Mohammedanism in Turkey is owing to the rough treatment it has received from that overshadowing Christian neighbor, more than to any and all other human influences combined. Deeply humbled, and further threatened, Mohammedanism there naturally turns to other rival Christian nations as allies, for its very existence, and not from any love to them or their institutions, and much less their religion. The idea that the corrupt system of Mohammedanism, as such, has changed its nature, or can change it, — can be exorcised of its deadly elements, and made harmless, and even beneficent, is futile. The single element of polygamy, in any system, and among any people embracing it, precludes all hope of essential amelioration. But God, who is wonderful in working, so orders events that the agencies which are digging the grave of Mohammedanism, shall, on the same soil, nurture the reviving germs of pure Christianity, causing even its death struggles to protect those germs in their early growth, and hasten their maturity. Its concessions to freedom or toleration, though made in good faith by the contracting parties, yet being the result of necessity rather than of choice, are carried

out only in proportion to the continued pressure of the same necessity which occasioned them — a pressure, however, which is certainly not small, and is ever increasing.

And when ambitious Russia stretches forth her grasping hand to lay it on her long-coveted prize of Turkey, before she is prepared to build up the truth on the ruins of the error she is beating down, God has counter agencies at hand to thwart her purpose, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further," until her influence shall be more Christianizing, and less exclusively self-aggrandizing. And would it be strange if astute Russia herself should at length begin to comprehend the signs of these times? It has well been said that Christian missions seem to be the only cause that gained in her late war with Turkey. And we surely need not marvel that God should not only bring great good out of so tremendous an evil, but also cause it to accrue to the special advantage of his own kingdom, which, though not *of* this world, is *in* it, and is far dearer to him than all earthly kingdoms, which exist only for the good of this.

EARLY DEATH OF MISSIONARIES.

Another dark cloud that has passed over our field is the death of a number of our mission-

aries, when apparently much needed in their work. Grant and Stocking, Stoddard and Crane, (besides others at Mosul,) all younger than myself, and successively welcomed by me to their missionary watch-towers, have fallen, and left the ranks of their fellow-laborers desolate and much enfeebled.

It is hard — well nigh heart-crushing — for the missionary to lay his beloved associates in the grave, especially his younger associates. How much easier would it be for him willingly to lie down in that grave! Hardly more crushing to his spirit is it to lay his loved children there, as I have known, by the bitter experience of burying six dear children in Persia.* Dark, indeed, was the day, for example, when we bore the gifted Stoddard to his resting place on Mount Seir. To entomb so much worth, such rare ability, fitness and qualification for his holy calling, flesh and blood staggered under it; faith alone was able to bear up.

“ Weep not for the saint that ascends
To partake of the joys of the sky;
Weep not for the seraph that bends
With the worshipping chorus on high.

“ But weep for the mourners who stand
By the grave of their brother in tears;
And weep for the people whose land
Must still wait till the day-star appears.”

* Judith, “the Persian Flower,” was the last of the six who died, leaving but one survivor from seven children.

But while to human view the providence is mysterious which thus removes missionaries in the midst of their days, there are yet consoling aspects, even in these dark visitations. Most of these brethren who thus early fell were still permitted to spend a goodly number of years in the missionary service — Mr. Stocking, seventeen years ; Mr. Stoddard, fourteen years ; Dr. Grant, nine years. And when we call to mind that they were men whose ardent love to the Redeemer, and almost more than mortal activity in his service, led them to crowd so many years of life and labor into those short periods, we can not say that they died *young*.

“ That life is *long* which answers life’s great end.”

There is also the influence of their holy conversation and burning zeal still continued in the field, as a shining light undimmed by the lapse of time, through the power of their example, as well as the fruits of their toil. It is, emphatically, on missionary ground, among those whom he has pointed to the cross of Christ, that the righteous is held in lasting remembrance. Many a rude Nestorian, and ruder Koord, in the wilds of the Assyrian mountains, to this day instantly lay their hands on their lips at the mention of the revered name of Dr. Grant ; thus

mutely, but expressively, declaring that they have no words to testify their estimation of the worth of that man of God. And at the mention of the cherished names of Stocking and Stoddard, the hearts of multitudes in Persia quickly melt, and overflow in tears of affection and gratitude. Their words are treasured, and repeated to children as household words.

