

THE CHRISTIAN HERALD

A WEEKLY ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE FOR THE HOME

A Kurdish Girl



Fuel-sellers in the Streets of Teheran



A Kurdish Mountain Woman



A WILD RIDE UPON AN AVALANCHE

AN EXPERIENCE ON THE PERSIAN BORDER

By Rev. John Newton Wright

ONE of my fellow-missionaries is the Rev. E. W. McDowell of Van, Turkey. He is, like myself, a member of the West Persia Mission of the Presbyterian Church, the territory of which includes the Kurdistan Mountains on the Eastern border of Turkey, where the mountain Nestorians reside. While on a most laborious and self-denying tour among these mountain tribes lately, he met with a thrilling experience which he relates in a letter I have just received, and from which I quote for the benefit of the readers of THE CHRISTIAN HERALD:

"I left Tkhuma, Kurdistan, Friday, January 4, with an escort of over thirty men. I dismounted as many as possible on the mountain side above Khani, a number, however, going on with me of their own accord, as they had business of their own in Julamerk.

"At two in the afternoon we reached the top of the mountain overlooking Tal, and in a few minutes began the descent. Nineteen of us had just started, six yet having stepped off the top, when an avalanche occurred. Of the nineteen of us were led to the bottom of the mountain. One man was lost, three others were buried, but were dug out uninjured. One man had a shoulder dislocated. Aside from these casualties there were no serious injuries to any of the party. My own injuries, luckily, were confined to a bruised and sprained knee and a fracture of two ribs.

"It was a terrible experience and not easily described. With Kasha Yokhanan, Rabi Nisan and Sahda, I was following the men who had opened the road. At the top of the mountain it was so steep that I was unable to keep on my feet, and had fallen and was still on my back, when I had a flash-like glimpse of the whole side of the mountain in motion. Rabi Nisan called out, 'Sahib, tliklan!' (we are lost!). 'There was a sensation as though falling through

space, a gale of wind struck us in the face, and a cloud of snow shut out the world. Then came a succession of rapid wave-like motions and the snow began to break up. In spite of all my efforts to keep on the surface I was drawn under, and the snow, like a torrent

from peril. As I stood there I looked up the mountain along the track of the avalanche, and I can describe my feeling only as one of fear and amazement as I saw the men whom we, but a few moments before, had left standing on the top of the mountain, still standing there outlined against the clear sky, but scarcely discernible as men, so great was the distance, and I had come that distance in less than two minutes. Kasha Yokhanan, on a previous trip, had timed himself by watch, and he said that it was two hours' fast walking from the point where I landed to the top of the avalanche. It was the opinion of all, including those who had remained at the top, that the time occupied in our descent was not more than two minutes.

"I had come the farthest of the whole party. How it was that no more lives were lost, and especially that no bones were broken, was marvelous. The villagers regarded it simply as a miracle, as the proportion, according to all precedent, should have been the other way. And it is with humble gratitude that I acknowledge God's hand in our remarkable preservation.

"When I rose to my feet I was swathed in snow from head to foot; the snow had been forced into my pockets and inside all my clothing. I was hatless and my hair was matted with ice. The sun had set behind the mountain, and the icy wind raised by the avalanche was congealing me when God's care was again made manifest, for lying on the snow not ten feet away was my heavy overcoat. Sahda had been carrying it, and he came out away above, but the overcoat had been brought down to me. I threw it over my head and beat my blood into circulation and then looked around for the others.

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General View of the City of Tabreez, Persia

of water, surged over and around me on all sides. "I, as helpless as a pebble in a flood, was rolled and tumbled along inside the avalanche. I can recall several heavy jolts as though from falls. Once my body was bent forward on my legs until I thought that my back was about to break; but finally all other sensations were lost in a struggle for breath, as my mouth filled up with snow. At what seemed to me the point of suffocation, there was a sudden slowing up of the motion of the avalanche, and I found myself lying on

pockets and inside all my clothing. I was hatless and my hair was matted with ice. The sun had set behind the mountain, and the icy wind raised by the avalanche was congealing me when God's care was again made manifest, for lying on the snow not ten feet away was my heavy overcoat. Sahda had been carrying it, and he came out away above, but the overcoat had been brought down to me. I threw it over my head and beat my blood into circulation and then looked around for the others.

