

ASSYRIAN CHURCH CUSTOMS

AND THE
MURDER OF MAR SHIMUN

By

SURMA D'BAIT MAR SHIMUN

with an introduction by
His Grace the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Edited, with a Glossary by
W.A. WIGRAM, D.D.

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Surma D'Bait Mar Shimun
Sister of the martyred Patriarch

Lady Surma d'Bait Mar Shimun, the author of this book was born in Qudshanis, Hakkari, Eastern Turkey on January 27, 1883. She died in Turlock, California on December 7, 1975.

PREFACE

BY HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

This remarkable little book has for me, and will have for many others, a peculiar and a vivid interest. It gives an outline picture of the daily life and the story of a Church and nation about which most of us have known very little; and it gives the picture from their side, not from ours.

For more than thirty years the "Mission of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the `Assyrian' Church" has had a place in the thoughts and prayers of a limited circle of friends, but it has not been largely under the public eye. The purpose and work of the Mission are described succinctly by Surma Khanim herself in her narrative, and I will not anticipate her pointed and appreciative words. During these thirty years, the remarkable series of devoted men who have been our missionaries (or, as the Assyrians call them, our "Apostles"), have reported constantly to Lambeth, and there have been few reports which have not made reference to the steadily Browning influence and authority of the gracious and capable lady who has now, in her thirty-fifth year, given us this book.

Herself a member of the ruling family, niece of the Patriarch Reuil Mar Shimun, and sister of his two successors, Benyamin and Paulus Mar Shimun, Surma Khanim—who is technically set apart as a "religious"—has been in close touch from her childhood with matters national and ecclesiastical, and has grown by degrees to be our trusted counsellor and friend.

She owes to one of our most devoted mission priests ("Rabbi Doctor Browne," as she calls him) an education more thorough than that of any of her countrywomen in Assyria. It includes, as this book shows, a good knowledge of English. Doctor Browne (whose death in Qudshanis in 1910 was caused by an accident) has frequently expressed to me the high hopes he cherished for his pupil. These hopes have been abundantly realized, for it would be difficult, I think to exaggerate the importance of what Lady Surma has been able to do for her people.

Her influence began when she was almost a child, and it has reached its culmination in these last tempestuous and fearful years. Undismayed herself, and inspiring confidence and respect in all, she found it possible to act as a veritable leader, where leadership was wanted, even in such days of horror and confusion as those which witnessed the murder of her brother the Patriarch, and the recurrent massacres of her people. In the hours of actual fighting, such unwonted responsibilities as the care of the ammunition stores and the like, were assigned to her by acclamation.

In her own fashion she wielded authority in at least one perilous and bloodstained march or flight, and in the great camp of refuge at Baqubah she held an undisputed place of honour. It was almost a matter of course that she should be chosen as the delegate of her people to come to Paris and to London, in these anxious and perplexing months of consultation, and public testimony has been borne in the British Parliament to the value of her aid.

In these circumstances, nothing can be more appropriate than that this lady should, while in England, give us from her own standpoint such an account of her people, religious and secular, as these pages present. In its straightforward simplicity lies its strength; those who, on reading it, desire an ampler knowledge of the historic and political setting of the picture given us, or of the ethical and theological questions involved, will turn to such books as "The Cradle of Mankind," by Dr. W.A. Wigram (A. & C. Black); "Our Smallest Ally" (S.P.C.K., 1920); "The Assyrian Church, 100-640 A.D."; or to the papers published by the Committee of the Archbishop's Mission. But I believe that in the compilation of this modest little book, which, as standing by itself in the literature of the subject, will be welcomed both in England and America, Surma Khanim has rendered to her people not the least of the services for which she will, in years to come, be held in grateful remembrance.

Randall Cantaur

LAMBETH Easter, 1920.

INTRODUCTION

By The Rev. W. A. WIGRAM, D.D.

The Assyrian Church, with which this book deals, is a very ancient type of Christianity, representing (with the "Jacobite" Church, its neighbor) the extension of the Faith among the Syriac-speaking peoples to the east of Palestine, the subjects of the Parthian and second Persian (Sassanid) empires.

Assyrians say that "the Gospel was brought to our fathers by the apostles Adai and Mari," and their tradition identifies the former with Thaddaeus, the apostle of Christ, who is also claimed as its founder by the Armenian Church. There is good historical evidence that an "apostle" of that name, who may quite possibly have been one of the "seventy," as another version of the tradition declares him to have been, was working in Adiabene by the year 100 A.D.

This Church "of the Easterns" (i.e. of the Christians dwelling to the east of the Roman empire of the day) had always a most isolated existence, as shown by the fact that it was forgotten at the council of Nicea, and never had any official knowledge of the Creed put forward by that council till the year 411, when it fully accepted it as in accord with what it had always taught. Individual bishops had knowledge of the council, of course, but not the Church in its corporate capacity.

This isolation was emphasized by the fact that the body had to insist on a measure of distinctness from the Church of the Roman empire, as a means of self-preservation. When the Roman empire became Christian, all Christian subjects of its Persian rival (who had been tolerated previously) became suspect, as Christians were in Turkey in later days, and a series of massacres or persecutions were inflicted on them. Hence, it was natural for them to put stress on any point that would distinguish them from "Roman Christians," in order to be able to say, "We are not the same brand of Christian as those others, and so need not be persecuted every time the Shah-in-Shah has a quarrel with the Roman Emperor."

Thus it was that they were accused of Nestorianism, a charge to which colour was given by the facts that they did not accept the council of Ephesus, used the title "Mother of Christ" as their official name for the Blessed Virgin, and honoured the name of Nestorius.

On the other hand, the fact that they accepted the council of Chalcedon is evidence that they did not teach what Nestorius was condemned for teaching, and in later days they have declared that the "Quicumque vult" is an adequate statement of their doctrine on the Person of the Lord, and that by their title "Mother of Christ" for the B.V.M. they mean, "Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God."

They were, in fact, kept out of touch with the Church of Constantinople by the infection of the latter with Monophysism, until such time as the rise of the flood of Islam swept both out of one another's ken.

Under the rule of the Arab Khalifs, this Church had a wonderful history, extending its missions to China, Afghanistan,

and India, in the latter of which the Church they founded exists to this day. At one time, as many as twenty five Metropolitan Archbishops owed allegiance to the Patriarch of the Chaldeans or Assyrians in Baghdad.

This great Church was, however, absolutely forgotten by the west, so that when an ambassador from it, as stated in the text, arrived at Rome, he found himself regarded as a visitor from another planet.

Evil days came on the body with the fall of the Baghdad Khalifate and the rise of the Turkish power, app. 1400 A.D. The civilization of Mesopotamia (already on the decline) received a terrible blow from the ravages of Timur the Tartar, and Turkish misrule spread its blighting influence over the land which had prospered under the Arabs.

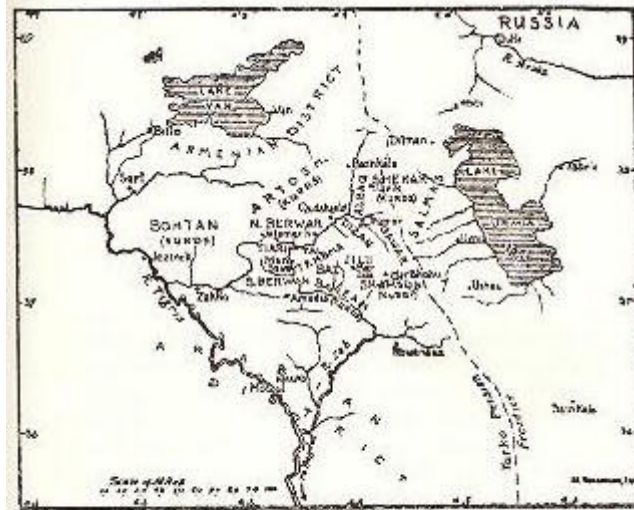
The Christian Church in the land sank with the general level of life in it, and the divisions of the body into Roman and Protestant sections diminished its vitality still further. In the nineteenth century it was but a shadow of its former self. Hence it was that the authorities of the Church asked help from the Church of England, holding that she could help them as a sister, and that they would trust her to respect their independence. It must be owned too, that even if the level of spirituality in this Church has sunk as low as its severest critics assert—and we think that fact unproven still it cannot be denied that it retains what it has always had in abundance, the capacity for producing martyrs.

Chapter I

The Assyrian Nation

Many have asked me to write down shortly some of the various customs, whether ecclesiastical or belonging to common life, of that part of our "Assyrian" nation which dwelt in Kurdistan, before the great war. First, let me say that it is our belief that we are of the blood of the ancient Assyrians of Nineveh.

This may be proved by comparing the physiognomy of many of the men of our mountains, and more particularly the men of Tiari, with the faces of the Kings, and other Assyrians, in the British Museum. It is also true that our language gives the same sort of evidence. Many of the commonest words, such as the names for dog, horse, ox, donkey, camel, leopard, eagle, soul, brother, servant, and the names of the months of the year, are the same in our Syriac as in the inscriptions of ancient Assyria. Still, for the most part, the men of Assyrian times dwelt in the plain about Nineveh, till the fall of their empire in 600 B.C. There is no doubt that our people have been for long in the mountains just to the north of those plains, whither they most probably were driven to take refuge. The fact of the length of their sojourn is proved by the antiquity of their churches. For instance, the church of Mar d7laye was built by the "Malik" (Chieftain) Aziz in the castle of Ribat in the valley of Tal in the fifth century



Tribal Districts Printed in Capitals
Hakkari: Country of Assyrian Christians

A.D.; the Church of St. George (or Giwergis) d'Baith Glala, now known as Khananis, in the sixth century; as was that of Mar Zeiah, in Jilu. The latter was built by a certain "Malik" Balak, and was finished by his son, Zuraq. The dates given are those of the inscriptions on the churches themselves, or from the histories of the Saints. Alas for the churches, for we fear that we have lost all of them in the great war and that they are destroyed.

There were in those days many Christian tribes in Kurdistan, from at least the sixth up to the sixteenth century, as we know from the old chronicles that treat of the churches and schools in those mountains. Thus, as late as the sixteenth century we had a great teacher who was a Kurd by blood, "Mar Mushi, who taught in Gurmali," i.e. Julamerk. His contemporary was Bishop of Bashkala in Albag. His brother, I must say, was a highway robber, whence it would seem that the nature of the Kurd was much the same then as now.¹

Much of this I have read in chronicles, and in books now destroyed, but much was also handed down orally. Thus I was at one time the guest of a Kurdish lady in Khananis, whose brother had taken forcible possession of the lands of the Church of St. George. She took me to a hill, on which stood a dead tree, very told, and asked me if I knew the history of that hill. Then she told me that this land of Khananis had had a Malik in old times, when all the inhabitants were "Sanam Faris" (idolators). Then there came a disciple of Isa (Jesus), who preached in the land, until he came to this village. Finding all the doors locked, as he went on to the house of the Malik, and knocking there, an old woman came and opened to him, and on his asking the reason for all the doors being locked, she said that the Malik and all his people had gone to worship on the hill, under the tree that I had seen. Looking into the house, he saw a pretty girl, crouching naked in the corner, and was told that she was the daughter of the Malik, and was mad. So he healed her, and she arose and dressed herself, and began to kindle a fire and to cook for him. So when the Malik saw the smoke from afar, he was angry, and asked, "Who is lighting a fire in my house?" Then he was told, "It is your daughter, for she is healed, and is now cooking for this stranger." For this cause all the country turned to the worship of Isa.

I asked her how she knew the tale, and was told that it had been handed down from father to son in the land.

I am not writing the history of the Church, or yet of the millet, but only an account of some of our customs, so that I will ask the reader not to judge the nation on account of my writings. I ask this because, -if you will allow me to say it, -you Westerners often judge us Easterners as if you had entire knowledge of us; whereas you are often mistaken even as we are in our judgments of you. Thus I leave to the learned the task of writing the history of our Church and her ancient glory, and how she sent missionaries to India, to Samarkand, and to China, where the monument of

Singan-fu is still extant to bear its witness. I have no doubt that the reader of Dr. Wigram's books, "The Cradle of Mankind" and "The Assyrian Church," will learn much of very great interest. I pass on to describe our customs only.

Chapter II

Baptism, the Churches and their Ornaments

Baptism is, of course, one of the Seven Mysteries of the Eastern Church of our Fathers, and is always administered in church. Properly, children are brought to Baptism when eight days old only. [This is, of course, a following of the Circumcision precedent. In practice, Baptism is sometimes postponed for lack of a priest, for some months or even years in isolated villages. W.A.W.]

The sponsors must make ready beforehand a white cloth, in which they present the baby to the deacon, and also a crown for its head, of white silk riband. On this there should be embroidered the words of the Psalms, "Thou has crowned him with glory and honour" and "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest him a long life." Three tiny tassles are sewn to the crown. One, which is black, hangs down over the forehead, as a symbol of death, which is always to be before his eyes. On the right hand hangs the white tassle, as symbol of Baptism; and on the left a red one, as a symbol of violent death. In some villages the crown is made only of white and coloured silken threads.

When all is ready, the sponsors with the babies stand before the gate of the Baptistry, while within it there stand priests and deacons, with the Gospelbook and the Cross, the censers and candles.

The Deacon recites a "Karuzutha" which is something like your Litany, and the Epistle and Gospel are read. Then follows the prayer of Consecration of the water. When this is finished, the priest commences the "Our Father," and at its end the Deacon receives one of the infants from the sponsor, and presents him to the priest. The priest, taking the babe, anoints his forehead, "in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and then anoints him all over. That done, the child is handed to a second priest-for two must be present-who is standing by the font. This priest then immerses the child thrice in the font, saying, "N. is baptized, in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen."

The Deacon then takes the child and hands him back to the sponsor, by whom he is wrapped in a white cloth. After he is dressed, the sponsor takes him to the door of the Sanctuary, where the sponsor receives the Holy Communion, and the celebrant places the crown on the head of the child, repeating the words that are embroidered on it. A child of four or five years may be brought to receive the Eucharist.

The Baptismal service thus normally forms an interlude (as does the service of Ordination) in the Celebration of the Holy Communion.

When the service is concluded, the Baptismal party go out into the churchyard, and in some of the greater churches go home in procession preceded by musicians. The sponsors bring christening cakes, and often supplies for a feast, to the house of the parents.

The white cloth and crown are kept, and, if the infant dies, are buried with him. If he lives to be married, then he will bear the Baptismal crown at that service, or if he or she enters the monastic life, then the crown is worn again, at the service of initiation.

The custom of ornamenting the Baptismal crown with tassles is not very ancient. The sponsors receive much honour from the whole family, and there may not be marriage between the children of sponsors and their God-children, for sponsorial relationship is the same as blood-relationship. After a death in the household, it is the sponsor who has to be the first to come to mourn; and in the case of rejoicing, and more particularly a wedding, the sponsor is the first of the guests.

The Churches

Our churches are built of solid stone and of "getch," which is a fine gypsum, much like "plaster of paris." Their doors are now usually arched, but low. This latter, however, is a modern custom, and a protection against desecration. Mar Giwergis of Khananis, and other old churches, have large doors.

Churches were often used-as in England in parts where there was always war in the land, as with us-as forts and refuges. Generally, they were built on a hill, and stood on their own lands, surrounded by fruit trees and copses. Some, like Rabban Pethiun in Tkhoma, stand high up on the mountain side, and some, like Mar Abd-Ishu in Tal or Mar Shalita in Diz, away among bare rocks in the face of some precipice, though the reason for this is often that they enclose the actual cell of some ancient hermit. The Sanctuary of every church is at the east end, as with you, so that the congregation must face to the east. On one side of the Sanctuary-usually the northern, but not always so-is the "Bait Qanki" or Sacristy, and usually the hearth at which the bread for the Eucharist is baked is in this sacristy. The baking of the bread for the Eucharist is always-as in every part of the East-done in church, and at a special preliminary service just before the celebration.

The Baptistry may also be in the Bait Qanki, or it may be in another apartment on the north side of the "Haikla" or Nave.

