



# **The Flickering Light of Asia**

*or*

# **The Assyrian Nation and Church**

**Rev. Joel E. Werda**

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This Book On  
The Flickering Light of Asia,  
or  
The Assyrian Nation and Church  
is dedicated  
TO MY DEAR PARENTS,

whose sole ambition was that I should serve the cause of Christ; whose unselfish love taught me the meaning of service to others; whose Christian influence left an indelible impression upon my life; and whose earnest and persistent prayers were destined to be answered in the arrest of my steps, and in the guidance of my feet into a service which even now must be their, as is my own, supreme delight. And whatever good there may come out of this imperfect labor of love, which may contribute toward the resurrection of my fathers' church, and the restoration of that church to her former sphere of influence and usefulness in Christ's kingdom, that good should, above all, endear the peerless name of Him who hears and answers the persistent prayers of Christian parents.



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By  
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## **FOREWORD**

Great as the Assyrian empire was in conquest and expansion, greater still became the triumphs of the Assyrian Christian Church. And just as during centuries of ceaseless persecutions, the capacity of this faithful nation for suffering for Christ never shrank, so also the ancient valor of the Assyrian warriors had never deserted the people. These two unique qualifications were most marvelously revealed during the terrible progress of the great World War.

## INTRODUCTION

Mosul to most Americans means only oil and a wrangling point of European and Turkish diplomacy. Yet there is a little remnant of what was once one of the earth's most famous races, which has dwelt in Mosul and the regions round about for, upwards of several thousand years. To these people the disposal of Mosul means life renewed and hope or utter extinction.

It has seemed to me a duty which I could not rightly refuse to consent to introduce this book, simply because the vivid story that it tells and the vistas of history it reveals are what Americans need to know now, and all this has been written nowhere else.

This book portrays the wonderful fight of a brave Ally of ours in the World War, of which most of us have never before heard, whose sufferings and ruin have far exceeded that of Belgium or Serbia, and whose fate still hangs in the balance. These are the Assyrians.

Across the Euphrates from Mosul lie the ruins of Nineveh, "that great city," where once ruled the ancestors of this pathetic modern remnant. What has happened in the thousands of years intervening is sketched in these pages.

For many centuries a mighty Christian Church loomed large on the page of ecclesiastical history. This Church was the Church of the "dwellers in Mesopotamia," of the famous University of Edessa, of the Missionaries to the farthest corners of India and China. The remnant of the Assyrians are also the remnant of this Church. This book collates the history of the Church.

Like a thin wedge, the rightful domains of the Christian Assyrians extend north of Mosul between Mohammedan Kurdistan and Persia. Here before the war the Patriarch-Prince, Church and State united, ruled his Christian people in all simplicity, respected alike by Mohammedan and Christian. Today part of the race has been massacred, part driven into Russia, a few into America, and a few after the exile are sifting back to their ruined homeland.

Beside the striking war story told in true Oriental style, what gives special value to this book is that the author himself an Assyrian, has drawn from the literature of his own people, on the history of his nation and Church, and put together the facts in a complete form as no one else has attempted.

The fate of this precious remnant is in the hands of the nations of the West. It would seem that common justice demanded their restoration. All that is needed is to give them an opportunity to make a new start, security and freedom to live their own life in their own lands, and help to rebuild homes, churches, schools. Also they need a few Western leaders of the right sort to guide them on their way, but it should be their own way.

To allow this nation to be wiped off the page of history ought to be unthinkable.

THOMAS BURGESS.

**PART I**

**THE ASSYRIAN NATION**

**And the Great World War**



## PART I : THE ASSYRIAN NATION And the Great World War

### THE TURKISH TRAP

Before Turkey decided to enter into the War, the Turkish government encountered two serious problems within the bounds of its own domains. One of the problems was the question of the Armenians, who had for almost a century aspired to separation and to the formation of an independent kingdom; and the other was the attitude of the Nestorian tribes, who had defied the Turkish authority, and had always maintained their independence in the fastnesses of the Kurdistan mountains. The problem of the Armenians, and also that of those Assyrians who were dwelling in the interior of Turkey, and who were at the mercies of the Turks, was to be easily solved by a program of massacres, exile and a diabolical attempt at their total extermination. But the Nestorian warriors had to be handled with the cunning diplomacy of the Turkish Statesmanship. These Nestorians, to be sure, were small in numbers, but they were regarded then as the sharpest thorn in the flesh of the Turkish empire, particularly, if they were to be supplied with guns and ammunition from Russia.

Consequently, a Turkish governor came to Bashkala (the capital of that Vilayet), and from there he sent some high officials as his emissaries, to greet the Patriarch Mar Shimon, and to extend to his Beatitude a most courteous invitation to become the guest of the Turkish government at his official residence. At this time the Russian forces had secured a strong foothold in the northwestern province of Persia, which immediately adjoins the south eastern frontiers of Turkey.



His Beatitude Mar Shimon Benyamin, Patriarch of the Nestorian Church, who was cowardly assassinated by a Kurdish Chieftain through the conspiracy of the Persian Tabriz authorities.

Mar Shimon accepted the invitation;,, and at his arrival in Bashkala, he was received with all the ostentatious honors the oriental monarchs can bestow. The patriarch and his people were promised absolute protection, together with a large sum of money to be distributed among the warriors of the mountains, on the condition that the head of

the Assyrian Church should pledge himself in writing that he would not allow the Nestorian tribes to take up arms against the Turkish government, and also pledge himself under oath that he would not side with Russia. But an intellect less keen than that of the patriarch could have perceived clearly the motive of the mischievous propositions, and could have seen the trap which was being prepared to be set for the extermination of these people as well.

The Patriarch, under the pretense, and of course, according to his custom also in all such matters, of consulting the leaders of his people, begged to be allowed to do so, and departed with a broken spirit and a heavy heart. He fully realized that the floods of Islam's hate were in motion, and that Turkey was determined to inaugurate her campaign of extermination against the mountain Nestorians as well.

Mar Shimon, therefore, instead of returning to his home in Qoodchanis, went directly to Tiari, the country of the strongest tribe of the independent Assyrians. He sent immediately after all the leaders of the Nestorian tribes. They all responded. The meeting was held within the walls of the Historic Church of Mar Sava. This took place in the early part of December, 1914. The Kurds, in the meanwhile, who had for centuries tried in vain to subdue and to destroy the Nestorians, saw now an opportunity to satiate their blood thirsty desire upon their Christian neighbors. Without the aid of the Turks they could not think of fighting against the Assyrians, even though they were vastly superior in numbers. Having for centuries made themselves obnoxious in the eyes of the Turks by their lawlessness and their campaigns of plunder, the Kurds, in order to regain the favor of the Turks, had secretly made the plan for the massacre of the Assyrians a common cause with them, and had also solicited their assistance. And the Turks, of course, could more than condone all the crimes piled high against their lawless co-religionists, only to carry out the program of extermination against all the Christians, as planned by the Turkish Pan-Islamic Revolutionary Committee. A secret letter, written by one of the Kurdish chieftains to the Governor of Julamarck, fell into the hands of the Assyrians, and it was read at the meeting called for by the Patriarch in the Church of Mar Sava. It contained the following paragraphs: 1. "These (Nestorian) Christians have decided to cut their way through to Persia, and have sided with Russia. 2. They have killed many of us, and have carried also plunder from us. 3. I would gladly contribute in men to the army quota as required by the government, but unfortunately I am unable to do so, as our men will have to pass through the lands occupied by the Christians. 4. Send us at once guns and ammunition; not that we desire to engage the Assyrians in battle, but rather to defend ourselves against their attacks. They are abundantly supplied with the Russian guns." And of course, every syllable contained in this letter was false. It became evident to the Patriarch and his leaders, that there had been conducted a secret propaganda by the Kurds, to add more fuel to the fire which was already kindling in the heart of the Turks against Mar Shimon and his people. It was deemed advisable to contradict these false stories; and the patriarch wrote a number of letters to that effect. But the letters, somehow, and in a mysterious way, had disappeared on their way, and had not reached their destination. But even if they had, they would have availed nothing, as the machinery of slaughter by the combined forces of the Turks and the Kurds had already been set in motion.



A group of the Mountain Assyrian Malicks, who served as the advisers of Mar Shimon Benyamin during the war. They are the chiefs of the independent tribes of Assyria.

## THE FIRST SOUND OF BATTLE

Here in the valley of Kurdistan sounded the first fearful echoes of Islam's declaration of holy war. The Kurds were urged to kill all Christians; otherwise, they would be regarded as outcasts from religion, and treated as traitors to the government. On the other hand, the death of every victim in their hands, would add to their great reward in the prophet's paradise. The unprotected villages and communities of the Assyrians, which were situated on the plains, were immediately attacked. A few managed to escape to the mountains where their brethren were. The larger number of them, however, which included women, children and the aged, were killed in manners that outdid the ferocity of Taimurlang. All the inhabitants of Gavar district were gathered together. Some were pressed into the houses, and the houses were set on fire; others were thrown into wells and ditches and were buried alive. All the Nestorians of Gavar and the adjoining plain country were totally exterminated, including the Christians of Albak and Barvar and of Qoodchanis.

As the work of the Assyrians' massacre went on, strong fears were entertained for the safety of the Patriarch, who had returned to his ecclesiastical See after his conference with the leaders of the mountain tribes. The members of the Patriarch's family had escaped to a place of comparative safety; but Mar Shimon himself, together with his brothers, remained in Qoodchanis, waiting for further developments. All attempts, on the part of the Patriarch, to convince the Turkish government and local authorities, of the innocence and the harmlessness of the Assyrians, failed. And the flames of the massacre were gradually enveloping Qoodchanis itself. Mar Shimon also was compelled to desert his ecclesiastical See, and join the members of his household in Deez, where he could be more accessibly protected by his mountain warriors.

The valor and fighting qualifications of the Nestorians being known to the Turkish authorities, the latter had secretly developed their siege plans to envelope Mar Shimon and his mountaineers, cut off every possible avenue through which they might escape, and also prevent all possible communications they might affect with the Russian forces in Persia. A Russian contingent, prior to this movement of the combined forces of the Turks and the Kurds, had penetrated into Turkey, and had advanced as far as the district of Gavar, wherethe greatest Assyrian massacre, so far, had taken, place, but only to return back to Persia, and leave behind a greater determination on the part of the enemy, if that were possible, to exterminate all the Nestorians. And indeed, the failure of the Turks to carry out this diabolical program in its entirety, falls short only of a miracle; while the final escape of the main body of the people, who found themselves thus surrounded on all sides, must be regarded as an absolute act of superhuman and divine deliverance.

After a number of small skirmishes between the Assyrian and the Turkish forces, the object of which on the part of the enemy was to engage the attention of the former in all directions, and, thus to demoralize them if possible, the Turks sent an advance force of 3,000 men to attack the Nestorians through a pass between Tiari and Tkhooma, where they gained also the advantage of the Mount "White". Against this force the Assyrians set in battle line 400 warriors only. The hostilities opened, and the battle raged with determination. The younger Assyrians fought, their older folks gathered in places of worship and prayed. Before the first day of the battle was over, the Turkish army was put to flight in great confusion, and left behind many dead and wounded. The few Assyrians charged like tigers in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. The Turks fell as they ran till the hill slopes were covered with their bodies. Some sought the shelter of the rocks, where they were later found and taken captive. A few managed to escape and reach the main Turkish camp on the opposite side of the River Zava, and there to repeat the story of the Nestorians'valor. They, however, were entirely ignorant of an angel's ladder, which was carrying to the throne of mercy the tears and the supplications of praying men and women:-tears and supplications which turned out to be infinitely more mighty than the boom of the thundering cannon, and infinitely more effective than the vibrations of the exploding shells. The would be tragedy was turned into a providential victory, the value of which was enhanced by the amazing discovery that in this heated battle, only three Nestorians were found wounded, and their wounds were amazingly slight. Had the Turks succeeded in this initial attempt which was to be followed by larger forces, perhaps no Nestorian would have been left to tell the story.

During the months of July and August, about six battles were fought on a large scale, between the Assyrians and the Turks; and in all of them the Nestorians had the best of the enemy, even though the latter had employed vastly superior numbers. While the losses of the Turks and Kurds in each engagement were counted by the hundreds, those of the Assyrians in all these engagements became incredibly small, and one almost hesitates to give figures which fall below three scores, including all casualties.

Prior to these events, the Russian forces in Persia had succeeded in sending some guns and ammunition to the Assyrian Patriarch at the urgent request of the latter. But these were altogether too -inadequate to cope with the

precarious situation of the Nestorians, who were now face to face with a trained army of the Turks, under the leadership of Haydar Beg Pasha, the Governor of Mosul, and assisted by the hordes of the Kurds under their several chieftains. Realizing the danger of their position, the Assyrian leaders managed to send a messenger to the Patriarch, who was still in Deez, urging him by an epistle, to endeavor in some way to get either to Persia or to Bashkala, in Turkey, and ask in person for the Russian assistance in men. Some forty Assyrians were selected to accompany Mar Shimon and Bishop Yav Alaha of Amedia on this most hazardous mission, which led through the very country now occupied in force by the Turks and the Kurds. Filling their sacks with parched wheat, the Patriarch and the Bishop and their attendants, were sent away secretly by a praying multitude, who committed them to the protecting shadow of the Almighty's wings. They slept in the daytime and travelled on foot during the night, often reaching within a hailing distance from an enemy who knew no law save that of murder and bloodshed. The Patriarch with his party reached safely the Russian headquarters in Bashkala, but only to return in similar manner, without bringing back with them the desired assistance. This fact was made known to the mountain Nestorians, and the situation became desperate. The strongest element of a nation was now facing total extermination! The Turks had constructed a bridge over the River Zava, the roaring floods of which had heretofore served as an impenetrable barrier to the advance of the enemy. They had also planted their cannon on the heights that commanded the positions of their opponents on the other side of the river. The Assyrians had courage enough to fight one against ten and even twenty, but how could they resist the explosives that were reducing the mightiest fortifications of Europe? It was the desperation of a cat pressed into a corner by a pack of dogs, and compelled to fight to the finish in spite of the overwhelming odds against it.

## THE FINAL SIEGE OF THE MOUNTAIN ASSYRIANS

During the last week in August, 1915, it became apparent that the Turks were advancing on all sides. The Nestorian pickets had reported the completion of the bridge over Zava, and also the passing of the Turkish Army across the river. The Assyrians, who were apparently hoping against hope, led their cattle, their goods and their families to the top of the mountains which rose up almost in perpendicular form from the edge of the river below, and which stood like sentinels over the passes through which the Turkish army had to advance. The air of the snowy heights, even in the month of August, caused terrible suffering among the people, who had depended so much for their deliverance, under God's mercies, upon the inaccessibility of the steep slopes. But one or two shots from the long range Turkish cannon revealed at once the hopelessness of their situation. And then these lofty heights under the clouds, instead of being esteemed as an impenetrable fortress were instantly transformed a temple of worship by the helpless refugees, who now believed, that only as such they could either protect them, or else show them a way of escape from inevitable capture and subsequent massacre.

It was also observed by the Assyrian pickets that the advancing army of the Turks was divided into three sections. Two of these sections under the Kurdish Chieftains were moved to attack from the direction of the only two passes through which the Nestorians could escape toward Persia, while the Turkish army was stationed immediately in the rear to dislodge the entrenched Assyrians by the use of their long range cannon. Had the Russians supplied the Nestorians with two or three mountain guns, and with a sufficient supply of large ammunition, as they had been urgently requested by the Patriarch, there would have been no place in these pages for the story of the most terrible massacres and losses to which the Nestorians were later subjected. And had the Russian forces of Bashkala heeded the plea of Mar Shimon ' their own lines of communication in Northwestern Persia would have never been exposed to as great dangers to which they became subjected; and possibly even the Persian Assyrians would have been saved from the terrible doom that befell them. Some ten thousand of these mountain Nestorians, properly and sufficiently equipped, under the leadership of their fearless Patriarch, would have surely made the Turks to have thought twice before attempting to enter into Persia. The Kurds had already fought with the Russians. They had already defeated and exterminated a force of the "Yellow Race" that was sent against them. Put they and the Turks had one fear only in this front, and this fear arose from the independent tribes of Assyria. It was a genuine fear. Experience had taught them so. Thus the mighty power of the Russian Empire, on which Mar Shimon had depended so much in the early stages of the war, sadly failed to respond to a call by the latter for arms and ammunition, and this failure, on the part of Russia, became the greatest weakness of an over credulous people in the hour of their great emergency.





A group of Russian officers during Russia's occupation of the North Western Persia.

Face to face with total extermination, the Nestorian leaders held another conference on those lofty heights under the clouds, to decide whether to cease firing and take a chance in a flight toward the Russians, who were still in Bashkala, or to avoid the stigma of the Kurdish reproach, and fight to the finish. They unanimously decided to take the latter course. The Kurds moved from the direction of Artoosh to attack Baz, and also from the direction of Chal to attack Tkhooma. t Battle raged all that day till darkness put an end to the firing. During the night the Assyrians had strengthened their fortifications and had erected walls of stone and rock. Behind these walls they remained waiting eagerly for the app roach of the dawn, and for certain advance of the enemy. The Kurds came up in hordes, only to find their lines mercilessly thinned down by the accuracy and the unfailing fire of the Nestorians. One of these Nestorians who had taken part in these wars, came to America with an unhealed wound in his leg. He came to me asking for my assistance to take him to some physician for an operation on the still painful bone. He very humbly told me the following story: "Our fighting units were divided into small groups, leaving larger numbers for reserve. In my group there were only one hundred and fifty of us. I had only ninety cartridges. I used sixty of them and saw sixty Kurds fall; my comrades did the same, and the execution was awful. Only a few of the enemy managed to escape!" I narrated this story to the American physician' to whom I had taken the young Nestorian for consultation. The American specialist was in the uniform at the time and ready within two weeks to sail for France. After the examination, I asked the doctor what I owed him for his services. "Nothing," replied the doctor, smiling, "only tell him to go back when he is well, and kill a few more of those Turks!"

But the temporary defense which the Assyrians constructed in haste could not resist the fire of the Turkish cannon. Repeated and most courageous attempts were made to put together the shattered walls of loose stone, but only to be demolished again by the shots of the mountain guns. Necessity has always been the mother of invention. The Assyrians of Tiari, in order to open a way for their commerce and communications with Mosul and Bagdad, had three quarters of a century before constructed a suspension bridge over the rushing floods of Zava; only instead of using steel wires which they did not possess, they twisted together twigs and a peculiar straw, which they transformed into bulky cables that were made strong enough to sustain the weight of the bridge, and give safe passage back and forth for their caravans. And likewise the people of Tkhooma had conceived the idea of making cannon out of the trunks of the hard wood trees of the mountains, and had already experimented with their invention. But the weapon purposely created for moral effect upon their Kurdish neighbors, could not now be allowed to draw the mockery of the roaring guns which vomited death and destruction. The Nestorians therefore, decided to lay low in their trenches, and make the enemy believe they had fled and deserted their defenses. It was apparently a hopeless situation. But what else could they do? The fathers and the mothers, the wives and the children of these fearless warriors, grasped fully the meaning of the critical hour, as they observed the progress of the battle from those towering heights to which they had climbed as a last refuge, to escape, if possible, the rush of the incoming tide of Islam's wrath. They watched and prayed all night, committing themselves unto the mercies of their heavenly Father, at the same time asking for a deliverance which God alone could give them from an inevitable doom. The courageous warriors stil remained behind their shelter, waiting for the approach of the morning and the advance of the relentless foe. The Turks welcomed the dawn by a round of cannon shots into the positions of the Assyrians to ascertain the whereabouts of their opponents. The Assyrians had no fire to return against the terrible weapons of war. They were only bent to keep their existence there absolutely concealed, till the enemy had come within the reach of the sword and of the point of the dagger. The Turks advanced, hungry for murder and plunder. Haydar Beg

Pasha, with the main body of his army, still remained across the river, to witness the smoke of burning villages. Two regiments of his mountain warriors continued to climb unhindered and unopposed. The Assyrians drew their sword out of its sheath and pulled the dagger out of the belt. They posed like a lion ready to jump on its approaching prey. The top of the Kurdish garlanded hat could be seen through the small crevices left purposely open between the heaps of stone and rock. Then the red of the Turkish fez came into view. Instantly there appeared, immediately beneath, a forest of bayonets, all glittering in the golden sun of the early morning. The Assyrians gave a terrifying yell, and threw themselves on the enemy, who became consternated and demoralized, both by the suddenness of the unexpected attack, and by the quick work of execution to which he was subjected. The Turks fled in confusion, leaving again their dead and wounded behind. There was no smoke in this battle to obstruct the searching of a pair of field glasses. Greater than the consternation of the Turkish regiment, was that of Haydar Pasha himself, who by the aid of the lenses in his hand, saw that the pursuers of his fleeing regiments numbered less than a quarter of the strength of his own men, and that his best troops even five to one were no match for the descendants of these "Ancient Archers of Assyria."

In the meanwhile, word reached the Assyrian victors that the defenders of the other fronts had almost exhausted their home-made ammunition, and that the leaders had counselled a general retreat at nightfall. But before the victors of the western line could recover from the effect of the staggering report, Haydar Pasha let loose his cannon with double fury' determined now to plough every square yard of the Assyrian positions with shot and shrapnel, and make it so unbearable for them that they could be forced to retreat and fall into the arms of the other forces of Turkey, which were sent to cut off their passage and their only avenue of escape toward the northwestern frontiers of Persia.

The siege was so completely laid by the Turks, that it was considered humanly impossible to cut a way through the packed line of the enemy. And the besiegers, never daring to attack, contented themselves with the thunder of their cannon, the vibrations of which, in the distant valleys, resembled the rumbling of a gigantic volcano. They felt certain that starvation would eventually compel the besieged Assyrians to stampede into Islam's prepared shambles.

Quick in movement, and familiar with all the nooks and foot paths of their mountains, the Assyrians began in the dark to withdraw from all their lines, and to concentrate in the shelter of some steep hills which infringed the banks of the lower part of Zava. The exodus here resembled that of the children of Israel under Moses. For every independent tribe moved under its own banner. Tiari, Tkhooma, Baz, jelloo, Tal, Deez, etc., all moved under their own Malicks and leaders. Those who had escaped for safety from the less protected lowlands, were distributed among the various sections. The Patriarch Mar Shimon, and all those who had been with him, first in Qoodchanis, and then in Deez, had already arrived safely at the appointed place.

Here, then, concealed for the time being, from the view of the enemy, assembled a camp which, in both religious character and in historic significance, presented in duplicate form the plight of the Hebrew exiles when they were escaping from the wrath of Pharaoh. The only distinction in the two tragedies being that this Christian camp did not know whither to go or where to turn. The Hebrews had a destination. The Assyrians had none! The allurements of a better future, and the dream of an "abiding city," can intoxicate a soul, and enable the pilgrim to endure sufferings for a season. But, Oh, for these helpless custodians of Christian faith! Oh, for this heroic remnant of a mighty people, and once a mighty church! Even if they did succeed to escape from an apparently impending doom, where would they go? There was no manna to feed them, and whence then the food that could keep alive so many thousands of women and children? It was a crushing burden upon the heart of the Patriarch; a staggering problem for the leaders of the besieged exiles; and above all, it was the greatest crisis in the history of the Nestorian people and church! They had survived the massacres of Shapur, the butchery of Taimurlang, and centuries of endless persecutions under the Moslem rulers. But now was the hour that was to determine either the continued existence, or the total extermination of both the Assyrian people and the ancient evangelical church of the East, established according to reliable tradition, by the very apostles themselves.

Trusting in God, to whose throne of mercy were continually rising prayers and supplications from thousands of hearts and lips, the leaders decided on a plan to cut their way through, and save at least a remnant of the people. They had some ammunition left; and having applied the strictest economy by making the besieged people to subsist on mulberry and other kinds of berries and vegetables, during the summer months of June, July, and early August, they had saved their scanty provisions for such an emergency. Of course, till now they had saved all their cattle as well. Meat they had had abundantly, although no salt to eat it with. But could they now save their flocks of sheep, which were absolutely needed for the food supply of a vast multitude? In the hours of early morning, the aged men and women, together with the children, were ordered to move on, and follow a guard that had advanced considerable distance ahead to be on the lookout for the enemy. The location of the Kurds was discovered. Then the fighting units, who still had ammunition left in their belts, were ordered to march on the right and on the left of the weeping

thongs. The Patriarch himself, with his rifle in his hand, led the advanced guard. The most critical hour had arrived. The Kurds and the Turks came in swarms from all directions. The Patriarch, with the advance guard, from behind the stones they had carried on their backs, to be used as movable trenches, opened deep lines in the solid wall of the advancing foe. The topography of the land, of course, failed to offer the Assyrians those mountain advantages they had had before. The Turks retreated some distance to draw the Assyrians into a trap. The Assyrians had no alternative but to advance, if only to save the women and the children. Familiar with the tricks of Soto, their bitterest enemy, some two hundred Assyrians performed a most heroic deed. They chose certain death by remaining behind, in order to engage the fire of the Kurds, and make it easier for the rest of their brethren to move on and cut their way through.

The Assyrians had now advanced enough for the enemy to have come in their rear also. The Kurds opened fire at random into the defenseless throng. Women and children dropped like leaves as from an autumn tree. Mar Shimon and his warriors had their hands full immediately in the front, and on the two sides of the multitude. The work of this terrible execution had just commenced when those two hundred brave came to the rescue, just as it had been planned. They had not remained together. Each had chosen a secluded ' spot. Perhaps the finest sharpshooters of the world could not be matched with them. From behind two hundred scattered rocks they sent volley after volley with terrible effect. The enemy was taken by surprise. It meant two hundred casualties at a time, unless each brute was hit by more than one shot. Soto was compelled to leave the Assyrian women and children alone. Before the Kurds in the rear could recuperate, the main body of the Assyrians, led by the fearless defenders, had succeeded in literally cutting their way through and reaching a place of safety. The enemy in the front had fled as if pursued by mighty armies. The remainder of Soto's horsemen in the rear, had deserted their horses and sought the shelter of the rocks below. The Kurds, of course, did not know the strength of the attacking Assyrians. They remained in their places of concealment till the nightfall, and in the cover of the succeeding darkness they had escaped. The two hundred brave Assyrians also took the same advantage of the wings of the night. By some hazardous path they escaped, and safely arrived at the Nestorian camp, minus only three of their number.

The providence thus saved this smoking wick of Asia! But Mar Shimon did not know what additional sufferings were still laid in store for his brave people.

Another day of comparatively safe travelling brought the Assyrians into the view of the Russian military camp in Bashkala, where they were gladly received by the Russian military authorities.

## **THE ARRIVAL OF THE NESTORIAN REFUGEES IN PERSIA**

The position of the Russian contingent in Bashkala being uncertain, it was deemed advisable for Mar Shimon to take his people to Persia. The influence of Russia being now preponderant in the capital of the Shah, the consent of the latter's government was easily secured, to allow the Nestorian refugees to remain temporarily in the country, pending the final outcome of the great war. The Assyrians had managed to save part of their cattle and their flocks. In addition to these, they, on their way to Bashkala, had discovered and confiscated some small stores of wheat which were deserted by the Kurds. These supplies were deemed sufficient to meet the requirements of the people till they entered Persia.

Toward the middle of September, the refugees were distributed in Salmas, Khoi and Urmia. In the course of their forced exodus, they had lost some four or five thousand souls, mostly women and children; and, of course, they had lost also all their earthly possessions. Sad as their plight was, still both the Patriarch and the people thanked God for their miraculous deliverance, and felt grateful for the hospitality extended to them in a strange country.

These refugees, however, were all mountaineers, who were accustomed to the climate of the high altitudes. Almost immediately after their arrival in the lowlands of Persia, they fell victims to the epidemic of fever, which was followed by the fearful ravages of typhus. The Russian medical service spared indeed no energy to check the disease. It finally succeeded; but after the list of fatalities had mounted to thousands. The refugees had also been accustomed to drink of pure and clear spring waters of their own highlands. The unclean streams of Persia added to the list of their fearful afflictions in the form of other epidemics of dysentery and cholera. "It was a frightful sight," says a correspondent to the Assyrian American Courier, "in the street, in the field, on the housetops and under the trees, you can see groups of men and women and children groaning in agony, calling for help, but no help can be had!" The dreadful contagions caused a havoc among Salmas refugees, and made vast the graveyard where the Assyrian victims lay. Eventually epidemics were checked and the Russian authorities undertook to handle the problem of food and other necessities of life.

The consideration shown by the government of the Czar for these refugees, passes almost all description. By an order from Petrograd, money was freely distributed among the people; the emperor himself contributing toward this relief work one hundred thousand rubles. Equally opportune at this time, was the relief sent from America.

As these refugees had lost all their household effects, they were in urgent need of bedding, quilts, mattresses, etc. A goodly quantity of these was supplied through the American relief funds.

The months of September and October were rather mild, and outdoor living was decidedly better and healthier for the refugees than the congested space within the dwellings, even if there were any of the latter that could be had. But as the severe winter of the northwestern Persia began to set in, a new problem confronted Mar Shimon and his poorly clad people. There were no tents to be had to accommodate such throngs. Stables, barns or any shelter that had a mere roof, and without fire or fireplace, were utilized for the purpose. The sufferings of the people became intense, and not a few perished in the snows and cold blasts of northwestern Persia.

As a shepherd of the flock, Mar Shimon moved from place to place, visiting the various centres where the refugees were distributed. In Urmia, he was received with great pomp, even the Mohammedans taking part in honors bestowed upon the Assyrian Patriarch. This apparent hospitality of the pro-Turk adherents of Mohammed, however, was by no means sincere. It was prompted by fear from the lash of a new authority, which they believed had entered into Persia at the urgent request, and for the deliverance of the Christians. After the manner of Judas, the betrayer, openly they were paying homage to the patriarch of the "infidels," and in secret they were laying the diabolical plan, which later resulted in the assassination of Mar Shimon and the two hundred chosen horsemen who served as his body guard. Here, the best part of a Christian nation continued to remain in exile, and to endure intense sufferings, while anxiously waiting every day to hear the tidings of the final triumph of the allies, with whose fortunes or misfortunes they had chosen to cast their lot.

## **THE SIEGE OF URMIA AND THE OUTRAGES PERPETRATED UPON THE ASSYRIANS OF PERSIA**

The flames which enveloped the world, seemed as if they were originally ignited to consume the Assyrian race. While the independent Nestorians of the mountains were struggling to extricate themselves from the trap which the Turkish government had laid for their extermination, the Mohammedans of Urmia had secretly planned to perpetrate the same diabolical deed upon the Assyrians of Persia. SO long as the Russians were in control of the Northwestern Persia, they, of course, would not dare to reveal the least indication of an ill feeling toward the Christians. The presence of these Muscovite soldiers in Persia, from the time of their first entry into the country, which was some years before the World War, had steadily and secretly given rise to the temperature of Islam's caldron of revenge. The overflow had most cleverly been concealed and stored up in a fearfully boiling form, to be let loose in some opportune moment. And this moment, they knew it was destined to arrive with the fluctuations in the fortunes of the great war. While the Persian Assyrians remained in total darkness with reference to the progress of the contending armies, the Moslems of Urmia were kept amazingly well informed as to the events that were happening, through the most wonderful espionage system of the Turkish Revolutionary Committee. The agents and the propagandists of the committee had been cleverly operating, from the beginning of the war, in every known Mohammedan community throughout Asia. The Assyrians, as well as the foreign element in Urmia, comprising some missionary bodies, had pinned their confidence and their faith on the mighty power of the neighboring empire. If there was any fear to be had, that fear arose from the possibilities of the Turkish arms, which of course were considered no match for the Russian forces, or for the military tactics of the Muscovite Generals. They also believed that the British expedition in Mesopotamia would compel the Turkish general staff to maintain a strong army in that front, and by doing so Turkey was obliged to weaken her northern armies, and thus making them incapable of an invasion into either Caucasia or northwestern Persia. But when were the mortals justified by relying confidently upon the arm of flesh? This was a new era! A period of mightiest convulsions the earth had ever known! Humanity had been driven into unknown seas! An invisible hand had pressed the button! The wheels of awe inspiring events were revolving fast! Providence had willed tremendous changes in the political regimes of the nations, just as they were foretold, centuries before, by the infallible prophets of the real King of the earth!

The Assyrians of Persia, however, did not feel justified to sit still while another power was shedding blood for the emancipation of the Christians from the bondage of Islam. They, accordingly, volunteered to take up arms and render all the military assistance they could to the Russian forces in this remote front. The Persian authorities, however, were given to understand that this step was not taken by their Christian subjects as a revolutionary movement against the government, but rather as a measure of self defense against any possible invasion by the Turks,



and also against the freebooting expeditions of the Kurds, who had already commenced to annoy the Christian inhabitants of Urmia. Whether the local authorities were satisfied or not, they accepted the explanation, apparently with good will; and of course they did so again from the fear of the Russians. But additional fuel passed now under the caldron, and the Islam's hidden rage registered its highest temperature for a determined and hellish revenge.

The line of the Russian operations, in the province of Azarbaijan, extended at the time as far as the City of Savoojboolagh, some seventy miles from the city of Urmia; and in Urmia itself they maintained a small force of the cossacks together with a few hundred men of the infantry. In addition to this Urmia contingent there were other quotas of much larger numbers of troops in Salmas and also in Khoi. Both of these districts are situated immediately north of Urmia. The Russian operations in this front were held in abeyance, pending developments in the direction of Sari Kamish, in ancient Armenia, where a large army of the Turks was reported to be moving for the invasion of Caucasia. The Russian forces of Caucasia stationed there to confront these invaders, were considered altogether inadequate to cope with the situation. A successful invasion, as contemplated by the Turks, would have meant, not only the loss of vast areas in Southern Russia, but it would also have jeopardized the position of all Russian forces stationed in various centers in Armenia and in Persia, and have led to their inevitable capture by the enemy. All Russian contingents in Persia, therefore, unbeknown to the Assyrians, were ordered to withdraw and retreat toward the Russo-Persian frontier, and remain there indefinitely, pending the fortunes of battle which was soon to rage in Sari-Kamish. And indeed, the fear of a successful Turkish invasion had become so great that many of the Christian inhabitants of Tiflis and the surrounding country had fled further into the interior of Russia.

Thus, during the night preceding the 20th day of December, 1914, the troops of the Czar had taken their departure, while the Assyrian soldiers remained still engaged in heated battles with the Kurds, who seemed to possess a full knowledge of the movement of the Russian forces in Persia. As the sun of the 24th day of December began to smile on the hilltops of the ancient Tebarma, the caldron of Islam's revenge was ready to overflow with the vengeance of demons. Copies of the proclamation of the Holy War, which were held in abeyance, were now instantly posted in the streets of the city. And before the Russian rear was within a hailing distance from the city, messengers were sent to all the Mohammedan villages, with the joyous news that the day of revenge and massacre had come!

The Assyrians of Persia woke up on that fateful morning stunned with astonishment and paralyzed with fear. Some of their contingents, as already stated, were less than twenty miles from the city, still holding back the inrush of the Kurdish hordes. They were unaware of the retreat of the Russians, and of the uprising of the entire Moslem element of the district. Those of the Assyrians—a "chosen" few—who had aspired to profitable leadership in former days, unmindful of the fate of the people, failed to notify the isolated troops; and mounting their horses, they escaped after the retreating Russians. The Assyrian soldiers, mostly made up of the young element of Takya and Ardishai, and the volunteers of the district of Barandooz, which was the farthest from the city toward the south, now realized that they also had to extricate themselves from their precarious position. They grasped the situation after several hours of fighting on that fateful morning, when they failed to receive the regular supply of ammunition from the Russian headquarters, and also the assistance which was promised for that day. They retreated, inch by inch, so to speak, their face to the enemy. They bravely contested the loss of every new position to which they were steadily falling back. Night came to their rescue, darkness covered them from the view of the tenacious foe. They gave a sigh of relief as they turned their faces toward the homes and the families they had left behind. But with the fall of darkness, there loomed up before them another and a most terrifying sight! The whole firmament appeared ablaze, and mighty columns of smoke were seen curling upward to the sky! The caldron had been let loose! Islam had drawn the sword! The adherents of Mohammed had lighted the torch!

In a few hours, the news of the Russian retreat had spread to every Assyrian hamlet and village throughout the districts of Urmia. The fearful news needed no corroboration. The ugly and demoniacal looks on the faces of their Mohammedan neighbors would have sufficed to have appraised them of their awful peril. Bewildered and almost insane with fear, the Christians did not know which way to turn. Some ten or twelve thousands of them whose villages lay in the path of the retreating Russians, had left their homes and all their possessions, and without any provisions for the journey, had started to an unknown destination, following their former protectors. And as they advanced all along the journey, the multitude of the fleeing men and women and little children grew to such proportions that the highway was congested almost to a standstill. The sight was simply frightful. It did not take long before the roads were strewn with the bodies of the dead and the dying from cold and starvation. For these refugees, in their haste and fear, had not taken with them any coverings. The snow was deep on the ground, and the cold winds of Media appeared to be playing to the tune of Islam's rage. Women gave premature birth to children, and with their new born babes were left on their beds of snow, to be relieved of their agony by an awful death. Aged men and women stumbled and fell, and there was no helping hand to lift them up. They were hungry and exhausted.

Their feet were half frozen, they simply could not move. They sat where they stopped, and they died where they fell. Some of the people who joined the caravan of the refugees, as it approached their villages, ventured to carry with them part of their cattle, to be used as beasts of burden. But soon the carcasses of the oxen and the water buffaloes added to the horror and confusion of the road. It took more than a week for these wretched throngs to reach the boundary line of Persia. But when they put their frozen and blistered feet on the Russian soil, they discovered that nearly one-third of their number had perished on the way, and that the total sum of the remainder, as taken by the authorities, was more than 50,000 souls, including the Christians of Salinas and Khio.



Shortly after the first Russian retreat from Persia, and before the arrival of Mar Shimon's Army, the Persian Assyrians began to flee to the protection of the American and the French flags in Urmia. But they were intercepted by the Moslems, who killed hundreds of them and carried their women captives.

But now we return to witness the awful tragedy of Urmia. Most of the people of Nazloo district and the country beyond, had escaped with the Russians. The vast majorities, who dwelled in Urmia and Barandooz and Margavar and Targavar districts, had had no chance to flee. As the fear of the latter rose mostly from the attitude of the Persian Mohammedans, the first thought that entered into their minds was to leave all their possessions and make a run to the only two centres, where they thought they could have protection. These centres were the extensive buildings of the American mission in Urmia, and the smaller quarters of the French Lazarist Monks. The only hope of the people's salvation was now in those two flags!-the stars and the stripes, and the tricolored flag of France. But could the people reach there? The flags were waving high in the city, where the two mission buildings stood. Driven by the awful fear of the massacre, the trembling throngs took to the roads that led into those two distant havens. But as they emerged from their homes and villages, they found all their ways intercepted and blocked! They felt then as if they had jumped out of the frying pan and fallen into the fire. The inhabitants of some of the nearby villages, situated within a mile or two of the city, and who had first heard of the Russians' retreat, managed to arrive in the city without much loss. To the larger majorities, however, it would have taken from two to four hours to make the journey, provided, of course, they continued on their way unhampered and unmolested. But now, the whole country around had assumed a terrible aspect! Friends had become foes; and all the highways leading to Urmia city were swarming with the packs of human wolves! They had come out for revenge, both to kill and to plunder. It was a wintry day, with temperature not far from zero. The fleeing throngs were literally stripped of their entire clothing. Naked women and little girls, eight and ten years of age, were subjected to the most revolting outrages. Little children were stabbed with daggers, or chopped to pieces by axes before the eyes of their frantic parents. Young virgins were assaulted while their helpless fathers were compelled to witness the hellish crime. Many of these refugees had fled back and sought the shelter of church edifices, thinking perhaps Islam's passion might balk at the sight of the sacred shrines which its adherents were accustomed to revere. But the malignant flood of crime knew no bounds. The Christians' Holy Bibles were opened on the pulpits, and their pages desecrated by the committal of unmentionable deeds. The houses of Christian worship were first transformed into houses of ill fame, and then turned into human abattoirs. Naked, frozen, wounded and bleeding, a remnant of the Assyrians managed to reach the "havens" they were so frantically seeking. Had the desire for greed and plunder been forgotten for a little longer by these Moslem brutes, perhaps this massacre would have surpassed in violence that of Tairmurlang, during his invasion of the same

lands some centuries before. But as they were all anxious to be the first to enter the homes of the Christians for a richer haul of plunder, they deserted the highways, and got busy in the villages of their victims. They emptied every home of its entire contents and set the building on fire.



Fiske Seminary for girls before it was destroyed by the Moslems, and where the Assyrian refugees fled. Courtesy, Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.

Two or three larger towns, situated not far from the city, their inhabitants did not flee. They relied either upon the influence of their Mohammedan landlords, or upon the promised protection of their Moslem neighbors who had apparently remained friendly. They, however, suffered more, and they were made to suffer more by those very neighbors! The male population of the towns were brought together, and driven during the night to the cemeteries. There the victims were promised immunity from death, if they would only disclose their gold and silver. This was a time when the smallest straw seen floating on the rolling waves might be grabbed at as a possible hope of a possible escape from an horrible death. But after the victims had given up all they possessed, they were so brutally murdered that many of them could not be recognized by their wailing relatives. On the heels of this fearful wave, there came another, equally as fiendish, when the invading Kurds arrived. So far as the plunder was concerned, the latter had come for the gleanings only. But as for the perpetration of the atrocious deeds, there was enough left for them also to quench their thirst for blood, and satiate their hellish passions. Thus, so far as the Christian villages were concerned, Urmia became a heap of ruins, and an area that looked like the scene of a hundred volcanoes. This was the hour of the jihad! the proclamation of the holy war! and the brute who committed more and blacker crimes, believed that he was listed for special favors in his prophet's paradise of sensual pleasures.



Ruins of Goolpashan, one of the richest Assyrian towns of Urmia. Destroyed prior to the arrival of the Mountain Assyrians.

## THE GLORIOUS WORK OF THE AMERICAN MISSION

The total number of the Assyrian population in Urmia has been variously estimated. The Persian authorities, nowhere in the Kingdom, have ever taken any census of the people. Consequently, the number of the Assyrians was

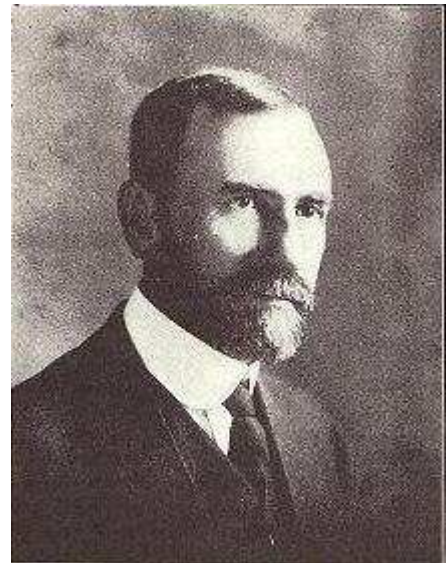
listed in accordance with the number of their villages, and the number of the families in each village. These Christian communities registered each from twenty-five to two hundred and fifty families. As a rule, the Assyrian families are large, and the common rule of allotting an average of five members to each family, cannot be applied in their case, in order to secure an approximate estimate of their total number. Some have figured this number at fifty-six thousand, and others at eighty-two thousand, exclusive of Targavar and Margavar population. To be, therefore, on the conservative side, and to include also the Persian Assyrians of the latter two districts, we may safely ascribe to them a total sum of seventy thousand people. Of this population about twenty-five thousand souls arrived in the mission buildings in the city, and the rest are yet to be accounted for, with the exception of those who deserted their homes and accompanied the retreating Russian soldiers.



Some of the American Mission buildings destroyed by the Moslems. Courtesy, Near East Relief.

Twenty-five thousand souls, who had experienced all manner of cruelties, and all manner of insults at the hands of their relentless pursuers, and who were deprived of everything they possessed, had now found refuge beneath a flag, the glorious principles for which it stood, were destined to inspire and awaken all nations of the earth. Twenty-five thousand souls! almost a duplicate number of the hungry multitude which elicited the divine compassion of Christ, and which was fed by a miracle that has inspired love and adoration in the hearts of millions of souls, throughout the long centuries of the Christian era. In the place of those fishermen of Galilee were now a band of the American missionaries. There was no Christ now to break and multiply the loaves and the fishes; whence then the bread to feed the hungry throngs? It was a tremendous task, and with its staggering problem it rested in full weight upon the shoulders of these successors of the early apostles. For aside from the problem of food, there was also the problem of housing and sanitation, the problem of medical service, the problem of giving the people the protection they had sought from the infuriated mobs of a maddened Islam. In this modern apostolic band there was a man of God, who, like his saintly father, was born to be a leader among his associates. This man was Dr. William Shedd, the son of his predecessors, Dr. and Mrs. John Shedd, whose love and devotion to the cause of Christ have to the present day left among the Assyrians a savor of life unto life. Dr. William Shedd was particularly blessed of God. For in addition to his sincerity, devotion and intellectual gifts, he possessed a remarkable wisdom, the need of which was particularly felt just at this hour of great emergency. It was providential that at this time he acted also in the capacity of the American Vice-Consul. Brave and courageous by nature as he was, his consular position gave him additional strength to be commanding, and deal firmly with the Mohammedan authorities.

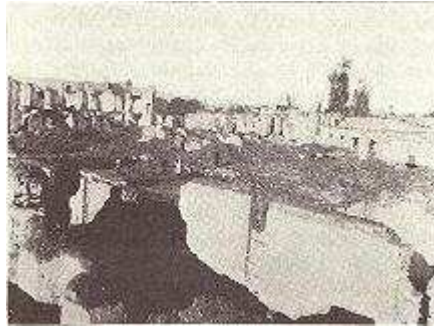
Rev. John Shedd, D.D. Dean, American Mission and American Vice Consul in Urmia, Persia. He died as a martyr for the cause of Christ during the last exodus of the Assyrians from Urmia. By Courtesy, Near East Relief.





The work of housing the refugees was taken up first. The mission quarters were entirely too small to accommodate such throngs. There was an abundance of Christian homes to be had in the immediate vicinity of the mission compass, wherein the people could be made comfortable; but no one would venture to move a step further from the shelter and the protection of the American flag. Furthermore, the Kurdish hordes, who had hardly found any plunder left for them in the devastated villages, had now entered the city, and had mingled with their native co-religionists in search of additional blood and prey. Therefore, terrible as the congestion of the refugees was, it was deemed safer to let them stay, where they were.

