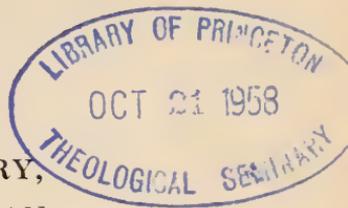


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# JOSEPH PLUMB COCHRAN



PERSIA'S MEDICAL MISSIONARY,  
RACIAL MEDIATOR, CHRISTIAN

*"Who went about doing good, and healing  
all . . . ; for God was with him."*

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By ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D.

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# JOSEPH PLUMB COCHRAN

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## I. PREPARATORY YEARS

Joseph Plumb Cochran was born in the little village of Seir in Persia, overlooking the plain of Urumia, on January 14, 1855. His parents, Joseph Gallup Cochran and Deborah Plumb Cochran, were missionaries to the Nestorians. By natural inheritance he entered into the missionary character and the missionary service. And this inheritance, which came to him pure and reinforced through his parents, ran far back of them. His ancestors on his father's side had moved from Scotland to Londonderry, driven by the persecution in Scotland under James, and on his mother's side he sprang from a French Protestant delivered from the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Out of a long ancestry of high-minded devotion to principle, of simple and true refinement, of energy and unselfishness, of geniality and good feeling, of self-respect and the respect of men, of modesty and purity, came the future medical missionary who was to be the friend of princes, the defender of the poor, the counsellor of Moslem governors and of an ancient Christian Church, the deliverer of a city and the father of a people.

From his birth in 1855 until his father's return on furlough in 1865, Joseph spent his life in the family home on Mt. Seir, about six miles from the city of Urumia. From the top of the mountain there is a magnificent view westward to the passes into the

valleys running up into the Turkish mountains and northwestward over the plain of Urumia and the city and the blue lake. In the winter the mountains were white with snow, and wood fires must be kept up in the little stoves which the missionaries introduced and taught the people to use. In the spring hillside and plain were covered with flowers, or green grass and grain, and even in the hot summer and fall, when the unirrigated country was barren and brown, the well-watered plain of Urumia, with the gardens and vineyards and long rows of stately poplar trees, lay out under the boy's eyes like a great Persian carpet.

Joe's pleasures were not numerous, but the life was wholesome and noble, and the boy learned self-control, dignity and courage. He knew how to handle horses and to meet men. And in the Urumia Mission he was taught to carry himself with self-respect and thus win the respect of his fellows, young and old. He knew what danger and peril were, and he saw men and women daily exalting duty and the fear of God above self-interest and the fear of men.

In 1870 the wife and younger children came home to be with the older children in America. As Joseph wrote, his father thought that it would be wrong for him to leave with them.

When Mrs. Cochran returned to Persia in 1871, she left Joseph behind for his education, and it was his good fortune to be taken into the home of Mr. S. M. Clement, Sr., where he was regarded and treated as a son and grew up as a brother with Mr. S. M. Clement, Jr., Yale 1882, later president of the Marine National Bank of Buffalo, who was Dr. Cochran's nearest and dearest friend. When he had completed the High School course he was nineteen, and under

the pressure of various circumstances and the need in Urumia, he decided to go on as quickly as possible to a medical course. He had always been fond of medicine. It had been his favorite amusement to play doctor, and for years the idea of studying medicine had been growing in him. And when his father died in 1871, nothing was more natural in his view or in the view of all who knew him than that he should prepare to take his place. This had been his father's desire. He saw it, but from above. After the father's death also the native preachers of the Baranduz district wrote to Joseph in Buffalo, urging him to return to Persia. Joseph demanded no miraculous revelation of duty. He was not waiting for a "missionary call," meanwhile intending to use his life selfishly.

In the fall of 1874 he went to Yale as a special student, taking both scientific and medical courses, but the urgent call from Urumia seemed to make it necessary for him to omit everything but the necessary medical training. On October 25 he writes to his mother: "It is some time since I last wrote you, yet I have you in my thoughts and prayers daily. I am very busy indeed, giving all my time to medicine. We have good opportunities here, there being the State Hospital and Dispensary here. I presume I have seen seventy or eighty surgical operations here so soon. I enjoy very much being here with so many students—1,031. Wednesday and Saturday mornings we have no recitations and usually go out to the park for some games. Then we come home in a body, singing and carrying on generally. We have class meetings, too, Sunday and Tuesday evenings, which are well attended and interesting. Then of course there is the regular hazing going on. I being a Medic and special Scientific

have not the fate of a common Freshman! Still the hazing, though unpleasant, is not serious."

The second year of the course he took in the Buffalo Medical College, and the last year, with his degree, he took at the Bellevue Medical College in New York City. When he had his degree in the spring of 1877, he went back to Buffalo and stayed until October, studying with Dr. Miner and working in his office and in the hospitals. He studied pharmacy also and later dentistry, in order to be able to help missionaries and others in as many ways as possible. He did special work, too, on the eye and spent a year in the Kings County Hospital as house physician. He had no money to waste. He says in one letter, "When you asked for papers giving accounts of the [Downs] case, I had no money to buy them." He had walked from his lodgings to and from the Medical College while studying there, having worked out on a city map the shortest route, three miles each way. He kept up his attendance at church and was a member of a Bible class, and in his hospital work he had all that he could attend to, especially with insane patients. All his preparations were made by the summer of 1878, and on June 10 of that year, he was appointed a missionary to Persia by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church.

