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NOAH LANDED IN THE OLDEST TOWN ON EARTH

NAKHKHEVAN. (Armenia).—It that entertaining old story teller called tradition can be relied upon, this is the oldest town in existence—the first human settlement settled after the deluge. And here began the renaissance of Noah on a world that had been washed clear of sin and iniquity after a thorough soaking of forty days. Nakhkhevan is where Noah and his family settled down when they came out of the ark, and he made his home here, according to the legends, until his death. We do not know exactly where he lived before the deluge, or where the ark was built, but at any rate he did not go back there, and from this place the family scattered to obey the divine demand to replenish the earth. And that reminds me of a good story.

Several years ago, in Mississippi, I attended services at a Methodist church and heard a philosophical sermon delivered by a gigantic colored man who worked at the carpenter's trade during the week and preached twice to an admiring audience on Sunday. He was a practical preacher, and his subject on the occasion I allude to was "Patience"—the virtues of patience, forbearance and toleration—and it was a most excellent discourse. During the course of his remarks he alluded to the common belief that Job is the ideal of patience, but declared that in his own humble opinion Noah was the most patient man mentioned in the Bible.

"The Lord," said he, "told Noah to build an ark and admonished him not to tell anybody what he was doing. The great flood that was to wash the earth clean and new was a secret and nobody but God and Noah knew what was going to happen. It was the most tremendous secret ever told to a human man and Noah had to keep it all alone to himself for forty years. He could not tell his wife and he could not tell his sons, who were helping him to build the boat, and all he could say to them was that they must suppress their curiosity and ask no questions. But he could not keep the neighbors away, and for forty years everybody in the town was coming around every day or two asking Noah what he was making and fooling with his tools."

None but a carpenter could realize what that meant, and it was the good preacher's conviction that Noah, instead of Job, was entitled to the honor and credit of being called the most patient man mentioned in the Bible.

There are various ways of spelling the name of this town, as is the case with nearly all the towns in this part of the world. The Russians have it Nakhkhevansky, but the map makers generally accept the Armenian version, for it is an Armenian word, and means "He descended here," referring, of course, to the landing of the ark.

It's worth the trip from Erivan, and even from Tiflis, if only to say that you have been here. It's a distinction to have visited the oldest city in the world, and Noah would feel very much set up if he could know that people came all the way from America to do his town such an honor. Unfortunately there are no records to back up the pretensions of the sleepy little place; there is no history of those eventful days; the oldest inhabitants are all dead, and the only foundation for the tradition are a few vague words in the Bible.

The only piece of the ark in existence, as I told you yesterday, is preserved in the Treasury of the Monastery of Etchmiadzin with the other sacred relics. Noah is buried near Damascus, where his grave is forty feet long and the people will tell you that he was a very tall man. His wife is buried at the village of Marand, at the base of Ararat, where she died a few years after the landing. The poor woman was not allowed to live to see the glory of her descendants.

The local traditions also place the Garden of Eden in the vicinity, in the valley of the Araxes, at the base of Ararat, through which runs the great highway from Erivan into Persia, which has been traveled for six thousand years in peace and in war, and has been the channel of commerce since human beings began to trade with one another. It has also been the scene of untold slaughter and misery, and forty battles have been fought to control it. This road has been trodden by the hosts of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and Alexander

the Great, and Hannibal led his legions along this way to conquer the Caucasus. The Ruslans control that highway now, and they bought it by the sacrifice of many lives.

All that remains of a memorable epoch in the world's history, in which Noah himself was the leading actor, is Mt. Ararat, and many wise men are of the opinion that there has been a universal misapprehension concerning that. The Rt. Hon. James Bryce, British ambassador to Washington, who wrote a book about this country thirty-five years ago, may be accepted as the most reliable authority, and with his permission I may quote him on this subject. He says:

"The only topographical reference to the flood is to be found in the words, Genesis 8:4:

"In the 7th month, on the 17th day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat," which may be taken as equivalent to "on a mountain of (or in) Ararat."

"The word Ararat is used in three, or rather in two other places in the Scriptures. One is in II Kings, 19:37, and the parallel passage in Isaiah, 37:38, where it is said of the sons of Sennacherib, who had just murdered their father, that they escaped into the lands of Ararat, rendered in our version and in the Septuagint, 'Armenia.' The other is in Jeremiah, 51:27, 'all together against her (i. e., Babylon) the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashchenaz.' The question, then, is what does this Ararat denote? Clearly the Alexandrian translators took it for Armenia; so does the Vulgate, when it renders in Genesis, 8:4, the words which we translate, 'On the mountains of Ararat' by 'super montes Armeniae.' This narrows it a little, and St. Jerome himself helps us to narrow it still further, when, in his commentary on Isaiah, 37:38, he says that 'Ararat means the plain of the middle Araxes, which lies at the foot of the great mountain Taurus.'

"The identification, therefore, is natural enough; what is of more consequence is to determine how early it took place; for as there is little or no trace of an independent local tradition of the flood, we must assume the identification to rest entirely upon the use of the name Ararat in the Hebrew narrative. Josephus Ant. Jud., (bk. I, ch. 3) says that the Armenians called the place where Noah descended 'the disembarking place, for the ark being saved in that place, its remains are shown there by the inhabitants to this day,' and also quotes Nicolas of Damascus, who writes that, 'In Armenia, above Minyas, there is a great mountain called Baras, upon which it is said that many who escaped at the time of the flood were saved, and that one who was carried in an ark came ashore on top of it, and that the remains of the wood were preserved for a long time. This might be the man about whom Moses, the law giver of the Jews, wrote.'