The Turks also soon arrived; and all communications with the outside world stopped. But even if the postal service had remained unobstructed, checks and bank notes had come now to be of no value; and the mission funds were entirely too small to cope with the situation. Dr. William Shedd came to the rescue. He kept in touch with the moneyed moslems and borrowed freely of them. They had implicit confidence in him. And in addition to that confidence the very high rate of interest promised on the loan was, of course, not a small allurements to the lender. There was still another motive which led the Moslem bankers to lend freely to the American mission. It was the fear of the Turks. They did not know but that the invaders might search and collect all gold and silver. It was a day of lawlessness, a day of do as you please. They thus feared and delivered their cash with high interest into the only hands they could have trusted. But whence the source of this trust? What was the ground for this confidence? Surely, in the last analysis, it was not a trust in the riches of America, nor so much in the government of the United States. They trusted in the principles and the ethics of that very Christianity they were now so ruthlessly seeking to eradicate from their midst. How blind have been the sons of men in all ages! How enslaving the power of superstition when it has once bound its victims with its chains! How deliberate and determined the rebellion of human heart, in refusing to acknowledge the truth, and in choosing to continue in sin and degradation, this, too, against the persuasive influences of the clear light it beholds! In the day of judgment it will surely be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorah than for these faithful adherents of Islam, who had repeatedly witnessed the superiority of Christ's teachings over the vagaries or the wild fancies of their own empty religion! But it has always been so, and it will always remain so, till the divine author of Christianity returns to chain Satan, the great slaveholder of the human race, at his glorious advent the second time, when with the chaining of the arch enemy will also be eradicated forever all those evil and sinful influences, which have led the families of mankind to reject the saving light they see, and choose to remain in sin and total darkness.



Ruins of the American compound, where the Persian Assyrians were sheltered during the invasion of the land by the Turks.

Through the funds thus obtained, arrangement was made with the Moslem bankers of the city to supply daily a needed quantity of bread for the besieged refugees. The bakers agreed. But how deeprooted was the hatred of Islam! How merciless its schemes for the extermination of the Christians! They conceived the fiendish idea of mixing ground glass and large quantities of plaster with the bread; and as a result the entire compass became a vast hospital. Dysentery made a havoc among the people; and before it was through with its appalling toll, a new epidemic set in.

The space was so limited, and the people so crowded together, that it was impossible for them to stretch their arms and feet. They slept as they sat down, compressed together like sardines. More than two thousand people were

crowded together day and night within the walls of a small church edifice situated on the compass of the missionary grounds. It was impossible to apply any rules of sanitation. Typhus broke out as if to thin down the densely crowded rooms. It raged so frightfully, that the toll of its victims soared up to eighty and a hundred a day. And all this while the maddened mobs were attempting daily to break through and totally destroy the rapidly dwindling multitude. They were held back only by sight of that flag, and by the appearance of a devoted sentry in the person of Mr. Miller, another American missionary, who stood as a faithful watchman at the gates, and often at the risk of his own life.



During the siege of the Persian Assyrians within the compound of the American Mission buildings, epidemics broke out among the refugees. From fifty to one hundred were buried every day. Courtesy, Near East Relief

The medical service also was inadequate to cope with the situation. With Dr. Packard, an American missionary, there were some seventeen Assyrian physicians. Of this number, two native physicians died, and six or eight were incapacitated by the same epidemic. Dr. Packard with one or two assistants attended the sick and the dying in the American College buildings situated about two miles further west of the city. The other four physicians had their hands full day and night amid the indescribable agonies of a large number of the victims. The epidemic spared none of the eighteen members of the American missionary group. Twelve of them were stricken down by typhus, and two died. Disaster and sorrow always brings out the best that is in men. The affliction of the Assyrians disclosed some sterling qualities of these missionaries which were never known before. The wives of the missionaries, as well as the unmarried missionary women workers, most heroically plunged into the whirlpool of disease and death, freely administered to the wants of their wretched guests, and by doing so, they themselves suffered as well.



American College of Urmia. The only building left intact after the exodus of the Assyrians. Left standing because it was made the headquarters of the Kurdish chief Simkoo. By Courtesy, Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.

With the arrival of the Turkish army, the Persian Moslem disorders ceased to some extent; but only to be followed by the inauguration of a new form of oppression, and by a series of fearful executions at the hands of the invaders themselves.

The American flag, which remained always floating day and night over the refugees' camp, was a thorn in the flesh of the Turks. It could not be violated, of course. But then, while the Turkish officers had received excellent European education, and are perhaps, the most modern element within the vast confines of Islam, the Tartar greed has never deserted them. And as to their ferocity, they belong to the age, of the Tartar Khans. By the aid of native mosulmans, they made out a list of the prominent Assyrians, and sought their apprehension. By military warrants, and under the pretense of investigating their records, they removed them from their places of refuge, and kept them as the prisoners of war in the Turkish barracks. They subjected their victims to all manners of cruelty. They took them out of prison nearly every day and for a number of days. On every occasion they told their victims that they were being led out to be shot. But after leading them a certain distance, they would bring them back again to suffer more cruelties at their hands. They had a motive for doing so. They demanded a ransom. But they might just as well have tried to draw blood out of a rock. The refugee captives had absolutely nothing left; they, together with all the Assyrians, had already lost all their possessions. A new task developed, and its attendant responsibility fell again upon the weary shoulders of that saintly and untiring missionary, Dr. William Shedd. He was appraised of the situation, and he immediately negotiated with the Turkish officers to settle the purchase price of the victims. With borrowed money several of the prisoners were rescued. The price was regulated not by the nature of the offense, for no offense had been committed by these men, but rather by the importance and also by an estimate of the previous riches of the individuals. The ransom price ranged from of \$3,000 to a maximum of \$6,000 each. a minimum

A great majority of these prisoners could not be released under any circumstances. Their doom had been sealed. They were to be shot. Among the latter was Bishop Dinha of the Nestorian church.

The gems of the divine love reveal their lustre in such hours of darkness! It has always taken a black night like this to bring to the view the satellites of grace. How narrow our conception of God's all embracing love! How bigoted those sectarian fences which have always excluded immeasurably more than what they have included within their limited bounds! And how supremely happy the knowledge of the fact that God has not confined His precious stones, or his witnesses, to within the boundaries of one clime, or of one land, or of one nation! The beauty of the new song in glory, shall appear, through the grace of the cross, in those queer syllables, which have given birth to the dialects of all nations of the earth. Here, then, in the ancient city of Tebarma, the scene of many previous martyrdoms, a Nestorian bishop is being led to be executed. He was not alone. He had a large company of his Christian brethren with him. What Mar Shimon Bar Sabae, the first Nestorian patriarch had done, during the persecution of Shapur the Magi, in the eighth century, was now to be gloriously repeated by another bishop of his church in the twentieth century.



Mrs. John Shedd, who, as the saintly wife of the American College President, did Perhaps more for the spiritual uplift of the students than any other Missionary. A more consecrated pair than Dr. and Mrs. John Shedd, I doubt if any mission field has ever seen.

The Moslems had established a rule in asking of their victims to deny Christ and embrace Mohammedanism in order to save their lives. But weaker men and women than this body of the prisoners had already chosen to be burned alive, and to be cut to pieces with axes, than deny their Redeemer! "Be brave, take courage, be patient, falter not, be firm and look up. In a few moments we shall be with Christ!" With such words he continued to encourage his companions in bonds, till they reached the end of their fatal journey, where they were all shot to death. It would have been a pity if we had lost this testimony. Providence saved it for our joy and our edification through the intervention of the falling darkness. With the first volley of shots all the victims had fallen. But two of them had escaped mortal wounds. They laid motionless in the heap of the dead bodies till the executioners had departed. Cautiously and under the cover of the night, they rose up and made their way to the American College, where they were admitted as if by a miracle, and their wounds were immediately attended to.

## THE RETURN OF THE RUSSIANS

The Russian Arms in Sari Kamish battle achieved a great victory. The Turks having been disastrously crushed there, the Persian contingents were ordered to return to their former centres. Unbeknown, however, to the Russians, a Turkish force of twelve thousand men under Halil Beg, had entered Persia from the direction of Kurdistan. This force was regarded as a part of the flower of the Turkish Armies. It was swollen up to a total of twenty-five thousand strong with the additions from the Kurdish tribes and from the Moslem volunteers of Urmia. Halil Beg encountered the Russians in Salmas. The latter's strength at the time did not exceed twenty-five hundred men of the infantry including a small equipment of the artillery. The encounter took place in the early part of February, 1915. After an all day battle, the Russians were compelled to fall back a little, and then from stronger Positions to make a stand till assistance would arrive. In the morning of the second day of the battle, the Russian force was strengthened to a total of nine thousand men. Halil Beg took the offensive, and his swollen army charged. It was cut down fearfully by the Russians' machine gun fire. The impression of the Russian victory over the Turks in the battle of Kars, nearly half a century before, had remained very vivid in the mind of the succeeding generation. In that battle, it is said, that, when the Russians opened fire with their guns, the fleeing Kurds in the Turkish army, ran yelling, "this is not war, it is the judgment day!" Both the scene and the impression of that victory were repeated perhaps with a greater slaughter in the battle of Salmas. Defeated, crushed, and almost annihilated, the Turkish General, with a small remnant of his extra fine army, retreated across the mountains over which he had come, and retired into oblivion.

The besieged Assyrians of Urmia knew that the clash between the Turks and the Russians was inevitable; but where and when the two contending armies would meet, they could not tell. Their American haven was entirely cut off from the outside world. And so far as the native Moslems were concerned, to elicit from them some news as to what was happening on the outside, it was, of course, entirely impossible. They possessed an amazing instinct of secrecy. The forebodings of the Assyrian refugees, however, were two-fold. They feared both the success and the defeat of the Turkish arms. With the former possibility, all hope of deliverance would have to be given up; while with the latter, revenge and retaliation were regarded as certain items in the program of their misfortunes.

The Russians moved on gradually, feeling their way cautiously as they advanced. They did not know the extent of their great victory. They still expected to encounter the Turks; but no Turks were to be found anywhere, save their wounded, who had crowded the hospitals, and who were left under the care of Christian physicians. The Russians had retreated from Urmia on December 24, 1914, and they re-entered the city on May 2nd, 1915. The refugees were then set free like birds out of a cage. They were told to return to the site of their former villages, and begin to rebuild their devastated homes the best they could.

But what a change had taken place during those five months of the Russians' absence from this beautiful district! They had seen it when it bloomed like a garden; now their eyes beheld successive heaps of ashes. They had once seen the Christian homes as a monument of Christian civilization; they now looked upon them as the natural product of the Mohammedan barbarism. They had seen Christian people advancing in prosperity, and excelling their former masters; they looked now upon a camp of dilapidated and emaciated refugees who were hardly able to stand on their feet. They had seen these Christian communities look like solitary oases dotting a wilderness of Islam's make; they were now led to see the fresh proofs of a superstitious Islam's curse. In fact, the sights witnessed by the Russian military authorities, appeared to them so appalling, and the outrages perpetrated upon Christians looked so heinous, that the Russian commanding General gave orders to a Siberian contingent, which had arrived in Urmia, to enter the city, and put all the Moslems to the edge of the sword. He was prevented from carrying out his issued orders only by the reasoning and the intercession of the witnesses and the representatives of Christ's Christianity.



The return of the Assyrians to their homes looked like the return of an army engaged in many battles. They now learned the full extent of their disaster. There were villages that had been entirely wiped off, and had absolutely no inhabitant left. There were families that had disappeared forever from their midst. Large towns had been reduced into little nests; while the family groups mournfully felt the absence of one half or two-thirds of their original number. In addition to this melancholy scene, there was the gloom of an abject poverty to which they had been reduced by the total loss of all their possessions.



The ruins of the Christian homes of Urmia. Courtesy, Near East Relief.

With the return of the Russians, postal service to Urmia was resumed, and the relief funds from America began to arrive at the most opportune MOMent. This was the month of May, in which it was not too late to plant, nor the season for the cultivation of the vineyards was entirely passed. The very poor received their rations, and the owners of lands were lent money out of the relief funds to make a new beginning in the development of their properties. In some cases, those who had saved part of their furnishings, placed their rugs as security; in others, a promissory note of I. O. U. became sufficient.

The Russian orthodox bishop also informed Petrograd of the pitiable condition of the Assyrians, and the ever sympathetic government poured rubles into Urmia for the aid of the Christians. With such assistance as they received for a start, the Assyrians commenced to erect some humble shelters, and undertook to pursue the shadow of their former industries.

The Persian Assyrians had no longer any fear of ati attack either by the neighboring Kurdish tribes, or by the native Moslems. For their own mountain warriors had now arrived in their midst. They had entered Persia shortly after the Russian victory in the battle of Sari-Kamish. Their former fears were indeed eliminated even if the Russian strategy should necessitate another and a similar retreat of the Russian forces. The Nestorian mountaineers were more than able to cope with any eventualities that might arise, even if all of Azarbijan was to venture to challenge their valor. In fact, their fame had already spread throughout Persia; and even the government of Persia entertained no small anxiety as to the future attitude of Mar Shimon's warriors, in case the Moslem fanatical element persisted in its previous course of mischief. When the staggering news of Mar Shimon's treacherous assassination, an account of which will be given in another chapter, reached America, the writer, not knowing the entire situation then, in the name of humanity, and in the name of the Assyrian National Associations of America, and through the courtesy of the Persian legation in Washington, cabled to the Persian Shah and the Persian Prime Minister, imploring the Persian government to save its good name, and intervene in rescuing the Assyrian Christians from extermination. The Persian Prime Minister, however, immediately replied, requesting the writer to use his influence in preventing the mountain Nestorians from exterminating the Moslems! But while the Assyrians rested perfectly immune from any fear of their Moslem neighbors, the uncertainty of the final outcome of the great war became to them an ever present shadow, giving rise to the surmisings of another dreadful flight, and keeping them in the misery of an unsettled situation.

## **THE VISIT OF THE PATRIARCH TO THE GRAND DUKE NICHOLAI**

The headquarters of the Russian southern armies were in Tiflis; and the Grand Duke Nicholai had been shifted as the Commander-in-chief of the Western Armies to handle the Turkish situation in the south. The Assyrians, under the leadership of their Patriarch, were already recognized by Russia as an allied nation, having sided with the allied powers. The Russian military authorities ' in Persia, therefore, urged Mar Shimon to pay a visit to the Uncle of the

Czar. The plight, as well as the future of his flock being an ever present burden upon his heart, the head of the Nestorian Church consented to do so. He was escorted with military honors as far as Julpha, the southern gate of entry into the empire of the Czar, where he was received with greater honors still. On a special train, provided by the authorities, and with an escort of high Russian officials, he arrived in the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Georgia. The city had assumed a bridal aspect. Its streets were bedecked with banners and bunting, and thousands of smaller flags were waving a hearty welcome to the hero of the Kurdistan Mountains. With an escort of Russian dignitaries, preceded by the stirring strains of patriotic music, and between the solid walls of cheering multitudes, the Nestorian Patriarch was conducted to a palace prepared for him by the government. Perhaps no greater honors could have been bestowed upon any monarch of any of the neighboring kingdoms. His arrival was also welcomed by the Czar himself through a telegram that will appear on another page. As the highly honored guest of the Uncle of the Czar, Mar Shimon remained in Tiflis seven days. And during those hope-inspiring days, from the Palace of the Grand Duke, he poured into the very heart of the Russian empire his just claims and complaints, together with the heart rending tale of his exiled people's woes.

The emperor was truly awakened to a deep sense of genuine sympathy, and also to a realization of Russia's responsibility toward the critical situation of a small Christian nation, which had so bravely risked its very existence, in order to do its humble share in the great cause, for which, even though the Allied nations were also bleeding, nevertheless, they were in no danger of such total extermination as were Mar Shimon and his people.

Had the Czar of Russia continued to sit upon his throne; or had the lawless regime succeeded the imperial house of Romanoff, appeared even in the rags of some political decency; or had it manifested even in a deteriorated form the standards of a rational government, a story altogether different than the one so imperfectly portrayed, would have appeared in these humble pages. The emperor meant well. He became truly solicitous as to the welfare and the future of the small Assyrian nation. But who can prophesy tomorrow's events? A continually grumbling race, which has steadily sought radical changes in the political forms of its government, without knowing what it desires, and without a desire to change its own character and alter its own attitude toward Christ the real and everlasting King of the earth, there is no telling what it may do, or what step it may take next. So Mar Shimon, the Patriarch of the Nestorian Church, and the acknowledged head of the Assyrian nation, in the midst of his most happy expectations, did not know that blacker days yet, and a more distant exile still, were awaiting his people in the near future.

It is a most gracious arrangement of providence, that tomorrow, with its joys or sorrows, with its successes or failures, should remain concealed from the view and the knowledge of the mortals. What could this brave Patriarch of thirty years of age have done, had he then seen the still sadder disasters which were yet to befall his people and his flock? How, would he have felt, had he seen in advance the fearful tragedy that was to follow his own assassination? Infinitely better not to see tomorrow, and be satisfied with what Christ taught when he said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Happy and hopeful, highly pleased and greatly encouraged, Mar Shimon thanked the Czar and bade farewell to the Grand Duke Nicholai. His departure from Tiflis was again marked with the bestowal of the previous honors, while his re-entry into Persia was made an occasion for a pageantry given the oriental monarchs.

Shortly after his arrival in Salinas, he decided to visit his people in Urmia. This decision had perhaps a greater significance to the Assyrian people as a whole, so far as their national aspirations were concerned, than any other event connected with their entry into the World War. With their characteristic broad mindedness, the Nestorian Patriarchs had never objected to the establishment of missionary enterprises in the midst of their people. They had welcomed every educational or religious effort that might contribute to the moral and spiritual uplift of their flocks. This liberal leniency of the successors of Bar Sabae had given rise to the existence of certain sectarian factions among the Persian Assyrians, who had become so saturated with unreasonable religious prejudices and leanings of their own, as to be led to lose sight of national unity and national aspirations. It is indeed quite possible to become so absorbed with the hope and the reality of the coming Kingdom of Christ, as to see no distinction between man and man, or between nation and nation. But the adherents of the various factions were very far from having attained those spiritual heights, and perhaps they had never dreamed of the glory of the coming Kingdom. They were a set of sects, among them undoubtedly many genuinely converted Christians, many precious sons and daughters of God, but as a whole, they were almost entirely ignorant as to those potential possibilities of an emancipated, united and liberally educated Christian Assyrian nation.

Urmia had witnessed many times some gigantic processions accorded to the visiting crown princes of Persia; but this ancient city, perhaps never in its entire history had beheld such glorious reception, like the one that was given to the Nestorian Patriarch. The very Moslems, who a few months before were bent upon total extermination of the Christians, now to be the first in the bestowal vied with each other to be the first in the bestowal of their honors! Cowards and hypocrites they were, a genuine product of their own religion. For after the manner of Judas, while

they were giving their reverential salams to a Christian Patriarch with their heads bent to the ground, in their wicked hearts they were concocting the devilish conspiracy, which led to the assassination of the very man at whose feet they lay prostrate now.

The Assyrians of Urmia gave a banquet in honor of the Patriarch. To the banquet were invited Russian Generals and officers, the Russian consul, various misbodies, the bishops of the Nestorian Church, sionary together with the Maliks of the mountain Assyrians. It was at this banquet that the great significance of the visit of Mar Shimon became apparent. Here in this banquet all sectarian fences were removed, old sectarian prejudices banished, and Mar Shimon Benyamin was publicly acknowledged and proclaimed as the political head of the United Assyrians.

In the midst of this joyous demonstration, the Russian consul, who had acquired the knowledge of the Assyrian language, rose to his feet, and in the Assyrian language said: "Gentlemen: You all have heard with what pageantry His Beatitude Mar Shimon, the Patriarch, was welcomed in Tiflis by Grand Duke Nicholai Nichalovich, and by all Russian dignitaries and Russian people there. You will all rejoice as I have rejoiced, to hear the telegram of His Majesty the Emperor, which he sent to Mar Shimon through His Highness the Grand Duke. I will read it:"

'I request of Your Highness to tell Mar Shimon, the Patriarch of the Nestorian Assyrians, how deeply I have felt the influence of his prayers. I believe our God will help us in the plan of our work to emancipate the Christians of Turkey from their centuries long afflictions. I feel heartily grateful to the Patriarch for the help he has rendered in the war, and for his willingness to co-operate with us.'

(signed) "NICHOLAI."

"I will read another telegram," continued the consul, "from his Excellency the Russian Minister in Teheran." He says, "Please tell his Beatitude Mar Shimon, that I heartily share with the joys of the Assyrians in having the Patriarch in their midst. There is for his Beatitude and his people waiting a clear and peaceful future. I request his prayers.'

"Now, in the name of the Czar," added the consul, "I ask you all to be patient, and to believe that the servants of the Czar will do all in their power to carry out the wishes of his Majesty the emperor concerning you."

Who among the Assyrians would not be intoxicated with the effect of such joyous tidings? These assurances, together with the liberal assistance given by the Russian government, acted like tonic administered to a feeble body. All previous sorrows were almost entirely forgotten; all garments of mourning were transformed into festal robes; and the hopelessness of yesterday was turned into the happiest expectations of tomorrow. Poverty, suffering, and even additional sacrifices from now on, were no longer looked upon by the Assyrians with a paralyzing fear, but rather, they were hopefully regarded as righteousness of their claim for independence and freedom, which they desired above all else. The star of Assyria appeared bright on the horizon, while the elements that would soon make it obscure were constantly working unseen and unobserved by the eye of man.

## **THE ASSYRIAN EXPEDITION TO THEIR FORMER HABITATIONS**

In the sober moments, which followed the hope-inspiring promises of Russia, the Nestorian Patriarch came to recall with bitter sorrow the tragedy of Gavar, and the fearful outrages perpetrated upon his people by the Kurds. Dreadful as those massacres had been, still immeasurably more unbearable to him became the painful thought that a large number of young Assyrian women were being held in captivity in the various Kurdish harems. And now, having an ample supply of arms and ammunition placed at his disposal by the Russian military authorities, he decided to take a punitive expedition into Kurdistan, with the view of rescuing the captives, and punishing those ferocious wolves of the mountains, who had so mercilessly devoured part of his beloved flock. The Russian staff hailed with joy the plan of Mar Shimon, and assigned a few officers to accompany the expedition, and report officially the result of their observations as to the merit and the fighting qualities of the Nestorian warriors, whose fame had become known in part only to the Russians.

It was in the early part of June, 1917, that the Assyrian expedition, under the immediate command of the Patriarch himself, crossed the Persian frontier, and entered into Turkey again; one-half advancing by the way of Margavar, and the other by the way of Targavar; thus making it impossible for the enemy to make any attempt of a flank movement. The Assyrian advance assumed the shape of a triangle, with Garvar, the scene of the Nestorian massacres, as the goal where the two armies were to meet.

The northern expedition, which the Patriarch accompanied, was placed under the command of his brother, David Efendi, the father of the present Mar Shimon; the southern expedition was commanded by a younger Assyrian, who was destined to become in generalship one of the wonders of the great war. He is now known as General Agha Petros, and rightly called by western correspondents the "New Nebuchadnezzar of Assyria." His native land was

Baz, and belonged to the independent tribe of that name. He received a fair education, and early in life he manifested those instincts and aspirations that led him to his present position. He moved into Persia, and some years before the war he was appointed as the Turkish Consul in Urmia. In this capacity he served largely the interest of his own people, protecting even the Persian Assyrians from their oppression in the hands of local authorities. For the deliverance of a large number of Kurdistan Assyrians from extermination at the hands of the Kurdish hordes by the diplomatic use of his consular authority, he received a medal from the Pope of Rome. At the commencement of the great war, foreseeing the plight of his people, he resigned his position, and devoted his entire time to devise ways and means to solve the problem of his people's salvation. Perhaps he alone, together with the Patriarch, were the only two persons who fully apprehended the peril to which their nation was exposed. And Mar Shimon found no little comfort in relying upon the judgment, tactics, patriotism, fearlessness and the military prowess of his young general. The wonderful achievement of this lion of Baz will appear in the progress of these chapters. We endeavor now to follow the expedition.



The notorious Soto, a Kurdish chief, seeking medical aid from Christian physicians. Attended by his servants. They are known as the Wolves of the Kurdistan Mountains. He was later killed during an engagement with some Assyrian forces.

The country through which these two Assyrian armies were to pass was linked together by an endless chain of natural fortifications; and behind these lofty ramparts lay the nests of Islam's vipers. The treacherous Moslems of Urmia had, of course, apprised their co-religionists of the contemplated move of Mar Shimon, and the Kurds had rallied in strong bodies to contest the progress of the Patriarch's armies.

The weak resistance of the Kurds to the advance of the right wing, under the corn mand of David Efendi, gave no indications of a determined stand on the part of the enemy. The Kurds were evidently retreating constantly to stronger positions, and with an apparent advantage of drawing the Assyrians further away from their base. They felt also confident that the left wing under Agha Petros, could not advance one step further from the eastern slopes of the high mountains, which surrounded, in a semi-circle form, the fertile plateau of Margavar, and where also a considerable number of the Turkish soldiers had remained for the sole purpose of encouraging the Kurds, or possibly holding them from bolting, as one of their chieftains later did. In the third day of its progress, David's army sighted the Kurds in force. The observations of the Russian officers, by the aid of their field glasses, gave them no little



unrest. It was a strong force, strongly entrenched on both sides of the receding slopes, over which the Assyrians had to climb before they could dislodge the enemy. It would indeed have been an act of insanity for them to have done so. But everyone of these warriors of Mar Shimon understood the mountain warfare better than the Russian officers. The Kurds instantly opened a terrific fire, which fortunately fell short, on account of the misjudged distance. One Russian officer shouted to the Assyrians to retreat. They apparently did so, but not with the same meaning the Russian had in mind. Using his own language, "I could not see them; I looked for them; they had all disappeared." Mar Shimon, against his will, was forced to remain a considerable distance in the rear. The Russian officers sheltering themselves behind the rocks, remained almost breathless, wondering what was going to happen next. There was a long silence. The Kurds also were evidently in a dilemma. The morning sun had climbed to its zenith, and there was no sign of the Assyrians yet. They had 'gone back a considerable distance, and, unobserved by the Kurds, they had sent two bodies of their men to attack the latter in the rear. A third body advanced again to the front, so as to be observed by the enemy, and arrest his attention. It kept the Kurds busy in sending volley after volley to check the advance. The Assyrians in this manner succeeded in holding the attention of the enemy till their own brethren had made the opposite slopes of the mountains. Early in the afternoon of the same day they stood over their enemies! The execution of this day was the first instalment paid by the Kurds for the massacre of Gavar. The achievement of the Assyrians was so great, and the destruction of these Kurds so extensive, that the Russian officer, in addressing later the Patriarch, said: "Your Beatitude, having seen the valor and the courage of your men, I wish to be received not as an officer, but as an ordinary soldier."

It fell to the lot of the left wing to encounter a stronger resistance. The fearless young General was always indiscreetly at the head of his army. He had many narrow escapes. In one instance, after the defeat of the enemy, as he continued to advance across the treacherous hills, he was fired at from behind a rock at a range of eight feet. He captured the Kurd, fed him and set him free, telling him to go back and tell the Kurds everywhere that the Christians were not only not killing their prisoners of war, but they were feeding them and taking good care of them.

The positions which Agha Petros attacked were a nest which had become a pest of annoyance to the Persian government for more than a century. It was this Shiekh of Nochia, who nearly forty years before had laid siege on Urmia with the view of capturing and plundering the city. And he would certainly have succeeded if it had not been for the great influence of Dr. Joseph Cochran, an American Medical Missionary, who, while dead, yet he speaketh by the undying impressions of his Christian life, and by his great humanitarian service for both the Assyrians and the Moslems as well. The Sheikh was later called to Constantinople, from which place he never returned. But he was succeeded by his sons and grandsons, who continued to remain as a cancer spot in these mountains of Margavar.

Because of the priestly position of the house of Abdul Kader, a large number of the Kurds had rallied around the Sheikh. They were assisted, as stated above, by a force of the Turkish regulars under Turkish officers. The Kurds and the Turks were completely routed after a battle that lasted all day. Agha Petros, in his report of this battle, says: "The Assyrian soldiers attacked like tigers, assailing one bulwark of the enemy and then another in succession. They looked as if they were flying across the hills to attack the foe in the rear as well. Among the dead we found a number of Turkish regulars, and among the took one Turkish officer." The Russian officers who accompanied the left wing of the Assyrian army recommended on this day eight men to receive the cross of St. George.



A group of Targavar Assyrian Warriors, feared by the Kurds. While protecting the Persian North Western boundaries, they were betrayed into the hands of the enemies by Mahamad Ali Shah, now the deposed King of Persia. Col. Baijan with his decorations, appears seated on the left.

After this crushing defeat, the lawless brigands of Kurdistan deserted their homes and their villages, and fled to the mountains further west. After several small skirmishes with the enemy, the eastern portion of Kurdistan was made safe for a child to travel through. During the month of July the right and the left wings of the punitive expedition met in Gavar as previously arranged.



The lawless brigands of the Kurdistan Mountains.

The Kurds, situated between Gavar and the Persian frontier, had been severely punished, but the arch enemy, and the chief instigator of the Assyrian massacres in Turkey, still remained nestled in his fortress of Chal, which was some three days' journey distant from the victorious army of the Patriarch. The Assyrians remained a considerable length of time in Gavar, sending smaller expeditions to the surrounding country in search of the hiding Kurds, and also waiting for the reports of their spies as to the movement of the Turkish forces. While waiting in Gavar, the Nestorian warriors excavated the ruins of the burned villages, to collect the bones of their martyrs, and give them decent burials. They also removed what was left of the bodies of the victims out of the wells -of water, and from the miry ditches, to be interred with religious ceremony in the Christian cemetery. It was the discovery of these bodies that revealed the fiendish nature of the atrocities to which these Christians had been subjected before they were finally stabbed or shot or cut to death. The Nestorian mountaineers, as a rule, were accustomed to such sights, inflicted periodically by the Kurds upon their defenceless brethren who dwelt in Kurdish 'communities. But now they could not restrain the floods of their tears, nor check their burning zeal to avenge the blood of the helpless women and their infants. Chal, the nest of hellish crimes, must be invested in spite of its apparently impenetrable ramparts; and Soto, the author of the atrocious deeds, must pay in full for the long list of his iniquities.

The spies, in the meanwhile, had returned, and brought a favorable report to the expedition. The Sari-Kamish defeat had staggered the Turkish forces, and some Russian contingents had crossed the Persian frontiers further north, and were stationed in commanding positions on the Turkish soil.

It was in the early part of September when Mar Shimon ordered the advance of his army for the punishment of Soto. The latter had concentrated his forces in Oramar, which he maintained as his headquarters. It was such a stronghold, protected by such inaccessible heights, that the Russian officers became skeptical of any success, and suggested the advisability of a retreat. Their estimate of the difficulty of the task was correct, but they would soon be compelled to form newer opinions as to the fighting qualities of the Patriarch's men. The expedition was supplied with two machine guns, which were loaded on mules. The beasts of burden might have been serviceable if the ordinary, narrow and zigzag paths were chosen in order to make the summit of the towering heights. The guns were actually borne by men over the steep and slippery slopes. Soto had relied on his alliance with the innumerable obstacles of nature, and therefore had these cloudy peaks guarded by only a small portion of his men. The Assyrians made the steep slopes, and Soto's guards opened fire. Had this personified demon had his entire force stationed there, this battle would have been known in history as "the Assyrian battle in the clouds." The guards fled after they had killed one and wounded two of their pursuers. But their own dead numbered sixteen and their prisoners thirty. This task had fallen upon men under the command of the Patriarch's brother. The army of Agha Petros had advanced from another direction and had already invested Oramar. When the Russian Officers saw the place they again urged a retreat, and the leaving of Soto alone. But the Assyrians could not forget the ghastly sights they had beheld in the ditches and in the ruins of Gavar. It was this man also who had poured a rain of bullets into the camp of the refugees, when the Nestorians were trying to extricate themselves from between the many millstones of Islam's wrath. Nor would Agha Petros listen to the counsel of the officers to postpone an attack on Soto till the other wing

of Mar Shimon's army had arrived. He pointed to the restlessness of his men. They were as fearless as he himself. Before nightfall Oramar had fallen, and Mar Shimon arrived to see the smoke of the place rising to the heavens. Soto had fled, and the Assyrian captive women were released out of his harem. The Russian officers could hardly believe their eyes.

It became evident, however, that the man the Assyrians were seeking had fled to Nervi, situated at a distance of two days' journey from Oramar. At Nervi, Soto had erected his lordly palace and there he had also constructed his strongest defenses. It was deemed advisable to let Agha Petros and his men return to Urmia, and on their way back search once more the nests he had disturbed, and also to allow an opportunity to the men under the command of the Patriarch's brother, to make the second attack on the devouring wolf they were so persistently hunting. With the brother of the Patriarch there was another brave warrior in the person of Malik Khoshaba, who came to be known as the "Lion of Tiari," and possibly surpassing in his courage, if it were possible, all other Assyrian generals.

The ruins of Oramar and its villages were still smouldering when Agha Petros turned toward the east, while the Patriarch, with the second wing of his expeditionary forces, headed for the west, persistent on the capture of Soto, dead or alive. On the 17th day of September, the Assyrians fell in line. The Kurdish chieftain had seen to it that the progress of his pursuers was to be contested at every pass, and at every point in the way which gave the defenders a decided advantage. Their resistance, however, caused absolutely no change in the program, as it never lasted any length of time. The ferocious wolves of prey had now become so many packs of shivering foxes, anxious only to make a run to the obscure places of concealment and hide from the righteous wrath of a people they had so maliciously wronged.

On the 20th day of September, the Assyrians saw in the distance the fortifications of Chal, nestled on the summit of a mountain, which rose up 4,000 feet in the air, and stood almost in perpendicular form, overlooking the valley below.

Was it possible that this gorgeous country should have fallen to the lot of a wild people, whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand against them? Some of the most picturesque mountains on earth were lordling over the rich possessions of a notorious brigand and murderer! The valley below abounded with all kinds of fruits, both of vine and tree. A horseman on horseback might ride unobserved through the grass that had grown to such astounding height in that fertile soil. The sun had descended from its zenith, and it was fast rolling away to kiss the equally charming cheeks of those eternal heights on the opposite side that overlooked the western horizon. The entire outlook appeared like a vast cathedral, covered by a huge roof of purple hue, and supported by the most gigantic pillars of solid rock. On the very brow of this temple of matchless splendor was seated a Kurd behind his ramparts, apparently certain that there was no sin in the killing of the Christians, or if there was any, that sin could never overtake him in his impregnable fastness which had defied even the menace and the mandates of the Turkish Empire.

Artoosh, a town of three hundred Kurdish families, was the first to fall in the way of the advancing Assyrians. Its inhabitants, anxious to save time and perhaps their homes as well, sent word to the Patriarch that they would surrender. A genuine surrender, according to the long-existing etiquette of these highlands, had to be accompanied by a tribute. The Assyrians waited patiently till the nightfall. Seeing no sign of any emissaries, they lighted the torch that had lighted the Christian villages of Gavar. Artoosh went up in the smoke, and Soto, as he saw the conflagration that illumined the valley, realized that he was paying another instalment toward his enormous debt to the Assyrians.

Without waiting for rest the punitive expedition moved forward. The Russian official observers could no longer glory in the fortitude of the most hardened elements of their empire's vast armies. It was a machinery of constant motion, as if the feet that carried these men on their mission were made of other material than flesh, blood and bone. Before midnight the Assyrians were at the gates of Arbush, another village which added to the wealth of the Kurdish chieftain.

For centuries this Kurdish town had tolerated the existence of an Assyrian settlement. But now the Christian inhabitants were detained as prisoners and captives. The Kurds had fled, and only the Christians had remained. No pen can possibly describe the joy of these people as they, with the light of the candles in their hand, went out to meet their Patriarch and their emancipator! But Soto must be captured; his men must be punished; and the expedition moved further on. Morning had just begun to light the summit of the hills, when Assyrians found themselves in the midst of the Kurds of Apinyanish. The latter were well aware of the expedition, but had never dreamed that the men whom they had once sought to exterminate could so quickly have overtaken them. They were taken by surprise. They became demoralized. They left their homes and fled. The Assyrians gave them no chance to escape. They pursued them across the hills and in the valleys. A few only escaped to tell Soto of the disaster that had overtaken his Apinyanish allies. The burning villages were left behind, and the Assyrians were on their way to the final goal, known by the name of "The Castle of Chal."

In giving a description of this battle, perhaps it would be better to use the language of the Assyrian eye witness, who says:

"In the history of our forefathers, there have been many battles between the Kurds and the Assyrian independent tribes. But not one could possibly equal in heroism, or in the greatness of the victory, the battle of Chal, which took place in the latter part of September, 1917.

"The Assyrians were under the impression that, after the fall of Oramar, and the disastrous defeat of the Kurds, the Castle of Chal, with its one hundred forts, would have been deserted. They, therefore, were very much surprised when their advance guard reported that the Kurds had assembled there and were prepared to give battle. We must admit that had the fact of the assembling of the Kurds in Chal been known to the Assyrians, in all probability the attacking force would have been prevented from taking a step that might have meant its annihilation, although it is a known fact that the Assyrian warriors would have preferred death to the reproach of the Kurds by falling back at this stage of their victories. One indeed can hardly believe his own eyes to see this mighty place fall so easily. Here was a castle with its one hundred ramparts, all constructed in tiers. Here were the fortifications that were nestled on a height that measured on one side of the mountain three hundred yards, and on the other one thousand. Behind these ramparts the Kurds stood ready to send destructive volleys when the Assyrians came within their range. Five men of the advance guard removed their shoes and stockings, unbeknown to their commanders, and unobserved by the Kurds who were defending the side of the lesser height, climbed up on their hands and knees till they reached the top and stood over the fortifications. They were observed by their comrades below, who did not recognize them. And just as they were being made a target by the Assyrians below, Malik Khoshaba shouted, 'Don't shoot! Climb up after them!' Twenty others did the same. But after the latter reached the top, the first five had thrown themselves into an upper rampart, losing one man, but killing eleven of the enemy. When the Assyrians below saw their flag lifted over the castle, they in a body gave a deafening yell and ran to the giant gate of Chal. They smashed it by sheer force, and with bombs in their hands they entered. The sound of the explosives simply paralyzed the enemy. A remnant of two hundred and forty Kurds, including the son of the chieftain of Chal, were taken captive. Soto had escaped, and his whereabouts could never be traced! The Castle was burned to the ground, and the plunder of sheep and cattle and horses recovered."

The expedition then penetrated as far as the banks of Zava. From there it turned and returned to Urmia, where the victors were received with a great demonstration, and where the Assyrian officers were decorated by the Russian medals which were awaiting them.

## **THE FALL OF THE CZAR AND ITS EFFECT UPON THE ASSYRIANS**

Those were happy days for the Assyrians when their ancient lands were cleared of the enemy, and they expected soon to occupy a part of their historic Fatherland made forever free from the Moslem bondage. And even the Persian Assyrians entertained strong hope that the district in which they had been dwelling, because of the pre-war contention of Turkey as to its ownership, might now be attached to the eastern Kurdistan, to form an Assyrian Republic. A clear sky for the Assyrians could have never hung over those Islam-cursed lands; brighter hopes could have never filled the heart of Mar Shimon; and the final triumph of the All'-es could never have made a sweeter balm to heal the most gaping wound of the great war. But who knows what tomorrow may happen? The wheels of destiny are not run by the will or the wishes of men. Perhaps the most abundant, and the most painful of earth's pains are its disappointments; cherished hopes that were never realized, dreams that never came true, glorious prospects that turned into heaps of melancholy ruins. In the midst of those joyous hopes and expectations, and out of a clear sky, one day there came the sound of a deafening thunderclap. The commander of the Russian forces in Persia, who was at the time in Urmia, called his officers and men together, and in the hearing of Mar Shimon and his leaders, with tears in his eyes read a telegram which he was holding in a trembling hand. He suppressed his emotions, and said: "Officers, men and friends, I have received this telegram from Petrograd, which I am compelled to read to you all: " 'Czar has been dethroned!'

A news of this astounding import would naturally act like a thermometer that would register the real feelings of the hearers. Its stunning effect upon the Assyrians was, of course, a foregone conclusion. But what about the rank and file of the Russian forces, which had heretofore, all alike, served the Emperor and their country? A few wept, and wept bitterly; but the vast majority broke loose like animals released from an iron cage. They shouted, they sang, they unfurled the red flag of the so-called "freedom," and began to celebrate the impending doom of their country and their people!



Human race has never been satisfied with any regime of its own making. Patriarchal, Judicial, Feudal, Monarchical and Imperial systems had had their day. Democracy now had to be experimented with by all peoples and all races. But democracy is not a code of laws; it is the condition of a well-developed and well-advanced mind. It is not a system despotically formed by masses; it is a moral state of the individuals. It is not an imitation of a certain ideal; but the inspiration that gives form to that ideal. In other words, it is not in what we want, but in what we are and what we are capable of being. Therefore, of most of the people of the earth, the Russians were least prepared for the inauguration of a regime which they never understood. A new wine could not be put in an old bottle. The Russians took an irrational chance by doing so; consequently, the bottle ripped open in a thousand places. Neither the hand of a Lenin, nor that of a Trotsky, will ever be able to mend together the shattered fragments of the vessel. There must, in this land of stupendous areas, either a perpetual chaos reign for many decades yet to come, or else this unprepared people return to a modified semblance of their former authority, before they can command the respect and the confidence of other nations.

For the Russian soldiers, heretofore, it was a campaign for the protection of the Assyrians; but now it became one of destruction. They heartlessly deserted a forest of guns, piles upon piles of ammunition, together with a vast number of stores, all filled with provisions and other accessories of the war, only to fall into the possession of their former enemies. Thanks to those two hundred loyal Russians, who determined to cast their lot with the Assyrians, and die with them if necessary, rather than return to a country which was destined to suffer by the misrule of men who had gone hopelessly mad. They immediately laid their hands on the stores that had been established in Urmia, and saved from plunderers a certain supply of arms and ammunition. These were turned over to Mar Shimon and his army, and were considered as sufficient for the Assyrians to defend themselves therewith, till some miraculous assistance came to them from some unseen source, or some miraculous way was opened to them that would lead them to where they knew not yet! For now that Russia had become a nonentity in the war, the Turks would surely return in force to invade Persia again, and to harass the British operations in Mesopotamia.

How infallibly true the meaning and the import of those awful words which Christ spoke when he said: "Not everyone that says, Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The men who would never venture on any mission or task without crossing themselves, began now to trample upon the very cross they thought they were defending in those benighted lands of Islam! The iniquitous deeds of which they became guilty equaled in their repulsiveness those of the Urmia Tartars. They exchanged their guns for wine, and their garments for vodka. And when their scanty means were exhausted, they inaugurated a campaign of oppression and robbery upon the very people who had before been their protege, as well as upon the Mohammedans. On their way back to the dreamland of Bolshevism, they resembled an army of locusts, devouring everything and everybody, leaving behind ruin and destruction, disgrace and humiliation, together with a helpless people who had staked all upon the pledges and the honor of Russia.

## **THE ISOLATED POSITION OF THE ASSYRIANS**

The Persian Assyrians had already tasted of the bitter ingredients, squeezed into their cup of affliction by a sudden and unexpected departure of the Russian soldiers from Urmia. But terrible as their experience had been, they had been able to endure the horrors of those frightful days in the certainty of the Russians' return to their former positions.

While the fear of a local uprising against the Christians was now eliminated by the presence in Urmia of the mountain Assyrians, nevertheless, blacker clouds still rolled into their skies, and threatened them with fiercer storms. The position of the Assyrians resembled that of a small boat, ready to be lashed by the mighty waves of an angry sea. They found themselves surrounded on all sides by at least fifty millions of Moslems, with Russia gone to pieces, and more than 600 miles of almost impassable mountains intervening between them and the British expeditionary forces in Mesopotamia. It was a terrible plight. The whole situation presented the outlook of a sweeping catastrophe. It spelled a disaster that meant to Mar Shimon and his people the eradication of a Christian race from the face of the earth!

In moments like these the strongest of men lose their courage, and the wisest heads lose their mental equilibrium. Mar Shimon called his leaders together for consultation. To the conference he invited also the heads of the missionary bodies in Urmia, together with the former Russian consul who was now decidedly more pro-Assyrian than pro-Russian. The telephone service between Urmia and Tiflis, in Caucasia, had not been interrupted yet. It was soon learned that, with the breaking up of Russia, and by the approval of the new regime in that land, Caucasia had attained her century-long aspirations, and had become an independent Republic. Cognizant of the great part the

Assyrians had played in the war, the new government of South Russia had urged Mar Shimon to hold on in his struggle, and had suggested also the formation of an alliance between the Assyrians and the Republic of Georgia. In the meanwhile, the representatives of Great Britain and France got busy, and endeavored to bring some sort of a cosmos out of a tangle in the southern regions of Russia. They pledged the heartiest support of their governments to the new Republic. The new government was quickly organized, and immediately took precautionary measures against any possible attacks by the Turks.

In the conference called by Mar Shimon, it was decided to send three Assyrian representatives to Tiflis, in order to come to some definite understanding with the new Republic of South Russia. The delegates of Mar Shimon were officially received, and the plan of an Alliance thoroughly discussed and confirmed. The Assyrians were to hold the front from Salinas to Savojboolagh, while the new government pledged itself to assist Mar Shimon both in money and in ammunition, and also in trained officers for the artillery.

These negotiations were going on still, and telephone communications were constantly being exchanged between Mar Shimon and the government of Tiflis, when there appeared in Urmia a Captain Gracy of the British Army. The notice of his arrival was given out by the Rev. William Shedd, D.D., to whom, as a noble missionary, and as the American Vice-Consul, reference has already been made in these pages. He informed the Patriarch that a British official representative desired to speak to the leaders of the Assyrian people. Besides Mr. Nikitin, the former Russian consul, there was now in Urmia also a Red Cross unit of the French government, headed by Dr. P. Caujole, and also a French army officer. Among the remaining loyal Russians, who had stood by their former consul, were also a number of the Russian officers. All these, together with the foreign heads of the religious bodies, were invited by Mar Shimon to be present when Captain Gracy addressed the meeting.