## II. THE MAN AT HIS TASKS

He was married in August to Miss Katherine Hale of Minneapolis, a Vassar graduate, and he and his wife reached Urumia on December 2, 1878. His work began at once. At Gavelan, a village on the way to Urumia, where he and his wife spent Sunday, the

sick thronged to him, neighboring villagers carrying their paralytics on donkeys as if a word of his would heal, and the day after his arrival at Urumia he began his medical practice with the patients who had been already brought from far and near to await his coming. His sister wrote a fortnight after his arrival: "Poor Joe does not have time to breathe in the city. His dispensary is thronged. It seems as if all Urumia had become sick just as he came."

He knew the Syriac, the language of the Nestorians, and the Turkish, the language of the Mohammedans, as well as the native scholars knew them and was able at once to resume intercourse with the people after ten years' absence.

The young doctor, not yet twenty-five years old, stepped at once into intimate and influential relations with the most powerful men of the land. His charm of character, his dignity, his tact, and his friendliness established him in the admiration and confidence of the people of all classes. He was extremely careful from the outset to conform to all the proper social ideas of the people. He was recognized accordingly as a Persian gentleman, and he had access as a welcome visitor to the highest homes, while he came, in time, to be almost idolized by the poor, to whom he was as courteous as to the governor or crown prince.

He realized at once the need of a hospital and with Mr. Clement's aid erected a simple but serviceable building in 1880-1882. In his own letters Dr. Cochran alluded only modestly and with restraint, as was his way, to the difficulties which he had to overcome in beginning his work and building the hospital.

Before he had been on the field a year a severe famine visited Western Persia, due to two years of

drought and to the export of grain for army supplies during the Russo-Turkish war. Money was sent from America and England for relief, and the chief responsibility for organization and administration fell upon the young medical missionary. The mortality among the sufferers was very great. It was estimated that on a single day 1,000 persons died within sight of the mission station. Thousands were saved, however, by the help given by the missions. A large pauper population had been produced, and multitudes had learned to beg, while the relief funds, so vast in Oriental peasant eyes, had led the people to depend upon the great beneficence of the Christians of the West and on the possibility of further help through the missionaries in any time of need.

Dr. Cochran's connection as a young medical missionary of twenty-five with the great Kurdish chief, Sheikh Obeidullah, and with the invasion which he led into Persia is more like fiction than sober missionary history. Next to the Sultan and the Sheriff of Mecca, the Sheikh was the holiest person among the Sunni Mohammedans. Thousands were ready to follow him as the vicar of God. He was a descendant of Mohammed and claimed to be of the line of the caliphs of Bagdad. He was a man of some real virtues of character, vigorous, just and courageous. He had conceived the ambition of establishing an independent Kurdistan, uniting all the Kurds under his rule and governing them justly, after his rough Kurdish notions, as a free state. He was, for a Kurd, a man of wide and tolerant sympathy. He wished to be on good terms with foreigners, and he was very fair to the Christians. Two years later when the Sheikh's dream had vanished and he was a prisoner

in Constantinople, the Sultan asked him to write a paper describing the condition of the people in Kurdistan. The Sheikh wrote in his paper a great deal about the Nestorian Christians there, praising them as the best subjects of the Sultan. The Sultan objected to such language and three times returned the letter for correction. Finally the Sheikh said, "I don't know much about politics, but I do know something about truth telling, and this is the truth." In this spirit he was ruling the people of Kurdistan with a firm hand when he invited Dr. Cochran to come up to visit him and prescribe for him in the spring of 1880. Dr. Cochran went, with the result that the Sheikh conceived a great affection for him, gave him his unreserved confidence and came to look upon the young doctor almost as a son.

This visit to Sheikh Obeidullah and the friendship which it established between him and Dr. Cochran had significant results. The old Sheikh had some grievances against Persia, and his ambition included the absorption in his proposed kingdom of the Kurdish district in Northwestern Persia. He sent his son down to Urumia in the summer to negotiate with the local Persian government, and the son, of course, sought out Dr. Cochran and was entertained by him. The political result of the son's visit was unsatisfactory, and in the fall the Sheikh came down with his army in an invasion of Persia and laid siege to Urumia. Dr. Cochran and his associates were placed in a very difficult position. They were residents of Persia and bound to be loyal to the Persian government. At the same time they were friendly with the Sheikh. They could not offend either, and yet to favor either would arouse the suspicion and hostility of the other. The

war raged around the city and rolled to and fro past the mission compound, which lay between the besieging army and the city walls. In the end the Sheikh withdrew without capturing the city, which owed its deliverance largely to Dr. Cochran's influence with the Sheikh, who at the same time, though driven back, retained undiminished his regard and affection for the young medical missionary.

