

that many of the famous personal physicians of the caliphs were secured. It was the leading medical faculty of the world in its time. After the overthrow of the Abbasid caliphate by invading Mongols in 1258, when the water of the Tigris ran red, green and black from the ink of Baghdad's precious illuminated manuscripts, medical progress continued in Persia. After this time, the author remarks, Persian physicians wrote in their own language, and Greek medicine became truly Persian.

Before continuing in chronological sequence the author interposes at this point two chapters on Arabian Medicine in Theory and Arabian Medicine in Practice, in which he gathers together from all his resources, including stories of the *Arabian Nights*, information as to medical customs and the achievements of the physicians of whom he has been writing. Medical training and examination for licensure are discussed. There was much quackery and deception. But public health regulations and surgical methods at their best, were surprisingly advanced. Ophthalmology was a recognized specialty and the caliphs employed their own personal ophthalmologists as well as their personal physicians.

The account of the Mongol Domination occurs at about the middle of the text, followed by chapters on the Empire of Tamerlane and the Safavids. The last third of the book begins with a chapter headed, The East India Company in Persia. From this point to the end of the book one has the feeling that in telling the story of British doctors in Persia the author has achieved his principal purpose. Probably this is the only book in which one can find this significant information. The 131 volumes of diaries written by the representatives of the East India Company in Persia and now preserved in the India Office in London constitute the sources used.

It was in 1611 that Shah Abbas the Great sent his ambassador to the court of James 1 of England "to offer to the English the free and absolute use of two ports in Persia, in return for their friendship and trade." The ambassador himself was an Englishman, the famous Robert Sherley. Five years later, the Persian section of the East India Company was founded by the establishment of "factories" at Jask and Ispahan.

Many of the men sent to Persia by the British government were physicians. The greatest of these men, according to the author, was Sir John McNeill to whose biography a whole chapter is devoted. It was into the succession of British doctors that Dr. Elgood himself entered when, many years afterward he became "Physician to H.B.M. Legation in Teheran." His experience was gained during the transition period when control of quarantine and other medical services passed from the British to Nationals. Through many years preceding this time the personal physician of the ruling shahs was usually British, French or Russian or of some other European nationality.

Dr. Elgood naturally looks at his subject through British eyes. And the contribution of Britain to this part of the world should not be minimized. Anyone who has lived on the Persian Gulf and traveled in safety on British-India steamers must realize his debt to the British for ridding the Gulf of pirates. And those who can picture the horrors of the terrible epidemics of plague and cholera which formerly ravaged Basrah and ports along the Gulf must feel gratitude

to British doctors for establishing and enforcing quarantine measures.

The present reviewer, formerly a medical missionary in Kuwait, on the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf, has read this book with great interest. The author has not forgotten to mention the contribution of medical missionaries in Persia. He had for his perusal the records of the mission of the Church of England. Regrettably, only a few remarks in one very short paragraph refer to the service given by the Persia Mission of the American Presbyterian Church. Their first doctor, Dr. Asahel Grant arrived in Persia in 1835, almost a century before the end of the period covered by this book. In 1882 the first American hospital was opened by Dr. J. P. Cochran in Urumiah. After that, hospitals were founded successively by American missionaries in Teheran, Hamadan, Tabriz, Resht, Kermanshah and Meshed. American doctors and nurses are still giving outstanding medical service in Iran. It is to be hoped that future editions will give adequate recognition to this contribution.

Each medical agency which has had a part in the history of Iran has significance in today's situation. To be intelligent about present happenings and future possibilities anyone will do well to read this delightful and very useful book.

ELEANOR T. CALVERLEY, M.D.

**Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir, From the Earliest Times to Our Own, By G.M.D. Sufi, M.A., D. Litt., Lahore, Pakistan, The University of the Panjab, 1949. Two vols., lxxviii, 341, 148; 343-833c, 151-258, I-IV. £4/10/—or \$12.00.**

This first comprehensive history of the Valley of Kashmir is a superb work. It is generous in size, for it has over a thousand pages. It has over a hundred illustrations and maps, many of them in color. Its bibliography is exhaustive and includes old and rare volumes as well as many fugitive articles. The author could have re-written the information he found in his sources, but he preferred to share with his readers the varied flavor of their accounts. He has given full credit for every borrowed statement.

The author gives excellent accounts of the literature, arts and crafts of the people and some report of their folklore and social and religious life. Concerning this last subject more might have been provided from the author's own investigations and experiences. This reviewer, for instance, would have liked to learn, at long last, why, when visitors buy quinces in Srinagar, the Kashmiris stipulated that they could remove and keep the seeds in the fruit. Were these seeds wanted for horticultural or medicinal purposes? The author does not gloss over the backward state of the common people. He makes his readers share his concern for their material, cultural and spiritual progress. Yet the reviewer would have liked to see greater attention given to the services of the missionaries for the medical and educational welfare of Kashmir.

But what the book has is splendid. The author is to be thanked for the labor he lavished on it. The University of the Panjab is to be congratulated for accepting and publishing it.

E. E. C.

## CURRENT TOPICS

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### Revival of Islam Through the Medium of Films

"The Higher Committee of Al Azher, the oldest centre of Islamic learning—has not only not objected to the realization of this method but have advised Muslims all over the world to encourage it.

"The adoption of this medium, it is pointed out, is likely to remove the age old prejudice among Muslims against photography.

"The first step in this direction was taken last year by Ibrahim Izzddin Bey, a prominent Egyptian, whose film *Zahoor Islam*, 'Dawn of Islam' won him deep admiration in religious quarters of the Muslim world.

"The film depicts the advent of Islam and the numerous hardships which it had to face in its early stages. The production of such a film presented formidable difficulties in view of Muslim sentiments against photographing early Muslim personalities. It was a controversial issue as to who could be photographed.

"However, the Mufti of Egypt, Hasnain Makhluḥ, finally solved the problem by declaring that the taboo against filming applied only to the Holy Prophet, members of his family, and the first four Caliphs.

"*'Zahoor-e-Islam'* gives a graphic description of pre-Islamic life and shows how Islam grew from strength to strength in face of numerous obstacles. Among the historic events shown in the film are the Battle of Badar and the migration of Muslims from Mecca to Medina. Some of the scenes were shot in Saudi Arabia and special care has been taken to show several historical places.

"Within a short period of its release the film gained wide popularity not only in Egypt but in other Muslim countries as well.

"The film which has also been translated in English and is being shown in educational institutions of America is likely to be dubbed in many other languages for the benefit of Muslims who do not understand Arabic or Turkish.

"The film was translated in Turkish language and shown in Turkish schools when the Turkish Government declared it to be an educational film thereby exempting it from all customs charges."

Quoted from *The Civil & Military Gazette* of Karachi, dated March 19, 1952.

### The Zwemer Memorial Fund

Friends of the late Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer are establishing a fund in his memory. In accordance with the wishes of his children, contributions will be used for a Library and Reading Room in Bahrain. Gifts should be sent to:

THE ZWEMER MEMORIAL FUND,  
c/o The Reformed Church in America,  
156 Fifth Avenue, Room 902, New York 10, N. Y.