Moments of great anxieties the Assyrians had experienced before, but not of such intensity. The foreigners could mount their horses, if they so desired, or jump into their carriages, and get out of the zone of an impending peril. But what would a nation in exile do? The alliance made with an uncertain Republic, and the pledges of a new government, the strength of which lay similarly in the pledges of support given to it by two remote governments, could have acted upon the mind of the people only as an opiate, administered for temporary relief from an attack of terrific convulsions, and which, with the passing of its effect, would be succeeded again by a still deeper sense of fear, and a still keener consciousness of pain. What did England have to say? What hopes its official representative had come to offer? What encouragement, and what comfort? What assistance or what pledge? With hope and despair contending for supremacy in the minds of Mar Shimon and his advisers, Captain Gracy, accompanied by Dr. Shedd, entered into the audience room of the Patriarch, where he was awaited and welcomed with prolonged cheers. After he was introduced by the American Vice-Consul, the British army officer, and the official mouthpiece of the British government, rose up and said:

"Dear Friends:-This is the first opportunity I have had to have the honor of being present with you. I wish now to speak to you with reference to the purpose and the plan of the Allied powers, concerning the small and oppressed nations such as yours. This great war that has now raged for so long, and is still raging at tremendous cost in blood and material, to the allies, has but one main object, and that is, the emancipation of small and oppressed nations such as yours. For centuries you have been crushed under the millstone of your enemies. You have been oppressed beyond measure. You have now come to the verge of extinction as a people and as a language, thanks to the misdeeds of the Turks, assisted by their allies, the Germans. I have come to tell you that, inasmuch as the great allied powers are making tremendous sacrifices, and are shedding streams of blood for the sake of saving you, and making you free, it is your duty also as a Christian nation to continue in the war, and fight as you have so splendidly fought in the past. Remember what you were in bygone centuries. The mighty deeds and achievements of your empire are today the richest treasures which adorn the museums of Europe, and which still inspire the people of the western world. Let the memories of your own past inspire you to the performance of greater deeds. Let the hopes of a glorious future make you patient and persevering to the end. Remember, we are fighting for your freedom; and you must also continue to contribute toward that final goal!"

This was the gist of the speech made by the representative of the British government. Its language was plain enough. It was full of hope, and it carried with it, in unmistakable terms, a guarantee of freedom to the Assyrians, provided, of course, the final issue of the great war was favorable to the allied nations. But in order not to leave any ground for doubt, and in order to make the point of Assyrians' freedom doubly certain, some Assyrians put the question again to Captain Gracy in his own language; and again the Patriarch and his people were assured of their freedom, and of possessing a home land, wherein they would enjoy that freedom under the protection of the allied powers.

While this hope lent its enchantment to the view of the mountain Assyrians, it could not produce the same effect upon the Persian Assyrians. It was a well known fact that, since the Russian entry into Persia, which was, as stated

before, some years before the great war, the Persians had gradually lost their confidence in England's friendship, and had now openly become pro-German. But the government of Persia, notwithstanding the allurements offered to it by Germany, and notwithstanding the pressure brought to bear upon it by the representatives of Turkey, had apparently maintained its neutrality, and had kept the country out of the war. This nominal neutrality had secured for Persia an acknowledged respect, by the allied powers, to protect her rights and her boundaries. The Persian Assyrians, therefore, by virtue of their nativity, raised the question of their neutrality and asked the British representative if they could lawfully cast their lot with that of their mountain brethren, and contribute their quota to the army of their leader and their Patriarch; and that, if they did take such a step, whether they would not justly incur the displeasure of the government of which they were then still the subjects. The Persian Assyrians, of course, had already made it known to the Persian government that, by organizing a military force, as they had already done, they had absolutely no revolutionary thought against their government; but, inasmuch as the government had been unable to protect them from a previous violence, they had simply taken a precautionary measure, to defend themselves against any possible repetition of the previous outrages, as well as against the Kurdish lawless expeditions which were aimed at their hurt. Still, the Persian Assyrians' spokesmen sought a reply to their query from Captain Gracy. The latter then added, and said:

"You should all think very deeply upon this matter, and prize your unique opportunity. It is the duty of you all to unite under the leadership of your great leader, the Patriarch. You have been known among the great powers, and recognized by them through the great name of Mar Shimon. There are no Persian Assyrians or mountain Assyrians. You are all one people, constituting the Assyrian nation. Such is the good will and wish of the allied powers concerning you. I have been sent by my government to declare to you, as well as to other small nations, that you are all fighting for your own freedom. I have said the same thing to the Armenians. I am just coming from Van. They are continuing in their struggle for their freedom. You must also unite under one head and do the same. And so far as the feelings of the Persian government are concerned, you leave that matter to our legation, and to the legations of the allied powers in Teheran."

"Furthermore," continued Captain Gracy, all the expenses of your army will be paid by the allies. It has already been arranged with the new government of Caucasia that you shall receive all guns and ammunition you need, and even military assistance, if you require any. Freedom is a very precious and costly possession. It has always been bought by sacrifice. You must also be willing to do the same, if you wish to possess your Fatherland, where honey and milk flow."

Captain Gracy took his departure, and the Assyrians began to reorganize their forces, in order to face the regular armies of Turkey, in the front assigned to their safe keeping.

## **THE FUTILE ATTEMPTS OF MAR SHIMON FOR A FRIENDLY UNDERSTANDING WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF PERSIA**

While the Assyrians, as stated before, had no fear of the Mohammedan element, in the midst of which they were now living, Mar Shimon deemed it advisable to allay the fear of the Moslems from the vengeance of their former victims; and also to remove any possible suspicion on the part of Tabriz government as to the presence of his men in Urmia. From the time of the succession of the Kajar Dynasty to the throne of Persia, Tabriz had become the seat of the crown princes of Persia. The city was also the Capital of the large state of the Persian Azarbaijan. The Moslem element of the state is not of Pharsee or Persian origin; it belongs to the Tartar race; and it is a blood member with the Turks, as well as with the Mohammedans of Caucasia and Crimea. Consequently, these adherents of Mohammed lack all the refinement, the education and the polish of the Persians. They possess all the ferocious brutality of the Turks. There can be no comparison whatever between the two peoples. They have absolutely nothing in common, save the traditions of their common religion. The sympathy of this element, therefore, was decidedly with the Turks, even though they did not agree with the latter as to the legitimacy of the Chalephate succession. Accordingly, they could no more be trusted than an adder, hid in the grass. Notwithstanding the fact that he knew their dishonesty and treachery and their concealed enmity, the Patriarch, nevertheless, in a true and sincere Christian spirit, endeavored to come to some understanding with them, and establish, if possible, friendly relations between the two peoples on a purely humanitarian basis and principle. This move on the part of the Patriarch was apparently received with great joy and jubilation. A great mass meeting was called in the spacious court of the big mosque in Urmia. Printed notices announced to the public the names of the speakers from both religions. The Mohammedans and the Christians, for the first time in the history of the Islamized Persia, sat together, apparently as human brothers and as fellow citizens of one country. Among the Mohammedan speakers were many distinguished men, like the Chief

Moitaheed, the high priest of Urmia; the Commander of the Persian forces in Urmia; the governor of Urmia, and many other social and religious dignitaries. Here, within the same walls of the "sacred" court, there had been many large meetings in the years gone by. But the Moslems had then congregated there to the call of the holy war. The very environments of the place were the reminders of the previous massacres. The very ground on which this strange audience stood, was saturated with the blood of Christian martyrs. The very walls that enclosed the sacred space still spoke with the accents and after the manner of Abel's blood. And the very mosque itself had come to remain as an undying witness to Islam's hellish outrages. For the great edifice, with its spacious court, belonged once to the Christians. The elevated stand, within the structure, where the Koran rested now, was once a Christian pulpit on which stood the Holy Bible in Assyrian language. The church and its grounds were confiscated by the adherents of Arabia's self-styled prophet, and were transformed into a cave of robbers and a den of murderers. Into this place this mixed audience was called. And here the orators of the two races and two religions were to preach on the brotherhood of man. The Assyrians had chosen three speakers only to address the meeting, while the Mohammedans had twice as many. If one was to judge from the outward appearance of this gathering, or from the polished language of the Moslem orators, or from the hearty enthusiasm with which the eloquent remarks of the Assyrian speakers were received, or from the character of the address given by one of Islam's great high priests, or from sweet sociability of the hour, and from an apparent manifestation, by the Moslems, of brotherly love, one might conclude that, while the great war was still raging in Europe, and while the Christian nations were still killing one another, and while they, at the expense of desolation in myriads of homes, were still contending for supremacy and power, here, in a corner of the earth, not very far from the spot where Adam fell, and sin and death entered into the world, were being detected symptoms which were heralding the dawn of a millennial era!

The meeting was naturally sprinkled with a large number of priests, of whom it was demanded to call their congregations together, admonish their people to cease from all hostility, and teach them to cultivate friendly feelings toward their Christian neighbors. Had these efforts been sincere, they would have proved the existence of a great transformation, or the birth of a reformation that might have been worth even the fearful tragedies of the great war. For these very men, who had heretofore proclaimed murder and massacre, were now preaching, apparently, brotherly love, peace and harmony!

However, this was all a blind. Islam perhaps had never before betrayed its characteristic hypocrisy so indiscreetly as now. Its impenitent fanatics played the role of the proverbial camel, which, by burying its head amid the wheat blades it was chewing, it formed an impression that, no one could see the protruding bumps of its massive back. The priests openly preached peace and harmony, but secretly they were planning a gigantic massacre. In the mosques they were telling the throngs to cultivate brotherly love, in the homes of their people they were urging them to prepare for another "jihad." The Governor of Urmia, Ejlal-el-Moolk, a personified demon, sent his agents broadcast into the rural districts, under the pretense of quieting the people, but in reality to urge the Mohammedans secretly to sell even the garments on their backs, and purchase arms for the day of revenge. The Assyrians were, of course, aware of this double-crossing by the Moslems, but Mar Shimon persisted in his Christian effort, continued to hope against hope, thinking that, while these offspring of Taimur the lame, might have been absolutely barren of the voice of conscience, they might still be in possession of a feeble sense of honor.



Rev. David H. Oraham, a missionary of the Brethren, who was assassinated through the instigation of the Persian governor of Urmia.



Simultaneously with this movement, Mar Shimon wrote to the Crown Prince of Persia, who was in Tabriz, explaining to him the real position of the Assyrians, and informing him again of their good will toward the Persian government. He also expressed to the successor of the Shah, his own gratitude toward the Persian government for its benevolent attitude toward the Assyrian Christians in Persia, and also for its official recognition of their religious rights and liberty. This benevolence, the epistle stated, is a matter of record, and it stands as a never crumbling monument to the credit of the only Mohammedan government, for its most liberal display of tolerance toward its non-Mohammedan subjects.

And as to the presence of the mountain Assyrians in Persia, the Patriarch wrote in explanation: ilwe have not come here of our own volition, we have no political designs, as I know, we have so been accused to your Highness by some evil doers and mischiefmakers. We have been driven away from our homes persecuted by the relentless fury of the Turkish government with all its characteristic barbarism. We have thus managed to escape the brutal sword of the Turks, and have found refuge on your sacred soil, and under your exalted and benevolent flag. I beg, therefore, that we be permitted to remain here, as the refugee guests of the most gracious government of Persia, till we come to know what God's providence has in store for us, or whither it will lead us. Indeed, it is no secret that we are today an armed camp; but even these arms we have taken up, not of our own free will, but rather as a precautionary measure against the murderous intent of our enemies and persecutors. And by doing so, I am sure, your Highness will appreciate the fact that we are at the same time protecting the boundaries of Persia, and preventing the Turks with all our strength from carrying out their former designs in confiscating these coveted parts of your kingdom. My people, therefore, rather than having the impossible political designs on the integrity of the Persian soil, as falsely reported to your Highness, in reality, and by virtue of their precarious position, are the very protectors of that soil. □

A similar letter was written to the Crown Prince by General Agha Petros, who by virtue of his long residence in Urmia, had, according to the Persian law, become a Persian subject; and who had come to be recogn-Zed as a terror to his people's foes, feared greatly, both by the Kurds and by the Moslems of Persia.



Assyrian soldiers on the alert, peacefully watching developments in the contemplated uprising of the Moslems. By Courtesy, Near East Relief.

But even the Crown Prince of Persia had been led deep into the mire of a dastardly conspiracy which, later, culminated in the assassination of Mar Shimon, and led to an attempt of a gigantic uprising of the Moslems for the extermination of the Assyrians. Consequently, no reply came to the letter of the Patriarch. Thus, instead of a courteous acknowledgment of the receipt of a most pathetic plea, the Crown Prince, together with the Governor of Tabriz, supervised the setting of a cowardly trap, and carefully inspected the plan when Islam would light the signal, and its adherents would rally to the slaughter of the Christians.

## THE SECOND UPRISING OF URMIA MOSLEMS

The new Caucasian government had redeemed one of its pledges made to the Assyrian Patriarch, by sending some officers for the purpose of training the Assyrian army. These, together with the former officers of the Russian army, who had remained in Urmia, commenced at once to reorganize the forces of Mar Shimon, and make them more familiar with the tactics of the European warfare. One branch of the military service, in which the Assyrians had always been deficient, was the use of the artillery. A special unit was, therefore, created to be trained for the

purpose of handling the eight pieces of the light cannon, and five machine guns, which were left by the Russian forces. The Assyrians were also instructed in the service of field telephone, which was indeed perhaps the most essential requirement of the army, owing to the extensiveness of the front assigned to it, and also to an abundance of passes, so remote from each other, and through any of which the Turks might be prompted to take the Assyrians by surprise. Both of these services were altogether new to the Assyrians. But it did not take long for the training officers to be firmly convinced that they could depend upon their new pupils to acquit themselves creditably in the performance of those duties for which they had trained them.

While this work of military training and organization in the army was going on, it was deemed equally important by the Patriarch that there should also be created an administrative machine with its various departments, each to perform a certain function and all to be directly responsible to the Patriarch himself and to his cabinet. To the department of Ministry, War, Foreign Affairs, Justice and Commissary, was also added a special committee for the sole purpose of devising ways and means for the unification of all the Assyrians, and their eventual concentration on one soil and under one flag. Here then was laid the foundation for future self-government, for an actual realization of which, the Assyrians were preparing to make greater sacrifices, and to shed larger streams of blood yet.

But neither was the Moslem element inactive. Whatever the Christians had been doing in the open, the Mohammedans were carrying on in secret. The entire male population of the city had been supplied with arms and ammunition which were unearched from their places of concealment. Their propagandists had persuaded a large number of volunteers from distant Mohammedan communities to come to Urmia, and they had all entered the city in disguise. In addition to these, a large number of the famous horsemen of Karadagh had been brought into the district in small detachments, and under the pretense of strengthening the boundary police force of Azarbaijan. All these Moslem elements had been thus concentrated in order to add to the strength of the "jehad," which was soon to be proclaimed. The mathematical figuring gave the Mohammedans an absolute certainty that they stood ten to one against the Christians. Having perfected their plans, they deliberately commenced with deeds of violence against Christian men and women. Their organized groups held up the Assyrians, as they traveled back and forth in the rural districts, and killed not a few in the city itself. Mar Shimon wrote a letter to Ejlal-el-Moolk, the governor, calling his attention to these outrages against innocent Christians, and asking him in the name of humanity to prevent the repetition of such hostile and evil deeds.

At this time, Agha Petros stood second to the Patriarch; and by common consent he was accepted and acknowledged as the Marshal of the Assyrian forces. His name was well known to the Moslems of Urmia from the time of his consular position in the city, as a representative of the Turkish government; but his fame as a General had now begun to disturb, to some extent, even the peace of Teheran. Consequently, in proportion to the dread the Moslems had of the Assyrian General, was their murderous hatred toward him. So at the receipt of the Patriarch's letter, the governor found his chance to set his trap for the assassination of Agha Petros, and then to unsheath the sword that would wipe off from the face of the earth "the unclean heathen," whose very presence was contaminating the sacred soil of Islam. He treacherously invited to his official residence the heads of the various Assyrian committees, including the General, for a conference, "to devise ways and means by which to prevent the recurrence of the outrages complained of by the Patriarch."

Agha Petros suspected immediately this "generous" move on the part of the governor, and sent back his regrets, saying that, as he was detained by important business, he could not attend. But before he had time to inform all the other leaders, who with himself were invited into the trap, some of them had already gone. Naturally, this conference was postponed for the following day. But those Assyrians who had innocently responded to the invitation of the governor, had seen through the veil of the conspiracy, and noticed on their departure, how the governor's sharpshooters had emerged from their places of concealment, and how their ugly looks had spelled a most painful disappointment. The situation was reported to Agha Petros, who immediately set his own wellpaid agents from among the Moslems, to conduct a secret investigation, and ascertain with absolute proofs the real scheme of Ejlal-el-Moolk. On being assured of both the conspiracy of the governor, and of the secret preparation of the Moslems for a general uprising against the Christians, Agha Petros immediately informed the Patriarch, and asked for permission from his chief, to take the initiative, and attack the Moslem forces, before the latter could occupy the advantageous positions in and around the city. Mar Shimon, however, counselled his General against assuming such responsibility in opening hostilities, reminding him of the agreement recently entered into between the Assyrians and the Moslem leaders, and also of the duty of the Assyrians, to prove their Christian honesty, and their faithfulness to their pledge and word of honor. At the same time the Patriarch wrote a second letter to the governor, now demanding an explanation of the continued outrages against the Christians, and for the reported preparations of the Moslems to attack their harmless and peaceful neighbors.

Ejlal-el-Moolk, however, had chosen, as he thought, a most Opportune moment to rise against the "heathen Christians." Certain contingents of the Assyrian forces had been sent out on picket duty; and others were strategically stationed to guard the passes through which the Turks might attempt to advance. The remainder of their army in Urmia was regarded by the governor as entirely too weak and incapable to resist his overwhelmingly superior numbers. If he could defeat and smash this small Assyrian force, the massacre of the Christians would follow in accordance with the diabolical plan he had made. Instead, therefore, of replying courteously to the Patriarch, he chose to give the explanation demanded of him by an open proclamation of the holy war.



The first surrendering of the Moslems to the Assyrian Army, as they came down the street with white flag.

## THE BATTLE AND THE SURRENDER OF URMIA

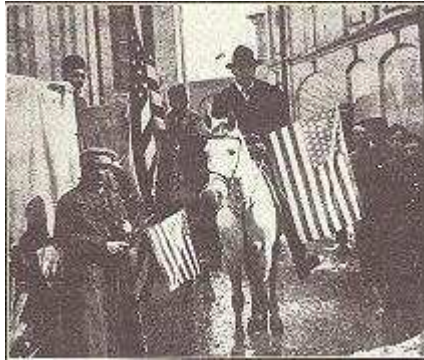
The righteousness of the reparation claims of the Persian Assyrians, against the Persian Azarbaijan government, is based upon such positive facts that they cannot possibly be found open to any contradiction. While the previous massacre of the Christians in Urmia, might be compromisingly attributed to the fanaticism of the Moslem mobs, all the succeeding outrages against the Assyrians were absolutely instigated by the Persian officials, and inaugurated under their direct supervision. Thus, the hostilities of the battle of Urmia were opened by Arshad-el-Moolk, the Commander of the Persian forces in Urmia. It was this individual who was the chief instigator of the Assyrian atrocities of 1914-1915. As a most bigoted fanatic, he was directly responsible for the deeds that had surpassed in their horrors the cruelty of the great Tartar conqueror. And because of the very atrocities, and for his hellish deeds, he was elevated to his new position by the governor general of Azarbaijan in Tabriz. It was also with his authority, as the commander of the Persian troops in Urmia that the horsemen of Karadagh had been called in small and unsuspecting units, to swell the hordes of Islam's fanatics, for the inauguration, if possible, of a more successful "jihad."

The city of Urmia had a population, estimated at 40,000. Of this total, the number of the native Assyrians did not exceed 2,000. The latter were generally grouped in the immediate neighborhoods of the three missionary centres, namely, the American, the French Catholics and the former Russian Orthodox mission quarters. The city, from ancient times, still remained enclosed within the walls of mud, raised to considerable height. It has seven gates, leading into seven main streets, all of which lead into its center, where the stores and the arched bazaars are situated. In the immediate vicinity of the city, and within one to three miles from its western, eastern and southern gates, stood the Christian towns of Charbash, Degalah and Googtapah. The last two named towns possessed two artificial hills, formed by the ashes of the never-dying fire of the ancient Zoroastrians; while the former town nestled itself on the skirt of a small mount, made famous since, by the martyrdom of an Assyrian Bishop and his Christian companions. As a precautionary measure, General Agha Petros had his three batteries planted on the three commanding hills, ready for any eventuality that might arise.

On February 9, 1918, some Assyrians who were passing through the street leading to the western gate of the city, were fired upon, and killed by the troops of Arshad-el-Moolk. Instantly the air thundered with the fearful shout of the "jihad," drowning the rattling sound of the fire arms, as they began to spell revenge and destruction. Simultaneously with this outbreak in Christian quarters, a special force was sent by Arshad-el-Moolk to surround Agha Petros in his home. The General, however, even though surprised by the suddenness of the attack on him personally, never lost his head. He shouted to his family to shelter themselves immediately in the cellar of his house;

then single-handed he manned the machine gun he had planted in a position within the building, and just for a possible day like this. While the walls and windows of his mansion were literally riddled by the bullets of the enemy, he thinned down so rapidly and so effectively the line of the attackers, that they left the heaps of their dead and wounded and fled. Now the hostilities were opened in earnest, and the Assyrians must either assert their supremacy, or else the last hour for the existence of a Christian people in this remote corner of Asia had come!

The Assyrian troops were quartered not far from the city, and within a hailing distance from one of its western gates. The Charbash battery, under instruction, was let loose into the city for the purpose of demoralizing the Moslems; while one hundred and fifty men were ordered to face the enemy in the main street, in order to ascertain its strength in that vicinity. The Assyrians entrenched themselves at once, and engaged the fire of the overwhelming numbers. This position they were to hold at all risks and hazards till they received further orders. In the meanwhile, seven hundred men were ordered to open a way through the section occupied by the Christians, and reach in the rear of the main body of the Moslems. In order to accomplish this task unobserved, they had to break holes through the walls of the adjoining homes of the Christians. This was done very successfully. After these men had stationed themselves in commanding positions, and had planted the two machine guns with which they were equipped, the General sent word to the one hundred and fifty men who were still engaging the fire of the enemy to vacate their position, and in their retreat to pretend that they were fleeing. They did so. If the dry bones of Husayn, the "prophet" of the Shea Moslems, were anywhere near the scene of battle, they might quake before the thunderous shout of his name. The Moslems, thinking that the Assyrians were defeated and were on the run, and that the hour of the "holy vengeance" had come, pursued the "fleeing infidels." This was surely the greatest hour of their jubilation! Mohammed had heard the prayers of his "faithful"; and they were soon to crown the precious names of both Hasan and Husayn with the greatest trophy of the greatest massacre of the "heathen followers of the Nazarene." But tremendous as the shout of victory was it was all for a moment. Mohammed perhaps had changed his mind, or Husayn perhaps had been angry at the procrastination of his worshippers. The pursuers moved fast, they were almost trampling upon each other in their haste to get first at the Christians. The main street was black with the "victorious" troops of Arshad-el-Moolk. The monotony of their uniform was broken by green and white garlands of Islam's double priesthood. The latter bore the banners of the holy war. They had come as far as the gate of the city, when Agha Petros gave the signal to his men, who fell now in the rear of the enemy, to fire. The famous horsemen of Karadagh dropped like leaves. Their bodies mingled with those of the shouting priests. The execution did not last more than thirty minutes. It was stopped again by Agha Petros, who called it "a slaughter, and not a battle." Here a force less than a thousand men had routed an enemy ten times as large! And all this time the Patriarch and his people were praying, not so much for the triumph of their defenders as for the salvation of a Christian people from the relentless wrath of Islam.



In front of the French Hospital in Urmia, gathering the wounded after the first fight between the Assyrians and the Moslems. The American flag proclaiming its mission of mercy. But merciful deeds failed to touch the hearts of the vipers of Islam.

The hostilities had apparently ceased. The Patriarch and his General were contemplating as to what steps they should take on the following day, when shortly after midnight, the dead silence that had pervaded the city was



suddenly broken by fresh thunders of the "jehad."- Arshad-el-Moolk, the commander of the Persian troops, and Ejlal-el-Moolk, the governor, had not repented of their evil. A second attempt of the Moslems during the night was crushed in the bud by the same Christian troops, who remained stationed in the same position which they had held during the day.

In the first day of the battle the entire western part of the city had fallen into the hands of the Assyrians. It was fully expected, however, that the Mohammedans would rally and attack again, and that perhaps a more crushing defeat would be necessary to bring the chief conspirators to their sense so as to leave the Assyrians alone. During the night, in addition to the troops who were stationed in the city and at one of the western gates, it was decided to occupy by smaller units some other positions in the southern part of the city, as also the gate situated near the American mission. At the southern gate was stationed Malik Khoshaba, the "lion of Tiari," with some two hundred of his own Tiari warriors. Their position faced directly the ancient ramparts of the city, which, as it became known in the morning of the following day, were held by very large forces of the enemy. In the rear of the Tiari troops and about half a mile away, outside the city wall, stood another fort, occupied by Karadagh horsemen. The other two batteries, stationed, one in Degalah, and the other in Googtapah, had received orders to be ready for action at sight of the signals.

Early in the morning of Saturday, February 10th, the defeated Moslems commenced with a greater fury, having been reminded by their religious leaders that, whosoever dies in this battle will go immediately to heaven and receive a larger and a more merited reward in Mohammed's paradise of superlative bliss. The hostilities opened simultaneously in the city and out of the city. Some Assyrian troops were bringing ammunition to their comrades who were being attacked within the walls of Urmia. They were intercepted by the horsemen of Karadagh, who emerged from the fort they were holding, and attempted to capture the ammunition and also cannon, which they were bringing up at the call of Agha Petros. The Karadagh warriors, under their Persian officers, were disastrously defeated, and fled back into the shelter of the fort. The Assyrians planted their guns against the stronghold and then took it by assault. The famous horsemen paid heavy penalty for their treachery. Among the dead in the fort was found the body of Riza Khan, a Persian General. In the meanwhile, the men of Malik Khoshaba, at the southern gate, and directly opposite the ancient ramparts within the walls, pushed back the troops of Arshad-el-Moolk. They surrounded the ramparts, and took that stronghold also by assault. The Assyrian troops, stationed on the main street leading to the western gate, known as the gate of Charbash, had penetrated further east into the city, and had pushed back the troops of Arshad-el-Moolk. The Moslems were compelled to vacate the streets, and conduct a guerrilla warfare from the roofs and the windows of their houses. Extremely anxious to save the lives of his men, Agha Petros issued orders to the troops to halt their advance. Now it was time for the batteries to bring the deceitful governor and commander of the Moslem forces down on their knees. From the south, from the east and from the west, the batteries of Googtapah and Deglalah and Charbash roared, pouring a rain of shells into the eastern portion of the city. The two-inch guns, were, of course, more terrifying than destructive; but the weapons accomplished their purpose. The red flag of the "jehad" disappeared, and a white flag was raised instead. Ejlal-el-Moolk and Arshad-el-Moolk surrendered unconditionally, and the firing ceased.

Credit for this victory is again to be ascribed to the fearless warriors of Tiari, who had some time before taken by assault the mighty fortifications of Chall in Turkey, which were defended by braver men than these cowardly fanatics of the Persian Azarbaijan.

Agha Petros immediately apprised his chief of the situation, and the Patriarch was ready to receive the suppliant emissaries of peace.



The final Surrender of the Moslems led by their priests to accept the terms imposed by the Assyrian Patriarch. By Courtesy, Near East Relief.

The Moslem delegation looked more like a mob than a body of men suing for peace. The Persian general and his officers, the Mujtaheeds, or the high priests of Islam, the white turbaned Mollies (priests) and the green garlanded Sayids, who egotistically claim their descent from the prophet of Arabia; merchants, bankers, landlords and representatives of all trades; all humble and humiliated, led by a white flag, marched through the streets of the city, under the gaze of the very people whom they were going to exterminate! Counting on the kindness of a heart, which the knowledge of Christ can generate, they came and fell prostrate in the presence of the Christian Patriarch of the Assyrian people! If these men could become Christians, they would have an amazing vocabulary for prayer and supplication. In the hour of need, their vernacular supplies the richest expressions of appeal for mercy. They poured their pleadings at the feet of Mar Shimon with the same eloquence they had previously demonstrated, even though so hypocritically, in advising their co-religionists to cultivate "friendly relations with their Christian neighbors." But one of their own poets has said: "The last end of a young wolf will be a wolf; even though with the sons of men it shares its meat and its loaf." So, while they trusted in the forgiving spirit of the Christian religion, and while they were certain that they would obtain the forgiveness they sought, still their wicked heart had never changed, nor could their seared conscience be awakened by the thunder of the roaring cannon. It was not a genuine repentance; it was simply a sense of fear and dread; and the Patriarch, knowing this, granted their petition on certain stipulated conditions.

### **THE CONDITIONS OF THE MOSLEM'S SURRENDER**

The city was still being guarded by the Assyrian troops when the Patriarch, in addition to his own advisers and Generals, sent also after the representatives of the allied powers to hear the conditions he had prepared for the Moslems' acceptance of surrender, and also to have them present when the latter signed those conditions. They were as follows:

1. The exercise of all authority shall be thereafter in the hands of the Assyrians.



Humbled and humiliated by defeat the Moslems of Urmia together with the leaders of the Persian Army march to rostrate themselves at the feet of Mar Shimon, asking for peace and forgiveness.

2. The Moslem "police force" shall be disbanded, both in the city and in the rural districts, and the same to be replaced by the Assyrians.
3. Within forty-eight hours the Moslems everywhere must surrender all their arms of all descriptions.
4. The arrest and imprisonment of the chief agitators, including Moosa Agha Sadir, Arshad-el-Hemayoon, Arshad-el-Moolk and Haji Samad.
5. Full indemnity, the amount of which to be determined later, to be paid to the families of the French officers who were wounded in this war, in case of their death; or if they survive, a smaller indemnity to be paid for the injuries suffered by them.
6. The Governor Ejlal-el-Moolk to be held responsible for the previous outrages against the Christians, and also for the bloodshed resultant to the break of hostilities, which were commenced with his knowledge and by his permission.
7. The Assyrians will then free the Persian soldiers taken prisoners in the war.

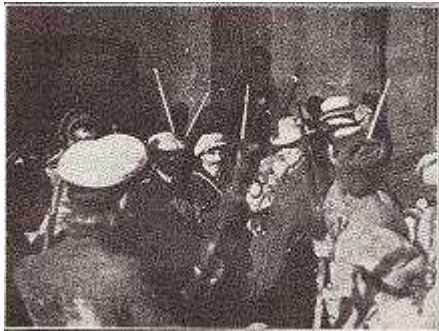
It was deemed advisable, however, in connection with the presentation of the foregoing conditions, to issue also a general statement that would contain a true version of the story of the hostilities, and offer justifiable reasons for the activity of the Assyrian army in this part of Persia; and also appear as a warning to the Moslems, not to dare attempt similar uprisings again against the Christians.



After the defeat of the Moslems the Assyrian soldiers preserving order in the streets of the conquered city.

The statement was as follows:

"Inasmuch as the Persian government is unable to make its Azarbajian subjects to abide by its declaration of neutrality; and inasmuch as it is unable to Prevent foreign troops from invading its territories and inflicting sufferings upon its own subjects, therefore, complying with our terms of alliance with the government of Caucasia, and by the advice and with the consent of the allied powers and also as an urgent measure of self-defense, we are maintaining our organized forces in the front allotted to our safekeeping.



An Assyrian guard shortly after the capture of Urmia by the Assyrian Army. Being congratulated by Dr. Allen an American Missionary. Courtesy Near East Relief.

"While we were thus performing our duty in protecting the boundaries of Persia and preventing the enemy from invading its lands, we regret to say that we found in Urmia a number of ringleaders among the leaders of the people, and among the officials of the government, who were working hand in hand with our enemy, and seeking our destruction. Contrary to their sworn declarations and public utterances, these evildoers agitated the Moslem element, and secretly collected forces and formed an army with the sole object of attacking us. Against our sincere and earnest pleadings, to permit us to live peaceably with them, they first perpetrated deliberate deeds of violence upon the Christians, and then most unexpectedly they surprised us with a bloody attack. We were compelled to defend ourselves, as we will always do, and by doing so, it was inevitable that the city of Urmia should suffer, and that blood should be shed with our blood."

The Mohammedans accepted, of course, the conditions presented to them, and placed their signatures under their sworn pledges.

But could these "seed of vipers" ever be trusted?



General Agha Petros waiting to receive the surrendering Mollies.

## THE ASSASSINATION OF MAR SHIMON

It soon became apparent that the Tabriz government was not only without knowledge as to the secret activities of the Moslems in Urmia, but it had also a hand in the agitation that led to the Mohammedan uprising against the Christians. The deposed Shah, Mohammed Ali, before his succession to the throne and his subsequent dethronement and exile, as the crown prince, and future King of Persia, had for a bribe of three thousand Toomans (\$2,700) given his consent to the Kurdish tribes of Kurdistan to attack his own Christian subjects of Targavar, plunder their homes, and carry away their flocks and cattle, and which, of course, they did. The existing crown prince, now residing in Tabriz, was none other than the brother of the deposed monarch, a fanatical Moslem, and a hater of the Christians. The plan for the assassination of Agha Petros, which was to be followed by a wholesale massacre of the Assyrians in Urmia, having failed so disastrously to the Moslems, superior authorities now concocted the diabolical scheme and formed a more treacherous conspiracy to kill the Patriarch and the Commander-in-Chief of the Assyrian forces; and then to mobilize larger forces in order to carry out the previous program for the extermination of the Christians. They were clever enough to play upon the virtues of their victim. They remembered how earnestly he had pleaded



with them, and how sincerely he had manifested his strong desire for peace and friendly relations, with both the Persian authorities, and with the Moslem subjects of Persia. Now was their opportunity to lay the new trap and commit the most dastardly crime in the entire history of Persia. Indeed, similar deeds of cowardice had already been committed by the Persian authorities of Azarbaijan, but they were committed against the lawless brigands of Persia, whom they had been unable to check or arrest, save under the pretence of becoming their hosts and decorating them with medals of gold and titles of honor.

But here was a man, as harmless as a dove, as brave as a lion, immeasurably more efficient than all the combined forces of Persia, to protect the integrity of the Persian soil, and to save the Persian subjects forever from the freebooting expeditions of their neighboring Kurds; and one who had absolutely no designs on Persia or its government, although he could compel submission from both its dilapidated army, and from its uncivilized people, if he so desired. Here was a great man, a noble man, of whose virtues they were going to take advantage and whom they were going to murder in cold blood!

It was the custom of the Patriarch to keep moving among his people. The impending troubles of Urmia had prolonged the usual period of his stay there. The enemy having been punished and forced to sign the peace agreement, on the 'Assyrians' terms, Mar Shimon made preparation to depart for Salmas and be in the midst of another part of his exiled flock. The news of his intended departure had, of course, preceded him by several days, and had reached the ears of Tabriz authorities.

In Salmas at this time resided a notorious brigand by the name of Simkoo. He was undoubtedly the most dreaded, by the Persian authorities, of all the Kurdish chieftains of the Eastern Kurdistan, and was regarded as the strongest of them all. Through the game of diplomacy he had managed to be alternately now on the Persian side and then again on the Turkish side. At the time of the Russian occupation of the State of Azarbaijan, the notorious brigand had surprised his co-religionists, and fought on the side of the Allies as well. He was once captured by the Russian soldiers and taken to Tiflis as a prisoner. But before the collapse of Russia he had succeeded in gaining the favor of the Russian military authorities to secure his freedom, and to bring back with him a considerable supply of arms and ammunition, on the promise that he would use his available force against the Turks. After the Russians had completely withdrawn from Persia, Simkoo, so far as Persia was concerned, became supreme, and since the days of Shah Abbass, no monarch had exercised as great an authority over the boundary lands of the northwestern Persia. The Persian government, of which he was a subject, he had defied, as he could always defy; and so far as the Turks were concerned, he knew he could play the game again by telling them that he was forced into the service of Russia against his will. Simkoo had had one fear only, and that had always risen from the Assyrian marksmen of Targavar, even though they were inferior to his men in numbers. But now that the Assyrian warriors of the hills were also present in Persia, he had become a peaceful subject, and had apparently chosen to live out and far from his old nest of lawlessness in the mountains of Bradoost and Somaie. It was this man that the Persian authorities used as a tool in their hands for the assassination of Mar Shimon. And after he had committed the dastardly deed, he was told, if the Turks failed to make their appearance in Persia by that time, he could escape into the interior of the country and remain there unmolested.

Mar Shimon and his bodyguard of two hundred horsemen arrived in Salmas during the last week of February, 1918. He was welcomed by his own people, and by the Armenians as well. Even the Moslems of Salmas vied with the Christians in the bestowal of honors upon him. Shortly after his arrival he was visited by two emissaries of the Persian authorities of Tabriz. They came to the Patriarch with that polished hypocrisy which grows exclusively in the soil of Islam. They reminded him of the letter he had written several months before to the Tabriz authorities, expressing his good will toward the Persian government, and requesting of the latter that he and his people be allowed to reside in Persia as their temporary guests. They officially informed the Patriarch of the "deep appreciation" that was felt by the Persian authorities of the contents of his Beatitude's letter, and that how those authorities had been "glad to serve a humanitarian cause," by gladly opening the gates of their country, to give the Assyrian Christians a place of refuge. But, the emissaries added, inasmuch as the Persian authorities desired to see those boundary lands in perfect peace and tranquility, and inasmuch as they would no longer countenance any local Moslem agitations and uprisings against the Christians, they thought that it would be for the interest of peace, if the only source of trouble that might disturb the tranquility of the country, was eliminated. And that, inasmuch as the Kurdish chieftan had indicated to the Persian authorities, a strong desire to come to an understanding with the Assyrians, it would absolutely insure the desired end, if his Beatitude could likewise assure Simkoo and his followers of his friendly attitude toward the latter as well.

It is a short distance between Deleman, the capital of Salmas, where Mar Shimon's brothers and sister resided, and Kohna Shahar, where Simkoo had established his new headquarters. Before the former city attained the dignity of a capital, the latter had the honor of being both the center of business and the seat of the government. And for that



very reason the old municipality still retains the name of "Ancient City." Kohna Shahar had a large Armenian population. The latter had been wise to the setting of the trap for the assassination of Mar Shimon. They had now a common interest with the Assyrians. They were to perish or survive with their Christian coreligionists. They secretly apprised the Patriarch of Islam's plot, and pleaded with him not to meet Simkoo, unless the latter came to Deleman to meet him. From the viewpoint of political etiquette, it was indeed the place of Simkoo to have called on the Patriarch. But the latter, ever anxious to avoid bloodshed and maintain peace with his Moslem neighbors, and ever ready to exhibit the spirit of his Christian profession, with his characteristic humility declared his decision to visit Simkoo in his own headquarters. The warnings of the Armenians, the pleadings of his own people, and the tears of his nearest relatives could not persuade him to alter his decision. He was as fearless as he was meek and lowly. The Moslem element of Deleman was, of course, aware of the plot, and with Satanic interest they were watching the road over which, either Simkoo was to seal the doom of the conspiracy by coming to the commander-in-chief of the Assyrian forces, or the Christian Patriarch, prompted by the high qualities of his Christian profession, was to be led like a lamb to the slaughter. And the Tabriz authorities lost sight for a moment of the gigantic struggle that was going on between the mighty armies of Europe, the result of which might mean to them either the supremacy or the downfall of Islam in Asia, and intently fastened their eyes upon the scene, where the awful tragedy of their own creation and planning was to be enacted.

On the 3rd day of March, 1918, the Patriarch sat in his carriage, and with a bodyguard of one hundred and fifty horsemen started for the headquarters of the Kurdish chieftain. He went to assure the notorious brigand that he could remain absolutely certain of the peaceful attitude of the Assyrians, provided his own men indulged no longer in deeds of violence and lawlessness. But was not this noble and Christian attitude of a great Patriarch equivalent to the giving of bread to the dogs and the casting of pearls before the swine?

The news of Mar Shimon's departure preceded him; and before his arrival, the great assassin, who could hardly believe the report, stationed seven hundred of his best marksmen in concealed and commanding positions, with the order to shoot simultaneously at the sight of the Patriarch, when he emerged from the house of their chieftain after the visit. No servant could have received his master with a greater honor. The Patriarch was escorted into the house. Two of his bodyguard accompanied him within. The others remained outside. The apparent absence of the Kurds from the environs of their chieftain's residence took the Assyrians off their guard. In the course of the friendly interview between the Patriarch and the Kurdish chief, one of the men who had accompanied Mar Shimon into the house, noticed from the window the presence of the concealed Kurds on the surrounding roofs. Realizing the full import of the situation, the attendant said to the Patriarch, in Assyrian: "My Lord, our end is certain, permit me to kill this dog (Simkoo) just to avenge the blood that will surely be shed." The Patriarch, with an incredulous smile, bade his attendant be calm. "My Lord, ", repeated the Assyrian guard, "they will surely kill us all, let me kill this dog, perhaps we can save your life!" The Patriarch, restrained his attendant again. He arose to depart, accompanied by Simkoo to the door. The latter shook the hand of his guest, and went back into the house. And just as Mar Shimon was seated in his carriage, surrounded by his bodyguard, the seven hundred Kurds fired, all simultaneously, into the group of their unsuspecting victims. Only six of these men escaped, with wounds in their bodies, to give the news of the tragedy, and tell the story of the Patriarch's assassination.

## **THE PUNISHMENT OF SIMKOO**

The sensational effect of Mar Shimon's assassination was almost equaled by the excitement caused by the daring audacity of the murderer. It became, however, soon apparent that there was something more assuring than a mere promise of protection made by the Persian authorities, who had encouraged the Kurdish chieftain to have acted so inconceivably bold, as to have stretched his murderous hand upon the life of the Assyrian Patriarch. The dastardly deed was intended to serve as the sound of a bugle, that would rally larger forces of Islam, to carry to a successful issue the terrible program in which the Mohammedans of Urmia had so decisively failed. The leaders of the second uprising of the Moslems, as well as the Kurdish chieftain, had been officially promised by Tabriz authorities, strong military assistance. Therefore, when Agha Petros, at the hearing of the terrible news, started with his punitive expedition against Simkoo, and David Efendi, the brother of the Patriarch, rallied his Salmas forces to surround the murderer, they were surprised by the discovery of the Persian forces, stationed in the environs of the assassin's stronghold, to intercept the passage of the Assyrian troops. Unbeknown to the Assyrians, the Governor-General of Azarbaijan had assembled all the available troops of the state, together with a large number of volunteers from the city of Tabriz, and had them all placed in the vicinity of Khoi, north of Salmas, and also on the hills which circled Simkoo's headquarters and the scene of murder. All these troops were to await the result of the Assyrians' battle with

the Kurds. Or, if the issue of the battle remained for any length of time uncertain, the Persian troops, on the pretense of keeping order in the country, were to attack the Assyrians, both in the rear and on the right, while the Moslem population would rise to exterminate the defenseless Christians at home. The Tabriz authorities, however, while, they had calculated on the bravery of the Assyrians, they, in their haste for destruction, had failed to take into consideration the military tactics of the Assyrian generals. The latter knew the treachery of the officials of the Persian government. They knew that the real scene of Mar Shimon's assassination was not Kohna Shahar, the ancient city of Salmas, but Tabriz, the modern capital of the Persian Azarbaijan. They also knew that now was the time to do what their murdered chief had so often restrained them from doing, -to humble even Tabriz down on its knees.

An intercepting Persian force was stationed on the heights of Kudchi, half-way between Urmia and Salmas, and on the eastern wing of the snow-clad mountains, which stood like impenetrable barriers, protecting the home stronghold of the Kurdish chieftain, to which he had now fled with his men. Agha Petros dispatched a small force of his men to engage the Persian troops in battle, while the main body of his punitive expedition he took by another and shorter route across the snow-covered mountains of Somaie and Bradost. The Assyrians, who were sent against the Persian troops, attacked them with a disastrous fire, which lasted two hours only. The latter fled and were pursued. Those who failed to halt or surrender, fell dead or wounded all along the route of their flight. This Assyrian force then returned, disarmed the entire Moslem population and remained in Kudchi, awaiting further orders from Agha Petros, who had now become the Commander-in-Chief of all the Assyrian forces. In Kudchi, the bodies of twenty Assyrians were found. They had been intercepted in their travel by the Azarbaijan troops and murdered in cold blood. In this battle the Assyrians lost two officers and one enlisted man only.

The expedition experienced terrible hardships. It was in the early part of March. The mountains were clad in deep snow, which made the progress of the Assyrians very slow. In summer season it would have taken the troops less than two days to have made the distance between Urmia and Chara, the stronghold of Simkoo. But now it took Agha Petros nearly eight days to face the mighty warriors of the Shakak tribe, entrenched behind their lofty fortifications. Owing to the depth of the snow on the mountains, and to the nature of the ground, and also to the strength of the assembled forces of Simkoo, it was generally believed by the Moslems, that the Assyrians' expedition would perish in the snows of the impassable mountains, or fall into a trap, where it would be annihilated by the assembled Shakak Kurds. And indeed, even the Assyrians themselves were not altogether free from the apprehension of some possible misfortune. For just at this time, a fearful snowstorm, which was sweeping across these ancient heights of Media, had enveloped the Assyrian expedition, and had made the most sanguine heart have most unpleasant surmisings. The reports of Agha Petros, however, which continued to arrive daily, gave a needed buoyancy to the Assyrians. On the 15th day of March, 1918, Agha Petros and Simkoo met on the battle ground of the latter; -one determined to make the murderer pay dearly for the innocent blood he had so cowardly shed, and the other, equally determined to defy and to challenge the supremacy of his pursuers. It is wonderful how the determination of a man's mind can overcome the infirmity of the body over which it rules. Every member of this expedition had suffered fearfully. Day and night they had literally been ploughing their way through the deep snows. The men of Malik Khoshaba, who had been separated from the expedition in order to attack the Kurds from another direction, had not tasted any food for two days. But, oh! for the bitter memory of that awful tragedy! the cowardly deed of that notorious assassin! They never thought of hunger or fatigue. The last report of Agha Petros, before the battle commenced, read: "I can hardly restrain our men from rushing the fortifications."