For twenty-five years Dr. Cochran carried on his work in Urumia. Primarily, of course, he was a medical missionary. The center of his medical work was the hospital. A mile or two from the city of Urumia, on the banks of the river of the same name, the mission had purchased fifteen acres of land. Four acres of this were enclosed, Persian fashion, by a wall fifteen feet high. It was a beautiful garden, with streams of water running through it. Avenues, lined with sycamore, pear and poplar trees, divided it into four squares and filled it with pleasant shade.

On one of these squares, wrote Dr. Cochran in one of his reports, the hospital is built, on another the college, and on the remaining two the residences of the superintendent of the college and of the physicians. The building is seventy-five feet by thirty-five, faced with red brick, and two stories and a half high. Aside from accommodations for the sick, it has drug-rooms, operating and assistants' rooms and store-rooms. It has two large wards and six smaller wards. The large wards have sixty beds, the smaller from three to six. The beds are of straw on high wooden bedsteads and are furnished with sheets and quilts made in the native style, that is, of wool, with a covering of bright calico. The windows are curtained with gay calico; pictures furnished by our friends

adorn the walls, and in nearly every window are plants. The floors are either carpeted or of brick. The kitchen is at a short distance from the main building, where the cooking is done in a native oven (a large earthen jar, three feet wide by six feet deep).

The medical staff, at its fullest, consisted of Dr. Cochran himself, a woman physician, an assistant physician from the number of Dr. Cochran's own graduate pupils, the necessary native nurses and also a class of medical students. In the hospital were received those of every race and religion whose cases required long and careful treatment or surgical operations, especially those who came from a distance, and the poor whose homes were destitute of the comforts needed by the sick. On two days of every week the physicians were regularly ready to see any sick who might come and to prescribe the remedies called for by their diseases, but on other days the sick were not turned away, and every day there came the pitiable caravan of woe and pain. Indeed, it is safe to say that Dr. Cochran never spent a day without seeing the sick and never went into Urumia City or to any village without being stopped by some suffering soul. The number of sick seen by the doctor himself was in some years not less than 10,000. The number of in-patients in the hospital, from the beginning till Dr. Cochran's death, was, according to the records kept by him, 5,783 persons. Of these more than 1,000 required surgical operations, and nearly all of these operations were performed by his own hands, besides other operations performed at times outside the hospital. Two hundred and forty of these surgical cases were for stone and one hundred and fifty for cataract. Dr. Cochran's skill as a surgeon is indicated by the

fact that of the first one hundred and eight cases of stone only two died, one of them from another disease two months after the operation. Of these one hundred and eight cases, thirty-eight were Persian Moslems and nine were Kurds; and his patients always included large numbers of Moslems as well as Christians. The variety of the work done is indicated by the fact that in one year the list of patients kept in the hospital represented about seventy different diseases. One year, besides patients kept in the hospital and those who came to Dr. Cochran for treatment, 1,145 visits were made to the homes of patients, and still another year 1,208, including visits to thirty-eight villages. Not infrequently he made visits to Khoi and Salmas. Patients came to him from great distances—Van, Mosul, Jezireh on the Tigris, every part of Hakari, every city and region of Azerbaijan and Caucasia. They included every class, but the majority were always the neediest, the poor who lacked the comforts that even a well man needs for his best good and whose sufferings in sickness were multiplied many fold.

The character of the work can be indicated best by giving a few specific cases and incidents connected with it. During the last year of Dr. Cochran's life, a patient who came to him in order to avoid a difficult journey to Europe was His Excellency, Saad es Saltaneh of Kazvin, a nobleman whose services had rendered him famous throughout Persia. He was suffering from a deadly disease (cancer) that required a very difficult operation. The operation was entirely successful. Another patient this same year was His Excellency, Bahadur ul Mulk, of Sain Kulla. It is safe to say that during the years of Dr. Cochran's

presence in Urumia no governor ever came to the city without being under obligations to him for medical services, and also without being bound to him by bonds of love and friendship. Both H. I. M. Muzaffr-i-Din Shah, when Vali Ahd, and his son who succeeded him, when they were in Urumia, or when Dr. Cochran was in Tabriz, consulted with him with reference to their health. Many Kurds of high rank, such as Sheikh Mohammed Sadik of Nochea, either came themselves to the hospital for treatment or sent members of their families. So, also, among the Christians of different races and sects, none stood higher in honor than the doctor. There was no more welcome guest at the Patriarchate of the Nestorian Church in Kochanis in the Vilayet of Van.

The hospital was administered with a conscientious frugality almost incredible. For many years the entire appropriation for the hospital and his other medical work was \$1,000. In later years the appropriation grew to \$1,500, but it required all his economy to compass so great a work on so slender resources, and he did not succeed without making personal contributions that he could ill afford. He helped out by utilizing all available drugs and herbs. Both in the hospital and among the people he always prescribed, if he could, remedies within the reach of the people, and reduced to the minimum the use of expensive, imported drugs. He knew what was obtainable and serviceable in the country, and he taught its use. He was clear in his conviction that it was right to make the work, as far as possible, self-supporting.

