

ARTICLE VI.

THE ARABIC PRESS OF BEIRUT, SYRIA.

BY JOHN ORNE, A. B., CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

ABOUT seventy years ago, when the first Protestant missionaries visited Beirut, this ancient city had a population of only about eight thousand. It had no schools or teachers, and hardly any one there could read. The people were in gross ignorance. No printing-press existed in the country. There were no carriage roads for easy transit, no conveniences of civilization, and scarcely any commercial intercourse with Europeans. Missionaries were looked upon as enemies to be opposed, rather than as friends to be cultivated. Now the population numbers about one hundred thousand. The city abounds in schools conducted by the various religious sects, as well as by the government. There are churches and substantial stone residences furnished with the improvements of modern civilization. There are macadamized streets, fine roads leading to the suburbs, and comfortable public conveyances to towns and cities in other parts of Syria. The city is lighted with gas, and supplied with water by means of an aqueduct. Educational institutions of various grades and for both sexes abound, furnishing instruction to many thousands of youths. There are a dozen or more presses for printing Arabic books and newspapers. These presses are under the management of the Protestant and Catholic missions, of the government, and of private individuals. According to recent information a few of these presses are as follows: the American, carried on at the Presbyterian Mission; the Jesuit, carried on by the fathers of the Jesuit Mission; the

Turkish government's lithographic press; those of Khalil Sarkis, Rizkullah Khudra, Yusef Shelfoon, Hannah Nijjar, Khalil Effendi Khouri, and others. Some of these presses confine their issues to newspapers and miscellaneous matter of the lighter sort, while others essay to perform all kinds of work attempted by a large and enterprising book-publishing house.

The American Press was founded in 1822 at Malta, to which island the missionaries had fled from the political troubles in Syria. Afterwards, in 1834, it was removed to Beirut, where it became firmly established and has remained ever since. The issues from this press of works on theology, history, science, general literature, and of educational textbooks, maps, cards, and other facilities for imparting instruction, besides works of a miscellaneous character, have been steadily increasing for more than seventy years, and the catalogue of its publications is ever lengthening its lists. It has become not only a decided power in Syria, but has extended its influence to Egypt and other parts of Africa; to Persia, India, China, and elsewhere among the Arabic-speaking people.

The equipments of the American Press are large and complete. It makes use of ten fonts of Arabic type, of superior quality, which have been employed by the great printing-presses of Germany, and in many cases have supplanted the old fonts in use. The British Foreign Bible Society has also adopted the Beirut type for its Arabic publications. The printing-office, which occupies a substantial stone structure, is furnished with steam-presses of the latest improved patterns, and of great power and capacity, hand-presses, a hydraulic press, a lithographic press, embossing presses, a hot-rolling press, a type-foundry, apparatus for stereotyping and electrotyping; and the office is prepared to do work with these ample appliances, not only for the use of the mission and its patrons, but for any other parties who may desire it. In fact the Mission Press, really the largest and most active Arabic

press in the world, is as thoroughly furnished as any European, English, or American press to do printing of a high degree of excellence, in several languages, either directly from the forms, or from electrotype and stereotype plates; even to *make type*, to execute artistic work, bind books, mount maps, and do everything else that is within the province of a completely furnished printing and publishing house. The Press does the Arabic work for the American Bible Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the London Religious Tract Society, the American Tract Society, the Syrian Protestant College, as well as for private individuals.

The American Press was established to further the cause of the American Board of Foreign Missions in Syria. Subsequently it went into the hands of the Presbyterian Board of Missions and continued its work in the same religious interests.

As might be expected of a mission press, the publications partake more of a religious than secular character, although not a few educational treatises, for the use of the mission secular schools and the Protestant College and the Medical School, have been issued.

Of religious publications the Bible takes the lead, both in the number and the variety of its editions, and in the superior excellence of the typographical execution of some of them. The full vowelled edition printed from electrotype plates in style of the first font, is one of the most elegant books in the Arabic language. The translation of the American Bible Society's edition of the Bible is the successive work of Drs. Eli Smith and C. V. A. Van Dyck of the American Board of Missions, and it is considered to be a model of pure Arabic. It reflects great credit upon the scholarship of these two eminent divines, who so thoroughly mastered the intricacies of two very difficult Oriental languages that they have produced an almost faultless translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew into Arabic.

Through the benevolence and at the expense of Mr. Mott, an English gentleman, a press and other necessary equipments for printing raised Arabic characters for the use of the blind have been furnished, and already portions of the Scriptures have been supplied for the edification and comfort of this unfortunate class of the community.

