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NEIGHBORS

STUDIES IN IMMIGRATION
FROM THE STANDPOINT OF
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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New York, Bishop Greer welcomed him with cordiality, and the Anglican Eastern Church Association arranged a dinner in his honor in Synod Hall. Finally, at the close of his stay, a Service was held in the Church of the Redeemer, Brooklyn, at which Bishop Darlington presented the Greek prelate with an engrossed testimonial on behalf of the Committees of the General Convention to confer with the Eastern Orthodox Church. So great was the spell of the Metropolitan's personality that even the Protestant ministers tendered him a dinner under the auspices of the Clergy Club of New York, and the spirit of the occasion would seem to give promise of an "entente cordiale" between the Greek Church and the Protestant educational endeavors in the Near East.

Archbishop Meletios was accompanied on his trip by several representatives of the Church, among whom were Archimandrite Chrysostom Papadopoulos, director of the Theological Seminary and Professor in the University of Athens; Archimandrite Alexander Papadopoulos, a Secretary of the Holy Synod of Greece; Bishop Alexander of Rodostolos, and Dr. Hamilcar S. Alivisatos, chief of the ecclesiastical department in the ministry of education. The object of the Mission was to effect the organization of the Greek Church in America. With this end in view, the Metropolitan and his advisers made a careful examination of the Greek communities and studied carefully the ecclesiastical constitutions of those Churches which are close to the Orthodox in the fundamental basis of government. "The system which most attracts our attention," said Archimandrite Chrysostom, "is that of the Episcopal

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Church, because it is most near to our own and because we are connected to that Church by special bonds." Upon his departure, as we have already seen, the Metropolitan left Bishop Alexander of Rodostolos in charge of the Greek Church in the United States, with the title "Synodical Bishop."

PART II

OUR SYRIAN AND ARMENIAN NEIGHBORS

A GLANCE at the map will show what a remarkable position the land of Syria occupies as the point of contact between Asia, Africa and Europe. It is on the direct line of travel between Asia and Europe, and it is part of the only land-route between Africa and Europe. It has therefore been, throughout the ages, the highway of the nations. The cities of Syria are rich in historical significance for Jew, Moslem and Christian. Damascus, the oldest inhabited city in the world, is connected with Bible history from Abraham to Saul of Tarsus. Jerusalem, from the days of Melchizedec to the present, has held a supreme place in the spiritual life of mankind. In Antioch the disciples of our Lord were first called Christians; from that city St. Paul started on his missionary journeys; and there, in the second century, the heroic St. Ignatius was Bishop. Beirut, the important seaport of Syria, is of more modern interest as the centre of a great Protestant educational work. From all these cities, as well as from the country districts, come our Syrian immigrants.

Syria—The
Cross-Roads

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The Syrians claim Phoenician ancestry, and are indeed akin to those hardy voyagers of early days.

The People They are not, as is sometimes supposed, Turks, though they have long been subjects of the Turkish Empire; nor are they in any way connected with Mongolian Asiatics. Originally, they spoke a language known as Aramaic, or Syriac, traces of which are found in the New Testament in the phrases, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani"; "Talitha cumi"; "Ephphatha"; but this language is in general use today only in the Church's liturgy, having been superseded in southern Syria by Arabic, and in the northern districts by Turkish. Hence the Syrians proper are sometimes known as Syro-Arabs. Like their Phoenician ancestors, the Syrians are ambitious and thrifty tradesmen. Possibly it was their shrewdness in trade which evoked the bitter complaints of the Roman writer Juvenal against the influx of Greeks and Syrians into Rome in his day; certainly this same business aptitude is a factor in the hatred which the modern Turk feels for the Syrian today and which has resulted in such terrible persecutions.

The stream of Syrian immigration into the United States had its rise at the time of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1892. Prior to that date Syrians had come at intervals, one at a time. In 1878 Dr. Joseph Arbeely and his family of nine represented the first immigrant family. Arbeely entered the employ of our Government at Ellis Island.