As his hospital was the first one in Persia, so also he was the first to send out physicians, natives of Persia trained in Western medical science, and so to

extend the benefits of his profession to many whom he never himself saw. The services of these physicians have been recognized by honors and titles bestowed on them by the Persian government, and the governor general of the Province sometimes countersigned the certificates given them by Dr. Cochran. At the time of Dr. Cochran's death there were fifteen pupils of his practicing in six places in Persia. One other was practicing in Gawar in Turkey. Two of these were Moslems, while the others were Nestorians. Besides these, not a few others were influenced by the example of Dr. Cochran's work to go abroad and there gain a medical education, the benefits of which have come back to Persia. It has been a wonder to those who knew Dr. Cochran that he could find time to teach these pupils. They learned much in the practical work of the hospital and Dr. Cochran's associates gave some of the lessons, but their chief teacher—and none was more faithful—was Dr. Cochran himself. He often taught in the evenings when it was impossible to find time in the days, crowded with demands from others. Still another way in which Dr. Cochran was able as a physician to accomplish much good was by the extension of the knowledge of medicine and hygiene in the country.

Often he left the hospital and traveled about in the villages, either in Persia or in the mountains of Eastern Turkey, healing the sick, settling difficulties among the people, or between them and their landlords, and preaching the Gospel in a simple, sincere fashion that made his word influential with all. And wherever he went, he was sure to find those who from grateful love looked up to him as a man of a higher order of men.

### III. THE PHYSICIAN CHARACTERIZED

Dr. Cochran's medical work was characterized by the moral qualities of the man. He was of quick and accurate judgment, very quiet in tone and demeanor, but firm and decided; ready to listen to others and to change his decision, if reason could be shown, but otherwise gentle and inflexible. There were certain moral and spiritual characteristics that were essential elements in his life. First of all may be mentioned his perfect truthfulness. He never yielded to the practice that is generally regarded as perfectly justifiable of deceiving his patients. Once a man of distinction who was his patient said to him: "Doctor, my friends who are near me will not tell me the truth regarding my condition, and I cannot rely upon what they say. What is the truth? Is my disease fatal?" The doctor told him the truth—that he could not live much longer—and then he urged him to prepare his soul for the great change. And so it was with many other patients and their friends. Never, in order to secure an end that he had in view, did he misrepresent the facts. Sometimes it was necessary for him to correct statements that had been made by him to the government or others, and he never failed to do so. His anger was slow, but it would be kindled against those who had led him astray. So men believed and trusted him when they trusted no one else. Another element of strength and power was his unselfishness. He sought nothing for himself, but he gained the best things that men can give—the honor, the respect, and the love of his fellows, as well as the peace of a conscience clear towards men and God.

The conscience which Dr. Cochran put into all his medical work was a Christian conscience. He was no

mere physician and surgeon. He was a Christian man and a missionary. He was very generous and tolerant in his attitude toward the practices of others, but he was very careful and strict in all his personal ways. In the Station he never allowed the hospital to take precedence over forms of work which he deemed even more vital to the development of the native church. In a careful appeal for reinforcements and enlargement, he placed, first some ordained missionaries, second native preachers, third intermediate and village schools and at the end of the list additional appropriations for the hospital. Another year he closes a statement of his needs with the words, "I have hesitated to ask for more than we do of the Board, lest it seem too much in proportion to the estimate for strictly evangelistic work." He was no mere philanthropist or healer of men's bodies. And he might truthfully have claimed that much of his work was strictly evangelistic. "Dr. Cochran is not a 'reverend,'" wrote Dr. Shedd in 1886, "but he does excellent work visiting congregations on Sunday, and talking to them as a layman."

But while he was primarily a medical missionary who practiced with extraordinary skill his profession as a doctor and also did his duty as a messenger of the Gospel, Dr. Cochran was unique as a missionary peacemaker and diplomatist as well. It is doubtful if any other missionary of modern times, outside of Africa or the South Seas, with their primitive tribes, has won a more interesting position in the political life of the people than came unsought to Dr. Cochran. Born in the country, speaking the three languages of the people as fluently and beautifully as the people themselves, with an intimate and sympathetic knowl-

edge of all the races, their conditions, their customs, their social and political relations, and with a skill at race diagnosis which brought him into touch with their inner life, their modes and currents of thought and motives of action, their ideals, their prejudices, the secret springs of their racial, social and religious consciousness—possessing a mind of exceptional powers of observation and receptivity, and with a thorough practical training, he began his work at the age of twenty-three. His work lay primarily among the Christian people, but it reached out to the Persian on one side, and the Kurd on the other, at whose hands the Christian was ever subject to oppression and outrage. The rôle of mediator was, in consequence, early forced upon the American physician whose professional skill and kindness of heart were quickly recognized, and whose services were freely given to all comers without distinction of station or creed.