A solid wall separates the Sanctuary from the nave, and only a doorway is left in it. This doorway is covered with a curtain, drawn except at certain parts of the service. Three steps lead up from nave to Sanctuary (and to the sacristy also, which is on a level with the Sanctuary), and in the middle of these steps stands the "Shkinta." The word is the same as the Hebrew "Shechinah," used for the glory that hovered above the Mercy-seat, but in our case the Shkinta is a stone stand, covered with silk, on which lie the book of the Gospels and a small silver cross. Hence it is sometimes called the table of the Cross, but this name is more properly given to other stands in the nave on which lie crosses for the congregation to kiss on entry. We do not use crucifixes but keep the plain cross, though crosses with incised outlines of the Christ have been brought from Russia.

The land belonging to the churches which we possessed, among the independent tribes, was cultivated to provide food for guests, strangers, and the poor. It was the duty of the "Rish Umra" or Lay Rector, and of the "Quankaya" (Sacristan) to see to this work. These officials were chosen by the people, and conducted to the Patriarch at Qudshanis, to receive formal confirmation, and from these lands a certain quantity of rice was sent every year to the Patriarch. The "Rish Umra" had to oversee the land, and the "Qankaya" to see to the vestments, candles, books, and so on. In the year 1913, however, my brother the Patriarch had decided in his council that all these lands should be used as endowment for national schools, and so support the school children, instead of merely feeding large numbers of guests. Some of these churches, such as that of Mar Sawa, in Tiari, had often as many as two hundred guests in one day, for it happened that they stood by the side of the road. Some of these schools had been started when the great war put a stop to all reforms.

Other churches in the lands of the Rayats had endowments also, but these had been mostly taken by the Kurdish Aghas, aided by the Turkish officials.

Vestments

The vestments of our clergy are very simple, for both priest and deacon wear a long white "sudra" (alb) with one red cross on the back and three on the breast. The sudra has no opening in front, that at the neck being large enough to allow it to slip over his head, in remembrance of the seamless coat of Christ. It is long enough to reach to the ankles.

It is confined at the waist by the "Zonara" or girdle, and the stole (Orara) is worn over the shoulder, with the ends tucked into the girdle. This last is not nearly so long as the English or Western pattern. Both have crosses along their length, and in Tiari these were often woven into the fabric, which was cotton or wool, and not embroidered on the surface of it.

Subdeacons and Readers wear the Orara only, and the Deacon the Zonara in addition.

The characteristic priestly vestment, corresponding to the Western chasuble, and worn by either Priest or Bishop when celebrating, is the Ma'apra. This looks like a cope, except that it is square in outline, not semicircular, and is ornamented with three crosses.

The simplicity of our vestments is a result only of the poverty brought on us by constant persecution. It is evident from our history that we once had many gorgeous vestments, and when English ladies have sent vestments of the shape we knew, but bordered with bright colours, we have received them with joy.

Ornaments of the Churches

The curtains hanging over the sanctuary doors used originally to be of rich and costly material. There were rich silken hangings on the walls, and the "throne" (i.e. altar) was always covered with silk; the principal cross, and the candles, stood upon it.

Clerics only might enter the sanctuary, and then only when fasting. Clerics might enter the Bait Qanki when not fasting, but the laity were not permitted to do so at any time.

The lights that stood upon the altar at celebrations were candles made of pure beeswax from our own hives, or sometimes of European spermaceti. Walnut oil was used for lamps, supplied often from the fruit of trees growing on the church lands. In the sanctuary, a small lamp was kept burning perpetually, and incense was used every day.

Some of the church books were very ancient, being written on parchment, and in some cases over 1000 years old. The most richly adorned of our churches was that of St. Mary in Walto, Tiari. Here there were gold chains and silver bracelets, presented by the women, and a beautiful chandelier of cut glass, of French make, presented by my uncle, then Patriarch. Another very rich church was that of Mar Zeiah, of Jilu. Here there

were many gifts brought by the travellers of that tribe, such as gold and silver crosses, chalices and patens; antique censers, ostrich eggs² and coral, were there also; and hanging high in the "Haikla" were many great Chinese vases, inscribed with Chinese characters, and probably sent here in the days when we had missions in China. That is to say, in the period from the eighth to the tenth centuries. Simply as curiosities, these and the other contents of the church could not be valued in money. The church also possessed a silk kerchief, said to have been presented by Mahommed, and to have a "firman" of protection for the church written upon it. This was most deeply revered by all Moslem visitors. Alas! in the place of all these treasures, now there remain only ashes and no more. The vases were smashed to pieces, the gold and silver carried off, by the Kurds from Oramar, helped by the Turks. We may rebuild our churches, but how can the Turks pay for the bitter ruin that they have caused?

Bells

It was never our custom to use bells to summon the faithful to church, though small bells are often hung as ornaments within. In the place of the church bell, we use the "Naqusha" (Greek Semantron), a board of walnut-wood an inch thick, about a foot wide and two feet long. It was often pierced with holes to make it reverberate better. This was struck with a wooden mallet. The striker began as a rule with three strokes, in the name of the Holy Trinity. According to the Canon, psalms should be repeated while beating it; some men had great skill in getting a clear and ringing note from the wood.

Prayers and anthems naturally vary with the seasons. All, however, were sung or rather intoned in the services antiphonally, by the two sides of the choir alternately.

Daily Services

Morning prayer often is held as early as 4 a.m. The Sacristan goes first to the church to sound the Naqusha. Then when all are there, the Priest or Archdeacon makes the sign of the cross, from his head and lips to the breast, and then from right to left (reversing the usual Western method); next, he kisses the cross, saying, as he does so, "We worship, Lord, thy Godhead and Manhood, undivided," etc. Every one who comes in kisses the cross, and says this prayer in his heart, only the officiating priest saying it aloud. Then the priest goes on with "Glory to God in the Highest" and the rest of the Angelic anthem, followed by "Our Father," in which all join. The Psalms for the day follow, consisting of three or more of the twenty-one "Hulali" or groups of psalms into which the Psalter is divided, and also of the six "Morning Psalms," which are repeated daily, like the "Venite" in the Book of Common Prayer. We have no Lessons in the daily service, though we have a regular series (Old Testament: "Apostle," and Gospel) in the Liturgy.

Certain prayers and hymns follow, and a "Karuzutha" or Litany. Then the deacon, who should be standing by the "Shkinta" at the door of the sanctuary, calls out, "Stand duly," a priest brings in the incense, and they proceed with other prayers and hymns. The incense is kindled and the censer is carried round, every person present being "censed" individually, and fanning the smoke into his face with his hand.

Each priest present then says a short blessing, and finally the officiating priest will stand facing the congregation, saying, "Bless, O my Lord." Then addressing the congregation, he adds, "by your permission." They answer "By command of the Christ, glory be to His name." All bow and strike their breasts; the priest says the final blessing, and signs them with the sign of the cross, taking the cross from the table for the purpose. All join in the repetition of the Nicene Creed (which is the only one in use with us), and then all depart.

Evening prayers follow the same pattern, but are shorter. They are said about sunset.

The Cross

Those who enter the church at any time kiss the cross. At the time of service, they kiss not only the cross, but also the hand of the officiating priest. The kiss of peace is exchanged between us as follows: The priest extends his hands, joined palm to palm. The person to whom he is giving the "peace" then places his hands outside both those of the priest; each then withdraws his hands, and kisses them. The same ceremony is then repeated between each two of the congregation.

If there is a church near to a road, but not on it, a cross is often incised on a stone by the roadside at the nearest point, as it were to bring the church nearer to the path, and the passer-by can kiss that cross instead of going up to the church. Prominent wayside crosses, such as you have at times in England, or in parts of Europe would run too much risk from the Moslems ever to be possible, but a cross cut into a large rock can hardly be injured.

Service Books

The daily service book is known to us as the "QdamWathar," an odd name which means "before and after," from the division of the Psalter adopted in it. With us, the book of Psalms is divided into two portions, each of which is said in one week, so that the whole is said in a fortnight, instead of a month, as in the Church of England. It is this division in two parts that gives the name to the service book, and also because in one week, one "choir" sings the prayers, which are sung antiphonally; on the following, the other choir.

Then, to supplement this, there are large collections of "variable portions of the service," forming what may be called "the proper for each day," for insertion in its fit place in that unvarying frame of the service which the Qdam Wathar provides. These collections, which are called "The Gezza" or Treasury, "the Khudra," or Circle (because it contains prayers and readings for the whole circle of the year), and "the Keshkul" (Kanish Kul, or General Collection, being really an abbreviated version of the other two), contain bible verses, and the psalms, prayers, anthems, litanies, etc., appointed for each day. They correspond, in fact, to the Collects and "Occasional Prayers" in the Book of Common Prayer, supposing that section of the book to be enormously enlarged. These together form the services for the week-days throughout the year. In addition to these are what are known-rather inaccurately, from the point of view of a Liturgiologist-as the "Four Taksi." (Taksa is simply the Greek word Taxis = "order.")

The first of these Taksi contains the Three Liturgies, or rites for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, that are used in our Church. The second, the "Taksa d'Siamidha," contains all the services for ordination in each one of the three (or as we count them, nine) ranks of the Ministry.³ The third of the Taksi is the "Taksa d'Ma'muditha," or rite for Holy Baptism. The fourth is the "Taksa d'Khusaya," or rite of absolution.

Naturally there are also marriage and funeral service books (the latter varying for layman, cleric, and bishop, and being a large book), and the books of the Epistles and Gospels, and also of the old Testament lessons for liturgical use, form three more volumes. The version of the Scriptures invariably used in our Church is the "Pshitta." This is freely used in their own homes by all of our people who can read. The local dialects of our people vary so much, that it is impossible to provide any one "vernacular Syriac" version of the Scriptures. The version in "Urmi Syriac" printed by the American Mission at that place is actually less intelligible on the mountains than is the "old language" of the Pshitta.

Altogether, it will be seen that a complete "Book of Common Prayer" in Syriac could not be so printed, as with you, in such a size that it can be carried conveniently in the pocket. Indeed, a person who had once to carry a complete set of good service books from one place to another found that they made a complete load for a mule by themselves!

CHAPTER III

Fasts and their Customs

I suppose that there is no nation in the world which fasts so rigorously as does the Assyrian. Not only are the fasts numerous, but the rule for fasting is far more strict than with you, seeing that we abstain not only from meat, but from everything that is animal, including milk, fish, butter, and eggs. Only vegetable food and vegetable oil may be taken. According to this rule we observe the 25 days of Advent, and the 50 (not 40) days in our Lent. In this latter period, indeed, many will go without food until the evening, on every day except Sunday; and I have known Priests and Deacons who would fast for two days, and eat only on the third day, throughout Lent.⁴

Many fast regularly till 3 p.m. through Lent, and most, excepting children, till about noon. The Book of Canon Law in our Church (the Sunhadus) allows exceptions in the event of entertaining guests, of men on a journey, or in case of illness; these however, were but rarely taken advantage of, although in the last years of the Great War my brother gave order that the fasts should be relaxed, especially by fighting men.

[Sunday is not a fast day, by the Canons. In practice, however, the rule of Lenten diet is not relaxed even on that day. One suspects that the explanation of this is to be found in the fact that Lent always opens with a grand scouring of cooking-pots, to get rid of every trace of animal food. When this has once been done, the ladies of the house refuse to repeat the ceremony every Monday for seven weeks, and as duplicate cooking-pots are not to be found, the men folk have to accommodate themselves to circumstances. -W.A.W.]

Nor are our fasts confined to Lent and Advent. There are three days of Fast before Epiphany, and the "Fast of the Apostles" (20 days) in summer. These are only partly kept, however, and when observed, imply no more than the Western rule for Lent, of abstinence from meat. There is one other Fast, that is most strictly observed. This is the "Ba'utha d'Niniwayi," or "Rogation of the Ninevites." This lasts three days, and is observed three weeks before Lent. It is kept very strictly, and the long services of the days are of a penitential character. It is said to commemorate the Fast of the Ninevites at the time of the preaching of Jonah. Ephrem and Narses, our great teachers, tell the story dramatically in a book called "Discourses of the Rogation," making the children weep, and ask their mothers, "When will God ruin our city?" and they describe how the King put on a sackcloth, and knelt on ashes, to pray for pardon and deliverance. [It is undoubtedly very ancient, for the observance is shared by the mysterious "Yezidis" or Devil-worshippers" of Mesopotamia. Thus it would seem to date from pre-Christian times at any rate. There is a record of its being revived in the sixth century, in time of plague, but Narses and Ephrem are both writers of earlier date than that. -W.A.W.]

Some of our Moslem neighbours also observe this fast though it is true that they may be descendants of lapsed or captive Christians; and I remember well an occasion when our two Kurdish gendarmes, and Yaqub, the Jewish merchant of Qudshanis, came in during our service, and sat there listening for more than an hour. All the three men knew vernacular Syriac well, and understood when the Deacon was translating from the printed classical language that he had before him, into the "vulgar tongue" of the people. Those who are most careless in the matter of church attendance usually come to these services. They begin about 6 a.m. with the recitation of half the psalter, by two deacons, or laymen, alternately. At the end of each section of the psalms, the congregation chants the "Antiphon," "Lord have mercy upon us, receive our petition, and be reconciled to Thy servants." A long series of chanted anthems, and a Litany recited by the Deacon, then follows, the congregation responding at the end of each sentence, "Hear our petition, and have mercy upon us."

The metrical homilies of Narses and Ephrem, referred to above, are then read, and a series of prayers for the Nation and Patriarch follow. At the mention of the Patriarch's name, all the congregation rise.

The whole service takes six hours, never ending till noon, and all come to it fasting. Indeed, I have known a priest of the name of Ephraim, whose custom it was to fast for the whole of the three days of the service (in which he was officiating), never touching food till the close of the celebration of the "Qurbana" (Eucharist), which is commenced at the close of the Rogation of the third day. This celebration would commence about noon, and (owing to the great numbers of communicants) was often not over till about 3 p.m. After that, the priest would allow himself to break his fast.

Customs of the Laity During the Fast

At the conclusion of this fast, the first food eaten must be rolls, made of the flour of seven different kinds of grain. This is said to represent the sand of the seashore, which was the only food that Jonah found when he came out of the belly of the whale! On that evening, whoever wishes to dream of what his fate will be, takes up a little of this flour with his finger and thumb, and eats. After this, he must not speak, and whatever he sees in his visions that

night will certainly come true. I will admit that the series of visions seen by young people is usually that some young man or woman is seen drinking water-or offering it to the dreamer-in some special house, and this naturally indicates the family into which the dreamer will marry.

The Thursday after the Rogation is known as the Day of Silence, because Nineveh kept silence, says the tradition, for forty days after the preaching of Jonah.

The celebration (Qurbana) on Maundy Thursday is usually at 3 p.m., and is attended by many children of 12 or 13-fasting. Then on that evening (Passion Night) vigil is kept. At 9 p.m., when all are ready, and before the church is entered, a fire is kindled in the house of the High-priest, and the prayers begin, with the proper psalms of the night. After this, the highest in rank present proceeds to wash the feet of twelve men. At midnight the Priest proceeds to read the story of the Passion (harmonized from the Gospels) and after that all the crosses of the church are covered with white, and the curtain of the sanctuary drawn back. From that time, there is no kissing of the Cross, making the sign of the Cross or prostrations, until the first Qurbana of the Resurrection. This takes place, with a fasting congregation, at about 6 p.m. on Easter Eve.

(As we reckon our days from evening to evening, the new day begins after evening prayer, at 6 p.m.)

Certain Traditional Observances

On these two days, Good Friday and Easter Eve, we do not use the ordinary greeting of "Shlama" (peace be to you) for the only "Shlama" of those days is the salutation of Judas. The greeting substituted is "Light be with your dead." During the Friday all fast, and prayers begin at noon. While the Priest is reading the Gospel, the Deacon holds an empty censer. After the prayers, which are over about 4 p.m., the fasting people go to the door of the "Qanki," and the Priest gives them "Bukhra." This word, which literally means "first-born," is applied here to small round loaves, baked in the Qanki where the bread is prepared for the "Qurbana," but not consecrated. Some, after that, will break their fast with bitter herbs, for they say, "on this day, the soul of Blessed Mary is bitter." On Easter Eve, the fast is kept the whole day, till the first Qurbana of the Resurrection is celebrated at 6 p.m. During that celebration, after the reading of the Epistle and Gospel, the Crosses are unveiled, and all signs of mourning removed from the church.

