

include the site of Eden, it certainly embraces the resting place of the Ark of Noah; and it still has representatives of the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth in the various nationalities now found in the country. It is the land of Abraham, and of Job, and of Jonah. The ashes of Mordecai and Esther lie buried at Hamadan. It was in this land that Daniel became instrumental in one of the greatest moral revolutions ever wrought in any nation by a single man. Great empires and advanced civilisations have arisen and passed away on this broad field. Nineveh and Khorsabad are representatives of their buried grandeur, while thousands of ancient inscriptions found on rocks and tablets, constitutes their epitaph.

The country has been rendered memorable by many of the great conquests which have affected the destiny of the whole human race, and it has been invested with pathetic interest by mournful captivities of Jews and others, in various ages. Even in our day the Nestorians, living between Persians and Turkish Koords, between Semnite and Shihite sects of Moslems—victims of rapacity and persecution on every hand—seem to represent the traditional lot of suffering and outrage which for centuries have characterized the country.

And yet there is nowhere a more beautiful land. "Only man is vile." Barrenness now exists, but irrigation, protected by good government, might yet restore that fruitfulness which in other ages sustained the dense populations of mighty empires.

"About two-thirds of the country," says the late Justin Perkins, D. D., "the western portion, lies in Turkey, comprising much of Assyria, or modern Koordistan; and the eastern third is in old Media, the north-western province of Modern Persia, now called Azerbijân. The former portion is physically one of the wildest and roughest regions on the globe, abounding in scenery of surpassing grandeur and sublimity, and is inhabited by the not less wild Koords, among whom, and in proximity to whom, many of the Nestorians dwell, till lately subject to lawless extortion and violent plunder from those redoubtable neighbors. The Nestorians betook themselves to those mountains at an early period, as an asylum from deadly persecutions, having less to fear, in the violent outbursts of Pagan and Mohammedan fanaticism, from the savages of the mountains than from the more civilized inhabitants of the plains on either side. In the lull of persecution, during the few past centuries, they have gradually spread themselves down into Persia. The Persian part of their country is one of the most beautiful on which the sun ever shone, consisting of several of the most charming Persian plains; bounded on the east by the

Lake of Oroomiah, which is ninety miles long and thirty miles broad, while the towering ranges of Koordistan rear a lofty, snow-capped barrier on the west. Oroomiah, lying on the middle section of the lake, and separated from other plains by bold ridges that run transversely from the higher mountain ranges quite to its margin, is the largest district occupied by the Nestorians, and it is the principal seat of Presbyterian missionary operations. The atmosphere of all that region 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 that distance in America, and readily describes celestial bodies, seen elsewhere only by the aid of a telescope. Indeed much of Persia, under its brilliant sky, is so fair as to be almost fairy; abounding in luxuriant fields, vineyards, and orchards, and smiling with tasteful gardens of bright and fragrant flowers, studded with gurgling fountains and shady arbours, and vocal with the notes of warbling nightingales and other musical birds."

THE PEOPLE.

The Nestorians derive their name from Nestorius, who was condemned for heresy by the Council of Ephesus, A. D. 431, and who died in painful exile in Lybia. Though holding some peculiar views in regard to the Trinity, the real offence of which he was guilty was his early *Protestantism*. He refused to call the Virgin Mary the "Mother of God," and he opposed many of the corruptions of the Church. His followers though greatly debased, still reject all image worship, confession to priests, the doctrine of purgatory, &c. Altogether the Nestorians number about one hundred and fifty thousand, of whom one-third are in Persia, and two-thirds in Turkish Koordistan. They stand in the relation of oppressed tenants toward the Mohammedans, among whom they dwell, being cultivators of the soil, and artisans in the more common and useful mechanical trades. One people, while living in the two contiguous Empires of Turkey and Persia, they partake much of the respective local peculiarities of the two parts of their country; those in the Turkish portion, Koordistan, being rude, untutored, bold and defiant, and those in the mild and sunny clime of Persia possessing much of the blandness and suavity common to all classes in that genial country. They are a noble race of men; manly and athletic, having fine forms and good complexions. They are also naturally a shrewd, active, and intelligent people, yet remarkably artless, affable, and hospitable, and peculiarly accessible for missionary purposes.

ONCE A MISSIONARY CHURCH.

That which gives to the Nestorians a peculiar interest is the missionary character