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Bess Allen Donaldson

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Bess Allen Donaldson (1879-1974) was an American Presbyterian missionary and writer about Persia. She went to Tehran in 1910 as a teacher at the Iran Bethel Girl's School, a Presbyterian mission school; she subsequently became principal. Dwight Donaldson was a missionary of the American Presbyterian Church in Mahad from 1915. She married Dwight Donaldson in Tehran in 1916 and they undertook evangelical work in Mahad until 1940, when foreign missionary teachers were expelled from Persia and their schools nationalized. Dwight Donaldson then became principal of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies at Aligarh in India, where the couple remained until his retirement in 1951. During thirty years of sharing her husband's missionary work, giving Bible instruction, and teaching English, particularly to women, Bess Donaldson gathered material for *The Wild Rue* (London, 1938), a unique study of Persian folklore and myths. Through the Mother Bickerdyke Historical Collection, she also published *Prairie Girl* and *Prairie Girl in Iran and India* (Galesburg, Ill., 1971 and 1972, respectively).