

The thirty-fifth Annual Commencement of the American College of Teheran was no ordinary event as commencements go. It would be hard for any commencement in Persia to be ordinary, but this year eight students were to receive the B.A. degree of the College which was something very unusual. Last year two graduates received the B. A. degree, the first to receive such a degree for study in Persia, but they were removed from the limelight by the extra large number of high school graduates, forty-five in all, who also received their diplomas. This year the candidates for the B.A. degree had things practically all to themselves. To be sure they had to share the honors with seven graduates of the Middle School, but the audience were never in doubt as to whose Commencement it was.

Events leading up to this Commencement also made it unusual. Caps and gowns had been brought out from America to lend solemnity to the occasion and that part of the exercises was especially pleasing to the older Persians who recognized in the "cap and gown" their own clothing, for are not the Persian "abbah" and "cap and gown" one in their origin. The abbah came to Persia with the Arabs or may even have preceded them. The cap and gown went to the European medieval universities with the invasion of the Moors who in turn had received the mantle from the Arabs. Thus could Persian students feel altogether at home in their new clothing.

Then the fact that some invitation cards to Persian ladies for the section reserved for chuddared Persian women had been returned with a request for cards for the European ladies section caused many to hold their breath for such a new development. The fact that the section for "chuddars" was not quite filled, a most unusual thing, and the corresponding fact that the section for Europeans was overwhelmingly filled leads us to suspect that many of the Persian sisters were there without chuddars. They could not be identified, but the ticket experience was revealing. The week before the three Persian girl graduates of the Girl's school had appeared on the platform without chuddars, and all three of them addressed the large audience, mostly men, and received great applause. These two incidents show that in Teheran at least, the unveiling of the women is not far distant. It is generally known that unveiled Persian women will not be interfered with on the streets and so the change is quietly coming about.

It was most fortunate that Professor Arthur Upham Pope was making one of his visits of study and exploration to Persia and so he was prevailed upon to make the Commencement address. He made a stirring appeal for Persianhood, and three of the leading newspapers requested translations of his speech for their next issues. The address appeared in Persian, French, and in English in the College paper. The message probably reached every person in Teheran who can read and many outside of Teheran.

It would be difficult to enumerate the number of leading Persians who were in the audience. The Ministry of Education, from the Minister himself to all of the officers and leading teachers in the department were there. Probably at no other Commencement has there been such a large turnout from this one Ministry, and that was due in no small measure to the cooperation between the College and the Ministry of Education under the new agreement which was reached last Summer.

In addition, the Prime Minister, the Minister of the Court, the Minister of War, the President of Parliament, and other ministers and ex-ministers were present. It was noted that four ex-ministers of education were among this latter group.



In the Afternoon following Commencement the Alumni gathered informally for tea and surprised Dr. and Mrs. Jordan by presenting them with a large Persian silver tray. It was a magnificent gift and a very happy furlough present for Dr. and Mrs. Jordan. The gathering of Alumni was not large but their range in age was great and yet there was not a one who had not come under the regime, one could almost add the rod, of Dr. Jordan during his thirty-one years with the school. Mrs. Jordan could address them all by name too, for she had taught each one of them in English or Bible or both. It was a joyous occasion, but one of those experiences which go deep and in spite of the joy are apt to bring forth a tear.

The day was over and the gathering of the morning with those young men on the platform and the afternoon gathering of those men who are making a success of life left us with the feeling that it was all very much worth while. When one considers the influences which worked and are even now working to mould their lives, we can feel that Christ is at work in Persia.