

Introduction

By David Malick

Christians under the Crescent in Asia is the account of a journey among the Assyrians in Turkey and Persia in 1876. The author, Edward L. Cutts, was sent on a mission of inquiry by the Archbishop of Canterbury in response to petitions from Assyrians to the Church of England requesting the establishment of a mission to open schools among them in order to bring about their educational and spiritual renewal. The full context and the results of this mission, including the subsequent establishment of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians, are admirably detailed by J. F. Coakley in *The Church of the East and the Church of England* (Oxford, 1992).

The importance of making this book more widely available to Assyrians and non-Assyrians alike is two-fold. This book serves as primary source material for a very important period in Assyrian history which also happens to suffer from the fact that few other sources survive. While we are fortunate that modern studies of the period exist, it is always profitable to have access to the primary sources to help evaluate studies based upon them and mine them for more information. Secondly, this book contains detailed descriptions of life and customs that have all but disappeared. During this period, the Assyrians were still living in their original homelands. Their economic and political situation was sometimes better and sometimes worse, but the horrific events of 1915-1918 were still far off and it is tempting to read this book and imagine what might have been if genocide and exile could have been avoided.



A GROUP OF NESTORIANS OF THE TYARI TRIBE.

Their Names, beginning on the spectator's right hand, in the sitting group, are Kabban Yonan, Kasha (= Priest) Khames, Malck Daniel, Malek Gouri, Hoshana ; in the standing group, Adam, Kasha Gewerhes (George), Kasha Dimchar, Kasha Hosana, Johanna, Batou. (*From a Photograph.*)