The earliest centre of Syrian settlement in the United States is in New York, extending from Cort-

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Syrian Immigration

landt Street to Battery Place along Washington and streets adjacent. The visitor is at once conscious that he is in the midst of a foreign community. The names on the show-windows are in Arabic characters; swarthy children are playing on the door steps; a number of old women are coming out of the Maronite* Church of St. Joseph; a block away the visitor spies a painted glass window of St. George and the Dragon, where the top floor of a building has been converted into the Melchite Church of St. George.

Some years ago Trinity Church made a social survey of this territory. The report states: "Within this district the Syrians are engaged in the manufacture of lace and kimonos, as importers and peddlers. They are ambitious and thrifty and soon become independent. After saving enough money they show a tendency to move to the newer Syrian settlements in New York and Brooklyn. Their stay in the district, therefore, is a means to an end, and while here, they make a business of taking fellow countrymen as lodgers to help themselves the more quickly to leave the section. During the spring and summer months numbers leave the district to peddle laces and shawls in the surrounding towns and summer resorts."

The more prosperous Syrians early turned toward Brooklyn as a place of residence, and quite a business district has sprung up on lower Atlantic Avenue, State Street, and places adjacent. Ten years ago conservative estimates placed the number of Syrians in

*For a brief account of the Maronites and Melchites see Appendix, Note G.

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New York and Brooklyn at 10,000. Lawrence, Mass., stood next with 5,000 Syrians chiefly employed in the woolen and cotton mills, and living in the vicinity of Valley, Oak and Elm Streets. Boston had a Syrian district with 3,000 inhabitants. Pittsburgh had 2,500, and St. Louis was fifth with 1,500. The war conditions, however, have played havoc with all statistics. A glance over the Syrian business directory will show that Syrians are scattered over the whole area of the United States. With one exception, every State reports some residents. Delaware alone has no Syrian establishment of any kind. The numbers range from 23,000 in New York and 16,300 in Pennsylvania to 15 in Idaho and 3 in Nevada. Dean Kerbawy estimates the Syrian population of the United States at no less than 100,000. There is a wide range of economic activity. The business directory shows Syrian mechanics, barbers, photographers, dry goods merchants, jewelers, dealers in "notions," kimonos, laces, silks and rugs; keepers of restaurants, pool-rooms, dentists, doctors, interpreters, tobacconists, etc.

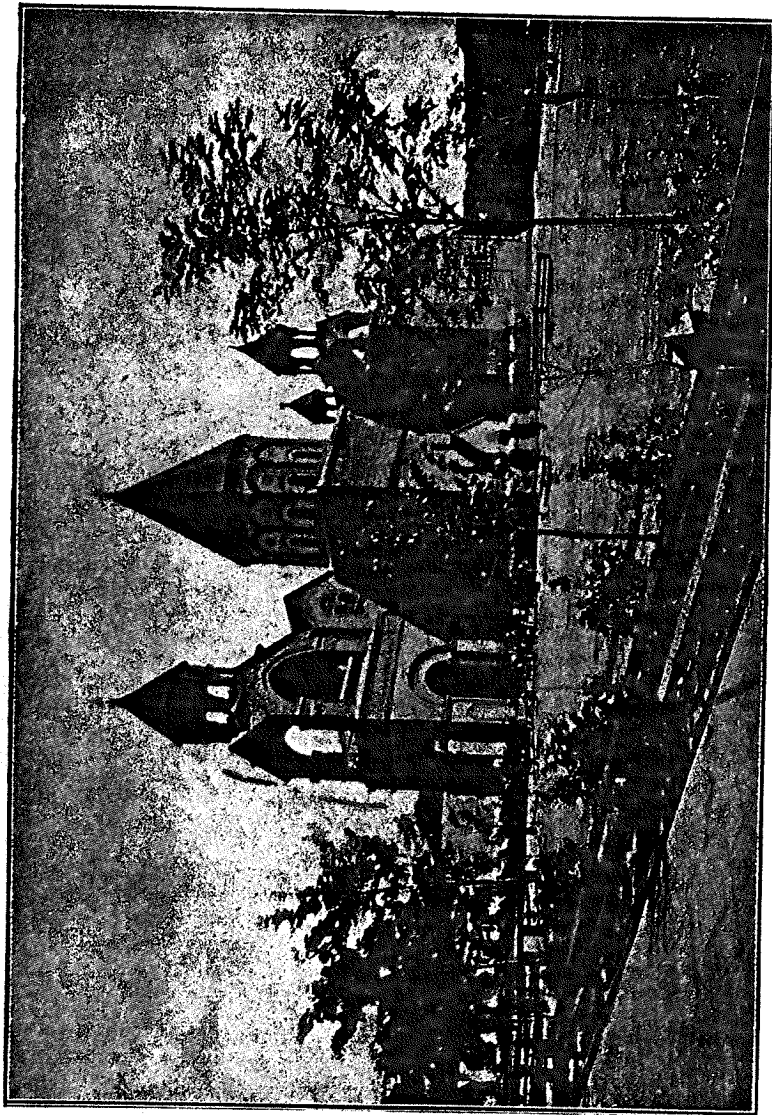
Throughout the war, the Syrians showed a spirit of the utmost loyalty to their adopted country. In Brooklyn, especially, the members of the Syrian community were active workers in the Red Cross and Thrift Stamp drives, to an extent unsurpassed by any other racial group.

