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MISSIONARY HERALD,

CONTAINING

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions;

WITH A VIEW OF

OTHER BENEVOLENT OPERATIONS,

FOR THE YEAR 1869.

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hot season, the doors and windows are tightly closed in the early morning, and kept so until four or five o'clock in the afternoon, to keep out the burning winds that sweep across the country at mid-day. These and similar precautions are as necessary on the plains of India, as stoves, or other "heating apparatus," in a rigid New England winter.

The front verandah of this "bungalow" is finely shaded from the morning sun by a thrifty creeper, which covers the lattice. The flower-garden is seen at the left of the "bungalow," and still farther to the left is the "cook-room," with a water-tank before it.

The "bullock-cart," represented in the foreground, is a common conveyance in India. It is large and comfortable, having seats in the inside for four persons, and the thick top affords a good degree of protection from the sun. The inside is conveniently fitted up with boxes, nettings, and pockets, for stowing away baggage; and when the missionary is "touring" it can easily be converted into a "dining-room" and "sleeping-room." Good bullocks will travel at the rate of four miles an hour, and sometimes, for short distances, at the rate of five or six miles. Eighteen or twenty miles, however, is a good day's work for a single pair, so that a long journey in the bullock-cart requires a great deal of time, unless it be accomplished by means of "relays."

The photograph represents the missionary with his family as just starting for a morning drive.

The second person from the rear of the cart is Rev. Waneram Ohol, native pastor of the church at Rahoori.

"BAB AND BABISM."

BY REV. EDWIN E. BLISS, OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

I have just been reading, in the January number of the "Hours at Home," an article entitled "Bab and Babism," and giving an account of a recent politico-religious movement in Persia. The writer says: "No Missionary Herald announces this most remarkable phenomenon of modern times." This may be true, and if so, the reason is that those who write for Missionary Heralds have learned to be somewhat chary of announcing most remarkable phenomena at first sight. Your correspondents in the East have come more or less into contact with "Babism," but as yet have failed to find in it "an important factor, that must henceforth be taken into account in the work of civilizing and Christianizing Asia."

The information we have of it corresponds in the main to the statements in the "Hours at Home"; but as these statements refer mainly to the early history of the new sect, it has occurred to me to supplement them by some account of more recent events. Before doing this I ought, perhaps, for the benefit of readers of the Herald who do not see the "Hours at Home," to give a brief narrative of the origin and early history of the movement in question.

About twenty-five years ago, a young Persian, named Ali Mohammed, of Shiraz, a student of Mohammedan theology, began to preach in the mosques of his native city against the vices of the Mohammedan priests and teachers —

their perversions of the true doctrines of the Koran, and the cruel oppressions of those in power. The eloquence of the young preacher attracted many hearers. His denunciations of abuses met with a ready response in the popular heart. Emboldened by the increasing number of his adherents, he began to assert claims to a higher authority than that of a simple preacher, declared himself to be the last of the Divine Incarnations, the 12th Iman Mehdi (The Guide),^o who, according to Mohammedan expectations, long concealed in a cave, is at length to come forth and reëstablish the true religion in its glory. He assumed also the name of Bab (door), to signify that through him, as by a door, men enter into the knowledge of divine things. These high pretensions only added to the enthusiasm of his followers. Their numbers multiplied. At length some of the more restless spirits, contrary, it is said, to the counsel of the Bab, raised the standard of rebellion against the Persian Government. The suppression of this rebellion severely taxed the powers of the Government; but in the end it was suppressed, and its leaders put to death. The Bab also, though he had taken no part in the insurrection, was arrested, tried, and executed. He had, it is again said, assured his followers that he could not be put to death—bullets could have no power over him. The failure of these assurances did not, however, shake the faith of his adherents.

Twenty years have now passed since this death of the founder of the sect, but in the mean time, the number of its adherents, as they claim, is continually increasing. "We are three millions," they say. "Our people are found in every town and village in Persia." Numerous converts are claimed in Turkey also, but it is impossible to know whether these statements of numbers are true. They are probably wild guesses.