On Friday morning, March 16th, the hostilities opened. The snowstorm, through which the Assyrians had passed, had betokened the fury with which they would storm the stronghold of Simkoo. The Shakak Kurds fought furiously all that day and all the succeeding night. But their wonderful courage was no match for the wrath of the wounded mountain tigers who were leaping by bounds and rapidly surrounding the unconquered brigands of Media. Simkoo wondered where the promised troops of Azarbaijan could have been! Was it possible that he also had been betrayed with the same betrayal that had delivered into his bloody hands the innocent victim he had so cowardly slain? A two-inch gun from the Assyrian battery had punctured holes into the massive walls of stone that enclosed the brigand's stronghold. But guns of that calibre could not reduce these fortifications. On Saturday morning, just before the noon hour, the Assyrians gave a terrifying yell and stormed the outer ramparts of the stronghold. Simkoo saw that he could no longer resist the onrushing tide. And before the Assyrians had time to scale the walls of the inner forts, the assassin, with a bodyguard as an escort, had escaped through an unknown subterranean passage, and had fled to an unknown destination. The escape of the assassin was, of course, painfully disappointing, but the sight within the extensive fortifications became simply frightful. The Shakak Kurds, even though their chieftain had escaped, paid in full for their iniquitous deed. Not one who resisted capture remained alive. The contents of

Simkoo's large food stores were estimated as sufficient for the supply of the entire Assyrian army for the period of one whole year. These, together with thousands of heads of cattle and sheep and horses, were confiscated for the same purpose. Fear fell upon the Moslems again. But it required another crushing defeat to be inflicted now upon the Azarbaijan regular forces, in order to bring the Governor-General of Tabriz down on his knees, and then to his senses.



General Agha Petros, who fought fifteen victorious battles with the Turks and the Kurds, and whose name became a terror to the Moslems.

## THE BATTLE OF SALMAS

Agha Petros with his punitive expedition returned to Urmia. No heartier welcome could have been given to any returning conqueror. The character of this demonstration, however, revealed, at least to the Moslem onlookers, something deeper than a mere emotional manifestation of joy. It was mingled with praises and hallelujahs, similar to those which were born centuries before by the triumphs of David over the enemies of Israel. For during those days of anxious waiting, these Assyrians had daily congregated again for prayers and supplications for deliverance from the wrath of their unprovoked enemies. Therefore, as they welcomed with great rejoicing their returning heroes, they lauded with greater shouts the power of their fathers' God, and the name of their Redeemer Christ.

The Assyrian General had been informed of the presence of the Azarbaijan troops in Salmas and Khoi. But he felt that he was needed where the greatest danger lay, in a possible appearance of the Turks in the south. On the other hand, he felt very certain that the Assyrian force, stationed in Salmas, would be able to cope with any situation that might arise there. The crushing defeat of Simkoo had staggered the designing Moslems of Salmas. The Assyrians decided not to take any more chances with a deceitful people. David Effendi, the brother of the lamented Patriarch, who was the commanding general of the Assyrian troops in Salmas, served the inhabitants of Deleman, the capital of the district, with an ultimatum, to surrender all their arms. The piles of guns and ammunition, taken from the Moslems, revealed the extent of their secret preparations for a murderous uprising against the Christians. With the surrender of arms by the Moslems, the city itself fell into the hands of the Assyrians. This disarming of the civil population, however, did not dishearten, to a very large extent, the officers of the Azarbaijan troops. The latter were informed by Tabriz authorities of the approach of strong Turkish forces from the direction of Oushnook, immediately

west and southwest of Urmia, and also of a large force of Tabriz and Khoi volunteers, who had already arrived at the scene of the impending battles. The Azarbaijan troops planned to attack from two directions; one of their forces advanced on the state road running between a long chain of hills on the one side, and the Lake of Urmia on the other, while their larger army came from the direction of Khoi. The latter opened the hostilities by firing on an Assyrian picket stationed some distance from Salmas, and on the caravan road that connected Deleman with Khoi. The Assyrian picket withdrew as instructed, in order to draw the vastly superior numbers of the enemy close to their prepared position. It was taken for granted that the enemy, as usual, would move slowly and cautiously. This was decidedly to the liking of the Assyrian General, who had planned to attack the approaching forces one at a time. Thus the Tabriz army was met at Tassui, some thirty miles from Salmas. It was crushed beyond the possibility of rallying again. It suffered staggering losses. The fleeing soldiers of the crown prince, together with the blood-thirsty fanatical volunteers of Islam, took to the hills, dropping like leaves in their flight, being pursued by the "heathen" they had despised so bitterly. Included with the rich spoils of the small arms and ammunition, the Assyrians captured also a field cannon, which they later used to great advantage.

In the meanwhile, the stronger army of Khoi had come within the striking distance of the Assyrians. An advance guard of the latter deserted their position as to be observed by the enemy. Unaware of the disaster that had befallen its left wing, the army of Tabriz attacked with a deafening shout. It was a ritual call upon the name of Ali their prophet. But Ali, like the prophets of Baal, must have fallen leep. He failed to respond to their call. Perhaps the alluring sights, under the shade trees of a camel radise, were too interesting for him to be disturbed by the urgent call of his followers, or, perhaps when he had decreed "holy wars" against the "heathen," he had never dreamed of the pageantry of the machine guns with which his "holy warriors" would be welcomed. However, the Governor-General's army of Khoi was literally cut up and almost annihilated. The dead and the wounded were counted by the thousands. Perhaps not more than two or possibly three hundred men escaped to hide in the hills, awaiting the fall of darkness, in order to make their way back to their homes. But the most amazing aspect of the battle was, that the Assyrian casualties did not exceed more than ten men in dead and wounded! Was it not possible that the Almighty had thundered with his righteous wrath against the successors of the old Caananites? The situation here presented a different outlook from that in Europe. God must have looked upon the scene of these battles from a different angle. This was not a war for conquest. There was no imperial ambition here. Commerce and Mammon had not called these armies into the field of battle. No geographical boundaries were involved, and no claims of violated rights were made a pretense for the shedding of human blood. This was a campaign of murder by the adherents of Mohammed; a Satanic determination on the part of the Moslems to wipe off the name of the followers of Christ from the face of these already benighted regions. Can we not then believe that the God of Joshua had in these later days thundered against an army of personified demons? The armies of Tabriz were defeated and crushed, and the hope of the Governor-General of Azarbaijan centered now in the possibilities of the Turkish forces from the west.

## **A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF MAR SHIMON BENYAMIN**

Mar Shimon Benyamin, the Patriarch of the Eastern Evangelical Church, was thirty-three years of age at the time of his assassination. He had succeeded his predecessor at the age of eighteen, and for fifteen years had occupied the patriarchal See at Qoodchanis. His mother's name was Asyat, the daughter of Kamar of Eill, an Assyrian Malik and also a deacon in the Eastern Church. His father's name was Eshai (Jesse), a blood member of the patriarchal family. He received his early education under a prominent scholar from Tkhooma, by the name of David, who was first a deacon in the Eastern Church, and was later elevated to the office of a bishop and named Bishop Aprim (Ephraim). In addition to his great scholarship, Bishop Aprim was also known for his piety and devotion. The future Patriarch of the East, therefore, could have been educationally and spiritually reared by no better instructor. He also took advantage of the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury's mission representatives in Qoodchanis, and gained not a little knowledge from those learned missionaries. His great office, besides its requirements in theological and ecclesiastical training, made it incumbent upon him to make himself familiar with political science and world's diplomacy. He was for in this realm of study, by having able English tutors who were deeply interested in the natural aspirations of his people, as well as in the spiritual welfare of his church. It has been conceded that, with the exception of "Mar Shimon the second," known by the distinguishing name of "Bar Sabbaee," and whose incumbency and martyrdom took place during the reign of Shapur the Magi, in the fourth century, a greater man than Mar Benyamin has not occupied the Patriarchal See of the Eastern Church. He possessed a most wonderful personality, which inspired both fear and love at the same time. It was his great magnetism that impelled both reverence and allegiance from all sectarian elements of his people, who had for more than a generation left their former fold, and



affiliated themselves with other religious beliefs. His personality became thus a center, around which all the Assyrians rallied and presented a united front, both in the emergencies of the war, and in the pursuit of their national aspirations. Had he been spared the bullet of the assassin, and had the promises made to the Assyrians by their allies been fulfilled, Mar Benyamin, by common consent of all the people, would have been proclaimed either as a king or as the first president of the Assyrian nation.

All truly great men are humble and meek. Such was the young Patriarch of the East. The Russian generals gave him the homage of a king, and the little children would run to him as to a loving father. He elicited the admiration of the Grand Duke of Russia, who in conversing with him felt as if he was in the presence of a crowned king, and he made himself the idol of his people, by the attention he paid to the poorest and the humblest of his flock. He rode in the imperial carriage and received the welcome given to a Czar, when he visited Tiflis, and he, at the sight of the weary refugees of his people, whom he found limping on the roads, took their place by walking afoot and gave them the horse he had mounted. He was considered the most handsome man in the Assyrian nation; and yet, back of those charming features there lay the beauty of his character. The constant smile of his face radiated the sunshine of his soul. As a sincere Christian he commanded with authority, and yet his rebukes were fatherly, mingled with kindness and mercy. Undoubtedly, it was the sweet charm of his character that endeared him to all classes and all religious colors of the Assyrian nation. The Roman Catholics and the Protestants revered and loved him for his noble and love inspiring traits, and were forced to acknowledge him as their leader.

He possessed a most liberal mind. With the authority of a Patriarch he could have preserved the ecclesiastical fence, which for centuries had protected his church against intrusion and proselyting efforts; but with his democratic tendencies and broadmindedness he removed the fences, and gave freedom of thought and belief to his flock. One intense desire of his heart was that his people should be educated and enlightened; and with a most generous heart he removed all obstacles in the path of the various missionary bodies. The early custom of the Eastern Church was to select for the office of bishop worthy men from monasteries and theological schools; but with the conquest of Islam, which destroyed both the monasteries and schools, and with the retreat of the Assyrians into the fastnesses of the mountains for self-preservation, the ancient custom inevitably ceased. And in order to maintain the religious system and carry on the church work, the existing bishops selected their successors from among their own kin, and dedicated them for the sacred office from their infancy. Mar Benyamin, however, installed a new system, by which the most worthy and capable men were selected for the office of a Bishop, irrespective of their degrees or family affiliations. During his incumbency as a Patriarch, he had prevented one of his own nephews from being dedicated to become his successor, making known his desire that even the Patriarchs of the Eastern Church should thereafter be made the choice of the flock, and be selected by the church.

Notwithstanding his youthful age, he towered over all the leaders of his people in wisdom and statesmanship. Ever conscious, however, of his better judgment he never failed to consult his inferiors. He was open to conviction and ready to receive counsel and advice from others. He was barren of pride, and a living example of unselfishness. By his conduct he taught service and sacrifice. He thought immeasurably more of the relief and the uplift of his people than of all the honors that were heaped upon him. Human nature is susceptible to the perils of applause, and the greatest of men have often succumbed to the allurements of praise; but Mar Benyamin always emerged like the Hebrew exiles from such pits and furnaces, untouched by lions, and unscathed by fire.

His love of humanity gave him the tenderest heart toward his enemies. His constant advice to his officers and men was, to acquit themselves like Christs, and not return evil for evil. In the fearful whirlpool of the great war he never forgot to demonstrate the reality of the Christian religion, as well as superiority over the superstitions of Islam. The love of his heart made him believe all men; and was this credulity that led him to his assassination and death.

Thus, the great Patriarch, like his great predecessor, laid down his life upon the altar of his Christian faith, for the salvation of his afflicted people. Mar Mon Bar Sabbaee, as the first Mar Shimon of the Eastern Church, received his crown of martyrdom at hands of the Persian Magi, who had sworn to eradicate the name of Christianity from the face of their empire, on the last Friday in the month of March the year 340, and in a southern province of Persia; like Mar Shimon Benyamin, as the sixteenth incumbent of the same See, and with the same name, drank the same cup, which was now prepared by the Moslems Persia, who had likewise sworn to exterminate the followers of the same faith in Persia, on the first Saturday in March, in the year 1918, and in a northern province of Persia. And yet how incomprehensible, even though infallible, the wondrous ways of God! Ungodly nation still remains like an unbroken rib the giant body of the wild beast of Islam, while a Christian nation of numberless martyrs, barely retains its national existence! There is but one solution, and only one. It is not the present possessions that count, but rather, the everlasting armies of the redeemed, gathered and prepared; for the glorious, and certainly not distant, day, when the rightful owner of the earth shall descend with his saints to challenge the authority of Satan, bind the great enemy of God and mankind, and transform a Paradise lost into a Paradise regained!



## THE SUCCESSOR OF THE PATRIARCH MAR BENYAMIN

Within two months after the death of Mar Benyamin, his brother, Mar Poloos, was chosen by the Church, and ordained to succeed the lamented Patriarch. The elevation of Mar Poloos Shimon to the Patriarchal See, took place in the presence of a vast audience in the Church of Marte Maryam, in the city of Urmia, on the 15th day of April, 1918. Thus Urmia, as a Babylon of Islam, witnessed, for the first time in its history, the ordination of a successor to the man it had so treacherously betrayed and slain!

Perhaps no better portrait of the new Patriarch could be given than the one, as it appears in a few paragraphs of his own patriarchal address, delivered at the same time and in the same service, of his elevation and ordination. Mar Poloos Benyamin, who now commanded both authority and power to have avenged the blood of his brother, and to have punished the leaders of the conspiracy in the assassination of his predecessor, spoke thus to the great audience, which was also sprinkled by the religious and political representatives of Europe and America:

□Beloved sons in the Lord: By the grace of God I have been called to occupy the Patriarchal See of the Eastern Church. I do, however, confess my weakness, and declare to you that the sacred service is far above my feeble strength. The tremendous responsibility becomes particularly great at this particular time, when both our Church and our Nation are face to face with a terrible crisis. Without your assistance the task will be entirely too great for me. However, I am not seeking your assistance in word only, but also in your deeds and in your Christian conduct. You and I must together keep close to the mercy seat of Christ, that he may enable us to conduct both the affairs of the Church and of the Nation in accordance with His own holy will. The Holy Scriptures are full of promises for us, if we only ask by faith. However, corresponding with our humble petitions and our declaration of dependence upon the Lord, there must also appear the beauty of our Christian conduct and our Christian life.

"Our history of sixteen centuries should be a lesson to us. During the long ages that are past we have suffered afflictions, persecutions, and massacres, which are beyond the power of human pen to describe, and yet we have not been consumed! We have been preserved and kept by a mighty hand and by a holy will. This should be an assurance for us that God the Father has a holy purpose concerning us. And the purpose must surely be that we may become a light and a blessing to the millions of our race who still remain far away from the truth of the Gospel. . When we have understood this then will we learn that we must not depend upon the arm of flesh or upon the power of man. Our hope and our trust must always be in the Lord and in Him only.

"We should also remember the commandment of our Saviour, to love one another and to be kind and merciful toward our enemies. We should abstain from revenge and should be willing and ready to forgive those who have done us great evil. We must remember that plunder is an abomination to the Lord, and must keep our hands clean from possessing that which does not belong to us, even though we have been robbed, we have been plundered and we have been deprived of our homes and of all our possessions. It is our duty to defend ourselves as a nation, and protect the sanctity of our family shrines, but we must also recall that our main mission in the world is to make known the name of our Christ, and to reveal the spirit of His Gospel among the races and the nations who know Him not. This we must do, not by a mere profession of our lips, but by a conduct dominated by a heart filled with His love.

"We are compelled to defend ourselves, as I have said before, and to preserve our national existence. This task may demand greater hardships yet, and greater sacrifices. Perhaps we have not given enough blood yet, nor has our capacity for suffering and sacrifice been filled to its full measure. But in all circumstances, we must keep in our mind the fact that all true greatness is in one's kindly feeling toward his enemies. Such was the spirit of the lamented Mar Benyamin Shimon. Let the sweet example of his life dominate our attitude toward those who hate us. He died, he gave his life for the flock he so dearly loved. Let us honor his sweet memory by loving one another, and by being kind toward our enemies. I, Poloos Shimon, your Patriarch and leader, beseech of you all, and ask of each and all of you, to become true witnesses of your holy profession.

"The blessing of the Lord be upon, you all. Amen!"

The period of the new Patriarch's incumbency was destined to be short. Physically not strong, his feeble body continued to grow weaker under the pressure of grief and sorrow, till it was finally swept away by the awful deluge of his people's affliction during their last exodus from Urmia. He lived, however, long enough to find himself in the midst of the historic ruins, which had once stood as the pride of his forefathers, and as the glorious seat of his illustrious predecessors. The British medical service of Bagdad did its utmost to prolong the life of the new Patriarch; but human Pharmacopoeia does not prescribe a palliative that can drive grief away, or even a sedative that will soothe the pain of an aching heart. The memory of the glorious past, which still lingered amid the melancholy

ruins of the once greatest Assyrian center of education and missionary enterprise, added another tributary of sorrow to the already overflowing stream of his people's woes, and hastened the end of the new Patriarch's life.

Thus, shortly after the arrival of the Assyrian refugees in Baquba, Mesopotamia, Mar Shimon Poloos died and was buried in Bagdad, where the bodies of numberless martyrs await the quickening echoes of the first resurrection trumpet.

## LADY SURMA

Perhaps of all the Assyrians the sister of the Patriarch received the heaviest blow. Her youngest brother was studying in Constantinople when Turkey declared war, and from there he was sent to some unknown destination and killed by the Turks. Her eyes were not yet clear of their flood of tears when she was crushed again by the sight of the slain body of her Patriarch brother, to whom she had become a mother as well as a sister. But after the assassination of Mar Shimon the entire burden of the Assyrian nation rested upon her womanly shoulders. It appears that she was raised and prepared to become a captain of her people's ship in the midst of these unforeseen storms. Even after the succession of Mar Shimon Poloos to the Patriarchal See, she retained the leadership of her people, and conducted the affairs of her nation with the patriotism of a Deborah and with the personality of an empress. If the story of the great Samiriamis fails to receive a full credit of authenticity, the Assyrian nation surely produced a second queen in the person and in the charming character of Lady Surma.

In her younger days Providence placed this brilliant woman in immediate contact with the fine culture of Great Britain. The learned missionaries of the Archbishop of Canterbury's mission to the Assyrians saw in her brilliant mind great possibilities for mental development. They, accordingly, spared no effort in giving proper education to the young princess of Qoodchanis. Most prominent young Assyrians persistently asked for her hand in marriage, but she chose to consecrate her noble womanhood to the cause of her fathers' church and for the uplift of her people. And this voluntary sacrifice on her part endeared her to all shades and all classes of the Assyrian people.

In her educational training she is a monument of praise and credit to those missionaries of England, who, prompted by the love of Christ, had preferred the solitude of the mountains to the luxuries of Urmia. Lady Surma will remain like a brilliant gem to sparkle in the crown of England's missionary enterprise. The apostles of Great Britain went to Kurdistan, inspired by the teachings of the great Apostle, and determined to become Romans with the Romans, in order to lift up the Assyrians to the level of their own culture. And Lady Surma is an example of that sweet and humble and holy service.

In addition to her educational attainments, Lady Surma in her maturer years revealed the presence of a superb intellect and an exalted mind. If Mar Shimon Benyamin was the real commander of the ship, Lady Surma's hand often controlled the helm over the treacherous sea of the pan-Islamic policies. She was a constant companion of her martyred brother, and always present in the counsels of the leaders of her people. She indeed relieved her Patriarch brother of many responsibilities that would naturally interfere with the functions of his spiritual office. As she grew in graceful conduct, in wisdom, in devotion to the cause of her people, as well as in power, she became the very embodiment of her foreign teachers' aspirations in behalf of the House of Qoodchanis and of the welfare of the Assyrian nation and church.

It is, indeed, impossible to write of Lady Surma without speaking a word as to the true spirit of the mission work in the foreign lands. The missionaries of England typified the spirit of the early Apostles. They did not regard themselves as members of a race superior to their fellow men; but rather as debtors to the grace that had given them both the environment and the opportunities for acquiring that which they so richly possessed. Hence, instead of exalting themselves and maintaining an exclusive circle for their social intercourse, they went down to the level of a people poorer than their own, and coming pitifully below the measure of their own learning and culture. Their accustomed manner of living was left entirely instead, they adopted the customs and behind, and

the costumes of their less fortunate brethren. They forgot they were British, they became real Assyrians in order to elevate the people, and help them to work out their own destiny. The real sword of the spirit is always drawn out of its sheath of humility. Christian weapons, when clothed with covers of pride and conceit and egotism, lose entirely their value and become completely ineffective.

It was, therefore, impossible for Lady Surma, as she found herself growing by leaps and bounds above her fellows, not to have cultivated the noble trait that had made so much impression upon her character during her younger days.

Because of the frailty of the successor of Mar Benyamin, Lady Surma assumed the reins of authority and commenced to lead and guide her people to some haven of comparative safety. When the final exodus of the people from Urmia became inevitable, she, like Israel's Deborah, led the Assyrian exiles through the stormiest weather the earth had ever witnessed, and with them she arrived in the camp of Baquba.

In Mesopotamia Lady Surma was destined to weather storms, perhaps fiercer than those that had driven her people into exile. The great personality of Mar Benyamin, which had impelled submission from all classes of the people, was left buried with his slain body in the bloody plains of Salmas. Mar Poloos, soon after the arrival of the refugees in Baquba, succumbed to the ravages of his lung disease, which was aggravated by the fearful plight of his people and his flock. Sectarian interest now commenced to lash the exiles' camp into fury. Misguided and misinformed, the Persian Assyrians began to bolt in showing an intense desire to return to their former kilns which they were induced to associate with the leek and the onions of Urmia. The immediate agitators were a band of the Assyrian parasites to whose class an allusion is made in these pages; but back of this disgraceful propaganda there were other personal interests of which I refrain to speak in this narrative. At any rate, the unity of the Assyrian people was sadly disrupted, and the very hope which had stimulated the Assyrians to make such gigantic sacrifices was cast to the winds. It was an act of sheer insanity ut who can ever convince a madman that he is insane?



Lady Surma and her two brothers, General David effendi on the right, and Zia on the left. Gen. David is now Commander in Chief of the Assyrian forces in Upper Mesopotamia.

Lady Surma, in the meanwhile, had come to London to plead the cause of her people. She was received in the capital of the world's greatest empire with princely honors. From the midst of her patriotic bors she was called back to Mesopotamia, to check, possible, the evil influence of the propagandists, maintain the unity of the people, and encourage the tish government to redeem the pledge made by Flats representatives in allotting an area for her people, to be known as the NEW ASSYRIA.

## THE ASSYRIAN BATTLES WITH THE TURKS

The Persian Mohammedans, still impatient and still 'persistent in their plan for the destruction of the 'Christians, and fully conscious of their own inability put into execution their murderous scheme, even after the assassination of Mar Shimon Benyamin, they relied now upon an invasion in force by the Turks. They had secretly urged the latter to enter into Persia with the understanding of either establishing a free Irsian Azarbaijan State, or, if possible, to annex this artar province of Persia to the remaining portions the Turkish empire. With the fall of the imperial ivernment of Russia, which had been the only ambling block to the Turkish aspirations toward kfganistan and India, and which had also been the gtterest enemy of the Turks and their religion, the proposition of the Azarbaijan Moslems, appealed to the commander of the Turkish forces. And as the Turkish arms had already been defeated by smaller numbers of the Assyrian troops, the Turks set in motion toward the Persian frontier overwhelmingly superior forces, with the sole purpose of eliminating from the field of battle this sore spot under the wing of their Eastern armies. That the Turks started on a campaign of murder and massacre, it became apparent from the encircling movement of their forces, as well as from their revolting conduct toward the Christians during the last exodus of the Assyrians from Urmia.

The appearance of the Turks in this campaign of extermination and occupation took place on April 8th, 1918. While their main army was moving from the north and northwest, they sent some of their regiments, equipped with several batteries of artillery, to knock at the gates of Urmia from the south and southwest. These Turkish columns had assumed the form of an avalanche They had gathered additional and strong forces in their progress through a Moslem country. The Kurds of Sheik Abdul-Kader, who had fled from before the Assyrians during the latter's campaign against them, had now returned as a part of the invading army; and the Kara Papagh horsemen also of Sooldooz (Persia), had united with the Turkish troops moving from the south. It took the Assyrians less than a week to eliminate this wing of the enemy's armies from ever being regarded a source of serious danger to them. On the 13th day of April the Assyrian troops, having utterly crushed the enemy, returned to the north of Urmia, where the greatest danger from the Turks lay.

The preparations for this eventuality were still going on, when, like an unexpected cyclone, the Turks appeared immediately west of Urmia. The valleys leading in a westerly direction from the Persian frontier into the interior of eastern Kurdistan, were the regular routes over which the Kurds had always moved in their expeditions of plunder into Persia. A possible appearance, therefore, of the broken fragments of these Nomad tribes was always anticipated by the Assyrians, but never considered as a serious menace by them. Hence, they had almost utterly ignored the possibility of a Turkish movement in force across the hazardous mountains, which vie with each other, either by their high altitudes, or by the ruggedness of their steep slopes. The Turks had sprung a surprise which was to be returned by a greater surprise soon to be witnessed by them.

The position of the Assyrians came little short of being precarious at first. General Agha Petros saw that he was being caught between two millstones of the Turkish armies, but he never lost his courage. The Generals Malik Khoshaba and Malik Ismaiel, the two fearless lions of Tiari, with their equally fearless warriors, suggested an immediate attack upon the Turks, whose shells were now exploding in the vicinity of Urmia. Agha Petros, however, decided first to feel the mood, and, if oppsible, the full strength also of the Turks before making an atrack. He wrote a letter to Khairi Beg, the commanding general of the Turkish forces, telling him: "We are not a kingdom or a government that you should fight against us. And why should we be compelled to defend ourselves when most of us by right belong to Turkey? We are ready to make peace with you, provided our -safety is guaranteed to us." Khairi Beg replied abruptly, saying: "Deliver to us all your arms, we will take Urmia, and we will protect you there."

Agha Petros, still desirous to ascertain the exact position of the enemy, wrote again to Khairi Beg, saying:

"We are willing to surrender our arms, but we will do so on two conditions: First, we desire a written assurance that you will annex the province of Azarbaijan to Turkey; and, Second, that you will give us food and provisions to last us for at least three months, till we have returned to our homes and settled in our own lands." Khairi Beg replied haughtily again by saying: "There is one condition only, all Christians must unconditionally surrender."

The exact positions of the Turks were now fully ascertained. They were moving along the valley through which Barandooz River twists its zigzag course toward the Lake of Urmia. Again Agha Petros sent a force to face the Turks, and to draw them further into the valley, while he himself, together with Malik Khoshaba and Malik Ismaiel and the warriors of Tiari moved by another route, and planted themselves so that they would fall in the rear of the advancing enemy.

In the early morning of May 5th, the Turks opened the hostilities by a rain of shells. Their commanding general had sent word that, at noon of the same day, he would eat his dinner in Urmia. His army, therefore, was moving



rapidly on. And when they had come within the range of the machine guns hid in the bushes and behind the rocks of the sloping hills, the Assyrians sprung their greater surprise. The Turkish army melted away. Its remaining officers, twenty-four in number, did eat their dinner in Urmia, but only as the prisoners of war! It became evident that the strength of the enemy had been deliberately exaggerated by Moslem reporters so as to cause consternation among the Assyrians. Instead of being sixteen thousand, as previously reported, it was an army of less than six thousand men. But against these Agha Petros had engaged less than twelve hundred of his troops. The entire equipment of the Turks was captured, together with their mountain cannon. Their wounded, together with the prisoners, were brought to Urmia, and the former placed in hospitals and taken Christian care of.

The brute, who had arrogantly demanded the unconditional surrender of all the Christians, had now himself surrendered to the amazing valor and to the mercies of the Christians. The Assyrians were, after this war, nicknamed by the Turks, as "The Little Germany," and indeed the impressions of that nickname remain with the Moslems to the present day.

Relying on the certainty of the Turkish successes, the blood-thirsty Moslems of Urmia had again made elaborate preparations to plunder what was left of the goods and the possessions of the Assyrians, and then to participate with the victorious Turks in the meritorious deeds of a general massacre. They had secretly, and almost one by one departed from the city and assembled near the Persian border. They had chosen for their rendezvous the large town of Askarabad, famous for its ancient fortifications, over which rose up twenty-four gigantic towers, and all enclosed within the walls of solid masonry. In the ancient days of warfare, the place was regarded as impregnable; and it was certainly the strongest fortress of Persia on this line of its western boundary.

The Moslems had also secretly brought arms and ammunition from the Turkish camps, the movements and the whereabouts of which they always knew. The Assyrians became aware of the plot, and had already decided to leave no armed foe behind, when they were to challenge the strong forces of Turkey in one decisive battle. The Moslems, who had been enforced by a large number of the Kurds, had repaired to the defenses of the fortifications. The Assyrian general sent against them one small cannon, together with three companies of troops. Word was sent to the besieged enemy to surrender. The latter refused, not knowing the extent of the Turkish disastrous defeat in the vicinity of Urmia. It was soon discovered that the small shells would make no serious impression on the walls, and the cannon was planted against one of the gates of the fortifications. Special precautions were taken not to hurt the Moslem population of the town, who had been urging the defenders to give up their arms and surrender to the Christians. As the gate was being shot into fragments, Malik Khoshaba led the attack in person. Some of his men had brought ladders from the town. In a rain of flying bullets, before which some thirty Assyrians dropped dead and wounded, the walls were scaled. The enemy, through another gate, attempted to flee, but was confronted by the fire of the machine guns already planted for his reception. And yet these Moslems, like the Egyptians of Pharaoh, became hardened more still.

## **THE MASSACRE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN KHOI, PERSIA**

In the city of Khoi there had never been an Assyrian colony. In the suburbs of the city, however, there had existed an Armenian community of some two thousand to twenty-five hundred souls. In order to accommodate the mountaineer Assyrian refugees, who had fled into Persia, more comfortably, Mar Shimon Benyamin had arranged for some thirty-five hundred of his people, mostly from Tkhooma, to reside in the district of Khoi. As already remarked in the course of this narrative, the people of Tkhooma, though smaller in numbers, were considered as the bravest and the best fighters of all the Assyrian independent tribes. After the collapse of Russia and the retreat of the Russian forces from Persia, these Assyrians became isolated and almost entirely cut off from the rest of the Assyrian people in Salmas and Urmia. The Moslems of the last two named districts severely punished and thoroughly convinced that they, unless aided by the Turks, would never dare to lift another hand against the Christians. But the Moslems of Khoi, even though they had seen their regular army defeated and crushed by the Assyrian troops of Salinas, had been looking for an opportunity to follow the envied example of their co-religionists, and share the rewards promised by their prophets for the murdering of the "infidel" Christians. The opportunity they were looking for arrived with the second invasion of Armenia by the Turks, and the latter's entry in force into northern Persia. The atrocities of Khoi have perhaps surpassed all the previous atrocities perpetrated against the Christians, either by the Turks in Turkey, or by the Persian Mohammedans in Persia. A description of this Moslem barbarism is given by the Rev. John Eshoo, who himself was one of those few that escaped in a most miraculous way from the wrath of Islam. He writes:



"You have undoubtedly heard of the Christian massacre at Khoi, but I am certain you do not know the details. Here had migrated a part of our people, and one-fourth of our refugees were stationed in Sardavar (Khoi). These Assyrians were assembled into one caravansary, and all shot to death by guns and revolvers. Blood literally flowed in little streams, and the entire open space within the caravansary became a pool of crimson liquid. The place was too small to hold all the living victims for the work of execution. They were brought in groups, and each new group compelled to stand up over the heap of the still bleeding bodies, and was shot to death in the same manner. The fearful place became literally a human slaughter house, receiving its speechless victims, in groups of ten and twenty at a time, for execution. At the same time, the Assyrians, who were residing in the suburb of the city, were brought together and driven into the spacious courtyard of a house, while the Armenians of the place were removed into the city proper for the same devilish purpose. The Assyrian refugees were kept under guard for eight days, without anything to eat except a handful of popcorn served daily to each individual. This consideration was by no means intended as a humanitarian act, but merely to keep the victims alive for the infliction upon them of the most revolting tortures at a convenient time set for their execution. At last they were removed from their place of confinement and taken to a spot prepared for their brutal killing. The helpless Assyrians marched like lambs to their slaughter, and they opened not their mouth, save by saying: "Lord, into thy hands we commit our spirits." The procession of the victims was led by two green turbaned Sayids (the highest religious order in Islam), one with an open book in his hand, reading from it aloud the passages pertaining to the holy war, and the other carrying a large bladed knife, the emblem of execution. When the procession arrived at the place appointed, the executioners began by cutting first the fingers of their victims, joint by joint, till the two hands were entirely amputated. Then they were stretched on the ground, after the manner of the animals that are slain in the East, but these with their faces turned upward, and their heads resting upon the stones or blocks of wood. Then their throats were half cut, so as to prolong their torture of dying. And while struggling in the agony of death, the victims were kicked and clubbed by heavy poles the murderers carried. Many of them, while still laboring under the pain of death, were thrown into ditches and buried before their souls had expired.

"The young men and the able-bodied men were separated from among the very young and the old. They were taken some distance from the city and used as targets by the shooters. They all fell; a few not mortally wounded. One of the leaders went close to the heaps of the fallen and shouted aloud, swearing by the names of Islam's prophets that those who had not received mortal wounds should rise and depart, as they would not be harmed any more. A few, thus deceived, stood up, but only to fall this time dead by another volley from the guns of the murderers.

"Some of the younger and goodly looking women, together with a few little girls of attractive appearance, who pleaded to be killed, against their will were forced into Islam's harems. Others were subjected to such fiendish insults that I cannot possibly describe. Death, however, came to their rescue, and saved them from the vile passions of the demons.

"The Assyrian victims of this massacre totaled twenty-seven hundred and seventy men, women and children, exclusive of an equal number of the Armenians."

While in Paris I called the attention of the Persian delegation both to the hideous atrocities to which the Assyrians were subjected in Persia, and also to my contention as to the claims that I and my colleagues presented at the Peace Conference in behalf of the Assyrians. This contention was, and still is, that, inasmuch as the Persian government is unable to maintain order or subdue the passions, or control the lawlessness of its Moslem subjects in those parts of Persia, and, inasmuch as the Persian government would be unable to meet the just reparation claims of the Assyrians, both for the loss of property and for the wanton destruction of life, the said government should be willing to part with Urmia and Salmas, and consent to the annexation of the two districts to the adjoining area claimed by the Assyrians as their homeland.

If, however, a bargain of this character was to be effected on the basis of justice and equity, not Salmas and Urmia only, but the entire State of the Persian Azarbaijan could by no means be regarded as an adequate exchange for the sufferings and the losses, and the fearful outrages inflicted upon the Assyrians in Persia.

## **THE ASSYRIAN BATTLE OF SALMAS WITH THE INVADING FORCES OF TURKEY**

The pledges of the Georgian Republic had been made in good faith to the Assyrians. But those pledges were destined to remain merely as proofs of good wish, good intention and mutual interest in a common cause. Surer than the occupation of any territory in Persia, Turkey had relied on the possession of at least a part, if not the whole, of Caucasia, which teemed with millions of sympathizing Tartars. The government of the new Republic, therefore, was

pressed entirely too hard by the enemy, to have rendered the least assistance to an ally removed by several hundred miles from its capital. Armenia had been invaded, and Georgia was exposed to a peril equally great. If there was any assistance for which the Assyrians could hope, that might be rendered by the Armenian element that had already fled from Van into Salmas and Urmia, or by an Armenian force under General Andranek, which would surely be driven by the invading armies of the Turks, and then, in order to avoid its certain capture by the enemy, would enter into northern Persia. This did actually take place. For the news of Andranek's approach had moved the Moslems of Khoi to hasten the massacre of the Christians there, before they could be rescued by the Armenian general. But the Armenians of Van who had fled to Urmia, instead of assisting the Assyrians to form a junction with the army of Andranek practically saved the Turkish army in Persia from being totally crushed, as it will presently be seen.

Agha Petros, having apparently cleared his rear from the menace of the enemy, marched to Salmas, where the Turks had arrived, and there to engage them in battle.

The Turkish army at this time was gradually falling into a trap skillfully laid by the Assyrian general. Andranek would appear in the rear and on the left of the enemy, while Agha Petros would face the Turks in the front and on the right. For six days the battle raged in Salmas, the Turks using heavy pieces of their artillery. The unavoidably slow progress of Andranek compelled the Assyrian general to divide his army into four sections, each under one commanding general. Two of these sections were laced immediately in front of the enemy. One section moved across the encircling hills to strike from the right of the Turks, while Agha Petros himself undertook a flanking movement to come against the enemy in the rear. The Turks detected this move, and made the position of Agha Petros the objective of their concentrated fire. The Turkish right was forced to retreat with the loss of some prisoners and one cannon. The Assyrian center took the hill of Mar Yohannan and remained entrenched there, awaiting developments and further orders. At this critical moment, when the surrounding of the Turkish army was a question of hours, the Armenian population of Salmas very mysteriously started to desert their homes and flee south toward Urmia. The Armenians of this district had heretofore been rendering most valuable assistance; but this stampede of their people became, for the time being, simply incomprehensible. In the meanwhile Agha Petros had called for additional troops in order to cap the climax and complete the victory. But instead of receiving the desired reinforcements, he received the astonishing news of the exodus of the Armenians from Salmas. The Armenians who had fled from Van, had done so against the will of Andranek, their general. They had been ordered by the latter to hold the city, and await Armenian reinforcements under his own personal command, which were moving with great speed. Andranek, on finding the Armenian city deserted by its defenders, was forced to retreat, and was, in turn, pursued by the Turks. The officers of Van refugees dreaded the news of their general's arrival. They knew they would be shot. Hence they falsely circulated the report that the coming of their general with five thousand men was untrue. They even bribed the two messengers sent by Andranek with the news of his approach to Khoi, to change their story, and discredit their previous information.

Terrible as the effect of this treacherous deal on the part of these Armenians upon the people was, it did not in the least discourage the Assyrian general. For he had planned to surround and smash the Turks prior to the arrival of Andranek with his men. But in the midst of this commotion, which took place on the verge of a great victory, further astonishing news came from Urmia, informing the Assyrian commanders of the reappearance of large forces of the Turks in the vicinity of that place. The Assyrians, suspecting the possibility of a flank movement by the enemy from the direction of Gavar and Targavar, and weighing the trophies of a decisive victory in Salmas with the dangers of an invasion in Urmia, decided to retreat, and make the hills that surrounded the large plateau of Urmia as the challenge ground for the two hostile armies.

## **THE LAST BATTLES OF URMIA AND THE CAUSE THAT LED TO THE FINAL EXODUS OF THE CHRISTIANS**

The Assyrian forces remained long enough in Salmas to make it possible for the forty thousand Christian refugees to vacate the district and start safely on their journey toward Urmia. The Turks, who in some way became cognizant of the flight of the Christian population, took this movement as a sign of weakness on the part of the Assyrian army, and made terrific assault on the Assyrian positions. Agha Petros and his inadequate force were made a target for the concentrated fire of the Turkish batteries. The Assyrians, however, accepted the challenge and returned the compliment, hurling back the Turkish hordes, taking again some captives together with another gun of large calibre. When the last train of the refugees had safely crossed the hills that separate the Urmia plateau from the Salmas district, and were within the sight of the former city, the Assyrian troops withdrew in perfect order, following

the caravan of frightened men, women and children, and giving them protection also from any possible attack by the Moslem population through which they were passing.

On the arrival of the Assyrian forces from Salmas, the semi-circle chain of hills, which walls Urmia plateau, was dotted with the Turkish batteries, and the Turkish infantry was preparing to attack from three directions. Agha Petros' army had gone without sleep for three consecutive nights. While the Assyrian forces which were left in Urmia were holding back the right wing of the enemy, the weary warriors of Salmas' battles threw themselves against both the center and the left wings of the Turks. The foreign observers have found no words with which to express their admiration for the bravery and the courage of the Assyrians. It seemed, however, that the fear of the great warriors had fallen upon the Turks. An Assyrian colonel, by the name of Azaria Khan, who later became famous as a general, and who had always in every engagement with the Moslems borne the brunt of battle, with few of his men stole his way through the Turkish lines, jumping from behind one rock to the shelter of another, scaled the steep slope of the Seir Mountain, till he and his men stood, unobserved, over and behind the Turkish infantry, supported as it was by the Turkish Mountain batteries. The guns of both sides were contending furiously. The Turks had the advantage of higher positions. The Assyrian colonel, with his five men and a machine gun, which they had borne upon their shoulders, waited patiently for their comrades below to draw the fire of the Turkish infantry. This was done, and the Assyrian machine gun was let loose with its rapid firing, while from behind the five positions purposely selected remote from each other, the individual fire of the five Assyrian sharpshooters added to the impression of a strong attack in the rear of the enemy. It was a most hazardous attempt on the part of the Assyrian colonel. But it was also a most cleverly designed move conceived by him, which turned out to yield the desired effect. The strongest resistance of the Turks was thus broken, the enemy began to retreat, and his retreat soon assumed the form of a hasty flight, leaving in the hands of the pursuers mountain guns and large quantities of war material. The army of Agha Petros and the other Salmas forces weary and exhausted, after the disappearance of the broken fragments of the Turkish army of invasion, bivouacked in the open and slept in the luxuriant grass of the mountains some thirty miles away from Urmia, before they were able to return from the pursuit of the enemy.

As told, the Assyrians, within the space of six weeks, fought fourteen victorious battles with the Turks. It was learned from the Turkish prisoners that the Turkish soldier had no desire, nor courage, nor ambition to fight, and that he was driven into the field of action against his will by the cruel whip of his masters.

But throughout these battles the Assyrians were daily waiting for some news from the British forces in Persia, and also for some supplies of war material which was promised to them so solemnly by the British Captairi Gracy. The ammunition left by the retiring Russian army was now nigh exhausted. Some quantities of war material were also left by the Russians in the small port of Sharabkhana, on the other side of the Lake of Urmia; but it probably had been confiscated by the nearby Moslems of Tabriz. The latter had become bold again. The Turks, after the withdrawal of the Assyrian army from Salmas, had entered the capital of the Persian Azarbaijan. The foreign consulates, with the exception of the American, had been deserted, and their occupants had fled from fear of the approaching Turks. Still the Assyrians took a chance by sending a boat with one hundred and sixty men to attempt the bringing of the much-needed ammunition left in the port of Sharabkhana. The captain of the new Assyrian boat, which was also left by the Russian army, was a Russian. But it was never known that he was a Bolshevik till the fatal day of the disaster. The boat arrived at the port. It was observed by the Turks and the Moslems of Tabriz, whose presence there was cleverly concealed from the Assyrian troops. The Assyrians landed. As they began to move toward the storehouse they saw the enemy coming. They fought their way back to reach the boat, but the boat was gone! It was driven farther out into the lake by the Bolshevik Russian captain. The Assyrians were captured and their bodies were literally mutilated. The fragments of their bones and skulls were later gathered, through the permission secured by the American Consul in Tabriz, and taken to the latter city, where they were buried in the Christian cemetery. The Assyrian National Associations of America donated funds for a monument, which was erected on the graves of the great heroes of Sharabkhana, who volunteered to take the terrible risk and sacrifice their lives in order to save their nation from total extermination.

All hope, therefore, of getting any supply of ammunition was gone; and if the Turkish army of Salmas undertook to make an attack, as it surely would, and if the battle was to remain undecided for any length of time, the doom of all the Christian people was regarded as absolutely sealed. Because of this awful predicament, the Assyrians had been unable to take full advantage of their great victories. After a crushing defeat, they had let the broken fragments of the Turks and the Kurds go. The Turkish prisoners stated that their comrades were often ready to surrender in large numbers if only their pursuit had been continued a little longer. But the Assyrians could not afford to do so. They had no ammunition! So, this little nation, this "little Germany," as it was nicknamed by its enemies, was left all alone, surrounded by millions of Moslems, the object of persistent and tenacious attacks by the Turks, having lost all

it possessed, deserted by its allies, hoping against hope for the fulfillment of its allies' promises, without ammunition and without an avenue of escape!

Where is the nation that could have stood all this? Did any of the great powers give the snap of their finger whether the brave and loyal nation, this "brave little Ally," perished in the whirlpool of their own making, or survived the greatest disaster in history? Does it not now appear that they were all trying to pull only their own chestnuts out of the fire? With all the cruelties attributed to the German army, there is not one to compare with the heartless isolation of the small Assyrian nation, which had staked her faith, risked her very existence, on the solemn pledges and most emphatic promises made to her by her selfish allies. And today, the Jews have their land; the Armenians have their Armenia; the Kurds, the bitter enemies of the Assyrians, have a kingdom promised to them; the Arabs, the treacherous Arabs, the pronounced saints of a murderous Islam, have been given an Assyrian city for the capital of their new kingdom. But the Assyrians! The Assyrians are left at the mercies of their former enemies! Without a home, without money! Living on charity, perishing from hunger and exposure in the cities of Persia; dwelling in tents in the deserts of Mesopotamia; their claims laughed at, their aspirations ridiculed, mocked and treated like wild beasts, and now deprived also of the benefits of the great American philanthropy. Who is responsible for all this? There is surely a day of retribution for all forms of injustice. The infallible Tribunal, even though shamefully rejected by the so-called Christian nations, still sits upon his everlasting throne! He will mete out justice, many measures for each measure. He alone is the hope of this sin-smitten world, and his coming kingdom only can supply the balm that will heal the gaping wounds of the oppressed pierced by the heartless selfishness of man.

As the subsequent pages will offer a more logical space for the present woes of the Assyrians, we return back to Urmia, to behold the plight of the bravest people on earth, but left without the necessary means with which to hurl back their enemies and the enemies of their allies.

The Turkish army of Salmas commenced its march from the north against Urmia. The deep pass through which the enemy was to make his way, and the steep hills that he was to scale, constitute some of the mightiest fortifications of nature. But the defenders required mountain batteries to return the fire of the large guns of the Turks. The Assyrians had a few of these guns, but they were now of no use. They were speechless! They had consumed almost entirely the small quantity of the food left for their consumption. The few shells they had left were being saved for extreme emergency. The Assyrian relied, under God, upon their valor. The roar of the Turkish cannon came closer and closer. They were now on the plateau. To their left was the salt lake of Urmia, to their right the friendly hills of the notorious Simkoo. They were to pass a promontory that stretched its pointed nose toward the near-by inland lake.