The grave of Mr. Stoddard, on Mount Seir, is a tenderly sacred place to the Nestorians, whither many love to resort for solemn reflection, one of whom remarked, just before I left my field, that that missionary's grave still preaches to them hardly less impressively than his eloquent lips while alive. The grave of the youthful Crane is similarly regarded by not a few on the heights of Koordistan,—as is also that of Dr. Grant, hard by the ruins of old Nineveh, on the banks of the Tigris. Mr. Stoddard had often expressed a strong desire to be buried among the Nestorians; thus to testify with his death, as well as his life, his devotion to their eternal well-being. His wish was accomplished; and being dead, he yet speaketh in Persia as well as in America.*

The death of a devoted missionary, sorrowful

* Read the excellent Memoir of Mr. Stoddard, prepared by Dr. Thompson.

as it is to surviving associates, and sad for the work that still needs him, is then still a boon — such to himself, to his field, and to the church of God. His is a happy death. Oh, what missionary death-bed scenes have we been privileged to witness on the plains of Persia, and on the mountains of Koordistan! How calmly and peacefully did the beloved Stoddard face the grim messenger — how valiantly meet that king of terrors, and triumph in the hour of final conflict, as he passed from earth into glory! And what fountains of heavenly joy welled up in the soul of the not less favored Mrs. Rhea, flowing marvelously, as from the river of God, into her longing, ravished spirit, raising her far above the power of racking and prostrating pain, and causing her literally to sing of mercy and grace abounding during all her excruciating bodily sufferings. To her, also, there was “light on the dark river.”

Is it not worth the trials and self-denials of a missionary life — long or short — to enjoy the blessedness of such a death bed? Worth it, a hundred times told, in personal experience; nor less as a more than golden legacy to the hallowed cause, and to the church on earth, for its comfort and encouragement. Let my last end be like theirs!

I have dwelt somewhat at length on the aspects of the night, in the missionary work, because this part of the subject is usually but little understood. Properly viewed, the darkness is not unmingled gloom. One side, at least, is gladdened with rays of coming light; and it needs but the aid of Faith's telescope to penetrate the dark folds of the clouds, when turned toward us, and catch glimpses of their illumined surface. With God there is no night.

In the present state of the church and of her missionaries, — so earthly, so far below what it is our duty and our privilege to be and to do, — we need to encounter these overhanging clouds, for the salutary exercise of our spiritual vision, the discipline and strengthening of our feeble, halting faith, to plume its drooping pinions for a more heavenward flight, in the face of the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness. So soon as the church and her missionary watchmen are prepared for it, we may confidently hope that they will be enabled to utter to her the grateful response — *A morning without clouds.*

God, moreover, in many of his most gracious dispensations, makes darkness his pavilion toward his people, on the one hand to bring their hearts the nearer to him, — thus inciting them to seek more earnestly the blessings they need, and

which he delights to bestow, mercifully compelling them to see light in his light,—and on the other hand to prepare them to receive those blessings with gratitude, under a deepened impression of their dependence. Then the darkest hour is but just before day.

“ The clouds they so much dread
Are big with mercy, and will break
With blessings on their head.”

How often is this true in our most favored missionary experience! Indeed, whenever I now see a cloud rise in the moral horizon, I have come to ask myself, as it were, instinctively, “What special favor is God about to show to Zion?”

I may not omit to refer again to the general civilizing agencies now in vigorous operation in the East, and the predominance of British influence in Asia. These are familiar themes; yet they enter so largely into the signs betokening the coming of Zion’s glad morning, that they are entitled to another brief allusion.

The God of grace and of salvation is also the God of providence. He who vouchsafes the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, and has multiplied revivals and converts among the Nestorians, is the same God who overturns among the nations, to dry up the waters of the moral Euphrates, and prepare the way of the kings of the East.

The same distant seas now lash the shores of the dark East as in ages gone by ; but instead of now separating Europe and America from it, as by an impassable abyss, they are the straight as well as level, highway, for the swift steamer ; thus bringing the capital of the Turkish empire, and fallen Palestine, and dark Egypt, and the once fabulous shores of the far-off Euxine, into the near neighborhood of *Protestant* Christendom, to feel its genial influences, and be regenerated by them. Under such influences the imperial palace of the Sultan of Turkey is lighted with gas,* and the telegraph wire passes not far from it. And even the Shah of far-distant Persia has commenced stretching that wire across portions of his kingdom. It gladdens the Christian heart to reflect that while God is leading his church to obey the last command of her Redeemer, he is also raising up other agencies to second her endeavors.

