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# THE ASSEMBLY HERALD.

OCTOBER, 1901.

## Foreign Missions---Persia.

Eastern Persia : . . . . . Teheran, Hamadan.  
Western Persia : . . . . . Urumia, Tabriz.

### Missionary Forces in Persia.

*By Rev. W. A. Shedd, Urumia.*

A resume of the forces of missions at work in Persia will be of interest to the readers of the Assembly Herald. In forming an opinion of the sufficiency of the forces at work, it should be remembered that the area of Persia is nearly one-fifth the area of the United States, exclusive of Alaska and the insular possessions, that the population is seven to nine millions, and that the intellectual, social and religious conditions are peculiarly complex.

The societies at work in Persia are the following: Our own Presbyterian Board, the English Church Missionary Society, the Assyrian Mission of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lazarist Order of Roman Catholic Monks, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church. Working in co-operation with the Protestant Missions are the American and the British and Foreign Bible Societies. The number of foreign missionaries in Persia is about 120, of whom two-thirds are Protestant and working in co-operation.

It will be noticed that this list contains all the great divisions of Christendom—Protestant, Anglican, Greek and Roman Catholic. A curious fact is that all of these divisions are at work in the same place and for the same people, in Urumia and for the Syrians. In Urumia there are also native Syrians or Nestorians supported by the Lutherans, Baptists and others. Outside of Urumia, Teheran is occupied by the Roman Catholics, and Salmas is another centre of their work. The C. M. S. occupy Ispahan, Shiraz, Yezd and Kirman. The Protestant missionaries thus occupy eight cities in

Persia, the Roman Catholics three, the Russians one, and the Archbishop's Mission one besides two points in Turkish Kurdistan among the Syrians. Of these missions ours and the C. M. S. are working in close harmony, while the others are based on ecclesiastical principles that preclude any general co-operation. The most recent of these missions leads in the number of native adherents, for there are not far from 20,000 nominal adherents of the Russian Church among the Syrians of Persia. The Archbishop mission works within the Nestorian Church and reports no church statistics. There are probably not far from 5000 adherents to the Roman Catholic Church in Persia, including children. It is unnecessary to recapitulate here the statistics of the Protestant churches.

One remark from the above is that the co-operating forces of our Board and the C. M. S. are wisely distributed so as to reach as large a portion of the population as possible and with such a division of territory as to reduce waste to a minimum. They have occupied the important centres of population and influence and have done much of the preparatory work of translation and study, though such still remains even in these lines. All this is the result not of special plans and consultation but has come about by the guidance of Providence. On the other hand one cannot but regret the wastefulness of indiscriminate giving to irresponsible native missionaries in the region of Urumia. Without reflecting in the least on the high motives and earnest desire to do good on the part of some, it is safe to say that no one should receive help unless vouched for by a reliable person intimately acquainted with the field.

work is carried on, Bible study being among the required branches, and here is shown

faithful to its true mission, can accomplish a great deal in the evangelizing of the great sections of the mighty West.



JOYS OF FOOTBALL SEASON.

The importance of our Western colleges can hardly be overstated. They should be constantly strengthened. And important as other work is, and important as our seven other Boards are, is it not true that our college and academy work, and the Board to which this is especially committed, have a rightful claim to our best thoughts and most generous impulses? If it is true that the future of our Church is assured where our own colleges

how necessary to Church work and missionary effort is a live denominational college. A united enthusiastic synod, and a college,

and academies flourish, the investment of money, prayer and lives in them cannot fail to bring rich returns.

## Medical Missionaries.

*By E. B. Hodge, D.D.*

Many young men find themselves very much attracted in these days to the work of medical missions, and we are constantly in receipt of letters of inquiry upon the subject. The reason for this quickened interest is not hard to discover. The study of medicine is in itself an exceedingly fascinating occupation, and the advances which have recently been made in this science, the great possibilities which the introduction of aseptic treatment in surgical cases has given into the hands of the practitioner of our day, and the means now possessed for the prevention as well as the cure of disease, the revelations of the microscope, and the powerful assistance afforded by the X-Rays in diagnosis, unite with many other things to stimulate the ambition of a man anxious to be of service to the millions of his suffering fellow-creatures. When the reports come home of the impression made in heathen lands by the

wonders of modern medical science, when the story is told of the thousands of patients who are easily induced to come to the dispensaries and the hospitals opened for their relief, these immediate, and apparently satisfactory, results of labor may perhaps be unfavorably compared with those of labor performed perhaps for many long years by ministers of the Word before the first convert is baptized.