CHAPTER IV

Easter and the Eucharist: How We Keep the Resurrection

In some places vigil is kept all night but we, in Qudshanis, used to begin the vigil at midnight; the *Nakusha* was struck and the village Reis would let off his blunderbuss from the roof of his house in honour of the night. So for midnight all the church would be adorned with lights, and prayers would begin then and for the part of the service that we call "*Kyamtha*" (Resurrection) all will go into the churchyard singing hymns: at the end of each hymn they say, "Our Lord has risen," and, "Glory be to Him," and at the end of this all the congregation clap their hands. Such a noise! and then the Leader of the prayers gives the Salutation of the Resurrection. He first and all after him will kiss the Cross and he gives to each a little lighted taper; each salutes another saying, "The Resurrection of Our Lord," and the other replies, "The Resurrection and Life and Renewal be upon you."

Then we have the custom that each should visit the graves of his own family and light tapers which have been placed beforehand on the graves so that the whole graveyard is alight. [This is all before daybreak. - W.A.W.] After all the ceremonies of Easter and the Holy Communion every one will go to his house for a rest and every house will have red eggs: they are always prepared for that day. Then the neighbours will call at each others' houses "to Bless the Feast" and will eat and drink a little. After a meal there are athletic sports, wrestling and throwing a ball, and sometimes shooting at a mark, etc.

In the Independent Tribes the custom is that after the Communion each family will bring food to the door of the church and all eat there together. Then on Monday of the Madrashi (Easter Monday) a Madrasa (doctrinal hymn) will be sung in memory of the dead. The Priest and Deacon walk around the graveyard with censers and the Book of the Gospel. Also on this day they act a sort of drama in the church, for Narses has written a metrical homily on the Entry of the Penitent Thief into Paradise. A Deacon (or in some cases a young boy) who acts the Penitent Thief stands at the bottom of the *Haikla* and the Priest who represents the Angel Keeper of Paradise will hold a lance decorated with candles, to represent the flaming sword, standing before the door of the Sanctuary and pushing him away as he tries to enter. The thief asks the angel to open the door of Paradise to him and the angel will answer, "It is impossible for a human being to enter this place; how is it that you come?" After a dialogue the thief shows a Cross which he has been hiding and says, "This is my Lord's sign that I may come in." Then the angel will fall back before the holy Cross and draw back the curtain and the thief goes in. "Now you show this, I cannot stand before that sign. Welcome."

How the Holy Communion is Celebrated

The wheat chosen for the holy bread must be the finest procurable, and every grain is carefully picked over, either by the deacons or by virgins. It is carefully washed and dried in the sun. Afterwards it is ground in a special handmill; this pure flour is called *Nshipa* (fine flour), and is taken to church to be baked. While the deacon or reader is making a fire in the *Tanura* (small pit-shaped oven) a priest or deacon will prepare the dough with leaven, at the same time repeating the psalms till it is taken out of the oven. Then in the Bait Kanki so many *Bukri* (little loaves like thick wafers, about two inches across) will be placed in the paten, and wine will be mingled with water in the chalice. All this is in the *Kanki* before entering the sanctuary.

Two deacons at least should assist the priest at a celebration: when they have entered the sanctuary one deacon will hold the censer and the other the cymbals which he will sound at certain times. After the "Our Father" and "Holy Lord God" (i.e. The Trisagion) have been said the deacon will go out before the door of the sanctuary and say the Litany, and then a reader will read from the Old Testament and a deacon will read the Epistle; at the end of the Epistle the congregation will say, "Glory be to the Lord of Paul" or "to the Lord of Peter," as the case may be. The priest will take the Gospel and Cross, holding them to his breast, and one of the deacons will hold the censer and the other two lights. One of the deacons will say, "Arise in readiness to hear the Gospel of the Christ." They answer, "Glory be to our Lord Jesus Christ." The priest says, "Peace be with you." Answer, "With you and with your spirit." Then he will translate the Gospel for the day from Old Syriac to the modern language and will expound it. At the end they say, "Glory be to the Christ Our Lord Jesus." Then follows the Nicene Creed, "We believe." During the celebration he will turn to the deacon and say, "Give peace one to another in the love of Christ." Then the deacon will kiss the hand of the celebrant and give the peace to one standing there in the manner described above, and all will take it from each other by touching the hand and each then kissing his own hand. The deacon says, "Whoso is not baptized, let him go out, and whoso will not receive the sign of Life and whoso will not receive, he may go out. Go, hearers. See to the doors." This custom goes back to the early times when there were catechumens and hearers.

The consecration of the Mysteries is by the Invocation of the Holy Spirit and by the Words of Institution. After the consecration the priest hands the paten to one deacon and the chalice to another, one standing to the left and the other to the right before the door of the sanctuary, and the first to come will be the little children, and this is the way they receive. A person will lay one hand in the other forming a cross and the priest will lay the bread in his hands and he takes it. In some places the priest puts it in his mouth, as with the children everywhere; then the communicant will go and drink the drink offering.

At the end the priest gives the last blessing and dismisses them. Men and women are separated in the church; women stand at the lower end of the *hekla*, where there is a special cross on a *shkinta* for them to kiss.

Our churches have no seats: therefore a very small church can receive a large congregation. Four hundred people can assemble in a "Haikla" thirty feet (English) square.

As each goes out of the church, an old man or woman sitting outside will give each a piece of bread to break their fast. This really represents the ancient Agape. They take butter and flour on the bread at some festivals.

Offerings

On the feast of St. Mary, which is in the middle of May, any house which has sheep will bring new cheese to the door of the church for the communicants.

On the feast of the Transfiguration (in August) every one who has hives of bees will bring honey.

Taksa of Absolution

Whoso asks for absolution the priest will give it to him, and in some cases it is given publicly, after public confession. Also it is read over the whole congregation. Every one who wants may come to Holy Communion without compulsory confession, though a notorious evil liver may be excluded, until such time as he has given proof of repentance; such excommunication is seldom used, but when used is a very formidable thing.

CHAPTER V

Festivals, Pilgrimages, Monks and Nuns

We have seven festivals which we call "the Feasts of our Lord." The Feasts of the Nativity, Epiphany, the Resurrection, Pentecost, Ascension, Transfiguration, the Feast of the Invention of the Cross.

The Nativity. On the preceding day there is Holy Communion at the eleventh hour of the day. After that the fast is broken. At the hour of prayers there is a custom of making a very small fire in the court of the church, called the Fire of the Shepherds: the deacon carries this through the church. It represents the fire by which the shepherds were watching their flock. By another custom after prayers, the priest gives to each worshipper a walnut or other fruit; these are called "Bizgi d'Maran," i.e. Our Lord's chips or pebbles.

The origin of this custom is as follows:

When a baby is born they call the neighbours in and eat sweetmeats or fruit for joy of the little one: so we do the same for joy of our Lord's birth. The prayers begin at 9 p.m. and continue till 5 a.m. but between 11 and 12 people rest. Then at 5 a.m. there is the Holy Eucharist; at Epiphany it is the same, the whole night vigil is kept. In the night before Epiphany many go into the rivulet and bathe, however cold and snowy it may be, as a memorial of the Baptism of our Lord. When the congregation goes out from the church in the morning the priest will stand there and will sign each on the head in the Name of the Father, etc., also in remembrance of our Lord's baptism. [The fact that the "Epiphany" does not commemorate the coming of the Magi only, but also the Baptism of Christ, has been rather neglected in England. -W.A.W.]

All the Fridays between Christmas and Lent are festivals, i.e. saints' days, till the Friday before Lent; on that day we commemorate all the departed. Lent begins on a Sunday.

For the Festival of the Ascension, the girls and boys choose a maiden who is called the Bride of the Ascension: they dress her as a bride and take her to every house, food is given to them and they go for a picnic; "The Bride" represents the church, the Bride of Christ. After that they hang ropes on trees and swing; every one, grown up or not, swings. The idea is that it represents "ascending," and to refuse brings ill-fortune, for it is supposed that if they do not they will have pain.

Nusardil (a Persian word) the Feast of the Apostles, fifty days after the Ascension. All the people, small and great, splash water over each other or duck each other in the stream. This is done, it is said, in remembrance of the Apostles baptizing their first converts. But Moslems do the same, so perhaps it is a pagan custom with a Christian name. On some Saints' days, such as Mar Sawa of Tiari and Mar Ziah of Jilu, many used to resort to these churches, and not only would the vigil of the saint be kept with services in church, but after that some used to dance before the doors of the church with national music., which sounds like bagpipes, to the honour of the saint.

There was a custom in Tkhoma only (nowhere else), in October, to mark the return to the church for the services which during the summer are held in the churchyard. The priests and deacons would dance in the Haikla slowly and solemnly, saying, "Church, church, rise and confess. Your Lord has come. Rise and confess." But this custom has died away.

Pilgrimages

We had certain churches to which pilgrimage used to be made. One was Mar Audishu of Tal. It has on its outer walls an "elbow" of the living rock, this is named the Elbow of Mar Audishu; women who have not borne children for fifteen or more years go through that hollow three times; after that some women do certainly receive their wish.

To Mar Kyriakus in Dizan, and to several other churches also, they take madmen and leave them for one or more nights in a certain cell; several have been healed by this process of "faith-cure," which we have always practised. Modern science no longer despises "faith," and you Westerns are now reviving what we in the East have never allowed to drop.

Every time people go on pilgrimage, they take either candles, or a manuscript service book, or costly material to ornament the church. Several people after illness and recovery take an ox or some sheep which are slaughtered and their cooked flesh is offered at the church door for the poor.

Monks and Nuns

Special monasteries and convents of monks and nuns we have not, although we had formerly; but there are some churches which have either a monk or nun living there to care for the church. Often girls or youths live as virgins in their parents' house. They are called Rabbanyati although they have not received the blessing of the Bishop, so they are not officially recognized. A monk who was deeply venerated for his holy life and who was well-learned in theology, Rabban Yonan of Tkhoma, died thirty years ago. He began reading when he was a shepherd boy: he used to take his Psalter on the mountain side and study when he was minding the sheep. This person not only passed his . life in prayer and fasting but used to carry books on his back, going from village to village, preaching and teaching, so that he educated many deacons and boys, amongst them Qasha Oshana (Priest Hosanna) of Tkhoma. In one of the villages in which he used to teach he got angry with some boys who did not attend regularly and took some girls of 12 years instead and began teaching them. One of these used to teach the school in that village till her death. Rabban Yonan was a most lovable man; if he saw boys playing he would go and play with them; he would go to weddings and sing psalms, then he would make jokes and make every one happy. Once when he was going from Derghina to a village in Tkhoma as his custom was, he met with some Kurds who began robbing him. They first took his clothes and a little bread which he had with him; his load which they thought contained costly goods they laid aside. When they came to examine it they were furious to see it contained only books, so they beat him well, with these words, "Ashes on your head, Monk; they are all books and books!" Then they gave them back and he went on his way, singing and dancing. They were so angry they brought him back roughly and asked why he made fun of them. He said, "I am so thankful to you for not taking *my* books that I am singing to pay my respects to you." Then they said, "He is mad, let him go!" Also this monk was very poetical, he wrote many poems in Modern Syriac and many dirges for the past glories of the church. In one of his anthems he mentions the coming of Dr. Cutts, who visited the country as representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury about 1880:

By the year which has gone and will not return
Appearance of England by one of the English priests
Who met the Patriarch of the Chaldeans
To take counsel and make agreement
To raise the sweet foundation.

Again, he had a gift from God of prediction: in the war of Sevastopol, he used to declare that at times he saw this side conquering, and at times that; always his predictions were confirmed by the official news when it came to our mountains.

Indeed, there have been others among our mountaineers--and I understand that the thing is known among other mountaineers as well--who had this strange gift of "the second sight." There was another monk, for instance, like Rabban Yonan, but less learned than he, who had this power. One came to him once, and asked about his brother, who had gone to Mosul and did not return. He bowed his head for about ten minutes, and then said, "I do not see your brother in the way, nor in the city, but I see a bier in the church, and I think that your brother is on it"; and it was so.

CHAPTER VI

Magic Arts, Marriages, Funerals

Some of our people will indulge in the practice of magic, though the rules of the church forbid it. Thus many will use, and wear, charms against the "evil eye," and will put them on their children, and animals. A string of blue beads is said to be of use for this! Then there are ways of telling fortunes, usually by means of the letters of the name. With us, every letter of the alphabet has its numerical value, and if you write down the value of each letter of a name, add them up, and then divide by some number which is thought mystical, then you can draw omens about the life of the person from either the quotient or from the remainder. Then there are other ways of drawing omens, from the twitching of the eyebrow, from the burning or itching of the ear, and so on. No doubt it would be easy to find habits like this among the ignorant in every land-and in particular, I think that there is no land on the earth where the belief in the "Evil Eye" is not found.

With us, however, there is this of interest in the matter, that these strange customs are so very ancient. The "Wise Men" among us have little books of these magical arts-or Kharashutha, in our language-and I believe that these formulæ are almost exactly the same as the magical formulæ on the clay tablets in ancient Babylon, now in the museums. of Europe. Hence, it would appear that these charms have been used continuously in this land since about 5000 B.C. and the practice of them among our people is another indication that we are of the ancient Assyrian or Chaldean stock.

Marriage

The Marriage Service is in two parts: Betrothal and the Blessing in the church. When the young couple are in love or when the parents have made a match, first the parents of the bridegroom will send to the bride's house, "On such and such a day we will come for the betrothal." Then the bridegroom invites his sponsors and the house of the bride does likewise. All will meet in the bride's house, with the priest of the village. First the priest will send the bridegroom's ring⁵ to the bride by two matrons and they will say, "This ring is from so and so, son of so and so, he asks you to be his wife. If you are willing, show it by putting this ring on your finger; if you are not, give the ring back to us." She will not speak but will place the ring on her finger and then they take word back to the guests that she is willing. Neither the bride nor the groom will be present with the guests, but the parents, or failing them the nearest relations, will represent them. Then the priest will begin with "Our Father," and some short prayers, then he will make both representatives hold each other's hand, then the priest will ask: "Do you, N., of your own free will, ask for N. to be the wife of your son?" Answer. "Yes, of my own free will." Then he puts the same question to the father of the bride. After the Prayers of Betrothal are concluded, according to Synodical Law, a discussion takes place about the dowry and about the groom's gift; this is finished by a letter signed by all present. Now for the Blessing in the church, which may be some weeks or months later. The sponsors and the friends of the bridegroom go with him to church, in like manner the bride's sponsors and some girls who are called the "sisters of the bridegroom" accompany the bride to church with music, singing and dancing. The rest stay outside and the bridal pair with their sponsors enter the church and the bride and groom stand facing the sanctuary with their respective sponsors, one man and one woman. They wear, as said above, their baptismal crowns. The priest begins the service, as usual by "Our Father." At certain times during the prayers the bride and bridegroom hold each other's hand. Blessings are read over the head of the bride and groom separately, such as, "May they be blessed as Abraham and Sarah," etc., to great length. The Book is supported by the bent heads of each alternately. After that the bride and groom will drink, from the same cup, wine which has been blessed. Their sponsors do the same, and they put on rings which have been dropped in the wine. After that again they go in procession with singing and dancing to the bridegroom's house where from the window or from the roof as they come near raisins are thrown at them. They will go into the room which has been prepared beforehand by the blessing of the priest; it is called *Baith Gnuna*, the Bridal Chamber. The neighbours will bring food during the three days that the feast lasts, and whatever the bridal pair ask during these three days will be granted. After a month the mother of the bride will come and invite both to her house, where they will stay for a week or a fortnight and then return.

Another custom: the second Sunday of Lent is called "The Sunday of the Daughters" (the old English "Mothering Sunday"), and on it every mother will invite her daughter and will give her presents. The third Sunday is the Sunday of the Sponsors and then all invite their sponsors to visit them at their houses, or else go and pay a visit at the sponsors' house.

In the plains, the rites and customs of marriage differ somewhat from those in the mountains. Here there are many customs, which go back in their origin to days when the bride was captured by force from her family. Thus,

the father of the bridegroom has to go, with a horse and the young men of his house, to fetch the bride from the house of her father, and when he arrives, he may not enter the building, but stands without till she is brought. The ring which he sends is handed to an old woman, who then has to go and find the bride. The maiden must always feign great reluctance, and hide herself, usually in a corn loft or some such place, till the old woman can find her, and show her the ring, and ask whether she will accept it. Even then she must show unwillingness, and answer in some such form as "Well, my father and my mother wish it, and so do all my brothers, so what can a poor girl do?" Then she is led forth and put on the horse, and the father of the bridegroom must dance to show his joy, and so take her away. All the young men fire their guns, and often will snatch up chickens and the like that have been left about for them, and carry them off as the spoil that they have captured with the bride.

