

spring were dangerous for him, and he often took that time to visit the southern portions of the great field under his care. Last January he left again with his wife, and reached Assiout, in Upper Egypt, planning to stay a few weeks with dear friends there. Letters from him from Cairo were full of cheer, hope, and courage. But the Master had other work, and Saturday, February 16th, he passed to his rest. No details have come. His son, Rev. Edwin M. Bliss, who was for many years associated with him, received a telegram from his mother, "Father very ill." The same evening brought another, "Father gone." That is all that is as yet known. He leaves a widow, four sons and one daughter, one brother, Rev. Edwin E. Bliss, D.D., missionary of the American Board in Constantinople, and four brothers in this country. The agency remains in the care of Rev. Marcellus Bowen and William G. Bliss, his second son.

Dr. Bliss's great work was in connection with the American Bible Society. Indeed he may be said to have been the pioneer of the organized work of that society in foreign lands. Previous to his appointment in 1857, a number had served as agents, but their agency had in almost every case been subordinated to work in connection with some missionary society, and had never had the elements of permanency. The first agent in the Levant was Rev. Simeon H. Calhoun, a missionary of the A. B. C. F. M. in Syria, who served from 1836 to 1844. The next appointment was that of Rev. Chester N. Righter, in 1854. He made an extensive journey that demonstrated the necessity of a special agency, but his early death prevented his carrying out the plan. When Dr. Bliss commenced his work in 1858 he found it no easy task to organize and develop the agency on its own foundation. But patience, tact, unintermitting labor, never failed, and before the Lord

called him away he was able to see the fruit of his labors in a thoroughly organized well established system, by which every portion of the great field under his care was reached by special colporteurs, so that it may truly be said that there is no one in that vast empire beyond the reach of the Word of God.

The Levant Agency, as at first constituted, included Turkey in Europe and Asia, Greece, Syria, Egypt, and Persia. He was warmly seconded in his efforts by the missionaries of the different Boards operating in those countries, and had the assistance of his oldest son, Rev. Edwin M. Bliss, from 1872 to 1888—with the exception of two years, during which he finished his theological course. Three assistants in Athens, Beirut, and Alexandria cared for the details in Greece, Syria, and Egypt. Still the wide extent of territory made it seem wise to divide, and in 1880 Persia was made a separate Agency. Subsequently Greece was transferred to the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Hardly of less importance than the distinctive Bible Society work, was the service rendered by Dr. Bliss to the general influence of Protestant Christianity in the Levant by the building of the Bible House at Constantinople.

The need of a central building, capable of furnishing offices for the different societies, storage rooms for Scriptures and evangelical books, and the many other needs of an increasing Christian work had long been felt. Indeed the lack of permanent location had given occasion to some to feel that Protestant, or rather Evangelical, Christianity had not come to stay. All wanted such a center, but no Society would take up the matter. At last, after much pressure from Dr. Bliss, the Bible Society allowed him to take time for the collection of funds in America. He came to this country in 1866, and returned to Constantinople in 1867,