PLANNING A GREAT TENT CAMPAIGN

The gleam of the white canvas of the Gospel tent is coming to be looked for as one of the un-failing signs of spring in the metropolis. The work started by the Committee of One Hundred, appointed representatives of the evangelistic agencies of New York, has been so successful in reaching the churchless masses that efforts to continue it on a yet larger scale are under way. Eight tents are in commission the first year, and the second there was the equivalent of twenty. For the support of the work, \$100 was contributed the first year, \$30,000 the second. This summer, the committee hopes to establish ten tents at five open-air locations and various outdoor features, if the public responds to the appeal for \$50,000 necessary for so extensive a campaign. "The advance of last year," said the Rev. Dr. C. L. Goodell, chairman of the Committee of One Hundred, "was not only in the increased number in attendance, but especially in the directness of effectiveness of the service rendered and in the systematic plan for following up the summer campaign by personal attention to those who were distressed. Hundreds have been visited by our helpers, many have been brought into connection and fellowship with our churches. The effect on the communities where meetings have been held has been most marked and beneficial.

Hundreds of homes have been made better and pleasanter. Discouraged mothers have been visited by our workers, and new hope has shown itself in new interest to have the home bright, cleanly and cheerful.

Many who once opposed us now welcome us, and there are almost innumerable openings, if we had the means to enter them."

The influence of the evangelistic work is not confined to New York, as many other cities throughout the land have been stimulated to institute similar work in their own communities. The churches and young people's societies gave their hearty support to the work last summer, realizing in consequence a new sense of the possibilities of Christian service, and a better understanding of the class of people who do not attend church, but who are ready to listen to a manly presentation of Christian truth, and who appreciate the efforts of those who they have thought were out of sympathy with them.

The tent evangelistic movement has passed its experimental stage, and has demonstrated beyond all question that such efforts can be made grandly successful. The committee will adhere to its policy of taking no collections at the meetings, relying on general contributions by those who desire the extension of Christ's kingdom.

All who are interested in the work of the Evangelistic Committee can send their subscriptions to Mr. John S. Huyler, treasurer, 64 Irving Place, New York, or Rev. A. F. Schauffler, D.D., 105 East Twenty-second Street, New York.



An Open Air Gospel Tent in New York

"We find prejudice against the church disappearing where this work goes. We are persuaded that nothing will cut the nerve of anarchy and save us from the schemes of wicked men like the earnest presentation of the Gospel by consecrated and unselfish men and women.

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There were two or three men near me, and in answer to my inquiries they said that all the others were lost. I saw Rabi Nisan some distance above, still shaking himself free from the snow. I called to him in reference to the rest of the party, and he answered to the same effect. Soon, however, others came down from above and brought more reassuring word. Kasha Khanan, Sahda, and others had come out a half-mile or more above, and under the direction of Kasha, were rescuing those who were partly buried. The sole sign of one man was his hand. Only an elbow of the second man appeared, and a third man was found with only his foot appearing. These were all dug out with some difficulty, and as it was thought all were accounted for they came down to the village. Then, on calling a roll, it was discovered that one of the porters was missing. Three of the six men at the top of the mountain were porters. They were terrified, and without waiting to learn the extent of the catastrophe, fled to Urumia, to report, we presume, the loss of the whole party.

All our loads were left on the mountain side and I, and along with the others I slept that night on the floor under the *kurse* (the built-in brick fire-place), which was a blessing to be devoutly grateful for. Next morning we were all able to limp around, though with many a groan. As soon as possible a party of men from Ribbat, under the direction again of Kasha Yokhanan, was sent up to search for the missing party. Not a trace was found, though the snow was carefully probed. He will not be found, probably, till spring. Our loads were brought down—some of them having been dug out from under the snow—and on the evening of the same day, Saturday, we went down to Kuri. I hobbled part of the way and part of the way was carried pickaback by two strong young fellows whom I hired to help me through to Julamerk."

