

WOMAN TO WOMAN: THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY WIFE AND THE ARMENIAN WOMAN

DR. INGRID LEYER SEMAAN

Medieval Georgian chronicles report about the apostle Nino, who, early in the fourth century, left Jerusalem on a missionary journey with the goal to convert the heathen Georgians, and, for good measure, probably a few odd heathen Armenians on the way. She established her first missionary station in Constantinople; however, after a few years of residence there she, along with fifty-two women followers, had to flee persecution and found refuge for a while in Armenia. There, too, she was persecuted, and at Etchmiadzin all her companions were slain. Again she fled; this time into the icy winter world of the Caucasus Mountains. Lonely, weary, and in great despair--her only comfort a stone she used as pillow--she fell asleep one night and had a dream. In it, a man appeared to her and charged her to deliver a book to the king of Mzcheta, a town far to the north in the high mountains. This command plunged her into yet greater despair. Then the man opened the book, and in the passages from the Bible he pointed out to her, Nino found courage and purpose. She was charged to go and preach the word of God. In the morning, she continued her journey. After further great hardships, she reached her destination revealed to her in her vision. She settled down, taught, healed, prayed, preached, and converted the royal household and many of the heathen Georgians to Christianity.

Nino had been prepared for her mission in Jerusalem by the most famous theologian of that time, an Armenian lady, the Niopara Sara from Dwin. We read that "the sainted Nino served for two years under her and was taught by her...for in Jerusalem there never had been and still was not anyone who knew as much as she did about religion both old and new; she had no equal in learning." When Nino set out on her journey, her teacher blessed her and gave her courage and strength for the journey: "I see, my child, that your strength is that of the lioness whose voice silences all four-legged creatures; is that of the consort of the eagle, that soars higher than her male companion. And though the apple of her eye is as small as a pearl, with it she carefully examines and encompasses the whole globe. When she espies her prey, she unfolds

her wings and swoops down on it."¹

As the centuries passed, many of the other heathen peoples of the region were converted; at the same time Christian tradition was to subdue such bold feminine witness of the faith as Nino's. Yet other missionaries came, this time men. They saw, preached, and, at times, also converted. The Jesuits and other Catholics left their mark; the Church of England sent her emissaries, and we remember Henry Martyn, that great linguist and missionary to the Persians who lies buried in Tokat, or that delightfully eccentric missionary to the Jews, Joseph Wolff. And the German Lutherans were not behind in their missionary zeal either. The missionary fervor was also stirring in the young American republic; in the words of Giragos H. Chopourian, "with the Second Awakening, which commenced about 1800, the missionary spirit rose high and by 1810 one of the greater missionary societies was founded," the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. These very serious young American men of the cloth who made up or supported this society were motivated by the concept of "disinterested benevolence" and by the "urgency of establishing the Kingdom of God intensified by the Millennial concept." They were convinced of the debt they owed to pagan mankind, especially to those peoples of western Asia that had been "the scene of those great transactions and events, which involved the destinies of mankind of all ages and all nations," to prepare them for the Second Coming which was at hand. Their basic concern was directed towards the Jews, but their hearts also went out to the whole motley population of the region that included Muslims and Christians as well, people who were living in darkest ignorance and deepest degradation, they thought.²

To put these insights and convictions into action, the tenth Annual Meeting of the Board created a Western Asia Mission. Two young Andover Seminary graduates, Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk, were assigned to investigate this missionary field and set up a station in Jerusalem. Thus a new missionary endeavor was born. Soon, however, these two young men were to find out that it was easier to share their good news with the nominal Christians of the Holy Land and the neighboring regions than to do something towards imparting the heavenly treasure to both Jews and Muslims and in this way effect indirect conversions. The direct approach was almost impossible; the Jews were hardened in their religious error, and Muslim law punished apostasy with death.

Other young missionary pioneers were sent to the field, pastors like William Goodell, Isaac Bird, William Dwight, and Eli Smith. Before they could commence their true work among the "heathen", they had to purify the lives and the faith of the already existing Christians. To do so was an almost herculean task, but it had to be done. The ways of these nominal Christians would truly turn any pagan away from the Truth, the missionaries were convinced of that. First and foremost, the missionaries felt, they had to create a desirable example that could be emulated later by the Jews and Muslims when

it was their turn to be converted. This good model the "native" Christians of the region did not provide; in the eyes of the ardent young clergymen these followers of the ancient eastern churches were an embarrassment. They had to be roused from their slumber that they might "shine as lights in those darkened regions," so that they might as beacon lead their erring Jewish and Muslim neighbors to the Truth. To reform the faith and lives of the already existing Christians was then the most urgent immediate task of the missionaries. They agreed that the most fruitful field in their undertaking would be among the Armenians, especially those belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church, a church, they generally felt, that was totally corrupt and debased, founded on superstition and idolatry. So it was decided that among these misguided Christians they should begin their labors. The story of these very serious and dedicated Congregationalists and Presbyterians has been very ably told on several occasions.³

These young missionaries were the sons of the Protestant tradition that is rooted in the family and the manse, the house of the pastor, and therefore when they embarked on the Lord's work they did not travel alone. They took their wives and their "houses" along. To a great extent the success or failure of the work of the men depended on their helpmates. For spiritual and intellectual companionship and for moral support, the missionary could turn to his wife. It was she who created the spirit and hospitality of the missionary home, the house that provided the base for their joint work and that was always open to everyone who cared to visit them. And many of the missionary wives rose to the occasion and proved themselves to be worthy daughters of the great apostle Nino and the Niopara Sara of Dwin.

But let us for a while return to the menfolk of these intrepid missionary ladies. Was it religious conviction, some vague romantic longing for the Orient and adventure that was in the air, some nationalistic conviction about the great destiny of their nation, or a bit of all of the above? Be that as it may; the American missionary and his wife were convinced of their altruistic and lofty goal. Again and again we are told that they never forgot about their ultimate task of the conversion of the gentiles, and that their work among the Armenians was merely the first step in this direction. Their aim was "not to break down the Armenian church, but, if possible, by reviving the knowledge and spirit of the Gospel, to reform it...Their main business as foreigners was to set forth the fundamental doctrine and duties of the Gospel, derived directly from the Holy Scriptures."⁴ Their goal was therefore to reform the great masses of the Armenians who were living in spiritual darkness, to "see these truly enlightened...to see their characters transformed by the power of the divine spirit." They had no desire that these Armenians should become "anything else but true Christians."⁵

In their hearts the missionaries were convinced that the members of

the Armenian Apostolic Church "almost universally admit that the church is in great error, and must be reformed...they admit that the truth is with us," we read in the July issue for 1857 (vol. 53, p. 209) of their mouthpiece, *The Missionary Herald*. It was the duty of the missionaries to oblige the Armenian man on the street and translate this insight into action.

The initial intention of the missionaries to reform may have been benevolent; yet their concerns were not always tactfully expressed and their methods could be very insulting. This led to much friction, even bloodshed and death. An account of the negative reaction that both the Orthodox clergy and laity directed towards the missionaries, their wives and helpers, and those of the Armenians who had lent a willing ear to the Protestants would fill volumes.

Keeping up with the missionary men took a heavy toll on the ladies and their children. For them encounters with the hostile population proved to be the lesser evil; the exhaustion of traveling over more than hostile terrain, the inclement weather, the filth, bugs, germs, and vicissitudes met on the road often turned out to be fatal. Many a missionary lady and her children found their final resting place in some obscure corner in Anatolia. "It is a dangerous business, travel, even with God as your guide," Janet Robinson reflects in her discussion of the lives of British missionary ladies.⁶ Those who survived persevered and stood behind their men; they knew they were an example to their "native" sisters and an invaluable support to their own husbands who were engaged in the great task of doing the Lord's work.

And what were these newly found "native" sisters in the Lord like? In many cases, the impressions upon first meeting them left the missionaries and their wives with rather unfavorable feelings. Armenian women, it seems, often enthusiastically joined the cursing and stone-throwing mobs that greeted the missionaries when they arrived in a new village or town. The Rev. Wheeler recalls such an incident when he and his party reached after an extremely exhausting journey the town of Choonkoosh. An excited crowd of men, women, and children had gathered before the door of the inn that had been assigned to the travelers by the local Turkish authorities. Now this Armenian mob "forbade our entering, even using violence to get possession of the key that had been given us." None of this cursing group would guide the missionaries back to the friendly Turk, and it was raining cats and dogs. "But just then the old virago, the mistress of the house...so far relented, said that we might occupy an open room in another part of the house, but with the added condition that we should leave in the morning...The early morning found our hostess, true to her promise, bidding us begone from her house," and they gladly obeyed.⁷ That fabled Oriental hospitality they had heard about so much back home did not always seem to exist among Armenians.