The same mountains now tower in Pontus and Armenia that stood there twenty-five years ago, — nay, in the age of the flood. But interesting changes are taking place on them. Instead of

* As singularly, yet strikingly, suggestive of some of the influences which mingle in the East, demolishing the old and introducing the new, it is a curious fact, that hard by the sultan's palace he has a mosque, a theater, and a gas factory, — doubtless paying quite as much attention to the last named as to the first — probably more.

the narrow parapets along the faces of the cliffs, from which a single misstep might precipitate the hapless traveler hundreds or thousands of feet into the rugged gorges below, a good carriage road is being constructed over them by the Turkish government. The growing demands of commerce bring about these changes. In place of the ten or fifteen thousand loads of merchandise, on its way from Europe to Persia, that crossed those mountains annually a quarter of a century ago, at least one hundred thousand loads now annually pass over them. Such an influx of the fruits of European industry and skill into Persia, and their diffusion through the length and the breadth of that remote inland kingdom, can not fail to exert a very strong influence on its entire population. It must obviously — to take the lowest view — stimulate their industry and awaken their skill in production of commodities for exchange. And increasing their wants, in thus furnishing more ample supplies, it must raise the general standard of civilization, as well as convey new comforts to the humblest dwellings. It must also give to the people new and strong impressions of the superior wealth, power, and prosperity of Christian nations. And the great number of merchants and muleteers engaged in conducting such vast operations of overland commerce,

being brought in contact with Christians, become comparatively intelligent and liberal in their feelings. Their religious prejudices are disarmed, and they are thus prepared to act the part of pioneers in diffusing light and opening the way for momentous changes among their countrymen.

In a room opening into the same entrance of a great caravanserai with the public office of the mission, in the heart of Constantinople, where Bibles, and tracts, and other books, are put up to be sent to all parts of the empire, and where inquirers often call for religious conversation, a large but fluctuating company of Persian merchants have their quarters; and they are not idle observers of what they there see and hear.

The myriads of jingling bells on the great caravan route between Europe and Persia, as I have passed them; have thus long been to my ear a solemn and delightful sound, — solemn, as the emblem of a mighty agency, put in operation and carried forward by the hand of the Lord, for the sure accomplishment of his purposes of mercy for dark Asia, — and delightful, as pointing to the certain and rapid approach of the day when “Holiness to the Lord” shall be written on the bells of all those myriads of horses. And when the railroad whistle shall take the place of

those caravan bells, as it has already begun to do in Turkey, then also, in his appointed day, shall "Holiness to the Lord" be written on the banner of each car, as it rolls through the gorges of those rugged mountains, and over the broad table lands and the palmy plains beyond.

As my eye rested, at Springfield, Massachusetts, a few months ago, on the most magnificent railroad car ever yet constructed, and I was told that it was destined for the personal use of the Viceroy of Egypt,* a moral sublimity, to my mind, clustered around it; for I could not help regarding it as sure to be an eloquent preacher of civilization, as it shall roll along the valley of the Nile, and indirectly a preacher of righteousness.

The good providence of God which has placed so much of the Eastern world under British control and influence, is a subject on which, I confess, I am always inclined to feel deeply and speak strongly. But the relations of our mission to representatives of England in Persia must be my apology. The Nestorian mission, whatever good it has accomplished, or may now promise, is, so far as human guardianship is concerned, a child

* A strange combination of ancient misty ages and modern times—of "Old Egypt" and "Young America," of civilization in its cradle, entombed and embalmed, rudely desecrated by the unsparing hand of irreverent Yankeeism—occurs in the fact, that mummies, taken from the catacombs, are used for fuel to drive the railroad cars.

—yes, an adopted and kindly cherished child — of the British embassy in that country. Our own government has never had a representative of any kind in that distant Mohammedan kingdom. Not even an American traveler, who was not a missionary, has, to my knowledge, ever been in Persia.

Dr. Bacon and his son, in company with Mr. Marsh, of Mosul, on their way to visit us, were robbed and turned back by the Koords, barely escaping with their lives, within about a hundred miles of Oroomiah. During my last sojourn of more than fifteen years in Persia, I never saw an American except the missionaries. A few Englishmen and other European travelers, at intervals far between, were the only other civilized men with whom I met during that period. And peculiar were my emotions, in once more emerging from that long exile, on reaching the large cities of Turkey, and again beholding seas, vessels, and boats.

There are indeed some advantages in our remote isolation. We are thus shut out from the vicious influences of civilization, which are a sore scourge to many of our missions differently situated.