The Syrian Orthodox Church

The Syrian Orthodox Church is part of the Eastern Communion to which the Greeks belong, and possesses the same ritual and doctrine, though there is a strong



SYRIAN CATHEDRAL OF ST. NICHOLAS, BROOKLYN, N. Y.



CATHEDRAL AT ETCHMIADZIN, ARMENIA

Courtesy of The New Armenia

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anti-Hellenic sentiment in the Syrian Church, which finds expression in a leaning toward and a dependence on the Russian Church.

In the year 1895, after a few fruitless attempts on the part of the Syrians in America to provide for definite ecclesiastical organization, the **Syrian and Russian** Holy Synod of Russia, at their request, sent a commissioner in the person of the Rev. Raphael Hawaweeny, formerly under the Patriarch of Antioch, but later transferred to the jurisdiction of the Russian Church. He arrived in New York in October, 1895, and began holding Services at 77 Washington Street, Manhattan, in the Syrian quarter, but soon transferred his activity to lower Brooklyn whither the stream of immigration was steadily flowing. His labors met with great success, and he was soon enabled to purchase a church building from a Swedish congregation on Pacific Street near Hoyt. He was consecrated Bishop Suffragan to the Russian Archbishop in New York, with charge of the Syrian Mission. In 1910 he attended our General Convention in Cincinnati, and was introduced to the House of Bishops by the Bishop of Harrisburg.

Bishop Raphael was a master-builder. He laid strong enduring foundations, gathering a large constituency and acquiring valuable property for the congregation. He was a man of wide education and keen intelligence, a master of many languages. He possessed rare gifts of administration, and was unselfishly devoted to the spiritual and material welfare of his people. His death, in 1915, deprived the Syrian Church of a strong leader.

Neighbors

He was succeeded by his co-worker, in America, the Rt. Rev. Aftimius, consecrated Bishop of Brooklyn in 1917, under the jurisdiction of the Russian Church.* At the time of the selection of Bishop Aftimius an unfortunate dissension occurred. Some objected to the Russian jurisdiction, withdrew from St. Nicholas, and organized an independent congregation under the name "St. Mary's Antiochean Syrian Congregation." They have placed themselves under Archbishop Germanos of Selefkias, who happens to be in this country representing the Patriarch of Antioch. This congregation is meeting in rented quarters at the corner of State Street and Boerum Place in Brooklyn. It is impossible to predict what will be the outcome of this movement which unhappily divides the Syrian Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church has had the advantage from the outset of a systematic organization. Bishop Raphael's administration gave it a carefully ordered arrangement. In this it presents a striking contrast to the Greek Church in America. Among the Syrians the lay element is under careful control, and the priests are subject to episcopal supervision. Numerically the Syrian Orthodox is much smaller than the Greek, and its churches are unpretentious. The priests have spiritual oversight of very wide areas. An illustration comes from Eastern Oklahoma where our Archdeacon reports that the only foreigners brought into any kind of touch with him are some Syrians in the oil towns who for the most part speak English, and are looked

*For list of Syrian Orthodox priests see Appendix, Note H.

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after in some fashion by their own priests who make occasional visitations to the oil fields. A number of their children belong to our Sunday Schools.

The difficulty of an effective pastoral oversight at long range is apparent, and becomes a matter of serious concern in relation to the children who are deprived of the opportunity of growing up in loyalty to and with intelligent understanding of the Services of their own Church. This situation presents one of the gravest difficulties which the Syrians must face. The future of their Church in America is closely related to its solution. The problem is especially acute among the Syrians, since the Syrian Church is weak along educational lines and lacks men and women who are equipped to develop Sunday Schools or to impart any religious training. The clergy appreciate the situation and are struggling to meet it, but many of them are ultra conservative and do not speak English; hence they are unable to hold the young people who are peculiarly enterprising and progressive. It is at this point that we can best serve the Syrian immigrant by encouraging him in loyalty to his Church.

The attitude of the Syrians toward the American Church is cordial and trustful, so much so that our clergy are occasionally asked by a Syrian Orthodox congregation to organize a Sunday School for them on our own lines. Unfortunately, however, the supply of organizing ability does not begin to meet the demand within our own Church. Nevertheless opportunities for helpful service do occur. One of our clergy states that

**Perils through
Lack of Over-
sight**

**Attitude to-
ward Ameri-
can Church**

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a Syrian priest called on him recently to secure assistance for the musical setting of the Arabic liturgy in English. The Service has been translated and is being set to the Syrian music, so that at regular times the worship will be conducted in the English tongue. This will not only be a long step toward holding the younger generation born in this country, but it will also have a tendency to bring the Syrian Church into closer association with American ecclesiastical life. In course of time it may be a means of winning back Protestant Syrians who have been alienated from their ancestral faith through the influence of denominational educational work. They have attended the Protestant schools in the home-land and have been drawn away from the Mother Church, yet their very education fits them to render valuable service to the Orthodox Communion which enshrines such richness of devotional life and spiritual treasures that even a Protestant Syrian, writing some years ago in the *Atlantic Monthly*, gave emphatic testimony to its power in the unfolding of his spiritual life, bearing eloquent witness to the great debt he owed to the Faith in which he was nurtured as a child.

While the friction between Syrian and Greek branches of the Eastern Orthodox Church, often becomes acute even in the home-land, and is frequently visible here, the relations between the Syrian and the Russian Churches are sympathetic and intimate. Both of them regard the American Church with friendliness, and Bishop Af-timius has openly expressed the hope that our Churches may come into close and cordial relations.

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The Episcopal Church has the opportunity of being "big brother" to the Syrian Orthodox in its new home in America. Bishop Parker of New Hampshire has extended a friendly hand by securing scholarships in his school for Syrian lads, and by using his influence to provide religious ministrations for Syrian Orthodox in the Army. Incidentally, a large number of Syrians have been among Uncle Sam's fighting forces. The founding of a few scholarships for Syrian boys and girls in our Church schools is one of the first steps we ought to take to help the Syrian Church. Working along these lines and wholeheartedly endeavoring to strengthen the Syrians in loyal adherence to their Mother Church, we have a large and effectual door of opportunity among these interesting and picturesque immigrants from our Lord's home-land.

The Assyrian-Nestorians

The Assyrians, part of whom are commonly known as Nestorians, are a courageous, hardy people, inhabiting the mountainous regions of Turkey and Persia. They have recently come into prominent notice through the visit of Paul Shimmer, representative of the Patriarch, who came to this country in order to arouse Christian sympathy for his people in their unparalleled sufferings at the hands of the Turks during the war. Once great and powerful, the Nestorian Church, driven into exile in Persia during the fifth century by the Orthodox Church, developed an extraordinary measure of missionary zeal. Not only the whole of Persia, but India

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as well, felt their influence. Thence they pushed eastward to the very centre of China, where evidence of their labors exists today in the form of a tablet inscribed with an abstract of Christian doctrine written in Chinese and Syriac. In India the Nestorian missionaries met with great success, the results of which, though in modified form, are still to be seen in the Indian Syrian Church of Malabar and Ceylon.

In their own land, for 700 years, the Nestorians have suffered destructive persecution, until at the present time their numbers are sadly reduced.

Missions to the Nestorians Our interest in them should be stimulated, not only by reason of their sufferings, but chiefly by the fact that in recent years they have appealed strongly to the missionary enterprise of Christendom. The American Presbyterian Mission at Urumia, Persia, proved a bulwark of defense for these unfortunate people during the war, although, religiously, it has succeeded only in forming a Protestant community. Since 1886 the Church of England has had a mission in Urumia, established "with the knowledge and blessing of the Catholic Patriarch of Antioch," and having as its express purpose "the strengthening of an ancient Church." The present Patriarch was educated in the Anglican school at Urumia, and the mission further assisted the Nestorian Church by putting its liturgy, (hitherto used only in manuscript), into printed form.

In 1907 Bishop Collins of Gibraltar paid a visit to Mar Shimun, the martyred Patriarch, and the story of his journey is one of the most fascinating chapters in missionary annals. He commends the

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naturalness, simplicity and spontaneity of the Nestorians' religious faith which reproduces the life and spirit of the early Christians. Mar Shimun received Bishop Collins with great cordiality. The patriarchal church building is described as a dark square edifice, built of large stones with only one little window and a roof of stone supported on two round arches. The graves of a dozen former Patriarchs are built into the walls. A ladder leads up into the baptistry. The chancel recess is covered by a curtain, and there is a vestry with an oven for baking the holy loaf, the preparation of the eucharistic bread being a matter of great care, since Nestorian tradition asserts that the leaven used has been in continuous and successive use since the night of the Last Supper. The Cross is greatly venerated (a striking fact when seen in the light of the constant persecution to which the Nestorians have been subjected), but the churches contain no *ikons* or other religious pictures. Mar Shimun said that he hoped for a closer unity with the Anglican Church, but was sure that his people were not ready yet. The difficulty was not in any particular doctrines or practices, but simply in the fact of unfamiliarity and lack of mutual intercourse.

Although there are about 5,000 of these East Syrians, or Nestorians, in the United States, they have had only a local prominence in American Church life, but the experience of the Church of England indicates the possibility of a very distinct responsibility on the part of the Episcopal Church and a unique opportunity for service. There are colonies in New Britain, Conn.,

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Yonkers, N. Y., and Philadelphia, Pa. The principal centre, however, is Chicago where there are two or three priests. In New Britain, Conn., the Nestorians are under the pastoral care of the Rev. Simon Yonan. The Services are held in St. Mark's Episcopal Church. On Easter Day, 1919, at four o'clock in the morning, the Sacrament was administered to no less than one hundred and eighty persons, some of whom had come from as far as Elizabeth, N. J. and Boston, Mass., in order to be present. This is a good illustration of the faithfulness of the Nestorians to their Church. A large number of Assyrians in Yonkers have, since 1903, held Services, at first in St. Andrew's Church and later in St. John's, where the Rev. Isaac Yohannan, a priest of our Church, ministers to them, using the Book of Common Prayer.