There were also the "viragos" of Ovajeck that gave the Rev. Parsons and his deacons such a hard time. The town had gained quite a notoriety on

account of "its females, who without an exception, it is said, are given to blasphemy and drunkenness. Their infants, male and female, are fed with wine at the same time that they are drawing milk from their mothers' breasts, and their first words are vile and blasphemous".⁸ Upon contemplating such gross misconduct on the part of their fellow Christians, the sensitive missionary blushed, thinking what an impression this loose behavior would make upon the Muslims they had come to convert.

A wide missionary field opened up before the ministers. These "females" had to be taught decency and manners. They had to be taught about the sanctity of the family and the value of human life. Once the Rev. Hubbart of Sivas had to officiate at the funeral of a misfortunate child. "A Protestant mother of eight girls had had a special spite against the eighth because she was not a boy, and said plainly she did not want the girl, hoped it would die. It had no disease, but I really believe she starved and froze it to death....No one of the little one's friends was present. The bundle was laid carelessly in the ground."⁹ This mother had already found the light! What could one expect from the unenlightened ones? What indeed, when women generally "were despised overworked, led lives of dreary, slavish subjection. The almost incredible ignorance of mothers, the absence of any medical help whatsoever, were the causes of a seventy-five per cent infant mortality."¹⁰ Of these sad truths, the readers of the missionary reports were assured again and again. For the missionaries, such generalizations often represented the whole truth.

The missionaries decided that the families of such hard-hearted mothers had to be visited in their homes, the domain of the woman. On the way to the villages, the world was pastoral and patriarchal as they knew it from the Bible. Like Rebecca of old, the women would go to "a common spring, from which" they "are seen with earthenware jugs on their shoulders." These women, observes the Rev. S. G. Wilson, who had been for fifteen years missionary in Persia, were "hardy and muscular, with the rosy flush of health."¹¹ Another missionary had little time to appreciate attractive Armenian women, but he had seen on his trip through Asia Minor "a number of them." He thought that they were very intelligent, had large, dark, luminous eyes, with long eyelashes, and their complexion is that of rich cream. Many of them have rosy cheeks and luscious red lips. They are tall and straight," unfortunately, he continues, they become "soon fat after marriage."¹² The missionaries usually did not wax this enthusiastic about the appearance of Armenian ladies--or they simply did not share their thoughts this freely. This was not the case when they came to describe the houses, especially the village houses, in which these daughters of Armenia resided. It was as if the Americans had stepped into the domestic world of the Stone Age. The description of the "house of Malo" in the village of Cheviermeh near Erzroom is typical: "In going thither I literally

walked over the village, since all the houses are half under ground, and appear from the outside like a succession of conical potato holes.

Malo's house was no better than a Circular heap, a little more elevated than those immediately around it. Passing on several rods, we came to the entrance; and, stooping low, we passed through the door, woven of large willows, into a long, low, dark, narrow hall, on either side of which were spacious stables. At length we reached the habitation of the human part of the establishment. It was a large circular apartment, perhaps forty feet in diameter, the walls of which were built of stone....surmounted by a kind of dome, built of logs....At the summit of this rude dome were two irregular holes, answering the double purpose of windows and chimneys.¹³

This was the domain of the average woman.

Getting to such a house was often hazardous and the reception the missionaries received by the women of the house quite rude. Mrs. Crosby Wheeler, her husband was for forty years missionary at Harpoot, recalls such an incident. She and her husband had come to visit the home of a woman who "was seated on her doorstep and would not permit us to enter. In a loud, angry voice she said, 'I want none of your teachings...if you want to instruct people, go to the Turks, they need instruction!'"¹⁴

Even if they gained entry into the house, the way in which the hostess received her guest was on many occasions less than friendly. For example, when the Rev. Clark visited the house of Baron Nicolas, one of his helpers, in Egin, "we found his mother and sister, both who had bitterly opposed him and disowned him. His mother received us into the house, though the reception was not very cordial. Soon after our arrival, the sister was persuaded by some of the Armenians to leave, and go to the house of a relative during our stay, for fear of Protestant contamination."¹⁵

Other mothers reacted negatively to the missionaries, but when they saw how their children benefited from the teaching of these Protestants, they relented. Miss C. E. Ely recalls such an instance of "hatred turned to love," when she visited the mother of two of her students at Moosh.¹⁶ Yet there were many women who opened their houses and hearts wide to the new teaching: "We were treated with the greatest kindness and hospitality. Our host's mother sat at our feet, and manifested much feeling as the way of salvation was pointed out, and the importance of loving God dwelt upon...she heartily thanked us for having spent the night at her house, and gave us cordial invitation to visit them on our return," the Peabodys of Erzingan write.¹⁷

The missionary men basically saw the women in church, though in many villages and towns the women were at first not encouraged by their men-folk to go there. When they did come, it became customary --in contrast to the

Orthodox churches where "the women usually occupy a gallery, where they are wholly concealed from the men"--for them to be merely "separated from the other sex by a low railing."¹⁸ The Rev. J. Y. Leonard invites us to sit with him in his chapel in Vezir-Kupreu as he introduces his congregation: "Among the women seated on the floor, in the rear of the audience room, you may observe a young lady, perhaps twenty-five years of age. A wreath of thin gold coins adorns her white brow, and a neat shawl...is thrown gracefully over her head and shoulders. A closer view would show you how these features have been ploughed with grief; for the iron has entered into her soul." Her father had been persecuted and her brother brutally murdered.¹⁹ In the Annual Report of 1858, we read about "an aged female", a "great sufferer....She comes with difficulty, dragging herself along; but her face is radiant with happiness; and she sits and drinks in God's precious truth, like floods of unmingled truth."²⁰

On the female side of the railing not all was sorrow and pathos. The female pillar of the community was sitting there as well: "The mother, the ruling spirit of the house, now seems remarkable for her good sense and judgment as also for her humanity and deep interest in religious truth. We have often noticed her in her seat in the chapel, gently swinging her head to and fro while her eyes poured forth floods of tears at the rehearsal of the love of Jesus for fallen and lost sinners."²¹ Over there was sitting the hope of the community, "an interesting and intelligent girl...about sixteen years of age." She had "already proved herself a valuable acquisition. Through her influence...four other women have lately joined us." This we read in the Annual Report for 1857 (*Missionary Herald*, 53, July 1957, p. 209).

When they contemplated some of the individual women in their congregations, the missionaries felt that they had been successful in doing the Lord's work. But when they reflected about the lot of the Armenian woman as such--and here the gentlemen from the West conveniently forgot that the lot of their own Western Christian womenfolk was far from being a bed of roses--their optimism was a bit shaken. At least in the West a gentleman respected the women of his household. Respect? In the street an Armenian woman always walked far behind her husband to show respect for him. When the American missionaries opened the door for their wives, the Armenian men around them were shocked: "What, a woman enter a door before a man! That was the privilege reserved for angels," and they concluded that perhaps "all the missionaries' wives were angels"²²--they themselves certainly were less fortunate!

The poor daughters of these patriarchal families! They were just chattel to be used for the benefit of the patriarchal house to which they belonged; the missionaries were very much aware about this sad truth. Fred Burnaby one day was enlightened by a typical calculating father about the asset girls represented to their families: "Our daughters are our maid-servants, when they marry

we lose their services. It is quite right that the husband should compensate us for our loss....It is also quite proper that you should give a husband something when he saddles himself with a useless encumbrance,"²³ namely a wife.

Whether a girl received a dowry or not "depends chiefly upon her marketable value." If she was acceptable to a man and his mother, her new "owner" would gladly "pay a handsome price for her." If she was not and therefore "difficult to dispose of," the father "would be willing" to give the young man something for taking "her off his hands." The fear of this expense, even in the enlightened nineteenth century, "often leads parents to murder their female infants," Moses Payson Parmelee, missionary physician "among the Armenians", deplors.²⁴ We do not hear this assertion often; nevertheless the missionaries knew quite well that little Armenian girls did not really count as children; manly Armenians fathered only sons. It should then not have been surprising that good religious Armenian parents even sold "their daughters into concubinage."²⁵ All this was simply shocking!