Another advantage incidental to our isolation is freedom from the fluctuations of fashion,

which, in Persia, like "the laws of the Medes and Persians" of old, "changes not." We have sometimes received from our friends numbers of Harper's Magazine; but I regarded the "fashions" represented in them as fancy sketches, never expecting to see an American lady thus draped. But when, on our return, we reached Trebizond, on the Black Sea, (the fashions will go wherever there is a water level,) the missionary lady residing in that city met us, a living embodiment of such a garb. So strange was the sight to us that we could not help rudely staring as she courteously met us at the door and welcomed us to her hospitable dwelling; while the ladies of our party, from the remote interior, in the unchanged fashions of years long gone by, were hardly less strange to her; and for the time we were thus the objects of mutual wonder, if not of mutual admiration.

It may be in place to inquire in passing, "When will our great American republic be represented in Persia by others than its missionaries?" With more than twenty American citizens (including the missionaries and their children) in that distant country, of ancient, sacred, and classic memory, for more than a score of years our government has never yet deemed it expedient to send thither an ambassador or

consul to look after their welfare, to say nothing of other important interests to be thus secured. In the absence of any civil protection of our own, we have, however, enjoyed it from the British embassy, when at the Persian capital, to the fullest extent it could have furnished such protection to its own countrymen. And far beyond bare protection, the representatives of that noble government have seemed to take pleasure in aiding us and our labors in every way in their power. For illustration, the letters and periodicals which we have received have been carried from Constantinople and Trebizond to Persia, and our letters brought thence to those distant ports, by the English monthly post, without the charge of a single farthing. This is an important item. Not only have we thus enjoyed a safe mode of letter conveyance, which could in no other way have been secured, but, during this long period, many hundreds of dollars, in the expensiveness of supporting a mail to that far interior realm, have thus been saved to the Missionary Board.

And what the British government, through its generous representatives, has done for our dependent missionaries in Persia, it has shown itself ready to do for them in all parts of the world. What would our missions have accomplished in Turkey, and yet more in India, but for the shield

of that government stretched over them? And what are its ubiquitous power and influence doing at this hour to advance the cause of Christ in all those Eastern lands?

Rare is the American missionary, I believe, in any land, whose heart does not prompt from him the fervent prayer, "May God bless and prosper England, as a bulwark of civilization, light, truth, freedom, and Protestant Christianity, from the rising to the setting sun."

And how bright a counterpart to what British officials abroad are doing for American missions is the noble work of the Turkish Missions Aid Society in England itself!—an organization which, composed of Christians of various denominations, furnishes funds to be expended by our missionaries in Turkey and Persia, irrespective of their ecclesiastical connections—an instance of unsectarian Christian philanthropy as rare and sublime in itself as it is beneficent in its operation.

The flippant newspaper editor, the scheming politician, or the carping traveler, who seek to serve their sinister purposes by exciting prejudice or hostility on either side, I choose to excuse on the score of ignorance or misapprehension, rather than arraign them on the charge of low malevolence, however large the reach of

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charity which such a construction may require at my hands. England and America—noble branches of the Anglo-Saxon race—are not more one from a common parent stock, than in all their highest interests, and especially in their relations to the less favored portions of the world. Together may they advance in the grand mission of man's amelioration and salvation which Providence has so largely committed to them. Would that the light sent forth from this new western world were as clear as that irradiated from the father-land; that it were unobstructed by the gloomy pall of that "stupendous wrong" which enshrouds our southern borders and overclouds the whole! Would that the sun in its course did not look down upon such an abomination, all the more revolting and appalling for existing in a Christian, Protestant land! While we awake to the wants and the woes of the distant heathen, let us not forget the heathen at our doors; especially as they are involved in a thralldom which rears such mountain obstacles to the conversion of benighted nations.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

"All the ends of the earth shall fear him."

The Morning cometh. — Much remains to be done. — Rapid Progress. — The Handful of Corn in the Top of the Mountains. — First Armenian Inquirers. — Contrast now at Constantinople. — Conversion of the Mountain Deacon. — His Labors, Sickness, and Death. — Obligations of Christians to come up to the Help of the Lord. — The Lord in Advance of his People. — The Missionary Cause a Means of Grace to the Churches. — Obligations of Christian Females to the Gospel. — Trials and Sacrifices. — Separation of Families. — Leaving my Field. — The Power of Prayer. — Consecration our only Safety. — The Kingdom of Christ will triumph.