#### IV. HIS INFLUENCE AMONG MEN

The influence he soon gained over men of every class was marvelous—an influence always exerted to allay strife, to right wrong, and to promote good will among men. The peasants looked to him as a friend ever ready to help; he had won the respect and the favor of the mullahs and the mujtahids, while the village proprietors, the local rulers, and the predatory Kurds loved and yet feared him; for his influence grew with the years and, in restraining injustice and exactions, was felt in places of highest authority in the land. It was well understood that he was both a careful and acute observer, and an incorruptible and fearless witness.

The governor general of Azerbaijan at one time asked him to assist in bringing about an interview which he was trying to arrange with an enemy, a noted Kurdish chief, saying that he was ready to take an oath on the Koran to give him safe-conduct. "But I would not trust your oath," was the doctor's frank reply. "As soon as you got him in your power you would kill him as you killed ——." The governor did not press the matter further.

I was with him once in a little village where a nest of robbers lived. The morning we left, among those who came to say good-bye was the head of the band. The doctor, who was a man of slight stature, looked him steadily in the eyes, and in his calm, even voice, told him in the plainest terms what sort of a man he was and what he thought of him. The Moslems admired a man who could not be intimidated and who was not afraid to speak truth to any man.

An old tyrannical governor, who was several times appointed to the district of Urumia, knew how to keep the district in order by his stern measures. A few noses and ears lopped off and a throat or two cut in the early months of his governorship served as a sufficient warning to evildoers, who kept out of the way thereafter. When the gentlemen of the Station called on this governor, they were amused to see the servant insert the long stem of the water pipe into the mouth of his indolent Excellency and take it out at the proper moment, and were startled to hear him swear violently if the servant did not drive the fly off his nose. Everything had to be done for him, and when a violent attack of rheumatism laid him low, life was not worth living for his attendants. Dr. Cochran was in great and constant demand at this

junction and had to traverse the long distance from his hospital to the palace at least twice a day to attend his unruly patient, whom the missionaries dubbed "Doctor's Baby." Finally the patient had improved to such an extent that the doctor ordered him out for a drive—an order that was not heeded. One day, the doctor being very busy with operations at the hospital and knowing that his presence was entirely unnecessary, postponed his call until the latter part of the afternoon. As he entered the large reception room, he saw it was filled with callers—noblemen and wealthy subjects who were paying their respects to the governor. The doctor's entrance was the signal for a perfect tirade from his angry patient. "What sort of a doctor is this who comes to see a sick man at this time of day?" etc., with impolite interjections to his attendants. Dr. Cochran stood calmly waiting until the torrent of abuse had spent itself, then said with his own equaled dignity: "I did not come today as a physician, but to say farewell. No one is a patient of mine who does not obey my orders, and I understand you have not taken a drive, so I bid you good-bye." There was an awful silence, for no person present had ever heard an Oriental despot addressed in such fashion, and what the consequence might be could not be predicted. Suddenly the governor burst out into a hearty laugh in which all present gladly joined, and the scene ended with a drive in the state carriage, the doctor and the governor sitting side by side and attended by large numbers of mounted retainers.

He became the great character of the city and of Western Persia. A Moslem lady of high rank in Urumia once remarked, as he was starting away,

"We always feel that the city is perfectly safe when Dr. Cochran is here." The poor looked up to Dr. Cochran with a great and grateful awe. "I chanced to see in the compound one day," wrote one of the missionaries, "a poor, ragged man reverently lifting and kissing the skirt of the doctor's frock coat in which he had been calling upon the governor, while he, oblivious of the incident, was talking to another man."

People knew that he knew the truth. No man in Persia had a better knowledge of the people than he. "What Dr. Cochran does not know about Persia," said Captain Gough, the British consul at Kermanshah, when he became acquainted with him, "is not worth knowing." And he knew perfectly how to deal with Persians. No one of them was more of a Persian gentleman than he was. As has been said, he knew and observed the etiquette of the land and moved as easily and quietly among the nobles and princes as among the poor of the villages.

## V. THE MISSIONARY DIPLOMAT

The influence which Dr. Cochran possessed and the conditions by which he was surrounded forced upon him the question of the duty of a missionary to improve civil conditions, to promote justice and to prevent wrong. He was a man of righteous character and a preacher of a righteous life. Was he not to do justice, and to love mercy, and to see, so far as he was able, that mercy was loved and justice done by others? The situation in which he lived was a tangle of races and religions, of civil and ecclesiastical laws and institutions. It would have been bad enough with