"Among the Armenians," writes Parmelee, it is common for parents to betroth their children to each other while they are still very young, and it is no strange thing for a young man of sixteen to take for wife a girl of ten or eleven years of age."²⁶ It was the generally accepted custom among Armenians, as Eli Smith, the main American missionary to the Armenians, was to point out, that "girls are often espoused as early as three or four years of age....The earliest period at which marriage is allowed by the rules of the church to be consummated, is ten for girls and fourteen for boys." There was no way out of these marriages since the church did not allow divorces. The young people had to adjust themselves to their condition--and everyone pretended that there were only happy marriages.²⁷

There were so many strange customs connected with Armenian weddings. Why, for instance, should the bride sit in front of the wedding guests with a sad countenance and cry her heart out?²⁸ Why should in different parts of Syria and Armenia brides have to pass through a "screaming process"? The missionary William Goodell observes that "for three days before she is married, she screams....It is not the scream of anguish, nor is it the scream of joy; but it is the well known scream of marriage intended!"²⁹

To be a young wife was truly a demeaning position. Should the young wife want to speak to her mother-in-law, "she must go modestly and timidly, and whisper in her ear like the most obsequious servant. Should her husband come into the room...she immediately rises, turns her face to the wall, and stands there till he goes out." The missionaries Goodell and Smith, with patriarchal inclinations themselves, very strongly objected to such customs. These poor creatures were not pagans living in Muslim harems; they were the women of the oldest Christian nation."O Christianity! What hast thou done for

women!" Goodell exclaimed in genuine dismay.³⁰

No Turkish wife had to wait till it pleased her father-in-law that she could remove the red veil she had been ordered to wear as badge of her subjection in the household--this was one of the lesser insults. "An Armenian lady is in no way educated. She is confined to a Harem. She is the slave of her husband, and has to do all sorts of menial work for him--wash his feet, rub them dry, and wait at table. From her earliest childhood a girl is brought up to consider herself as a slave in her father's house."²² Upon marriage, and every respectable girl should be married otherwise she would bring great shame on her family, she simply exchanged father for husband, exchanged one tyrant for another, and did not improve her position at all. Eli Smith sums up her plight: "The relation which the wife sustains to the husband, is that of a servant, rather than of a companion. To give counsel and express opinions, though she sometimes does it pretty loudly, is not considered her department. She is managed more by commands than by advice, and not infrequently is the rod called in to aid."²³ No wonder those Armenian brides-to-be indulged in "screams of marriage intended" and all the others looked so sad!

The wife could eventually rule over her family if she was left a widow and had sons and a house. Then she was revered as a matriarch; finally she had a chance to make up for all the humiliation of her test period when she herself was a young bride, and usually she took it out on the new brides that came into the house. Many of these matriarchs were reputed to be veritable viragoes, a term the missionaries liked to use to describe them. The Protestant missionaries in particular had their encounters with these powerful old ladies. Mrs. Wheeler has the following to say on the subject: "The mother-in-law rules the brides with an iron scepter; her word is Law." For instance, "even when her son would like to have his wife read...many a mother-in-law has burned the primer her son has brought home for his wife; and in some cases, when the son has insisted that his wife should read, they have both been turned into the street."²⁴

To labor among these poor misguided and ignorant women and their families--"sowing the seed" of the Truth among them and bringing them "the bread of knowledge", furthering the "welfare of Zion" and thus hastening the coming of "the Lord of the harvest"--this then was one of the main reasons why God had sent the missionaries and their wives east. All this could be done through educating them.

The Truth the Protestant missionaries brought was the Word of God as found in the Bible. They soon realized that this Word could become meaningful only to educated people who could read. As has been told on several occasions, the missionaries--some with greater ability and zeal than others, to be sure--after learning Armenian, set themselves the task of translating the Bible into the language of the people. But how many of the Armenian men, not

to mention the women, could read even a primer written in their own language? Before they could appreciate the Word of God, they had to be first given the rudiments of education. Preaching on Sunday and teaching children and adults how to read and write during the week were among the basic tasks all the missionaries set themselves. While the men found their domain in the church and the chapel, their wives created theirs in the school room.

They realized that the life of the Armenian woman could be made bearable through education. To carry out the task given to them, the missionaries needed to reach them, "the real educators," as the Rev. Parsons knew.³⁴ Once properly approached, they tended to be more impressionable and receptive than the men. While "the great coldness of the church, especially of the male members," often pervaded the congregation and caused the missionaries "many a sleepless night," the women, on the other hand, were at times "an honor and blessing to the church."³⁵

At first, though, it was often very difficult to reach them. The "strong fetters of spiritual bondage" as well as those of female bondage that had shaped their lives for generations, had intimidated them. At times, it was almost impossible to have the women worship in the same room with the men. "Many are afraid to come even to the same house where the men assemble," Dr. Reynolds reports from Van.³⁶ To reach the women, they "require to be visited in their homes," Mrs. Allen of Harpoot reflects about her experience. This way are "their prejudices softened by kindly sympathy, and interest in their home duties and cares shown them by one of their own sex; thus the way is opened for accepting an invitation to go and hear the truth, and for its entrance into their own hearts."³⁷ In other communities, the endeavors of the ladies had borne fruit earlier. Thus Mr. Richards reports in 1857 from Arabkir that the "missionary ladies seem to be gaining upon the confidence of the women, and in their visits...from house to house, the women have been persuaded, in many instances of late, to take a seat in the same room with the men."³⁸

Well, it was a good start. The missionaries realized that without their helpmates they would be severely handicapped in carrying out their tasks. The Rev. Justin Perkins praises his own wife and through her all the other wives and helpers:

It were grateful to offer a passing tribute to female fortitude in the missionary enterprise, might a husband be allowed to do it. I may at least be pardoned, for saying in general, that we witness, in many of the females sent out by our churches, not only the devotion that was 'last at the cross and first in the sepulcher,' but also a heroism which is able calmly to meet and cheerfully sustain the trying emergencies that often almost crush our own sterner energies. It is preeminently on missionary ground that woman is a help-meet for man.²⁵

The good Reverend had almost lost his wife in childbed a few days before he wrote his glowing tribute to her. The couple had set out together on one of their grand missionary journeys, though Mrs. Perkins was very pregnant. He could not do without the assistance of his wife and had urged her to accompany him on a long and hot summer journey to Tabriz. It was a miracle that mother and baby daughter did survive.

The Rev. Knapp did not require his wife to undergo such hardships, yet she too was "a very important factor in the success of the mission at Bitlis."⁴⁰ Mrs. Rhea, a very intellectual lady, also "entered zealously upon the discharge of every duty devolving upon her" and made her husband's work in Mossul a success. "Her character was complete."⁴¹ And let us not forget that intrepid and spirited missionary lady Mrs. Schneider whose untimely "death left a great vacancy in respect to labors" among the Armenian women.⁴²

It became soon evident that there were not enough missionary wives to carry this heavy burden. To bring "life and light" to their Armenian sisters, the Board invited unmarried ladies to come and lend a helping hand. They were helpers; these ladies and the missionary wives were "assistants"; in the eyes of the members of the Board for close to a century only men could be "missionaries". In its January issue of 1872, the *Missionary Herald* (Vol. 68, p.22), reports:

Thirty unmarried ladies, most of them educated in some of the best institutions in the United States, devoting their culture and discipline to special labors in behalf of their sex, at sixteen of the principal centers of influence in the Turkish Empire,--in charge of ten boarding schools, with over two hundred pupils in training for Christian work, laboring in Sabbath-schools, visiting the women in their homes, gathering them by hundreds to the place of prayer, establishing mothers' meetings with special reference to the training of Christian households, going out often with the missionaries from village to village, and wakening new hope and aspiration where life had been but a wretched burden, a prolonged misery, and a despair.

They were mere "assistants" with a supply of less "sterner energies" than that of the men. Yet in carrying out their task, they disappointed neither the men nor God. The tribute paid to them by the Rev. Leonard of Marsovan reads like a feminist version of the Sermon on the Mount:

Blessed is the young lady who comes from her native land to devote her life, heart, and soul, to the Christian training of women in Turkey, or any other equally needy land. Many will rise up and call her blessed. Though she might sacrifice most that is commonly considered desirable in this life, yet she, in reality, renounces the less to secure the greater. Instead of becoming the head of a household she becomes the mother of a nation, in the truest, best sense. Her pupils will remember her as such, and impart

the influence received from her to their children and their children's children, or to multitudes whose instructor they may become.⁴³

The missionary boards and societies back home did not encourage their unmarried "assistants" to get married out in the field. This is what the Swiss missionary doctor Josephine Zürcher, who had been recommended by Pastor Johannes Lepsius to join the mission hospital at Urfa, found out when she married into a German missionary family based in Jerusalem. Most "assistants" followed the rule and remained single, nevertheless there were a few intermarriages. We hear about a Mr. Nahashian who had married an American missionary lady to Urfa. The writer Louisa Mary Alcott used her as model for a character in her story "On this Dark River" (1854).