Under the southern brow of this rocky projection the Assyrians waited, while a contingent of their comrades were like eagles climbing the steep slopes of the mountains on the right flank of the enemy. The Turkish batteries were kept furiously active, vomiting a deluge of Islam's wrath. Their deafening roar played the notes of the gladdest song of the Challif's holy war, while their shells dropped in endless succession, tearing and ploughing the ground as they struck.

The Assyrian troops, who were sent to scale the mountains on the right flank of the enemy, had done so; and they signaled their success to their brethren on the other side of the mountain projection. The Turks turned to the right, along the highway leading to the bridge of Nazloo River. The Assyrians gave their accustomed yell: "In thy name will we fight, Mar Shimon Benyamin," and threw themselves desperately upon the advancing enemy. Instantaneous with this move, the other Assyrians made their flank attack. As the enemy was marching in close formation, it suffered fearfully from the terrific fire of its opponents' machine guns, which were cleverly planted on the slope that commanded the highway. The Kurdish element in the Turkish army fled. The suddenness of the attack confused and demoralized the Turks once more. They turned east toward the lake, and then north again along its shore. Decisively defeated, they retreated and returned to the pass through which they had marched, and waited there unpursued, till they were reinforced by additional forces in their rear. Another opportunity was lost to the Assyrians: they yearned to follow the enemy, but they had no factory to replace their empty cartridges! And as for the solemn promises of their allies, they were now almost forgotten.

A very remarkable incident took place shortly after this victory. By making mention of it here the reader will be able to form some idea as to the character of the Assyrians, and their conception of the principle involved in one's word of honor. Of this excellent virtue, the Persian Assyrians, I regret to say, are almost absolutely barren. They are emotional 'changeable and unreliable. Perhaps their long oppression as subjects has made them so. Their environments under the tyranny of their Molsem masters have hindered them from cultivating that moral excellency, which has always appeared in superb and matchless grandeur among their mountain and independent brethren. The Assyrians had quite a number of Turkish officers among their prisoners of war. These officers had witnessed the



kindness with which their fellow captives had been treated by their war enemies, and had particularly noticed the attention that was paid by the latter to their wounded soldiers. And as to the conduct of the Assyrians toward the officers themselves, the latter had not anticipated it, and in their own confession they could never look for it anywhere else. They came to have a sincere sympathy for the isolated Assyrian people; they honestly desired to save the Assyrian nation from extermination in a land that looked like a vast surging Islam sea. They sought an interview with the leaders of the Assyrian nation, and they spoke to them in the following manner:

"You are absolutely the bravest people on the face of the earth. Your courage is most unique, your valor incomparable. You are truly a Christian people. We have seen this in your conduct, not only toward us, but also toward all your enemies. You are lions in the war, but lamb-like in your victory. Unfortunately, however, you are a small nation; you cannot replace your slain; you cannot continue to fight millions of your foes. Turkey will eventually bring up a mighty army that will flood and overwhelm you. And you have no resources, no sufficient supply of ammunition, and no factories to manufacture the same. We are telling you this honestly. You have been deserted by your allies. They are absolutely selfish. They are all seeking their own. Where are the pledges that were made to you? Where are the cannon, or the guns, or the ammunition that were promised you? Where is the British army? You have been left alone to fight the battle of your allies! It is not your own battle. They will never fulfill toward you what they have promised. You have waited patiently for the fulfillment of those pledges. Now we should not be telling you this, you have seen it all for yourselves.

"Come, now, and make peace with Turkey. We know you feel that you cannot rely upon her word. We know that you fear you will be betrayed. But we will take up the cause for you. Leave it to us; and while we are still your captives, we will negotiate those terms for you. We will arrange to secure for you the most satisfactory guarantees you need. Only say the word. Nor do we want you to take the initiative in the matter, by which you might give an impression of weakness on your part. We will take up the negotiations. We will suggest the proposition for the mutual benefit of both sides. It will pay you to make an alliance with the Turks, no matter what the final issues of the great war may be. Russia is out of the game. You will not be called upon to take up arms against your former friends. England and the other Allied nations are remote, and you will have no occasion to face them in hostilities. Look after Seek your own destiny. Consider your own future, and think of yourselves first and last. You just say the word, and leave the matter to us. We have learned to appreciate you and love you. We honestly desire your best good!

Are not these words an accurate commentary? Did they not speak the truth? Did not these intelligent Turkish officers understand the real game of the war? Did they not speak in prophetic foresight, at least, so far as the Assyrians were concerned? Who would not have yielded to this most solicitous pleading? Who would not have grasped such an opportunity when placed in such a position? What answer should the Assyrian leaders have given to this honest and imploring appeal of the Turkish officers, every syllable of which, meant under the circumstances, the best interest of the small Assyrian nation?

Some of the leaders of the Persian Assyrians were moved and yielded at once. They suggested an immediate armistice. They would make peace with the Turks, and, if necessary, they would form an alliance with them. But, fortunately, members of this element were a very small and an ineffective minority in the counsels of their nation. They- were destined, however, later to play their unpatriotic, selfish and hired part to the detriment of the Assyrians' cause.

But what about the mountain Assyrians? Could they ever think of bearing a stigma on their fair name? Could they ever think of proving false and going back on their word? Could they betray England, to whose representative they had solemnly given their pledge? Nay, nay, a mountain Assyrian would rather die than do a shameful and "sinful" act like that. The promise made to their allies must be kept under all circumstances, it mattered not what their allies did. They were an honorable people. They were neither false nor cowards. Once they had made a pledge, they were going to stand by it, come what may. They would fight to the last man unto the end. They had better be wiped off from the face of the earth than it ever be said of them that they, in an emergency, had proved untrue and had betrayed their friends. They decided to remain loyal, and hold the front allotted to them at all risks and all hazards.

With their ammunition rapidly dwindling, the Assyrians planned to be on the defensive only. The topography of the land was in their favor. Their forces could seek the protecting shelters, made numerous by the formation of the high mountains, and thus avoid any serious damage from the Turkish bombardments. They would depend, upon God, on the success of close battles and hand-to-hand fighting, for which they were famous. Their machine guns still had a supply of the tiny shells, even though they would have to make use of them with strict economy. These guns which were a terror to the advancing army, could be planted unexposed along the only paths that made Urmia



accessible to the invaders. Audaciously they chose either to vanquish their foes, or be vanquished by them and then be annihilated.

Face to face with such gloomy prospects, and bewildered as to what had happened to the promised British expedition that would bring them both assistance and the much-needed supply of war material, they were surprised one day by the whirling sounds that descended from the sky. It was a clear and bright summer day. To be accurate, it was on the 25th day of June, when they saw a hornet-like object soaring high in the dazzling firmament that hung over the ancient city of Media. It came lower and lower. First it was fired upon as an enemy observation aeroplane. Then the British flag was sighted! And an overjoyous Christian population thought of the festal reception to be accorded to the approaching British soldiers. The friendly flyer alighted and landed near the camp of the bravest troops that had ever defended the name and the honor of the British Empire. The captain rose up from his seat, surrounded by the Assyrian officers. He was escorted to the presence of Mar Shimon Poloos, and there he told his story in the hearing of Agha Petros, other Assyrian generals and the Assyrian clergy. He delivered the glad news that the British expedition would arrive in Sayen Kala, Persia, within two weeks, with arms of all kinds and abundant ammunition, and that an Assyrian expedition should be dispatched to meet the former and return together to Urmia. Having delivered his message, the British officer returned to his machine and flew back to whence had come.

The road from Urmia to Sayen Kala was situated through the most dangerous passes and in an enemy land. Besides the bitter animosity of an exclusively Moslem population, the country was overrun by the straggling elements of the broken Turkish southern forces. The officers of these isolated troops had conducted a regular campaign of the holy war. They had succeeded in rallying to their assistance considerable forces from among the distant Kurdish tribes, and from among the Persian Moslems as well. Whoever led the expedition must, therefore, have a sufficient number of men with him in order to be able to open his way to Sayen Kala, which would require a steady march of several days.

General Agha Petros undertook the task. But owing to the pressure by the Turks from the north, he took with him only about one thousand men of the cavalry, feeling certain that the Assyrians would be able to hold their own in Urmia till he returned with the British expeditionary force. Providence, however, had willed otherwise. There are no incidents nor accidents that can possibly come to pass without the permission of Him who holds the destinies of all nations in the palm of His omnipotent hand. There may be an inexcusable negligence, or some inexplicable circumstances which appear to weave the fabric of earthly events; but not a warp nor a woof was ever twisted together for the material that makes history, but that it came out of the spinning wheel of an infallible wisdom. He who sees the single hairs, as they fall from the heads of men, surely holds the all-controlling interest in the future of individuals and nations in the palm of His hand. The entire history of the Assyrian people from the beginning of the great war, answers to an almost exact duplicate of the sad history of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. Every event during those weary years of flight, exile and warfare; every calamity and every threatened catastrophe; every hope that remained like an unreal dream, and every disappointment; every exhibition of their amazing valor, and every battle from which they emerged victorious; all the pressure from the overwhelming forces of Turkey, and all the hatred of the combined elements of Islam, only made known the fact to the unconscious Assyrians that neither Urmia nor any other part of the adjoining lands was a proper place for them to dwell in; and that they must return to their own ancient and historic fatherland! So Agha Petros and his mounted men arrived safely in Sayen Kala, but no British expedition could be seen there! A small contingent of the latter's troops had arrived at the place appointed; but on finding strong signs of enemy's presence, they had already departed into the interior of Persia.

## **THE FINAL EXODUS OF THE ASSYRIANS AND THE LAST MASSACRE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN URMIA**

The absence of the British troops in Sayen Kala had the effect of a stunning blow to the Assyrian General. The position in which he and his men were placed, was not only embarrassing and bewildering, but also most dangerous. He, of course, knew all these lands like the letters in the alphabet. In fact, it was his thorough knowledge of the topography of those ancient hills and valleys that placed his enemies in every battle at his mercy. And so far as his courage was concerned, he knew no fear. Using a slang expression, he had the goat of his foes. He could have returned to Urmia, if he so desired; but by going back empty-handed, he might cause consternation among his own; embolden the native Moslems to attempt another uprising; and encourage the Turks to make their attacks with less fear of defeat. It would be better, therefore, for the moral effect, both upon his own people, and upon his enemies, to

have them remain under the prevailing impression left in the minds of all by the visit of the strange messenger from the untrodden realm of the air. He, accordingly, decided to keep on till he had found the British.

The Turks, in the meanwhile, had made fresh attacks upon the Assyrians in Urmia; but with the same results. The prolonged absence of Agha Petros however, began to create unpleasant forebodings in the hearts of the people, as it also led to the wicked whisperings of the Moslems, who managed to apprise the Turks of the plight of the Christians. While the army still maintained its splendid courage, the Christian population became panic-stricken, and fled in terrible confusion into the city, which was already congested by the refugees of Salinas Armenians.

More than the delay of Agha Petros, however, the treacherous conduct of the same Armenian soldiers, who had fled from Van, contributed to the cause of the panic. General Andranek with his splendid troops had advanced to the vicinity of Khoi, about ninety miles from Urmia. He had an understanding with the Assyrian army that, while the latter was to push the Turks back, when he arrived in Khoi, he would be in a position to strike the enemy most effectively in the rear. And it surely would have happened so, had it not been for the concealment again, by these deserters from Van, of the real location or the nearness of their own General whom they dreaded. And by this treacherous act, they placed in jeopardy also the bravest troops of Armenia, and the bravest commander the Armenians had. Jealousy is a terrible thing. It has afflicted, I regret to say, both the Armenians and the Persian Assyrians as well. So, as the south brought no tidings of the great Assyrian General's return; and as the veracity of the report from the north, concerning the arrival in Khoi of an equally great Andranek, was deliberately denied, fear fell upon the entire Christian population. The people could no longer be restrained by any means or threats.

The passage to the north into Russia, was, of course, blocked by the Turks. The southern gate of Urmia plateau presented the only avenue of a possible escape. The long caravan of frightened refugees fell in line on the road leading to Sayen Kala, and from there no one knew where. The Assyrian forces also, having nothing left to defend, departed.

The sufferings of the Assyrians throughout the long, tedious and hazardous journey from Urmia to Hamadan, are simply indescribable. In their haste for flight, many of these people failed to take provisions with them for the journey. And those who managed to do so, took only a supply that would last them a day or two, or possibly three, the longest, as they fully expected that they would meet somewhere on the road, and not very far from Urmia, the returning Assyrian General and his men, together with the British expeditionary force. The country through which the caravan of the refugees passed was exclusively Moslem in population. The entire land had already become more than once a regular campground for the heterogeneous forces of Turkey, who had left it almost desolate and barren. There was, therefore, very little, if any, left to have been commandeered by the Assyrian forces. Consequently, when the small rations were exhausted, and the journey continued to become longer, the refugees tried to subsist on vegetation only. Disease broke out among the multitude, and was followed by the ravages of cholera. And as the fleeing Assyrians were now being pursued by the enemy, who literally played the role of the Egyptian iaroah, they had no time to bury their dead, or to cry with them those who were held in the agonies of the dreaded contagion. It was perhaps a merciful God, even though applied with the vengeance of God, that came in time to shorten the fearful sufferings of the dying. Before Hamadan was reached, more than fifteen thousand bodies had been left behind buried, and their bones have since transformed the narrow valley, in which they fell or were killed, into one of those melancholy scenes, beheld by Ezekiel the Prophet.

Naturally the progress of the refugees with the aged and the little children was very slow. The Moslems of Urmia headed by a Persian General, by the name of Majid-el-Saltana, had started on the pursuit. During the night, as the Assyrians were resting near Sayen Kala, and as they fell asleep from fatigue and exhaustion, the pursuers stationed themselves over the hills that commanded the narrow road that followed the course of the river which runs zigzag through the valley. As the morning broke, and the weary pilgrims began to rub their eyes, a most murderous fire was opened into the dense crowd. Before Azaria Khan, the now famous Assyrian General, could scale the hills with a body of his men to drive the enemy away, some five thousand more Assyrians had fallen dead!

The crowds were so dense that the victims fell like leaves as from autumn trees. The Persian General, after this heartless slaughter of women and children, sent a telegram to his superiors, in Tabriz, the contents of which became known later. The telegram read: "I have sent a few more thousand dogs into hell." With their numbers daily thinning down, the Assyrian refugees, barefooted, half naked, hungry, emaciated and sick, arrived in the city of Hamadan, where Daniel of Shushan's fame had beheld these political convulsions in his prophetic vision.

We return now again for a moment or two to Urmia. The exodus of the Christians had been so sudden and so hasty that, the Assyrians who resided north of Urmia, had been unable to overtake the caravan of the fleeing refugees, and had been obliged to remain in the city. A few were sheltered by their "intimate" Mohammedan friends; but most of them had fled to the same mission building, where after the first retreat of the Russian troops from Persia, they had been protected by the American and the French flags. Most of the foreign missionaries, however,

had departed into the interior of Persia, fearing now a wholesale and indiscriminate massacre. In the American Mission there remained Dr. Packard, a medical missionary; and in the French, Mgr. Sontag. They had both been men of tremendous influence with the Moslems, and had also enjoyed great honors and favors from the Persian authorities. A large number also of the prominent Assyrians who could have fled, were deceitfully persuaded by their Moslem friends to remain, being promised, under oath, absolute protection by the authorities. Included among the latter, was Dr. Israiel Khan, an eminent physician, and a man of great prominence and influence with the Persian authorities. The title of "Khan" had been given him by the Persian government, both for his efficiency and his humanitarian service among the Moslems. The noted physician had been dissuaded from joining the caravan of the fleeing refugees by the notorious governor of Urmia, who had offered him the shelter of his own home.

The Assyrian army having departed, there was nothing left to check the passions of the fanatics. It was time now for the overheated caldron of Islam to flow freely, with no apparent fear of retribution. In order to make this massacre more meritorious, the great Mujtaheed (high priest) of Urmia issued a holy war proclamation; and in order to hasten the quick work of extermination, he set the period, for the merciless slaughter of the Christians to extend not longer than forty-eight hours.

The blood-thirsty mob, headed by Arshad el Hemayoon, attacked the Roman Catholic Mission first. Even the brutes, with all their ferocity, can be tamed by the kindness of man. But the leader of this mob became a real demon in flesh, by rewarding in the manner he did the great kindness he had received from the French apostolic delegate. Hunted by his iniquitous deeds, conscious of the crimes he had already committed against the Christians, and realizing that he was guilty of death, he had fled from the righteous wrath of the 'Assyrians, and found refuge together with his wife in the official residence of the French bishop. He had not only become a protege of his protector, but had also freely enjoyed the most liberal hospitality his most generous host was capable of giving him. Into this residence Arshad el Hemayoon, at the head of a band of murderers, entered first. He had the hands of his former benefactor tied up. As a favored guest of the French bishop, he had become familiar with the entire layout of the interior of the house. He knew where the unsafe safe was, which contained not only the ever plentiful funds of the Roman Catholic Mission, but also thousands upon thousands of Toomans (dollars) of the Assyrians' money, deposited there for safe-keeping. The bishop's residence had been practically turned into a vast storehouse that

resembled a gigantic wholesale rug store. The native Christians had brought all their costly goods and belongings, together with their jewelry, deeds of property, etc., and placed them under the protection of the French flag, just as a much larger majority of the people had done with the American Mission. The safe was broken open, and all the contents thereof taken by Arshad el Hemayoon. Then the residence was stripped of its furniture, and all the basements emptied of their contents. Then by the order of his former protege and favored guest, Mgr. Sontag was beaten with the butts of the guns; and when fallen, he was kicked and beaten till he was bleeding profusely. While he was still conscious, he was dragged to the door of the Roman Catholic Church, and shot there. Their fanaticism still unappeased, they began to abuse the dead body of the bishop in indescribably hideous manner.



One of the Assyrian refugees praying for aid amid the ruins of the Christian region of Urmia. Courtesy, Near East Relief.

The French mission buildings were now sheltering more than six thousand refugees. The murderers entered with every conceivable weapon, from a long sword to a wooden mallet. They commenced with the little children and infants. The latter were held by their tiny feet and their heads dashed against the walls and the stone pavements. The older ones were held up by the hair of the head, hanging, while their bodies were severed by one stroke of the sword. The little girls were publicly assaulted and then cut in twain. Women had their breasts first cut off, and then pierced by daggers. Others were taken to the roofs of the buildings, and from there dashed to their death into the street

below. Others had their hands and their limbs amputated by sickles and axes, and then had their skulls crushed by wooden mallets. The spacious courtyard became impassable from the still bleeding fragments of the victims' mutilated bodies, while blood literally leaked from the floor of each building to the one below. Of the entire number of the Christians, estimated at more than six thousand, in the French mission buildings alone, not more than sixty souls remained who escaped in a miraculous way; and all the rest were put to death in less than forty-eight hours, the official time for the application of the mandate of the "jihad."

This barbarous brutality was likewise practiced in the buildings of the American mission which yielded much larger revenues in plunder than the Catholic mission, only the custodian of the latter escaped the fate of the French delegate; and this was probably due to the influence of, or the fear from, his former Kurdish patients.

Dr. Israiel Khan, who had been persuaded by the Governor to remain under his protection, was delivered by the latter to the mob. After he had been subjected to the most revolting abuses and most awful tortures, he was led to the official quarters of the governor to be hanged there. While they were adjusting the rope around his neck, he asked permission to speak "a few words." Thinking perhaps that he was going to embrace Islam, the Moslems permitted him to do so. Weak and bleeding, he stood erect, and stretched forth his hand, and said, "Ye men of Islam, these are my last moments on earth; you are going to murder me. I am going into the presence of my Christ and Saviour, who alone is the Saviour of the whole world. But as for you, I want you to remember these dying words of mine; you will pay dearly for your iniquitous deeds right here on this earth, and in this very city. My blood, as well as the blood of thousands of innocent Christians, whom you have so mercilessly slain, will surely be avenged; and it will be eventually avenged by my own brethren. Now you may proceed; I am ready to go." He was hanged, and left hanging for several hours for the satisfaction of the murderers.

The number of the Christians, who were unable to escape with their brethren, has been estimated at from sixteen thousand to seventeen thousand souls. Of this entire number, some three hundred persons only managed to hide themselves from the wrath of Islam, till they were finally rescued by the American Consul, and taken to the city of Tabriz.

## HAMADAN AND BEYOND

The weary Assyrians at last arrived in Hamadan. A more frightful sight could never be beheld. Men and women with their clothes torn into shreds, had become literally naked; their bare feet were swollen and bleeding. Hunger and thirst had reduced their bodies to mere skeletons. The ever present fear had made many of them actually mad; while the uncertainty of the future put them all in a terrible despair. A people extremely affectionate by nature, in the intensity of their anguish, had lost all remembrance of their loved ones, who were found absent from among the living. The entire camp became a vast hospital, and there were neither physicians nor medicine to relieve the sufferings of the sick. The British had a Contingent of troops in Hamadan. In fact, some of those troops had met on the road the caravan of the refugees, and had rendered to them all the assistance they could. But the British force was too small, and its resources too limited, to have saved the lives of hundreds more, who succumbed to the pangs of hunger and to the ravages of disease. Perhaps the saddest aspect of this whole awful tragedy was the sight of so many orphans, whose parents had perished on the roads, as it became apparent when the census of the people was taken. These were all gathered and placed in separate quarters in Hamadan. A prominent Assyrian, writing to me on the situation, said, "I visited one of those orphanages, and found about one hundred and sixty boys in a cellar-like place. They were all hungry and naked. The floor of their room was damp. They had some torn mats for their beds, and hardly any bed covering for their bodies. Two weeks later I called there again, and found the dungeon-like place empty! They were all dead!"



A group of the orphan Assyrian boys. Hundreds of these are left without books or schools to receive an education. Courtesy, Near East Relief.



It is a matter that deserves most serious consideration on the part of the American people, and particularly the Christian people of America, to inquire to why the Assyrian nation should be barred from easter flow of the great American charity. Those thgor were in charge of America's most liberal contributions, were surely cognizant of the fearful plight of a brave and Christian nation. And yet, they have choked the generous purse of America, and have not allowed its contents to save the lives of thousands of Assyrian people. I have been unable to understand why the name of the Assyrians should have been eliminated from the list of the afflicted nations of the countries of the Near East, and only casually mentioned by the custodians of the American relief funds, as if that name was confined between the signs of a parenthesis, or between a pair of printing brackets. It has been incomprehensible to me, why the name of a "little Christian ally," the name of a small and brave nation, which risked its very existence for the same cause which led America into war, should be supplanted, in the relief propaganda in America, by the name of a Moslem country, which in soul, spirit and body, was an ally of Turkey, and an ally of Germany! It was the Persian authorities of Azarbajjan that planned the conspiracy that led to the assassination of the Assyrian Patriarch. It was the Persians who were massacring the Assyrians and plundering their homes. It was the Persians who had become the bitterest enemies of America's "little ally." It was the Persians who were driving the Assyrians out, persecuting them, pursuing them, exiling them and killing them. It was the Persians who were betraying the Assyrians into the hands of the Turks and the Kurds. And yet, when it came to make an appeal to the philanthropic heart of America, in the place of the most deserving name of Assyria, or the Assyrians, there was placed most conspicuously the undeserving name of a persecuting Persia! Why?

I do not know what the American people will think n they find out that, oven those small funds that were allowed to reach the Assyrians, went to pave the of the Persian cities, and improve the broken :roads of the country. Many of these Assyrians were compelled to do a day's hard manual labor, in sweeping and paving the streets of their enemies, in repairing their broken roads, and cleaning their cesspools, before they were allowed to have, either any daily rations of bread to eat, or twenty cents of American money with which to keep themselves and their families alive.

There is absolutely no doubt that, almost from the beginning of the relief work which was inaugurated in America, the Assyrians were discriminated against. But why should this discrimination be, it is for the Various Christian bodies in America to find out, if they so will. It is also a mystery to me, why the American charity funds should be given as a loan to the Assyrians, and in some instances a security taken for the same. Perhaps it was due to the shortness of the funds, or to a plan of using and utilizing the same funds again and again, without depending any longer upon fresh supplies from America. But the method applied to the Assyrians, to my knowledge, has never been applied anywhere else, at least, during the period in which the great war was raging. Had it not been for the philanthropic work of England in Mesopotamia, perhaps two-thirds of the remaining Assyrians who were induced to remain, or to return to Persia, on a hope of eventually returning to their former homes in Urmia, are left almost destitute and suffering fearful privations. Probably, out of their own funds, the American and the Roman Catholic Missionaries are aiding their own adherents; but what will the others do? And there are now possibly fifteen thousand Assyrians in the various cities of Persia, and at least seventy-five per cent of these people did not originally belong to either one of the two missions alluded to.

At any rate, the Assyrian past history of Hamadan was repeated. This ancient capital of the Parsees, had for centuries concealed from human view, the sleeping bodies of the Assyrians, who had died and were buried there in the happy period of Christianity's triumph in Persia. Among the ancient dead are many martyrs, slain during the persecution of the Christians by the Magi authorities. Providence, however, so willed that, additional glory should crown this historic scene on the glorious day of the resurrection of the saints. Thus, the victims of the Magi prejudice, in the 8th century, and those of the Islamic bigotry of the 20th Century, came to sleep together under the soil of the same empire, that they might together rise in triumph, and together sit in judgment, to condemn those who hated them without a cause. Vast, indeed, is the graveyard of the Assyrians in Hamadan.



A group of the Assyrian Orphan girls. Hundreds of these have neither books nor schools to receive an education.

But sacrifices can gladly be made, and suffering more patiently endured, if the objective which inspires them both can be obtained. The hope of freedom had acted like the sound of a resurrection trumpet, and called the Assyrians everywhere to form a national unity, and rally around one flag. Even the guiding hand of providence seemed to approve the plan, and open the path for the concentration of these early Christians, on their own ancient soil. But Hamadan became to the Assyrians what Shechem had become to Israel of old, only the conduct of the former was less justifiable than the revolt of the ten tribes from Judah. And just as the fleshpots of Egypt had become a snare to the sons of Jacob during their journeying toward the Land of Canaan, so also the free luxuries, and the indolent life of Urmia, created a craving in the heart of the Persian Assyrians for their former life of bondage!

This shameful revolt was given strength by a set of parasites, who had come to accumulate large wealth, and own extensive properties, and erect palatial homes through the funds collected under false pretenses from the American churches. And if some of these properties are ever to be recovered, or some reparation be ever and eventually made for their loss or their destruction, every square inch of these properties, and every cent of that reparation, should either be confiscated by the Assyrian nation in whose name such funds were selfishly collected, or else be returned to the American churches of nearly all the denominations in America. It was this element, backed up also by the allurements of the American relief funds, scanty as they were, that led to the destruction of the Assyrian national unity, and to the revolt of the Persian Assyrians, and their subsequent separation from the main body of their brethren who are now in Mesopotamia. The audacity of this element was so daring, their selfishness so all embracing, and their folly so amazing that they sent representatives even to Peace Conference in Paris, where they openly declared that they had nothing to do with the Assyrian nation, and that they simply desired to have it made possible for them to return to their former place of oppression and bondage, only to have one of the Allied powers keep an army in Urmia for their protection!

Thus, in spite of constant urgings of the British military authorities in Persia, that all the Assyrians should go to Mesopotamia, a certain portion of the element alluded to, refused to depart, and has remained on the Persian soil to the present day.



Assyrian refugee women in exile. By Courtesy, Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.

The main body of the refugees, assisted from now on by the British troops, arrived in the camp of Baquba, which was already prepared for their kindly reception by the British authorities of Bagdad. It would be impossible for me to speak in terms of sufficient praise for the generosity and the consideration of the British Government toward these Assyrian exiles. The British military authorities spared absolutely nothing to make their exiled guests as comfortable as it was possible for them to make them. No European city can claim better sanitary laws, or a better sanitary system than the one by which the lives of thousands of these Assyrians were saved from certain death. Nourishing food was abundantly supplied. The sick were taken good care of in the newly made hospitals. Schools were established, and boys and girls received excellent education. It was a vast city of comfortable tents, divided into sections and streets and avenues; and it was chanted into sleep by the murmuring song of the majestic river below, or intoxicated by the rich fragrance of the not very distant groves of orange and lemon and pomegranate.

While the Assyrians were thus temporarily quartered with all the comforts they needed, the writer, with the assistance of his colleagues, was knocking at the door of the Peace Conference in Paris for the recognition of the just and righteous claims of the Assyrians. These claims will appear under another chapter. But at a time when the representatives of the British delegation in Paris made a verbal and solemn promise to the writer, assuring him of the recognition of the Assyrian rights, and at a time when a British commission, as the Writer was informed, had been sent to Mesopotamia, in order to study the situation there, and decide on the boundaries of the land which would be allotted to the "little ally" as a permanent home, the same evil propaganda that had disrupted the Assyrian national unity in Persia, broke out in the Assyrian camp in Baquba. There was a storm, and there was a clamor. The Persian Assyrians, being led by the propagandists to believe that all Mesopotamia was a desert land, bolted and expressed a strong wish to return to Urmia. They were deliberately fed on false news and false promises, and for the same selfish reasons and purposes. Even the Assyrian American Courier, a publication owned by the writer, and established for the purpose of political, educational and spiritual uplift of the people, with its pages containing most accurate information as to the prospects of the united Assyrians, and the hopelessness of their return to Urmia, in a most mysterious way was not allowed to reach the people, so that they might be enlightened for their own good and their best interest. Copies of the publication were later found torn to pieces or hidden in the rooms of the same set of parasites who attended also to all mail sent from America, and who had sold their conscience and the best interest of their nation for filthy lucre, and for the prospects of the fleshly pots of the lazy, life of Urmia. And when the Persian Assyrians came to realize that they had been deceived, and that Urmia was still a blazing volcano, and that they could not possibly return there, they were doped by another pill of an equally misleading promise, to the effect that, they would be taken to America, where millions in money and the richest soil of the land were awaiting them!

Before the American consulates in Bagdad and in Persia were notified of the new immigration laws, a few thousands had managed to have their passports vised for the United States. Some were admitted through the kindness and sympathetic consideration of our Department of Labor; but many others are still roaming wildly in the various ports of Europe and Asia, not knowing what to do or whither to go.

This humble book, I trust, will eventually fall into the hands of certain individuals, who may see how sadly they have been misled by some capricious mercenaries, and how great has become their responsibility for supporting a propaganda that has led to the disruption of the Assyrian unity, and has immensely added to the already swollen tide of the Assyrian nation's woe.

Thank God, in the depth of my soul, I believe in the name and in the interest of God's Kingdom first and last, and with all my blunders and shortcomings, of which I am more conscious than any other person can possibly be, that holy principle, or that holy desire for the spiritual uplift of my people, has dominated all my activities and all my efforts in behalf of the Assyrian nation. But conscious as I am of my own imperfections, I cannot help but revolt against the thought that the Kingdom of God is to be judged by the size of the bundles of dead wood, marked by the trade mark of various sectarian names. Any missionary enterprise that does not carry with it the humble spirit of Christ, or does not confine itself within the path and in the program of the real master of the enterprise, or is unprepared to subscribe to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, as declared by the inspired Apostle Paul when he said: "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," is bound to lay a great deal of "hay and stubble" upon the solid foundation of Christianity, instead of "gold and precious stones."

Thus the small minorities of the Persian Assyrians, who were led to revolt against the Assyrian unity, and against the Assyrian national aspirations, are found today sunk deeper in misery, roaming in the ports of Europe and Asia, and hungry in the various cities of Persia. Driven by the pangs of starvation, the weaker ones have subscribed even to the creed of Mohammed. They were able to resist until death the drawn sword of Islam, but they succumbed to, and became lost in, the ecclesiastico-political whirlpool of the sectarian propagandists.

## **THE ASSYRIAN CLAIMS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE OF THE PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE AT PARIS**

Shortly after it became known that the Peace Conference would be held in Paris, the writer, as the President of the "Assyrian National Associations of America," which he had organized, sent a cable through the courtesy of the Department of State to the American consul in Bagdad, requesting of the latter to ascertain the wishes of the Assyrian national leaders with reference to their national claims, to be presented at Peace Conference in Paris. Of the three sectarian groups, into which the Assyrian people are divided, the Nestorian element, because of the great and courageous role it played in the war had the first right to speak. And yet, for the sake of the Assyrian national unity, it was deemed advisable by the writer to ascertain the wishes of the other two Assyrian Patriarchs as well. The American Consul, through the Department of State, replied that the Jacobite Patriarch, being then in the territory still occupied by the Turks, could not be communicated with; that the Roman Catholic Patriarch has a desire to go to Paris in person; but the wish of the Nestorian Patriarch is, "All Assyrians united, and under the protectorate of Great Britain!" This was precisely the policy advocated by the Assyrian American Courier, which was then as still is, the only national organ of the Assyrian people: Only it was the desire of the Assyrian National Associations of America that, if America decided to enter into the League of Nations, we should ask at Peace Conference for the mandate of America.

With the contents of the cable sent by the American Consul at Bagdad in the possessions of the writer, he, together with his colleague, sailed for Paris, where the following claims were presented before the conference of the preliminaries of peace.

## **THE CLAIMS OF THE ASSYRIANS BEFORE THE PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE AT PARIS**

### **I. THE ASSYRIAN PEOPLE**

The Assyrians are better known by their three Ecclesiastical designations representing the three main divisions;-

(A.) The Nestorians have predominated in the Kurdistan mountains, inhabiting Barwar, Tyari, Tkhooma, Baz, Jeloo, Gavar, etc., with Koodchanis as their patriarchal See.

(B.) The Chaldeans predominate in the province of Mosul, abounding also in the various locations in lower Mesopotamia down to the Persian gulf, with Mosul as their patriarchal See.

(C.) The Jacobites prevail in the province of Dearbeker, abounding also in Syria proper, and in other localities in the former empire of Turkey, with the city of Mardin as their patriarchal See.

A careful examination of the various statistics compiled by the European experts as to the Assyrian population shows that the resources from which they were compelled to draw were entirely erroneous and misleading. This error in all probability is largely due to the fact that a very large number of the Assyrians lost their mother tongue and speak Turkish, Arabic and Armenian, and the Armenian speaking Assyrians became identified with the Armenian people and were counted as the Armenians. Thus during the so called Armenian massacre and exile, fully 175,000 Assyrians perished, and were listed under the Armenian atrocities.

Exclusive of the three main Assyrian divisions mentioned above, there are also; -

(D.) The Assyrian Maronite element. The Maronite Assyrians became identified with their Syrian coreligionists, and are erroneously named to the present day as the "Syrians."

(E.) The Persian Assyrians. Before the war broke out, the city and the district of Urmia alone claimed 82,000 Assyrians who occupied 112 villages. The small district of Salmas claimed 10,000 Assyrians. Settled in the various cities and localities on the western boundary of Persia, immediately adjoining Turkey, there have lived about 150,000 Assyrians.

(F.) The Assyrians in Russia. Driven by the Mohammedan oppression, large numbers of the Assyrians had left both Persia and Turkey to settle in the various parts of south Russia. Some 30,000 to 40,000 of these sojourn now in the district of Iravan, Caucasia. A similar number is at the present time in the city of Tiflis and its environs, in Caucasia. Other Assyrians formed temporary settlements in the various towns situated on the Black Sea. During the first Russian withdrawal from Azarbaijan, about 40,000 Persian Assyrian refugees managed to escape to Russia, and have remained there since. All told there are not less than 100,000 Assyrians in Russia, and 95 per cent of these are ready to return to an autonomous state, freed from former oppression, and protected by some mandatory power.



The most conservative figures will place the Assyrian population at not less than 600,000 (not including India and Egypt Assyrians), and while the three main Assyrian bodies are separated from each other by certain areas occupied by the non Assyrian elements, they nevertheless are living in a proximity sufficiently close- to form a separate state protected by some mandatory power.

(G.) The Islamic Assyrians. Like unto the ruins which tell the story of a past catastrophe, the moslemized Assyrians constitute a living history of the persecutions to which the Assyrian people for centuries have been subjected. Within the areas still occupied by the Assyrians, or in the immediate vicinity of all such areas, there are moslems which are distinctly of the Assyrian origin. Perhaps one or two examples should suffice, not only to reveal this fact, but also to show the justification of both the Assyrian claims and the Assyrian aspirations.

In a portion of the Kurdistan mountains, immediately west of the Persian boundary, there has lived a Kurdish tribe of considerable size, known by the name of "Shakkak," who themselves admit their Assyrian nationality, and to the present day they address the Nestorian patriarch in the most reverent manner, calling him by an endearing designation of "Uncle."

In the district of Sapna, immediately above the district of Barvar, in upper Mesopotamia, there are bodies of Kurds, still retaining sufficient characteristics to prove their Assyrian origin.

The Yezidies of the Shangar mountains, numbering now more than 300,000 souls, are of the Assyrian blood, and their departure from the Christian fold is of a comparatively recent date.

It is not necessary to make mention of similar bodies in other localities; but the leaders of the Assyrian people have always looked for the day of the opportunity, to reclaim their lost nationals back into the Christian faith, and also into the national fold. - And indeed with this end in view the Assyrian National Associations have been organized, not only in the United States and Canada, but also elsewhere. Funds have been collected, and National treasuries have been created with sufficient resources to establish national schools, not only for the Assyrian people, but also for those of their brethren in flesh and blood who are now lost to them in the fold of Islam. And surely, history shows, that the Assyrians, when given an opportunity, are capable of the achievement.

## II. THE ASSYRIANS AND THE WAR

After the entry of the Russian forces into Persia, and immediately before the declaration of war by Turkey, the Turkish Government sent official emissaries to Mar Shimon, the patriarch of the Nestorian branch of the Assyrian people, and offered the late patriarch large sums of money in gold, on the condition that the patriarch and his people should remain neutral. Of the three Assyrian patriarchs, Mar Shimon alone was in a position to strike against the Turks with the Assyrian independent tribes of Tyari, Tkhooma, Baz and Jeloo. In the meanwhile, Mar Shimon's brother, who was studying in Constantinople, was kept as a hostage by the Turkish government, and threatened with an horrible death, in case Mar Shimon refused the Turkish offer and went over to the side of the allies. This intelligence was officially communicated to the head and the leader of the Nestorians. The patriarch, however, sent envoys to the Russian military authorities in Urmia, Persia, by whom he had previously been approached, and from whom he had received a promise of 25,000 guns, and informed the latter that he had decided to declare war against Turkey.

In addition to the Turkish offer, the German consul in Mosul, sent agents to Mar Shimon, guaranteeing the absolute security of all the Assyrians in the Turkish empire, on the condition of the patriarch's neutrality. Even this German offer was refused, and the hostilities commenced between the Turks and the Nestorian Assyrians.

Thus from the time of Turkey's entry into the war, the Assyrians have fought incessantly as a distinct unit in the group of the Allied nations. The victories credited to the Russian forces in Kurdistan, were in reality won by the Assyrian forces in that front of battle. The Kurds, who were a perpetual menace to the Russian operations, were absolutely cleared from those valleys by the army of Mar Shimon. And had the Russians fulfilled their promise of supplying the patriarch's forces with rifles and a few cannon, the capture of Mosul by the Assyrians would have been an easy possibility.

However, surrounded on all sides by vastly superior numbers, short of guns and ammunition, face to face with total extermination because of their siding with the Allies, sacrificing thousands on the field of battle, and losing tens of thousands through actual starvation and disease, the Assyrians never faltered. Through all the vicissitudes and the turning tides of the war, and even after the collapse of Russia, the Nestorian Assyrians remained loyal to their Allies, and endured all for the sake of the freedom of all the Assyrians.

The independence which they now seek, they do not ask as a charity, they demand it by appealing to the sense of justice and equity. They have fought for it; they have purchased it with the streams of their own blood shed on the

field of battle. In Kurdistan, in Turkey, in Persia, in Russia, in Poland and in France, lay the graves of the Assyrians, which stand not only as splendid monuments to their valor, but also as a tremendous price paid for the restoration of their lands, and for the independence of their people. Even the late patriarch himself laid down his life upon the altar of his people's freedom.

A nation that has lost nearly one third of its numerical strength because of the part it played in the world war, must surely be entitled to recognition and independence, especially in the presence of those political declarations which have repeatedly proclaimed the inauguration of a new era, wherein the principle of self determination was to be recognized as a sacred and inherent right of mankind.

### **III. THE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OF THE ASSYRIANS**

The original land of the Assyrians embraced an area of 250,000 square miles. Islamic power seized the land, and planted Islamic elements in the newly confiscated territory. The name, however, with whatever dialect pronounced, stands as an eternal deed, showing that the house belongs to the Assyrians. And no tribunal of justice can overlook this fact. The Assyrians, however, do not pretend to claim all this original territory. But they do claim that portion of upper Mesopotamia, where they abound in large numbers. This portion of the land embraces naturally an area which stretches from below the lower-Zaba, up to and including, the province of Dearbeker, where the Assyrians vastly outnumber the Armenians; and also from Euphrates in the west to the mountains of Armenia in the East. Added to this, the Assyrians naturally desire an access to the sea.

The Assyrians realize that in all probability the Kurdish elements which reside in the area claimed by them, may present a sort of problem that will command attention. Against such a possible observation we feel that we must present the following memorandum:

1. Morally there can not be a discrimination between the Kurds and the Turks. The Kurd proved himself just as an efficient a tool for the aspirations of an imperial Germany, as did the Turks, while the former vastly exceeded the latter in ferocity and brutality against all the Christians, and particularly against the Assyrians. The crime of one is the guilt of the other.

2. To place an enemy element, which happens to be dwelling in the area claimed by the Assyrians, on the same level with a people that has suffered and suffered gladly and so heavily in the Allied cause, would be, to place the criminal on the same level with the innocent, and it would mean lasting injustice to the Assyrians.

3. While it is perhaps just that even the Kurds, as a race, are entitled to the benefits of the principle of self determination, if they so desire, but to permit their claim to expand and infringe upon the exclusive right. of the Assyrians, is to place a premium on plunder, murder and massacre.

4. So long as there exist religious bigotry and religious fanaticism, and the word "Gavoor" (heathen) is not eliminated from the vocabulary of the Turk or of the Kurd, this islamic element can never be trusted by the Assyrians. The wild beast is now caged by defeat but not tamed by culture. In order to free the Assyrians from the repetition of the former barbarities to which they have been subjected for centuries by the combined hatred of the Turk and the Kurd, and in order to save their position from being exposed to the previous perils, the reasonable area thus claimed by them, even though including some Kurds within its bounds, must be created into an Assyrian state, under the protectorate of some mandatory power.

5. It would be decidedly to the moral, educational and spiritual advantage of those Kurds, who will thus remain in a newly created Christian state, to receive the benefits of those educational and industrial enterprises which the Assyrians themselves have undertaken to establish.

6. It will be decidedly in the interest of peace, at least in that portion of Asia, as well as to the advantage of the power holding the mandatory authority in the land, and also to the moral and spiritual advantages of all the non Christian and heterogeneous elements of the entire Mesopotamia, to grant to the Assyrians the new state they desire and embracing the area they claim.

Has the agony of the war given birth to the rights of mankind? If so, the awful sacrifices made, meet their equal compensation. Anything short of the righteous and reasonable claim of a people, no matter how weak or how small, is bound to bring another day of retribution. Heaven with sorrow witnessed the tragedy of the war; it now hearkens with yearning to the cry of the small nations, and looks with longing for the enactment of justice to the oppressed people. Therefore, immeasurably greater than the crises of the war, are those which now hang upon the treatment accorded to the weak and the deserving.

### **IV. THE CLAIMS OF THE ASSYRIANS FOR REPARATION**

A ruthless slaughter of innocent women and children cannot be condoned. A deliberate crusade to exterminate one whole nation cannot be concealed under the cover of an unconditional surrender. If Turkey failed to exterminate the remainder of the Assyrians, and confiscate their property, she did so because she failed in her war. She, perhaps, can never pay for all the material and other losses suffered by the Assyrians under her most oppressive rule for centuries; but for the losses inflicted upon the Assyrians during the war, both Turkey and Germany should be compelled to make reparation. Fully 200,000 Assyrians of the Kurdistan valleys and plains are absolutely deprived of everything they owned, and their homes are left in ruins. In order that they may be able to rehabilitate themselves, they should be compensated for their entire material losses. And likewise, we believe ourselves entitled to reparation for all the Assyrians who resided in the interior of Turkey.

The Assyrians in the district of Dearbeker, including Orpha, Harpoot, Mardin and Midiat, have passed through a literal deluge of blood. The Assyrian population was put to the edge of the sword by the regular troops of Turkey. The villages, including those in the district of Bohtan, were totally destroyed. Altogether, more than 186,000 men, women and children were massacred, 84 Jacobite churches and 14 monasteries were razed to the ground, and 186 Assyrian priests were killed in the most barbarous manner.

The brave Assyrian city of Midiat stood the onslaught of the Turkish troops for a period of six months. The city at last had to surrender on account of the lack of ammunition, and the Turks, besides killing the Assyrian defenders, bayoneted every woman and child within the walls. The Assyrian city of Midiat is a heap of ruins now.

## V. THE CLAIMS OF THE PERSIAN ASSYRIANS

The Assyrian atrocities in Azarbaijan have equalled if not surpassed those inflicted upon their brethren in Turkey. While the Russians were still in Urmia, the local Mohammedans had caught the echo of Turkey's proclamation of the "holy war," and they were then seeking an opportunity to pour out their vengeance upon the defenseless Assyrian Christians. This opportunity presented itself, when immediately after the first withdrawal of the Russian forces from Urmia, the entire Mohammedan population arose, lifting up the banner of the "jihad," and determined to exterminate the entire Christian population of Urmia, Sooldooz, Margavar and Targavar. The Assyrians of the last three named districts had already escaped into Urmia from fear of the approaching Turkish forces. The Assyrians, from all directions, naturally, endeavored to reach the city of Urmia, where they might seek the protection of the American and the French flags, which were flying over the buildings of the two respective missions. The Assyrians, however, who had left all their possessions behind, were intercepted by their armed Mohammedan neighbours, and killed in the most brutal manner. Old men and women, who were unable to take the journey, were either thrown alive into the wells and covered with dirt, or else burned alive in their homes, which were set on fire. Little girls, six and eight years of age, were assaulted on open Bibles, and on the pulpits of the Christian churches. The leading Assyrians were grouped together, placed in rows, and then either shot by rifles, or beheaded by the sword. The murderers, in a number of instances, actually licked the blood off their swords and daggers to appease their hatred, and satisfy their thirst for the blood of the Christians. About 30,000 to 40,000 managed, in a most miraculous way, to reach the city, where they found the American and the French mission buildings open to receive them. Here they were obliged to remain for several months in a state of seige, and thousands of them perished from contagion and disease.