only Moslems, Turks, Persians and Kurds to deal with; but when Armenians and Jews and Nestorians were added, with the network of precedents and compromises under which non-Moslems were enabled to live under Moslem law, existence itself, not to speak of missionary influence, depended upon the tact and Christian diplomacy with which a man met men and bore himself as a mediator and friend among them. He realized how delicate and complicated the problems of his use of his civil and political influence were, and he would have rejoiced to be free from all his government work that he might devote himself to his medical practice and to personal service for the spiritual help of men, but he simply could not refuse to do good. It is true that in trying to do good he incurred the enmity of the Dasht Kurds. If we say that he ought not to have done anything to help the oppressed Christians of Tergawar, or to have stopped disorder, we may be prescribing a course which would also have prevented his accomplishing a work of relief and justice which is almost unique in missionary annals. It may be said that the missionary should not mingle in such matters, and this is a sound principle, but now and then a strong man will arise whose influence in the application of Christian principle to civil and social life simply cannot be suppressed. It is questionable whether any man in Dr. Cochran's place could have been strong enough to refuse to use his strength, and whether, if he had, he could have retained his strength. Moreover, he was working in a serious and complicated situation where no clear line could be drawn between Church and State, or religious and civil affairs, because all are one, entangled inseparably. What it would be impossible

to do, and unwise to do if it were possible, in Japan, he simply could not escape doing in Persia. And even in Persia his position was seen to be unique, and after his death no one attempted to fill his rôle as a sort of unofficial Christian conscience moving upon the tangled web of Oriental confusion and wrong.

There can be little doubt that it was the strain of this work, in which he bore the burdens and suffered in all the sufferings of the people, which wore out his life. It culminated in a dreadful tragedy in 1904. The Kurds of Dasht, a small mountain-locked plain on the border of Persia and Turkey, had been unbearably lawless in their oppression both of the Christian and the Mohammedan villagers of the Urumia plain. Finally a notorious outlaw, Sayid Ghafar, deliberately shot down one of the best educated and most respected Syrians or Nestorians of the country and a naturalized British subject, because he would not give up his watch on Ghafar's demand. Dr. Cochran then took the matter in hand. As a result Ghafar and the Dasht Kurds plotted to kill him.

The journey from Urumia to Julfa on the Aras River, which divides Russia from Persia, even when not dangerous is rough and uncomfortable, and the Station always arranged that some one of the men should accompany, at least to Julfa, any of the women missionaries leaving for Europe or for home. On March 4, 1904, Miss Margaret Dean, who had been the teacher of the children of the mission circle, and Miss Paulat, of the German Orphanage, which had been established in 1896, and Pastor Wolff, a Swedish missionary, started for Russia, and Mr. B. W. Labaree went with them. It appears quite certain that enemies of Dr. Cochran understood that he, and not Mr.

Labaree, was going out with the party and sent word to Sayid Ghafar and to the Kurds of Dasht that they could, without risk of detection, follow them and attack them outside of the Urumia district and kill the doctor. When the party left Urumia, unconscious of any special danger, the Sayid and thirteen of the Dasht Kurds followed, but failed to overtake them. They inquired in Salmas of the movements of the missionaries and learning that some were to come back soon on the return to Urumia, they waited for them, and when Mr. Labaree and his servant returned, the Kurds divided and held the three roads by one of which they must pass. On the one which they chose, the Sayid and three Kurds met and murdered them. The crime filled Western Persia with horror, the more so as the men who committed it were known to have aimed at the man who was more loved and more feared than any other man in Western Persia. British and American consuls were sent to Urumia to take matters in hand, and they did their work, of course, with and through Dr. Cochran. The extra toil, the sorrows of the villagers who were in constant terror; and the grief which he felt at Mr. Labaree's death in his stead, weighed on his heart by day and by night. Those who watched him saw his hair whitening and the lines of his face deepening and perceived that the burden he was bearing was pressing with perilous weight. "How can I eat of your bread," he said to the governor with whom, under constraint, he was dining, "when it is your fault that my brother has been killed?" "His intense feeling all through those awful months is, as I feel," writes Mrs. Labaree, "what hastened his end more than anything else. He never voluntarily spoke to me of the fact that Mr.

Labaree died for him, but when he would take my little fatherless children into his arms, such a look of suffering and grief came into his face as I never want to see again. The more I think of it, the more convinced I am that death was absolutely *the only way out* of the maze of suffering, danger and anxiety in which the doctor found himself. And God in His love and mercy did not try His servant beyond his strength but gently released him. I love to think that Dr. Cochran and Mr. Labaree look at the whole awful tragedy *from God's side now* and together, in the light, they are convinced that they were led safely through the awful darkness that surrounded their deaths. And I also love to think that we, too, shall know and understand some day, and in that hope we may even now rest satisfied that 'all is right that seems most wrong, if it be His dear will.' "

## VI. DEATH AND THE MOURNING

He went on with his work but the burden was too great for him, and on July 21, 1905, after a delightful communion service among the missionaries, he spoke of having a fever and terrible aching. For several days he would pay no attention to it, for he had a very serious case of typhoid fever under his care, one of the leading Mohammedan ecclesiastics of the city. Under his firm sense of duty he insisted on going into the city each day to see his patient, the Bala Mujtahid, until he fell in a faint in his yard, and was compelled to give up. Even then he declined any medical assistance. He said with a smile that he would look after himself until he lost his senses and then others might

be called. All that could be done for him was done, and under the skillful care of Dr. Vanneman of Tabriz, who drove over, the fever was broken, but his heart and other organs had borne too great a strain. The hard work and overwhelming burdens that he had carried, work and burdens that he could not do and bear perfunctorily but that ate into his life, had sapped his vitality, and he grew weaker, mercifully without pain, until at three o'clock on the morning of August 18, 1905, the true soul went quietly to its reward. In the days of his delirium he had often been thinking of the Kurds, and once he spoke about Heaven and added, "And there will be no Kurds there." In the land to which he was going, he was thinking, "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." He would be beyond all Kurdish plots and hatreds and fears then. But there were Kurds there, some of them waiting for him to welcome him whither he had guided them.