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THE inquiry of the prophet returns as we draw toward the close of this volume, "What of the night?" I respond with the prophet's echo, "The morning cometh, also the night." Yes, the morning cometh; the day is dawning. Sure is its progress, by the power of God's word, by the rich effusions of his Spirit, and by the wonderful working of his providence. Also the night. Clouds rise and lower in the missionary horizon; but they have always a smiling as well as a frowning surface, and in their varied mutations, even when seemingly most portentous, are themselves har-

bingers and helpers of the approach of the millennial day.

I say not that the morning has come in Persia. The day only dawns. The great work has been auspiciously commenced there, and is in rapid and glorious progress. There is a shaking in the valley of dry bones. Bright beacon lights are kindled there, which stream upward to the skies, darting gleams of heavenly radiance into the gloomiest recesses of the reigning death-shade. There exist not more interesting churches on earth than among the Nestorians. A foundation has thus been laid for marvelous revolutions, which must come, and which may at any time very suddenly come.

But myriads of the Nestorians remain yet to be converted, as well as the millions of the Mohammedans. The almighty agency of the Holy Spirit is that which we most need, and for which we should most earnestly long and pray. How inadequately do we appreciate the dispensation of the Spirit! how faintly desire and feebly expect the fulfillment of this promise of the Father! How easy for him, and how in harmony with his holy will, there as here, to multiply converts as the drops of the morning, when his churches and their missionaries are prepared for the blessing! On that hangs our hope for the salvation of the

Nestorian Christians, for Mohammedan Persia and Assyria, for dark Asia and a lost world.

The agency of the Holy Spirit, I hardly need remind the churches, is fully adequate to such a consummation — nay, is firmly pledged for it, and gloriously advancing toward it. The missionary enterprise is now in a stage of rapidly increasing progress.

One of the felicities of the missionary's position in the East — an incidental compensation for his unavoidable sacrifices and self-denials — is the vivid and striking illustrations of Scripture in the every-day life and circumstances with which he is there surrounded. As an instance, take the beautiful prediction of Zion's rapid increase in the seventy-second Psalm — "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." In Persia, the sunny land where I have spent so many years of my life, there is little or no rain from the month of May till November. Fair, dry days and weeks succeed each other as a rule, unmoistened by a shower and undimmed by a cloud during all that period. A consequence is, the necessity for artificial irrigation. This is effected by taking the rivers, or portions of them, from their beds, where they leave their mountain gorges, and conveying the water along the

declivities, as high up as practicable, in canals prepared for the purpose. Those canals are, at intervals, diminished by out-letting branches; those branches are subdivided, and the smaller ones divided yet again, and so on, and water is thus conveyed periodically, through that network of canals spread over the country, to every field, and orchard, and vineyard, and garden, and to every part of each — to every plant, and tree, and vine, and flower; and the lower slopes of the declivities and level plains of the country are thus kept beautifully verdant during those months without rain.

But what, in the mean time, has become of those mountain tops? Water can not thus be conveyed to them. Showers do indeed visit them in spring somewhat later than the great plains below; but as the season advances those mountain tops become dry, and parched, and baked, under the scorching sun, presenting the image of sterility personified, like vast beds of ashes baked anew with each day's returning drouth and heat.

Such I suppose to be the source of the Psalmist's metaphor. And every benighted land, when the missionary enters it, is the parched, barren mountain top. The handful of corn or wheat, a quantity quite insignificant, as men may view it, — nay, it may be, heartily despised by the world-

ling, — is cast into that unpromising soil; and behold the result! Under the divine blessing, that seed, the gospel leaven, silent but mighty, germinates even there, and matures and brings forth a crop so thrifty and tall, that it waves before the breeze like the stately cedars of Lebanon.

The missionary work, in its commencement and progress, is a standing fulfillment of this figurative prediction. Perhaps no one passage in the Bible presents the whole subject so comprehensively, as it were in a nutshell. The period between the casting in of the seed and the ripening of the harvest is not defined; but the inference from the language is, that the one follows the other in quick succession.

I repeat, this prediction has its glorious fulfillment in every successful mission. We have seen it fulfilled in Turkey. It was during my stay of five months at Constantinople, on my way to my field, twenty-seven years ago, that the first two Armenian inquirers came to the three senior missionaries, who are still there — Messrs. Goodell, Dwight, and Schaufler, then but recently established in that great Babel of strange languages and multifold nationalities. All around them was dark as the shadow of death. Those two inquirers came to them tremblingly, like

Nicodemus by night, groping in the darkness and feeling after the light. The entire field was then as the parched mountain top, a few kernels of corn having but just fallen upon that single point. Now mark the contrast — all Turkey dotted over with Protestant missionary stations and churches, and pervaded, and in a certain sense shaken, by the power of divine truth.