When they arrive at the village where is the girl's new home, the bridegroom stands on the roof of the house, and throws down pomegranates upon her as she passes--this being most likely a symbol of fruitfulness--and then she is led into the house, and the religious ceremony commences. Here too they drink of the same cup, often with a small cross floating on it as a symbol, and both are crowned.

Burial of the Departed

When a man dies, first the priest will be called, then the godparents, then all the neighbours come to condole and to help.

The departed before he is enshrouded must be bathed. In the case of a deacon or priest clerics do this. When the body is shrouded it will be placed on a bier and carried by four men to the church while the priests and deacons follow, chanting. One chant begins, "By the separation of one of our members." Another: "Blessed be the Christ, our Redeemer, Who at the last time will come and raise the buried to life." Another: "Lord of the disciples, Life of all the world. In Thy hope they died: in Thy mercy absolve them."

The grave has been made ready and the service and burial will be concluded there, and afterwards all return to the house of the departed and will eat and go to their houses. The second day there will be a celebration for the departed, and his relations will distribute food to the poor before the door of the church. For three days the neighbours come to the house of mourning to condole, and on the third day the priest goes at four in the morning to the grave before celebrating *Qurbana*, with some of the women who are most nearly related to the departed, and will say some short prayers and will tense the grave. This resembles the visit of the women to our Lord's grave.

Every man will place a light on the grave of those dear to him on the Easter Vigil, as we have said. It is most likely in allusion to this that at that period our greeting to one another is the words, Light to your departed, though indeed, our regular greeting to a mourner is as follows, "God give you comfort, and to your departed rest and light with Him.

In some districts-as in Tkhoma for instance-food is also placed on the graves, and in this valley the graves are often made with a little niche in the side of them, both for this purpose and for the putting of the light. This custom, however, has been dying out of late years. The day on which this was usually done was the Friday before Lent, which as stated above, is our "All Souls' Day."

CHAPTER VII

The Nine Degrees of the Clergy and the Seven Sacraments

We count the number of Orders among the clergy as nine and not three, as do the Westerns. To be more accurate, we divide each one of the three orders universally recognized and received, into three "internal grades," thus organizing and arranging what has been left rather undefined elsewhere.

Thus we have three orders of Episcopal rank, viz. Patriarch--Catholicos, for we use those two words indifferently, Metropolitan or Matran, and Bishop (Abuna).

Our ancient documents show that the premier Bishop in our church has used the title of Catholicos or Patriarch at least from the year 424 A.D. It does not seem that any other see used the title regularly and officially at so early a date, and our Patriarch has used it regularly ever since.

Thus, the use of it goes back to a time previous to the arising of any of the disputes about doctrine that have divided the church.

The holders of these three degrees do not eat meat, nor do they marry, though all below them are free to do so, either before ordination, or after it at their own discretion. There was once an ancient Canon saying expressly that Bishops might marry, but this custom (though there were instances of the use of it, even among our Patriarchs, in the sixth century) fell into disuse more than a thousand years ago, owing to the example of certain great saints in our history.

The present "Manual of Canon Law" in our Church is the "Sunhadus" of Mar Abd-Tshu, compiled from the canons of the old councils by a learned Bishop of Nisibis about 1300 A.D. He says that in his days the ancient custom was to take Bishops from among monks, and knows nothing of married Bishops.

Bishops among us were "hereditary" until lately. That is to say the office did not go from father to son, which would plainly be impossible, but from uncle to nephew, and so remained always in one family. Notwithstanding this, the "heir" to a Bishopric (Natar Cursya or holder of the throne, in our language) had to be accepted by the people before he could be consecrated.

The system was a late growth in our church, growing up in the Middle Ages when, as Westerns know, many strange customs grew up in many parts even of the Western Church. It is contrary to our Canons, but it is for all that a thing that could grow up naturally in our tribes, particularly among a people whose customs are largely those of the Old Testament, and who could point to the family of Aaron.

[Hereditary religious chieftainship is certainly congruous to Eastern ideas. Among the Kurds, for instance, the position of "Sheikh" (which has a religious significance among them though not among the Arabs) goes regularly and habitually in families. The Assyrians, living among the Kurds, would not consciously copy them, but were nevertheless breathing the same intellectual atmosphere. -W.A.W.]

My brother broke through the custom, consecrating two Bishops who were not of "Episcopal families" for Urmi and for Trichur in India.

The custom seems, and is, strange, of course, but it is not more uncanonical than the ways in which Bishops are chosen in other parts of the Church, and I hear those ways defended on the grounds that it hard to alter them, and that they do not work badly in practice. That is what we say of our odd custom too.

The Priestly grades of Orders are as follows: KurEpiscopos, Archdeacon, and Priest or Qasha (Grk Presbyter). The Diaconal grades Deacon or Shamasha (which is an exact rendering of the Greek "Diakonos"), Sub-deacon or Reader. The work which the deacon does is more like that of an acolyte with the Westerns in some ways, but for all that it is a regular grade of the ministry, and not a mere step toward the priesthood, for a man who is ordained deacon will often remain in that rank all his days, and he has his work as such. Thus, when a priest celebrates the "Qurbana," he must have a deacon to assist him, for there are parts of the service that must be said by a deacon, or by a priest acting in that capacity, and a priest cannot celebrate alone. The same is true of certain other services.

The other two ranks of reader and sub-deacon have largely dropped out of use, but we are reviving them with new work, as they will be useful.

In this, as in other rites of the Church, we have not consciously copied either Greek or Western, though both they and we have, no doubt, drawn from a common source -the example of the Apostles and the customs of the Church in the first two centuries. We are different branches of the one stem.

This fact comes out clearly in a strange incident in the life of our Church in the Middle Ages.

At the time when the great Khans of the Mongols were ruling in the East, and were taking the place and power of the last Khalifs of the House of Abbas in Baghdad, it befell that an ambassador was sent from our Church to Europe. This happened as follows: the Khan of the day, Arghun, had a war with the Sultan of Egypt,

and as he heard that the Christian kings of the West had made war lately (in the Crusades) against this enemy of his, he was desirous to make alliance with them! So he sent for the Catholicos of our Church of that day, one Yahb-Alaha (which is Syriac for Theodore), and ordered him to go and find these kings of the West, and make alliance with them in the name of his master! The story seems even stranger when we read that this Patriarch of ours was a Chinaman, born in Pekin, and the fruit of those missions of our Fathers to that land, of which a monument still remains at Singan-Fu.

The Patriarch could not go himself, but he sent his "cell-mate" and Archdeacon, who was also a Chinaman, of the name of Soma. Soma started on his way, and came to Rome, where the Cardinals-for there was no Pope just then-were very much surprised to meet this Chinaman, who came from outside the world as they knew it, and said that he was the Archdeacon of a Church, and "vekil" of a Patriarch, of whom they had never heard at all! They asked him how it was that his people had received the Faith; "had the Pope sent men to them?" He replied, "Never came there a man from the Pope to us Easterns. The Holy Apostles Thomas, Adai, and Mari, they taught our Fathers, and as they gave us the Faith, so we hold it to this day." They asked, "But how then do you hold the Faith?" and he gave them the confession which we use today, and they owned that it was quite orthodox, and he and they took Communion together.

Later, in his work as Ambassador, Soma visited the king of England (Edward I), who greeted him most kindly,

and said that he would ask for nothing better than to take the Cross again in his old age, and go to the Holy Land once more. Here, too, the Archdeacon celebrated the Qurbana, and the King received the Eucharist from his hands, so that it would seem that once at least our ancient Liturgy of SS. Adai and Mari was performed in the great church at Westminster.

Soma's embassy did not do much, and he went home again, but at least he had shown the West the fact that an independent and ancient Church did exist in the East.

The Seven Razi of the Church

The seven "razi," or Mysteries, of the Church that we recognize are as follows: Qurbana (which is our ordinary name for the Eucharist), Baptism, Ordination, Absolution, the Sign of the Cross, the Sacred Oil of Anointing, and finally, the "Melka" or King.

The first six of these are known, of course, to all the Church of the West, though some are not counted by you among the "Mysteries" or Sacraments; indeed, not all of our writers enumerate these Mysteries in quite the same way, though all agree that there must be the mystic number, seven.

Qurbana is the usual name for the Eucharist with us, and we feel that it is a very significant one, far more so than "Mass" or even "Eucharist." It means "Offering," and the root of the word is the same as that of the word written "Korban" in the Gospels, "the thing given to God." It contains three ideas: those of drawing near to God; of making an offering to Him, and of His accepting the offering. Thus our Liturgy speaks of the whole service as "the living and reasonable offering of our first-fruits."

Some of our Fathers, however, do not use the term, preferring to speak of the Eucharist as "*the Mystery*" (Raza), even as in the West it was sometimes spoken of loosely as "the Sacrament."

As I have spoken of the other Razi elsewhere, I will only say now that "the Sacred Oil of Anointing" is used only in the anointing that follows on Baptism, and which corresponds to the Western Confirmation.

When a church is consecrated, the building is anointed, the sign of the cross being made, with olive oil, in seven parts of the church.

The custom of anointing the sick has not been preserved among us, though it is not very long since it was practised, and it is still the use of our neighbours the Armenians.

The Raza named last, the "Melka," needs careful explanation, for it is peculiar to ourselves.

It is really a twofold ceremony, and is carried out as follows: We use leavened bread in the Qurbana, as do all Easterns, and the bread is baked, as is also usual throughout the East, at a special preliminary service, described above. It is then leavened by putting into the dough a small portion of the leavened bread kept from that prepared from the previous (or a previous) celebration. This is not technical "Reservation," for the bread kept for the purpose has not been consecrated. Then, what is properly called the "Melka" is added to the dough, before it is put in the "tanura" or oven. This "Melka" is the finest of fine flour, kept in a vessel in a niche in the sanctuary of the church, and known as the "Treasury" (Gezza); it is of this that our Fathers tell the following tradition:

When our Lord distributed the consecrated elements at the first Qurbana in the Upper Room, he gave a double portion to the beloved disciple, St. John. St. John consumed one portion, but reserved the other, and

this he moistened with the blood of the cross, as he stood on Calvary. Then, after the ascension, when the apostles separated on their several missions, this portion of the bread was ground to powder, and a part was given to each apostle, to be used in the consecration of the Eucharist. This "Melka," or Holy Leaven, is increased on Maundy Thursday-and at other times if need be-by the addition of fine flour and salt, and is never allowed to diminish, so that some of it may be mixed with the dough at every celebration.

Thus, we delight to think the bread used at each Qurbana is put into direct "connexion" with that used at the first in the Upper Room at Jerusalem, and also, by means of the leavening particles, with that used at all others, thus reminding us of the words of St. Paul, "Ye are all partakers of the one Bread." As I have mentioned this tradition of our Church, I will insert another of the kind, which has left its mark on our services.

Westerns know, I think, the tradition that Golgotha, where Christ was crucified, was the tomb of Adam; our tradition says that the blood of Christ dripped on the bones of our first Father, and that as he felt the life-giving drops, he revived, and exclaimed, "Thee, Lord of all, do we confess, and Thee, Jesus Christ, do we glorify, for Thou art the giver of life to the body, and Thou art the Saviour of the soul." It is certain that the formula has its place in every one of our services.

[There are many such traditions in oriental writers. Another says that when Adam left Paradise, he took with him a branch of the Tree of Life, and some spices of the Tree of Knowledge. These, preserved in the East through all ages, were brought "to Him whose right they were" by the Magi, and the spices were the frankincense they offered at Bethlehem, and the bough became the crosspiece of the true "Tree of Life"-the Cross of Calvary. -W.A.W.]

CHAPTER VIII

Ordinary Dress, Handicrafts, Laws

As every district has different customs, so in each somewhat different clothes are worn. So I take as an example two mountaineers, a Tiari man and Tkhoma woman.

The Tiari man will wear wide trousers woven of wool, finely spun by women; the colour either white or red, or often many-coloured, generally striped, and round the ankle worked with colour. He also wears a shirt, waistcoat, and short open coat with long sleeves, the latter having "revers" worked with colour; a wide sash woven of cotton, generally blue; and above the coat a sleeveless zouave jacket of white or black felt. Instead of this he may have a knitted or woven jacket of fine black wool, embroidered with red or gold; this has half sleeves. On his head a conical cap of white felt with a little embroidery of red threads and a black feather. [The conical felt cap is a familiar object on Assyrian sculptures. -W.A.W.] Some tribes wrap a black silk handkerchief, called the pushia, round the felt cap. They used to wear two thick plaits of hair brought round to the front. On their feet white felt shoes or sandals strapped on. These soft soles give a very good hold on our rocks, as all travellers know.

A woman of Tkhoma will have a little flat cap embroidered with silk, beads, and coins. To their plaits of hair which hang down to the knee they add two plaits of black wool with blue beads sewn on. They wear a cotton *sudra* or chemise to the knee, usually red, a long coloured woollen coat, over it another long sleeveless coat. Their sash is of wool and has a leather shield to save the sash from being rubbed when they spin, for they spin as they walk along. Their trousers are rather wide and coloured; these reach to the ankle and are tied under the knee with a beautifully embroidered garter. They wear felt shoes like those of the men, and socks worn outside the trousers, knitted in coloured patterns.

Handicrafts and Trades

Generally people plough and mow and keep sheep, so that the sheep, butter, cheese, and wool are sold in plenty. In other villages wool and cotton are woven; in others they have hives and sell much honey. In Shamsdinan they grow very good tobacco which fetches a high price in Urmi. It was sold by the Sheikh of Shamsdinan, a Kurd, who gave only a low price to the growers. Gawar, Liwan, and Albaq were noted for producing wheat, barley, and many kinds of vegetables, for these three places have rich soil.

The practice of medicine is hereditary, the medicines are made from herbs, and the preparation is kept a secret. Some are very skillful, and keep their medicines very clean. Most of the medicines, however, are very nasty to the taste. One such "doctor" used always to give the gall of an animal to cure any pain in the stomach!

Others use a decoction of the red "haws" of the wild rose as a medicine for a cough, and this is often very effective.

In our house we had as heirlooms two articles which were known as the "snake-stone" and the "eye-stone." The "snake-stone" looked like pumice, and when put on the bite of a snake was believed to draw out the poison. The eye-stone (which was not a natural stone but a compound of some substances not known to me) was most certainly often very useful for those diseases of the eye that trouble folk who live in our smoky houses. I have seen it used by my mother on as many as sixteen people.

Some of the clergy sell manuscripts at which they have laboured; they also work on their land, besides holding services and teaching village schools.

Dyes are made of various herbs; the pomegranate and the walnut are much used: these dyes do not fade, and give colours, red, yellow and brown, deepening to black, all of very good tone. Inks, both black and scarlet, are made from oak-gall and *Julijana*, a kind of Erigeron. We also buy dyes.

The men of Baz are noted as builders and as blacksmiths: Tiari men for weaving and knitting. The Assyrians of Mosul and of Amadia are noted for gold and silver work; also as merchants. The Assyrians of Urmi and Salmas work in vineyards and sell raisins and wine; they work at other trades also. Before the war they were advancing well in European civilization; we had two printing presses printing Syriac, one at the American, one at the English Mission in Urmi. In Urmi they had very good carpenters and tailors who had learnt in Russia and in England; also doctors and dentists and chemists who had studied in England and America. A few women had studied medicine and nursing in America. Round Urmi the country is most fertile and beautiful.

Women used to spin and sew and see about the house, and some who could read taught their children. The Urmi women had sewing societies to help the poor.

Mines

Our country is rich in minerals, mostly unworked. In Mazragu in Tiari there is a lead mine; in Upper Berwar arsenic is mined. One kind of red marble is found in Albaq and white marble in Urmi, and in Qudshanis another sort. Many more mines might be worked. We do not use coal, but there are deposits in the plain of Urmi and in Nurdīs, besides large beds of coal near Amadia. There is also much quicksilver and sulphur; and the Kings of Assur used to mine gold. Pottery is made in Tiari in Gemani.