At times a bachelor missionary succumbed to the beauty of an Armenian woman. Such involvements, however, did not always end in marriage. Dr. Zürcher recalls the story of the lovely Protestant girl Gülinea who bore an illegitimate child. When she was called before the board of elders of her congregation to justify herself, she declared the father of her child to be one of the American missionaries, a married man. He denied the charges vehemently, and the elders tended to believe him; after all, he was a man of integrity. There was something most peculiar about this gentleman: he had very strangely shaped ear lobes. The two parties had to appear before the board of elders. When the judges turned to the girl, she simply removed the cap of her baby girl that she had brought along. The child had the same ears as the father. The career of the missionary was ruined.⁴⁴

Such scandals occurred seldom. The missionaries were basically very serious family men, very much aware of the fact that a pastor should be married, should have a "home away from home" over which the wife should preside. Such a home Mr. Hamlin enjoyed at Bebek till his wife died in 1850. "For ten years she was the lively and effective center of the 'home'," ⁴⁵ we are told. Of the importance of such a "home", Mrs. Wheeler has the following to say: "The missionary home should always be a model of good taste and neatness. The missionary comes from a class of society which should have such a home; and here it is that the married missionary can do work that cannot be done by the unmarried. The influence of such a home should be a very great, elevating and converting power." It should always be open to receive guests no matter how great the disorder. At such times she had done some of her best work. "How naturally you can show them that not only do our houses need cleaning, but our hearts also," she reflects.⁴⁶

The Knapps of Bitlis were the perfect missionaries: "The pioneer blood of six generations of New England ancestry ran in their veins; theirs was the resourcefulness, ambition and 'grit' that seems the heritage of those born and bred on New England farms." Mr. Knapp had "true Yankee ingenuity,

inventiveness and mechanical ability." He planted a garden around his new home, cultivated in it the till then in Anatolia unknown potato and tomato, introduced his new friends to the use of window glass, cured the sick--though he had never studied medicine--established a school for boys and one for girls in Bitlis and twenty-eight other institutions for learning in the region. He taught, preached, counselled. He was a sincere man, whose great gift was "inspiring confidence and affection," a gentle and peaceful man. "But underneath all his gentleness was the granite of his native state: he could never be moved by physical danger or the fear of men when a principle was at stake."

Nor could Mrs. Knapp. She was loved and respected as the "Khanum", a woman "with a vivid, forceful personality radiating sunny cheer and stimulating sympathy, strong, true, intensely loving, Christian." She knew how to deal with people, could calm angry passions; she mothered the boys and inspired the girls of the boarding schools she and her husband had established. Yet she, too, was down to earth; she was an accomplished homemaker and trained many Armenian women in the art of cooking, a skill in which she excelled. Many a traveler came to appreciate her hospitable home as "an oasis in the desert."⁴⁷ The missionary had to be a many-sided man, and his wife had to be his equal if they were to succeed in their work.

Her house was the most immediate stage for her activities. By inviting the "native" woman into her own house, the missionary wife could establish the trust that lay at the foundation of her teaching. Mrs. Wheeler was very sure of her role as "woman, the teacher of the race":

The missionary woman will find use for all the ability she has. Whether she graduates from Vassar, Radcliffe, Wellesley, Smith or dear old Mt. Holyoke, some lessons in a manual training school will be of great value to her, as she needs to know the secrets of modern cooking to guard her home from the dyspepsia fiend. A knowledge of hygiene and nursing will save her and others hours of pain, and will fit her to teach the people many things of which they are now ignorant. She can do many things better than a man if she is well-fitted for missionary work. Her sphere of usefulness will be so wide and so varied, and the demand upon her so constant and exhausting, that above all else she will find it hard to fill her place.⁴⁸

So she, along with the Mrs. Schneiders and Mrs. Hamlins and Mrs. Sheppards and all the other wives, kept an open house, organized schools, visited, and accompanied her husband. But first and foremost came her duty to the "native" women. The practical New England woman she usually was, she eased her newly found sister's lot by teaching her new methods in housewifery; she organized sewing societies or encouraged lace making and embroidery, skills in which Armenian women excelled. During hard times, she also found a market for these products back home. There were the "singing schools" that all women loved to attend, the Sabbath schools, the popular women meetings in which she

explained the Scriptures to the women, or the many hours she spent teaching girls and women how to read. After she had learnt the language of the people, she could make most pastoral calls on her own--and she could go to places where her husband would not be admitted.

Then there were the extended tours to the remotest outposts of her husband's missionary field on which she dutifully went along. Not even the most advanced stage of pregnancy would keep her at home, since she knew that "these tours constitute a primary agency in the aggressive movement of evangelization" and were taken very seriously.⁴⁹ Miss Julia A. Shearman, though, must have had the time of her life on her first tour. It was true that the journey had been troublesome, but when she reached her destination--she was the first Frank lady who had been to this village--it seemed "that all the women and children" had come out to greet her. What a reception she had! "Three times I was seized and compelled by main force to stay and sing."⁵⁰ Mrs. Allen of Harpoot is more sober when she describes her tour: "At noon I held a meeting for the women. A great many came...I have never before spoken to such a crowd of earnest listeners. It was a precious but solemn season."⁵¹

Not all the descriptions of these missionary tours sound this optimistic. There were still places like the village of Yenijak that Mrs. Schneider and her husband visited in 1872. It was a place rife with ignorance and superstition, especially on the part of the women. "They believe so devoutly in the Virgin Mary, that they cross themselves while passing our house--invoking her protection from pollution, as if ours was a pest-house," she reports.⁵²

Such ignorance was shocking. But then the Schneiders, like all the other missionaries to the Armenians, were realistic and practical people. The bigotry they encountered was in reality no great obstacle to their grand mission; the situation could be set right by teaching these women how to read and write. Of course, there were some women who were absolutely hardened in their ignorance and could not be bothered with reading and writing, women who said "Let those who come after me learn that"--an attitude that irritated Miss Van Duzee of Erzroom to no end.⁵³ But from the various accounts it becomes clear that most women gladly obliged their teachers and were intelligent students.

The objection to these educational projects came basically from the mothers-in-law and from the suspicious husbands of these scholars who feared for their domestic prerogatives and forbade the women of their households to go to school when they saw how this rudimentary education was beginning to liberate their helpmates. The missionaries, truly interested in the spiritual and mental welfare of the women, in turn, scolded and cajoled with honied and peppered tongues and often succeeded in their arguments with the husbands. A case in point is the story that the Rev. C. H. Wheeler tells. In the city of Palu on the Euphrates, he was told that the women persisted in their ignorance, but

he knew that it was on account of the men. Because of this, he was upset when he left the community. "Visiting the city a few weeks later, what was my surprise to find all the women present each with a primer in her hand! Asking how this strange event had come to pass, I received the reply, 'you told us that it was our duty to bring our wives in, and as they wouldn't come, we whipped them and made them come!'"⁵⁴ The husbands had saved their face, the women gladly studied their primer, and their condition slowly started to improve.

It was obvious that girls as well as boys had to be educated, and it was a slow and at times painful process. What? "Educate a girl!"--or for that matter, a woman--"You might as well teach a cat!" Dr. Jessup was once told by some conservative Muslim fathers in Beirut; the attitude of the average Armenian father was at first not much different. Why put notions into their heads when their labor was required at home and on the farm? An educated girl would definitely scare away a suitable groom, many parents reflected. It was generally accepted that for girls to "grow up without marrying...is an intolerable disgrace both to them and the family." Throughout the greater part of last century, educated girls did not have much of a chance on the Armenian marriage market. The missionaries knew, like the Italian traveler and geographer Ubicini, that "a woman who possessed the slightest knowledge of reading was certain to be regarded with an evil eye by her companions, and marriage for such a phenomenon was almost out of the question."⁵⁵

The obstacles were great, but the missionaries and their assistants persevered; they knew that what they were doing was right. Perhaps at times at first they were overly optimistic--but in most instances their labors bore fruit. Mr. Christie's letter from Adana is typical of this positive attitude. It seems in every missionary station he visited, he found schools for girls. "Appearing in a land where thirty years ago hardly a woman, if any, could read, this gift...is surely a remarkable sign of the times."⁵⁶

Through their own exemplary lives, their visiting of homes, the missionary ladies slowly broke down parental opposition to the education of girls; even the tuition fee that was charged proved in many cases to be no obstacle. Mrs. Knapp was convinced of the truth that "parents see such a change wrought in their girls that they are willing to make sacrifices in order to secure the benefit" for their daughters.⁵⁷ Miss Mary Ely from Bitlis tells the touching story of a young man who came to her school begging that his two sisters be admitted. He explained that he had desired for a long time "that his sisters should learn, but his father--recently deceased--had been bitterly opposed to Protestantism, and therefore the girls had been kept in ignorance." Times were surely changing, and Miss Ely was delighted. "It was a pleasant scene,--that older brother pleading for the education and enlightenment of the sisters, offering to bear the entire expense himself."⁵⁸

