

chants, pushing their commerce, by their dauntless enterprise, the length and breadth of Africa long before Livingstone crossed it; with their zeal they have visited and colonized in India, China, and the East Indies, and the fire of their religious enthusiasm has kindled a flame which swept everything before it and only halted after it had half overrun Europe. Truly, we could easily convince you that the Arabs are a virile people still, and worthy of our attention as we try to lead them on to higher and better things.

Surely it is not without a purpose, as Edson Clark says, that this widespread and powerful race has been kept these four thousand years, unsubdued and undegenerate, preserving still the simplicity and vigor of its character. It is certainly capable of a great future; and as certainly a great future lies before it. It may be among the last peoples of South-eastern Asia to yield to the transforming influence of Christianity and Christian civilization. But to these influences it will assuredly yield in the fulness of time.

Mesopotamia is a country north of Arabia proper, which tho peopled by Arabs to-day dates back to a civilization which was in its glory three thousand years before Christ. Here is the seat of ancient Babylon, the Queen City of the Earth, the metropolis of literature and art for all the nations of the then known world. To-day excavations have revealed a system of canals which told of its wonderful fertility and researches in its ruins during the last half century have brought forth the prose and poetry of that marvelous civilization. Inhabited by such glorious peoples,

it stands to-day a desolate place in comparison, surrounded by wide wilderness and waste, and only peopled along the river by a few straggling Arab cities here and there.

There are many reasons which lead me to hope that Mesopotamia has a future of marvelous development before it when they shall adopt Western methods and progress. Indeed, it is fascinating employment as Hermith Freeman says, to watch the immemorial culture of the East slow moving with the weight of years, dreamy with centuries of deep meditation, accept and assimilate as in a moment of time, the science, the machinery, the restless energy and practical activity of the West.

There are six reasons which augur well for the future of Mesopotamia:

1. Its strategic geographical situation.
2. Its political situation.
3. The Bagdad Railroad.
4. Irrigation plans by Sir William Wilcox, of Egyptian fame.
5. Its commercial situation.
6. Mohammedanism and the position of the missionary.

Geographically there is no doubt but that within the last five thousand years the great delta caused by the confluence of the three great rivers, the Euphrates, Tigris, and Karoon, has gradually pushed its way into the Persian Gulf, until over two hundred miles of the sea has been replaced by land. Frazer in his recent book, "The Short Cut to India," says that these rivers at the present time advance the land from the silt they deposit to not less than 80 feet per annum. Sir William Wilcox says that undoubtedly many of the ancient

cities of Babylon were very close to, if not directly on the Persian Gulf, while the ruins of these cities are at the present time from two to three hundred miles back from the coast. Busrah, the city where our Arabian Mission is established, must have been at one time a port on the sea, but it is now 60 miles from the mouth of the river and is the terminal port for all lines of steamers plying in the Persian Gulf, and commerce with it is bound to increase. I have counted over twenty large ocean steamships in the Busrah River at one time, waiting for the shipment of dates. Here the English and Turkish river steamers ply to and from Bagdad on the Tigris, and to and from Mohammerah and Ahwaz in Persia on the Karoon River. If you will look up Busrah on the map you will see that it is in a direct line with Kurachee and Bombay from Constantinople and is on the track of the shortest possible mail route to India, and the railroad which the future is bound to bring. Seventy-five miles of date gardens extend from above Busrah down to the sea on either side of this wonderfully beautiful river, and twice daily the gardens are watered by the tidal wave. Sail boats coming down the river for hundreds of miles are laden with grain, licorice, and provision for sale or exchange at Busrah.

In order that the situation may be more real, consider the political aspects which confront us on every hand. Busrah is at present in the maelstrom of political strife, many statesmen believe that the future battle of diplomacy will not take place in the Far East but in the Persian Gulf. Naturally the favored

valley of the Euphrates will be the chief bone of contention.

Germany has her interests there, and projects her railroad to reach the Persian Gulf at Kuwait, after passing through Busrah. Three years ago, the Hamburg-American line established itself in all the principal ports of the Gulf, with Busrah as its chief station, and began to operate a monthly line of freight steamers to Europe. The British have had numerous lines of steamers, both with India and England, and the Germans are gradually building up a trade nearly every part of which is wrestled from British hands. The British affirm that Kuwait, situated on the only good harbor in the Persian Gulf is under British protection, altho the old regime in Abed El Hamid's reign has given the German syndicate the right of way to this part, which the Turks claim as their territory.

Persia, far more disorganized than Turkey, is in a position which few diplomats understand. It is, however, apparent to every one who sees the situation near at hand, that Russia is encroaching on the north and is in this way gradually drawing nearer to her much coveted outlet to the sea. Great Britain has a nominal sphere in the south, which includes that territory south of a line drawn from somewhere above Bushire across to Teheran, but she has not antagonized the Persians to such an extent as Russia, nor has she, like the Russians, established any police system for the protection of commerce. Some time ago, Great Britain attempted to dictate to Persia in the interests of finance and commerce, when she threatened to give Persia a three months' ultimatum, after

which, unless proper measures for the protection of trade were taken by the Persians, Great Britain would systematize police force over South Persia. This raised a storm of opposition from both Germany and Turkey.