After the return of the Russian forces into Urmia, the Siberian regiments, as they beheld the atrocious deeds perpetrated upon the Assyrians, actually shook with emotion, and prepared to bombard the city and avenge the blood of the innocent people. It was again the Christians who interceded with the Russian officers, and persuaded them not to return evil for evil.

After the collapse of Russia, the Mohammedan population of Urmia, unmindful of the forgiving spirit shown them previously by the Assyrians, and of the desire of the latter for peace and harmony in spite of their losses, rose up once more, this time assisted by the Persian Kurds and the Mohammedans of Salmas. Fortunately, some of the mountain Assyrians, under the leadership of the late Nestorian patriarch, were now in Urmia. The Nestorian patriarch at this time sent two letters, one to the governor of Urmia, and the other to the governor general of Azarbaijan at Tabriz, informing them that the Assyrians had absolutely no evil designs, that they were friendly to the Persian Government; and begged the governors to prevent the Mohammedan uprisings, and also to allow the Assyrians to remain temporarily in Urmia, till God in His mercy showed them a way of escape, either to Caucasia, or to Bagdad. Instead of heeding this request, the two governors mentioned, had themselves planned the uprising as it became evident later, and were determined on the extermination of the Christian population. The subsequent assassination of the late Mar Shimon was also a plot which was originally laid in the city of Tabriz. We have the

most conclusive proofs to show that the responsibility for the Assyrian massacres and losses in Persia, rests absolutely upon the Azarbaijan authorities of Persia. Fully 112 Assyrian villages were burned to the ground or otherwise destroyed. The homes of all the Assyrians in Urmia were plundered, and the household effects, together with the cattle of the Assyrians, can be found in the possession of Urmia Mohammedans. The proofs of this responsibility have already been submitted by the leaders of the Assyrian people to the legations of the allied nations in Teheran. Fully 50,000 Persian and mountain Assyrians perished because of these fanatical uprisings, and about 4,000 Assyrian women are now kept in bondage in the homes of the Moslems. And during their last exodus from Urmia, on their way to Bagdad, the Assyrians were pursued and shot down by a Majid-el-Saltana, a general in the Persian Army.

For the shedding of innocent blood, and for the material losses they have suffered, the Assyrians present their claim for indemnity against the Azarbaijan government of Persia.

If we were to figure at the shocking rate of 250 Toomans which was the standard price allowed by the courts of Urmia for the killing of a Christian by a Mohammedan, the Azarbaijan government should be held responsible to the extent of 12,500,000 Toomans as an indemnity for a deliberate plan to exterminate all the Assyrians, and for the actual loss of 50,000 men, women and children.

Indemnity for the Assassination of the Nestorian patriarch

The assassination of the late Patriarch Mar Shimon was a most cowardly deed, perpetrated by the instigation and conspiracy of the two Persian Governors to whom we have alluded. The Governor General of Azarbaijan, showing apparently compliance with the request of the Assyrian patriarch as contained in his official letter, sent messengers to the latter, asking him to meet the Persian envoys in Salmas, to which place the said envoys were coming from Tabriz. Mar Shimon, accompanied by 200 of his men, and intensely desirous of harmony, left for Salmas. Here in the city of Deliman he met the Persian envoys, entirely ignorant of the fact that their apparent friendship was a mere mask for murder. Most cordial greetings were exchanged, and the negotiating parties apparently came to a mutual understanding. At the conclusion of the interview, the patriarch prepared to depart to Urmia. The Persian envoys, however, suggested that he should also meet a Simkoo, Kurdish brigand and chieftain of a notorious Kurdish tribe, who was also residing then in Salmas. The patriarch replied that Simkoo did not represent the Persian Authorities, and he was not even a law abiding Persian subject, and, therefore, he could have no dealing with him. The Persian envoys, however, appealing to the patriarch's desire for peace and tranquility, and under the pretense of wishing to calm the disturbances in the entire district, insisted that Mar Shimon should visit the notorious Kurdish chieftain. In a spirit of meekness and humility, and with a desire to please the Tabriz authorities, the patriarch consented to do so. In the meanwhile, Simkoo, with the full knowledge and deliberate planning of the Tabriz envoys, had his sharp shooters placed in advantageous points on the roofs of the houses adjoining his residence. So when the interview with the Kurdish brigand was over, and as the patriarch emerged from the house into the court yard, where his men were waiting for him, he was received with a rain of bullets, and only six of his wounded attendants managed to escape to tell the story of conspiracy and murder.

Justice demands that the Azarbaijan government should pay an indemnity of one million Toomans for this cowardly betrayal of trust, and for this deliberate plan of assassination and murder.

For the material losses of the Assyrians in Urmia, Salmas, Sooldooz, Targavar and Margavar, the Assyrians demand an additional and a most reasonable indemnity of 18,000,000 Toomans, making a total of 31,500,000 Toomans, which they justly claim from the Azarbaijan government of Persia.

The Assyrians desire further to make known the following facts:-

1. The districts of Targavar and Margavar, immediately west of the district of Urmia, are almost exclusively inhabited by the Assyrians, while their very names are indicative of Assyrian origin.
2. In the district of Urmia about 112 villages are almost exclusively inhabited by the Assyrians.
3. In the small district of Salmas nearly 30 villages are inhabited by the Assyrians and the Armenians mixed.
4. In Somoi and Bradost, immediately north of the district of Targavar, both the Assyrians and the Armenians abound, while part of the Kurdish element in the valley, even though Mohammedan by religion, is of Assyrian blood and origin.
5. The remainder of the population both in Urmia and in Salmas districts, is not of Persian blood but of Turkish or Afshar origin.
6. Because of the ill and bitter feeling created, first by the pre-war oppression of the Assyrians, and then intensified by the fearful outrages perpetrated against them during the war, the interests of peace and harmony can perhaps be best served by an exchange of these districts for some other place which falls within the zone claimed by the Assyrians, and which could be more desirable, and of decidedly greater advantage to Persia.



The Assyrian delegates would be willing to debate their claims with the Persian delegates, or to enter into negotiations with them for a satisfactory solution of the problem.

## VI. THE CAPABILITIES OF THE ASSYRIANS

The prospect of a people can best be seen in the light of its retrospect. Entirely indifferent to the imperial grandeur of the bygone ages, we simply make mention of those capabilities which are essential for the promotion of civilization, and which in their free operation, they contribute to the uplift of mankind at large. The successive ages of oppression, and an existence of actual bondage, accompanied with perpetual fear, to be sure, closed the passage of progress to the Assyrian people, and they inevitably ushered in a long period of deterioration and comparative illiteracy, of which we are most sensitively conscious; and yet in the midst of Islam's perpetual fire, the ratio of such illiteracy among the Assyrians has always been kept many degrees lower than among their ruling masters. History shows that either during the regime of the Persians, or of the Tartars, or of the Chalifs, or of the Turks, the Assyrians became the eyes and the brains of the powers that ruled over them. Even at the present time the sons of Assyria hold most responsible positions in the various departments of the governments of which they are subjects.

The memories of Orpha, and of Nisibin, and of Ctisphon, and of Babylon, have always lingered in the mind of every succeeding generation; while in this day of new opportunity, those memories have already given to the people a fresh inspiration, and a united determination, to rebuild the ruined structures of their old institutions, and to resume the initiative they once had in enlightening the peoples and the races with whom they are destined to come in contact. The Assyrians are still the same people of whose heroism and achievements when Gibbon writes, he does so with a trembling pen, and with an admiration that becomes an inspiration even to a skeptical historian. Thus, providentially endowed with spiritual gifts and attainments, and as the faithful custodians of the earliest Christianity, the Assyrian people are destined to play once more the old apostolic roll and become a blessing even to their former enemies.

**Educational Preparation.** Unconscious of the events, the impending aspect of which was surely concealed from the knowledge of man, guided, nevertheless, by a gracious providence, the Assyrians, as if in the possession of a prophetic vision, have, for the last 25 or 30 years, taken advantage of the opportunities presented to them by the educational institutions of both America and Europe, and have developed talents for an Assyrian National University which has long been in contemplation. The spirit of the great Assyrian educators is still alive, and the Assyrians throughout the world are prepared to establish their own national schools, the doors of which will be thrown open to every tribe and race that may be found living in their midst.

**The Industrial Possibilities.** In the line of industry, even though crushed by injustice and robbed by tyranny, the Assyrians have always excelled their persecuting enemies.

The greatest part of the new Russian Caucasian Railway, which runs from Tiflis to the Persian frontier, was built by the Assyrian engineers and Assyrian skill.

Wherever and whenever they have found themselves in the possession of equal rights, the Assyrians have become contractors of renown, as in Russia and in America. The foundation of a new and a most prosperous city in the United States was laid by Assyrian hands, and Assyrian contractors.

Agriculture has always been a specialty of the Assyrian people. But they have specialized in the new development of scientific agriculture; and a movement is already in motion to introduce modern tools and modern methods for the awakening of the fertile soil of Assyria from its long lingering slumber.

**Manufacture.** Whether it be silk or cotton or wool, the Assyrian mechanics and weavers are prepared to plant and to run Assyrian factories.

The Assyrians may need foreign capital, but they certainly do not need foreign skill for the development of mineral resources.

**Commerce.** In the line of commerce the Assyrians made such strides as to arouse the jealousy of their enemies both in Turkey and in Persia. In the centres where the Assyrians are found, both import and export business has gradually been passing into their hands. Undoubtedly this their success has indirectly been responsible for a hatred that has now poured the vengeance of their persecutors upon them.

Such are the capabilities of a people who ask for justice, and in the name and in the interests of justice they ask to be created into a state under a mandatory power. In the choosing of such a power, the wishes of the Assyrians in America are naturally for the United States, while those of the patriarch Mar Shimon are for Great Britain. The question of the mandatory power, however, we voluntarily submit to the judgment and the discretion of the supreme council.

## CONCLUSION

1. The Assyrians, as a historic people, both in the interests of history, and for the perpetuation of that history, should be created into a separate state.

2. Their achievement in the past, and their large contribution for the uplift of mankind, both in the educational endeavor, and in the spreading of those pacifying influences which are the real backbone of civilization, entitle the Assyrians to a recognition of their claim.

3. A nation that has persisted through centuries of persecution in the declaration of her faith, and has sacrificed vast numbers of martyrs upon the altar of that faith, finds her greatest right to a recognition of her claim in her consciousness of moral and spiritual responsibilities, and also in the knowledge of her capability to resume the discharge of those humanitarian and self sacrificing obligations.

4. After the manner of the figure beheld by Moses, the fire of the Assyrian affliction has been terrific; but they have not been consumed. The historic nation has still a remnant left, sufficiently large to be created into a separate state.

5. As a belligerent people who have risked more and sacrificed proportionately more, fighting on the side of the Allies, they are entitled to a realization of their claim for a separate state.

6. As a belligerent people who entered into the war on the side of the Allies, in spite of the alluring inducements offered them by the Turkish Government, the claims of the Assyrians for indemnities and reparation are entitled to the very first consideration. The very plight of their refugees calls for immediate attention.

7. We have the most conclusive proofs to show that the Assyrians were urged by the official representatives of Great Britain, France and Russia, to enter into the war on the side of the Allies, and were induced into a state of belligerency with the most solemn promises of being given a free state. The Assyrians, therefore, having risked the very existence of their nation, and having made such appalling sacrifices upon the altar of freedom, demand that these promises of the allied governments now be honorably redeemed.

8. The outrages perpetrated upon the Persian Assyrians should be indemnified, and all their material losses should receive full compensation from the authorities directly responsible for the Assyrians' loss of life and property.

9. In the interest of future peace and tranquility, some plan should be devised whereby Salmas and Urmia, including Targavar and Margavar, where the Assyrians abound, could be exchanged for some other place that would be perfectly satisfactory to the Persian government.

10. The Assyrians demand a state bounded roughly by Tikrit (below Zaba) in the south, and the province of Dearbeker in the north; and by a straight line running parallel with the banks of Euphrates in the west, to the mountains of Armenia in the east.

11. The Assyrians realize that at least for 25 years hence, they will be incapable of self government, and therefore they desire the supervision of a mandatorial power.

(These claims are in perfect accord with the wishes of Mar Shimon and men of war and the leaders of the Assyrian nation as expressed through the cables transmitted through the department of State in Washington to the President of the Assyrian National Associations of America.)

JOEL E. WERDA

Pres. Assyrian National Associations o America

## **PART II**

# **CHRISTIANITY AND THE ASSYRIAN NATION**

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## **PART II: CHRISTIANITY AND THE ASSYRIAN NATION**

### **FOREWORD**

When Christianity was rejected by the Jews, found more receptive mood among other nations. The Prince of Nazareth was too humble for the pride of the Hebrew; the Gospel was too simple; and the cross a stumbling block. Neglecting her most glorious opportunities, Jerusalem was deserted and Antioch was made the center of Christianity and the cradle of the world's evangelization. Those Penticostal Tongues had a significance much deeper and much broader than that which could be realized by the "Seed of Abraham." They became the first fulfilment of Christ's prediction, when he said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." They were also the beginning of that glorious period when the harbingers of the Gospel were to proclaim the unsearchable riches of God in tongues foreign to their dialects and among all nations of the earth.

But Christianity in its process of development came in contact with national peculiarities, and struggled with religious idiosyncrasies. The principles of the new Kingdom, which could not satisfy the earthly ambition of a carnal Israel, immediately attacked the pride of a patriotic soldier. The doctrine which was a stumbling block to the egotistical Pharisee seemed to be too simple to the speculative mind of the philosopher. The solidity of the Roman empire, which was maintained by the worship of the Roman deities, was at once threatened, and the mythology of the Athenian brought to naught in the light of a new revelation. Consequently, there ensued a serious conflict; a conflict that was destined to destroy both marble and monument which stood for national achievements, and sever a glorious history from the ascribed merit of a blinding superstition. Literature and also art made a common cause with the gods of gold and silver and stone, and all together were determined to save the pagan empire from an impending calamity, by fiercely resisting an irresistible invasion by Christianity.

But it was not so in the East. All the local surroundings were favorable to the entrance of Christianity. The historical antiquity made vivid the sacred remembrances of the "Just" who walked with their God. The prophetic utterances still echoed with undying emphasis out of the tomb and shrine. Ruin and destruction vindicated the authenticity of the sacred history. River murmured the song of captivity. Hills and valleys stood like undying reminders of a universal calamity; while both legend and tradition uttered the lamentations of a lost paradise. Such were the associations of the people to whom Christianity was introduced in the historic East.

## THE FOUNDING OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE OLD PERSIAN EMPIRE

On its entrance the Christian religion found the plains of Assyria an object of bitterest animosity between the Eastern and the Western Empires. From the fall of Nineveh, the rich lands of Euphrates had been subjected to repeated invasions by new conquerors. Romans, Greeks and Persians, had alternately conquered Assyria, destroyed its cities, devastated its lands, and carried the inhabitants into captivity. The armies of the victors had, however, left a remnant in Mesopotamia, to speak their own language, and retain their historic name.

The fatal banks of Euphrates had at last set a temporary boundary between the Eastern and the Western empires; and the extensive plains, which lay between the "great ruins" and the Ionian sea, furnished a fertile field for the seed of the Gospel, under the foremost power of the world. When the national energies were almost entirely exhausted, through endless wars, to satisfy the ambition of the throne; and when the bloody waters of Euphrates appeared as an awful warning against further aggression by the armies of the contending nations, Christianity found its unique opportunity to invade the barbaric lands, and penetrate into the heart of the Zoroastrian empire.

The Assyrians have embraced Christianity since the Apostolic period. There is an early tradition which speaks of Thomas as the Apostle of Suryaye (Assyrians), who in his Apostolic tour, is said to have crossed the lake of Darsapha (the modern Urmia), and preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of Ancient Media.

The real foundation of the church, however, in Mesopotamia and Chaldea, is distinctly ascribed by the ecclesiastical history of the Eastern church, to Mar Addi and Mar Mari of the seventy; and to the latter the Nestorians gave the honor of being their first Patriarch, from whom the validity of their sacerdotal orders is derived in an unbroken line of Patriarchal descent. The rapid growth of Christianity, and the increasing number of believers, called for a new center of Christian influence. Antioch was too far away from the banks of the Tigris, and a Mar Mari founded the new bishopric in Seleucia, an important city, which became a nursery, whence the seed of the new faith was scattered in the Parthian empire, and which became attached afterwards to the Persian dominions. Mar Mari died in the year 82 A. D. and the See was occupied by one Abras, said to have been related to the family of Joseph, the reputed father of our Saviour. Sleewa Bar Yohanna, an Assyrian author, who lived in the early part of the 14th century, tells us of the labors of Mar Mari that, after the Eastern See was founded at Ctisphon, then the seat of the Persian monarchy, and inhabited chiefly by the Magians, he disciplined Dorkman and Cashgar; and went on the same mission to the two Iraks; traveled through El-Ahraz and Yamen; crossed to the Islands of the Arabian and Indian seas, converting many heathen to the Christian belief through preaching and working miracles, and constituting them into churches. On his return he exalted the bishopric of Ctisphon to a Patriarchal throne; and before his death he intimated that his successor should be sought for at Jerusalem. Accordingly, after the departure of Mar Mari, a company of the believers went to Mdeeta Kadishta (the holy city), and found Shimon, who had succeeded James, the brother of our Lord, as the head of the church at Jerusalem, informing him of the decease of Mar Mari, and requesting for a new Patriarch. In consequence, Abras was elected and consecrated to fill the vacant place, which he occupied in the year 90 A. D. And after a superiority of seventeen years, the Patriarchal throne was left vacant again by the death of Abras, which took place during the reign of Hadrian, the Roman emperor.

About 22 years had elapsed when the See was filled again by Abraham, who ruled over the Eastern Church from A. D. 130 to A. D. 132. The fourth occupant of the See was Yacob, who gave direction to two of his disciples, Khnaneshoo and Aha-de-Abhooy, to go to Antioch immediately after his death, where one of them might be consecrated to succeed the deceased ruler. But at this time the relations between the Eastern and the Western empires were worse than unfriendly. The two disciples, consequently, at their arrival at Antioch, were seized as the spies of the Persian king, who, together with Saleeba the Patriarch of Antioch, were condemned to be crucified in that city. Aha-de-Abhooy, however, escaped to Jerusalem, where he was consecrated by Mattias the head of the church there, to succeed Yacob the deceased Patriarch of Ctisphon. He reached his destination A.D. 205, and held his spiritual superiority for a period of about fifteen years.

The incident, though sad as it was to the believers who mourned over the death of their martyrs, had a peculiar effect on the future of the Eastern church. It gave rise to the independence of that body; an independence which has ever since been preserved, and which in the later times made it impossible for the Nestorian Christians to be entangled with the errors of the Romish church. After the vacant place of Saleeba had been filled by the appointment of another Patriarch of Antioch, the spiritual rulers of the four Sees had decided that the Eastern church should no longer send her Patriarch-elect to be consecrated in Antioch, but that the Metropolitans, Bishops and Elders, together with the faithful, should choose and ordain the person who was to execute the Patriarchal functions in Ctisphon. Sleewa-Bar-Yohanna, the above mentioned author, gives us the following epistle, sent from the Western Patriarchs

to the Eastern church, directing that church as to the future course to be taken by the Christians of the East in the investiture of their Patriarchs. The epistle is as follows:



Bishop YawAlaha of  
Barvar and Amedia.  
Occupant of a See  
established in the 12th  
century.

"To the brotherhood of Christ our Lord, Who is the Saviour of men, the Restorer of the primal fall, and Receiver of repentant sinners: From your brethren in the faith, and associates with them in the degree (of the Priesthood), and their associates in prayer, the company of the afflicted shepherds, to whom is committed the feeding of the sheep of Jesus Christ, the drivers away therefrom of the ravening human wolves, and their preservers from the crafty wiles of the spiritual ones, who are moved thereto by the deceit which is from without, who are not living in the love of God; the Peace of our Saviour from the curse of sin, and the Visitor of our race through the communion of the Trinity, be with us and with you throughout all ages. Amen.

"We, who being unworthy, have been appointed shepherds in the church of Christ, do ordain for a profitable ordinance, the end and design of which is. praiseworthy and excellent; since you are our brethren the children of the baptism of our Lord Christ, especially in this age in which we have filled up the troubles which you have endured. For in truth your trials have been multiplied, and the fountains of adversity have been opened, and many have been moved, and some have been overcome thereby. Whereof, we, the company of afflicted Shepherds, being grieved on your behalf, have compassionated you the congregation of believing brethren and children, and have been reminded of the declaration made in the Book, which speaks to us and guides us, which also tells us that the despised is rejected of men; especially is this true of Christianity; since all the nations condemn it, and strive to destroy it. Moreover, when we beheld the slaughter of the two holy Fathers and excellent Shepherds, how they were ignominiously treated, having been crucified by the door of the church of Antioch, though they had done nothing to deserve such punishment, and were guiltless of any treachery; and one being a shepherd of the Eastern church, and the other a companion shepherd of the Western church, whose murder was notorious, and their ignominy seen of all, therefore, we, the Fathers, in the unity of the spirit, have met together and have agreed together in one opinion, and have permitted that, on the decease of the Head, or the Metropolitan, or Bishop, who is set over the Eastern flock of the churches of Ctisphon, the protected city, in which is the magnificent cathedral church, his successor in the supremacy shall not go to Antioch. This decree we have made with one accord in behalf of Christianity, to prevent the heads thereof from being despised, as a protection to them, and for fear of the opposition of Kings, and that the faith may not be endangered, that he who is to be made Patriarch shall be elected by his Metropolitans, Bishops and flock. That he be the Head, the Patriarch, over all the Bishops of the East, and its dependencies, and that his See be as one of the four Sees, and the last of them, of which one is the See of Matthew the Evangelist; the other that of Mark, who also wrote as he did; and the third the See of Luke, the learned and acute, who completed the exposition of our Lord's Gospel and birth; and the fourth the See of John, the bold who revealed the mystery of the eternal Filiation, and was filled with the graces of the Spirit. To him shall appertain the consecration of Metropolitans, the benediction of Bishops, the administration of the affairs of the flock, the ordination of the Heads in the Eastern borders, in Athoor, and Media, and Persia; all these Sees shall be subject to him, shall submit to his authority. And

this our commission, will, permission, ordinance and sanction, shall be applicable to every one who shall become Patriarch in that honourable See, until the appearance of our Lord Christ in His great glory.

"Furthermore, the elect head who shall be found fit for this noble dignity, and shall fill this glorious See, shall consecrate Metropolitans, and perfect the ordination of Bishops. These shall he choose from such as keep the ordinances and customs, and who are not opposed to the statutes drawn up by the Holy Fathers and elect Shepherds who confirmed the truth with their blood, and who were under the guidance of the Spirit. Nevertheless, he shall not ordain a Metropolitan or Bishop, unless there be two Bishops with him. And when a Bishop is ordained by a Metropolitan, he shall not take his place with the Heads until he shall have presented himself before the Father of Fathers, the chief of the flock, the Patriarch, who shall bless him and confer to him the episcopal authority.

"But should the Patriarch transgress in his office, and turn aside from God in his rule, and be found deceitful in his belief, then, if there be a king at the head of Christianity at the time, let the matter be referred to him, that he may order him to appear before him, and confront him with the assembled Metropolitans and Bishops. But if the Christians have no king, then let his condemnation be deferred till the coming of our Lord Christ, who is the Judge of Kings, and the Lord of all nations.

"This covenant we have drawn up, sanctioned, confirmed and unalterably approved, to be an unchangeable tradition. Therefore, let that which we have said be before your eyes, and what we have ordained be established in your hearts, and what we have approved of have free course among you; and the Lord Christ, spread abroad in His church, peace, security, and mercy, and encompass you with His right hand for ever and ever. Amen."

The authenticity of the epistle is proved by other Eastern writers. Mar Odeeshool a later Nestorian author, writes: "In the days of Papa a letter was written by the Westerns, raising this Eastern See into a Patriarchate. The letter was sent with all honor by the hands of Agepta of Elam."<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, the Eastern See depended no longer upon the Mother Church for the investiture of its Patriarchs; and Shiachlupha, the ninth in succession, instead of being sent to Antioch or Jerusalem for consecration, was the first to be ordained on the spot.

## THE PERSECUTION OF THE EASTERN CHURCH BY SHAPUR

During this period Christianity had made rapid progress in the Persian empire. The villagers brought their idols and threw them at the feet of the preachers of the Gospel. The very places where the Magi idolatry was practised, were converted into the platforms from which the doctrines of the new religion were proclaimed. Men and women purified their homes from the gods they had so zealously but ignorantly worshipped. Realizing their obligation, the monks left their monasteries to carry the good news to every secluded town. The rich and the Poor opened their homes to welcome the messengers of God. Those who were once the persecutors, were glad to be numbered among the persecuted.<sup>2</sup>

A change so great and so rapid, aroused the hatred of the Magians, who regarded the Christians as the adversaries of the Supreme Being. The Zoroastrian Diety was humiliated, and the Persian glory was in danger. The sympathies of the Christianized people were suspected to be with the Western empire, and the worshippers of the sacred fire took advantage of the long sought for opportunity, to arouse the suspicion of the barbarous tyrant. They sought to reduce the strength of the Christians, in order to secure the safety of Shapur's dominions, and protect the worship of a diety, the smoke of whose fire ascended from the tops of many hills. So, toward the close of the third century, after a period of great missionary activity, and glorious triumphs over tremendous obstacles, made numerous by the jealousy of the sovereigns and the malice of the priests, Christianity was attacked by the flames of persecution, kindled by the wrath of an ambitious and a superstitious Shapur, who after having ravaged Syria, Cilicia, Capadocia and Mesopotamia, mercilessly and without cause murdered the unresisting Christians with the barbarity of a second Nero.

According to the oriental writers, the Christians in Persia suffered two main persecutions. One in the year 330, and the other in the year 342 A. D.<sup>3</sup> The former was the climax of a long period of persecutions, during which the Christians seem to have had brief intervals of rest. The exact number of the victims is hard to ascertain; but Assemani quotes Mari as saying that more than one hundred and sixty thousand Christians suffered martyrdom in one district alone, called Beth-Germe.<sup>4</sup> The peaceful ecclesiastical reign of Shiachlupha was thus followed by the clouds of intense hatred; and together with the multitude of the believers, several of the formers' successors fell victim to the superstition of a barbarous sovereign. A great number of ecclesiastics shared the fate of their converts. The shepherd and the flock had their bodies mangled in testimony to Him who purchased them with his own precious blood.<sup>5</sup>



We have slightly referred above as to the cause of the persecution. The imperial jealousies were indeed made a ground for the merciless massacre of the Christians. The Persian Jews had not left any possible effort to arouse the suspicion of the Eastern ruler, who was already holding a hostile relation to the rival power. The Christian ecclesiastics were accused as hiding Roman spies in their homes. The innocent religious correspondence between the Sees of the two hostile empires was suspected as a conspiracy against the home government, betraying the secrets of the empire.

But there was a greater cause for the persecution than the mere political accusation brought against the Christians by the civil authorities. Christianity had come in contact with the Persian Dualism. The Monatheistic view of the Christians stood in opposition to the Zoroastrian notion of the two Principles which controlled the Universe. The Christian faith appeared as a confounding of the Good and Evil, and of the God-like and the ungodlike. The holy essence of the Supreme Being was profaned, as the Magians understood, by the combination of a pure and an impure One. The One Creator of the Christians, would, therefore, be the Author of all that Hormuzd and Kahraman brought into existence by their hostile relation. The Principle of good, according to the Monotheism of the Christians, would be the Principle of evil also. The Being from whom proceeded peace, prosperity, fortune, victory, glory, beauty, health and length of years, was the Author also of war, perplexity, misfortune, defeat, dishonour, disease, sickness, calamity and death—a problem, insolvable to the Dualistic mind, and antagonistic to their historic belief. Zervan cannot create evil; its creator must be Devil or Kahraman who is the inferior antagonist of the Holy Essence. Hormuzd who represented the primal Essence, was represented by everything good and pure in nature. Hence, Aftab, Atash, Ab u' Hak (Sun, Fire, Water and Earth), were the objects of Parsic adoration. The Christians, by worshipping one God, did not pay the honor due to the Sun and Fire, (which represented the pure and holy Being), while on the other hand they profaned the Water by the baptizing of their converts, and defiled the Earth by the burying of their dead.

Thus, both, political suspicion and religious superstition, united together, to kindle the flames of the most merciless persecution, which began raging in the year 343 A. D.

Shimon Bar Sabbaee was now the incumbent of Seleucia. The emperor issued the following edict: □THE CHRISTIANS; UNLESS THEY SHOULD CONSENT TO WORSHIP THE PERSIAN DEITIES; SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO PAY TAX LEVIED ON EACH INDIVIDUAL." The strong ordinance met with a determined reply. The edict was directed to the old venerable Shimon, who occupied now the position of a spiritual leader. Nothing could shake his spirit. His bold answer may lack to the modern reader the charm of Christian humility; but Bar Sabbaee evidently saw the evil of a demand which was beyond the possibility of being met by his poor flock. He knew that the object for issuing the edict was, to compel the Christians to resign their faith, and worship the Parsic deity; or that, because of their Amenability to comply with the condition of the edict, they should fall prey to the wrath of their enemies. Shimon replied: "The Lord, whom we have resolved to obey, is the upholder and director of your government; we cannot subject ourselves to an unrighteous command of our fellow servant. God is the creator of your divinity (Aftab-Sun); it would be a reckless and blasphemous thing to place God's creatures on a level with Himself. The Christians have neither gold nor silver, as the Lord has forbidden them to keep up such treasures on earth." The pagan sovereign, who had been seeking an excuse to feed his temper the blood of harmless lambs, gave his own interpretation to the fearless answer of Bar Sabbaee. He charged the Christians with the spirit of rebellion. Literalism of conscience meant nothing to him, but general insurrection. The clouds began now thundering, and severe punishment was threatened. But Shimon was firm. No threats could shake his faith. God forbid that he should betray his flock. His life was of no value to him. He would follow the example of the great Shepherd who gave himself for the life of His people. A few more thunders, and then the cloud burst. The following edict was issued; "Whereas, Shimon scorns my authority, and obeys the Roman Emperor, whose God also he worships, and utterly despises my god, he must present himself before me and be executed." This was followed at once by another decree, by which the clergy of the first grades were to be immediately executed, the churches of the Christians demolished and their contents confiscated.

Shimon, together with Abdichalaas and Hananya, two presbyters of his church, were taken in chains to Liden, the residence of the emperor at the time. The tyrant was exasperated at the indifference of Bar Sabbaee. According to the prevailing custom, all subjects were expected to prostrate themselves before the royalty; but Shimon did not pay the customary homage which he regarded as improper and sinful. The emperor then demanded that he should bow to the Sun, and by doing so he would receive the favor of the royalty. Shimon replied, "he could still less pay homage to a lifeless being." When the king found at last that nothing could change the conviction of Bar Sabbaee; that no inducements and no threats could make this fearless man betray his religion, and into prison, expecting that perhaps bonds might weaken him and compel him to yield.



His Beatitude Mar Shimon Eshai, the present Patriarch worship the Sun, he commanded Shimon to be thrown of the "Nestorian" Church.

Christianity had now rooted itself even in the royal palace. Gooshiat-Zadeh, the head of the imperial household, had already become a believer. But the aged eunuch had been prevailed upon to worship the Sun. He happened to be sitting at the palace gate when the old and venerable Bar Sabbaee was being led bound in chains into the imperial prison. As Gooshiat-Zadeh saw Shimon, he arose on his feet, to salute him; but the latter, having learned of the eunuch's inconsistency, paid no attention to him. The silent rebuke awakened the conscience of the old convert. The effect of Shimon's conduct was so great upon him, that he cried aloud, saying, "Woe is me! What must not await me? For I have denied God! I am not worthy to be spoken to." Shapur, hearing of what had taken place, sent for the chief steward of his palace, and inquired as to the cause of his grief and whether anything had happened in his home. "O, King," replied Gooshiat-Zadeh, "nothing has occurred to my family; but I would rather have suffered any other affliction than that which has befallen me now. I mourn because I am alive, and ought to have been dead long ago; yet still I see the Sun, which, not voluntarily, but to please thee, I professed to worship. Therefore, on both accounts, it is just that I should die; for I have been a betrayer of Christ and a deceiver of thee." This bold confession both astonished and enraged the king, and, after all attempts of Shapur had failed to move the eunuch, he was sentenced to lose his head. When the executioners were ready to perform their duty, Gooshiat-Zadeh asked for a favor send a message to the emperor. The message was follows: "From my youth until now I have been Tingly attached, O, King, to your house, and have nistered with care and diligence to your father and vwlf. I need no witnesses to corroborate my statents; these facts are well established. For all the matters wherein I have in diverse times served you, grant me this request; let it not be imagined by those ho are ignorant of the circumstances, that I suffer & punishment for acts of unfaithfulness against the Ate, or for the commission of any other crime. But t it be published and proclaimed aloud by a herald, at Gooshiat-Zadeh loses his head for no crime that i has ever done, but for his refusal to deny a living )d and worship a created deity."

Another, Benyamin, a deacon, was cast into the ison, where he suffered the cruelty of the Persian Mgeons for nearly two years until the arrival 'of Roman ambassador who was sent for a special ission. Being informed of the imprisonment,of the acon, the ambassador requested from the Persian iperor his release. The request was granted on the ndition of the latter's silence, so as never to preach y more. When informed of what had taken place, nyamin said: "It is impossible for me not to impart others the light that I have received, for the Gospel itory teaches us to what sorer punishments he justly 3oses himself who hides his talent." His freedom, wever, was secured; and no sooner had he left the ingeon than he began to preach the Gospel for which was suffering. After about a year's labor

in this way, he was seized again and required to give up his faith. In answer, he asked the king, what sort of punishment would he impose upon a man who betrayed his allegiance to the emperor. "Death," replied the king. "What punishment, then," said the deacon, "might not that person justly suffer, who should deny his Creator and give the honor due to God alone to one of his fellow servants?" His poor body was tormented in a cruel manner such as the king's wrath alone could invent. Then his spirit joined the throng of the martyred saints in glory.

Space will not permit to give in detail every circumstance concerning some of those who testified through their blood. Nor would we be permitted to give every incident, the name, the country, or the mode of their death. Human language would exhaust itself in describing so many species of torture which the ingenuity of the Persian barbarians devised. The number of the distinguished men and women, who suffered martyrdom during this period of persecution, and whose names have been ascertained, exceeds sixteen thousand.<sup>6</sup> While the Christian historians of Persia themselves have failed to compute the great number of those whose names could not be learned, and who entered their rest in glory through a path of great tribulation and suffering.

Meanwhile the bishops and the clergy never ceased exhorting their flock and encouraging one another. Theodoretus, bishop of Cyros, on Euphrates, sent the following letter to Eusebius, bishop of Persian Armenia: "Let us be watchful and fight for the sheep of our Lord. Their master is at hand, he will surely appear; he will scatter the wolves and bestow honor on the Shepherds; for the Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. Let us not murmur at this storm which has arisen, for the Lord knows what is best; on this account He did not grant the request even of his Apostle who besought Him to deliver him from his trial; but said unto him, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' The God of peace will shortly cause Satan to be trodden under your feet, and rejoice your ears with the tidings of your peace, when he shall say to the raging sea, 'Peace, be still.'

Such was the troubled sea vexed by repeated massacres and persecutions through which the infant church had to pass. The Christians, nevertheless, survived the malice of their persecutors, and in spite of the determined attempt for their extermination, their number grew and multiplied rapidly.

## THE FINAL BREAK

But what was once peculiar to the political relation of the two empires became inevitable also in the religious sentiments of their Christian subjects. Up to this time the Eastern church, although keeping her independence from the mother church, held a fraternal relation to the latter. The bond of Christian unity between the two countries was so manifest that it aroused even the suspicion of the Persian throne. But now a new phase took place in religious history, and the relation which was once so close and so affectionate between East and West, was broken never to be repaired.

Constantinople called for a new bishop; the choice fell upon Nestorius to fill the vacant See. Up to this time nothing is known by the church in general as to the peculiar doctrine with which the schools of each country were pregnant. But the election of an Eastern bishop brought at once into light the two opposite tendencies of theological training. The doctrinal controversy, of which we shall have occasion to speak later, broke the bond of unity, and created the absolute independence of the Eastern church. There occurred, indeed, many schisms within the Roman empire itself, but the parties and splits created by such controversies had to yield to the despotism of the sovereign who upheld the state religion. It was not so in the East. Such a division would rather be favored by the Persian ruler; and the Christian teachers would have perfect liberty to propagate their own tenets in a land whose relation was intensely bitter to the neighboring country, where the ruling church was in power. When the so-called Nestorians were thus expelled from the Roman empire, they found refuge and toleration in the Persian dominions. So the monarchs who were once persecuting their Christian subjects, now began to protect and support them.

During the Nestorian controversy, Edessa was the Eastern seat of learning. This school stood as the glory of the Mesopotamian church. Here all the Persian clergy received their education under the most liberal teachers; and here were generated those doctrines which agitated and shook the Christian world. What Nestorius upheld in his field of controversy was originated by him. He did not generate the doctrine which cost his excommunication, banishment and death. Long before Constantinople opened her gates welcome the eloquent monk of the East, the doctrine of the Person of Christ had been defined by the great divines of Edessa. The controversy which he undertook, became merely the means of uniting together, as a distinct body, all those who were imbued with the doctrines represented on the platforms of the offended city.

But the Western Metropolis was not the only theatre of the doctrinal dispute. Immediately after the conclusion of the "Robber Synod," the very city of Edessa itself became a field of violent controversy between the two opposing

parties. As Nestorius was not without supporters in the midst of his bitter foes, so Cyril, had at least a few in the East to defend the Alexandrian theology. Rabulus, who was formerly in friendly terms with the Eastern theologians had now attached himself to the Egyptian bishop. He was now occupying the spiritual See of Edessa, and created the bitterest antagonism against the ecclesiastics who supported the doctrines which Cyril rejected. Associating himself with a party of zealots, he tried all in his power to crush the growth of the new movement. His antagonism, however, was met with a determined resistance. The number of the opponents, which the school of Edessa had sent out, was too great for his futile attempts. The clergy stood boldly him; while Abas, a presbyter, who was presiding over the school of Edessa, made his name memorable in the annals of the Nestorian history by his fearless courage to condemn the Alexandrian heresy. Rabulus, learning of the strength of the new body, resorted to the tyrannical measures. But the banishment of the clergy, who had attached themselves to the Alexandrian heresy, put an end to the influence of the heretical leader.



An Assyrian graduating class in Theology. Prof. Baaba seated in the center. Prof. Baaba was a noted orator.

## THE NESTORIAN SCHOOLS AND WRITERS

The eastern church could no longer expect any fair toleration in the lands where the Persian influence did not exist. Edessa was beyond the limits of the Persian dominions; and consequently, Zeno, the Greek emperor, after having failed to compel the Christians to 'forget their dissensions and subscribe to the Common articles of faith,' broke up the school of Edessa. The Seminary, however, was transferred to Nisibeen, where it had all the advantages to flourish all the more. The efforts and the labors of Mar Ephraim were not in vain. The foundation which he laid in Edessa, became still stronger and more influential in the new age, where the 'old school' was established. His activity and genial ability displayed in the cloisters of the first Eastern Seminary, which he established, gave stimulus to his able successors to make Nisibeen of world-wide reputation. There was none to equal the new Theological Institution. No energy was spared to make the school a source of enlightenment and blessing. The three years' course of Biblical and Theological studies, furnished the ministerial candidates with the best education of the time for their future activity. The study of Grammar, Belles-Lettres and Rhetoric received the strictest attention of the able instructors; while Music, Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy and other sciences were likewise taught with great success. Bishop Junilius of Northern Africa, who lived about the middle of the 6th Century, speaks of Nisibeen as the place "where the Scriptures were expounded by teachers publicly appointed, in same manner as Grammar, and Rhetoric among the Romans." All attempts were made to give special prominence to the exposition of the doctrines of the divine word. A constant tendency to piety could not but make the Eastern commentators the most famous of the time. The Oriental imagination with its characteristic tendency, digged earnestly into the truth, and when it failed to comprehend the superhuman mysteries, yielded reverently to the incomprehensible. The "Assyrian" writers, unlike their contemporaries, devoted their time and energy in search after the true meaning of Inspiration. In the Western church, the speculative mind had constant tendency toward philosophy. Plato and Aristotle exhausted the mental energies of the occidental scholars. Their theology was shaped through classical speculation; while the highest ambition of the Eastern divines, was for a deeper, knowledge of the Scriptural doctrines. Mosheim speaks of the Nestorian commentators of the 6th Century as the best of the age, as they alone sought the true meaning of the inspired word. Such was the species of learning which Nisibeen gave to its attendants.



But Nisibeen was not the only school of the "ancient church." Dorkena was already established in the year 385. Later, schools were founded in Bagdad, Mahuza, Beth-Abe, Tirhana, Maragha and other places, besides one as far as Horasan in central Persia.

It will give the reader an idea as to the amount of learning the Nestorians possessed, and the wide range of literature over which the researches of their scholars extended by giving a list of the books and compositions of different authors as drawn by Mar Odeeshoo at the close of the 13th century. The list will make the reader acquainted with not less than twenty commentators on the whole or parts of the Bible; many Historians, both ecclesiastical and secular; Canonists, Scholastics, Poets, Lexicographers, Grammarians, Logicians, Writers on Geography, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy and Metaphysics, etc. The catalogue is as follows:

## WRITINGS OF THE NESTORIAN FATHERS<sup>7</sup>

Shimon Bar-Sabbaee wrote epistles to Mar Acac.

Meelis wrote epistles and treaties on various subjects.

Mar Yav-Ahooi wrote an epistle to the Eastern Papa, in whose days a letter was written by the Westerns raising this Eastern See into a Patriarchate. The letter was sent with all honor by the hands of Adepta of Elam.

Apreem (Ephraim) the Great, called the "Prophet of the Syrians," wrote a commentary on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, the Kings, the Psalms, Isaiah, the Twelve Prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, besides other books, and epistles on the faith of the church; poems, anthems, hymns, and the Anneeda. He also wrote on the alphabet, a controversy with the Jews, and treaties against Manes, Baradosenes, and Marcion, and an answer to the blasphemy of Julian.

Narsai, "the Harp of the Soul," wrote an exposition of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. He also wrote twelve other books, three hundred and sixty poems, a Liturgy, an exposition of the Sacraments, and a treatise on Baptism. He wrote also Consolations, Antiphonae, hymns, homilies, and a treatise on an Evil Life.

Bar-Soma wrote homilies, anthems, and other poems, also a Liturgy and many epistles.

Auraham of Beth Rabban, wrote an exposition of Joshua, Judges, Kings, the Wisdom of Bar Sirach (son of Sirach), and Isaiah in two volumes; also a commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets, on Daniel and the Song of Solomon, and Moutbha,<sup>8</sup> divided into chapters.

Yohannan of Beth Rabban wrote a commentary on Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers, Job, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Proverbs; a book against the Magi, one on the customs of the Jews, and another against heretics. He wrote also a poem on the humiliation of the Ninevites, one on the death of Chosro, and another on the plague which visited Nisibeen, together with Consolations for all conditions of men, a Catechism on the Old and New Testament, hymns, poems and a treatise on Chanting.

Marrootha, Bishop of Meiparkat, a learned physician, wrote a book of Evidence, Antiphonae, and hymns in honor of the Martyrs. He also expounded the Canons of the 318 (of Nice), and wrote a full account of the holy Synod.

Mar Abha the Great translated the entire Old Testament from the Greek into Syriac; he also wrote an exposition of Genesis, the Psalms, Proverbs, the epistle to the Romans, the second to the Corinthians and the three following epistles, and that also to the Hebrews. He wrote, moreover, several poems, and the Psalms.

Elisha Bar Sabine wrote an exposition of the Psalter, on Different Opinions of the Psalms.

Auraham Katteena wrote Catechisms.

Shimon of Kurdlah wrote 1028 poems and anthems. Father Yazeedad wrote a vocabulary called "Loocate."

Bar-Shhak wrote a book (title not mentioned). Damanis wrote poems.

Susai of Sus wrote a book of Thanksgivings.

Auraham Sabha wrote a beautiful Catechism.

Gregor of Shooshtra wrote a work against Heathenism, on Natural Evidences, Consolations, Anthems, a narrative of Auraham of Shooshtra, a History, and an account of different Festivals. It was he who originated the chant "Ittayebh Baabhadaikhoon."<sup>9</sup>

Bar Sahda of Kerkook wrote a history and a work against the Magi, the disciples of Zoroaster.

Yacob of Edessa wrote a book of the Times, and a Chronicon.

Shimon of Bedka wrote a History.

Ara wrote a work against the Magi, and another against Bardossenes, entitled "Beetles."

Pakor wrote one book (title not given).

Bar Dkosi wrote two volumes against the Chaldeans, and another against Porhyry the heretic.  
Daniel Ibn-Maryam wrote a history in four volumes, and another expounding the Chronicon.  
Zacci of SuphawroteontheWondersoftheWorld. Bar raknan wrote poems for the consolation of the sorrowing.  
Yohannan Bar Abgare wrote Canons and Homilies on Church matters, and on the Division of Inheritances.  
Mar Daweed of Beth Rabban wrote on the Boundaries of Countries, and on the Changes of night and days.  
Yohannan of Estooni wrote a Grammar.

Yohannan Bar Khamees, Bishop of Temnoon, wrote a Grammar.

Bar Bahool collated a Lexicon from many books, assisted by Eshoo Bar Ali, the physician, Marozi and Gabhriel.

Elia of Azak wrote three books of poetry, questions, epistles, prefaces and anthems.

Dad-Eshoo, Bishop of Heerta, called "Mattushuah," wrote a Catechism on Holy Scriptures and anthems.

Andor the Scholar, wrote a dissertation on many things, arranged alphabetically, which he sent to his friend Koorta.

Elia Bar Kanosh wrote Benedictions, Narratives, a treatise on the use of the Psalms, and on the Sacraments of the Church.

Mar Elia, the First, wrote Decrees, a treatise on Church matters and a Grammar.

Yohannan Bar Kaldon wrote a valuable work called "Bushaya," another on the Most Beautiful, and a third on the Merchandise of the Monks.

Elia Bar Yeshnaya, Metropolitan of Nisibeen, wrote a History, a Grammar, poems, four books of church rules, and epistles on various subjects in Syriac and Arabic.