It must have been a day of celebration for the champions of female education when the Board in 1872 received a letter of request from the congregation at Aintab:

We remember how things stood twenty-five or thirty years ago. At that time we did not realize the necessity and advantages of education. A population of 10,000 Armenians in Aintab was satisfied with one school, in which reading and writing could be learned. We, as Protestant Armenians, were no longer satisfied with even three or four schools, nor with the fact that only our sons could be educated; something must be done for our daughters too. We found also that ability merely to read and write did not suffice.... While at first we were hardly willing to send our children to school, though it was the missionaries who bore the expense of their education, now we were willing to establish secondary schools at our own cost. In the light of God's Word we saw that we must be educated, would we become good Christians, good fathers and mothers and useful members of society.⁵⁹

In Bitlis at Mt. Holyoke Seminary as well, parents had seen "such a change wrought in their girls that they are willing to make sacrifices in order to secure the benefit," we read in *the Missionary Herald* (72, April 1876, p. 401). Nevertheless, it was difficult to eradicate prejudice and opposition to the idea of educating girls and women. Considering the odds against which the missionaries had to work, they brought about almost a miracle. The obstacles in their way had been nearly insurmountable: they had come to the darkest and remotest parts of the Ottoman empire, to the Muslim world with all its prejudices against women, to an entrenched patriarchal society that had no respect for the individuality and integrity of its women--yet in a few decades they had started to change some of the basic attitudes of this society towards its women. They had changed them so much that a woman attending college was no longer an anomaly. All this had happened at a time when girls, for example in Germany, were not allowed to attend high school and hardly ever dreamed about attaining a university degree. Julius Richter, the mission historian, a gentleman of the traditional old chauvinistic German variety, assesses this achievement in the following manner: "Perhaps a German writer is not a fully competent critic of American schemes for female education, as it is known that Germans hold somewhat different views on the position of women in society from the American ideals. So Americans are inclined to extend to Oriental women, too, a fuller measure of educational advantages than seems desirable or proper to a German mind."⁶⁰

While quite a number of patriarchal Armenian fathers and husbands permitted their daughters and wives to attend school, even college as we shall see, the sphere of their sisters in enlightened Germany was still restricted to what is called the three k's: "Kinder, Küche, Kirche"--children, kitchen,

church. Of course there were still members in the Armenian community who thought as well that educated women were neither "desirable" nor "proper". And they did not always confine their sentiments to words only. It happened on several occasions that priests of the Armenian Orthodox Church either demolished or burnt down schools that were run by the missionaries. When these dramatic demonstrations of disapproval did not have the desired effect, they stooped to slander and spread the rumor that the missionaries had set up their schools so that they could kidnap little Armenian girls whenever they so desired.⁶¹

Schools for boys remained usually a priority on the agenda of the educators, and girls had to wait sometimes for a very long time. Mr. Parsons, for instance, reports in the *Missionary Herald* that he used to have "frequent complaints from the bretheren in Nicomedia, that their girls were not cared for--that some were turned away for alleged 'want of room and ability to care for them'" (55, June 1859, p. 166). This is by no means an isolated complaint, and it was not restricted to the education of girls on the lower levels. Mr. Wheeler reports the following about Armenia College at Harpoot in the *Missionary Herald* (78, February 1882, p. 63):

Such is the power of superstition that daughters of Armenians, though numerous in our other schools, have not yet reached the college, but, as the erection of new buildings and the securing of a fine corps of teachers for the male department have put it in its present commanding position, so, undoubtedly, the same action on behalf of the female department will break down even the thicker and higher walls of prejudice by which girls are shut out from enjoying the privilege of higher Christian education which the college offers.

Education, though in most cases only elementary, did have its effect and had "liberated" the girls and had given them confidence in themselves. Miss Van Duzee reports of an incident that cheered her heart as champion of female education. It happened during a celebration in honor of St. Vartan at her school in Erzroom. A large room in the girls' school was packed with notables of the community and fathers and mothers. "These last mentioned were on one side, but there was no dividing wall or lattice" as there used to be in public places in order to divide the sexes. But the main attraction of the afternoon was a dialogue written and presented by ten young girls:

They said they had heard that in Europe, and especially in America, women had a great deal of freedom, but whatever there was in other countries, it had dwindled to nothing before it reached here. The fathers willingly spent money for the education of the boys, but it was not so for the girls....Girls ought not to spend their time thinking of marriage, but in improving their minds. It was the care or improvidence of women which made the family poor.

Miss Van Duzee was delighted with the courage and boldness with which the girls made their presentation. To her, the dialogue also "shows in miniature what is going on in real life in Erzroom, an interior city of Asia." These daring young girls were certainly astonishing. "Straws tell which way the wind blows," the lady educator concludes.

Armenian womanhood certainly had come a long way! The Rev. Smith and the Rev. Dwight, and all the other early missionaries to the Armenians would certainly have had a difficult time to recognize these young girls to be Armenian!

As we have seen, wherever the missionaries went, they established schools, schools on all levels to educate, but first and foremost to use them as tool for evangelizing. There were countless schools that taught the rudiments of reading and writing and the Bible to old and young, to male and female; the schools that trained little boys and scores of Bible women, who, in turn, went from home to home and taught there what they themselves had just been taught and were paid for their services. The missionaries also created a whole "constellation of Lancastrian schools" which they furnished with "competent and trustworthy teachers." These schools were based on a "monitorial system, one pupil teaching another."⁶²

All these schools provided a good beginning, but it soon became obvious that this level of education did no longer satisfy people whose intellect had been aroused. This was true for both boys and girls. Again the missionaries responded; they added new levels to already existing schools and opened institutions that provided education on a higher level. Evangelizing remained their prime objective. Most important, they, but especially the ladies, became the pioneers of female education.

Frank A. Stone has told the history of this pioneer work in women's education in the Middle East from its beginning in the 1820s. The story how the educational ideas of Miss Emma Hart Willard and all the American educational institutions that were based on her concepts--the female seminary of Mt. Holyoke in South Hadley, Massachusetts, in particular--makes fascinating reading. Most of the missionary wives and many of the assistants were graduates of these seminaries, and thus Miss Willard's very progressive ideas about women's education travelled with them to the most obscure hamlets in Turkey.

Biblical studies and religious exercises were stressed in her curriculum; domestic work occupied an hour and a half each day; the study of the natural sciences was important. It was an educational program emphasizing intellectual excellence, yet at Mt. Holyoke the girls were given a much more practical education than their brothers at Yale or Harvard. Very important in the shaping of these young women was the spirit and ideal of selfless humanitarian service that pervaded at Mt. Holyoke.⁶³

The educational ideals imparted to the women students at Mt.

Holyoke travelled with the graduates when they, alone or along with their husbands, went to Turkey. The spirit of their alma mater guided them when they felt they should alleviate the sad lot of their Armenian sisters they had come to help. These women needed to be educated, and their American counterparts loved to share what they themselves had been taught. It was a perfect combination.

Perhaps the greatest contribution to the education of Armenian women were the boarding schools for girls that sprung up from Constantinople to the farthest reaches of eastern Anatolia and that were sponsored by the various women auxiliary groups and mission boards back home who were interested in the educational work of the missionary ladies. To their minds, these schools were especially appropriate, as Barbara J. Merguerian has pointed out, since "they provided opportunities to train students in all aspects of everyday life and also to avoid the problems that young girls might encounter in passing the streets alone on the way to school."⁶⁴ Boarding schools also made it possible for girls from remote areas to get an education. The missionaries had definite goals in mind when they set up these institutions, as we read in the *Missionary Herald* for May 1878, vol. 74, p. 142:

In all cases two, in some cases there are three or four, unmarried American ladies, of good education, connected with each school. The main purpose of these schools is to raise up an efficient class of educated native women as general helpers in the work of evangelization. After spending three years in these schools, some of the young women become the wives of native pastors and preachers, others become teachers in common schools.

The writer of the *British Quarterly Review* from which this report is taken, full of praise, adds: "We doubt whether the Americans are doing anything in Turkey that is so sure, sooner or later, to change the entire character of society as what they are doing in the line of the education of women."

It amounted to a veritable female education boom. The Rev. and Mrs. Goodell as well as Miss Lovell were involved in the opening in 1845 of the school at Pera. After this school was moved in 1862 to Marsovan, to compensate for the loss, the Home School for Girls was founded in Constantinople in 1865; eleven years later it was moved to Scutari on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. In 1866 Bitlis became the home of a boarding school for Armenian girls; in 1876 Bursa and in 1878 Smyrna followed suit. In 1874 a boarding school had been opened in Nicomedia which was then moved to Bardizag and eventually to Adabazar. There were yet others. Julius Richter sums up: "By 1895 the number of girls' boarding schools had increased to twenty with 1,200 boarders. Some of them, as in Kharput and Marash, became colleges. The highest and most prominent institution is the American College for Girls at Scutari...publicly recognized by an official decree, an irade of the Sultan, in

1895, and even relieved of taxation."⁶⁵ The missionary ladies had accomplished much.

