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No. VII.

The Mission Fields of Turkey.*

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.
Isaiah, LVIII: 12.

THE TURKISH EMPIRE occupies an important position geographically, comprehending the south-eastern portion of Europe, the south-western part of Asia, and the north-eastern corner of Africa. In one direction it commands the entrance of the Black Sea; in another, it stands sentry at the gate of the overland route to India and the East. Politically, it is the worst governed and weakest of the nations—existing by the grace and common consent of the Great Powers of Europe and America, rather from a feeling of jealousy on their own parts than from any particular love for “the sick man.” In a missionary point of view Turkey is invested with imperishable interest. In its western borders may be still identified, in

masses of ruins, the debris of the ancient cities that gave their names to “the seven churches of Asia”—most of them founded by St. John, and of which, after the martyrdom of Timothy, he became the arch-presbyter, and to the “angels” of which he addressed the remarkable words which we find in the beginning of the Apocalypse. In our progress through this vast mission field we shall be reminded of the Isle of *Patmos*; and of *Crete*, where Titus succeeded St. Paul as “bishop”; and of *Cyprus*, the home of Barnabas. We shall have a look at *Tarsus*, the birth-place of the great missionary to the Gentiles; and *Antioch*, where St. Luke was born, and where the disciples were first called “Christians”—the city second only to Jerusalem in ecclesiastical interest; and *Damascus*, the oldest city in the world. Passing through “the Holy Land,” we shall go down into Egypt, and, amidst the tombs of the Pharaohs, the pyramids and obelisks and ruined temples, be reminded of a civilization four thousand years old and of departed greatness. Further east, we shall find missionaries attempting to restore Christianity in the very cradle of the human family, in that “Ur of the Chaldees,” where Abraham was born, in the neighbourhood of Nineveh, “that great city”; and under the very shadow of Ararat.

While thus the receptacle of associations that carry us back to the genesis of the race and the development of religion, Theocratic and Christian, the existing empire of Turkey dates only from the beginning of the fourteenth century, when it was founded by

* *Oriental Churches*, by Rufus Anderson, D.D., Boston, 1872. *Bible Work in Bible Lands*, by Rev. Isaac Bird, Philadelphia, 1872. *The Mohammedan Missionary Problem*, by Henry J. Jessup, D.D., Philadelphia, 1879. *Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board in Turkey*, by Rev. S. C. Bartlett, D.D., Boston, 1880. *Seventieth Annual Report of the A. B. C. F. M.*, Boston, 1880. *Forty Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U. S.*, 1880. *Wilder's Missionary Review*, Princeton, N. J., 1880. *Christlieb's Foreign Missions*, Boston, 1880. *The Missionary Herald*, Boston, 1880, &c.