Of the other religious publications there are some intended more especially for the use of the students in the Theological Seminary. Many of these, perhaps most of them, were written in Arabic by the members of the mission, as well Americans as learned native Syrians, graduates of its schools and seminaries. Among these works are Rev. Dr. J. S. Dennis's "Systematic Theology," "Evidences of Christianity," and "Biblical Interpretations"; Rev. Dr. Henry H. Jessup's "Homiletics and Pastoral Theology"; Dr. G. E. Post's "Complete Concordance of the Arabic Bible," and "The Bible Dictionary"; Rev. S. H. Calhoun's "Harmony of the Gospels," "The Life of Christ," and "Scripture Helps"; Dr. W. W. Eddy's "Commentaries on the New Testament," and "The Historical Foundation of Christianity"; Mr. Ibrahim Sarkis's "Key to technical and unusual words found in the Arabic Bible"; Dr. Wortabet's "Commentary on the Hebrews"; Dr. Eli Smith's "The Work of the Holy Spirit"; Nofel Effendi's "History of Religions"; R. Hassoun's "Chronological Arrangement of the Gospels." Some of the publications are translations of standard English works; such as, Edwards's "History of Redemption"; Alexander's "Evidences"; Phelps' "Studies of the Old Testament"; Keith on "Prophecy"; Newton's "Illustrated Life of Christ"; Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Holy War"; Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ"; D' Aubigne's "History of the Reformation"; Dwight L. Moody's "Twelve Sermons"; Spurgeon's "Sermons"; Miss Havergal's "Little Pillows," and "Morning Bells." Of works not religious but edifying, we find "The Schoenberg-Cotta Family"; "Swiss Family

Robinson"; Smiles' "Self Help"; "The Dwellers on the Nile," by Budge. Of controversial works, there are examples in Haurani's "Darwinian Evolution and Materialism," and his "Reply to the Darwinian Theory."

The smaller works, on a great variety of subjects, mostly of a religious or moral character, adapted to all classes of people, young and old, are too numerous to mention except in a catalogue of publications. They comprise history and fiction; sermons and homilies; works of devotion and consolation; narratives, allegories, biographies, meditations, essays on religious and moral subjects. Drummond's "The Greatest Thing in the World," and "Black Beauty," a book which has been termed "The Uncle Tom's Cabin for the horse," are books which can be obtained as easily at Beirut in the Arabic language as in Boston in English.

Of the multitude of tracts, picture-books, picture-cards, story-books, question-books, catechisms, hymn and tune books, and all the other appliances for Sunday-school and general religious work, it is unnecessary to make any detailed mention. The mission book-store in Beirut is as well supplied with all these as is any denominational repository in this country.

Of the purely secular educational publications there is a good supply. The list consists of material for teaching persons of all ages. There are alphabet wall-cards, primers, reading-books of several grades, some of them illustrated; grammars and rhetorics, both elementary and advanced, prepared mostly by native scholars; special text-books on etymology and prosody; geographies, with atlases both large and small; wall-maps; arithmetics, mental and written; treatises on algebra, geometry, trigonometry, logarithms, chemistry, physics, geology, botany, astronomy, meteorology, physiology, natural history.

These works are all good and reliable text-books on their various subjects. A few of them are translations from the

English; but most of them were prepared especially for the use of students in the mission schools, the Protestant College and Female Seminary of Beirut, and the Medical School. Their preparation reflects great credit on the scholarship, industry, and philanthropy of the members of the mission, both Americans and Syrians. Dr. Post's "Botany"; his "Plants of Syria and Egypt," "Flora of Syria and Palestine," "Natural History," "Physiology"; his 700-page treatise on "Surgery," and his "Materia Medica," all attest his wonderful versatility of genius, his thorough scholarship, and his untiring industry. The same may be said of Dr. Van Dyck's 412-page "Chemistry," his "Higher Astronomy," "Physical Diagnosis"; Wortabet's "Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene"; Haurani's "Wonders of Nature," and "Commercial Products of the Sea"; Dr. Bliss' "Mental Philosophy." All these text-books are valuable treatises on their respective subjects, and their English translations would rival similar works in use in our own high schools and colleges.