We have a word or two to say on this subject. First of all, we feel sure that no one acquainted with us will for one moment suspect us of any want of sympathy for medical missions. It so happens that some of those nearest and dearest to us both in this country and in foreign lands have served God in the noble profession of Medicine. But our impression is that each and all of them would have most emphatically given an honor higher yet to the work of preaching

the gospel, and would have felt that they could have served their own generation even more effectively in the ministry if God had seen fit to endow them with the necessary gifts and to call them to that exalted privilege. We beg our young friends therefore to remember that it is the gospel, and not medical science, which is appointed for the saving of the world. The amount of physical suffering among the hundreds of millions of the heathen is incalculably great, and all that medical missionary work can do among them in the way of relief is like a drop of water in comparison with the ocean. After hundreds of years of work of this kind the condition of the people would be found as bad as ever, if they remained heathen. On the other hand, where the gospel is preached, and such a transformation occurs as has been seen in the islands of the Pacific, society itself is regenerated, and the physical evils, so characteristic of heathen lands, to a large degree disappear; for "godliness hath the hope of the life that now is" as well as of that which is to come. In one word, the commission which the Church has received is to preach the gospel to every creature as the one great panacea for all human woes, whether of the individual or of society. All other instrumentalities, however important, are but subordinate and subsidiary. We find that some of our young men, who had expressed the firm conviction that they had received the call of God to preach the gospel, and in whom friends believed that they saw the evidence of the gifts necessary for the holy office, are now considering whether they shall not turn aside from their contemplated preparation for the ministry and take up the equally laborious and expensive study of medicine. It may be wise that they should do so. We are only warning them to do such a thing only with a full understanding of all the facts of the case. Let them understand that they must exercise the self-denial of taking up a work of less importance and of lower privilege.

If a decided taste and talent for the study of medicine has been developed, especially if this is found together with a decided conviction that the qualifications for success in the ministry are lacking, then, with the advice of judicious friends, the candidate may well divert his attention from the ministry to

medicine. In addition, if he has the foreign field in view, he must keep in mind the fact that the Board of Foreign Missions is able to send out but a small proportion of medical missionaries; say one physician to twenty other missionaries. A minister with his heart set on going with the gospel among the heathen has a much brighter prospect of being sent than the physician can have under ordinary circumstances. But, even if the minister fails to secure an appointment from the Board for the foreign field he may well find an all but limitless field for missionary labor here at home; while the physician who fails to get an appointment must turn aside to secular work at home, simply making it as religious as circumstances will permit.

It must not be thought from what we have said above that we are representing the medical missionary as a mere doctor, ministering to the bodily wants of men and relieving physical distress. We are well aware that this is not the case. We know that the true medical missionary carries the Word of Life with him, and that he ministers, as circumstances will permit, both to body and soul. But we are also aware that it is for the medical work that he has received his training, and that it is medicine which must largely engross his time and attention. It would be hard to exaggerate its importance; only it is an importance which is subordinate and subsidiary. It offers honors which the noblest of men may covet; only there is yet "a more excellent way."

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### The Training of Children.

Those who are children now are to constitute the working force in our churches in the days to come. Every consideration of wisdom and prudence calls for the most careful preparation of our young people for the responsibility which must soon devolve upon them. The years before us promise to be years which will call for the supreme effort of the Church's experience. We seem to be in the position of an army which has laid siege to a fortress. Trenches have been dug, mines have been excavated, and the circumvallation of the fortress has been completed. All has been but preparatory to the great assault, which is to try the mettle and