Though the spirit of Mt. Holyoke pervaded all of these schools, each had its own characteristics and was known for its own unique achievements. For instance, Mt. Holyoke of Bitlis was renowned for its spirit of religious revival; the Home School for Girls at Constantinople was famous for its outstanding school chorus and for the dramatic productions staged by the girls. But most important, the ideal of selfless humanitarian service, reminiscent of the Mt. Holyoke girls, was always taught at the Home School. As a result, many of its graduates did not flinch at accepting teaching posts in remote and backward communities. One of its students was the first Ottoman subject to become a professional nurse, another, Zarouhi Kavaljian, was the first Armenian woman in the Empire to study medicine. The Anatolia Girls' School opened a special school for the deaf; the Girls' Training School of Bursa (later of Aintab) became a famous teacher training institution; whereas the school at Smyrna, with Cornelia Storrs Bartlett as mentor, opened the first formal kindergarten in the whole Empire. Between 1885 and 1900, forty-two women were trained there as kindergarten teachers, who, in turn, opened twenty-seven pre-schools in many parts of Turkey.

Other schools gained fame through their curriculum. Bible study figured prominent on all curricula; we should not forget that the basic aim of these schools was to save souls for Christ. Like at Mt. Holyoke, emphasis was put on instruction in the native language; consequently the study of English was usually introduced when the school was well established. A typical curriculum would include mathematics, history, botany, geology, physics, psychology, and home economics. At times this last subject was stressed more than the others, at times subjects like music or English or literature were included. The school at Bardizag gained for a while a certain amount of notoriety under Miss Farnham who led her girls in calisthenics in the school yard.

The fame of yet other schools was based on their leadership. Mt. Holyoke had trained its students well, especially under ladies like Mrs. Schneider and Mrs. Wheeler and the Ely sisters and Mrs. Knapp--and all the others who, with great enthusiasm, did such important pioneer work. In the annals of missionary work among Armenians, we encounter most prominently the names of the Ely sisters who followed the invitation of the Rev. and Mrs. Knapp to come to Bitlis and take charge there of the fledgeling school for girls that had been founded by the missionary couple. The story of the sisters which is so closely intertwined with that of Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary in Bitlis has been very ably told by Grace H. Knapp and Barbara J. Merguerian.

The missionary ladies were often very satisfied with their charges. We read in a report about the school at Marsovan: "There are jewels in this school, --those who are sure to be useful and beloved wherever they go, there are oth-

ers whose diamond character requires a good deal of polishing to bring it out; but on the whole, a finer, more sensitive set of girls cannot easily be found in this country than those gathered in the Marsovan seminary." Unfortunately it often happened that soon after graduation the family of a girl would, according to their unenlightened tradition, marry her off to the highest bidder. The educators could only hope that "the women educated by the missionaries be found to have a powerful influence in the right direction, in the circle wherein she is placed."⁶⁶

Many of the girls who found teaching positions did indeed have a very "powerful influence" in the "circle" wherein they were placed. The missionaries had failed as far as the conversion of Jews and Muslims was concerned, but they certainly had done something for Armenian women when they provided education and jobs for them. Maritza, the young Armenian girl Mr. Fowle and Dr. Farnshaw observed one day in her classroom in a school near Cesarea, can stand for a whole generation of girls and women that had been educated by the missionaries:

If any one has any doubts about the expediency or wisdom of educating girls in this land I wish he could have seen Maritza as she stood before us, and compare her with what she was before Miss Classon [her former principal] took her and spent upon her the \$30 so kindly provided by the Christian women of America! Modest and retiring, yet 'strong in the Lord and the power of his might,' she is a power for good in the whole community.⁶⁷

The "power for good" in her community that Armin Theophil Wegner has envisioned for Esther Worperian, the heroine of his unpublished novel fragment "Die Austreibung"⁶⁸--"The Expulsion"--is the opposite double of Maritza. We meet her first in the excellent library of Euphrates College at Kharput founded in 1876, a college to which its faculty fondly referred to as "the Oxford of Asia Minor." In Esther's time, the school and its library have already become the bastion of the new patriotic and revolutionary spirit that, according to many Turkophile-oriented critics, had been encouraged to grow by the missionaries.

Esther, one of the few coeds at this institution, is a very serious student of philosophy and mathematics and has been inspired by the spirit of her alma mater. She is possessed by the idea to liberate and lead her people, another Jeanne d'Arc. Already as child she had dreamed of becoming "herself a revolutionary...who did not want to give in to weakness and humility; she did not want to kneel before authority...but through her education and energy had wanted to become the heroine who liberated her people from bondage."

In the novel as well as in reality, most of these educated young Armenians never had a chance to translate their dreams into action. Though the burning and looting and vandalizing of Armenian school premises in Sultan

Abdul Hamid's time could not inflict any permanent ruin on the institutions, the reprieve was only temporary. The events of 1915 and 1916 demanded many casualties, and most of the schools were among them. Some of the girls' schools could again resume instruction, but the community they had previously served no longer existed. The new generation of students they attracted was almost completely Turkish. The American Academy for Girls at Üsküdar and the American Collegiate Institute in Izmir belong to this group of survivors.

Another institution survived death and destruction and in 1960 celebrated its centennial: the Aleppo College for Girls, a century ago known as the Girls' Seminary of Aintab. The school, after it had been transplanted in 1922 to its present location, carries on in the tradition of its founders to "Walk as Children of Light." All of the women, the teachers going back to that intrepid missionary lady Mrs. Susan Schneider, and the students--many of whom also have become teachers--"have brought honor to the School."⁶⁹

Naturally the missionaries and their "female" assistants made mistakes. To us, they at times seem too paternalistic and intransigent, even bigoted, in their insistence that they alone possessed the ultimate truth; at times they offend us in their persistence that they "owned" the only true version of Christianity.⁷⁰ Still, we do have to remember that they were the children of their century, and when measuring their values we cannot simply judge them by our measuring tape.

That they have brought honor to their calling to be teachers, this we can say about all the missionary ladies we have met. They were dedicated teachers and gladly shared what they knew. Not many of the schools they founded have survived--but does that really matter? It was their presence among the Armenian women and their sharing of friendship and ideas with each other that mattered. Through their work they could reach and help many women, could awaken their intellect, inspire them with self-confidence, could even make a whole society aware of the need to change. How many of us teachers can claim that much?

NOTES

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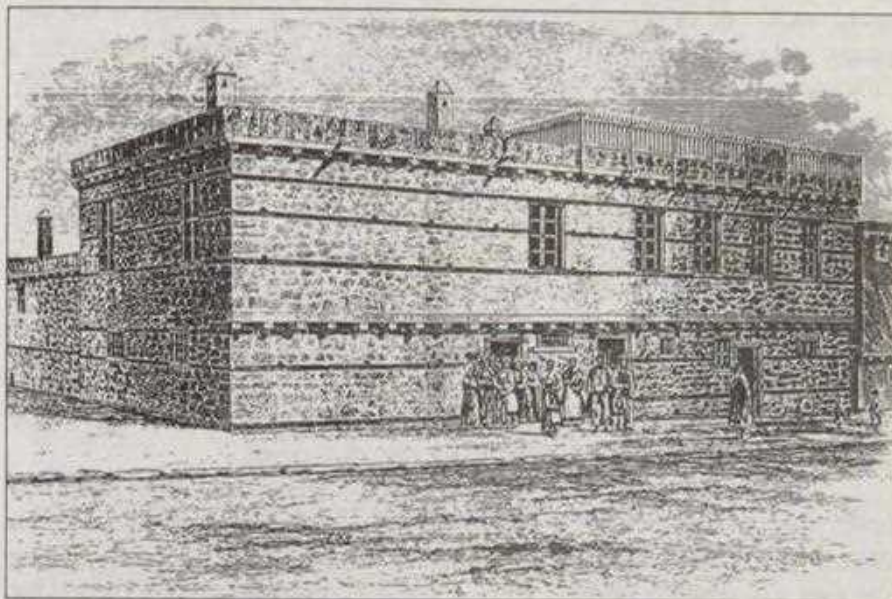
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63. Frank A. Stone, "Mt. Holyoke's Impact on the Land of the Ararat," *The Muslim World*, 66 (Jan. 1976), pp. 44-57.
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66. *Missionary Herald*, 71, March 1875, p. 275.
67. *Missionary Herald*, 77, June 1881, p. 229.
68. The MS of this novel is found in the Archive for Modern German Literature at Marbach-Stuttgart, Germany.
69. The celebration was commemorated through the publication of the *Centennial Book of Aintab Seminary 1860-Aleppo College for Girls 1960*.
70. In recent years it has become quite fashionable to find fault with the accomplishments of especially the missionary ladies of last century--both American and European alike. Simone Prodolliet's book *Wider die Schamlosigkeit und das Elend der heidnischen Weiber* (Zurich, 1987), for example, belongs to this trend.

