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## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

### THE BURDENS OF WAR AND PEACE

While even such countries as Great Britain seem appalled by the problem of poverty as one without solution, for the financial year just completed the "burden of armaments" in Britain alone is nearly *sixty-four million pounds sterling*, having increased nearly one-third within ten years! France and Germany have each spent £43,000,000. England's bill for armaments, past and present, exceeds £90,000,000 per annum! If the nations would learn war no more, what immense sums would be set free to further the work of missions at home and abroad!

### THE USE OF MONEY

Attention is often called to the comparative outlay of money; and perhaps it can not be too often done, if only to remind us how clamorous is self-indulgence, and how easily vast sums slip away in little outlays. For example, while in 1905 Americans gave for foreign missions less than \$8,000,000, there were spent here, in the aggregate, over *thirty* times as much for work in the home

Church, and *three hundred and twenty-five* times as much for confectionery and chewing gum, millinery, jewelry and plate, tobacco and liquors. The single article of chewing gum cost Americans eleven million dollars! For tobacco and drink they spent over two thousand millions! Even the most ardent devotee of wine and liquors would scarcely hold that they are important factors for the elevation of mankind. What shall we say, then, if they are proved to be forces of degeneration?

### A NOVEL MISSIONARY OFFERING

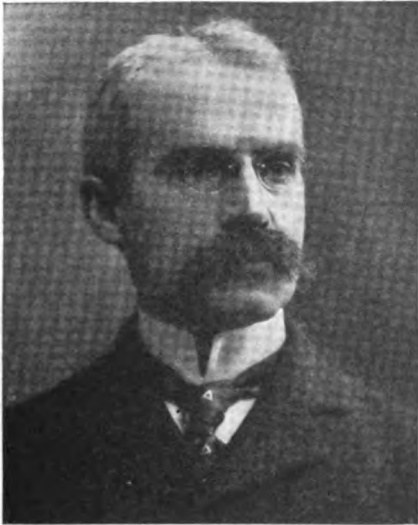
A marvelous meeting is described by Rev. Cyril Ross, of Korea, who tells of a gathering of over 400 native Korean Christians in Pyeng Yang. The leader suggested a new sort of missionary offering for home work—not in money, but in men—in witness for Christ, each one giving from a day to a week or fortnight to voluntary labor, simply telling the Gospel story to their neighbors. That night an equivalent of two years of time was volunteered by those present, and when the tidings

# A MISSIONARY PHYSICIAN IN PERSIA

## A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF DR. JOSEPH PLUMB COCHRAN

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Dr. Joseph P. Cochran was for twenty-seven years in active missionary service in the Presbyterian Mission of Northwest Persia. His



JOSEPH P. COCHRAN, M.D.

widely established reputation for professional skill, and his strong hold upon the confidence and affections of all classes of the Persian people, gave him a distinction that caused his death in August last to appear as a most serious blow to missionary work. The tributes to the memory of this "beloved physician," coming from many ranks and conditions of men in Persia and elsewhere, leave no doubt that the opinion of the British Consul General in Tabriz, that in him we have lost "an extraordinary man," is the well-nigh universal conviction of the great masses of Persians to whom Dr. Cochran was known. Christians and Moslems, natives

and foreigners, members of the imperial court at Teheran, and high officials, with singular unanimity recognized their deceased friend as a man far above the ordinary rank. Some spoke of him in Persian phrase as "the unique man," and others as "just one bit of love." Through his widely recognized elevation of character, along with his accomplishments in the languages and etiquette of the country, and more than all by his conscientious devotion to his calling as a messenger of Christian truth, Dr. Cochran has added greatly to the honor of the Christian name and has enlarged the influence of the Christian faith in Persia and surrounding lands.

Joseph Cochran was born of devoted missionary parents in Persia in 1855, and in his younger boyhood went to America to carry on his studies. After completing scientific and medical courses, he returned, in 1878, to his native soil to engage in medical missionary service. He soon showed himself to be a well-equipped physician and surgeon, a young man of clear judgment, with a sincere attachment to the people of the land.

Two years later, through the generosity of friends in the Westminster Presbyterian Church, of Buffalo, N. Y., the foundations of Westminster Hospital were laid in Urumia. The history of this institution would be a professional biography of Dr. Cochran himself. Here

unfolded and ripened his rare skill in the treatment of disease and the handling of the surgeon's knife, his alert judgment, his accurate knowledge of men, advancing him in reputation to a degree seldom attained by foreigners in this strange land. His success was the more astonishing, as for a long time he did not have any competent medical assistance or counsel. In the absence of any one to supply the lack of his own modest pen, the world will never know of his numberless remarkable surgical achievements.

The necessarily small financial resources of this humble missionary hospital caused Dr. Cochran's executive ability to be put to severe tests to make his balance-sheets square from year to year. In progress of time, however, the doctor's admiring friends in Buffalo supplied one convenience after another, until the hospital's equipment was the best in the land. It came to be known far and wide, in Persia and without. Men in remote regions heard of the wonderful doctor and his charitable retreat for the sick, and came at great pains to its doors begging for help. There were among them men and women of many creeds and nationalities from the distant parts of Persia, from the plains of the Tigris, from the Caucasus. And when they returned to their homes it was to scatter far and wide the story of the amazing benevolence which they had experienced and the unheard-of skill of the Christian "Hakim Sahib," as the Persians call the foreign doctor.