The counters of the mission book-store contain also several Arabic-English and English-Arabic dictionaries by such authors as Sarkis, Abcarius, Kessab and Hammam, Bistany, Wortabet. Even the ancient classic languages have their illustrations in such works as Harvey Porter's "Latin Grammar in Arabic," his "Latin Reader, with Latin-Arabic Vocabulary." The department of History is well represented by J. Abcarius' "Universal History" (729 pp.), Porter's "Ancient History" (a large 8 vo. work of 598 pp.), Sarkis' "Summary of Ancient History," with special histories of Damascus, Jerusalem, Rome, Macedonia; Nofel Effendi's "Notes on Arab History." Of works by native poets the press either prints or offers for sale the "Assemblies of the Sheikh Al Yazijy," the "Makamât of Hariri," the "Diwans" of Motanebbi and El Farid, the "Poetical Selections" of Ibrahim Sarkis. For ethical instruction we find Sarkis' "Ancient Arabic Proverbs," and that celebrated book of allegories and fables entitled

“Kalila and Dimna.” A weekly illustrated paper called *The Neshra* is published by the mission press, and ably edited by the brothers Rev. Drs. H. H. and Samuel Jessup. It contains religious and secular matters, often a report of a sermon or lecture, and some scientific articles.

The above list, comprising but a part of the religious, educational, and miscellaneous publications of the American Press at Beirut, will convey some idea of the enterprise, industry, and scholarship of the members of the Presbyterian Mission.

The extreme cheapness of these publications in the Arabic language is noteworthy. The vowelled Bible (8vo. 1st font, morocco, gilt) is but \$4.50. The same in roan is only about \$1.50; unvowelled, ninety cents. From this the prices of the different styles run down to as low as twenty-eight cents. Testaments are supplied as low as ten cents. In fact they are as cheap in Arabic as in English. The Arabic Gospel of Matthew for the blind (bulky as such embossed styles are) is only about ninety cents. The Arabic reading-books run from five to fifty cents, a 240-page one being but twenty cents. Educational books are cheaper than the same sized books of this class in America. An arithmetic of 414 pages, which would in English cost here at least \$1.50, can be had for about sixty cents in Beirut, while a large geography of 502 pages is but seventy-five cents. The higher-class works, for the use of the College, the Theological and Medical Schools, are rather under than over the prices of the same works in English. Miscellaneous works are remarkably cheap. D'Aubigne's "History of the Reformation" (2 vols. 1458 pp.) may be had for \$1.35. Dr. Eddy's "Commentary on the New Testament" (about 600 pp. in each vol.) is offered for \$1.80 a volume. "The Pilgrim's Progress" (containing 537 pp.) is but fifty cents. The works of the standard Arabic authors Hariri, Motanebbi, Yaziji, El Farid are supplied at much lower prices than the European editions of these authors' works. Book-

lets and tracts can be had for less than the expense of postage.

Rivalling the achievements of the Protestant American Press of Beirut, the press of the Jesuit fathers takes a high place for the number, the variety, and the excellence of its publications, and for the beauty of its typographical work. This Catholic Press, founded with the special object of aiding the Jesuit missionaries of France in their labors among the Syrians, has, in addition, taken upon itself to contribute to the advancement of Oriental studies in general. It offers to publish any work which does not offend the Catholic doctrine or morals, whether in the Arabic, Syriac, Turkish, Armenian, Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, English, or other languages. It possesses type for printing in all the above languages. Its arrangements for stereotyping, electrotyping, lithographing, its type-foundries and steam-presses, are adequate for doing any work that may be required. It employs proof-readers competent to correct the proofs in all the languages above mentioned. The Arabic fonts of this press present a remarkably clear-cut, well-defined appearance; and many of its publications are printed in vowelled characters. This latter fact is a decided advantage, especially to foreign readers, not familiar with the language as spoken.

Although many of the publications of the Jesuit Press are of a religious character, consisting of Bibles, Testaments, prayer-books and service-books, "Lives of the Saints," "Meditations," catechisms, and controversial treatises; and of an educational character, such as arithmetics, geographies, grammars, conversation books, Arab-French and French-Arab dictionaries, primary reading-books for the special use of the mission, yet a very large part of its publications are of a more pretentious character in the field of classic Arabic literature. That great classic story-book, "The Thousand-and-One Nights," or "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," is issued by the Jesuit Press in a beautifully printed, expurgated edition of five volumes. Excepting the Calcutta edition of Mac-

Naghten, this is the edition most pleasing to the eye, and the easiest to decipher.