APPENDIX I

ERZROOM FEMALE SEMINARY

By Miss C. O. Van Duzee



In the year 1868, when the first lady teacher was sent to Erzroom, there were no schools for girls over twelve or thirteen years of age, and for those who had not learned to read before that time, there was no hope. It was, as the natives expressed it, "a shame" for large girls to go to school."

During the winter it became known that a Protestant school was to be opened for that class of girls, and immediately the Old Armenians (in distinction from the Protestants) bestirred themselves to do the same thing. They bought land that spring in three different places, and commenced to build.

The first summer seventeen names were on the records, but not all came at once. They were over twelve years of age, for we do not receive those younger, as they can go to the little girls' school. Of these seventeen, five were village women, whose husbands were under instruction by the government of the mission, two were village girls, and the others were from the city, mostly Protestants.

The school furniture was an old pine table and a wooden chair for the teacher, and low pine benches, behind which the girls sat on the bare floor. For a few weeks we were in a poor, little room, opening from the wood-shed of one of the missionary houses; then we moved into a larger place, more respectable in the eyes of the people, but where the sun never came, and the smell from the stable under us, together with other odors from the house, were almost intoler-

able to a civilized person. A month later, a large, airy room was secured, which was full of sunlight. The little furniture was soon moved, an old black-board added, and all was in working order again.

The scholars were kept five hours a day. Mrs. Pierce and Mrs. Cole heard, each, one or two of the classes, for we were all beginners in the language, and probably studied our lessons as much as our scholars, though for a different reason. The girls knew nothing of school etiquette, neither did they think it necessary to comb their hair oftener than once a month. It was two whole summers of every-day work before they entirely changed their minds on this, to us, important subject.

School closed in October for the winter, the married women going with their husbands to teach in the villages. In the summer, villagers--men, women, and children--are almost too busy to eat or sleep, but in the winter their work is very light, and they have a great deal of leisure. We take advantage of this state of things, and send our pupils to teach others during the winter what they have learned in the summer. We called them together again in April, and school proceeded that summer very much as it did the year before, only better organized, and with more progress on the part of the girls.

In the spring of 1871, the third year of school, our pleasant room was better furnished; a new pine table took the place of the old one, with uncertain foundations, and a plain cushioned chair the place of the wooden one, which by this time was standing on three legs. There were window-curtains, carpets for the girls to sit on, small boxes for their books,--one for each,--a clock, and one or two mottoes. At the same time we began to board the three village girls, who had previously boarded themselves, with money given by us.

That year there were only seven scholars. There had been a sifting, some proving unfit for the work, while others were unable to come, but these few made fine advancement. During both of these summers Mrs. Pierce and Mrs. Cole had kindly taken charge of two or three of the classes, but just at the close of this school term Miss Patrick arrived, and was ready to help the next summer.

In 1872, we used pleasant rooms in the lower part of Mr. Parmelee's house. Our scholars had increased by the addition of village women and girls, and also by the coming in of three or four from the city. The boarders were four. A beautiful Mason and Hamlin organ had arrived during the winter, a present from the makers. We had, besides, a new black-board, and a set of small maps. In the spring of 1873 a house was purchased, next to Mr. Parmelee's, and after the necessary additions and alterations the school was moved in, about the first of June, and the Theological School took the rooms we had occupied the previous year.

In the engraving, the stone wall without windows, is the front of the schoolroom, and the first window from the corner belongs to the recitation-

room. Those beyond are our windows. The school building is connected with our rooms by a door into the recitation-room, so that we have access to the girls at all times of day or night. The house with a railing around the roof is the one occupied by Mr. Parmelee. The school building extends from the railing to the corner, in front, and on the side street, as far back as the pointed stone wall appears. The two small back windows, near the roof, belong to the girls' dormitory. The street in front is a continuation of the macadamized road which extends to Trebizond.

There are two or three reasons why no windows were put into the front wall of the school-room; the air from the street is very bad in the summer, it is not the sunny side of the house, being northeast, and the girls would be tempted to sit in the windows more than would be proper, considering the customs of the people. They make good use of the one in the recitation-room, but one window full of girls would do no harm, where three would be objectionable.

The building looks rather prison-like from the outside, but it is not at all so inside. The school-room has two southeast and two southwest windows, into which the sun pours all day long. The walls are beautifully white, thanks to the help of some friends in Constantinople. Then there are black-boards, maps, mottoes, pictures, a clock, the handsome organ, and "last but not least," a plain pine cupboard, containing a school library of Armenian books, presented by the North Church Sabbath-school, Buffalo, N. Y. We think the room is very pleasant. Down-stairs there are a convenient native kitchen, two cellars, and two rooms for sitting and sleeping.

Last summer (1873) there were seven boarders, and the names of nineteen scholars on our records, in which the boarders were included. There was an eighth boarder for the first month, but she was so sickly that we had to send her home. The girls took turns, by couples, in doing their work. Their market-man (a student in the Theological School), with his family, lived in rooms for that purpose, opening from the front hall of the school building. There is no yard for the girls except the roof, but there is no place in connection with the building that could be obtained for "love or money".

The studies are such as are pursued in every common school at home, and also the Catechism, Astronomy, Armenian, History, and the rudiments of some of the Natural Sciences, Philosophy, and Music. The study of the Bible is continued through the whole course. As the school advances, some higher branches may be introduced, but everything has to be started from what would be considered a great deal lower than foundations at home. They have to be taught, over and over again, the simplest things. Everything is taught in the Armenian language, and good text-books are very scarce.

There has been no revival, but we have reason to hope that the whole five of the first class are Christians, and two or three in classes below gave us some reason to hope last summer. A school prayer-meeting is held every week,

and besides this the scholars attend the women's meeting, and the general church prayer-meeting.

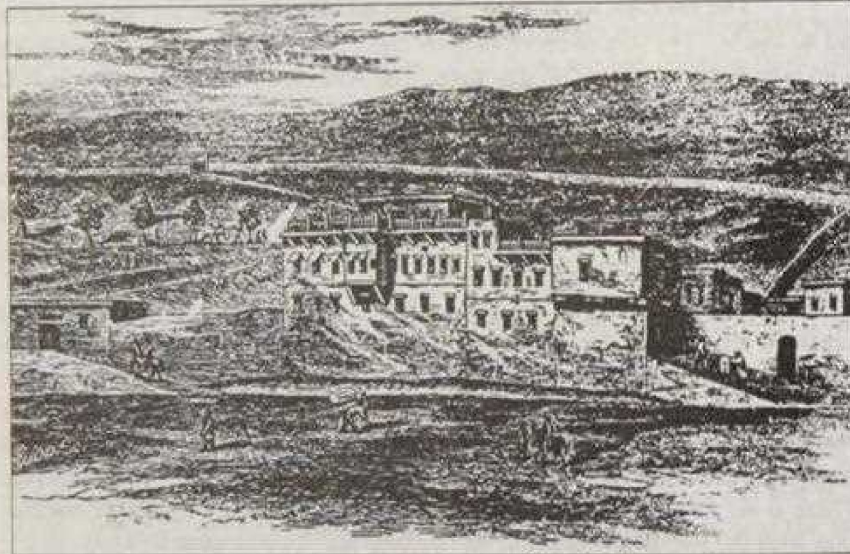
Many thanks to the kind friends at home who have given us such a pleasant and convenient building. May their prayers follow their gift, and the blessing of the Lord rest on those who shall be educated here.

Source: *The Missionary Herald*, 71
(February 1875), pp. 32-35

APPENDIX II

MISSIONARY PREMISES IN HARPOOT

By C. H. Wheeler



This sketch represents the eastern portion of the missionary premises in Harpoot, as seen from the south, the buildings in front, as seen in the sketch...being unrepresented. With the exception of a portion on the right, these buildings were not erected by us, but bought from an Armenian, who, like some in this land, having a sudden run of prosperity, built a bigger house than he could support, and then sold it for two thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars, which was probably less than half its cost. The upper story of the large building is divided into three parts, Mr. Allen occupying the left, I the middle, and the teachers of the female seminary the right, while the lower story is devoted to the pupils. The room on the extreme right, over the gate, is a Bible

depository,- now in process of building...