Our mountains are wild and rugged and abound in flowers; your garden rhubarb grows on our mountains, and great scarlet Oriental poppies and many of your garden flowers. You have them in greenhouses, with us they are quite common. A great charm of mountain journeys is the springs of delicious, sweet water. There are healing springs of hot water, and some so full of iron as to stain the rocks blood-red.

Headship and Laws of the Nation

The Patriarch is not only the spiritual head but also the temporal chief of the nation. For 400 years these powers have been hereditary in our family, going from uncle to nephew; although always the new Patriarch has been chosen and consecrated by general approval. The consecration used to be at the hands of the Metropolitan of Shamsdinan with other bishops, also all Maliks and tribal chiefs must be present. So the Patriarch ruled the nation as a Prince-Patriarch and was so known. So also the Maliks have been hereditary from father to son; this custom is subject to approval by the tribe. For example, when the Malik dies the Rieves and the priests will assemble and will choose the son or, it may be, the brother of the deceased. They will choose some persons to go up with him to the Patriarch with a letter to show that he is rightly chosen; the Patriarch will then confirm him as Malik by a letter, "We approve and choose and make N. Malik for you, and you shall be obedient to him," etc. He will give the new Malik a present of honour, either a sword or a gun, or some costly present. So likewise that Malik, by the approval of the villages, appoints the Reises of the villages.

Our Laws

A small dispute in a village can be settled by the Reis. and village priest; a more important case is taken to the Malik. If the Malik did not choose to attend to it, as feeling it too important, he might pass it on to Tkhome or Ashitha: these two places were appointed by the Patriarch for decisions in important cases. A great cause would be submitted to the Patriarch; it would then be decided and the decision would be sealed. Buying and selling land or houses were important, and those deeds required the Patriarchal seal.

The Patriarch had jurisdiction over the prison and power to inflict fines. The prison was indeed part of our own house in Qudshanis. Cases used to be decided by the Sunhados, a book containing both Canon and Civil Law, e.g. laws of inheritance and of debt and of wills. I give an example. Law IV, Heading 14, gives Ishubokht's decree about houses which have more than one storey, and which abut on roads and squares. If one man owns the lower storey and another the upper storey and the owner of the lower storey says to the other that he should look to the upper storey and repair it; if he refuse, the owner of the lower storey has a right to spend money on necessary repairs; then after four months, if the owner of the upper storey will not pay, he forfeits his right to that storey.

Roads and Ways

"A Farsakh is three miles: one mile equals ten stadia: one stadium one hundred paces: a pace is half a rod (or about 6 English feet). A rod is four yamini: one yamin is the length from the fingers to the shoulder.

"The arcades and streets of the city are for common use."

Obviously rules like these come from a time when our people were living in towns of their own-which is not the case with them at present.

The decision of cases at law, which were brought to the Patriarch's court might be committed by the Patriarch to the Bishops and Chiefs who formed the court but he would usually preside in person.

CHAPTER IX

The Patriarch and the Nation

It was the custom that the Patriarch, during every three years of his patriarchate, should visit the six tribes who are independent of Turkish Rule. Notice was given of his arrival on the preceding day so that the people could gather to receive him and give a salute with rifles.

The priests and deacons would precede him in procession, singing hymns accompanied by cymbals, and swinging censers. He would be the guest of the village Reis or of the priest. In whatever apartment the Patriarch should spend the night, a light would be kept burning and a guard would be stationed before the door although there was nothing to fear. In whatever house he was a guest, all who came from afar to meet him would be entertained in that house to the number of 200 at a time.

When the Patriarch arrived, e.g. near the frontier of Tkhoma, a Malik of that country would take his silver water goblet from a servant, showing that henceforth he would serve the Patriarch. When the Patriarch went over the frontier of Tiari the Malik of Tkhoma would hand over the silver cup to the Malik of Tiari.

The Divan of the Patriarch

The Patriarchial House was in Qudshanis; the formal hours for visiting him were at 7 a.m. after morning prayers, or at 5 p.m. after evening prayer; the latter or both used to be called Coffee Divan.

He used to be seated in a large room where all who wanted to bring any petition before him or to pay their respects would be conducted and would kneel and kiss his hand and then stand. He would give them permission to sit and cigarettes would be smoked. One servant would bring in a coffee pot and another a tray of cups in holders; the Patriarch would begin the conversation. The Divan might last an hour; this is the formal old custom but the Patriarch receives visitors at other times also.

The Patriarchal House was most hospitable, not only for Assyrians but for Kurds, Turks, Jews, Yezidis, Persians, Europeans, etc. The number of guests received during a year would mount up to thousands. The wheat for bread used to be brought from the villages by mules kept for that purpose; the other food came from nearer villages. Of the servants of the Patriarchal household those in attendance on the Patriarch would be of chiefs' families, as Deacon Petros of Baz, nephew of the Malik of Baz, Shamasha Khanu of Diz, etc. These sacrificed all their private interests for the service of the Patriarch and held the chief posts as Steward of the House and Steward of the above-mentioned villages. Indeed, in their faithful service for 40 years they had been trusty friends, more like relations than servants. Of the same kind were our scribes, Qasha Ishu of Tkhoma and Shamasha David who was later consecrated Bishop of Urmi.

We had Kurdish servants of good family, Ahmad of the tribe of Artush, cousin of the Agha, and Fhatu of the tribe of Pinyanish; they were faithful and devoted. One of them showed it when he went to V*3n with the mules to buy corn. In the market they were arrested by the Yuzbashi (Capt. of 100). He wanted to take our mules by force, but Omar, the Kurd servant, refused them and beat the Yuzbashi and broke his head. The case was taken to the Vali, and when he learnt whose mules they were he let them go free.

Relations with the Turks

This Assyrian Nation, from oppression and persecution for centuries, since the time of Tamerlane, has diminished from millions to thousands. Many of them have been dispersed to various countries, and are found not only in Europe and America but from Lake Urmi to Beyrout in the west and from the north of Lake Van to the south of Mosul. Sectarianism has separated this nation and placed them under different names such as Maronites, Jacobites, Chaldeans, Nestorians. The greater part of this nation has been under Turkish and Persian misrule. The part that has been called Assyrian -Nestorian, who have lived in the mountains of Kurdistan, although living according to geography in Turkey, yet had their own laws as above described. These six independent tribes are Tiari, Tkhoma, Jilu, Ishtazin, Baz, and Diz. The largest village of these tribes was Ashitha, with six thousand inhabitants.

The other part of the Assyrians used to live under Turkish law. But these tribes were independent: 1. They never served as soldiers under Turkish officers. 2. Although they used to sell honey, sheep-butter, and tobacco, Turks never imposed customs on them as they used with the inhabitants of Mosul and Van. 3. The Turks have never inscribed the roll (taken a census) nor known the number of these people. 4. The tribute which they used

to pay to the Turk once in three years was assessed by themselves by a letter from the Patriarch. But never a Turk would go into the Independent country.

In 1895 the Turkish army came to Halmun and Geramun to take tribute from them; now these two villages are situated near Tiari, so the men of Tiari came out to fight the Turks and the Turks were driven away, leaving all their tents and munitions. In 1897 a battalion, 400 strong, of Turks was coming from Mosul to Bashkala; they came unawares through Tiari and refused to go back as desired, so the men of Tiari took the officers' swords and many rifles and they had to implore mercy for their lives.

The Turks then wrote to Mar Shimun (Lord Simon, the name always assumed by the Patriarchs), the Patriarch, to beg him that their weapons might be restored. He granted that and sent men to see them safe through. Another time the Turks had a like experience in Tkhoma and were well beaten. In 1910 the Sheikh of Barzan and his family took refuge in Tkhoma from the Turks, and the Tkhoma people kept them safe and refused to give them up to the Turks who came to demand him. The Turks demanded the lead mine of Tiari but were always refused. In 1870 the Vali Pasha of Van invited all the Maliks of the tribes and other chiefs of the Assyrians with the Patriarch to come to Van to him. He suggested that the double burden of secular and ecclesiastical rule was too great a weight for one man and that Benyamin Beg, father of the Patriarch Reuil Shimun, should bear secular rule with a gendarmerie from the Independent Tribes, paid by the Turks, and he should take counsel with the Vali-Jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters would be left to the Patriarch. The tribes knew this was a "pand" (trick) to break down their independence, so they all agreed in one counsel and refused the division or rule, saying: "We will live and die under the leadership of our Patriarch and keep to our own laws; we will have none other to rule over us." And they did not!

The Patriarch has always been known as a prince ruling his own nation free from the law of the Turk. He received the second and third orders of the Mejdieh from the Sultan. When he was displeased with a Vali or Mutessarif his complaints were heard and the official complained of would be removed or degraded. Also when he was invited to a seat of government such as Van or Diza, he used to be received with martial music and salaams. Kemal Pasha received Mar Reuil Shimun in this way. Mar Benyamin Shimun not only received the Second and Third Orders of the Mejdieh but in 1913 the Third Order of the Osmaniya was granted to him.

These six tribes used to have the over-lordship of the surrounding districts, as Liwan, Tal, Ku, Gawar, Lower Berwar, etc. And without these districts they would have insufficient food for themselves and pasture for their sheep.

I must remark that some Turkish officials have treated our people well and have shown impartiality to Christians and Moslems; as Haidar Beg who was Kaim-makam of Diza, and Kamil Pasha and others. But men of this kind soon lost favour and position.

During the Great War two women of Tkhoma who were carried off by the Turks to Mosul were returned to us. On their return we asked how they were treated; they answered that Haidar Beg was good and ordered that they should be kindly treated but that the subordinates were oppressive.

This is an example of what generally took place.

Our Relations with the Kurds

The Kurds quite accepted the facts of the headship and independence of the Assyrians in the Hakkari district: for instance, the Agha of Selai-a district to the north of Julamerk-was chosen by the chief men of upper Tiari, and a letter announcing the choice made was sent by them to the Patriarch, who would in his turn write to the Kaim-makam of the district for his confirmation. Independent choice of an Agha by the men of Selai, or nomination of their chief by the authority of the Kaim-makam in Julamerk, were unheard of things.

Again, the "Mira" of Southern Berwar was chosen in "Lower Tiari," the Christian district bordering on it, and the Maliks and chief men of that district used to go down to Berwar for his installation. This custom was locally known as the "Dumirana," an adaptation of the old Kurdish word for chief. The same held good for the choice of the "Majwar" (subordinate chief) of certain Kurdish villages bordering on the Christian district of Tkhoma, for these men were selected and installed by the Malik of the latter region; in the district of Dizan, (bordering on upper Tiari) the rule was the same for the choice of the "Majwar" and "Reis" responsible for order there; it was the Christian "Malik" who installed them in their office, not the Kurdish tribesmen.

The Kurds, on the other hand, never had anything to do with the choice of a Christian Malik or chief among the Assyrians. These sedentary Kurds were subject, in a word, to all the customs of the land; saving, of course, the absolute freedom of their religion.

In the-not infrequent-event of wars between Kurds and Christians, it was the Patriarch who used to call the chiefs of both parties to council, either in his patriarchal residence, or in some convenient place, and the manner in which these "peace-conferences" were conducted was as follows: the Patriarch, with a few chosen counsellors, would take his seat in his reception-room, and then the chiefs of the two contending factions were ushered in, and each party took its seat on its own side of the room, in silence. Then the Patriarch would rise and deliver his speech, about the necessity of peace, the merits of the dispute, and so forth, and finally order them to "give peace to one another"-i.e. to exchange the peaceful salutation that implies friendship-and be reconciled. Then both parties would rise, and solemnly "pour peace on one another," after which they were allowed to sit down as they liked, exchanging cigarettes, drinking coffee together and so on, after which the Patriarch would declare which had to pay damages to the other, or perhaps the case might be settled without such indemnity, according to the arrangement previously made: then letters would be written and put on record, declaring that on such a date, such named tribes had met and been reconciled the one to the other, these documents being sealed with the Patriarchal seal, and with those of the chiefs of both parties.

If ever the Patriarch was a guest in a Kurdish household, he was invariably received with all honour, the Kurdish chief going out with all his horsemen to meet and welcome him, and conduct him to the house.

In the case of a feud between two Kurdish clans, it was a common thing for the Patriarch to be called in to give his counsel, or to act as umpire; we give an instance that occurred about sixteen years ago. Haji Beg, Agha of the Artoshnai Kochars,⁶ came to ask for the good offices of Benyamin Mar Shimun, in his desire for a reconciliation with Shekir Agha, chief of the "sedentary Kurds" of the same clan.

The Patriarch went down to the district of Liwan, called both chiefs to meet him there, and reconciled them. Again in the year 1910, the Patriarch collected, and reconciled, two hostile sects of Julamerk Kurds in his reception room, and one might adduce as many instances as are wanted of the same fact. For brevity's sake, however, it may suffice to say that the Headship of the Christian chief over the Christian districts of Hakkari, and the Kurds who dwelt there, was a recognized thing, and our relations with our Kurdish neighbours were friendly on the whole. Naturally, wars and troubles took place. Thus, some seventy-five years ago, a merely local quarrel developed into a great disaster. Certain local Kurdish chiefs about Julamerk, among them Nurullah Beg, had a dispute with us over the over-lordship of certain properties and churches; fighting commenced, and as they knew that they could not overcome us by their own power, they called on Bedru Khan Beg, of Bohtan, and all the tribes of the Kurds. Thus they made war collectively against us. Our Assyrian tribesmen acted, it must be owned, most unwisely, in that they did not stand by one another for mutual defence; hence we were defeated, and there was a fearful massacre, not only of the fighting men, but also of the women and children. Mar Abraham, the then Patriarch, went down to Mosul, where he found a refuge in the house of the British Consul, and appealed to Great Britain for help. [The Consul in question was Hormizd Rassam, famous as a pioneer in Assyriology. The Ambassador who supported him at Constantinople, and procured the requisite orders from the Sultan, was Stratford Canning. W.A.W.]

Two years after the slaughter, Nurullah Beg sent to the Patriarch, suggesting a reconciliation, but the Patriarch refused. He declared that "things have gone too far now. One or other of us must rule in all Hakkari over both Kurds and Assyrians. We cannot rule side by side." Finally, by the power of Queen Victoria of holy memory (whose name is as that of one of the saints in the minds of English and Assyrian alike) pressure was brought to bear upon the Turks, Bedru Khan was arrested and exiled, and the Assyrian "millet" (i.e. nation) was established once more in its home. From that time up to the year of 1914, thanks to the help of British consuls, the rights of the Patriarchate over all Assyrian Christians were yielded to the Patriarch, as in the time of the "Amir," Bedru Khan, and not only that, but also the rights of the Patriarch as head prince and ruler of Hakkari were recognized by Kurds and Assyrians alike.

The Firman of the Prophet Mahommed, Granted to the Patriarchal House

It is a thing of common knowledge among the Mussalmans of Hakkari that there was a special firman granted by the Prophet to our house, and therewith, as the universal belief went, a certain special knife of his giving that was preserved to the time of Bedru Khan Beg (1845).

Once in the year, a selected Mollah of Julamerk used to come up and read that document in the public assembly. Further, the strictest Moslems, who will not as a rule eat anything that has been slaughtered by a Christian, will eat without hesitation of any animal slaughtered by a member of the Patriarchal family.

These things were kept among the treasures of the Patriarchate till the day of the massacre, and when the firman, which was then captured, was brought and shown to Bedru Khan, he exclaimed, "The curse of Allah be

upon Nurullah Beg of Julamerk, for he it was who stirred me up against the firman of the prophet. Had I known that this house possessed this firman, I should never have dared to go against them. May God require this war of you."

The firman was engrossed in letters of gold, on parchment, and was written "circle wise," with the print of a hand in the middle. (This is an ancient type of Arab script. The print of the hand of the donor of the grant was impressed in the middle of the parchment, and the substance of the decree written round it, in one continuous spiral.) The knife had a shaft of silver, with a piece of red coral set in the pommel, and an inscription inlaid in gold on the blade.

CHAPTER X

The Great War

Hitherto, we have spoken of those parts of our nation that were "Ashiret" in status; those "tribes"-to give the translation of the name-into whose territory the power of the Ottoman government had never extended itself, and whose position was rather like that of the Highlands of Scotland, two hundred years ago.