Other classical Arabic works for which we are indebted to this press are "Seances of Badi uz Zeman, al Hamadani," with excellent commentary, a treasury of wit and wisdom, by the Chaucer of Arabic literature, who flourished in the tenth and eleventh centuries; a volume of 545 pages containing letters by the same distinguished author, which letters are perfect models of epistolary style; "The History of the Dynasties," by Abul Faraj, commonly known as Bar Hebræus. This last work is more complete than the English edition of Pococke of Oxford, and contains many corrections of that edition, the result of the discovery of several other texts since Pococke's day. In poetry we find among others the works of Abu'l 'Atahyat, one of the most illustrious poets of the glorious reign of the Abbasides; the diwan of Al Hansa, a poetess of the seventh century, whose poems are of the elegiac sort, and whose name among the Arabs is synonymous with grief and lamentation. The editor of this latter work had the good fortune to find two collections of the poems, which he saved from oblivion and presented to the Arabic-reading world as treasures from the mine of Semitic literature.

Another valuable work recently issued is that entitled "The Arab Christian Poets." The editor proposes to show that most of the pre-islamic poets were Christians. Whether this idea is sustained or not, the work, as a collection of Arabic literature, is one of the most valuable that has emanated from the press for many years. The diwan of the Christian poet Al Akhtal, previously in MS. only, is issued in very attractive form, completely vowelled and annotated. It is a work of great linguistic, literary, and historic value, and interesting to the wild Bedouin of the desert, as well as to the cultivated citizen of the town.

We must not omit to mention, among other works of the sort from the Jesuit Press, two valuable collections of se-

lections from Arab writers in every age, and in every department of literature. One of these, called "Nochab al Mulah," or "Collection of Choice Extracts," contains liberal selections from Lokman's "Fables," "The Thousand-and-One Nights," "Kalila and Dimna," the historians At Tabari, Macrizi, Abul Fida, Ibn Khaldun, Al Makkari, Abdl al Latif; from the voyages of Ibn Batuta, the Natural Hist. of Kazwini; parables and proverbs from As Sabrawi and Al Halabi with some of the Seances of Yazigi, Hariri, and Hamadani. Another collection in six volumes, with three additional volumes of commentaries and one volume of indexes, called "Majani al Adab," or "Flowers of Arabic Literature," contains a similar variety. These two works are cyclopædias of Arabic literature and treasuries of its most precious gems.

The works in the department of philology, such as dictionaries and grammars, are of a high order of merit, and are adapted to the wants of advanced students. Among these may be mentioned a book of "Arabic Synonyms," which the author has prepared from more than fifty books and MSS. of the most celebrated Arab lexicographers and grammarians; a book of "Phrases" for the assistance of writers in expressing their thoughts in the best manner; Ta'alibi's "Lexicology"; a large Arabic dictionary in two volumes, containing 1500 pages, by Said el Khoury, el Khartouni, and styled a *Kamoos*, or "ocean." It contains the substance of all the great Arabic dictionaries that have preceded it, and surpasses them in its typographical execution and in the facility it affords the student in finding the word sought, as well as in the citations of authorities for the various readings.

Besides several small treatises on grammar in Arabic and French, a large work has lately issued in French, intended to supersede Caspari, Wright, and De Sacy. The author, Father Donat Vernier, has been occupied in the preparation of this grammar more than twenty years, having consulted not only

all the European grammars which have preceded it, but also the great Arabic sources.

A weekly paper, *The Bashir*, or *Herald*, devoted to religious and political news and to society matters, containing also articles scientific, historical, is from the same press. The great variety of educational, historical, poetical, and philological works issued by this press is evidence that it ministers to a literary and not strictly sectarian taste. Most of its publications are written originally in Arabic, and are not translations from other languages. Oriental scholars everywhere are greatly indebted to the Jesuit Press of Beirut for its beautiful and accurate editions of classical Arabic authors, and for the excellent auxiliaries to assist them in reading the same. The same remarks, in the main, in regard to the cheapness of the publications of the Jesuit Press may be made as were made with reference to those of the Protestant Press.

Of the other Arabic presses in Beirut, unconnected with any religious denomination, but devoted to printing works in all departments of literature, as a purely business enterprise, the most important is "The Press of Belles Lettres" carried on by Khalil Sarkis. It offers to print in all living languages, Oriental and Occidental. Its publications are unsectarian, and the shelves and counters of its book-store contain the products of all the presses of Syria, Egypt, and Constantinople. In its catalogue we find the standard works of Arabic authors; as, for example, the philosophical "Introduction to the History of Ibn Khaldun"; "The Grammatical Commentary of Ibn Akil on the *Alfiyyeh* of Ibn Malik"; a four-volume edition of "The Thousand-and-One Nights"; a six-volume edition of the romance of the Arab warrior-hero, Antar, the son of Sheddad; while of modern works of permanent value it issues the "Mohit al Mohit," or "Arabic-Arabic Dictionary," in two volumes (2300 pp.), an enlargement of the vocabulary of A Farouzabádi by Butrus al Bistani, and several works on history, biography, proverbs, poetry by the eminent