At the left is seen a stable, between which and the house is the play-yard of the seminary pupils. The walled and terraced space in the rear of the buildings, though dignified with the name of "garden," is, with the exception of the few trees which are kept alive by a weekly goatskin bottle of water in the rainless summer, a mere rocky, gravelly waste, as are all the mountaintops and sides.

Upon the hill-top in the rear is seen a part of a Turkish cemetery, which extends far to the north and east, covering many hundreds of acres. Indeed, the city is nearly encircled by these graveyards, which, during the many centuries since Harpoot began to be, have received to their often re-opened graves the successive generations of its population.

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Առաջին միսիոնարութիւնն զէպի Հայաստան եղաւ Նինոն [Նունե*], որ երուսաղէմի մէջ դաստիարակուելէ ետք զուինցի Նիափարա Սահա կոչուած հայուհիին կողմէ՝ առաքելացաւ արեւելք՝ քրիստոնէութիւնը տանելու համար վրացիներուն: Աշխատանքի եւ առաքելութեան անոր առաջին հանգրուանն եղաւ Բիւզանդիոնի մայրաքաղաք Կոստանդնուպոլիսը, ուր, սակայն, հալածուելով՝ իր ընկերուհիներով անցաւ Հայաստան, հոս ալ, սակայն, հալածուելով՝ նահատակուեցան ինք եւ իր ընկերուհիները [Հոփսիմեանց կոյսե*ր]:

Դարերու անցքին հետ Նինան չմնաց առանձին, եւ անոր յաջորդելու եկան այլ առաքեալներ եւ մերք՝ անոնց ընկերակցող իրենց տիկիները: Նինայի յաջորդներուն մէջ կը գտնենք կարողիկէ Յիսուսեանները, Անկիւքան Եկեղեցին, գերման Լուտերականները, եւ ուրիշներ, որոնց ներկայութիւնն զգալի դարձաւ եւ աշխատանքներն՝ արդիւնաւետ՝ մանաւանդ տասնիններորդ դարուն:

Այս բոլորին մէջ իրենց աշխատանքով, գործունէութեամբ եւ գործելակերպով հիմնական մնացին ամերիկեան Պորտ ընկերակցութեան առաքեալները, որոնք եթէ արեւելք հասան քրիստոնէութիւնը տանելու համար հրէային եւ մահմետականին՝ շուտով, սակայն, գտան որ կը գտնուէին պատին առջեւ անկարելիութեան մէկուն քարացած կրօնամոլութեան եւ միւսին՝ կրօնափոխութեան պարագային մահուան դատապարտումին պատճառով:

Ուղղակի գործունէութեան մը ծախողանքին ղեմ յանդիման՝ անոնք որոշեցին անուղղակի միջոցը, նախ բարեկարգել Եկեղեցին քրիստոնէայ հայուն, դաստիարակել զայն, անկէ ստեղծել ընդունելի տիպարը իսկական քրիստոնէային եւ անոր օրինակով քրիստոնէութիւնն ընդունելի դարձնել ոչ քրիստոնէային:

Սակայն, ըստ այս առաքեալներուն, խաբարուած էր քրիստոնէութիւնը քրիստոնէայ հայուն, եւ կը կրէր դարերու տգիտութեան բեռին մերքեւ:

Դիրին չեղաւ Պորտի ներկայացուցիչներուն առաքելութեան իրագործումը, որովհետեւ անոնք իրենց ղեմ գտան ծառայումը հայուն հետ Եկեղեցիին: Այս իրագործումին մէջ միսիոնարներուն քիկունք կանգնեցան նախ անոնց կիները, եւ ապա Միացեալ Նահանգներէն եւ այլ վայրերէն հաւաքագրուած այլ միսիոնարուհիներ:

Աստուծոյ խօսքը տանելու համար հայութեան՝ անհրաժեշտ էր նախ ուսումնառութիւնը անոր, որպէսզի անիկա կարենար կարդալ Մեծ Գիրքը եւ ջուրն ուղղակի խմէր ակէն: Սա կը նշանակէ մէկ բան – հարուածել հայ Եկեղեցին եւ անոր դարաւոր գործն ու վարկը:

Դիրին չեղաւ մատչիլ հայութեան: Օտարը միշտ ալ մնաց օտար եւ հալածուեցաւ.

մերժուեցաւ եւ անգօսնուեցաւ: Քրիստոնէութեան օտար ծառաներուն հազիւ թէ արտօնուեցաւ մատչիլ հայութեան: Հոս, ճիշդ հոս ալ մէջ մտան նախ անոնց կիները եւ ապա իրարայաջորդ սերունդները անուրի առաքելութիւններուն, որովհետեւ անոնք էին որ կարողացան քանդել պատուարները եւ հալեցնել սառը՝ կիճէ կիճ հաստատուած յարարութեամբ եւ իրենց անձնական օրինակով:

Ուսեալ եւ զարգացած այս օտարութիւններն էին, որ շուտով զտան իրենց ընկերներուն հետ թէ եթէ պիտի յառաջացուէր որեւէ փոփոխութիւն հայութեան, անոր եկեղեցիին եւ հաւատալիքներուն մէջ՝ անհրաժեշտ էր նախ դաստիարակել հայ անհատը, սորվեցնել եւ ուսում ջանքել անոր, որպէսզի կարելի ըլլար անոր ձեռքը տալ Աստուածաշունչը: Ընել կարենալու համար այսպէս՝ անոնք հաստատեցին զանազան մակարդակի ուսումնարաններ, որոնք, ի՞նչ խօսք, առջի օրերուն եղան լոկ մանչերու համար: Գիրիճն չեղաւ աղջիկներն ալ ներգրաւել ուսումնական եւ դաստիարակչական համակարգ, այսուհանդերձ ժամանակը եկաւ լուծելու շատ բան, եւ հետզհետէ դպրոցներ հաստատուեցան հայութիւններու համար եւս: Եւ հեղ մը որ հայութիւն առաւ համն ու բոյրը ուսումին եւ դաստիարակութեան՝ ալ չկեցաւ ետ հայ տղամարդէն, եւ անոր հետ քալեց անվախ եւ ճակատը բաց՝ հասնելու համար բարձրագոյն աստիճաններուն ուսումնառութեան, եւ ապա, ինքն իր կարգին, դառնալու դաստիարակչութիւն եւ ուսուցչութիւն իրարայաջորդ հայ սերունդներուն:

Տալու համար մէկ պատուճը հայուն եւ հայութիւն ուսումնական եւ կրթական այս գործընթացին՝ Դ.կ. Սրմաան առաւելաբար կը յենի տուեալներուն վրայ՝ Պոսթոն հաստատուած Ամերիկեան Միսիոնարական Պորտի *Միշընթի Հերըլփ*ին, որոնք, սակայն, միշտ չեն որ կ'ենթարկուին մանրագնի քննութեան եւ դատումի: Հակառակ տա իրողութեան, սակայն, այդ տուեալներով է, որ հեղինակը կը փորձէ գծել ու տալ մէկ պատկերը տասնիններորդ դարու հայ դպրոցին, անոր գոյատումին, դիմակալած դժուարութիւններուն եւ վերջնական յաղթանակին, որոնց մէջ մեծ դեր խաղացին առաքելութիւնները, եւ օրինակ ծառայեցին հայութեան եւ հայութիւններուն, որ իրենց վրայ վերցնեն դաստիարակութիւնն ու կրթումը հայ տղոց եւ աղջիկներու յաջորդական սերունդներուն:

Մասնաւորելով իր խօսքն ու զնահատականը ամերիկացի եւ ազգային այլ պատկանելիութեամբ այս կիներուն եւ օրիորդներուն Դ.կ. Սրմաան կը հաստատէ թէ «անոնք պատիւ բերին իրենց դաստիարակի կոչումին...: Նուիրեալ ուսուցչութիւններ էին անոնք եւ ուրախութեամբ բաժնեկցեցան այն՝ ինչ որ գիտէին իրենք: Անոնց հաստատուած դպրոցներէն բոլորը չէին որ տեսեցին – սակայն ի՞նչ կը նշանակէ այս մէկը: Իրենց ներկայութիւնը հայութիւններու միջեւ եւ անոնց հետ իրենց բարեկամութեան եւ զաղափարներուն փոխանակումն էին կարելու: Իրենց գործին ընդմէջէն անոնք կարողացան հասնիլ եւ օգնել բազմաթիւ կիներու, կարողացան արթնցնել անոնց իմացակամութիւնը, ներշնչել զանոնք ինքնավստահութեամբ, [եւ] նոյնիսկ կարողացան զգացնել ամբողջ ընկերութեան մը անհրաժեշտութիւնը փոփոխութեան»: