

Moving westward, we come to the vast territories of Semipalatinsk and Akmolinsk, peopled by the Kirghis tribe. We have seen already that this formerly pagan tribe accepted Islam only about fifty years ago. For a number of years the Orthodox Missionary Society has carried on work there, and in 1908 there were seven missionary centres with twenty-two missionaries, twelve schools, thirteen churches, but, alas, the number of converts is small! It must be admitted that missions among the Kirghis present special difficulties, of which we shall hear further on; let us only say that the Kirghis is characterized by an indifference to religious truths which makes it hard for missionaries to gain any hold upon his conscience and will. Even Islam has not yet succeeded in making the Kirghis into fanatical Moslems; they still hold some pagan beliefs and practices. During the last fifteen years 500 baptisms are reported. The newly baptized Kirghis are gathered into special colonies and cared for materially and spiritually.

We come next to the northwest of Siberia and the district of Tobolsk. Here missionary work among pagan tribes was begun 200 years ago; after some years it stopped, and the newly baptized converts were left to themselves. A hundred years ago the work was again undertaken and has continued ever since. But organized missionary effort for Mohammedans was only opened ten years ago by the "Tobolsk Central Anti-Moslem Missionary Society." Seventy thousand Mohammedans are reported to live in this district. Fourteen missionaries are working here, all of whom are themselves baptized Tatars. They are full of zeal. Work is done by preaching, by discussions, by spreading of Gospels and tracts in the Tobolsk Tatar dialect. There are no special missionary schools. In ten years eighty souls