Assyrian Jacobites

The Church in Syria, as a whole, always possessed a marked individuality. Geographically it was separated from the rest of Christendom. **A Divergent Group** Politically it was outside the Byzantine Empire, the capital of which was Byzantium—the modern Constantinople. Its language kept it apart from the Greek world. Under such circumstances one would have supposed that unity would be its marked characteristic. On the contrary, however, it seems always to have lacked cohesion, and, as we have seen, to have had a divisive tendency, which has resulted in numerous separate ecclesiastical organizations. One of these we have just considered. Another should be noted, since it includes an appreciable part of our

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Syrian immigration. These are the Assyrian Jacobites, so named after their founder, a Bishop of Edessa in the sixth century, Jacob Baradaeus by name. He was a picturesque figure, described as fleet of foot, temperate, shunning no hardship, full of missionary zeal. Dressed in tattered garments, with the appearance of a beggar, he travelled throughout Asia Minor and Egypt for a period of forty years, gathering followers, organizing congregations, consecrating Bishops, ordaining minor clergy. With apostolic zeal he labored by day and travelled by night, and with such effect that his teaching swept over Syria and Mesopotamia, and indeed, became the foundation of the National Church of Syria.* Of this great movement, however, but scanty remnants exist today, their number being estimated at 80,000. Bishop Jacob assumed the favorite title "Patriarch of Antioch" (a title, we note, always claimed by the head of every independent Syrian Church), and adopted the name of the martyred Bishop Ignatius, a name similarly adopted by all of his successors.

The Jacobites use the old Syriac language in their Church Services, although it is now practically obsolete as a spoken language, having been superseded in popular use by Arabic. The Jacobites use leavened bread in the Eucharist, mixed with salt and oil. At each making of dough, a small piece is set aside and mixed with the next making, so that the continuity of the Eucharist is emphasized by the unity of the

*Baradaeus taught the Monophysite heresy that Our Lord possessed only one composite nature. The Nestorians hold that He had two distinct and separate natures.

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bread. They administer Communion in both kinds. They venerate pictures and images. They make the sign of the Cross with one finger to show, that according to their teaching, Christ had but one nature.

In July, 1841, the Rev. Horatio Southgate, a priest of the American Church, afterward consecrated Missionary Bishop of Constantinople, paid a visit to the Jacobite patriarch at the monastery of Der-el-Zafaran. He remained a fortnight as his guest. Mr. Southgate went as representative of the foreign committee of our Board of Missions. He started abroad in 1836, receiving his final instruction at a public meeting held in the Church of the Ascension, New York, on Easter Day. In the course of his travels he came into personal relations with representatives of the Greek, Armenian, Nestorian and Jacobite Churches. This was perhaps the earliest instance of contact between the ancient Syrian Church and the West. The primitive character of the life of the Jacobite Patriarch may be inferred from this entry in Mr. Southgate's diary, "The Patriarch was engaged all morning in superintending the threshing and winnowing of the wheat."

Jacobites have been coming to the United States a few at a time for the past twenty-five years. Many find employment as silk weavers. In New England they are represented in various trades. There are more than a thousand scattered through New Jersey. In Paterson there are about fifty families, and in West Hoboken the same number. At College Point, Long Island, there are ten families; in Worcester, Mass., there are about a

A Visit to the Jacobites

Jacobites in the U. S.

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hundred families; in Boston sixty and in Fitchburg thirty; in Central Falls, R. I., there are forty families.

In this latter place they worship in a small building, and Bishop Perry speaks of them as, "earnest, self sacrificing, well versed in their liturgy and loyal to their traditions."

There is only one Jacobite priest in the United States—the Rev. Hanna Koorie, of Paterson, N. J. He gathers his congregation occasionally in St. Luke's Church, South Paterson. He struggles heroically to minister to his people scattered as they are over a wide area, as far away as Michigan. The Jacobites have no church building in the United States, but land has recently been secured at 550 Clinton Avenue, West Hoboken, New Jersey, and the congregation has been incorporated under the title "Assyrian Jacobite Apostolic Church of St. Mary the Virgin." Father Koorie was ordained in Jerusalem and displays his letters of ordination in four different languages. He is untiring in his devotion to his people and most unselfish and indefatigable. He is under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch Mar Ignatius Elias, who lives at Mardin, Turkey in Asia.