The same has been true among the Nestorians, as we have seen in our glimpses of the work in Persia and Koordistan. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Contemplate a single case of conversion; and to select a clear one, which our feeble faith might perhaps pronounce a hard one, we will recur to that of Deacon Gewergis, the mountain evangelist, who was as bad a man before his conversion as he was good afterward — a noted thief and robber, who had even there earned a fearful eminence in every evil path. It would be difficult to tell what prompted that man — yet doubtless it was the finger of God — to bring his two daughters down from the wild mountains and place them in our female seminary. A few months afterward the father came again to visit his daughters. As the Lord ordered, he came at a very interesting period of a revival in that seminary, himself and his companions all bristling with deadly weapons, according

to the usage of their native mountains. Finding his daughters, with many others in the school, deeply moved and weeping under conviction of their sins, he, too, was moved, but at first in a very different way. Surprised and angered by what he saw, he alternately plied threats and ridicule to divert those daughters; but all to no purpose. Among his sarcastic taunts was this, with many others which are stereotyped in that land of metaphors: "Are your grandfathers all dead, that you are thus weeping and taking on?" Miss Fisk, the principal of the seminary, observing his course, addressed to him a few words of remonstrance and of solemn warning in regard to his own condition. Her words were a barbed arrow to his heart. Soon, trembling and weeping, he requested of her a place to pray. Miss Fisk, at first suspecting him of playing a double part, put him off, fearing that he might steal exposed articles if allowed to occupy a room. But his importunity prevailed, and in his closet, on his knees before God, he found pardon and salvation before leaving the place. And there has not, perhaps, been a more sudden and marvelous transformation of character since Saul became Paul on his way to Damascus. Even his native roughness of manners, under the softening power of divine grace, soon disappeared, and he became

a living model of a truly bland and courteous Christian gentleman.

It is further remarkable that this Nestorian deacon, almost from the hour of his conversion, adopted Paul as his Christian model. The idea of doing so was quite original with him. Having found the pearl of great price, he at once resolved, in God's strength, to spend his life in publishing the glad tidings. And conferring not with flesh and blood, he started at once to fulfill that high purpose, and faithfully and zealously pursued it to the end of his pilgrimage, traversing the wild Assyrian mountains in their length and their breadth, proclaiming Christ and him crucified to all whom he met—nothing daunted, though often reviled, abused, threatened, and even beaten. Thus did this good soldier of Jesus Christ perform the work of an evangelist, without stipulation or remuneration, till his family were at length known to be in deep want, when the small Christian village of Seir adopted him as their mountain missionary, paying to him regularly the avails of their monthly concert, which, in their poverty, amounted to about four dollars per month.

Deacon Gewergis overworked, and the result at length was a violent brain fever, of which he died. As is common in that disease, he was de-

lirious ; but it was affectingly interesting to listen to him, even in his delirious hours. He reiterated, at the top of his voice, almost incessantly, the single phrase, "Free grace ! free grace ! free grace !" — an utterance which carried with it a moral sublimity seldom equaled, especially in the recollection that free grace had been with him so emphatically the sole foundation of his confidence, that he was pardoned and washed, made a child of God and an heir of heaven ; that free grace had for many years been the burden of his message to perishing thousands ; and that that same free grace was now the ground of his earnest longing to depart and be with Christ, which for him was far better. When the disease had spent its force his reason returned ; and, like the calm sunset after a storm, — peaceful, joyous, and triumphant, — he fell sweetly asleep in Jesus.

I do not regard myself as justly open to the charge of superstition ; but I must confess to the weakness, if such it be, of having begged of his brothers the favor of Deacon Gewergis's walking-stick, which had so often supported him as he journeyed over the wild mountains. I hung it upon the wall of my study, that I might be daily reminded of that good soldier of the cross, and that my other helpers might also be thus reminded of him. And often, when they have entered

the door, I have observed their eyes instantly fill with tears, as they rested upon that staff. I must confess further to my weakness, in having brought Deacon Gewergis's walking-stick to America, and deposited it at the Missionary House in Boston.

While we admire the power and the grace of God in such wondrous moral transformations, we may not forget that that power is infinite and that grace boundless. How easy it is for God to multiply such conversions by thousands and millions! Who would dare to limit the Almighty?