The Persian Government, after its experience of the political element in Babism, keeps a sharp eye upon it, and has banished many of its adherents from the country. Indeed, for ten or twelve years after the death of the Bab, the headquarters of the sect was on Turkish soil, at Bagdad. Seven years ago the fears of the Persian Government were excited afresh, and the present head of the sect, with some forty of his adherents, was required to remove from Bagdad to Constantinople. From here they were sent to Adrianople, in European Turkey; others were banished to Egypt, and others still to more remote places in Africa. The Adrianople colony, increased by subsequent arrivals, after being allowed to remain there in peace for six years, was last summer suddenly broken up by the Turkish Government (again evidently at Persian instigation); the poor men were compelled to sell all their property at great loss, were put under arrest, and sent off to Acre, on the Syrian coast, where, it is said, many of them are now in prison, and otherwise subjected to very cruel treatment.

The very quiet and honest conduct of these people at Adrianople, their apparent acquaintance with the doctrines of the Bible, and their professed acceptance of some of those doctrines, made a very favorable impression upon their Christian acquaintances there; so that when it was known that they were to be sent into another exile, an effort was made to prevent, through the intervention of the foreign ambassadors here, what seemed a great outrage upon an unoffending people. But the reputation that Babism had acquired as a secret political movement prevented that effort from being pushed as it might otherwise have been, and nothing was accomplished.

So far as can be judged from the utterances of this leader at Adrianople, Babism is an attempt to mix Mohammedanism and Christianity. No such advanced ideas, however, as are mentioned in the "Hours at Home," in regard to the treatment of women, were avowed there. Such precepts of the gospel as enjoin meekness under injuries, such doctrines as that of regeneration by the Spirit of God, they profess to accept. Still they do not give up the Koran. They hold their own private religious services, but they do not withdraw from worship at the mosque. In a word, and in the language of this leading man, they would "break down the middle wall of partition between the Moslem and the Christian, and teach all to live together in love," and in the bonds of a faith to be made up, as they seem to fancy, of *pure* Mohammedanism and *pure* Christianity.

And it is just here that we give up hope of any good coming from the movement. Schemes of breaking down middle walls of partition between other religions and Christianity; schemes of developing Christianity out of some other religion, or of developing "the absolute religion of the future" out of various religions, are not hopeful, whether they originate in Persia, Germany, or the United States.

The study of the Scriptures may open the eyes of individuals among the followers of Babism to the true light; but the finale of the movement will probably be to add, for the time, one more to the numerous sects now found in the bosom of Mohammedanism. Babism is not a remarkable phenomenon in the East. Such waves are continually rolling over the "Dead Sea of Oriental Quietism;" but they subside, and leave the minds of men as far as ever from the truth. Almost every missionary laboring here makes the acquaintance of some sheik, some man of subtle, mystic mind, who gives his spiritual interpretations to the words of the Koran, finds parallel passages in the Christian Scriptures, has his scheme of a new religion, and draws hundreds and sometimes thousands (so they will tell you) of disciples after him. These movements have only this meaning in them,—they show how Mohammedanism fails to satisfy the minds and hearts of its votaries; and they should stimulate our prayers and labors for the manifestation to them of Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life."

OUR COUNTRY AND THE WORLD.

THIS is very different from the popular statement—"Our country *for the sake* of the world." The one is narrow, selfish, not in keeping with the command of our Lord, the spirit of the Apostolic age, or the lessons of Providence. The other is broad, generous, Christian; leading to the largest consecration, the grandest effort, and has the promise, "Lo, I am with you."

If the doctrine—"Our country for the sake of the world"—were ever a good one, it should have been good for Judea. The gospel should have had its perfect work there first of all, in the complete evangelization of that country, and then a great company of missionaries would have been in readiness to go into all the world. What a glorious light would have been set up, what power the missionary army would have had, pointing back, for illustration of the power