Their lot indeed was difficult (for life in our mountains is never easy) but it was not too hard to bear, and it had its advantages and pleasures. The fact that, by ancient right and custom, these clans bore arms and could defend themselves, gave them the chance of protecting their families and property against both Kurdish raider and Turkish official. Very different was the lot of those who were "rayat," i.e. directly subject to the Ottoman government, and to the caprices of its minor officials.

It would be too long to recount all the acts of oppression and slaughter of which the Turks were guilty, before the great war, to those Christians who were entirely under their law; nor can we repeat the tale of all the acts of unrighteousness and oppression by which so many were deprived of their lands for the benefit of Kurds. Instances that we are prepared to prove from personal knowledge are those of Gawar, and of the church property in Khananis. In like fashion, whole villages of Christians were expelled, in hundreds of cases, from their homes-as was the fact in the whole district of Shamsdinan, and in villages like Bala, Kalanis, and so on. Such of these property-owners as were not killed, usually fled-much against their own will-to Russia, and settled for the time there.

A Christian who was "rayat" had absolutely nothing that he could call his own with any security; all that he had was at the disposal, either of the local Kurdish Agha, or of the government "Mamur." Much time, and many books, would be needful to recount all the acts of oppression, and it would be a mere repetition of what has been put on record already.

It was on the 3rd August, 1914, that the Patriarch Benyamin Mar Shimun, was summoned to Van, to meet the Vali, Tahsim Pasha. [The date is important as showing that the Turkish government had already determined on its attitude, and instructed its local governors. -W.A.W.]

Long conversations took place between them referring to the assistance that would be granted to the Assyrians, if only they would remain neutral and not join themselves with the Russians, for Turkey was entering the war. The answer was clear, namely that our attitude would be conditioned by that of the Turks towards the Christians at large, and that in the case of the Assyrians, Mar Shimun must of necessity consult with the Maliks and notables of his nation, as without that he could not be answerable for them. The Patriarch then returned from Van, and sent letters of counsel to all the "rayat" districts of Christians, warning them all to remain quiet, and to fulfill strictly all their duties to the Turks. He was, in fact, waiting till he should see how far the Turks would or could fulfill their covenant, and very soon this began to be abundantly clear.

In October, some fifty men of the Christians of Gawar were brought to Bashkala-the local government centre and there killed. In the district of North Berwar, the Turks plundered the houses of the peasants, taking even the children's socks. One deacon was most brutally treated. He had not come to greet the "soldiers," excusing himself on the ground that he was at service in the church. His mouth was filled with live coals. Women were carried off, among them two women of the village of Iyil, who were beautiful enough to take the Kurds' fancy. This was done by the direct order of the officer in command. One of them begged that her husband might accompany her, and that she might carry her infant child on her shoulder. Her husband and child were killed before her eyes, and she herself carried off. The poor creature, crazed with grief, flung herself into the first river that the party had to cross on the road.

At the same time, certain friendly Kurds wrote privately to the Patriarch, to the effect that his arrest had been already decided on, and that he must take measures for his own safety.

It must be clearly understood that the atrocities of which we have given instances did not take place without the knowledge of high officials. On every occasion, the fullest details were sent in writing by Mar Shimun, to the Vali of Van, and to the Kaim-makam concerned.

It was impossible to obtain either justice or mercy for the Christians, or even an answer expressing common courtesy or sympathy from the official. Never while I live shall I forget those days of terror and misery; the daily and nightly councils that we held in our house, and the discussions, "What has befallen today, and what steps can we take?"

From the time that Turkey entered into the war, there was no more law or order left in the land. Often and often have I sat with my brother till two in the morning, hearing the tales of woe and oppression brought by the

villagers, by men who had to come as a rule by night because they dared not be seen approaching the home of the Patriarch by day.

Those who have any knowledge of Kurdistan will understand what is implied by the mere fact of a night journey among our mountains, in peril from snow, and from the wolves. One night in particular lives in my memory; we called it "the night of the tribulations of Job," for that in it there came eight separate messengers, one after another, to give us news of as many separate acts of violence. When one tale of raid and massacre was done, then a servant would come in and say, "Behold, one has come from such a village, to say that such a priest or head-man has been murdered," or maybe, such a village raided, or so many women carried off, till at last there were eight of them.

One woman was brought in, from the village of Kirmi, distant some three hours only from our house; she was bare-footed and bare-headed, and had a child of three months old at her breast; she was brought in, to the presence of the Patriarch, my brothers, and myself, and this was the tale she had to tell. "We were just about going to bed, when there came a detachment of Turkish soldiers to the village, on the road to Julamerk. They entered the village, they demanded food immediately and also the surrender of the women's socks and head wraps because they had not enough! (Travellers in the winter always wrap their heads, to protect the ears from frost bite.) We gave them what we could, and started the preparation of food. Then when I was busy, I heard a scream from one of the women of the house, and a man's voice saying, 'I am your servant, only do not take my wife.' Then my husband rushed in, saying to me, 'Run and hide yourself.' Then I ran to the cradle and took my son, and started to come here, and for the others, I know not what has befallen them."

This was on the night of the 13th of November, 1914. The child died, and the woman was in danger for some days, but she still survives. Then in the morning we heard that Yukhanan the deacon and his two sons had been killed in Albaq, by "Khurshad Beg the Kurd, at the order of the government." This Yukhanan had been a trusted servant of the government, a member of the council of the local governor (Mutaserif), and a man whose house, as he was a man of some means, was always open to guests.

After three days, the Patriarch sent a trusty Kurdish messenger to Albaq, to bring word of what had passed. In five days he returned, and with him a Christian, who had this tale to tell. "As for the Christians of Albaq, most of the young men have been killed, all the villages and houses plundered, and the women and young children carried captive and now kept in the house of a Kurd, Shahin Agha. He has used them kindly, and has prevented any attempts to make them embrace Islam by force. The wife of Shamasha Yukhanan and her two younger sons (ages nine and eleven) have been carried off by Khurshad Beg, and are now kept in one of their own stables. Her two children were begging in the village for bread for their mother and themselves; some gave them food; some said, "Go to your father and let him give to you."

All agreed, however, in affirming the kindness shown by Shahin Beg, to all the Christian captives, whom he kept in his house for a long period.⁷ This is the more to his credit, as at that time the word was being diligently spread in all the land that "The war is a Jihad, and therefore every Moslem who does not undertake the conversion of Kafirs, declares himself thereby an apostate and renegade to the faith of the Prophet Mahommed."

Accounts of many acts of oppression, both before and during the war, have been published in Europe, accounts based on the reports of eye-witnesses, both native and foreign; the foreign witnesses being either English or American missionaries, or British Consuls. These same reports tell also how our Armenian neighbours have been persecuted, without mercy, and the facts are known past denial.

These were the facts that set us thinking about our political relation to the Turks, because it was so obvious that there was no hope remaining for the "Rayat" Christian under Ottoman rule. Every district of Assyrians who lived under Ottoman rule were in the same state. In Shamsdin, Norduz, Albaq, Mar Bhishu, Iyil, Gawar, all was alike. Villages were raided, men and women were either killed or carried captive, and those that remained scattered in other lands. There was but one step for us to take, and at the last, that we proceeded to do.

Thus, on the 15th of February, 1915, some 300 armed men of Tiari came up to Qudshanis, and I, with the Patriarchal family and my younger brother went down to Tiari with them. The Patriarch remained in the place, with my brother David, and about 500 men, representing all the tribes, for we were still in the hope that there might be some change, and that we might not be forced to begin open and official war with the Turkish government. No change came to pass, however, and on the 12th of March the Patriarch and his following went down to the district of Dizan, and the village of Mar Diz, where there was held a month later (April 12th), a great assembly of all the notables of all our tribes. This momentous assembly was held in the very house in which, seventy-five years before this time, there was held the assembly of the notables of the nation under the

presidency of the Patriarch Mar Abraham, which decided that the nation as a whole must make war on the Amir of Hakkiari.

The debate lasted for five days, and at the end of that time it was decided, with the approval of the Patriarch, that we must declare war on the Turkish government, and enter into an understanding with the Entente.

Thus an official letter was sent through the Kaim-makam, to the Vali of Van, to the effect that, because of the massacres and oppression to which their "Rayat" brethren had been subjected, the six free districts (Tiari, Tkhoma, Jilu, Baz, Ishtazin, Dizan) felt obliged to sever their political relations with the Ottoman government.

The first fighting took place at the bridge of Diz, between some of our out-posts, and a detachment of zaptiehs (Gendarmerie), and as a result of it, Julamerk fell into our hands. There in the telegraph office we captured an official message from the Vali of Van to the Kaim-makam of the place, telling him how extremely necessary it was that Mar Shimun should be arrested, "To make it impossible for the tribes to enter into war against us." It was in this same month that the Patriarch received a message from the commander of the Russian force in Azerbaijan, General Chornazuboff, forwarded to us by the commanding officer of the force in Gawar, Andreiovsky. Agha Petros had sent the letter, asking the Patriarch to bring his force and cut off the retreat of the army of Khalil Pasha (which was then in retreat from Urmi) and to unite his force with that of the Russians.

The Patriarch took a party of mountaineers, and went down to Persia, where he met the Russian general in Salmas, and was received with all the honours of a prince. He represented to him the very great need we had to rifles, and, in fact, of supplies of all sorts, and asked for assistance. It was agreed that a force should be sent to our help "as soon as it should be possible."

On the 23rd of June the regular Turkish army, with the Kurdish irregulars in support of it, advanced from Mosul against Lower Tiari, bringing machine and mountain guns with them, as well as bombs. They were commanded by Haidar Beg, Vali of Mosul. At the same time the Kaimmakam of Julamerk, with the Artosh Kurds, attacked the district of Upper Tiari, and a combined assault followed.

It was a desperate fight, for the Kurds had, of course, rifles and bombs, and many on our side had old flint-locks only. Thus the enemy were able to advance as far as Mar Sawa, and the women and children had to be removed to the higher mountains. The losses on both sides were very heavy. On the 5th of August, Mar Shimun, who had been in Salmas at the time of the attack, returned from that place, with some 200 rifles of the Russian pattern, and a supply of cartridges. This enabled us to attack once more, and three days later we drove the enemy out of Mar Sawa, and defeated the Kaim-makam's force near the village of Derawa. The Patriarchal family was at this time in the village of Mar Abd-Ishu, in the district of Tal, and Mar Shimun and the notables of the nation had another important council at that place on the 10th of August, to consider the position.

We could then say that we had fairly repulsed the first attack made upon us, both by regular and irregular troops.

It was at this time that my brother the Patriarch received a letter from Haidar Beg, the Vali of Mosul, to the effect, "Hormizd, your brother, is in my hands; if you do not order your people to lay down their arms, your brother will be put to death." The answer of the Patriarch was as follows, "My people are my sons, and they are many. Hormizd my brother is but one. Let him therefore give his life for the nation."

It was decided in the council that the Patriarch should return once more to Salmas, to ask for the help that had been promised, so he set out accordingly, accompanied by a small party of riflemen, and by a deputation of the "Notables." They had great difficulty on the road, for they had to travel by night on account of the dangers, and had to fight for their lives more than once, and were in difficulty through lack of food. However, they reached Bashkala, and there Mar Shimun gave his escort permission to return, and went on himself with the chiefs who were with him to Salmas, where he met the Russian general, who was expecting him.

As a result of the council they then held, the Patriarch sent on one of the mountain chiefs (Khoshaba of Lizan) to Tabriz, that he might tell his tale to the Consul there as representative of the people, and explain their condition. This, it was promised, should be duly passed on to "exalted quarters."

There was, however, no possibility of the Russian giving help at the moment. He was in the act of withdrawing his force from Salmas, and his advice to the Patriarch was that he should accompany them, "and so save a life that will otherwise be thrown away."

This advice Mar Shimun rejected immediately and finally, with the words "I go back to my people, to live or die with them."

After the Turkish army had been broken at Sara Kamish [January 1, 1915-the defeat broke up the Turkish attack on Batur and Transcaucasia. -W.A.W.], the Russian force returned to its position in Salmas and Urmi, and when they had entered again into Bashkala, Mar Shimun sent word to us, in the mountains, bidding us

"endure and fight." They held out hopes that they might even march in our direction, according to the covenant made, but nothing was ever done. Gradually hope left us, and at last Mar Shimun returned with one servant only, to us in Diz, to say that there was no chance of any relief from them. Thus for these three months the five little tribes of our people had held out in their mountains against all the attacks that had been brought against them, till at the last, in all our army, men were selling cartridges one to another at a Turkish gold piece for ten.

There was a final fight in the district of Tkhoma, near to the village of Rabat, and in this action many of our men were fighting hand to hand with their daggers only, having no other weapon, and this was the reason why in this fight alone some few of our men were taken prisoners by the Turks. Food was failing us also; we were terribly in need of salt (a handful of salt sold for ten shillings English), the lack of which began to cause illness, and many of our folk were suffering much from hunger and nakedness. Many died from sheer lack of any decent food.

Thus there seemed no resource open to us save this, to leave our mountains while we had any cartridges left, and go down to some place of safety, near to the Russian army. This accordingly we did, though we lost many men and children by the road, mostly from famine, but many also in battle, for the road by which we went lay near to Albaq (where was a force of Kurds) and there was a fierce battle with them though the losses of our enemy were greater than our own.

It was in the month of October, 1915, that what was left of the nation of the mountaineers issued from the mountains and came down to the plains of Salmas. We had lost men in thousands, both from battle, and from illness, and from famine, and latterly, from overcrowding. The Consul of the Russians now took steps, and the men of the nation were soon dispersed in various villages, both Mussalman and Christian, in the districts of Khoi, Urmi, and Salmas.

In the December of that year, Mar Shimun was summoned to Tiflis by the order of the Grand Duke Nicholas, where he was received with almost royal honours as the guest of his Highness, and overwhelmed with honour and sympathy. A special telegram of congratulation was sent to him from the Tzar, expressing his majesty's hope, "That both you and your nation will soon be restored to your homes in triumph."

So the people assembled, Russians and Assyrians together, there in this Persian district, and it was seen that some sort of organization and government was a necessity, lest folk should come into collision with one another. We have, too, to thank both the Americans and English for the help they gave us, in food, clothing and the like, and the Russians likewise, for they gave with an open hand to our people in their need, provided hospitals and doctors, and indeed did all that was in their power for us in our necessity.

In September, 1916, the Patriarch was called to council by the Russian general, and 2,000 of the young men of the nation were enrolled, and provided with rifles (Persian pattern), and generally equipped as auxiliaries of the Russian Army, and another telegram of congratulation was received by my brother from the Tzar. In the following month the force went into battle, and was engaged in the battles at the capture of the positions of Masiru gorge, and Harik, to the north of Urmi and near Bashkala. The Russian officers saw the worth of the mountaineers in fight, but pointed out to my brother in council that without military discipline the men could never get the benefits of their victories, and they would remain vain. The contingent was thus put under regular military training, my brother David being in chief command of it, with Russian officers to advise him; after some months of training the men showed the fruit of it in a series of actions that took place round Shamsdin in the summer months of 1917, when they were engaged with the 9th division of the regular Turkish army, and in a most successful attack on Kurdish territory, when they penetrated as far as Oramar, and captured that place, though it was considered more prudent to return thence to Urmi. It was for these exploits that the Patriarch received the decoration of the Cross of St. Anne from the Tzar, and several of his chief men the Cross of St. George.

Meantime, the Russian revolution was making progress, and the Russian army was being drawn from Persian territory. They left with us, however, a supply of rifles, ammunition of all sorts, and some guns, and for a while, some officers also, who should complete the training of our men. To most of these, indeed, we owe a deep debt of gratitude, in that they completed their duty by us to the last, and never failed in their sympathy for us Assyrians throughout, and they showed invariable gallantry in the fight. I am sorry, however, to say that this is not to be said of all of them, for some apparently came simply to cause annoyance, and there was not very much use in these!