Protestant Syrians

For nearly a century the Mission Boards of various Protestant bodies have carried on work throughout the Near East among the Syrians. Educational institutions of a high order have been founded. Native Christians have sought the opportunities offered by these schools. Some have been won away from their ancient faith, and have attached themselves to inde-

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pendent Protestant congregations that have been organized among them.

The relations between the ancient Churches and the American Protestant Missions have brought about a very delicate situation. The extreme Protestant point of view does not always take sufficient account of ancient and traditional forms of religion, nor is it in natural accord and sympathy with the intricate organization of the Eastern ecclesiastical system, and its elaborate liturgical customs. "It became evident," says a Protestant writer of our day, "that the Greek nation was not ready to welcome the Gospel!" He meant that Greece was not hospitable to American Protestant missionary endeavors. The average Oriental, on the other hand, believes that the Protestant missionary can add nothing to what he already possesses in the Orthodox Church. The result of Protestant work in Syria has been the organization of native Protestant congregations. From these a goodly percentage of our Syrian immigrants are recruited. They have learned English in the Mission Schools; they have become acquainted with American teachers; they join the procession of those who are seeking their fortunes in the new land. Thus we shall find Syrian Protestants in our Syrian settlements, and definite religious work amongst them in many places.

Individual Protestant Syrians often find their way into the Episcopal Church, and become attached to our liturgical forms and rich sacramental life. An illustration came to hand while the present writer was preparing this chapter. A ring at the doorbell brought a couple of Syrians to be

An Opportunity

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married. The bride was of the Orthodox Church, the groom was a young Syrian from Woonsocket, R. I., a member of our Communion, very staunch, and insisting on our Prayer Book rite. He had found his way into the Episcopal Church from one of the Protestant bodies. There are frequent instances of this kind.

Our Church has carefully avoided any effort to proselytize the Syrian population. In Providence, R. I., there is a congregation known as the "Old Syrian Church," with which the Episcopal Church has intimate relations, but no official connection. Bishop Perry says that "religious work among the Syrians presents a complicated problem, and one that requires much care and patience. The deeper one goes into it, the more difficult are the problems arising from the longstanding divisions between Uniats, Maronites, Orthodox, etc." Perhaps one of the best contributions which our Church can make toward the solution of the problem is to bring about an intelligent appreciation of the Eastern Churches. Oppressed, impoverished, uneducated, these Churches have survived, and have rooted themselves so deeply in the life, affection and convictions of the people, that thousands have heroically faced persecution, torture and death for the Faith. The Eastern Christians have never been found wanting in fidelity. No one would wish to add a Syrian Episcopal Church to the already large list of Syrian religious divisions. Rather let us enter into helpful relations with the ancient Churches, and meet them in a spirit of sympathy, toleration, statesmanship, and we shall discover the opportunity of an

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abiding constructive work amongst these people from the cradle-land of Christ.

The Armenians

Owing probably to the fact that the Armenians are, like the Syrians, inhabitants of Asiatic Turkey and have also long been the victim of Turkish misrule and oppression, the average person usually confuses them with the Syrians or even with the Turks. They are, however, an entirely distinct race. Of Aryan stock, rather than Semitic like the Syrians, they wandered from their original home in Thrace, about the year 1300 B.C., crossed the Bosphorus into Bythina, pushed eastward into Cappadocia and Cilicia, and in the 8th century B.C. settled in the region about Mount Ararat. Here, at a very early date in the Christian era, Christianity took root among them. In A.D. 310, Tiridates was converted, and Armenia became the first of all countries to establish Christianity as the national religion. Its Bishops were present at the first great Council of the Church at Nicæa in the year 325, but in the middle of the fifth century, the Armenian Church, refusing to accept the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, separated itself from the rest of the Church and established itself as a distinct national body under the title *Gregorian*.* The ecclesiastical head of the Armenians is a Catholicos, whose residence, since the year 1441, has been at Etchmiadzin, a town thirty-five miles north of Ararat.

*There is now on foot a movement looking toward the reunion of the Armenian Church with the Eastern Orthodox.



VARTAN, AN ARMENIAN BOY

Courtesy of *Men and Missions*