"Two wives of a nobleman have called upon me," wrote Mrs. Cochran, "dressed in mourning for Joe and told me that all the Moslems in the city were wearing mourning for him. The Syrians wept day and night and held memorial services in their churches, as they had before held special services of prayer, and many had fasted and prayed for days before that his life might be spared. A rugged Kurd came yesterday, saying if the sahibs were not here he must see me, and he wept with sobs that shake a strong man's frame and told how on one hand he had saved his life and on the other he had saved his soul. He had worked three years over him in the hospital for a wound he had, and while here he had been converted."

All the Moslems were not wearing mourning for

him, but to say that sorrow filled the whole city and plain is to speak soberly. "For days," wrote the Rev. R. M. Labaree, who had resigned his church in America to come out to take his brother's place, "the governor and the principal men of Urumia had been sending around men to inquire as to his condition; missionaries and every one connected with us were repeatedly stopped in the streets by total strangers to be asked in regard to him. That night all the people in the college yards assembled about the house, weeping, and slipped up quietly to get one more glimpse of the face they loved so well, as he lay on his bed unconsciously breathing out his life. And when the end came, every one felt in all this city that he had lost a personal friend—and this in every walk of life, from the governor, who burst into tears on hearing the news, to the poorest beggar, two of whom on the day of the funeral threw themselves upon the ground at the foot of the casket and in true Oriental fashion beat their heads upon the ground until they were forcibly removed. It was this sense of personal loss on the part of hundreds of every nationality and grade of life that was to me the most impressive thing that I ever encountered at a funeral service. What sort of a man was this that could so impress himself upon high and low, upon Nestorian of every form of faith, upon Persian, Armenian, Jew and even Kurd, as his own personal friend? And I could not but think how cheap would have been the reputation and wealth that the doctor could have easily attained in the homeland compared with the love and the trust and the almost worship that he has won here in Persia."

He was buried amid the sorrow of the whole city, and the leading Mohammedan preacher in Urumia

publicly eulogized him in the mosque, declaring that even from the religious point of view he was a man whom Moslems should admire.

## VII. ESTIMATES OF THE MAN AND HIS WORK

And Mirza Abdul Kazim Agha's judgment of him was just. Courtesy and considerateness were part of his nature. He was a man of clear and quick judgment and of strong and unhesitating action, but he was not overbearing, or assertive, or discourteous. He did not surrender his politeness or dignity under excitement. No one ever saw his forbearance overtaxed, though there were times when the strain was greater than even those closest to him knew. Jealousy and malice and selfishness were qualities of a lower plane than that on which he moved. "Among those characteristics in him, which impressed me most deeply," wrote an American woman, "was his gentlemanliness. He was a gentleman by instinct as well as training." Professor Linden, one of his instructors in the Central High School in Buffalo, said of him as a boy: "He was the most perfect gentleman I have ever known among my pupils. Instinctive gentlemanliness was emphasized by a singular gentleness toward and thoughtfulness for others. I have never, even under most trying circumstances, known him to be impatient or thoughtless of others' feelings."

He was a delightful conversationalist. His own experience, his knowledge of Persian stories, his contact with life in many lands, his exhaustless fund of anecdotes and his quiet and playful wit, made him the most delightful of companions. He was always ready for any social emergency. When the Vali Ahd,

the grandfather of the present Shah of Persia, visited Urumia some years ago, the doctor went out with many others to greet him. The Vali Ahd called him up to the carriage and held out his hand to him, asking to have his pulse felt and a medical opinion of his condition given immediately. In Persia every available doctor is consulted as a matter of course and is expected to give a correct diagnosis on the spot after feeling the pulse and looking at the tongue. Dr. Cochran felt the pulse with all due solemnity and then, with quiet acceptance of the Oriental situation, pronounced the entirely satisfactory verdict, "It feels as though royal blood were coursing through it." It was this light humor which brightened all his social intercourse.

His charm was heightened by his genuine modesty. There was no pretentiousness or boasting of any sort. He always depreciated his abilities. He could write the most fascinating reports, but he spoke of them with diffidence and humility. He shrank from self-advertisement of every sort. "In 1889," wrote one of his sisters, "when my brother visited my home in Sparta, N. Y., he yielded to my wishes and spoke in our church one Sunday evening. It was always hard for him to talk about work in which he had taken a prominent part. I wanted him to tell about the circumstances leading to his receiving the decoration from the Shah and to show the stars to the audience. But with his characteristic modesty, he went to the service without them, and they were only shown when my husband in the pulpit, against my brother's protest, fastened them upon his coat while he was speaking." And it was so also in Persia. He went about in a quiet and unpretentious way, careful always to do

what the Persians deemed proper, but with no show or retinue of any sort.