On the 3rd of December, 1917, Mar Shimun came down to Urmi from Salmas to visit General Simonioff to discuss the final military arrangements. Count Cozmin was then appointed commander of the whole Assyrian force in Urmi and Salmas, and Captain Gracey, of the staff of the British Military Mission then in the Caucasus, under General Offley Shore, arrived to join us, and the fact of his coming was a great encouragement to us all. Still more valuable to us was the speech that he made in Urmi in the presence of the

Patriarch, of the American Consul, of the American Missionary, Dr. Shedd, and the representatives of the Red Cross in Persia. (The speech amounted to a formal recognition of the Assyrians as allies of Great Britain. The writer wishes here to bear witness to the never-failing self-sacrifice and zeal of Dr. Shedd on behalf of the Assyrian nation throughout these days of trial.)

Captain Gracey, however, also gave us (with the most honest intent) a piece of advice that proved disastrous. On his way to Urmi he had visited Simco (Ishmael) Agha of the Shekak Kurds, who dwell between Urmi and Van. Simco had expressed a desire to make alliance with Great Britain and with us Assyrians, and Captain Gracey advised Mar Shimun to accept him. My brother did not like the notion, as he did not believe that the Kurd was honest, but on the advice of the British officer he agreed to the plan and Simco became our ally. The fact that he controlled the district between Urmi and Van (then held by the Armenians under Andranik) made his alliance useful.

We were now left to fight for ourselves against the Turks, who proceeded to attack us, with their Kurdish allies. Meantime, they had also come to a secret understanding with the Persians, and the Persians also soon began to take steps against us. Feeling also began to rise against us among the inhabitants of the land, and attacks were made on isolated bands of Assyrians-notably in Khoi and demands made that all Assyrians should go out of the land.

[The position was, in fact, anomalous in the extreme. Persia was, in theory, Neutral. Actually, she had not the power to enforce her own neutrality or to protect any who took refuge with her. Naturally, those who did so take refuge, had retained their arms and defended themselves. The country thus became a general battle-ground for all contending powers. No Persian authority had raised any objection to this, so long as the fight was in any way doubtful, lest they should offend the ultimate victor. Now, the collapse of Russia had made things apparently clear, and the Persians were anxious to carry favour with what they thought the winning side. - W.A.W.]

The Patriarch and the notables of the nation used every effort to assure them, by word and by writing, that we were only sojourners in their land in order to protect ourselves from Turkish aggression and attack, and so on. The foreign Consuls in Tabriz used their influence to get us permission to remain, at least till the snow should have melted in the mountains, and life there was possible for us, but the only response made by the Persians was a series of murders of our people, and the showing of hostility in every way.

Our position was now most perilous. The Russians were occupied in killing one another. The English had apparently left us; our own mountains were filled with snow, the Turks were preparing to attack us the moment they were ready, and the spirit of the "Jehad" was rising once more among the Mussalmans at large.

Thus, on February 24th, 1918, the explosion took place. Crowds of Moslems gathered in the streets, carrying banners, and shouting the war-cry of all Shiah, "Yah Hassan, Yah Hossein." Fighting very soon began, both with rifles and bombs. We had only a very small force then in the city, but it was ready for an event like this under its leader, Count Cozmin. Some gallant Russian officers, and with them Agha Petros, Malik Khoshaba, and others of our leaders, understood the fanatical spirit of the Moslems, who were gathering under arms, and waving the banners both of religion and of the Turkish empire.

On all sides we heard cries of the "Unity of all Moslems," of "Down with all Kafirs," and the like, and at the last some shots were fired from a village near the city, and all hope of averting an outbreak was over. There was desperate fighting in the town for two days and one night, but in that time the Moslem forces were broken, their artillery and weapons captured, many of their leaders arrested. Those who were left took refuge under cover of the flag of the Entente, in the English Mission House, where the Patriarch was residing as a guest. The Patriarch wrote to Salmas at this time-in which district his family and a part of the nation were then residing-giving the most strict orders that everything was to be done to preserve peace with the Moslems in that land, for there, as in Urmi, they were beginning to gather, and collect weapons in a threatening way, and also to attack and sometimes kill people on the roads.

For instance, one day a half-company of our soldiers came from Khusrabad to Diliman, to take away some stores that had been left there, belonging to the Battalion, which was stationed at the former place. Ten of the soldiers went down into the market to buy food, and, while they were eating, their guns were stolen by men of the government levy. Naturally, the soldiers were desirous of going to take them back by force, as indeed they might easily have done (and as is the custom of the men of our mountains from the days of old). This, however, they refrained from doing when they showed them the written word of the Patriarch, and he was able to get back the guns (which had been taken to the house of the Persian governor) in the way of peace and friendliness. (The traditional manliness and truthfulness of the Persians passed away with the house of Sassan. Now if a Persian has an enemy his way is to invite him to his house as a friend, and then either poison or stab him.)

When peace had been established in Urmi the Patriarch stayed there for a while to arrange matters definitely with the Moslems. There was a long discussion, enduring from nine in the morning till after two in the afternoon, in which the Patriarch assured the Persians at length that we had come to Urmi to seek refuge from the Turks, and that we had no intention of taking their land from them, but should return to our mountains as soon as that should be possible for us. He then returned to Salmas for a similar "Diwar" with the notables there. (The leader of these notables was Izak-al-mumalik.) Thereafter there was peace for a while in Urmi, under the government of the council of the Assyrians, and for a time Moslem and Christian seemed able to live side by side without disputing, and on an equality.

The Murder of Mar Shimun

On the 16th of March, 1918, my brother the Patriarch received a letter from Simco (Ishmael) the Agha of the Shekak Kurds. The letter confirmed what we had heard two days before, from a certain Samuel, known to us as a trusty friend of the Agha, namely, that Simco was very anxious to meet with the Patriarch at any convenient place, to discuss peace. The letter ran thus: "I have come to Koni Shehr, near the town of Dilman, and I am in great hope that your honour will command me (i.e. will do me the honour of paying me a visit) there in order that we may have some speech together."

The request seemed a most natural one. Simco was our ally, received as such on the advice of English officers. Still, the military position had changed of late, for when we received him as an ally, the Russians were still a power. Since then the Russians had fallen to pieces, and it was both proper and necessary that the two chiefs, Mar Shimun and Simco, should meet and take counsel as to what ought to be done. We decided to accept his invitation and meet him as a friend.

The Patriarch ordered his carriage, and went down to the place of meeting, accompanied by a few Russian officers, and a small guard of honour of our own horsemen. It was about 4 p.m. when two of these horsemen galloped in to where we were with the news that the Patriarch had been murdered, but at first we refused to believe it, until one of the Russian officers (Major Kondriatoff, who had himself been wounded) brought us the details, and told us how this fearful crime had been accomplished.

"As Mar Shimun drove up to the house in Koni Shehr, where he was to meet with Simco, we saw that there were many men with rifles on the house roofs, but we considered that they had just gone up to see us. Simco came out to meet the Patriarch, received him with all honour, and conducted him into the house, where they drank tea together. Mar Shimun spoke with the utmost frankness to the Agha about peace, saying, 'I assure you in all honesty, that we have not the least intention of doing any harm in Persia, or of carving out a place for ourselves in it. We only wish to defend ourselves from the attacks of the Turks,' and so on. Simco then replied, asserting his complete agreement with this idea, and the Patriarch rose to depart. Simco escorted him to the gate, and kissed his hand, and his horsemen were ready to conduct us on our way. Mar Shimun and I then took our seats in the carriage, when suddenly a shot was fired at him; this was followed by a volley from the roof, from the windows, and, in fact, from all sides." As many as forty of the horsemen were killed or wounded, and in the confusion that followed some found refuge in the houses of Armenians, among whom was my brother David.

The body of the Patriarch was rescued by a party of Tiari and Tkhoma men, headed by Daniel, son of Malik Ismail. It was buried with all episcopal honours by two Bishops, Mar Petros of the Chaldean Church, and Mar Elia of our own communion. The grave is within the Armenian Cathedral of the district. Three Churches thus united to do honour to one whom all revered and loved.

It was at this time that certain papers were captured by our men in war which proved to us what we now know, namely, that a plan had been made for the destruction of the Christians, and principally of my brother, the acknowledged leader and wisest head among our small nation; this was done by the Persians, though Simco was the hand and agent in the matter. Their belief was that the loss of this one person would be so crushing a blow that the Assyrians would forthwith yield themselves up. Poor Persians, they did not know that Benyamin Mar Shimun was the one person who had most sympathy with them, and who was working in uprightness of heart before God to prevent all war with Persia. They did not remember how, in the first year of our coming to Persia, when Mar Shimun was received with such honour among the Russians then, whenever the Russians sent to him an Assyrian who had been guilty of any offence, that he might judge him according to his power as head of the "millet," then Mar Shimun used to send always to the Persian governor, that justice might be done according to Persian law.

Then when some among us asked him why he did this, he replied, "I wonder that you have so little sympathy. Are not these Persians oppressed enough by the Russian army, seeing how all the matters of Persia

are in their hands, that we Assyrians too should do judgment for our own selves, seeing that we are under the eaves of the house of Persia? That were contrary to true manhood."

We have said that a portion of the Urmi army, coming to Salmas, attacked Simco's main stronghold. This force was led by Agha Petros and the Russian officer, Count Cozmin, and with them were David my brother, and the Tiari Maliks, Berku, Ismail, Khoshaba and Oshana. They attacked Simco's castle of Chira, and after a desperate fight, and great slaughter of our enemies, they took it. Simco and his immediate followers escaped, and fled to Khoi, where they massacred some 3,800 of the Christians of that place, mainly women^o and children, with some few men among them. Our own army withdrew to Urmi after the capture of Chira castle, and we soon received the news that the Armenians, who had been in arms at Van, had been obliged to yield up that town to the Turks, from the lack of ammunition among them. This was a heavy blow for us, since we were thus surrounded on all sides by Turks, Persians, and Kurds.

Many papers were captured when the castle of Simco fell, and these were sent to Urmi, to Dr. Shedd, for translation. One of them proved to be a letter from the governor of Khoi, containing a plan for a "blow at the Christians who were all around him," and another describing how the heir-apparent of Persia, when he heard of the murder of Mar Shimun, sprang up in his reception room, crying out in his joy, "Then Simco shall be our governor for this!"

The men of Diliman had gathered a force against us, composed for the most part of Kurds of broken clans; this we attacked at once, and on April 19th we took that city, with great loss to the Persian army, and we captured some pieces of artillery.

On the 23rd of that month, 1918, my brother Paulus was elected Patriarch of the Assyrians in Salmas, and being taken to Urmi, was consecrated Catholicos and Patriarch on the 29th day of the month, by four Bishops, in the church of the Virgin Mary in the city. The Bishops were Mar Khanan-Ishu, the Metropolitan; Mar Elia, Mar Yosip, and Mar Sergius of Jilu. All the notables of the nation were present, and after the service we left the church in solemn procession, with all the clergy in their robes with censers, cymbals, and all possible solemnity. The third battalion of the army was drawn up on parade at the gate of the city, and so we were conducted in state to the house of the English Mission, where we were staying as guests, under the care of our old friend, Mr. Neesan.

This was, however, no more than an episode of joy in our dangers. Fighting was going on all around us, and before the end of this month we had to send the force of the third battalion to Ushnu, there to meet the 6th division of the Turkish army that had advanced under Haji Ibrahim Effendi from Rowanduz to that point. Three days of fighting followed, in which the Turkish force was defeated and driven back as far as Rowanduz, our men pursuing and capturing 37 prisoners and much ammunition.

Another attack followed from the north, the enemy penetrating as far as the Baranduz river (ten miles only from Urmi) before they were checked. Still, after eight days of battle they were repulsed, and we captured not only 350 prisoners-of whom 24 were officers and two generals, but also eight pieces of artillery and many rifles, besides a large stock of cartridges. The pursuit was pushed as far as Kala Peswa. [This Kala Peswa-for there is more than one place of that name-is about thirty miles north of Urmi. -W.A.W.]

At the same time, the 5th Turkish division came against us from Khoi, under the command of Ali Ihsan Pasha (afterwards commander of the Turkish army in Mesopotamia at the time of the British advance on Mosul), who had a considerable Persian force also under his command. They attacked our Salmas force, but were repulsed, and we captured a piece of field artillery, two machine guns, and thirty prisoners, pursuing them to Khoi. I must not forget to record the fact that a certain number of Armenians from Van were with us in this action, and they fought most gallantly, under their leader Malkumanian.

On June 15th, Ali Ihsan renewed his attack on Salmas, having been reinforced by the 7th division from Bashkala. A portion of our "Urmi force" came to our support, under Count Cozmin, Agha Petros, and Malik Khoshaba, but at the same time an attack developed from the south, where the 6th and 12th Turkish divisions attacked us, on the Urmi side, under Haidar Beg. On the first day we held our own well enough in Salmas, capturing some 25 prisoners, and an army doctor, besides three machine guns and many cartridges. Still, as the fight went on, our ammunition began to run very low, and the enemy, realizing this, began to rely much more on the artillery and machine gun fire, to which we could make no reply, for we had only 25 rounds left for our guns. On the 21st of June, Count Cozmin gave orders that the whole Christian force must be ready to retire on Urmi, for the force of the enemy was too great for us, and we could not hold out both in Salmas and in Urmi. I am sorry to say that in our retreat-where discipline was not possible-some of our women and children fell into the hands of the enemy.

Still, when concentrated round Urmi, we were not yet defeated, though a very dangerous attack was made upon us by Haidar Pasha with his two divisions, from Mount Sir, which is distant only six miles from the city.

Again we repulsed this effort, and took one of their guns, though we had to leave one of ours in their hands in exchange. The 5th and 7th divisions then attacked us again from the north, but we again repulsed them and drove them back once more as far as the plain of Salmas.

Still, in spite of all our victories in open fight-and here we may say that our fighting men have always proved themselves to be better men than the regular Turkish soldiers, and much better than the Persians-there was no doubt that things were growing very black indeed. We were out-numbered by far, we were cut off from any possible help, and though we could defend ourselves for as long as we had weapons, our supply of ammunition of all sorts was beginning to be very small indeed, and we had no means of getting more.

It seemed then that there was no hope for us, and we were almost in despair, when there came a word of succour and encouragement. Dr. Shedd had been attempting to write to the places which were in possession of the English, but there had come no answer, and we were in despair, when suddenly an airplane came flying above us. As only enemies were near to us, we thought that this was an enemy, a German, and fire was opened upon it, and many cartridges fired, in the hope of bringing it down. Suddenly we realized that the airplane was English, and then indeed our folk, in their fashion, began firing out of joy! The messenger was Captain Pennington, and he has himself told how he was received. He had come from Miani, and the General of the English force had sent him with a letter specially from Kazvin, to bring us word from him.

Thus, on August 20th, 1918, a force was arranged, under the leadership of my brother Zeiah, and Agha Petros, and several of the chiefs of the mountain clans who should go to meet the English army. Some Armenians and three Bishops were to accompany them. They were to find the English in Sain Kala. This force made its way to the place, after a sharp fight with the Turks in which they were the victors, and found them at the place, and with them our old friend, Captain Reed.

It is a sorrow to me to write what follows, but the tale must be told. Before the force was able to return from Sain Kala, the Turks made another attack upon us, and with a great host, from the north and the direction of Salmas and Baradost. The fighting lasted for some days, but the supply of ammunition was very scanty, and it was seen that it was impossible to resist the enemy longer, until the return of our friends from the south. Thus, in the last days of August, 1918, all the Christians of Urmi set forth thence, and determined to make their way to the English in Sain Kala. Then upon the road, Mejid-es-Sultaneh came behind us with his Turkish friends and he killed many women and children, and took many captive. The English came to our help, giving their own food to the hungry, and often putting the weary on their own horses and so bringing them safe through. Never can we forget the kindness of those English officers and men, and the hospitals and food stores that they put for us on the road.

At last we reached Hamadan. (Our friend of old time, Dr. Shedd, died during this journey. God give him rest.) There a force of two battalions was raised from among our people, and the whole nation was brought along to Baqubah, there to live in the great camp that was made.

There, under General Austin, all was arranged for us, with hospitals, doctors, attendance, and a place for a market. It was indeed like a great city of tents, under its captains and controllers, who should give food to each one that needed it, and with even a school for the small children, and a place where girls might be trained as nurses, under Mrs. George.

Great indeed was the kindness and the sympathy that we received in this place from General Austin, and from his staff. Never will we forget it, or cease to be thankful for it, and ever will we pray for the security and prosperity of the royal throne of Britain and its empire, for our words cannot express the thanks that we desire to render. There our people are at present, under the care of Colonel Cunliffe Owen, who, with his wife, shows them the same care and sympathy.

