

The demand was made that mission schools should teach the Moslem law (*Shariat*), and that they should not teach the Bible to Moslem pupils. That the schools would not be permitted to continue solely for Christian pupils was made clear when a group of schools in Hamadan which dismissed their Moslem pupils was immediately closed. It appeared that the only alternatives before mission schools were to shut down altogether, or to continue on condition that the *Shariat* was taught to all pupils, and the Bible to none who were Moslems. Continuous negotiations have taken place between the American Presbyterian Mission, the Church Missionary Society and the successive Ministers of Education, and it is now agreed that Moslem pupils in mission schools, in order to have the same privileges as those in government schools, must take the examinations in Moslem law, 'whether they prepare for these examinations in the mission schools or outside them'; that is, the mission school is not required to teach Islam. On the other point, 'the teaching of *Taurat* and *Enjil* in the programme of Moslem pupils is forbidden, but there is no objection to the teaching of selections from the great prophets and renowned scholars.' The Bible, that is, cannot be taught as such to Moslem pupils, but ethical courses drawing largely on Biblical material and complete freedom in extra-curriculum work are allowed. The educational regulations of the Government are likely to be more irksome than the religious, for, though a school may be kept open if it teaches certain courses in Persian and observes the regulations regarding Bible teaching, it cannot present its students for government service, technical schools, etc., unless it submits to the full government curriculum and examinations, which are not considered by the missions to be at all satisfactory.

Temporary agreements have been arrived at between Britain and Persia pending the conclusion of a treaty. These agreements provide for missionary work to be carried on freely if it does not infringe the laws of the country.

Steady, quiet progress is being made with evangelistic

work. A notable event was the meeting of four Persian Christians, without the presence of any foreign missionary, as a continuation committee of the Inter-Church Conference of 1927, to plan for home mission work in Persia. This is one of the countries in which the determination of the Christians to achieve a united Church is most manifest.

Great activity is being shown regarding Christian literature, recent additions including a Bible dictionary and some important commentaries. Printing for the inter-mission literature committee of Persia is being done not only in Persia but in Cairo, Beirut, Berlin and London.

#### IRAQ AND ARABIA

The Arabian Mission has reopened medical work which had been closed for fifteen years. Dr Paul Harrison has opened a dispensary and in-patient department in the province of Oman, at Matrah, which is the head of the caravan route to the whole hinterland.

At Basra a large, new school for girls is being built, and it is noted that a desire for modern education is growing on all sides. At the same time, village schools of the old type are also increasing, and at least they remove illiteracy.

The mission at Kuwait is developing its field more extensively, visiting villages at a distance from the central town to which the work has hitherto been confined.

#### SYRIA AND PALESTINE

The establishment of the Newman School of Missions at Jerusalem, through the co-operation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Church Missionary Society and other bodies, adds one more to the list of training institutions for missionaries. The school opened in January with over sixty students and, though the numbers fell later on to about fifty, it was a remarkable beginning indicating the need for the school. Special efforts are made, in addition

to the regular work of missionary training, to provide lectures and other help for Palestinian Christian workers. The school works in co-operation with the Beirut language school and the School of Oriental Studies at Cairo.

At Nablus and at Gaza trouble occurred after the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council, but the work of the missions has gone steadily on, including a remarkable movement of Moslems towards Christianity in one part of the Church Missionary Society's field.

In Damascus an untoward development was the closing of the reading room conducted by Pastor Nielsen of the Danish Mission. The mandatory authorities claim to have acted in deference to the feelings of the Moslems regarding the work carried on, though no definite charges were made.

It is noticeable that here, as in other places where Moslem feeling runs high, medical work goes on quietly and steadily.

#### EGYPT AND NORTH AFRICA

A dramatic proof of the extension of the modern movements of thought in Egypt may be seen in the decision to modernize the teaching of the Azhar University, for so long dedicated to the traditional Moslem learning. The Rector of El-Azhar in a public communication laments that, owing to the withdrawal of Moslem scholars from contact with the outer world of thought and life, 'Islam is without adequate defenders and without real preachers.' He points out the great need for moral character in the nation, and states categorically that 'all the efforts made to reform the theological schools in the past twenty years have made no appreciable difference as regards the form of the teaching.' A large reform is now projected, whereby both a more scientific method will be brought to bear upon the teaching of the Qu'ranic subjects, and the whole of the ordinary secular subjects now required for the government schools will be included in the Azhar course. Other religions are to be studied and the Bible is to be read.

Modern thought, which in Turkey has tended to drive out Islam from official recognition, works differently in Egypt, and is acting as a ferment within Islam. Men of the type of Taha Hussein, the hero of the trial for heresy, are virtually theists without being Moslems. But communal Islam is still powerful and a legal case in which one mission in Egypt has become involved demonstrates the unyielding character of the Moslem claims: a nurse in a mission hospital, who stated her intention of becoming a Christian, was taken from the hospital by her relatives and has been adjudged by the courts (which operate according to Moslem religious law) to have no rights of freedom until she is past marriageable age. This is undoubtedly the true reading of the *Shariat*, but it appears clearly to be incompatible with the provisions of the constitution of Egypt for securing complete religious liberty to the individual.

Active propagation of Sunday school work in Egypt and the Sudan continues, and recently there was formed the Egypt and Sudan Sunday School Union, including the Egyptian Presbyterian and Anglican Churches. Though the Coptic Church does not officially co-operate, eight thousand Coptic children are in Sunday schools.

The School of Oriental Studies continues its work, with greater efficiency since it has become a part of the American University of Cairo. Since then it has sent out over 250 trained missionaries to all parts of the Arabic-speaking field.

#### GENERAL

The several instances of hostility on the part of Moslems to the work of Christian missions are worthy of close attention. There is not, apparently, evidence which would justify us in saying definitely that these phenomena proceed from a common cause or that there is a widespread organization with an anti-Christian purpose. Causes for Moslem unrest and uneasiness are plain. The meeting of the International Missionary Council on the Mount of Olives was