Early last summer a certain mili-

tary officer from a town some six days distant from Urumia had been a patient at the hospital for a number of weeks. Two Christian preachers passing through that town, which was inhabited by the most bigoted Moslems, found him a warm friend in time of need. The general gave these preachers of the Gospel so hearty a welcome and praised their friend, the "Hakim Sahib," so loudly that the suspicious citizens of the place also united to show the evangelists much kindness. It has become almost an equivalent of a safe-conduct through disturbed or hostile regions for men to announce themselves as the men of the "Hakim Sahib."

In the fall of the year 1880, when the hospital was still incomplete, the Kurdish invasion under the famous Sheik Obeid Ullah occurred, and brought conspicuously to notice some of the more sterling traits of Dr. Cochran's character. He had made the friendship of the sheik during a visit to his mountain home, and now wished to avoid an open rupture with him, especially as that would prevent his securing the protection of the sheik for the inoffensive Christian population. But it was a delicate matter for him, the friend of the Persians and constantly residing among them, even to seem to recognize the sheik and his 30,000 warriors otherwise than as open enemies. But notwithstanding malignant efforts to prejudice the Persian officials against Dr. Cochran, he was called in by them to mediate with the sheik and bring about a delay in his bombardment of the city. In these delicate

negotiations the doctor succeeded and at the same time retained the confidence of both parties. The incident went far to establish Dr. Cochran's name for straightforwardness, trustworthiness, and cool-headedness.

In surgical practise Dr. Cochran was continually meeting with cases where the native surgeons have so maltreated the patient that either the case can not be saved, or else the result of long and difficult effort is only crowned by limited success. A good example of this was a boy who had been tripped up by a playmate, sustaining a slight injury on the leg below the knee. The village bonesetter was called in, who rubbed and kneaded the flesh of the leg so violently that general inflammation was

started. The pain increasing, the bonesetter decided that the bone had been cracked, and so he took a skein of cotton and, twisting it around the leg, passed a long stick through and twisted the skein with the stick, in order to exert the necessary pressure to close the crack in the bone, and then put the leg up in little narrow splints, with a bandage soaked in glue. As a result of all this treatment, not only was the flesh terribly bruised, but the periosteum of the bone was violently inflamed, which resulted in the death of the entire length of the bone.

A number of Kurdish chiefs were received as patients, some of them coming long distances. Not far from the Persian frontier, on the slope of one of the wildest gorges in Turkish



SOME OF DR. COCHRAN'S DISPENSARY PATIENTS AT THE HOSPITAL IN URUMIA

Kurdistan, dwells a chief whose power in those regions is second only to that of Sheik Mohammed Sadik. This man, with his tribe, holds undisputed sway over quite a large territory, while from travelers on distant roads his robber bands bring tribute to their chief. Sutu Beg's nephew was taken ill, and in course of time appeared at the hospital, bearing a letter from his notorious uncle, which resembled very closely the letter which introduced Naaman, the leper. It read somewhat as follows:

Now, when this letter is come unto thee, behold I have therewith sent Kazin, my nephew, to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his disease, and when with God's help thou hast cured him, dismiss him under proper escort, that he may arrive safely among his friends and relate the favors and blessings conferred upon him.

He had an escort of prominent men from different districts, all with ailments of their own. Dr. Cochran was able to do much for the comfort of all of these men, and they went off to their distant homes rejoicing in the benefits received. There were a number of Persian and Mohammedans and Kurds as well, who were deeply impressed by their stay in the hospital, and went away praising the religion that prompts its adherents to such works of charity and love.

Not long ago, when the Dasht Kurds attacked the Christians of Tergawer, devastating their homes, burning some of them to death, shooting others of them, and among them innocent women, one of whom was the venerable and godly mother of one of our most worthy native pastors, Dr. Cochran's righteous in-

dignation moved him to make a firm remonstrance with the Persian government for their supine indifference over such outrages. His representations caused the Persians to call a halt in the Kurdish determination to wipe out the whole of that Christian population. But the Dasht Kurds could not brook such interference with their red-handed policy of extermination. So they began their plottings against the life of the man who seemed to stand across their pathway, but likewise against the man to whom they were deeply indebted for important professional services. Out of these fiendish schemings came the deplorable murder of the Rev. Benjamin W. Labaree. Dr. Cochran's grief was most poignant, as he fully realized that the blow had been intended for himself. Doubtless many a day afterward in the year and a half of tangled negotiations with the exasperating Persian government and of revengeful threats upon his life from the Kurds, as well as of misunderstandings with our own government, the shadow of his own death as a certain sequel to that murder must have darkened his vision of life. The one special comfort his friends have in regard to his death is that he died (of typhoid fever) quietly in his home, and not by the roadside at the hand of Kurdish assassins.

