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"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL xii. 4.

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THE TRAVELLER.

THE NESTORIANS, OR THE LOST TRIBES.

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THE Nestorian Christians, so memorable in the early annals of the Church, are emerging from that state of obscurity in which they have for many ages been almost lost sight of by the civilized world.

In consequence of the favourable report of Messrs. Smith and Dwight, who visited the Nestorians in Persia in the spring of 1831, under the patronage of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, that body soon resolved upon the formation of a mission among that interesting branch of the primitive church. It was an untied and difficult field, but fraught, as was believed, with the brightest promise. At their annual meeting, held at Utica, N. Y., October, 1834, the Board of Missions presented a convincing and urgent plea for a suitable physician to engage in the incipient labours of that important mission.

The healing art, it was believed, might procure favour and protection, by affording convincing proof of the benevolence of our motives; for it is well known that to relieve the sufferings of the body is the most ready way of access to the heart. It would also procure access to places where none but a physician could go. But for more than a year the call had gone through the length and breadth of the land, and not a physician could be found to go.

In view of these considerations, I abandoned an increasing and delightful circle of practice in Utica, and, with Mrs. Grant, was on my way to Persia the following spring.

A pleasant voyage of forty-eight days brought us to Smyrna, the site of one of the seven Churches in Asia. From thence, one of the first of those numerous steamers, which are now producing such changes in the East, conveyed us to Constantinople, the proud metropolis of Turkey. No steamer then ploughed the waves of the stormy Euxine, and we were wafted by the winds in a small American-built English schooner—once a slaver—to the port of Trebizonde.

From the shores of the Black Sea, the saddle became our only carriage for seven hundred miles, over the mountains and plains of Armenia to the sunny vales of Persia. On the loftier mountain summits, a corner of a stable sheltered us from the cold and storms; by the verdant banks of the Euphrates, and beneath the hoary summit of Mount Ararat, we reposed under the canopy of our tent, while the bales and boxes of merchandize from the seven hundred horses and mules which composed our caravan, were thrown around in a hollow square, and served as a temporary fortress to protect us from the predatory Koords by whom we were surrounded. An escort of armed horsemen had been furnished by the pasha of Erzeroom to guard the caravan, and the stillness of the midnight hour was broken by the cry of the faithful sentinel who kept watch to warn us of danger. The strange customs and usages of an Oriental land, and the thousand novelties of the Old World, served to while away the hours as we pursued our onward course for twenty-eight days, at the slow pace of an Eastern caravan.

We arrived at Tabreez, one of the chief commercial cities of Persia, on the 15th of October, 1835, and met with a cordial reception from the few English residents in the place, and from our respected associates, the Rev. Justin Perkins and lady, who had preceded us to this place. From

His Excellency the Right Honourable Henry Ellis, the British Ambassador and Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Persia, with whom we had already formed a pleasant acquaintance at Trebizonde, we received the kindest offers of aid and protection; and I seize this occasion to acknowledge the same kind and unremitted favours from his successors, and other English gentlemen with whom we have met in the East.

After resting a few days at Tabreez, I proceeded to Ooroomiah, to make arrangements for the commencement of our contemplated station among the Nestorians in that province. My professional character procured the favour of the governor, and of the people generally. Comfortable houses were soon provided, and on the 20th of November my associate arrived with our ladies. We entered upon our labours under the most encouraging auspices, and they have gone on prosperously up to the present time.

The sick, the lame, and the blind gathered around by scores and hundreds, and my fame was soon spread abroad through the surrounding country. We were regarded as public benefactors, and our arrival was hailed with general joy. The Nestorians, in particular, welcomed us with the greatest kindness and affection. Their bishops and priests took their seats at our table, bowed with us at our family altar, drank in instruction with childlike docility, and gave us their undivided influence and co-operation in the prosecution of our labours among their people. They regarded us as coadjutors with them in a necessary work of instruction and improvement, and not as their rivals or successors. We had come, not to pull down, but to build up; to promote knowledge and piety, and not to war against their external forms and rites.

We found much in their character to raise our hopes. They have the greatest reverence for the Scriptures, and were desirous to have them diffused among the people in a language which all could understand. In their feelings towards other sects they are charitable and liberal. In their forms, more simple and scriptural than the papal and the other Oriental churches. They abhor image worship, auricular confession, and the doctrine of purgatory; and hence, they have broad common ground with Protestant Christians—so that, not inappropriately, they have been called the Protestants of Asia.