With innumerable provocations to lose his temper, he was noted for his calm and tranquil spirit and his patient acceptance of disappointment and thwarted plans. How wonderful such self-control is those will appreciate who know the strain to which it is subjected in an Oriental land. He had come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and he did not chafe at hindrances which he could not remove, nor complain because the conditions of service were difficult and trying. The natives never ceased to be impressed with his patience and quietness. By his example he preached as powerfully as any man ever preached by words.

He truly loved the people, Mohammedan and Christian, and they knew that he loved them and that he was living for them and that, in a true sense, in his Master's spirit and name, he was bearing their transgressions and sins and giving himself for them.

But the inner spring of his life was not feeling, but a firm and noble sense of duty and a steadfast devotion to what was right. This unbending conscientiousness showed itself in his frugality and precision in the use of mission money. He would never countenance any extravagance. If it was necessary for some one to undertake the unpleasant duty of scrutinizing another man's accounts and making criticism, he was ready. He wrote long letters to explain the necessity of what many would regard as small expenditures. But the money was all sacred money in his eyes, and an outlay of \$200 needed the same moral justification as an outlay of \$200,000. He obeyed with scrupulous fidelity all the rules of the Station, the Mission and

the Board, and he thought that others should do so. He was courteous but perfectly firm in refusing to countenance loose disregard of these rules and all easy-going irregularity. He saw no reason why righteousness should cause bad feeling. "It is news to me," he wrote of one whose carelessness he had to check, "that Mr. ——— entertained any but the kindest feelings toward me, as I have never had any other toward him." All moneys which came to him in his work he carefully accounted for and would not regard presents to him for medical service as personal, but always credited them to the hospital; and if he wanted to keep a rug or a horse which had been given him, he would pay its value into the hospital funds. He had a sense of honor in such things as fine and keen as the edge of the sharpest dagger blade worn by any of his Kurdish friends or foes. He never shirked work or evaded duty, however hard and unpleasant. He never complained of having too much on hand, or of being loaded with more than his share of work.

But he had no careless hands. His touch was ever gentle and healing, and he threw his whole self into all that he did. "He was so very careful," wrote one of the Anglican missionaries, "at every turn to do the thing he had in hand and that only and had an extraordinary capacity for throwing himself into the work that he was for the time engrossed with. On each occasion he seemed to be a different person, yet through all he was the same. It is difficult to explain what I mean, but I know it came to him on account of his being able to throw himself so whole-heartedly into the task he had in hand, that for the time being he forgot his other gifts. It is from such lives that we learn the meaning of missionary zeal."

In his relations to his fellows his magnanimity was unbounded. He offered once to give up his post in Urumia to another and go to Salmas, or if it would be more acceptable, to have the friend to whom he was writing come to Urumia and take the first place, Dr. Cochran taking a place as his assistant. And the proposition was made in all honesty and sincerity. He was not seeking his own but the things of Jesus Christ.

Such a man made a profound impression on all who came to know him. The English and Russian consuls were won by him and took him into their confidence. Whatever was worth knowing about affairs in North-western Persia he knew. Officials all over the Empire knew him and respected him. In Urumia he walked to and fro as a living Christian evidence. "Mingling so freely as he does with the higher classes of Moslems in this town," wrote Dr. Labaree in 1903, "he is creating a deeper impression upon them as to the superior worth of the Christian faith than arguments from the most able controversialists could do." And his work was helping to produce wide-reaching and enduring changes. In religious character, as well as in social and political conditions, the Nestorians and to no small extent the Moslems of the field in which he worked were deeply affected by his life. They are not, and never can be again what they were when he came in 1878, as a young man, to contribute his life to the enlarged work of the "Mission to the Nestorians." "It is a vindication of the American missionary effort beyond cavil, that when their field is lighted up by an event of world-wide interest such a work is revealed, the fruit of two generations of Americans," said the *Boston Transcript* in an editorial in

January, 1907, with regard to the agitation in Persia for a constitution, which it closed with an account of Dr. Cochran, "who played a rôle to some extent such as the one that other modern hero, 'Chinese Gordon,' enacted in China."

Ever since Dr. Cochran had come as a boy of fifteen to America in 1870 his most intimate friend had been Mr. S. M. Clement, Yale 1882. Mr. Clement had gone out to Persia to visit him in 1882, and no one knew better what kind of man he was, and this was Mr. Clement's careful judgment: "His was a pure life of consecration to the highest ideals, and an absolutely unselfish devotion to duty. Here was a man who had put aside the alluring ambitions of a most promising professional career in this country and was living day by day, and every day, the Christ-life amid the perils and privations of fanatical, heathen Persia. Nothing but the teaching and example of Christ can explain such a life; and he had more of His spirit than any man I have ever known."