Dr. Cochran's personality was a striking one. Tho somewhat under the average height, his appearance would impress strangers anywhere as being a man of unusual force. No less impressive to his acquaintances was his retiring dispo-

sition and self-effacement among men. No man in the mission probably had a larger degree of self-reliance than he, yet no one was more modest in stating his judgment on current problems. Unselfishness was stamped upon his every association in life. He lived to serve others. Men stood in awe of him because of his dignified reserve, but there was no withholding of his powers from the humblest applicant for his professional attention. It was rare to see in him any signs of impatience, no matter how the people thronged about him. Such self-control was a constant wonderment to his associates. His readiness to sacrifice himself was impressively exhibited at the outset of his last illness. One of the chief mollahs of the city was down with typhoid fever, and was urgent to have another visit from his much-trusted physician. Tho not in a state of health to warrant the effort, but not wishing to disappoint the old man, Dr. Cochran summoned strength and rode to the door of his patient, but fainted on entering the house.

Dr. Cochran's extended professional services among the subjects of the shah, and his distribution of relief in famine times, had become known to his majesty, and he had twice bestowed decorations upon him, in acknowledgment of his great benevolences. When presented to the shah in 1888, the king seemed much pleased to receive him, and proceeded to ply him with a perfect torrent of questions about the condition of his Christian subjects on the Turkish frontier. The doctor was able to answer the queries as rapidly as they fell from the shah's lips.

Dr. Cochran also rendered bene-

ficient service to his generation in the medical education of a considerable number of native young men, Christian and Moslem, who are now widely scattered in Persia and Turkey. They are actuated in some measure, we hope, by the high principles of their noble instructor and exemplar. Undoubtedly much is due to Dr. Cochran's influence in the breaking down of old-time prejudices against Christian science, which has become apparent among the Persians in the communities where he and his students have become known. We recall the story Dr. Cochran told us a few years ago of a well-known, very strict seyyid of our city, who was most anxious to have Dr. Cochran attend a member of his family. The man could not, however, bring himself to face the prejudices of his bigoted neighbors until he was able to announce a dream in which the prophet had appeared to him, informing him that it was perfectly allowable in the sight of God to avail of the skill and remedies of the successful Christian physician from the West.

The crowning grace of Dr. Cochran's character was his supremely religious purpose of life. His splendid abilities, his influence over men, his gracious manners and culture (he has been called the first gentleman in Persia), were all together consecrated to the service of Him whom he called Lord and Master. Had he remained in America he might have attained high professional rank, and might have amassed wealth, but all these allurements never seemed for an hour to dull his devotion to his service for Christ in Persia. He renounced them all for the privilege of taking

part in planting here in Persia a branch of the evangelical Church of the Lord Jesus. His whole heart was in every department of the missionary work. Tho too modest often to preach in the pulpit, yet when he did so he was listened to with closest attention. It goes without saying, however, that his own strenuous loyalty to high Christian principle was a more persuasive argument with men than his most winsome speech.

His direct contact with patients in hospital and dispensary afforded him abundant opportunity to preach the Gospel. On one occasion a man came to the hospital, suffering with cataract. The case was interesting, because he was a pious Moslem. He came convinced that a "merciful God will use this means for the restoration of lost sight." Almost the first question he asked on arriving was:

"Doctor, can you read? . . . Well, then, you know what blindness means to one who has not seen for three years. All the people of the village used to bring their notes and deeds to me, and I often read our holy books to them, but now, except for the little I have memorized, I am as much of an animal as any of them."

He was fond of discussing religious themes, and soon demanded that prayers be conducted daily in his room. On the day that Dr. Cochran had promised to let him open his eyes and see if the operation was a success, he addressed the doctor very seriously, saying:

"I have a petition. I wish the words of Christ, in the Testament, to be the first thing my opened eyes shall fall upon, but am unprepared to-day, for since you operated on me I have not

been able to shave and wash my head and undergo all the necessary relations to an effectual prayer."

Dr. Cochran told him he could arrange for that by leaving a single band over his eyes merely. When he was ready the doctor removed this band and held the Testament before him. He could easily see the title, New Testament, or "New Boncise," as it is in Persian. Repeating this and assuring himself that he saw every letter, he raised both hands toward heaven and uttered a most fervent and touching prayer of gratitude to God and to "His Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ."

His hospital work was saturated with his evangelistic missionary aims. In the religious services of the institution he was especially careful to provide that Moslem patients should get some instruction in the truths of Christianity in their own language. He was a man of prayer, and in his own quiet way impressed upon his attendants his sense of the need of prayer in the attainment of the best results in the hospital work. In his extensive visits among the higher classes of Mohammedans he did not fail to commend the Gospel of Christ, and he often drew their attention to the superior comforts and assurances of the Christian faith as death approached.

Who shall estimate, this side of eternity, the value of such a Christian life in the midst of a population like the Persian, standing in a position to command the closest scrutiny, and never failing in presenting an almost ideal image of the matchless Lord he served? To that Lord be all the praise and honor.