"Marco Polo, whose route does not

seem to have led him near it, says only, in speaking of Armenia:

"Here is an exceedingly great mountain, on which it is said the ark of Noah rested, and for this cause it is called the Mountain of the Ark of Noah. The circuit of its base cannot be traversed in less than two days, and the ascent is rendered impossible by the snow on its summit, which never dissolves, but increases with each successive fall. On the lower declivities the melted snows cause an abundant vegetation, and afford rich pastures for the cattle, which resort thither from all the surrounding countries."

For centuries it was conceded that the top of Ararat could not be reached, and even today the highest Armenian ecclesiastics insist that God has made it impossible for human feet to climb. They insist that no one has ever reached the top and that no one ever will, but the ascent has been made by at least fourteen or fifteen experienced mountaineers. Mr. Bryce himself not only made the ascent in the quickest time on record, in 1877, but went up entirely alone. The Russian governor general at Erivan furnished him with a body guard of Cossacks and several Kurd porters, but when they reached the height of 12,000 feet they refused to go any farther, and at 1 o'clock in the morning Mr. Bryce started on alone, reaching the summit about 2 the following afternoon, and returning to camp the same night.

Mr. Bryce told me in Washington not long ago that it had been his desire to ascend Ararat, which was due to scriptural associations and to reading when a boy a thrilling account of an ascent made by Dr. Parrot, the first human being, so far as known, to reach the summit.

There are two peaks, called Greater and Lesser Ararat, about seven miles apart. Greater Ararat rises to a height of 17,323 feet from the plain of Araxes, being the second mountain in height west of the Caucasus, Elburg in the Himalayas alone exceeding it with a height of 18,493 feet. Little Ararat rises 13,300 feet, and is almost identical with its greater companion. Both are slumbering volcanoes, and although there has been no eruption within the memory of man, earthquakes have frequently occurred and have caused much damage. The line of perpetual snow is thirteen thousand feet, and the summit of Greater Ararat is always covered, a perfect dome of spotless white rising against an azure sky. It is one of the most beautiful of mountains.

At an elevation of about 5,600 feet on the slopes of Greater Ararat formerly stood an Armenian village, called Arghuri, an Armenian word meaning "He planted the vine." According to tradition an Armenian church dating from the eighth century occupied the spot where Noah built his altar and offered his first sacrifice after leaving the ark, and making a safe descent of the mountain with his fam-

ily and the living creatures that were saved with him. At Arghuri "he planted the vine," raised grapes, made wine, drank to excess and got caught in the scrape narrated in Genesis 9:20. Until 1840, when the village was destroyed by an earthquake, the actual vine referred to, planted by the hands of the patriarch, was still pointed out by the inhabitants.

The Persian rulers of this country used to have a summer residence near this village, but it was destroyed with the rest, and has never been restored.

Quite near Arghuri the monastery of St. Jacob marked the spot where a saintly monk of that name, a contemporary of St. Gregory, a founder of the Armenian church, received divine evidence that the traditions connecting Noah and the ark with Ararat were true. For years he lived a hermit upon the mountain side, praying for light. At length God sent an angel who appeared to him in his sleep and deposited upon his breast a fragment of the ark as a reward for his faith and zeal and piety. That is the fragment of a plank that may now be seen in the treasury of the monastery at Echmiadzin.

PROFESSOR TO COMPLETE HISTORY OF EARTHQUAKE

BERKELEY, July 25.—Henry M. Stevens, professor in the department of History at the University of California, who left for Europe on a year's leave of absence three months ago, returned yesterday to his home here.

He announced that he will spend the remainder of the time allotted him by the leave of absence in the completion of a history of the San Francisco disaster of 1906.

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BY AUTHORITY

SEALED TENDERS.

Sealed Tenders will be received at the office of the Superintendent of Public Works until 12 o'clock noon of Wednesday, August 17, 1910, for the construction of an extension and additions to the Matson or Brewer wharf shed on Queen street, Honolulu.

Plans, specifications and proposal blanks are on file in the Department of Public Works.

The Superintendent of Public Works reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

MARSTON CAMPBELL,
Superintendent of Public Works.
Honolulu, July 28, 1910.

CERTIFICATE OF TREASURER.

I, D. L. CONKLING, Treasurer of the Territory of Hawaii, do hereby certify, in accordance with the Requirements of Section 2577 of the Revised Laws of Hawaii, the same being a portion of Chapter 158 of said Revised Laws providing for the incorporation of banking corporations, that I have examined into the condition of the BANK OF HONOLULU, LIMITED, a corporation formed under said Chapter 158, and that the said corporation has complied with the provisions required by said Chapter 158, as amended, to be complied with before commencing the business of banking, and that the said corporation, BANK OF HONOLULU, LIMITED, is authorized to commence said business of banking.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Treasury Department, this 2nd day of June, 1910.

(Sig) D. L. CONKLING,
Treasurer of the Territory of Hawaii.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

HAWAIIAN FERTILIZER CO., LTD.

At the annual meeting of the Hawaiian Fertilizer Co., Ltd., held this day the following officers were elected to serve for the ensuing year:

E. D. Tenney.....President
J. P. Cooke.....Vice President
J. Waterhouse.....Secretary
E. F. Bishop.....Treasurer
George H. Robertson.....Auditor
R. A. Cooke.....Director
C. H. Atherton.....Director

J. WATERHOUSE,
Secretary.

Honolulu, July 18, 1910.

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