But they had, as a people, sunk into the darkness of ignorance and superstition: none but their clergy could read or write; the education of their females was entirely neglected; and they attached great importance to their numerous fasts and feasts, to the neglect of purity of heart and life. Still there are some who now appear to lead exemplary lives, and to sigh over the degradation of their people. Indeed, we cannot but hope that something of vital piety may have continued to burn upon their altars from the earliest ages of the Church, and we trust it will again shine forth in a resplendent flame.

In such a state of things, it is not surprising that we have been permitted to prosecute our labours without a breath of opposition from the ecclesiastics or the people.

Twelve or fourteen freeschools have been opened in the villages of the plain; a seminary and girls' boarding-school have been established on the Mission premises in the city; considerable portions of the Scriptures have been translated into the vernacular language of the Nestorians. They have opened their churches for our Sabbath schools and the preaching of the Gospel; native helpers are being raised up, and qualified for usefulness; our mission has been re-enforced by ac-

cessions from America, and a press, with suitable type, has been sent out.

The Rev. A. L. Holladay, and Mr. William K. Stocking, arrived with their wives, June 6, 1837; Rev. Willard Jones and wife, November 7, 1839; Rev. A. H. Wright, M.D., July 25, 1840, and Mr. Edward Breath, a printer, has embarked with a press of such a construction as to admit of its transportation on horses from the shores of the Black Sea to Ooroomiah.

The province of Ooroomiah, in which the labours of the mission have thus far been prosecuted, comprises an important part of Ancient Media, and is situated in the northwestern part of the modern kingdom of Persia. It is separated by a lofty chain of snowy mountains from Ancient Assyria, or Central Koordistan on the west; while on the east the beautiful lake extends about eighty miles in length, and thirty in breadth. The water of this lake is so salt that fish cannot live in it; its shores are enlivened by numerous water-fowl, of which the beautiful flamingo is most conspicuous, and sometimes lines the shore for miles in extent.

A plain of exuberant fertility is enclosed between the mountains and the lake, comprising an area of about five hundred square miles, and bearing upon its bosom no less than three hundred hamlets and villages. It is clothed with luxuriant verdure, fruitful fields, gardens, and vineyards, and irrigated by considerable streams of pure water from the adjacent mountains. The landscape is one of the most lovely in the East; and the effect is not a little heightened by the contrast of such surprising fertility with the stern aspect of the surrounding heights, on which not a solitary tree is to be seen; while in the plain, the willows, poplars, and sycamores by the water-courses, the peach, apricot, pear, plum, cherry, quince, apple, and vine, impart to large sections the appearance of a rich, variegated forest.

Near the centre of this plain stands the ancient city of Ooroomiah, containing a population of about twenty thousand souls, mostly Mohammedans, and enclosed by a fosse and wall of nearly four miles in circuit. At a little distance on the east of the city an ancient artificial mound rises to the height of seventy or eighty feet, and marks the site, as it is said, of the ancient shrine or temple, where, in days of yore, the renowned Zoroaster kindled his sacred fires, and bowed in adoration to the heavenly hosts.

The climate is naturally very delightful; but owing to local causes, a poisonous miasma is generated, occasioning fevers, and the various diseases of malaria, to which the unacclimated stranger is specially exposed; and the mission families have suffered much from this cause. My late inestimable wife was the first victim of the climate we were called to mourn; and in her peaceful and triumphant death, she set the seal to the truths she had so faithfully taught and exemplified in her short but eventful life. She rested from her labours on the 12th of January, 1839; and her infant twin daughters now repose by her side within the precincts of the ancient Nestorian church in the city of Ooroomiah.

In the month of February of that year, I received instructions from the Board of Missions to proceed into Mesopotamia, to form a station among the Nestorians, dwelling, as was supposed, on the west of the central mountains of Koordistan. By this means it was hoped that a safe way of access might be found to the main body of the Nestorian Christians, the independent tribes which have their abode in the most difficult fastnesses of the Koordish mountains in the centre of Ancient Assyria. I had long regarded these mountain tribes as the principal field of our future labours. They comprised the main body of the Nestorian Church,