scholar Ibrahim Sarkis and others. A 500-page cook-book, and a 260-page work on agriculture, imply a degree of civilization among the Easterns hardly contemplated by the people of the West. More than one thousand publications of the various Arabic presses in the East, besides the Press at Leyden, on religious and secular subjects, history, jurisprudence, poetry, grammar, rhetoric, logic, science, commentaries on the Koran, books of "The Traditions," treatises on the unity, on the mystics, or Sufies, travels, fiction, sermons and addresses, many of these being, in accordance with the Oriental manner of writing, very voluminous, can all be had at the depository of this press.

A weekly paper, the *Lisan ul Hal*, or *Tongue of Events*, devoted to politics, commerce, and literature, appears twice a week from the same press. Several Arabic papers besides those already mentioned are printed in Beirut. They are all of the same general character and value, containing political editorials, and news from all parts of the world, besides telegrams, selected items of interest, financial and weather tables, advertisements, and very rarely a story or anecdote. No criticisms of the Turkish government are tolerated.

As we proposed to limit our review of Arabic publications to those issued by the presses of Beirut, we forbear any account of the productions of the presses of Constantinople, Cairo, Boulak, and other Eastern cities, which presses rival in their activity those already described. Valuable Arab classics, and translations from European languages of works in many departments of literature, are constantly sent forth from these presses, showing a business energy and a zeal for spreading Arabic literature among the reading public in favorable comparison with the energy and zeal of European and American publishing houses.

Now what does this vigorous activity of the many Arabic presses imply? What is the significance of all these Semitic publications? all these millions of pages of Arabic literature

annually issued? Certainly that the Arabic is, by no means, as many persons think, a *dead language*. No greater indications of the vitality of any language can be shown than busy printing-presses constantly furnishing copious supplies of reading matter in ancient and modern classics, educational works, current literature, and the news of the day. The Arabic language is, then, not only *living*, and *spoken*, but also, to a large extent, *read* by the people of the present day. If the minds of the people of the West have not been awake to the present condition of things in the East, to the spread of education among the Semitic people of Syria and Egypt, it must be on account of their own indifference and inattention. The Easterns are themselves awake and active. Largely through the contagious influence of the American Presbyterian mission, and the rousing of a spirit of competition, the Catholic sects of Syria and even the Moslems themselves have caught the infection of education and the spirit of enterprise, and all parties and all creeds are now working with zeal to spread knowledge among the people by means of the vehicle of the Arabic Press.

An abundance of printed matter implies many readers; and the general diffusion of the ability to read implies educational schools. These schools exist. The various educational departments of the American mission form but a small part of the whole system of instruction, even in Beirut. The British Syrian schools, the schools of the Church of Scotland, those conducted by the French and the Germans, the church schools and the private schools of the orthodox Greek sect, those of the papal Greek, of the Maronites, the Jesuit, the Jewish, those of the Sisters of Charity, and the Sisters of Nazareth, and lastly the Reshadiyah, or government military schools, and the Mohammedan common schools, all combine to teach the young Syrians of both sexes reading and the rudiments of grammar and arithmetic; so that the number of those persons able to read books and papers in their native

language is constantly multiplying, and a market is found for the great stock of printed matter which is constantly pouring forth.

Schools of some kind have always existed among Arabic-speaking people. Readers of the Koran have never been wanting since the days of the Prophet; and instruction, private or public, sufficient to enable the Moslems to read their sacred book, the only one that most of them had a chance of reading, and that too in manuscript form, has always been furnished. Until recently this has been the substance of what has been taught to boys exclusively. Of course at the university of Al Azhar and some others, grammar, rhetoric, logic, the "Traditions," have been taught with great thoroughness, to the neglect of natural science and all other practical branches. Now, however, in the mission schools, to which, to a considerable extent, even the Moslems send their children for the sake of a secular education alone, and in the government schools, mathematics and natural science form a part of the curriculum of study. A good many Arab youth are consequently, from their instruction in the native schools, quite well informed in arithmetic, grammar, geography; while the graduates of the mission schools and colleges pass as good examinations, and in as great a variety of subjects, as do the youth of this country who have received their instruction in our high schools and academies. Even the conservative students in the Mohammedan universities are now craving modern science as a part of their course of study. Some educated Syrians who have come to the United States, to visit or to reside, are not only accomplished in the knowledge of their own language and literature, but are, to all appearances, as well educated in subjects of academic instruction as American youth. They speak and write English with nearly as much propriety, as much freedom from faulty spelling and erroneous construction, as do the most accomplished graduates of our own high schools and colleges.