The British refused to finance the Bagdad Railroad with the Germans, and there have been rumors in connection with the scheme for the irrigation of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers country. Sir William Wilcox suggested another railroad from Damascus direct to Bagdad and then down between the two rivers to Busrah, to be built connecting with the French railroad at Damascus across the comparatively level country, costing much less to build and promoting perfectly the schemes for irrigation.

The valley of Mesopotamia which was once the granary of the world is at the present time lying waste. Prominent engineers say that there are sixteen million acres of the finest land in the world, capable of yielding cotton and wheat, or the luxurious date-palm. This land only needs proper care, and does not suffer from a dearth of water, but from the abundance of it. Floods are of yearly occurrence, ruining crops and discouraging canals inland. Sir William Wilcox would bridle this immense power in the mountains of Mosul, and by great dams high upon the two rivers. He would then irrigate the country from the Euphrates to the Tigris and as this former river is about eighteen feet higher than the latter, the situation is ideal to use all the Euphrates water for irrigation and the Tigris for navigation. In Egypt, irrigation can be carried on

extensively only in the fall of the year, whereas in Mesopotamia Sir William would utilize the spring rises and again in the fall the flood gates of these dams can be opened to water a second crop.

It would be needless for me to point out all the reasons why a railroad from Europe would develop the country. We all know that it would bring prosperity and be a spur to the latent industrial resources. The new oil fields which have been discovered back of the Karoon River are being developed by the Anglo-Persian Oil Co., who are piping the oil over a hundred miles to the banks of the river a few miles from Busrah, where they are building a refinery plant. This oil field is estimated to be the third largest in the world, so we can expect to have a big industry developed here. Coal oil fuel has passed the experimental stage so the recent oil finds here will help the economic condition of the railroad remarkably.

As yet no other industries are to be found, since all the raw material is shipped abroad for manufacture. Dates, grain, wool and licorice are shipped in large amounts to Europe and America, and every fall hundreds of Arab horses are shipped to India and are bought up in large part by the British Army.

We believe that Mesopotamia has a future before it, because of religious interests there. Now what part is the missionary to have in the development of this country which must develop in a few years to be a center of industry and commerce? A prominent man once said that the missionary "seems to be the highest expression of human character in the nineteenth century, and his pro-

fession to be the noblest. He has the enterprise of the merchant without the narrowing influence of gain, the dauntlessness of the soldier without the shedding of blood, and the zeal of the geographer but from a higher motive than science." The sort of men who are wanted as missionaries are men of education, standing, enterprise, zeal and piety. It is a mistake to suppose that any one as long as he is pious will do for this office. Pioneers in every field should be the ablest and best qualified men, not those of small ability and education.

We need good men in every mission field, but especially in strategic centers like Busrah, pregnant with opportunities, do we need strong men. The field is ripe for a broad sowing of the religion of Jesus Christ. The flimsy garments of religious form and ceremony which Mohammedanism has been trying to clothe itself in are at last too thin and tattered to hide the wickedness and degradation which lie beneath. The religion of Mohammed, because it is false, is fast losing its grip in this region, and at present the opportunities to educate and enlighten the people here are unlimited. They must be influenced, before they become gripped, like the Mohammedans of India, by an educational system, which plucks from them their ancient philosophies, undermines their old faith and puts nothing in its place. Our purpose as missionaries is to educate, but to inculcate at the same time the great principles of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, as taught by our Master Christ.

Education must be the watchword of New Turkey. Everywhere the

officials are establishing schools, and have patterned them after the American Mission schools, which are to be found by the score throughout the Empire, and have patronized these schools by appropriating money to educate special young men and women as teachers. Last year the Turkish Government sent five Turkish girls to take a normal course at Constantinople College, an American institution. In Beirut and Robert College it has been well-nigh impossible to cope with the number who apply, demanding an education.

After years of work the Arabian Mission has succeeded in obtaining the desired permission from the Turkish Government to proceed untrammelled in our educational institutions.

Medical missions are perhaps the most powerful entering wedge for the Gospel to reach these people. I have seen the wonders medical and especially surgical skill could accomplish. In our hospital we find sufferers from vesicle calculus, hydatid cyst, liver abscess hernia, diseased or injured limbs, bullet wounds, and a variety of other surgical patients which would test the skill of the most experienced surgeon. Here we find children crowded in one room and women in another and these oftentimes present our most trying cases. If we pass outside to the one-story buildings we find our most offensive and loathsome sufferers, whom we try to treat as best we may without contaminating our wards. Scores of lepers present themselves to us each year and often do not know the nature of their disease, but we are obliged to send them away without affording them much relief.