Behishua of Kamool wrote on the Monastic Life. Yohannan Hermis wrote poems.

Ammanuel, the Doctor, wrote a work on the six days of creation in poetry, homilies and expositions.

Gobhriel, Bishop of Shabookweat, wrote a catechism, homilies, controversies, consolations and anthems.

We possess also the Eastern Synods of Ishak, of Bar Soma, of Mar Abha, of Mar Hazkiel, of Yosip, of Eshoo-Yabh, of Mar Timateos, of Eshoo-bar-Ncon of Yohannan, the Acts of Shimon, the Acts of EshooBakht, Metropolitan of Persia, and those of Odeeshoo and Gewargis, Metropolitan of Arthur, besides two volumes of Svnods, collated by Gobhriel, Metropolitan of Basra, and another of the Catholicos Mar Elia the first, and four of Elia of Nisibeen, surnamed Bar Ishnaya. We possess, moreover, many other books whose authors' names are unknown; such as the book entitled "The Enlightenment," and the book of the Union (-Mar Odeeshoo).

Shleemoon of Khlat, of Basra, wrote a work entitled "Dibboreeta," another on the Heavens and on the Earth, and several poems.

Odeeshoo wrote a commentary on the Bible, the book of the Paradise of Eden, a collection of Synods in Arabic, the book entitled Margeneetha on the truth of the Faith, a treatise on the mysteries of the Grecian Philosophers, and another called "Scholasticus," against heresy. I also collated a book of Church Laws and Discipline, and another consisting of twelve treatises on knowledge in general, besides consolations, antippons, and anthems, for various occasions, an explanation of the epistle sent by Aristotle to Alexander the Great, also a work solving many different questions, and one of arguments, proverbs and riddles.

"After the best of our ability we have recorded the books which we have seen, our object being to show the perusal of them is profitable. The authors spake by the Spirit, according to the testimony of Paul the Apostle; may their prayers keep and invest with glory us, the sheep of Christ, and may their memory endure forever, inasmuch as they enlightened the Church by their wisdom, and enriched her children by their attainments. Glory be to the Spirit by whom they themselves were enriched.

"Here endeth the catalogue of all the church books written by the undeserving Odeeshoo, Metropolitan of Nisibeen and Armenia. To God be thanksgiving and glory forever. Amen."

No more satisfactory testimony could the reader be furnished with, as to the character of these literary productions, than that which comes from the hand of an English Divine, who says, "Many of their writings which have been preserved to us, display great originality, acuteness and erudition. Their metaphysics borrowed from the Aristotilian school are remarkable for their comparative simplicity; their histories and narratives are written in easy and flowing style; their expositions of the Holy Scriptures, though often learned and ingenious, are plain and suited for ordinary capacities, and the services of their ritual breath great spirituality of feeling and depth of devotion. Most of the latter, as well as many other of their literary productions, are written in poetry or measured verse, for which style of writing Syriac seems to be admirably adapted. Some of these poems display a degree of sentiment and spirit combined with the softest tenderness, a command of phraseology, and a fertility of imagination frequently rising to an almost sublime enthusiasm, together with a thrilling and varied versification, worthy of the most exalted genius. And even their polemical essays, except when directed against the Monophysites, toward whom they harbour an innate dislike, are devoid of that rancour so common among the ancient and modern controversialists of the west."<sup>10</sup>

## THE MISSIONARY CONQUESTS OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH

But these times of martyrdom were also times of fearless missionary activity. The intense hatred of the barbarians was not enough to quench the uncontrollable zeal of the Christians. The exquisite torture of persecution but brought into light the exquisite beauty of an heroic spirit. What was destroyed by sword and spear, was replanted by an untiring Christian enthusiasm. In 256 A. D. Bosra was made the seat of a new bishopric. Undeterred by the fate of Abdas, the first incumbent of Suza, where Nehemiah walked, arrayed in the splendor of the royal palace, the line of succession remained unbroken till 1281 A. D. As far off as Toos, in Horasan, Christianity made her invasion, where a bishopric was established in 334. Not very far from the mentioned city, a Metropolitan See was erected at Merv, as early as 420. Even in the dark landscapes of Afkanistan, where no missionary of present time has made his way yet, the light of the Gospel shone; and at about 411, Herat was made a center of Christian influence, where a See, similar to that of Merv, in Horasan, was established.



A group of the Ministers and evangelists of the Mountain Assyrians.

The most important feature, however, which has made the names of the Eastern school so memorable, was the cultivation of the missionary spirit. The reign of Feeruz created an internal tranquility, of which the Christians of Persia took advantage. The new sovereign favored his Christian subjects on account of their dissensions; and the Christians made the best use of the opportunity to propagate the new religion. From now the history of the Nestorian Church forms fine of the most glorious narratives of religious activity; and their daring undertaking furnishes one of the most interesting chapters in ecclesiastical history. Mesopotamia and Syria had already come under the control of the separated sect; but the Gospel should be proclaimed to the pagans. The world was the field. The schools furnished the heroes for the noble task. Christianity was proclaimed in almost every corner of the Persian Empire. Horasan, according to the ecclesiastical history of the Eastern church, was almost entirely a Christian land. The doctrines of the new sect were widely spread in Arabia, where they had established many new churches. "Rivers and deserts obstacle to their unconquerable zeal." From Persia they crossed to India, where the fruits of their labors even now testify to their missionary activity amid the mountains of Malabar coast. Cosmos, a traveler, about 535 A. D. speaks of many Nestorian bishops, priests and martyrs around Aden in Arabia, on the Island of Socotra in the Indian sea and in India. Wherever the Persian commerce had access, there the Nestorian missionaries carried the news of salvation. Even the imagination of Gibbon, a skeptic, kindles as his pen is compelled to portray the heroic adventures of these early Christians, when he says: "Christianity was successfully preached to the Bachtrians, Huns, the Persarminians, the Medes and the Elamites; the barbaric churches from the Gulf of Persia to the Caspian Sea were almost infinite, and their recent faith was conspicuous in the number and sanctity of their monks and martyrs. The pepper coast of Malabar and the Isles of the ocean, Socotra and Ceylon were peopled with an increasing multitude of Christians."<sup>11</sup>

To the Nestorians is also to be ascribed the earliest attempt of imparting the knowledge of the true God to the heathen Chinese. The voyages of commerce even then were the channels of mercy to the remotest races groping in the darkness of paganism. The international trade kept the land of "Sinim" in close contact with the Persian empire. But there was something more important than Horasan silk or Hindoo Nard to excite the curiosity of the Chinaman. Along with the traffic of natural products, the Nestorian missionaries carried the knowledge of a supernatural religion.

During the missionary enterprise of the Nestorian church in China the Dynasty of Tang was in power (from 618-908). For 287 years the celebrated line of princes held the imperial throne of that country. During the whole period of their reign the land of heathendom had her brightest era. What Haroon-elRasheed was in Persia, and Charlemagne was in Europe, Tai-Cum of Tang dynasty was in China. He possessed a literary taste unwitnessed in his predecessors, and unsurpassed by any of his successors. Under his direction schools were established, a system of literary examinations was instituted, and by his command a code of laws was created.

The arrival of the Nestorian missionaries, therefore, occurred at a singularly opportune moment. It should be remembered, however, that the Eastern chronicles refer to the creation of a Metropolitan See in China as far back as the 5th century. But the most interesting fact which has brought into light the heroic activity of the Nestorian Christians is the discovery of the celebrated monument of Singan-fu in the year 1625. Several attempts have been made to contest the validity of the evidence of the inscription: Voltaire in his customary but superficial manner treated the subject with ridicule. Prof. Neuman furnished the most vigorous opposition against its genuineness. But a careful and impartial examination by the western scholars has proved beyond any doubt the authenticity of the historic monument; while the annals of the Nestorian church furnish a formidable testimony for its genuineness.

The inscription is three fold; Doctrinal, Historical and Eulogistic. Under the first head the principal doctrines of the "Illustrious Religion" are discussed, together with the description of the practices of its ministers. The historical portion states the entrance of Christianity in China; and the favor the missionaries received from Tang Dynasty for nearly 150 years. The last part is an expression in verse of the Christian's praise of God for his infinite power and wisdom; His grace made manifest to humanity and then revealed to the remotest regions of the earth through the agency of His servants; praise for the unique character of the "Illustrious Religion," and also for the emperors whose favor and protection they enjoyed.

Christianity in China came in contact with three distinct religions. Taoism and Confucianism had long before rooted themselves in China, and they were bitter rivals, never in harmony one with the other. Buddhism came into the field arrayed with antagonism against both, and now the illustrious Religion appeared claiming the faith and the respect of the people. Confucianism presented itself to the public under the charm of "Instruction." Taoism preferred the designation "The Way." Buddhism boasted with the motto, "The Law," while the new religion appealed to the intelligence of the people as including all the three.

The prosperity of each party largely depended upon the view and the sentiments of the ruling emperor. When one religion received the royal favor, it meant ,disfavor to the rest. Buddhism had been imported from India by the emperor Ming in 67 or 68 B. C. The "Illustrious Religion," therefore, advanced as long as the Tang Dynasty upheld it. But there came a period during which the Nestorian missionaries received the fatal blow. Wu-Tsang, who succeeded to the throne in 841, had been trained under the Taoish influence and was made a slave to all its superstitions. In consequence, he bitterly hated other religions, having, no doubt, Buddhism first in mind, as it held conspicuous position now by the majority of its adherents all over the empire. The proclamation was given; and the plan of destruction began as a hurricane, sweeping away the numerous monasteries and the "disastrous" institutions from the empire. That the Nestorians fell under the charge of the imperial bolt, appears from the nature of the proclamation which in the conclusion reads: "as to the religions of foreign nations, let the men who teach them, as well as those of Ta Tsin -as of Mu-hu-pi, amounting to more than three thousand persons, be required to resume the ways of ordinary life, and their unsubstantial talkings no more be heard."

The expulsion of the Moguls in 1369, seems to have put to end the missionary efforts of the Eastern church in China.

The earliest annals of the Nestorian church give the accounts of the missionary enterprise in Tartary also. During the Patriarchal superiority of Timothy (778-820), the Nestorian Missionaries penetrated the camps! of the roving Tartar. Timothy succeeded Hananeshoa, during whose primacy, according to the inscription of Singanfu, the Nestorian monument in China was erected. The two Patriarchs hold the most conspicuous position in the ecclesiastical history of the Eastern church. They have made their names immortal by their zeal in the work of the world's evangelization. Timothy is also honored as an author. He left many sermons, an exposition of the Gospel according to John, ecclesiastical canon, polemic writings, a treatise on Astronomy, and two hundred letters. His special interest, however, was in the establishment of the missions. He consecrated Subchaleshoa, a monk from the monastery of Be'th-Abe, who could speak Persian, Arabic and Turkish, for a mission in the lands beyond the Caspian Sea, whence he crossed to the Eastern Tartary. While on his way back, to bring the report of his success to the Patriarch, he was attacked and killed by the barbarians. Timothy, however, not being discouraged the least, set apart two others from the same convent, whom he ordained as Bishops, to fill the post left vacant. They took with them fifteen other of their companions, and together started, undeterred by the fate of Subchaleshoa to convey the message of life to the dwellers of the barbaric regions. The two Bishops were clothed with authority to ordain any of



their companions whenever it should be necessary. As the Eastern canon required the assistance of three Bishops for the ordination of another, they were directed to use a book of the Gospels to take the place of the third. Thus the heroes of the Gospel departed, not shaken by the ferocity of the barbarous races to whom they were going, and for whom they were sacrificing their life. The pen of a skeptic historian is once more constrained here to write, "The zeal of the Nestorians overlapped the limits which had confined the ambition and the curiosity both of the Greeks and the Persians. The Missionaries of Balach and Samarcand pursued without fear the footsteps of the roving Tartar and insinuated themselves into the camps of the valleys of Imaus and the banks of the Selinga. They exposed a metaphysical creed to these illiterate shepherds, to those sanguinary warriors they recommended humanity and repose."<sup>12</sup>

## **THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITY OF THE NESTORIAN CHURCH UNDER THE SARACENE RULERS**

Under their Persian rulers the Christians were both persecuted and tolerated. Now they received the favor of a sovereign, and now again they fell victim to the superstition of his successor. The' Gabree empire, however, was overthrown by the Saracenes in 641-1258 A. D., and during the whole period of their reign the Eastern church enjoyed better times of tranquility and repose. They had already established their missions in Arabia, and had exerted great influence upon the descendents of Ishmael; and when the latter invaded Persia, they found the Christian church at home very powerful. The Sword, the Koran or the tribute were the three conditions offered by the new conquerors to their subjects. The Christians would gladly prefer the last, and the Arabian invaders were satisfied. But according to a treaty between Mohammed and Sargis, a Nestorian monk,<sup>13</sup> there were special privileges afforded to the Christian subjects. By the conditions of the document, protection was secured for the sect. They were exempted from the demands of the military law. Their national customs and habits were to be respected. No tax was to be imposed upon the clergy. Twelve pieces of money was to be the highest amount demanded of, the clergy; while the poor were to pay not more than four. No person should be compelled to change his religion. This was especially emphasized in the case of women who were to enter into the service of a Mohammedan. The Christians were to have the liberty of practicing their religious customs; keeping their own fasts and following their customary prayers and ceremonies. Under such circumstances, the Eastern church attained the climax of its success. So great was its prosperity under the Mosulman's toleration, that the Patriarch (Eshoo-Yabh) writes to Shimon, the Metropolitan of one of the Persian Sees, "even Arabs, on whom the Almighty has in these days bestowed the dominion of the earth, are amongst us as thou knowest. Yet they do not persecute the Christian religion; but on the contrary, they commend our faith, and honor the priests and the saints of the Lord, conferring benefits upon the churches and upon converts."<sup>14</sup>

Whatever may have been the motives which led the Saracene rulers to confer favor upon their Christian subjects, it is certain that the learning found among the latter was a chief factor in securing their peace and prosperity. When the Mosulmans invaded Persia, they found the Christians standing far superior to other people in education. The government was consequently furnished with able treasurers and scribes. The Christians held conspicuous positions in the court, and they were depended upon for medical treatment. In filling such stations, and enjoying the entire confidence of their Arabian Sovereigns, the physicians, scribes and treasurers could defend their fellow Christians, and uphold the cause of the religion which they themselves represented. In a small Mohammedan settlement of Cufa, a bishopric was established without any hindrance from the faithful of the Islam; and now, while Seleucia-Ctispon was in a state of decline and decay, the Patriarchal See was removed to the city of Bagdad, the capital of the new conquerors.

The world is indebted to these inhabitants of Chaldea for the preservation of valuable fragments of Greek literature. Their celebrated schools furnished the best system of education. The Eastern Christians were now the masters of science. Aramaic, Syriac and Greek were publicly taught. The treatise on grammar, rhetoric, poetry, dialects, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy and medicine were kept in public libraries.<sup>15</sup> Medical and philosophical writings of the early Greeks were translated into the Ancient Syriac. The Arabian invaders were, accordingly, excited at the scholarly achievements of their Christian subjects; and the amount of learning existing in their new territory could not but arouse the curiosity of a people who were the early patrons of education. By the order of the Chaliphs the Nestorian scholars translated various branches of scientific literature into Arabic. The works of Aristotle and Galen could be read in that language. They translated also other writings from Greek, Persian, Syriac and Egyptian languages into the vernacular of their Arabian sovereigns.

Interesting as is the history of the Nestorian activity at home and abroad, it would be enough here to give to the reader a summary of their extensive work in the evangelisation of the world. Their zeal was animated, from the very beginning, by the principles of the great commission given by the risen Redeemer. They regarded the world as the field of their Christian operation, and extended their missions to the remotest regions of the earth. Their burning enthusiasm shows, indeed, that there was no human race for whose degenerate condition their inspired sympathy was not kindled. Life and self were of little esteem to the apostles of the Master; perils and foes could not stop the hand so mercifully extended to reach the fallen races of humanity. The great success of their missions, and the wide spread of their influence, may therefore, be gathered from a survey of the various centres of their Christian labors. At the time when Choolakoochan captured Bagdad, 1258 A. D., the Nestorians had twenty-five metropolitan Sees scattered all over the continent, from the Caspian sea to the Chinese waters, and from the northernmost boundaries of Scythia to the southern extremity of the Hindoostan Peninsula. They were:-1. Elam and Jundishapoor (Susiana, or the modern Hoozistan); 2. Nisibeen (Nisibis); 3. Mesena or Bosrah; 4. Assyria, including the cities of Mosul and Arbela; 5. Beth Garne or Beth Sileucia and Carcha (in Assyria); 6. Halavan, or Halacha (the modern Zohab on the confines of Assyria and Media); 7. Persia, including the cities of Ormuz (the modern Urmia); Salmas or Salamis and Van; 8. Merve (in Hoorasan); 9. Hara or Harat; 10. The Raxichitae, or Arabia and Cotrobl; 11. China; 12. Hind or India; 13. Armanistan or Armenia; 14. Syria or Damascus; 15. Bardaa or modern Azarbaijan, the northwestern province of Persia; 16. Raia,<sup>16</sup> and Tabreestan (the latter comprised a part of Mazandaran and Geelan, the two modern provinces of Persia on the southern coast of the Caspian sea; (Hyrcania being the ancient name of the territory); 17. Daiamites; 18. Samarkand and Mavaral-Nahr (Transoziana); 19. Cashgar and Turkistan (Independent Tartary); 20. Balch and Tocharistan (Bachtria); 21. Hamadan or Ahmata (Media); 22. Segestan (Seistan); 23. Chanbalek (Chambalu or Pekin in China); 24. Tanchet (Tanguth in Tartary); 25. Chasemgara and Nuacheta (districts of Tartary).<sup>17</sup>

The Patriarch of Bagdad exercised his authority over all these 25 Sees, and the Metropolitans were in direct communication with their chief. Those in the distant fields, who could not meet the Patriarch in person, were to send him once in every six years a report of their work, and their confession of faith showing their submission to the head of the Eastern Church.

## **THE PERSECUTION OF THE EASTERN CHURCH UNDER THE TARTAR SOVEREIGNS**

When the power of the Chaliphs declined, the Nestorians were sensible to some extent of the approaching calamity which was to befall their missions under the Tartar rulers. They had, indeed, as we have already seen, extended their missionary work as far as Tartary, and established Metropolitan Sees there. The story of Prester John is perhaps too familiar to be related; but whether its genuineness be admitted or not, it shows beyond any doubt that the Nestorian missionaries received the favor of the so-called converted ruler. The probability is that, some of the successors of the Unk Kahn embraced Christianity; but whether this be true or not, it is evident that the Christian religion was represented in the royal families by the Christian wives and children. Gengis Khan is said to have married a Christian wife, and her four children were probably brought up in the faith of their mother. The continuation of these influences, however, does not appear to have been very long, as with the death of the monarch, the favor which the Christians had received during his reign, would naturally cease.

The Christians at home, nevertheless, were familiar with the ferocious barbarity of the Tartars, and they could not but foresee another period of perplexity following their memorable days of comparative tranquility. The terror of the victorious hordes of Tartaristan had fallen upon the Asiatic nations. Bagdad was once more doomed to see the wild hosts of the North beseiging her mighty walls, and sweeping the Dynasty of the Arabian prophet. The movement of the Tartars was reported from Samarkand in a letter from the Nestorian Metropolitan there to his spiritual chief in Bagdad. The Patriarch communicated the news to the Chaliphs. But the successors of Mohammed could not resist the innumerable hosts of swarthy warriors. The city of the "moameens" (faithful) had to open her gates to the infidel archers. The power of the Chaliphs fell; and Khoolakoo-Khan captured the capital of the Arabs in the year 1258 A.D.

The Tartar sovereigns seem at first to have been well disposed toward their Christian subjects, but the latter, unfortunately, in vain looked for a second Un Khan, or a successor of Gengis, to receive the favors, which their Metropolitans in Tartary had enjoyed. After the fall of the Chaliphs, the brightest era of the Eastern church came to an end. The Arabian religion had already spread wherever the influence of the Chaliphs' victories had reached. Every unfortunate nation which fell victim to the triumphs of the Saracene crusades had to suffer the worst of all

calamities, by bowing to the banner of Mecca, and acknowledging the apostleship of an "illiterate" fanatic. The future offsprings of the overthrown nations, left the bosom of the nursing mother, and were forced to drink of the killing stream of the Mohammedan superstition. From the very beginning, the adherents of Islam made the sword as their pen, and the blood of human beings as their ink, thereby to propagate their religion, and secure myriads of followers. The ill-fated Tartars were not an exception to the Moslemized nations. They also had embraced the superstition of the Imams to the exclusion of Christianity. How lamentable now the condition of the unfortunate Nestorians! It seemed as if nature with all its destructive forces of fire, blood and earthquake, could not attain in ferocity the fearful wrath of a merciless Taimurlang, who with the savagery of a barbarian, and with the superstition of a Mohammedan, crimsoned the face of the earth with the blood of the innocent "Nasara." Toward the close of the fourteenth century, the Nestorian Christians were almost exterminated in many regions. Christianity was entirely banished from Transoxiana, effectually concealed in Mongolia where it afterwards altogether disappeared, almost wiped off in India, and persecuted unto death in Persia. We become almost skeptical when we listen to the voice of history as she reflects the character of the great assassin. In the year 1380, the ferocious Taimur killed two thousand men alive with mortar in the form of a tower, where they miserably perished. Seven years later, he sent an army of one hundred thousand soldiers to the doomed city of Isphahan, and demanded of each warrior a human head, which they mercilessly accomplished. In the year 1401, ninety thousand more human heads were piled up in the streets of the city of Bagdad. A year previous to this, he had 4,000 Armenian horsemen buried alive. He followed the Christians with relentless fury, destroyed their churches, and put to the sword all those who were unable to escape to the caves of Kurdistan mountains. Such barbarity paralyzed the missionary activity of the Nestorian church, and blotted out their missions from other regions of the earth.

## THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH AND THE TURKISH RULE

But the Nestorians had already passed through similar vales of blood. The atrocious barbarity of Shapur did not check their progress. The most severe persecution of the Gabree ruler helped to intensify the enthusiasm of the Eastern Christians to propagate the Gospel of peace in the remotest corners of the earth. Their activity might yet have survived the destructive ferocity of Taimur, had it not been for their subsequent rulers, who were similarly imbibed with the same superstitious principles of Mecca and Meddina. The Turk was no less blood-thirsty than the wild Tartar. Neither pen nor tongue can describe the impetuosity of the fanatic Mosulman. To him the existence of a "Gavoor" (heathen) was a curse to humanity; hence the sooner the Christian is exterminated the better the Moslem fulfills his religious duty.' The Turkish sovereignty meant indeed the continuous oppression of the followers of the "Nazarene." There was no end to the persecution, and the helpless Nestorians were destined to struggle in the midst of a sea formed and perpetually swollen by the blood of their martyrs.

After the destruction of Bagdad by Taimur, the patriarchate was removed to Mosul. But now when the Nestorians had lost their strength, and the church was in a state of disorder and panic, they had to contend with a stronger enemy. If not as atrocious as Shapur, or as ferocious as Taimur, but certainly as dangerous as the ambition of "St. Peter's successor." The cunning tools of the Roman Pontiff had begun their work of sowing the pestilential seed among the unfortunate churches. In appearance, as lambs, in disposition, as wolves, they conspired to swallow up, if possible, the remnant which was left from the preceding plagues. A few Nestorians that lived in Cypros were gained over to the Romish church in 1445.<sup>18</sup> In 1559, those who existed in Malabar coast were compelled by the Jesuits to acknowledge the superiority of the Pope, in consequence of which, all their Antipapal books, containing the pure Nestorian doctrines, were expunged; and in the beginning of the 17th century, the papal machinations were set at work to introduce the idolatrous worship in the very center of the Nestorian body.

During the residence of the Patriarchs in Mosul, a deep departure took place from the previous custom of the church as to the selection of her spiritual rulers. The change was due to the gradual decay of the ecclesiastical tradition and discipline. Up to this time, the occupant of the Eastern throne was to be appointed by the general consent of the church, together with the approval of the Metropolitans, Bishops and the Clergy. But Shimon, in 1450, had enacted a law that his immediate relatives were to succeed him.<sup>19</sup> The law seems to have been practiced for nearly a century, when the church, disgusted with the ecclesiastical aristocracy, arose to break the yoke of a hereditary patriarchate in the year 1551. There were now two claimants of the See. According to the law of the previous century, Shimon Bar-Mamas, the Archbishop of Jelu, Sert and Salinas, was the rightful successor. But the church supported Sulaka to fill the vacant See. It so happened that in the year 1551, at the death of the Patriarch, there was but one Metropolitan left out of the twenty-five who ruled from China to Egypt, and from the northern Tartary to the Island of Socotra. According to the discipline of the church, there should have been at least three

Metropolitans present to perform the ceremony of consecration. Sulaka, accordingly, repaired to Rome, where he was ordained as the "patriarch of the East." That this incident did not involve any intimate relation between the East and the West, is apparent from the course which the future successors of Sulaka took. Elia the II, sent private embassies to the Pope in the years 1607 to 1610, to solicit the friendship of the Pope Paul IV, and, if possible, to reconcile the Nestorians to the Latin church. But when Elia III, 1829-1859, was in power, he addressed a letter to the congregation DE PROPOGANDA FIDE, declaring that, such a reconciliation would be possible only on the condition that the Nestorians would be allowed a place of public worship in Rome, and that there would be no interference whatever with the doctrine of that church, and no attempt to alter her discipline. These conditions could not satisfy the ambition of the Roman Pontiff; accordingly, the proposal could not be accepted.



His late Beatitude Mar Shimon Poloos, who succumbed to the fearful woes of his people and who died within the first year of his incumbency as the Patriarch of the "Nesorian" Church. On the left the Metropolitan Mar Khnaneesh, and on the right Bishop Sargis of Jeloo.

After the appointment of Sulaka to the See of Mosul, Shimon, the rightful successor, refused obedience to the Patriarch, and was elected by his own party as the Patriarch of the Nestorians of Kurdistan, where the patriarchate exists even to the present day. The unhappy people were thus divided into two sections though one in faith, but exposed to the most serious perils caused by the perpetual quarrels between the two rival Patriarchs.

The Romish monks at last succeeded in their per-sistent attempts in gaining a handful of Nestorians residing near Diarbeker, and, consequently, tie in the year 1681, consecrated a Mar Yoseph as "the patriarch of the Chaldeans," to exercise authority over the seceded Nestorians. The occupants of the latter See held their exalted position till about 1780, when the secession of Mar Elia of Mosul also to the Roman Pontiff, obviated the existence of a separate organization. The secession was secured by bribes and violence; and immediately after the death of Mar Elia, instead of his nephew, the rightful successor, a "Chaldean" (seceder to the Romish church) from Salamas was appointed to the patriarchate of Mosul; and the very title, Mar Elia, was changed to that of Mar Nicholas. Persistent attempts have been made to bring the seceders entirely under the Romish yoke. It is bad enough to bow to the imported Images, and to be contaminated by a revolting idolatry, but so far, they have regulated their obedience by



their own convenience, rejecting the Latin Liturgy, and not allowing their own sacred literature to be expurgated by the papal censors.

No mention can now be made of the existence of pure Nestorians beyond the confines of the Kurdistan mountains and the plains on the extreme northwestern boundary of Persia. Out of that mighty army, scattered in almost every country and every clime of Asia there remains but a small portion numbering from 250 to 300 thousand,<sup>20</sup> holding fast to their distinctive beliefs, faithful to their Father's creed and obedient to their own spiritual ruler, "MAR SHIMON PATARYARCHA DE MADINHA" -- (Mar Shimon the Patriarch of the East).

## **THE NESTORIAN THEOLOGY**

Many centuries have passed, generation after generation has lived and died under the shadow of the church; Christianity has broken up the despotic yoke of the early ages, and yet the edict of the "Robber Synod" is as absolute in this 20th century as when the unfortunate Nestorius was wandering in his banishment through the Egyptian deserts. In the schools of the present day, as in the cathedral of Ephesus, the verdict of heresy has been continually pronounced against the unfortunate sect without a patient hearing. A charge so serious as this has indeed been unjustly laid at the door of the Nestorian Christians. The cause of the grave accusation is perhaps due to the lack of personal investigation. Those who have partaken in the decision of the Ephesian Synod, should at least give the Nestorian a chance for the defense of himself. And I could render no better service than to put before the reader some extracts of the Nestorian Theology, and then undertake to make a few personal remarks.

The following are the extracts from the Nestorian writings, displaying the character and nature of the Eastern Theology:-

### **THAT THERE IS A GOD, AND THAT THE WORLD IS CREATED AND TEMPORAL<sup>21</sup>**

"St. Paul, the heavenly apostle, the treasury of the HOLY GHOST, and the spiritual philosopher, has through the spirit, laid an admirable foundation for Theology, by his saying that men "should seek God, and feel after Him, and find Him out from His creation," inasmuch as the artificer is known by his work, and the maker through the thing made.

"That the world is made, and created, and had a beginning in time, we know from this:-This world is compounded, framed, and disposed, as a whole, and in all its parts; and everything that is compounded, framed, and disposed, must have a compounder, framer, and disposer. That it is compounded is proved from its whole being made up of many parts, and from all its bodies being made up of matter and kinds, and from the visible and invisible movers therein. But the most certain witness of its being framed is man, who is a small world in himself, and in whose formation all creation is brought together, as one of the sages has said: 'Man is an epitome of the whole world, and of the whole frame of creation.'

"Now that the world is disposed is clear from the wonderful order of the heavens, and the planets, the elements, with all their productive powers, generating plants, trees, mines, and the members of beasts and of men, the astonishing order of which surpasses the wisdom and knowledge of all created things.

"In the same way the ancient philosophers concluded that, every motion must have a mover, until they arrived at Him Who is not moved, Who is the cause of all, and of Whom they predicated that He must be Good, Wise, and Almighty. Good, inasmuch as He created the world without a cause (i.e. of His own motion); Wise, because of the admirable order and frame displayed in the universe; Almighty, because He overcame the things which are naturally destructive to each other, and brought them together in one agreement.

"Further, this world is made up of quality and quantity, as respects its bodies and spirits, and of different dimensions and extensions, of which the mind can inquire, why they are not less or more, higher or lower than they are. And when it would know a cause for the appropriated designs, resemblances, and dimensions, for all and of each, and for their existence and continuance as they are, it can find no other than the will and intelligence of the Creator, who created and disposed them after His own will, and as He knew would be best and most fit. The artificer must of necessity exist before the work, in order that it may be proved of him that he is really the maker of that which did not exist before, and that he made it. This truth, then, being confirmed, it results that the world is made and had a beginning in time, and is not eternal. It also results that it has a maker, Who is good, wise, eternal, strong, and possessed of a will."

### **THAT GOD IS ONE AND NOT MANY**

"That the Maker of this world is one and not many, may be proved thus:-It is impossible that many can possess one, perfect, unchangeable, selfconsentaneous will; because they must - either be co-equal in substance, and in everything appertaining thereto, which would destroy plurality by the nonexistence of distinction, or anything distinguishing, just as it is inconsistent to conceive of the existence of two blacknesses, alike in every respect, and not distinguishable, and having but one substance; or they must be distinct from each other in' substance and in what appertains thereto; when they would be contrary the one to the other, and destructive the one to the other. But the existence could not exist between two opposing makers, nor could a perfect work proceed from them.-Or they must be alike in substance, and distinct in what appertains thereto each one having an appropriate quality by which he is distinguishable from his associates; when they would all be compounded of the things in which they are alike, and of those in which they are distinguishable. But every compound thing is made, and must have a maker and compounder; hence results the truth of that declaration: " 'The Lord our God is One GOD; and though there be gods many and lords many, to us there is but one GOD.'□

### **THAT GOD IS ETERNAL**

"Everything that exists must be either eternal or temporal; and everything temporal has a cause and maker, and time and maker must be pre-existent to it. But that the cause of all things is without a cause, and that the maker of all things has no maker, every right and unprejudiced mind is assured of, because it is natural to it so to judge. It results, then, that the Self-existent is the Creator, and the Eternal, anterior to time, because He Himself created time. For time is a reckoning of the motioris of bodies, and as we have already proved that He is the Creator of these, therefore He is eternal and without beginning. Now that which has no beginning, can be reachable by no end, and must possess of these two opposite extremes whatsoever is the most high and the most glorious, as truth, light, and life, and must be the Best, the Wisest, the Almighty."

### **THAT GOD IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE**

"Everything comprehensible is comprehended either by the senses, or by the mind; and that which is comprehended by the senses must be either a body or an accident. But the adorable God is not a body; for every body is compound, and every body occupies space, and every body has limits, all of which is opposed to the Self-existent. Nor is He accident; for an accident can not exist alone, but requires a substance wherein to exist.

"All that is comprehended by the mind, the mind must either stretch to the ends of its length and breadth (which are parts of its limits distinguishing it from what it is not), in order that it may in reality comprehend it; but hereby the thing is at once limited, and extension and dimension are foreign to the nature of the Self-existent:-or the mind does not stretch to its end or to the boundaries which limit it; but this is not comprehension. Hence the Divine Nature is incomprehensible, it being impossible for the mind to comprehend aught of the knowledge of the Self-existent, except that He does exist.

"It is said of a certain great philosopher that he always used this prayer: " 'O Thou cause of the motion of my soul, grant me to know that subtle essence which moves me, what it is, and what it is like. But not even that subtle essence wherewith I am endowed, and whereby I am capable of knowing, can comprehend what Thou art, and how Thou art. This only it can know that That does exist.'"

"Now, when we say (of God) that He is invisible, incomprehensible, impassible, and immutable, we do not describe what He is, but what He is not."<sup>22</sup>

### **TRINITY**

1. "GOD the FATHER, and GOD the SON, the Word, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, one substance, one GOD, in three co-equal Knoome, \* of whose Divinity there is no creation; he is living and everlasting. When He determined to make known the mystery of His being, He created."<sup>23</sup>

2. "The glory of the Lord of all can be comprehended by none, nor can His greatness be conceived by reason, neither His form imagined. He hears without ears, speaks without a mouth, works without hands, and sees without eyes ... nor can He be confined in any place so as to be laid hold of ... Who can search Him out?"<sup>24</sup>

3. "O Thou living and everlasting One, by whose decree all creatures were created, visible and invisible, our Almighty GOD, Who fillest the heavens and the earth, the merciful and the compassionate One, Who carest for our

species, and renewest our frame, Who feedest us with good things, . . . Who art long suffering, great in Thy power, just in Thy wisdom. . . O Thou righteous FATHER, and everlasting SON, and HOLY SPIRIT, of invisible substance, incomprehensible, wonderful in Thy doings.... incorruptible, immortal, 'near to all, but comprehended by none; worshipped by angels and men in spirit and in truth; GOD, without beginning and without end."<sup>25</sup>

4. "And He (CHRIST) manifestly committed unto them (the Apostles) the whole hidden mystery of the Godhead, without additions or reserve. (That there is) one essence in three Knoome.<sup>26</sup> The word 'Essence' He applied to the three co-equal Knoome, lest it should be thought that there are three essences having the same name. 'Go ye into all the world, and disciple all nations in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST;' three Knoome co-equal, one distinct essence. The word Name proves the unity of the Essence, and the latter part of the sentence points out the co-equality of the Knoome in this one and self-same Essence."<sup>27</sup>

"Everything that exists must be either a material body whose existence is the subject of accidents and changes, and is acted upon by whatever is opposed to it; or not a body, and consequently not the subject of any of these things. Now, we have already proved that GOD (glory be to His incomprehensibility), is not a body, and, therefore, is not subject to anything pertaining to materiality, from which He is infinitely removed.

"Whatever is immaterial, and not subject to anything appertaining to matter, the traditions of the ancients call Mind. And whatever is exclusive of matter, and of what appertains thereto, must be knowing, and must know himself, because himself is ever present and known to him, and he is not dependent on anything but himself. And whatever knows himself must be living. Therefore GOD is Wise and Living.

"Now, he who is wise, is wise because of his wisdom; and he who is living is living because he has life. This is the mystery of the Trinity, which the church confesses of the Adorable Essence; The Mind, Wisdom, and Life, Three co-essential proprieties<sup>28</sup> in one, and One who is glorified in three proprieties. (The Church) has called the Mind, FATHER and Begetter, because He is the Cause of all, and first. (She) has called the SON, WISDOM and Begotten, because He is begotten of the Mind, and by Him everything was made and created. (She) has called Life the HOLY GHOST, and proceeding, because there is no other HOLY GHOST but He. He who is Holy is unchangeable, according to the expositions of received expositors; and that is that which is declared by John the Divine, the son of Zebedee: "In the beginning was the Word;" and "The Light is the life of men." "

"Now, as the reasonable soul has a three-fold energy, mind, word, and life, and is one and not three; even so should we conceive of the THREE IN ONE, and ONE IN THREE. The sun also which is one in its disk, radiance, and heat, is another simile adduced by the second Theologus Paul, the chosen vessel,-" 'He is the brightness of His Glory, and the express image of His person;' " and, again: "CHRIST, the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD.'

"Further, everything that exists is either an accident or a substance. But the Self-existent can in no wise be susceptible of accidents. Therefore, these three proprieties must be essential, and are on this account called Knoome, and not accidental powers, and do not cause any change or plurality in the essence of the Self-existent; For He is the Mind, The Same, He is the Wisdom, The Same, He is the Life, Who ever begeth without cessation, and puts forth (Makes to proceed) without distance (i.e., without removal from Himself.) These things (cessation and distance) are infinitely removed from Him, and appertain to bodies.

"Now, there is no real likeness between created natures and the Nature of the Self-existent, and a simile does not in everything resemble that which is compared by it; for then the simile and that which is compared by it would be the thing itself, and we (who have just instituted several comparisons) should not be unlike the man who attempts to compare a thing by the self-same thing.

"The mystery of the Trinity is expressed in the words of the Old Testament: "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness;" the occurrence of the letter nun (n)<sup>29</sup> three times in this sentence is an indication of the Trinity. The "Holy" thrice repeated in the seraphic hymn, as mentioned by Isaiah, joined with one "Lord" attests Three Persons in One Essence. The words of David, also, are of the same import: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth;" and many other like references. Let the heathen, then, and Jews who rail at the truth of the Catholic Church, on account of her faith in the Trinity, be confounded and put to shame."<sup>30</sup>

## **OF THE WORD OR SON OF GOD, WHICH WAS MADE VERY MAN**

"Blessed be the compassionate One, Who has graciously sustained our life by the prophecies; for Isaiah saw, with the eye of his mind, the wonderful Virgin-born; and Mary brought forth Emmanuel, the Son of God, without marriage, He being formed of her by the HOLY GHOST (as it is written), to be an adorable abode and temple for the rays of the Father, in one Filiation; which (body), at the commencement of His wonderful conception, He united to

Himself in one honor, therewith to fulfill all His purposes for the salvation of all, according as it pleased Him. Who was praised at His birth by the hallelujahs of angels in the highest, and by those of earth, He was worshipped through their gifts. One is the Messiah, adored by all in two Natures, who, as touching His Godhead, is begotten of the Father, without beginning, and before all ages; and as touching his manhood, was born of Mary, in the fulfillment of time, a body of union. His Godhead is not from the substance of His mother, neither His manhood from the substance of His FATHER; but the natures and Knoome subsist in the one Parsopa of this one filiation. And as there are in the Godhead three Knoome, One Self-existent, so the filiation of the Son is of two natures and one Parsopa."<sup>31</sup>

"He who is, by His Self-existence, perfect GOD, the Word, abounded in His compassion for our frailty, and took upon Him our similitude to be an abode for His Divinity, raised and nailed it to the cross, and yielded it up unto death, thereby to give us life; then raised it again and seated it in the heavens, far above the highest dominions and powers. And as we were all under condemnation through the first Adam, so by the second Adam we are justified. Who can declare His glorious generation? So we praise, so we reasonably believe, and so we with wonder confess, as we have been truly taught; so that even should an angel from heaven come and teach us any other doctrine than this Gospel preached unto us, we will neither deny His Manhood, nor that His Divinity is impossible."<sup>32</sup>

"With all these proofs to establish the humanity of the Savior, I am astonished at the tenets of the erring heretics. Manes, Marcion, and worthless Simon deny (CHRIST'S) body, and thereby deprive our race of salvation. Eutyches, also, falsely asserts that the (CHRIST'S) body descended from above, equally denies our body (i.e. that CHRIST'S body was like our own). Eunomius and his followers denied the soul (of CHRIST), Apolinaris denied the mind (of CHRIST), but the worst of all was Jacob (Baradaeus), who makes the self-existent possible. This erring man maintains that there is but one nature in CHRIST, and says that the self-existent became flesh, thereby destroying the co-equality of the Knoome of the Trinity, and inflicting a serious injury on mankind. After him come the erroneous Chalcedonians, whose creed resembles his, since they believe that there are two natures and one Knoome in CHRIST. And this creed is maintained by all the West, by the Romans, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Copts, the Melchites, and by the most of the Georgians. This wicked party excommunicated Mar Nestorius, who was true, and who taught the truth in the church. He confessed two Natures and two Knoome in CHRIST, even as the disciples declared to all nations in their preaching; and all nations received this doctrine, which is well known in all the Churches of the East as it was preached and manifested by Mar Mari the Apostle."<sup>33</sup>

"After the similitude of His hidden likeness had become corrupt, and the image of His mysterious self had been defaced and defiled, and the transcript of His similitude had been utterly ruined, and after the model of His own creation had been swallowed up by death, the good GOD designed to renew and to restore it. And when the set time for the fulfillment of this His benevolent purpose towards the creation had arrived, the Lord spread abroad His mercy as the sea, and His pity as the great deep, and He poured forth and enlarged the goodness and the grace of His Divinity, by sending His consubstantial Son,-the SON of Self-existence. In a befitting way His Will descended towards men; He sent His Beloved, the Begotten of Himself, that is, His Express image, Who in consummate Wisdom, took upon Him, from us, a nature and a Knooma. In a wonderful manner He clothed Himself with a corruptible garment, covering therewith His excellent glory, and when the time appointed in His wisdom had come, He mended and repaired it, and sewed together its rents. He was borne in the womb according to the laws and peculiarities of nature, and was brought forth by His mother."<sup>34</sup> . . . "From these things, then, let us rest assured that the Messiah is One in two Natures, and two Knoome subsisting in one Parsopa of Filiation, since the Natures did not "commingle;"<sup>35</sup> and in like manner we believe of the Knoome. The SON of the FATHER clothed Himself with Him of Mary, and was conceived in the womb. But let no man filch a word from this, and wilfully pervert it by specious philosophy, so as to conclude that there are two Sons. For there is only one SON only, not a SON and a Son making two, but One Son.... The will of the Creator descended and united itself to the will of the creature: the Divine Nature clothed itself with the human nature, which thus became co-equal in everything, in reverence, in worship, and in praise, for they have but one Parsopa; in essence, however, not so, for this were impossible ... Now, in what we have laid down, there is no doubt, double-meaning or equivocation whatever; neither in what we have declared is there any folly or ignorance; but as it is written, all has been arranged in a 'Goodly pleasant way, and after a suitable order; all, we say, has been set forth worthily, rightly, truly, firmly, and on a solid foundation..."<sup>36</sup>

"Behold Him, who is clothed with light, wrapped in swaddling bands, what a mystery is here! No less wonderful is it that He Who is seated on the throne of heaven should have been laid in a manger! The Ancient of times became a Son of Mary in the latter times, and appeared as the FATHER, LORD, and MASTER of the sons of Adam, loosing from off their nature the bands of the curse and of sin, and causing a light to shine forth through the shadows of death. The sun of His love chose an orb from the firmament of humanity, and made the rays of His Moon to be the rational confidence of man; so that henceforth the grossness of the dark earth cannot hide the one from the other, He having destroyed it by the splendor of His brightness. He brought down the Spiritual, and guided it to the nature of



the dust, wherefrom He chose Him out an abode to manifest forth the mystery of perfect and great salvation, and to exhibit true liberty to the children of flesh, who had become the slaves of falsehood and error ...<sup>37</sup>

. . . "Behold Adam, the begetter of nations, is begotten again, and the Creator of men has become a little child: He (the first Adam) who would have arrogated to himself the sovereignty unreasonably, took it (in CHRIST) when He was born an infant.\* ... "That which good and righteous men, who declared the set seasons, waited for, has at length appeared and come to pass, and has dazzled the minds of men; the Essence, in itself simple, has, by a wonderful operation, made itself compound through the different 'kinds of flesh' (I Corint. XV.:39) and the accidents of color, and thereby manifested the hidden mysteries of itself...<sup>38</sup>

"The hope of the good, and the parables of the just, are now brought to light, and the sayings of the prophets are fulfilled in the birth of the Highest. The Fire and the Spirit, whose mysteriousness Moses the Prophet worshipped on the mount, have manifested their excellence in vile flesh. The stone cut out without hands, as prophesied of by Daniel, appears in the Child born without conjugal intercourse or connection. Though the seals of virginity are unbroken, behold a child is found wrapped in swaddling bands, even as Isaiah had declared, that a Virgin should bring forth Emmanuel. A Branch from the root of Jesse sprouts out where there is no water; and the daughter of David inwardly magnifies and praises the LORD'S SON.