Nor must we forget to give our thanks to the missionaries of the Americans, and particularly to Dr. McDowell who did so much for the help and comfort of our people, in the way of giving clothes, wool, etc. Always we have known him as a helper of the Assyrians, and as one who has true sympathy for our people.

When our people set out from Urmi, there were some 70,000 of them on the road. Of these, some 20,000 perished under the hands of our foes. There was, no doubt, much disorder on the road, and for this we have been blamed by some of the officers. Undoubtedly, we are very sorry for it, but we did not know that a small nation would have to be judged so very strictly. We had admittedly no discipline in our march. We were being driven through a land of enemies, and the Turks and Kurds were on our track, and the Persians before us. Most of us were nearly starving, and were carrying arms. Hundreds of men had lost their all, including their families, on the road, under the hands of their enemy; and they did not know whether they would ever reach safety and the British army, or whether they would perish on the way.

[It is true that the migrating nation took food, etc., by the strong hand where they could find it. We fancy that the most civilized people would have done the like. This other fact is true also. The women of the

Assyrian nation had suffered treatment that was hideous past expression from Kurd, Turk, and Persian, and the fact was fresh in the wild tribesmen's minds. Mussulman villages by the score were at their mercy now, and yet, by confession of their own bitter enemies, no Mohammedan woman had to complain of insult or maltreatment at Christian hands. -W.A.W.]

Let it be said, then, that for what we did there was excuse. I have already told how valiantly our young men fought under the leadership of their own chiefs. Since then, as is known, it can be seen how they have fought under the English officers who formed them in battalions -under Major Knight and my brother David- and how they have been an assistance to the English in the fights round Amadia, against the Kurds. Two at least of our officers, Daniel, son of Malik Ismail, and Israel of Tkhoma, have been decorated for their courage by Great Britain. Aghajar of Urmi also received a well-earned decoration for his services.

Our nation has been almost destroyed. From the beginning of the Great War onwards, more than 40,000 souls have perished, in battle, massacre, famine, and pestilence. We have lost our ancient homes, our books, written on parchment more than one thousand years ago and treasured ever since. Our houses, our lands, our vineyards are waste in the hand of the enemy. If our losses were counted in money, they would amount to many millions of pounds. Now what our nation asks for is as follows.

That part of the Assyrian nation that dwelt in Turkey has been the helpers of the Entente against the Turks, and has suffered from the Turks. We desire our settlement in the lands that were our own, from Amadia and Bohtan, north to the plain of Gawar, Shamsdin, and the mountain of Harifta. This to be free from all Turkish authority, and under the protection of Great Britain. We want the chance of teaching our own schools, of working our own lands, of trading openly. Let our old laws and customs be preserved, save for such changes as the nation itself may see to be needful.

As for the part of the nation which has its home in Persia; we ask that its damages be made good from Persia, and that it be settled in its old home (Urmi and the surrounding district of Salmas, Tergawar, Mergawar, etc.) with some sort of security for decent life and freedom from oppression in the future. Then these will have some opportunity for progress in their trade, their agriculture, and the like. Then let there be free opportunities of access between these folk and their brethren in Hakkari, for the general purposes of the nationality.

May I say what our feeling is, about Persia and the Persian government. In all that I have written, I have no wish to show any hostility to Islam as a religion; we know its laws, and we know that, when they are carried out, they are good: we can respect many of its teachers and great men, and our nation has lived for centuries among Mussalman neighbours. No house could have had more faithful friends and servants than the two Moslem Zaptiehs whom I have mentioned above, whom I remember as members of our household, for as long as I can remember anything. Further, as I have said, we were friends with the Kurds in the old days.

We feel, however, that we have received wrong, not perhaps from the government of Persia, but certainly from men who were its officials, and we ask that in the future we may have justice, that justice which the Law of Islam declares is our right. Persia said that she was a neutral power in the war; we entered her territory as refugees, and only asked to live there in safety till we could return to our homes. Then, the Persian officials attacked us, without reason, and invited the Turks into Persia for our destruction. Thus it came to pass that, while we were at open war with the Turk, and were fighting them fairly, it was actually the Persians who did more harm to us than the Turk, and high officials of that nation who urged Simeo the Kurd to murder our patriarch.

We feel, too, that it ought to be remembered that, at the time Mar Shimun was murdered, he was a recognized ally of Great Britain, and that it was owing to the unwise advice of British officers (advice given, of course, with the very best intent) that he sought to make alliance with Simeo, and so came by his death. We see that, in other cases, England demands that those who have broken the laws of war should not be allowed to go free.

We quite see that the matter has been made difficult, by the fact that there is now an "alliance" between Persia and England. But we also are allies of Great Britain, who fought in her cause in the war-a thing which, with all respect to Persia, cannot be said of that Power. So we ask of Great Britain that, as she has undertaken to give advice to Persia, and can so give that advice that it will be difficult to disregard it, she will see that one of her "allies" shall act with justice by the other.

We know that things are difficult, when all the world seems to think that it is the business of England to put things right, and Armenians ask for one country, and Arabs for another, and so on; yet we hope that when England is trying to do justice to every one, she will not forget the weak and the small, for we know that this justice has been the foundation of her rule in the East.

For those of our people who live in Turkey, let me say of the Turks what I have said of the Persians. It is not because Turks are of the faith of Islam that we object to them and feel that we cannot live under them, but because

they are such very bad rulers. They oppressed our people more than they did the Mussalmans (Kurds and Arabs), because we were easier to oppress; but these hated them-and with reason-almost as much as we did.

Englishmen say that they have always lived in comfort in Turkey, and have many Turkish friends. It is quite true, but they forget one thing. No Englishman was under Turkish law, or under the Turkish officials; those who were in the land during the years of war, and were actually under the Turk, felt that there was a difference. So, when the Turks say now (or others say for them, "Where are we to go if you take our country from us?") it is difficult for us not to recall words which our people heard so often from Turkish officials, when we asked for justice, to enable us to live in the land. The words were, "Haidi Jehannuma," which is in English, "Go to Hell." Yet, we do not wish to send them there, but ask only that they may live in their own land, and not in ours! I say what men of all faiths and nationalities feel in Mesopotamia and Kurdistan, when I say that there will be no happiness or safety for any, under the rule of the Ottoman.

With Kurds it is different. They were our neighbours of old, as I have told, and if it had not been for the intrigues of the Turks who used them against us, I do not think that the old friendship would have been broken by anything but passing feuds. If the Kurds could be separated from Turkey (as for instance, by an Armenian state) and a stop put to that Turkish propaganda among them, which has been the cause of the death of several British officers, then even Kurds would be more inclined to sit still now, and we might live among them as of old, provided that both of us were under British protection and control.

What we feel now is this. We Assyrians fought for England in the war, we were recognized as her ally, if a small one; we have been sheltered by her, and are sheltered now; we do not wish you to feel that we are ungrateful for that. Yet, when those for whom we have fought have won the war, we find ourselves still exiles, after two years; still we are kept out of our country, and even the fact that our young men are fighting for England at this hour does not give us back our homes and ruined churches.

Our people do not and cannot know how hard it is to settle things after the war; they only see that those who fought against England are in their homes, while those who fought for her are in the wilderness still. Is it so strange that they should ask, "Why is this?"

I have now told my story. I have striven to tell the truth, without malice, and in particular I have sought to avoid the sowing of strife between Christian and Mussalman. Under God, the future of our people, their very life as a nation and as men, is in the hands of England, and we ask, "What will you do with those who have fought for you?"

When we have put requests to you, we have been told, "You must trust us, for we know more than you, and can do better for you than you can do, by asking help of others." We try to believe that that is true, but time passes and "hope deferred makes sick the heart."

Must we say that the future lies black before us, and that it will be in the future as it has been in the past, world without end, and that we must ever live with a revolver at our heads?

We make our earnest prayer to England that she will not abandon those whom she has saved in the past, and that she will care in the future for those who have suffered in her cause, and whom in the hour of danger she was willing to call ally.

GLOSSARY OF SYRIAC TERMS USED

By W.A. Wigram, D.D.

ABUNA	Bishop.
AGHA	Chief of a Kurdish tribe or clan.
ASHIRET	Tribe or clan. From an Arabic root meaning "ten" (cf. Dent. i. 15).
BAIT / BAITA	House. The word refers either to the family or to the fabric.
BA'UTHA	Prayer or petition. The term is specially applied to the three "Rogation Days" of the Assyrians.
BUKRA	"First-born." The word is used (1) of the "pain beni" distributed after the Eucharist, which is a reminiscence of the "Agape," and (2) at times, loosely, of the Eucharistic bread also, in allusion to Christ, "the first-born of all creation."
D'-	The preposition "of," like the French "de."
GEZZA	"Treasury." (1) A service book, giving the variable parts of the Church Service for all Saints' days. (2) An "aumbray" in the sanctuary of the church, in which the "Melka" (q.v.) is kept.
GURNA	Font.
GNUNA	Bridal chamber. From a root meaning "to protect," or "hover over."
HAIKLA	The nave of a church. In ancient Syriac, a temple.
HULALA	A liturgical division of the Psalter. There are 21 Hulali in the book of Psalms.
IDTA	Church (i.e. the society).
KARUZUTHA	Lit. "Proclamation." A sort of Litany in the Assyrian services.
KHUDRA	Lit. "Circle." A collection of the variable parts of the Church services on all ferial days throughout the "circle" of the year.
KHARASHUTHA	Magic.
KESHKUL	Prob. "Kanish Kul," or "General collection." A service book.
KAIM-MAKAM	Local governor. A third rank in the hierarchy of Ottoman provincial officials.
KOR-EPISCOPA	"Chor-episcopus." The highest of the three "presbyteral" grades of the ministry in the Assyrian Church. It is not counted as Episcopal.
MADBEKHA	"Altar." In common use, the whole sanctuary of a church.
MALIK	The paramount chief of a district among the Christian tribes. It is often used as a title of honour to one who does not actually hold office.
MAR	"Lord." It is a title used both for Saints and for Bishops. "Mar Shimun" (Lord Simon) is the hereditary title of the Patriarch.
MARMITA	A liturgical division of the Psalter. Three "Marmyati" make one "Hulala," and there are in consequence 63 in the book of Psalms.
MATRAN	Metropolitan, or Archbishop. The title is given in the Assyrian Church to the second dignitary in their hierarchy, the Metropolitan of Shamsdin. In the modern use of the Chaldean body, which has become subject to the pope, "Matran" is used, with some disregard of etymology and history, for an ordinary bishop, and "Abuna" for a priest.
MADRASHA	A doctrinal hymn (cf. Hebrew "Midrash," commentary.)
MA'APRA	The priestly Eucharistic vestment. It resembles a cope, but is of square, not semicircular, outline, and is ornamented with crosses. It comes from a root meaning "to veil."
M'AMUDITHA	Baptism. From a root meaning "to dip" or "dive."
MELKA	Lit. "King." Liturgically, the fine flour mixed with the dough at the baking of the Eucharistic bread, and reserved in the sanctuary for that purpose. For the tradition connected with its use, see p. 46.
MILLET	A Christian subject nation in the Ottoman empire, organized (as they always are) in a church, and often having its own language. From a root

	meaning "to speak."
MUTASERIF	A provincial deputy governor in the Ottoman empire.
NATAR CURSYA	"Holder of the Throne." The recognized "heir" of a Bishopric, according to the semi-hereditary system of the Assyrians in medieval and modern days.
NAQUSHA	The board beaten with a mallet (the Greek "semantron") which serves the purpose of a church bell. Rt. "to knock."
NSHIPA	Fine flour made from picked wheat, and intended for the Eucharistic bread. From a root meaning "to pulverize."
NUSARDIL	A Persian word said to mean "the New Year," but not so used in modern times. It is used in the Khudra for a church feast, that "of the Apostles."
ORARA	The stole worn by the clergy. It is shorter than the western type, reaching hardly below the girdle, but it resembles it otherwise.
QDAM-WATHAR	"Before and after." The common name of the book-of Daily Services (the Breviary) in the Assyrian Church. It is derived from the liturgical arrangements made in it, between the two choirs.
QANKI	The sacristy or vestry of a church. Etymologically, the word means "the apse," and is derived from the Greek "conchs," a shell; thus it should refer to the sanctuary as a whole, but in practice it has the meaning given. Assyrian churches are not usually apsidal in form.
QANKAYA	One who has charge of the "Qanki." So, the "Rector" of a church.
QASHA / QASHISHA	A priest.
QURBANA	The Eucharist. From the root q-r-b, "to draw near," to "offer."
RABBAN / RABBANTA	A celibate. A Christian monk or nun. (Pl. Rabbanyati)
RAYAT/RAYAH	A Christian subject of Turkey. The Arabic word means "flock." "cattle," and it expresses their status.
RAZA	Mystery, Sacrament.
REIS	The head-man of a village, Christian or Moslem.
RISH	Head. The word is used either literally or metaphorically.
SHAMASHA	A deacon.
SHEIKH	Lit. "Elder," "old man." Among Arabs, a chief. Among Kurds, the word implies religious chieftainship also.
SHLAMA	"Peace." The usual greeting between Christians, except in Holy Week.
SIAM-IDHA	"Laying on of hands." Ordination.
SHKINTA	Lit. "The abiding place." Heb. "Shechinah," the visible glory of the divine presence. Among Assyrians, the table on which the cross-the symbol of the divine presence-rests in the church, for salutation by all who enter.
SUDRA	Shirt. The alb worn by priests and deacons at the Eucharist.
SUNHADOS	(Greek, "synod," "council.") The book of Assyrian canon law, which is a compendium of the rules laid down by various ancient councils.
TAKSA	The Greek "Taxis." The name of the liturgy among the Assyrians.
TANURA	The name of the fire-pit which forms the oven in Kurdistan.
UMRA	A church (the fabric).
VALI	An Ottoman governor-general of a province.
WAZNA	Font. Lit. "cistern."
YAMIN	The right hand. A measure of two cubits, or half a fathom.
ZAPTIEH	A member of the Turkish corps of gendarmerie.
ZONARA	The girdle worn at the liturgy by priests and deacons.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Lest any reader should tend to be too severe on the Assyrians for the fact referred to, let me remind them that in the century previous to that mentioned there was one pope (John XXIII) who began life as a pirate. His two brothers also followed that profession until they were caught and hanged, maugre the influence of their ecclesiastical relative. The Holy Father could never be got to forgive the King whose justice could not be got to respect persons. (Milman: "Latin Christianity," XIII, v.) -W.A.W.

² These eggs were not only ornaments, but symbols also. By oriental tradition, the male ostrich stood always by the nest, gazing intently at the eggs, till by the power of his gaze and love, the life in them was quickened. The ostrich eggs then hung in the Church to remind the people that they ought to gaze at Christ and His sanctuary with equal love to that of the bird.

³ Assyrians divide up the three orders each into three, viz. Three Diaconal (Reader, Sub-Deacon, Deacon); three Presbyteral (Qasha, Archdeacon, kor-episcopa); three Episcopal (Bishop, Metropolitan, Patriarch).

⁴ The Editor wishes to say that this is the fact, to his personal knowledge. Further, these men were doing their ordinary manual work the while. He has known one man, who ate only on Sundays through all Lent, and no great amount even then. Certainly, this man was not doing manual work, however. -W.A.W.

⁵ Of course bridegroom and bride of old and universal custom exchange rings in all parts of Christendom. -W.A.W.

⁶ Kochar means "nomad." Where, as is often the case, part of one Kurdish stock has become "yarlu" or sedentary, i.e. has settled down to village life, it is natural that those who remain nomad, and migrate from place to place, should soon develop an agha or chief of their own. Kinship, however, is not forgotten in the change of habit, and both sets of tribesmen consider themselves as part of the same stock still.

In the case of the Artosh Kurds, the bulk of the tribe settled down in villages that were previously Armenian or Assyrian, around the turn of the century. Perhaps one third of the clan preferred the old gypsy life. As appears from the text, admitted kinship does not always prevent quarrels and feuds. -W.A.W.

⁷ Such acts of generosity on the part of Mussalman gentlemen, and of loyalty to the original tenets of their faith, are found in previous massacres. Too often, however, they are only isolated acts. -W.A.W.