

not say, is one of immense practical importance.

4. The Home Mission, the Foreign Mission, the Acadian Mission, all claim our increased attention and interest. There is no time for halting, much less for falling back, in any department of our work as a church. God has given us a noble field to cultivate; let us ask for grace to be faithful to our high calling.

MISSIONS IN PERSIA.

The great and terrible famine which has desolated Persia for years has given place to plentiful times. So at least it is hoped. The last harvest was prosperous. Prices have fallen, and bread is within reach of the industrious. But while the famine no longer desolates, its dark shadow still hovers over the land. Multitudes have escaped from the scourge only with their lives. They have exhausted all their resources in the struggle between life and death; and now, when bread is plenty, they are in danger of perishing from their helpless poverty. Thousands of these unfortunates are just drifting over the country in quest of compassionate hearts and hands. It is impossible to estimate the numbers of these that succumb in their desperate efforts to prolong mere existence.

In Oroomiah, the locality of the principal Presbyterian Missions, great numbers of these wretched creatures have sought a temporary home in the villages and city. To these refugees of the southern districts of the country, Mohammedans in faith, the sympathies and charities of the mission have been largely extended. Hundreds of them have been aided to return to their houses with vague hopes of reconstructing scattered families and fortunes.

To hundreds of others food and other necessities have been regularly supplied through the past months. A large room and court have been hired where the poor assemble every day. A Nestorian helper of character and experience, has charge of the distributions of bread among them.

At noon the door of the room is opened and the crowd of hungry ones file in. On

a given day 312 is the number mentioned as having presented themselves for the portion allotted to them, or to the families they represent.

Upon their assembling the Missionary in charge delivers a short discourse on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Their eager attention is most gratifying. Now and then they nod assent, and sometimes, too, the tears are seen trickling down their wan faces as the stories of a Redeemer's unselfish love, so new to them, touch their hearts.

"A day or two since," says Mr. Coan "the room where the preaching is held was so crowded that some had to stay outside by the windows. When deacon Yossip, a convert, finished talking he gave out the bread. One poor man who had been listening outside failed to get his portion. The deacon expressed his regret, but the man replied 'Never mind, I have eaten the better bread—these gracious words of Jesus which you have spoken.' He went away happy."

These people are questioned each day on what they heard the day before, and though they belong to the more simple-minded and ignorant of the Persian Mussulman population, it is surprising how they treasure up the truth they hear on these occasions.

The missionaries often visit their wretched haunts in the city, to ascertain by personal observation their condition and needs. When necessary, places are rented for them, clothing is supplied and the sick are furnished with soup. Mr. Coan again writes, "Today we found a poor boy relating to his mother and several others the subject of the day's discourse with deep interest. In another place—a mere hole—where five were huddled together, the same thing was going on. The poor creatures seemed so have forgotten their hunger in feasting upon the true bread of life. They really seemed to be happy."

"A young man in going to his wretched abode, kept ejaculating, 'Praise to Jesus.' A well dressed Mussulman met him and said, 'Why do you give praise to the Son of Mary, He is not your prophet?' 'Why do I,' said he, 'because I love to; He loves me, and I love to praise Him.'"

One of the ladies of the mission frequently meet the women and children by themselves, in the room mentioned, and give them simple religious instruction. The missionaries have also a systematic arrangement for the extension of aid to those in distress among the resident population of the city and villages, both Christian and Mussulman.