Yet it is clearly not enough that we admire and thankfully acknowledge what God hath wrought, and give wings to our faith and hope in predicting what he will do, and speedily do, in the missionary work. The churches are called upon, at the same time, prayerfully to inquire what God would have them to do — what efforts make and influence exert in the advancement of his kingdom. It is infinite condescension on his part, and the most exalted honor conferred on his children, that he permits them to be co-workers with him in the matchless scheme of the world's salvation. And while he grants to his people this high honor and this unspeakable privilege, he expects, nay, requires of them, a prompt and willing coöperation. He calls on them by

the authoritative language of his word, and the hardly less unequivocal voice of his providence, to come fully up to his help against the mighty. He is far in advance of his people by the movements of his providence and the bestowments of his grace; thus assuring us that he waits only to be properly inquired of by them to give unto his Son the heathen for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession—to fill the whole world with the knowledge and the glory of his name, as the waters fill the mighty deep. Linger not, then, Christian brethren, but come at the call of the Lord up to his help by your prayers; for it is not by might nor by power, I repeat, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord, that the kingdom of Christ is to come in the world; and the Holy Spirit is vouchsafed in answer to fervent prayer. Come up to the help of the Lord also by your contributions; for, as faith without works is dead, so prayer without alms is, in this case, unavailing.

To a thoughtful mind some of the present aspects of our own country are calculated to excite deep concern, if not gloomy foreboding. The sea of worldly influences,—of fashion and luxury, of error and of vice,—broken up, every day, from its lowest depths, and sent surging through the land by the driving car, the lightning wire,

and the million-tongued press; and that terrible scourge of southern bondage, communicating its death torpor to every moral and religious sensibility, not only in the regions of its prevalence, but measurably also throughout the whole country,—to a looker-on, like myself, after an absence of twenty-five years on the other side of the globe, these things are suited to excite deep and painful apprehensions for the safety of our beloved native land.

In musing on this subject, in my journeyings and labors among the churches, the most hopeful instrumentality that I have been able to discover, by which, under God, our American churches and the country can be saved from the threatening perils, is the hallowed cause of missions. Here is an ample field for the highest aspirations, the warmest zeal, and the most enlarged activity, for the roused energies of American Christians.

I have often wished that I might address myself directly to Christian females in America, and try to impress them with their peculiar obligations to the gospel. This can never be fully understood till we see the condition of the female sex in a benighted land. The missionary, in every unevangelized country, finds the females several degrees below the men,—oppressed, abused, down-trodden,—not in Africa alone, but wherever

the gospel is not. And surely it was meet that *woman* should be *last* at the cross, and *first* at the sepulcher, in view of her obligations to Christianity. A straw shows the direction of the wind. When I commenced reducing the language of the Nestorians to writing, I early observed that there were no words in that language for *wife* and *home*. Why not? Because the *things* did not exist among the people. *Woman* and *house* were the nearest approximations; but what a world of meaning ranges between those corresponding terms, in every language that deserves to be called a Christian language! And so in all their social and domestic usages, woman is the down-trodden slave, and man the tyrant lord. Mothers and sisters, among the fallen Christians in the East, were not accustomed to eat with their husbands and brothers when we went among them. They must first serve, and then take the remnants, if any there were. The revival of pure Christianity there elevates woman to her proper dignity and place.

The gospel, my Christian sisters, to which you are so deeply indebted for what you are and what you enjoy, is able to raise your sex, in every benighted land, to the temporal and spiritual blessings which you so richly inherit. There, as here, we find woman's heart, when reached by the truth,

far more susceptible to its power than that of the other sex, as a rule. To Christian females in America we look — and feel that we have a right to look — as to a tower of strength in the prosecution of the missionary work. It is an appropriate sphere in which woman can give free scope to her feeling heart in the discharge of her unspeakable obligations. Christian friends, attest your gratitude to Christ, and fulfill your mission of love, by more fervent prayers, and redoubled efforts, for speeding the tidings of the gospel to your suffering sisters throughout the benighted world.

I have not unfrequently been asked about the trials and sacrifices of missionaries ; nor would we affect to conceal that their pathway is beset with manifold self-denials. The missionary's life is a life of wearing care, severe toil, and sore trial and self-sacrifice. It has well been styled a "standing martyrdom," — not, however, from hunger, nor thirst, nor nakedness, nor often from the shedding of blood, but from the sorer rending of heart-strings. There are scenes in that life which are never written, — which can never be told, — but which are experienced, and felt, through the inmost fibers of the soul. It was my privilege, on my return from Persia, to conduct home with me several fragments of broken families — not unmeaning incidental emblems of the

nature of the service. There was in that company an unmarried female missionary, with health prostrated from long, arduous, unremitted, and very successful missionary labors, who must number herself from scores of beloved pupils, and other scores who had been such, or been led by her to the cross of Christ, all bound to her as daughters to a mother, and making the place of their separation a Bochim, as she now turned her face from them toward her own distant, widowed mother, of more than fourscore years!