"The emblem of Aaron's rod that budded speaks from afar, that the tree of virginity bears fruit without having been watered. The prophets figured forth the hidden mystery of Him in divers manners, and in various ways, the righteous declared His beauteous signs, and those who searched diligently prefigured Him in proverbs; but the perfect accomplishment of the whole has appeared to us in a wonderful mystery, and in an astounding way. He covered and hid His dazzling brightness with a corporeal and corruptible garment, for had He appeared to the children of the dust in His glory, who could have looked upon His Divine splendor? who would have been so rash as to gaze upon His exalted image? or who could dare to conceive of Him Who is beyond all conception? Did He not say to the son of Amram: 'Turn back, for no man can look upon me and live?' Great is He Who is Born, Who strikes all creatures with awe! ...<sup>39</sup>

"Hitherto the law of nature was in force, but in the -appearance of the SAVIOUR from a virgin, the law of birth from (conjugal) union was abrogated; and the mind that would comprehend how this was, must lose itself in the inquiry.<sup>40</sup>

"David says of Him, that 'His Throne shall stand as the sun, and shall endure as the moon, to order and to establish all things,' that is, by His manifested Divinity, and by the life and wisdom of His humanity; for in the motions of Himself He comprehends all the angels in the Highest; and, in the members of His Body, He comprehends man who is on the earth, thereby fulfilling as in a rational way, that the two worlds are, by the power of His Spirit, but One body, and He is that very One Who through these sees the things which we cannot see. He is the very one Who makes all visible creatures to subsist, Who tries and judges them. Before, the union of these offices belonged to the Knooma of the Divinity; afterwards, it was given to the Knooma of the humanity. And since all these things are fulfilled in this Begotten One, He is, therefore, Man and Lord most truly, certainly, and beyond all doubt. Let our abject race, therefore, rejoice, exult, and leap for joy, since the King of the Highest and of the Deep came down in order to raise it from its fall, and through Him the pure in heart see GOD. let not heretics, with perverse minds, dispute this truth; but henceforward let angels and men rejoice together, because they shall abide one Church forever□<sup>41</sup>

□ □By His birth He has opened the gates of the highest which were shut, and by His nativity He found again the lost sheep of the FATHER.... The lifegiving Spirit was the agent in His pure conception, and gave a body and members to the infant by the power of GOD, and joined it to Him in one immutable parsopal dignity, not to be changed for ever and ever.<sup>42</sup>

"And whereas He twisted the Old and New Covenants into one, we believe that He is Lord of both. At the annunciation He was called Jesus, that is, a SAVIOR, because He was destined to redeem men from the power of the Hater. He was also called CHRIST, a name of union and of dignity, because in Him a new life was joined to the mortality of dust. . . .On this day the bark of prophecy has reached the shore; in this Begotten One all the types are fulfilled. Water and clay have become like the elements of air and fire since Jesus took them from a body. Whereto, then, serve the orders, multitudes, classes and appointments of the heavenly hosts, who magnify the Lord within the veil? Whereto the circuits of the spheres, the sun and the moon? Whereto the sea and dry land, the mountains and plains? Wherefore dost thou ask, O inquirer? Wouldst thou say that their creation was superfluous, or that humanity could have done without them, or that they cannot hide that radiance? If thereby thou meanest what the apostle did when he said, 'that God may be all in all,' thou dost rightly interpret the mystery of the they shall abide one Church forever.... perfect man (as said by Saint Paul), for this is its true signification. For the Parsopa of the Word, as on this day, appeared in the body, and has centered in His own beauty the sight and contemplation of all minds.<sup>43</sup>

"The church exults in Thy adorable birth, Thou SAVIOR of the world, since thereby the nations and the nations (Jews and Gentiles) are made one, and the shepherds of the earth and the angels in the heavens above unitedly sing And praise thee.<sup>44</sup>

"In the Name of God the Most Merciful. The orthodox creed of the Nestorians, drawn up by the undeserving Abdeshua, Metropolitan of Nisibis and Armenia. Abdeshua Metropolitan of Nisibis and its dependencies, says: That the most glorious and exalted Creator is pre-existent, the Self-existent, the One, the Truth, the Only One, Who is not susceptible of plurality in any way, Whose Essence is eternal, the Wise, the Living. Christians apply to Him, Whose Essence is eternal, the name of Father, because He is the Cause and Source, and the Maker of all created beings, and pre-existent to them in Nature and Essence. They apply to the Wise the name of SON, because wisdom is begotten of the Essence of the Wise, without time (i.e., eternally) or separation, or diminution. They apply to the Living the name of HOLY GHOST, because He is the Living, the Eternal, the very Spirit, the Holy. And this is what they mean by the declaration, that GOD is Three Knoome (Persons), One Essence, One God. Unity is ascribed to Him because of the unity of His Essence, and Trinity because of His essential "proprieties." And they believe of Christ that the eternal Word, Who is the Wisdom of the exalted Creator and called the Son, and Who is hree Knoome (Persons), as we have stated, One of the dwelt in the human nature taken from the Virgin Mary, and united therewith. Hence the name of Christ has a double meaning with them, the Divinity and the Humanity; and hence they say that Christ is perfect God and perfect Man, One LORD."

Even if we were to disregard our suspicions as to the misstatement of facts on the part of the opponents of Nestorius, we should not in justice be permitted to regard what the bishop of Constantinople may have said in the heat of controversy, as the criterion by which to judge the orthodoxy of the Eastern Christians. Although the latter side with the Greek divine, and believe that he was orthodox in his Christology, they can only feel responsible for what their own divines taught, and what their own literature bears upon the doctrines, for the holding of which they have been subjected to the gravest charge. The foregoing quotations are some specimens of the "Nestorian" theology. Whether they breathe out the spirit of a purely Biblical conception of the "Great Mystery," the reader may form his own conclusions, holding but one fact in mind, that there is no Christology even of the present day, the language of which is not logically subject to criticism. No theologian of the present century would make a definition of the doctrine of the person of Christ without closing his essay with more or I less appropriate cautions. The Nestorian divines, though modest enough, perhaps failed to do so; and yet what is lacking in the writings of one author is furnished in the productions of another. In the few extracts bearing upon the proof of the existence, unity, eternity and incomprehensibility of God, the logical precision and the irresistible, a posterior reasoning of the author is certainly remarkable. But what this First cause, is, he reverently disclaims any power of apprehension, and concludes-"Now, when we say of God that He is invisible, incomprehensible, impassible and inunutable, we do not describe what He is, but what He is not." The brief paragraphs bearing on the doctrine of the Trinity will testify for their own merit. Any effort of apprehending the incomprehensibility of human reason is utterly avoided. But the Scriptural teachings which are the only source of information, are so plainly put forth, as to enable the human mind to conceive the truth so clearly revealed in the inspired record, and to prevent any possible confusion of "Three in One" and "One in Three."

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

The orthodoxy of the Nestorians on the doctrine of the Trinity not being in dispute, we will now explain their belief in the nature and the "person" of Christ, which demands our special attention. It should be remembered, however, that the whole Nestorian Christology has always centered in one sentence only, which is the formula of their belief; to wit: "Two natures, two Knoome and one Parsopa;" that is, each nature of Christ having one Knooma; but two natures and two Knoome constitute but one Parsopa.

Now, what does this formula mean? Our main difficulty is with the term "Knooma," for there is no equivalent for the word either in Greek or in English; and for this reason it was repeatedly said by the opponents of Nestorius, that, "There is no Knooma in our Greek language," hence they understood it to mean nothing else but "person," in the sense in which they themselves employed it; or so they are quoted by Bar-Sarrogh, saying: "There is no distinction between Knooma and person (Parsopa) in the Greek language.

The term Knooma is traceable to two roots in Syriac-one of which "Knam" which has an equivalent in Arabic, "Kanama," from which the infinitive "takneem" is formed, and in Arabic means 'to represent in the attributes of a personal being, or personify;' not, however, in the sense of "shahasa," which is equivalent to "man" or "person." The meaning of this root in Syriac is somehow doubtful. The other root is 4 'Kam," equivalent to Hebrew "Kom," and

primarily in Syriac means, "to stand up" or "stand with;" while in Pael form "Kayyim," means "to cause to rise," "to cause to stand..... to establish." Either root might be preferred; but the latter is more in harmony with the definition given by Bar-Sarrogh, "and Hassan-Bar-Bahloal, the two Syriac Lexicographers.

Quoting Bar-Sarrogh, "Knooma is that which is inseparable from its nature. It is that single (something) 'Mkaimoota,'<sup>45</sup> united with the nature, i.e., is a single mkaimoota by virtue of which the knowledge of the ego in man finds expression. Knooma rises from and stands with the nature. As Knoome in Christ represent his nature, so also Parsopa represents both Knoome and nature, for Parsopa is the tower, or center, of all human sensibility, and sum of a complete nature."<sup>46</sup>

Further, the use of the term in the Syriac Gram. mar may throw some more light upon the subject. All nouns which are called "proper" in English, are called "Knoomaye" in Syriac, or Knoomal nouns. The grammatical significance of a Knoomal noun is, that it is distinguishable from everything else; nothing can be like it, and nothing can be confounded with it. Its distinguishability belongs to it, it stands by it, it is inherent in it; or if we quote a grammatical definition, "The Knoomal noun signifies that which individually and alone can be distinguished from any. thing else."

The term is also used by the Nestorians for the three hypostases in the Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Ghost are "the three Knoome subsisting in one essence, co-equal in its self-existence." They are spoken of as indistinguishable in their essence; "for they are co. equal in the essential 'propriety' or Delayta,"<sup>47</sup> which belongs to all the three Knoome in general; but they are distinguishable in the relation of their "Persons" to the general essence of the Trinity. The Delayta or "propriety" of the general essence is "Spirit, Eternity, Nature, Divinity, Sovereignty, Judgment, Authority, Infinity, Creation, &c.," which belongs to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But the Knoomal relation of the persons to the Godhead is peculiar to each according to the Holy Scriptures; for by the Knoomal relation, the "delayta" or "propriety" of the Father, is begetter, that of the Son is "begotten" and that of the Holy Spirit is "proceeding." The Begetter, the Begotten and the proceeding, each denote a Knoomal distinction, by virtue o w re ative Delayta or "propriety," the three Knoome are distinguished without dividing the general essence which belongs to all the three. Hence "God the Father" and "God the Son," the word, and God the Holy Ghost, one substance, one God in three co-equal Knoome.

Accordingly, what the Nestorians mean by using the term Knooma for three hypostases in the Trinity is, that while all the three constitute One, in whose essential substance there is no numerical distinctness, yet there are three who by virtue of their Knoome are relatively distinguished, and as such are conscious of their relation to the Godhead. For without this Knoomal consciousness the idea of the three relatively distinct and contemporaneous hypostases in the Godhead would be inconceivable. Hence, what a Knooma implies in the Nestorian Theology, is a quasi-personality, by nature and substance, one and indistinct from the general essence, but by its Knoomal relation distinguishable and conscious of its Knoomal delayta or "propriety."

Having thus looked over the significance and the use of the term, we shall now proceed to study its application in the doctrine of the person of Christ, which is embodied in the formula already mentioned -- "Two natures, two Knoome and one Parsopa.□

In the extracts given above, the divinity and humanity of Christ are most clearly and most emphati. cally put forth. In no better language could they be disclosed than in the clauses such as, "One, is the Messiah, adored by all in two natures, who as touching his Godhead, is begotten of the Father, without beginning and before all ages; and as touching his man. hood, was born of Mary in the fullness of time, a body of union." Again, "Behold him who is clothed with light, wrapped in swaddling bands; what a mys. tery is here! no less wonderful is it that he who is seated on the throne of heaven, should have been laid in a manger! The Ancient of Times became a Son of Mary in the latter times, and appeared as the Father, Lord and Master of the sons of Adam."

Now this who was "born of Mary" and "wrapped up in Swaddling bands" is the "Son of the glorious ,Essence of the Father,-the second Knooma in the Trinity. He is represented, not as a being distinct in substance from the Father, or as an emanation of the eternal divinity, but One incapable of separation in Essence from the Supreme One. For "as the reas. onable soul has a three fold energy, mind, word, and life, and is one and not three, even so should we conceive of the Three in One, and One in-Three." Yet He is the Son, who although co-equal with the Father in substance, is distinct from the Father as the second Knooma.

The Sonship of the Son in essence belongs to the indivisible substance, but in Knoomal relation is the delayta or the. "propriety" of the Begotten. Thus, by virtue of His Knooma, the second person is distinguished from the other "person" in the trinity; and by virtue of his quasi-personality He Himself is conscious of the relation he is holding to the Father as the Son.

The perfect humanity of the Son is also with equal distinctness emphasized in the Nestorian Theology. The author of the Khamees says: "He was born in the womb according to the laws and peculiarities of nature, and was

brought forth by his mother through the pangs of labor. □ Just as the divinity of the second person is one and co-equal with the essence of the Father, so His humanity is one and the same as that of His mother. "The clear truth was manifested by the Son of God to His affianced church, when it pleased Him in His love to come into the world, to teach and to preach the doctrine of His divinity and Humanity." Again, "He was in the womb for nine months and was born as a man, He being truly Man." Indeed the perfect divinity and perfect Humanity of Christ are both too plainly taught to require any further remarks.

How are we going now to account for the formula of the "two natures and two Knoome?" We have already seen that what the Nestorians mean by a "Knooma" as applied to the three persons of the Trinity, is a quasi-personality, by nature of which, each person is conscious of his relation to the Father. But if Knooma, according to Bar-Sarrog, "represents a nature, how are we going to account for the two natures of Christ without admitting two Knooma in Him? And if Knooma, as we rightly infer from the foregoing extracts, involves the idea of self-consciousness inherent in a personal being, how could Christ be conscious of His divinity and humanity without Divine and human Knoome?" Further, according to the Nestorian Theology, the existence of a nature without a Knooma is inconceivable. Every nature must have a Knooma in order to subsist, and without which it cannot subsist, for "Knooma," argues Mar Odushoo, "is the first essence or principle which betokens the reality of the existence of the general essence." Now, admitting as we do, that Christ was a perfect God and a perfect man, how could the two natures subsist without the two principles which "betoken the reality of their existence?" Christ, although possessing one "persopa," as the formula declares, must have certainly been conscious of the existence of the two natures. He had that divine consciousness by virtue of which He knew that He was the preincarnate Logos; and there was in Him that human consciousness which made the Logos know that He was Jesus. It is admitted that they acted in unity, but this unity is still of two consciousnesses and not one in its nature. It is true that it is a divine, human, but it is equally true that it is an infinite, finite. For, "the divine nature and Knooma," argues Mar Odushoo, "before and after the union, is an eternal and uncompounded Spirit. But the human nature and Knooma is a temporal and compound body. Now if the union destroys the attributes which distinguish the natures and Knoome in Christ, either the one or the other of these becomes a nonentity, or they become a thing which is neither God nor Man. But, if the union does not destroy the attributes which distinguish the natures and Knoome in Christ, then Christ must exist in two natures and two Knoome which are united in the persopa of the Sonship." Thus the unity does not exclude two distinct sources, and one persopa does not do away with the fact that there were two Knoome indispensable for the completion of the two natures, of both of which Christ was Himself conscious, although they constitute, indeed, as it is acknowledged, but one parsopa, which we call-"A theanthropic personality."

Further, if there be left any suspicion as to the plurality of persons, on account of the Nestorian formula of the two Knoome, or perhaps on account of the language by which their belief is expressed, such a suspicion is entirely repudiated, not only by the loud declaration of "One Parsopa," but also by the strongest protest against such a notion. Thus, e.g., "There is plurality in the natures, but they subsist in one, their "Delayata" (or proprieties) subsisting in one parsopa of Filiation." Again, "The spiritual essences who dwell in the regions of the spirit enraptured, and the earthly such as were alive, and such as were in the graves, rejoiced, saying: "He is one to all generations." And again, "From these things let us rest assured that the Messiah is one in two natures and two Knoome, subsisting in one parsopa of Filiation. Since the natures did not commingle;<sup>48</sup> and in like manner we believe of the Knoome. The Son of the Father clothed Himself with Him of Mary, and was conceived in womb. But let no man filch a word from this, and wilfully pervert it by specious philosophy so as to conclude that there are two Sons. For there is One Son only, Not a Son, and a Son, making two; but one Son, we repeat, as is most proper to maintain."

Now Nestorianism has been charged with teaching two "parsopal" natures in Christ, from which the logical inference follows that He must have had two souls. There is no ground whatever for the charge except the denial of the expression, "Maryam yeldath Alaha"-Mary the mother of God. It is necessary to recall that the Nestorian position was a polemic one, against both Docetic and Humanitarian heresies. From the point of view of the latter heresy, Mary was the "mother of Jesus," because He possessed no divinity. According to Docetism, to which Cyril had made a near approach, she was "the mother of God," because Christ was exclusively divine. But Nestorianism in order to refute the existing errors, held that Mary was "yildath Mshiha," or "Kristotokas," for in Christ God and man had met and united; and as such he was a complete man as well as a complete God, and a complete God as well as a complete man. To prove this, they undertook to refer to the instances in the Life of Our Lord, not by any means to show that He had two parsopal natures, such as require two distinct souls, but that the two natures were revealed distinctly enough to prove that they did exist in Him. Thus there is God, demanding of the tomb to yield its dead, and keeping under His control the forces of nature which He created; and there is man, eating, weeping, in need of rest and sleep. "He healed the sick and infirm, cleansed the lepers, and gave sight to the blind, He being truly God." "He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued in prayer until dawn, He being truly man." He gave the power



of walking to the lame, and members to the maimed, "He slept on board the ship, He being truly God." He being truly man." "He revealed the secrets of a woman, and told her of all her hidden and open actions, He being truly God." "He wept and shed tears for Lazarus and inquired for the place of his grave, He being truly man." The fact that each nature was present at the action of the other, does not disprove the unquestionable manifestation of either. The compactness of the natures, as it is admitted by the Nestorians, did not and could not conceal the distinctive evidence that Christ was both a complete God and a complete man. Our belief, from the Nestorian point of view, in the incarnate Logos, is not arbitrarily imposed, nor has a man been deluded to embrace and to confess a belief which has not proved itself to be scriptural. We know that Christ was both God and man, only by what He really was, that is, He exercised the functions of the visible and invisible beings. He showed himself to be the Logos distinctly enough for us to know that He was very God, and yet he ran a career which proved beyond any doubt that he was a man and "Son of man." Mary then was "yildath Mshiha," or "Kristotokas," in whom Jesus and the Logos united and constituted one parsopa; a distinct duality with a constituted unity.

How this union was formed, the Nestorians do not undertake to explain; to them He is an incomprehensible mystery. "The descent of the Word is inexplicable, and is beyond the examination of all inquirers, and the union so exalted that no words can express it." Again "Hitherto the law of nature was in force, but in the appearance of a Savior from a virgin, the law of birth from (conjugal) union was abrogated, and the mind that would comprehend how this was, must lose itself in the inquiry."

But that the union of the two natures in one person or parsopa of Christ is indissoluble, is equally made plain. Thus says the author of the Khoodra. "The natures and Knoome subsist in the one parsopa of this one Filiation; and as there are in the Godhead three Knoome, One self-existent, so the Filiation of the Son is of two natures, two Knoome and one parsopa.... Therefore, O Lord, we worship Thy divinity and Thy humanity, without dividing them; for the power of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is One. The Sovereignty is one; the will is one and the glory is one." Again, says the author of Khamees, "The life-giving spirit was the agent in His pure conception, and gave a body and members to the infant by the power of God, and joined it to Him in one inimitable Parsopal Dignity, not to be changed for ever and ever."

Thus by adopting a formula of two natures, two Knoome and one Parsopa, the Nestorians have fortified their Theology against the two heresies which confounded the divine and human natures in Christ, and consequently destroyed the very foundation of the atonement; at the same time avoid any possible inference of two distinct personalities by uniting the two Knoome in one indissoluble parsopal dignity. "Seeing that we confess but one Son, One Christ, One Parsopa, we have no fear of being guilty of blasphemy."

## THE NESTORIAN RITUALS

We cannot overlook the fact that there is a good deal of chaff to be found in the Nestorian liturgy. In fact Christianity had lost not a little of its purity prior to the time when the Nestorian Church existed as a distinct body. The traditional influence could not altogether be avoided; and when the Eastern Church secured her independence, she possessed not a few of those human inventions which the curiosity of the western mind had created.

The services of the Nestorian rituals breathe not a little of that spirituality which is the animating power of the church, and their liturgy reveals a remarkable spirit of deep devotion and piety. But, nevertheless, the Nestorian Church furnishes another unquestionable evidence that the extreme ritualism and deep spirituality are the two principles in whose activities no harmony can be looked for. One must supplant the other. The Nestorians, not altogether unlike their western brothers, in cultivating the former, became impoverished in the latter.

According to the liturgy, there are seven canonical hours of prayer appointed for the divine worship. But of these, four only became preserved, and are-Shahra (Lauds), Slootha d'Ramsha (Vespers), Soobaa (literally Satiety), Slootha d' Lilya (nocturns). The significance of the appointed hours, and the cause of the changes in their number, may be learned from an ex. tract from the Synodal collection of Mar Odeeshoo.

"Jesus Christ our good and merciful Lord, who knew the frailty of our mortal nature, in His Divinity by the prophets, and His united Divinity and Hu. manity by the Apostles, enjoined upon us seven times of prayer, suited to our condition. And the Catholic Fathers, who themselves followed this rule, appointed the same for monks and anchorities, and their successors ordained that each of these seven services could consist of three HOOLALE,<sup>49</sup> which rule is still observed by the holy priests and righteous be. lievers who are much given to prayer. But the Fathers who rose up after times, perceiving that all the people were not equally well disposed to divine worship, and moreover, that their ordinary occupations did not always allow of their perfecting it according to the Canons,

ordained that the services for laymen should be four in number, viz.: Vespers, Compline, Nocturne, and Lauds, which decree they sealed with the words of our Lord.

"The order of Vespers and Lauds is of Canonical authority, and can neither be added to nor abridged. The order of Compline and Nocturns, according to the use of DAIRA ILLAITA,<sup>50</sup> is as follows: The Compline consists of one HOOLALA, an anthem, a short doxology, a collect and a litany. On account of necessary worldly occupations of laymen, it was permitted that they should observe these services voluntarily; but the Lauds and Vespers as ordered by the Canons without intermission.

"The first service is that of the SHAHRA, which is offered up by laymen in behalf of their different worldly callings, and in order that they may be delivered and strengthened against the hostile spirits, who roam about at noonday, seeking to ensnare men into sin. And because the labor preceded rest, the laborer should pray that he may obtain rest. The Angels, likewise, at the beginning of time sang praises as soon as light was created. For these reasons the Laud's prayers rank first.

"The second service is that of VESPER, and Its proper season is just before the sun set. Herein thanks are offered unto God for our preservation "during the day, as also for the coming night ordained our repose. In it we likewise implore the mercy God for those errors, short-comings and follies, of which we have been guilty during the past day, and let us may be preserved from the 'pestilence that alketh in darkness.'

"The third service is called SOOBAA, from the practice of those holy men who fasted all their days; but by laymen it is styled 'the prayer before sleep.' At this time becomes us to recall to mind all the sins which we have committed, and to supplicate pardon from the merciful Lord; and, moreover, to think of death, and to resolve, before God, that if spared, we will, to the best of our frail nature, endeavor to sin no more. We should also, at this time, consider the coming judgment of God, that whitest buried in sleep, our dreams may not be of those vain acts which we have committed during the day.

"The fourth service is that of the NOCTURNS, and its time every believer will fix according as he is zealously affected in his holy exercise. Some pray at the first, others at the second, and others again at the third ceck-crowing; but the common hour now observed is when the congregation assembles in the church for divine worship."<sup>51</sup>

The liturgy of the Nestorians is all written in SAPRAYOOTH (the classic Syriac). It includes a number of various productions adapted for special occasions.

I. The EVANGALION, or the extracts from the four Gospels, is read in connection with the celebration of the Liturgy of which it forms a part, on the eve of the Sabbath days, festivals, and in the conclusion of the service of the SLOOTHA d' RAMSHA (Vespers).

II. SHLEEHA (Apostle), or the extracts from the epistles of St. Paul, is read during the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

III. KERYANA (literally reading), consists of the portions of the Old Testament and the Acts of the Apostles, and is read in connection with the services mentioned above. In the order of their reading, the Keryana comes first, then Shleeha, then Evangelion. The first in the order of service is read by the Karooya or reader while standing at the door of the altar on the south side; the second by Hypodiacon while standing on the north side; and the last is read by the officiating priest who stands between Karooya and Hypodiacon right in front of the altar. The Gospel, however, may be read by a Shamasha (deacon) also.

IV. TURGAMA (Interpretation) consists of a collection of hymns, the sentiment of which is generally exhortation to the faithful, is read before Shleeha and Evangelion, and is chanted responsively by the officiating Shamashe (deacons) standing around the MEDBHA (Altar).

V. DAVEEDA, or the Psalter, being regarded as the principal spiritual food for the worshippers, is more frequently used than anything else. The portions of the Daveeda appointed to be read, are divided into twenty HOOLALE (Cathismata), and a twentyfirst HOOLALA consists of the two songs of Moses from the Exodus the 15th chapter and the Deutronomy the 32nd. One-half of these HOOLALE is chanted in Sunday morning services (nine for the Nocturns and one for the Laud), immediately after the singing of the Angelic hymn,-"Glory to God on the highest and on earth, peace, good will toward men," and the offering of the Lord's prayer. For the week day services the Psalter is divided into six portions, each consisting of three or four HOOLALE which are chanted in SLOOTHA d' LILYA (or Nocturns). During the SLOOTHA d' RAMSHA (Vespers), a selection of several entire psalms are read consecutively.

In Lent, however, it is appointed that the Psalter should be read over twice during the six weekly Nocturns. The same order is also directed to be pursued in the services occurring between the Lauds and Vespers during Lent, and also at the Vespers and Compline of the same season.

The whole Psalter is appointed to be read once a day in the services between the Nocturns and Matins during the Baootha d'Ninveye, or three days' fast in commemoration of the repentance and the deliverance of the Ninevites.

The DAVEEDA is used also at the opening of every office, at the Maamoodeetha (Baptism), Eucharistia (Eucharist), Tishmishta (Burial), and every other church service, during which a Psalm or a portion of a Psalm is recited.

VI. KHOODRA (literally Cycle), which is a col lection of anthems, responsories, hymns and collects, is used throughout the year in all Sunday services, in Lent and in Baootha d'Ninvaye.

VII. The KASHKOL (collection from all) is a collection of prayers, and is appointed to be used at every service of the SLOOTHA d' RAMSHA and SLOOTHA d' LILYA of the week days throughout the year.

VIII. The KDHAM oo BHATHAR (the Before and After), comprising a few prayers and extracts from the Psalter, and two or three collects appointed for the Matins of every Sunday. The term signifies the division of the congregation into two parts, separated by the nave, which a called the Gooda Illaita, or or high choir," and the Gooda Tahtaita, or "under choir." The Khoodra in a rubic for every Sunday gives the direction whether the service is to be said by the "Before" or by the "After." If Kadhmaya or "Before," then the high choir, or the portion of the congregation on the north side of the church begin the prayers for the ensuing week. If Bathar, or "After," then the under choir, or the congregation on the south side shall open the daily service for the same appointed period.

IX. The GEZZA (Treasury) is a collection of anthems, hymns and collects, and comprises the services of all the festivals throughout the year.

X. The ABOO HALEEM. It contains collects which are to be read at the conclusion of the Nocturns of all Sundays throughout the year, of the festivals and the three days' fast in commemoration of the repentance and deliverance of the Ninevites. The reading of ABOOHALEEM precedes the commencement of the Matins; and in these services the collects take the place of the Angelic hymn.

XI. BAOOTHA d' NINVAYE (the prayer of the Ninevites) comprises a collection of hymns the authorship of which is ascribed to Mar Aphreem. The poems give the historical account of the wickedness of the Ninevites and their subsequent repentance. They include many exhortations to humiliation and penitence, which are the conditions of receiving forThe service lasts for three days, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, beginning with the 20th day preceding the first of Lent.

XII. The TAXA d'SIAM-EEDA, or Baptismal office, is always used in connection with that ordinance.

XIII. The KTHABHA d' BOORACHA, or the book of Matrimony, is used in the marriage ceremony.

XIV. The KAHNEETA contains the order of the burial service, which is to be used solely in connection with the departure of the persons dying in holy orders.

XV. The ANNEEDA is used in the burial service of all persons deceased out of holy orders'.

XVI. The TAXA d' SIAM-EEDHA, or office of the laying on of hands, comprises the services for the ordination of all the clerical and ecclesiastical orders.

XVII. The KHAMEES is an exposition of the life, parables and miracles of Christ in poetry. It includes some hymns also on duty of repentance.

XVIII. The WARDA is also a collections of hymns adapted for church festivals. Some of its portions are recited during the Eucharistic service.

XIX. The TAXA d' HOOSAYA gives the direction of the service in connection with the restoration of the backsliders or offenders to the church. It includes prayers which are to be read over the penitents before they are admitted into church communion.

These offices constitute the order of the devotional services in use among the Nestorians.

## THE NESTORIANS' CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH

The CHURCH, from the Nestorian point of view, is "a congregation or an assembly met together for the acts of celebration." The principle which characterizes it, is the faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; for Christ "calls 'a church' a congregation which believe on Him." As such, the church, purchased by the precious blood of Christ, and saved by the divine grace, "is made an abode and a place of refuge for all who believe on Him."

The church, which is the bride of Christ, possesses pledges or Sacraments committed to her by "Jesus the High Priest, the heavenly Bridegroom."

Mar Odeeshoo in his Marganeetha, enumerates seven Sacraments; and in doing so, he does not distinguish between Sacraments and Ordinances, as the former term is generally applied in the Nestorian literature to Baptism and Communion, which are also quite frequently called "Pledges." Why the writer did ' so, perhaps no other reason

can be given than the mere fact that he followed the example of the sister church in the west. For the same reason also, the Holy Leaven was introduced, in order to make the Sacraments amount to the sacred number of seven, as held by the Western church. Quoting Mar Odeeshoo:

"The Sacraments<sup>52</sup> of the church, according to the divine Scripture are seven in number: 1. The Priesthood which is the ministry of all the Sacraments. 2. Holy Baptism. 3. The Oil of Unction. 4. The Oblation of the Body and Blood of Christ. 5. Absolution. 6. The Holy Leaven. 7. The Sign of the Life-giving Cross."<sup>53</sup>

1. The Priesthood "is the ministry of mediation or reconciliation between God and man in those things which impart forgiveness of sins, convey blessings and put away wrath." The candidate for the office must "be tried, whether he is worthy or not," according to the injunction of the Apostle Paul, "If a man desireth the presbyteriate, he desireth a good work. A presbyter then must be blameless, &c." (I. Tim. 1-13.)

There are nine orders of priesthood, divided into three classes: First, the Patriarchs, Metropolitans and Bishops; Second, the Archdeacons, Deans and Presbyters; Third, the Deacons, Sub-deacons and Readers. Of these the three orders under the first class practice celibacy, and the rest are exempted from that law. When was the celibacy imposed upon the prime orders is hard to ascertain. No doubt this was due to the influence of the Roman Church in subsequent centuries, as the first Eastern primates were married and were utterly opposed to the unprovided-for law of celibacy.

2. Baptism is "the immersion in and the washing with water."<sup>54</sup> Whether the Nestorian Church from the beginning practiced infant baptism is not very certain. They fill the Baptismal Basin with water in which the infant is immersed up to the chin, then the officiating priest will take the water in hand, pour three times over the head of the child, "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."<sup>55</sup>

3. The Oil of Unction with the Nestorians is an "Apostolic tradition." Just as those who "were set apart for the typical priesthood ... were anointed with the oil of unction," so also, in like manner, those that are "separated to the kingdom and to the true priesthood must be anointed with this same manifoldly symbolical unction. The matter of the oil of unction is pure olive oil. The form, the Apostolic benediction."

4. The Oblation of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Nestorians do not appear to have modified the doctrine of trans-substantiation. They accordingly believe as does the Romish Church, that in partaking of the elements of the Eucharist, they actually receive the body and blood of Christ. Through the elements, therefore, when received "in faith and without doubting" a person secures "the forgiveness of sins, purification, enlightenment, pardon, the great hope of the resurrection from the dead, the inheritance of heaven and the new life." Whenever a person approaches the Sacraments, he meets "with Christ himself, and his very self he takes into his hands." - The matter of the Sacrament, "Christ has ordained to be of wheat and wine." The form, "He conveys through His lifegiving word and by the descent of the Holy Ghost."

The Nestorian rituals, however, are very strict against unworthy partakers of the Sacraments. No warnings and admonitions are spared to the communicants who approach the "spiritual table," to partake with humility and broken hearts, with "right intention and confirmed faith;" with self renunciation and with love unfeigned." Unworthy communicant "eats and drinks thereof to the damnation of his soul and body."

5. Absolution and Repentance. The Romish idea of absolution is entirely foreign to the Nestorian Church. The hope of forgiveness on the basis of a true repentance and confession of sins is most emphatically encouraged by referring to the passages, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance," the parables of the Prodigal Son, of the Hundred Sheep, of the Two Debtors, &c. The confession may be made to the priest as the spiritual adviser; but the help and the "heavenly happiness" come only through "the gate of repentance." The backslider, or "whomsoever Satan has cast into the disease of sin, let him come and show his wounds to the disciples of the Wise Physician." But the healing and forgiveness result only from the act of true believing. For "whatsoever is not of faith is sin. It behooves, therefore, the Christian believers, who through the infirmity of this human nature which all cannot keep upright, they are overcome of sin, to seek the Christian Dispensary, and to open their diseases to the spiritual physician," that they may by absolution and true repentance obtain the cure of their souls, and afterwards go and partake of the Lord's feast in purity." Knowing, however, "that these things" must not be done "after a worldly manner ... just as some, for lucre's sake have made of this sacred thing a merchandise and a source of temporal profit."

The doctrine of the absolution and repentance, as held by the Nestorians, stands in a striking uniformity with the rituals of the Church of England. The exhortation given by Mar Odeeshoo "to go and show their wounds to the disciples of the Wise Physician," corresponds with the advice contained in the Episcopal Communion office. The auricular confession is entirely unknown to them. The individuals who have repented, and wish to partake of the Sacrament of the Lord's Feast, are expected to consult the priest, and meet together near the church or in the porch, where, we see upon their and humiliating themselves, the priest will read over them a few absolutions in the form of



petitions from KTHABHA,d' HOOSAYA (Book of Pardon, consisting chiefly of earnest supplications to God that He, in His infinite mercies, would pardon His penitent children.

6. The Holy Leaven is kept, according to Mar Odeeshoo, "for the perfecting of the administration of the Sacraments of our Lord's Body until His coming again." The office of the Holy Leaven demands that, when the Leaven in a church is nearly expended, "on the Tuesday before Easter, two parts of pure and well sifted flour called SMEEDHA, and two parts of the finest and best salt, shall be brought and laid upon the slab; and upon these shall be dropped a little of the purest olive oil, and three drops of water, and these shall be mixed together. Then the rector, and another priest or more, and the deacons, shall bring the Gospel and the Cross, and shall place them near the slab, with the censor and lights, and they shall open the service Cith 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts,' &c."

7. The Sign of the Life-Giving Cross. Other Nestorian standard rituals do not style this as a Sacrament. Mar Odeeshoo, however, enumerates it as the seventh, although it is worthy of notice that even he does not place this in the same order where the other six are treated by him. He separates it from his treatise on the foregoing Sacraments and disposes it under another head entitled "Of Things Which Pre-figure the World to Come," and there he speaks of the Cross not that the material is an object of worship, but rather that the emblem brings to the recollection the crucifixion and death of Christ, and the great salvation resulting there from.

"Now the great foundation of Christianity," he says, "is the confession that through the Cross renewal and universal salvation were obtained for all: ... When, therefore, we look upon this emblem of our salvation, we conceive as though we were beholding our Saviour outstretched upon it for the remission of our sins, and for the renewal of all creation. Hence we offer a fervent and Eucharistic worship not to the fashioned matter of the Sleebha (Cross), but to Him whom we figure as upon it; and above all, to God, who gave His Son, to be a Sleebha (crucified) for us, through whose crucifixion He wrought renewal and redemption for us, and through whom He gives to such as are worthy, everlasting life in the kingdom of heaven.

The Nestorian Churches are entirely clean from all kinds of images and pictures. They are opposed to the use of them even for the ornamental purpose. The adoration of a crucifix is regarded by them as a revolting idolatry. No relics are in use among them such as are common in the Romish Church.

The reader has, no doubt, already inferred from the article on Absolution that the Romish idea of pardon is entirely foreign to the Nestorian mind. The Indulgences, such as fabricated and sold by the Romish Church, are utterly contemptible to the Nestorians, and repugnant to their doctrines. They know of no purgatory. In fact, no mention even of the name is made in their rituals.

## THE PRESENT NEED OF THE NESTORIAN CHURCH

It is indeed unfortunately true that this Eastern Evangelical Church, erroneously nicknamed as the "Nestorian Church," driven by a perpetual eruption of Islam's wrath, sought refuge in the isolated fastnesses of the high hills and mountains of Kurdistan; and in its isolation, lost not only its burning zeal for Christ, but it also sank into illiteracy and ignorance. Nevertheless, as compared with other ancient churches of the East, the "Nestorian Church," has preserved the purest Apostolic teaching.

The mind, as it contemplates over the past of this church, to whose zeal no perils presented obstacles, whose influence knew no territorial limits, and whose missionary enterprises embraced all the barbaric lands, from the Chinese seas to the waters of the Persian Gulf, and then undertake to study its present and unfortunate condition, must only reverently bow to the will and the wisdom of God whose ways no finite mind can comprehend. What a lamentable portrait of the eople as compared with the one seen in the light of the people as compared as compared with the one seen in the light of the by-gone centuries and reflected in the pages of history! That mighty activity which once no national prejudices succeeded to check, has now fallen asleep amid the hills of Kurdistan! That productive genius which ennobled the pen of the Nestorian Authors, is slumbering motionless in the shell of inevitable ignorance! That fertile imagination which decorated the vast pages of their literary productions, lay dormant and buried in pitiful illiteracy! Those famous schools which were once the pride of the nation, furnish in their ruins, the notes of the bitterest lamentations! How are these things possible? How can they come to pass? There is only one answer, so far as the mortal can understand, and that is, the perpetual volcano of hate, persecutions and massacres in which the Assyrian Church and people have lived for centuries, is responsible for their sad decline. But in spite of this sad and melancholy picture, we turn again to the throne of mercy, and thank God the Father of Mercies, that He has spared a remnant and preserved a seed for His people. May we not believe that He who overrules all for good has a purpose in preserving a nation through so many centuries of slaughter and bloodshed? May we not believe that He may yet raise from the ruins of the old temple one which is exceedingly

better and far surpassing in its beauty and splendor? And may we not hope that the Nestorians may yet be the means of preaching the Gospel of their ancestors to their surrounding neighbors who are dying without Christ?

Great indeed are the possibilities of this Church; but the greatest need of the Nestorians now is education. Education to them will act like the sound of resurrection trumpet, awakening the consciousness of the Church and giving a new birth to her former missionary aspirations. Education to them will be like the opening of a perennial fountain from which will issue again streams of healing waters and reach to the many races now dying without Christ and without hope. Education to the Nestorian Church will act like the touch of an electric button that may shed floods of light to expel the darkness that has for centuries covered and enshrouded the very cradle of Christianity and civilization.



Assyrian refugees camp in Baquba, Mesopotamia. Saved from starvation by the British government.

Two hundred and fifty thousand Yezidies of the Shangar Mountains in Mesopotamia are of the Assyrian stock; and during the long regime of the Turkish empire they have always had their sympathy with their Christian brothers in flesh. With proper education they can be brought back into the fold of the mother nation and mother church.

The very murderers of the Nestorian Patriarch with their chieftain are of the Assyrian origin and race. They were moslemized during the invasion of the land by the Tartars under Taymur-Lang. And to the present day they address the Nestorian Patriarch with the endearing term of their "Uncle."

Other Kurdish communities and tribes, who have heretofore presented an ethnological mystery, are none other than the Assyrian victims of the Tartar invasion and persecution. Education will enlighten the people, and the grace of God through their Nestorian brothers in flesh can rescue them from the bondage of Islam.

The now moslem city of Mar Agha, situated on the southeastern shore of the Lake of Urmia, was originally Mar Aha, named after a Nestorian metropolitan, and used as a Metropolitan See for this ancient district of the ancient Media.

Not far from the city mentioned above, there is a community of fifteen thousand mysterious moslems, whose women will never think of covering their dough for fermentation, without first marking over it the sign of the cross! Who are they.

And surely, infinitely more precious than the antique relics of Nineveh and Babylon, must be the priceless souls of the lost Assyrians to be recovered and reclaimed for God and for the mother Christian nation.



An Assyrian school for girls. maintained during the Assyrian exile.

Such are a few possibilities and prospects of the "Nestorian Church." It would be a blasphemy to compare the value of souls with the value of dollars; but humanly speaking, is not this historic church worth a . n extraordinary effort, if for nothing else but for the sake of making it possible for her to seek and to reclaim the lost Assyrians? Does not the amazing endurance of the people, or their P'atience. in never ending tribulations, or their unwavering firmness and tenacity in holding on to the cross of Christ in the midst of a sea lashed into constant fury by the hate of men and demons, impel an interest in them deeper than a mere admiration? And does not the loyalty of this Church, together with those admirable and unique virtues it still possesses, present a sure promise of immense possibilities, and justify an expenditure which means the resurrection of a mighty witness for Christ?

Educate the Nestorian Church, and the Nestorian Church will do the rest.

If, however, the resurrection of this church is made, under God, dependent upon education, as we believe, education then requires schools. It is absolutely important that the Nestorians should have national schools of their own. The unity, the harmony and the solidity of the people can in this manner only be maintained, and the self-consciousness of both the people and the Church can, through such medium only, be restored.

The first essential step in the holy undertaking is the establishment of a Nestorian Church press. Greater than the material losses of the Assyrians is the destruction of their literature. Even the library of the Patriarch Mar Shimon was not spared by the enemy. Fortunately, copies of the Nestorian books and manuscripts can be found here in America, and the most important ones can be replaced. The Nestorians everywhere are in need now of books both for Church and schools.

In connection with a part of their own literature, the people are in urgent need of modern books. These can be translated and printed in condensed form and be transformed into a spring of knowledge in every home and family as well. It is this deplorable lack of books and mediums for the impartation of knowledge that has placed the Nestorian Church into its present heart-rending plight; and an immediate supply of the same will immediately act like a powerful stimulant, and vivify both the Church and the people. Herein is the solution of the whole problem under God, and herein is the certain hope of the resurrection of the Assyrian nation, and the restoration of the eastern Evangelical Church, to perform the noble functions it did once perform, and to become once more a mighty power for God and humanity.

May we not look for the hour when the new song ascending from the pure hearts shall echo through those historic vales, till

"The mountain tops shall catch the flowing joy,  
And one glad song each heart and tongue employ?"

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> There is an apparent discrepancy between Mar Odeeshoo and Sleewa BarYohanna as to the date of the document. According to the latter, the epistle was written at the time when Aha-de-Abbooy held the Eastern See, while the former refers it to the time of Mar Papa's Supremacy -- a difference of about forty years.

<sup>2</sup> Tasheita d Mar Sabha (Syriac Manuscript).

<sup>3</sup> The exact date is hard to ascertain, as there is a chronological discrepancy between the various historians. See, however, the two Chaldee documents on the history of the Persian martyrs in Stephen Euod. Assemani Acta Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium: Appendix, P. 215.

<sup>4</sup> These Persecutions covered a period from the death of Shiachlupha about IBFA . D. to 343 A. D., when the second or the main persecutions took place.

<sup>5</sup> Lit. The house of bones.

<sup>6</sup> Sozomen, B. II. C. XIV.

<sup>7</sup> Mar Odeeshoo's Marganeetha.

<sup>8</sup> A book containing prayers for the Nocturns.

<sup>9</sup> I will repent on account of your deeds.

<sup>10</sup> Badger, Nestorians and their Rituals: Vol. II. p. 10-11.

<sup>11</sup> Gibbons Roman Empire, Vol. IV. p. 156-157.

<sup>12</sup> Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. IV., P. 157,

<sup>13</sup> The treaty has been rejected as forgery by some European critics, but its authenticity is admitted by both the Mohammedans and the Eastern Christian historians. The substance of the treaty is given by such Assyrian writers as Bar Ibhrye, Maris and Amnus.

<sup>14</sup> Assemani, Vol. III., p. 131.

<sup>15</sup> Assemani, Vol. III., p. 943.

<sup>16</sup> Probably "the Rhages of Tobit near the modern city of Tehran." -- Layard.

<sup>17</sup> See Layard's Nineveh and Its Remains, Vol. I., P. 214-215.

<sup>18</sup> See also Assemani, Vol. IV., p. 141.

<sup>19</sup> There is a strong likelihood that, the motive for this arbitrary departure on the part of Shimon was to protect the church from the machinations of Papal ambition, to which a less cautious successor, outside his own immediate family, might be induced to yield.

<sup>20</sup> Including the Nestorians of Malabar, India.

<sup>21</sup> Having no original manuscripts of these extracts at hand, I am greatly indebted to the Rev. G. P. Badger, who has made the translations in his second volume on the "Nestorians and Their Rituals."

<sup>22</sup> From Mar Odeeshoo's Marganeetha. See also Badger, "Nestorians and Their Rituals," Vol. II., p. 382-385.

<sup>23</sup> From the Khwdra.

<sup>24</sup> From the Khoodra.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> For the meaning of the term, see Chapter on the Doctrine of the Person of Christ.

<sup>27</sup> From the Gezza.

<sup>28</sup> The word translated "Propriety" in Syriac is "Delayta," which literally means "that which belongs to." Always used as a possessive case with the prepositional suffixes.

<sup>29</sup> [Our.]

<sup>30</sup> From Mar Odeeshoo's Marganeetha.

<sup>31</sup> From the Khoodra.

<sup>32</sup> From the Gezza.

<sup>33</sup> From the Gezza.

<sup>34</sup> From the Khamees.

<sup>35</sup> The word translated "commingle," in Syriac has the meaning of a union by which the two substances lose their distinctive attributes. But the two natures of Christ did not "Commingle" as the distinctive attributes of each were preserved.

<sup>36</sup> From the Khamees.

<sup>37</sup> From the Khamees. Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> From the Khamees.

<sup>40</sup> From the Khamees.



<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> From the Khamees.

<sup>43</sup> From the Khamees.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> A passive participle of the root "Kayyim," the Pael form of "Kam."

<sup>46</sup> See quotations in Smith's Thesaurus Syriacus under "Knooma."

<sup>47</sup> There is no word in English to express the real meaning of the term. "Delayta" often stands in Syriac for an attribute; but here it has quite a different meaning for which "propriety" as used by Badger is probably about the best translation, although the deficiency of the translation should be taken into consideration when the term is found in other connections.

<sup>48</sup> So as to lose their distinctive attributes.

<sup>49</sup> Literally, Praise. A Hoolala consists of a certain number of Psalms selected for devotional purposes.

<sup>50</sup> The covenant dedicated to Mar Gabhreil and Mar Oraham (Abraham), situated part of Mosul, and since taken away from the Nestorians by their enemies.

<sup>51</sup> From Soonhadooos (Canons) collected by Mar Odeesho.

<sup>52</sup> The word translated "Sacrament," in Syriac is "Raza," the literal meaning of which is "mystery," -- a revealed mystery.

<sup>53</sup> Mar Odeesho's Marganeetha.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> In most of the cases, however, the infant is totally immersed.