The wide-awake Arabic weekly newspaper published in New York City, and called *Kawkab America*, or *Star of America*, is edited and issued by two Syrians, both accomplished scholars in English. It keeps abreast of the news of the day in this country and in all other parts of the world. The variety of its articles on subjects political, local, social, historical, scientific, and literary, shows the bright intelligence and excellent judgment of its learned editors. Although issued more particularly for the information of the Arabic-speaking people in this country, of whom there are now many thousands, it is equally edifying to the few but gradually increasing number of American students in this Semitic language.

With all this wealth of Arabic literature, of which so many examples have been cited as the products of the presses of Syria and elsewhere, which presses were first established by the leading members of the American Protestant mission, whence all the other presses drew their own enterprise and energy, is there any need of answering the inquiry put by certain captious individuals: "Are the missionaries doing any good"? To say nothing of the oral instructions, and the preaching of the missionaries for the sake of imparting useful knowledge and wholesome precepts of religion and morality, is there any need of asking if the teaching of thousands of children to read in their native tongue; the furnishing of printed Bibles and other religious books, educational works in all departments in which the human mind seeks and enjoys information, with translations from other languages of some of the best literature; if awakening the Orientals from their slumber and apathy of ages, and giving them an impulse to achieve something themselves in bringing out the long-buried literary treasures of their own classic writers in the golden age of Arabic literature; if all this work by them is not doing *good*, and entitling them to be regarded as real benefactors of mankind? But the labors of the missionaries have never been limited to teaching, preaching, and general philanthropic work.

They have been extended to the making of geographical, geological, archæological, linguistic, philological, ethnological, and other scientific investigations and explorations, in which they have often been the pioneers; and in every case the results of their studies, when presented to the world, have been to the great benefit of scholars and to the increase of knowledge among men. The journals of the various missionary societies, as well as those of many scientific and literary bodies, abound in articles prepared by missionaries, which articles are calculated to increase the stock of useful knowledge. There is not a so-called heathen land where the first efforts for the welfare of its people and for the world at large have not originated with the missionaries.

There is no space here to discuss the criticisms, mostly extremely puerile, made through the columns of the *Kawkab America*, some months ago, by certain native Syrians, now, or at the time, resident in this country, upon the character and the results of the work of the American mission at Beirut. These critics are themselves the products of the mission, and are indebted to the instructions obtained in the mission schools for whatever success they may have obtained in life. The questions proposed in this discussion were: "In what respect do the Syrians consider the presence of the American missionaries in Syria at the present time? Is it beneficial or not? What position do the missionaries occupy in the estimation of Syrian people?" The superficial criticisms made by most of these dissatisfied persons could, many of them, with as much propriety be made against the whole class of clergymen, teachers, and professional men generally in this country. Every reasonable mind could at once perceive the weakness of the charges laid at the feet of the missionaries. Notwithstanding any faults of method and deficiencies in execution, the great fact is conspicuous that the missionaries, by preaching and teaching, by religious and educational books issued from their industrious press, have been the means of enlightening, re-

generating, elevating, and purifying many thousands of the benighted and degraded people of Syria.

Isaac Taylor speaks at random when he says: "It would be better if all the missionaries in Eastern countries were withdrawn and the work entrusted to the natives, because these missionaries do not attain the result they claim and which is desired."

These views, if adopted, would cause the whole mission work to decline in amount and quality: for without the impetus of Western energy to keep up the means of instruction, the people would eventually relapse into the condition of ignorance in which they were first found, and from which they had then no power to extricate themselves unaided. In that condition help came from the West, and the labors of these loving and faithful friends have brought about most grand and cheering results. It is a common and an easy thing for one to be unappreciative of benefits received and to be ungrateful to those who have conferred them.

It may be true that there is no more successful way of making an enemy of a person than to do him a favor; but those who are not in any way dependent upon the help of others, and those who have not received direct benefits from them, are better qualified to form a correct judgment as to the value of services rendered; and the verdict of all such will be that the greatest benefit ever conferred upon the people of Syria is the establishment and the operation of the American-mission Arabic Press.