There was in the same company a deeply-stricken missionary widow, bidding farewell to the grave of her husband. There was a small orphan girl, whose parents and only sister had found their graves on missionary ground. There were two other missionary daughters, sisters, of eleven and thirteen, whose parents, almost a score of years in the field, had the hard lot of parting with their loved offspring at that tender age, and sending them to the opposite side of the globe. That parting was a peculiarly affecting scene. The long-looked-for and much-dreaded hour arrived. The solemn sound of the bells announce the caravan before the door, and the party must file in. The two daughters are now seen hanging on the neck of their fond mother, whose emotions, at that moment, can

better be conceived than described. The caravan is waiting ; and the not less feeling father, pale from inward conflict, must summon them away ; but for the first time, perhaps, in the lives of those docile children, his voice is not heeded. He must take them by the arm and lead them from the yearning embrace of their mother. Arrived at the door, there comes from one of the departing weepers the touching cry, " O papa, do let me go back and kiss mamma once more." Wonder not if that father's heart falters. A large concourse of Nestorians, who had assembled to bid us farewell, look on and weep, and smite on their breasts, deeply moved with this affecting form of missionary sacrifice for Christ's sake, and for their sakes ; and an aged matron of that sympathizing people raises her voice with the plaintive cry, " Enough ! enough ! Do not consume that poor mother's heart ! "

In that company of fragments of families, on my return, there was yet another missionary child, from a neighboring mission — a loved daughter, bidding adieu to her aged parents, who have toiled at their post almost forty years, and must part with that cherished solace of their descent to the tomb.

Few know the living martyrdom, in missionary experience, connected with the separation of par-

ents from their children who are sent to this country, and the desolation of the homeless condition of returned missionaries and their children, and missionary widows and orphans in America, where most of their kindred are, in many cases, in the graveyard, and a new generation in their places. May I be spared the pain of ever again hearing, from a beloved only missionary child, who had been tossing, between two and three years in this country, without any feeling of home, the touching expression, "I never expect to find a home any more till I find it in heaven."

But I am treading on sacred ground. I have said that the trials of the missionary are not to be told. I may not further lift the vail, nay, can not, having passed through too many such ordeals to permit me to describe them.

Yet the missionaries do not complain. With all their sacrifices and self-denials, they account their work a privileged, a glorious work, unspeakably so, nor least of all in their tribulations. If I may be permitted to allude to my own feelings on the trying day of my departure from my missionary field, I should say, that the work never appeared to me so blessed as amid the affecting scenes of that day, to some of which I have referred. There were hallowed joys mingled with those cups of tears, even the bitterest.

And how glorious is the privilege for all believers to be co-workers with the missionaries, and, yet more, with their and your common Redeemer, in such an enterprise! The laying of the Atlantic telegraph, if it ever be accomplished, is a matchless human enterprise; and marvelous, and well nigh limitless, must be its results, in binding nations and continents together in a common brotherhood—in diffusing peace on earth and good will to men. But your closet, fellow-disciple,—yes, the closet of the humblest disciple of Jesus,—is a telegraph station, whose wire connects with the throne of God; and quicker than the electric passage may you pour your deepest and largest desires for a lost world into the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth, whose resources are boundless, and whose purposes of mercy for this lost world are as sure as the foundation of his throne. He will, 'I reiterate, be inquired of by his people to do these things for them. And the mites of penury, with prayer, are equally acceptable and available with God, as the treasures of affluence, and far more so than those treasures unaccompanied with prayer.

Earth and its interests are transitory. Riches take to themselves wings. Life is a vapor. But the cause of God! His holy kingdom, for which we pray and labor, and of which we profess to be cit-

izens and heirs, is an everlasting kingdom ; and the sun of that morning which is rising upon it shall never go down. Every farthing cast into its treasury shall be transmuted into eternal gold. All who identify themselves with that kingdom, and give it their hearts, their prayers, their substance, and their children, are safe, in all their essential interests, for time and eternity — everlastingly safe ; and they only are safe. Let the church awake and do this, and soon will her watchmen, from distant realms and remotest islands of the ocean, echo the glad tidings, *The morning has come* — the blissful millennial morning, when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold. The Lord our strength hath promised it ; and though heaven and earth shall pass away, not one of his promises for Zion shall ever fail.