When Mr. McDowell reached Van, on January 17, he had somewhat recovered. His money and papers, however, were lost in the avalanche. Near the southern end of Lake Urumia, in the province of Azerbaijan, Persia, is a large town called Sowook (Cold Spring). The inhabitants are mostly Kurds, of a rough, rude sort. One of the photographs I enclose shows a Kurdish woman of that region. She has been to the cold spring or the river to get a bucket of water, and is carrying it on her back to her home. Her foot-gear consists of slippers which only cover her toes. They will be easily dropped at the entrance to her dwelling. Her features are indicative of the dark mind and hard life. She is standing beside a wall, such as surround the yards. It is made from tramped clay. At night thieves easily break, or rather dig, through these walls and rob or murder the family dwelling there.

Another photograph shows a man and a couple of

boys from the same region. They, also, are Kurds. The boy at the left has a pair of Persian socks thrown over his arm. Most of these Kurds live more like ravening wolves than like men. They greatly need the Gospel. Some two millions of these degraded but naturally capable Kurds reside in the bounds of our West Persia Mission field. We have not had the men or the means as yet to open up Gospel work among them. So we were glad when, some three years ago, a



Youthful Kurdish Mountaineers

German society sent Pastor Von Oertzen and his accomplished wife to Cold Spring, with the special view of evangelizing these wild tribes.

Last fall, Mr. Dannon, a polished young German gentleman—an Oriental philologist and fine musician—came to spend a year or so with the pastor, in order to make a special study of the Kurdish dialects. All went well till about a month ago, when one night three masked men in Kurdish costume dug through the earthen wall about the mission premises. They then entered the room downstairs where Mr. Dannon was sleeping. A little later he was found seated in a corner

of the room dead, with twenty deadly sabre wounds in his body.

The murderers then went upstairs. The Von Oertzens awoke to find three masked men, armed with daggers and pistols at their side. The wife besought them not to kill her husband, and tried at the same time to appease them by handing them her rings, watch, money and other valuables. They were somewhat placated, but before leaving struck the pastor on the head with a dagger, inflicting an ugly but not fatal scalp wound.

The local Persian governor has, I hear, tried hard to arrest the murderers, but with no certain results as yet. The people of Cold Spring have shown much sympathy with the pastor and his wife.

We hope and pray that the mission work begun for the Kurds may not be broken up by this fiendish deed. May God, whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, so overrule this great wrong as to bring salvation to these wild Kurdish tribes.

JOHN NEWTON WRIGHT.
Tabreez, Persia.

Among the Workers

—EVANGELIST BENNUEL, assisted by Mr. Allen as musical leader, held a series of successful meetings at Gowanda, N. Y., lately.

—EVANGELIST E. R. HERMISTON, Hillsboro, Ore., lately closed a very successful meeting at McMinnville, where many college students accepted Christ.

—A REVIVAL of thirteen days' duration closed Sunday, April 21, at Clarence, Mo. It was conducted by Evangelist F. A. Geisenheiner, of Decatur, Ill.

—PRESIDENT C. H. MADISON of the Federation of Gospel Missions reports: "The work of the National Federation is proving its usefulness and going steadily forward, slowly but surely uniting the missions of this country into a solid army for Christian work."

—MR. W. H. FORSYTHE, Milledgeville, Ga., writes that since the great victory for temperance at Knoxville, Tenn., where the temperance forces won by a majority of 2,000, the saloon-keepers are going into honorable business. One has established a shirt factory.

—THE EIGHTH SERIES of Sunday afternoon theatre services conducted by Pastor S. Edward Young, of the Second Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg, Pa., closed recently. The attendance was larger than ever before, on several occasions hundreds being turned away.

—DR. ALICE B. CONNICK writes from Ludhiana, India: "The elegant static electric machine which THE CHRISTIAN HERALD readers sent me is doing good work. My wards are daily crowded to their utmost capacity, and I am doing pioneer work in this line. Praise God for THE CHRISTIAN HERALD'S help!"

—THE REV. THOMAS LAW, Secretary of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England and Wales, is visiting this country. He is the guest of the National Federation of Churches. His itinerary will give him an opportunity to meet the ministers and laity of New York, Providence, Boston, Chicago, Pittsburg, Washington, Philadelphia, and other cities.

—DURING A RECENT revival service at Aberdeen, S. D., fire broke out under the platform on which some 300 persons were sitting. There were about 2,000 in the audience. Evangelist R. E. Johnson, who has a powerful voice, averted a panic by instantly starting a Gospel song, in which the choir quickly joined. All got out safely, although the rear of the platform was in flames before the evangelist and choir left it.