

Persia.

LETTER from Rev. John C. Mechlin :

SALMO3, May 16, 1888.

I was one of the 2,000 young people that pledged themselves for Missions a year ago. I graduated from Western Seminary, Allegheny, Pa., was accepted by the Presbyterian Board and sent here.

Three of the seven missionaries that arrived here in October remained at Salmos—Mr. Mechlin and his wife, and Miss Emma Roberts of Atlanta, Ga. Messrs. McDowell and St. Pierre and their wives went on to Oroomioh.

I will tell you how this station was opened, and how God's hand was seen in it. Work has been done in this Plain for several years by Oroomioh helpers. But frequently they disgraced their profession by quarrelling and by lying. The missionaries felt it necessary to put a missionary here who could always aid and control the helpers. As to the peoples of Salmos, five nationalities are represented here. 1. Persians—from whom come our rulers and many business men—all, of course, Musselmén, but very friendly. We call on them and they on us. Many of this class are reading the Bible. Sheik Islam, the religious head of this Plain, is very friendly, and a man of such influence that the Governor does not meddle with his affairs. Much prejudice has been broken down by the medical treatment of Drs. Holmes and Cochran, whom they hold in high esteem. 2. Jews. They are many and very friendly. We will soon open work among them. They are here, as everywhere, a marked race, and their business is trading. 3. Nestorians. These people, among whom we have one church, belong to the Oroomioh Plain, and still cling to the Old Church. 4. Mountain Koords. They are so near that we may count them as belonging to the Plain. 5. The Armenians. They are the richest, and are either farmers or merchants, having a strong national pride. Their great hope is one day to become a separate power, but Russia, Turkey and Persia will all resist this. Surrounded by Mohammedanism, and often sorely pressed to become followers of the False Prophet, they never gave up their form of worship or their belief in Jesus as the Son of God; but they did not hold so strongly to the spirit as to the letter of the Bible. Formality took the place of heart worship, and the priests cared more for the fleece than for the sheep. But here they remained, as if to witness for the doctrine of the Trinity; and it seems as if God had left them here, that, revived and quickened, they might give salvation to all these peoples. At the annual meeting in the fall of 1884 it was, therefore, resolved to open a station for work among the Armenians. *Haft Dewan* was chosen because it was one of the most central and influential Armenian villages of the Plain.

Dr. J. H. Shedd, of Oroomioh, came that fall to Salmos, and rented a house from Sheik

Islam in the village of Ula, to begin work there until it could be opened in *Haft Dewan*. The first thing to do was to secure a house in that village. A man who was connected with civil matters was willing to rent us his property, provided we would give him big rent. But before the bargain was made the proposed transaction became public, and the man received such a beating—*bastinado*—that he died from the effects of it. Thus the work was begun in blood, though the man was not a martyr for our cause, but for money. Before long another man ventured to offer his place for rent. He received large money in advance for three years. As soon as this became known it caused an awful stir. He was fined—one-quarter of the money being taken from him—and he was also severely beaten. Afraid for his life, he fled to Tiflis, Russia. Many times his wife came to Dr. Shedd and pleaded with him to take back the money and give her the paper. But though we had the right to the place, the next question was to get possession. The people were furious and it did not seem safe to go to our house. We had to appeal to the government; finally, our minister at Teheran carried the matter before the Shah, and a special order was sent from the throne to the Governor of this province.

A chain of circumstances showed God's providence and answer to prayer. The present Ameer was then Governor of Oroomioh, and on the death of the then Ameer, who had been unfriendly, was appointed to fill his place. Just as he left for Tabriz, he got the mandate of the Shah. He sent for the Governor of Khoi, who was responsible for the troubles having gone so far, and degraded him before the people, probably more to revenge himself than to punish the Governor, with whom he had a quarrel. He also gave orders that no one molest us in Salmos. Posters were put up in Dilimon, the central market town, warning all against interfering with us. Here was the chain of providences: The death of the Ameer, the appointment of a friendly successor, his receiving the decree when he did, and the orders he left in Salmos. And this was not all. He reported the Governor of Khoi to the authorities in Teheran and they summoned him to the capital. He knew that if he obeyed, he would be beaten, and degraded from his position. So instead of going, he sent a present of seven hundred Tomans (\$1,050), and all trouble passed over. As soon as Mr. Wright, who was stationed here by the mission, could take possession, he made his home in *Haft Dewan*. Some of the leading men met him and said that they would oppose him in every way, would raise money and have their own schools, and their children should not come to his. They said: "Why don't you do as your Master did? If they did not want him in their city, he went to another." Mr. Wright answered