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Missions in Church of the Brethren

MRS. JESSE B. EMMERT, NEE GERTRUDE  
ROWLAND

Missionary to India, 1904

On a farm near Reids, Washington County, Maryland, on October 10, 1876, Gertrude E. Rowland gladdened the home of her parents, Abram S. and Susan Friedly Rowland, because, preceding her in the home, were five sons. Her young life was marked with the joys common to a good home. She attended the public school until, in 1895, she was induced to enter Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. She applied herself for two years, dropped one year to teach school, and then returned and finished a course the year following. She returned home and entered upon teaching; but after two years she was compelled to quit, because not strong enough to endure the strain.

When eighteen years old, she confessed Christ at Juniata College, and united with the Church of the Brethren, baptism being administered by W. J. Swigart. Her spiritual growth was marked while at Juniata College, and she took hold of religious duties with pleasure. She was leader of the Young Ladies' Christian Band, and superintendent of the home Sunday-school during the summer, and thus made herself useful for her Lord.

During the winter of 1903 she was constrained to offer her life in service on the India field. She was approved by the Conference at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, but was not permitted to sail that fall on account of her health. After a short rest she came to Chicago and assisted Cora Cripe in the Children's Mission there. This gladdened her heart, and she and her work were long remembered. In the fall of 1904 she sailed for India. At Bulsar, on February 23, 1905, she was united in marriage to Jesse B. Emmert and has been a faithful helper in his active life on the field. To them have been born three children. She enjoyed the furlough home during 1910-11 but was glad to return to her chosen field of labor.

Biographical

GASTON J. FERCKEN

Missionary to Asia Minor, 1895 to 1899

Missionary to Switzerland and France, 1899 to 1906

William E. Fercken was a Hollander by birth, a merchant by trade, a Vice-consul of the Netherlands in Aleppo, at the time his son, Gaston, was born on June 10, 1855. His wife was a native of Marseilles, France, and a daughter of one of the soldiers who, under Napoleon, fought at Waterloo. When the son was still a child, the Government ordered the father to locate at Beirut, he having been made Consul for the Netherlands in that place. From seven till fourteen Gaston attended the private school of a Lutheran minister who taught him reading, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, history, geography, the Bible and the catechism. He then entered the National College, a native institution, where all the studies were pursued in Arabic. Five years gave him thorough training in the language as well as other studies. Here he also learned the English language. He began work in an insurance and mercantile office, but soon having an opportunity to travel through France, Italy, Tunis, Algeria, Egypt, India and Ceylon, with a wealthy manufacturer as his private interpreter, he quit the office. In the meantime, his parents both having died, he located at Smyrna, where his father was born, and where two of his brothers resided. Here he spent five years in the Austrian College, teaching and pursuing his studies, until he was granted the degrees of B. A. and B. S. Here also he became fluent in speaking the Greek. Up to this time he had made no profession. His mother was a Catholic; his father never identified himself with any organization. Gaston felt called to the ministry and thought he would attend a divinity school, and look into the Word to determine where he could be most at home. The choice of schools was at Geneva, Switzerland, in the Free Reformed church. After two years' study he embraced the

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opportunity to come to America, and finish his theological education in the Episcopal College at Middletown, Connecticut. He then entered the ministry of the Episcopal church. At this time he was married to a lady from South Carolina, and to them were born a son and a daughter. He spent ten years on the Pacific Coast, as a missionary for the Episcopal church. In December, 1894, he and his wife, after some correspondence with D. L. Miller and one or two others, came to Mt. Morris, Illinois, and united with the Church of the Brethren. In due time the Mt. Morris church called him to the ministry, the Conference of 1895 approved of him as a missionary to Asia Minor, and in the fall of the same year he and his family located at Smyrna, Asia Minor. Here he labored, preaching the Gospel, and also conducting an orphanage, until, after a careful investigation by D. L. Miller, in 1899, the mission was closed, and Brother Fercken opened a mission at Lancy, near Geneva, Switzerland. After about three years the mission and orphanage were moved to Oyonnax, France, a small village in the eastern part of that Republic. He was home on furlough in 1903 and at the Conference at Bellefontaine represented Switzerland on the Standing Committee.

Brother Fercken was a fluent writer, a great reader, and while in France began to follow the teaching of Swedenborg. In 1903 he published, unknown to the General Mission Board, through the Swedenborgian press, "Twelve Letters to My Son," followed the next year by "Even Thine Altars;" and in still another year by "The Divine Philosophy." With the issue of the last book a few brethren learned of his books and secured them. As soon as he learned this, in 1906, he left his mission in France for parts unknown. After some time it was learned that he was on an island east of Madagascar, in the Indian Ocean. His wife did not accompany him after he left France.

### Biographical

#### MRS. GASTON J. FERCKEN

Missionary to Asia Minor, 1895 to 1899

Missionary to Switzerland, 1899 to 1902

Sister Fercken was a daughter of a wealthy gentleman in South Carolina. She was attending school in the North, formed the acquaintance of G. J. Fercken and married him. To them were born a son and a daughter. She accompanied her husband through all his labors until after the mission was established in France. She then brought her children to America and at last accounts she was living with relatives in New York City.

#### DAVID S. FILBRUN

Member of Book and Tract Work, 1890-1894

David S. Filbrun was born near New Carlisle, Miami County, Ohio, on January 18, 1852. His parents were earnest Christian people, the father serving as deacon in the Church of the Brethren for many years. Reared upon the farm, their children had every advantage for a well rounded out development. David is the fourth child in a family of four sons and five daughters. The common schools were good and David applied himself diligently. At eighteen years of age he began to teach public school, and taught twenty-four consecutive years, giving two years, however, exclusively to township supervision. His first school was in Sulphur Grove schoolhouse, nine miles north of Dayton, Ohio.

On December 12, 1872, he was united in marriage to Sarah Ellen Karns, and to them were born one son and four daughters. All are living but one daughter, and all have confessed Christ.

When twenty-three years old, Brother Filbrun confessed Christ and united with the Church of the Brethren in the Hickory Grove congregation, Southern Ohio, Jo-